



DICK A. GRECO
MAYOR

August 16, 2001

Honorable Chairman and
Members of the City Council

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to present to you the Recommended Annual Budget for the City of Tampa fiscal year beginning October 1, 2001 through September 30, 2002. The budget for FY02 totals \$649 million and represents a 6% increase from the current year. The ad valorem property tax millage rate will remain at 6.539 for the 13th consecutive year.

The Recommended Budget being presented to City Council today reflects thousands of hours of effort by City department personnel; as well as various neighborhood associations, civic groups, citizens, business leaders, other government agencies and, of course, City Council. The result of this effort, addresses numerous quality of life issues affecting many of our neighborhoods and the City as a whole. Quality of life issues are generally related to three service program areas: public safety, leisure and recreation, and environment/infrastructure needs.

Public Safety: In order to continue the current trend of reducing crime rates, we are increasing the staffing of the Police Department by adding a fourth QUAD Squad with eight officers, and nine additional officers for the New Tampa, Tampa Heights and Channelside areas. By using grant funds, the City will not be required to absorb the full cost of these officers until the end of the third year. Tampa Fire Rescue will see two new fire stations (Hunter's Green and Busch Gardens areas) open in FY02. All new stations will be equipped with pre-emptor traffic signals to ensure that dispatch of equipment can occur rapidly so that response times are maintained. Fire Rescue will continue its concentration in new technology by implementing the final phase of the automated vehicle locator system which also facilitates rapid emergency vehicle dispatch. Due to the stressful nature of fire rescue work and potential exposure to hazardous substances and/or infectious diseases, Fire Rescue will initiate a health and wellness program for all firefighters and emergency rescue personnel. The benefits of the mandatory, comprehensive annual physical exam are early detection and/or prevention of heart and infectious diseases; reduced work related injuries; and less time spent in rehabilitation.

Leisure and Recreation: FY02 will see significant improvements to facilities in neighborhoods throughout the City. Nine of the 16 facilities funded through the 1999 Recreation Bond are expected to open this year. These include: Jackson Heights YET Center, Barksdale Senior Center, M.L. King, Jr. Pool, Oak Park Center, Forest Hills Community Center, Port Tampa Center, Cuscaden Park, Interbay Fitness and Wellness Center and the Benito Athletic Center. The Parks and Recreation departments will have over 60 new full time, part time, and seasonal positions to: staff new facilities; provide maintenance for new facilities, parks and greenways; and provide more park security. The Community Investment Tax (CIT) has helped to address concerns about parks and recreation facilities voiced by residents and neighborhood groups throughout the City. In FY02, the CIT allocation of \$2 million will be used for improvements at 13 parks and 5 recreation facilities including: additional security lighting, community centers and restroom/storage/shelter buildings, new covered ballcourts, play equipment and play surfaces. Finally, with the

approval of the plan for the second five years of the Community Investment Tax, a bond will be issued in the near future to secure funding to begin development of a downtown Cultural Arts District which will feature a new Tampa Museum of Art. Also, CIT funding to assist the Lowry Park Zoo's fund raising efforts will enable the Zoo to begin its expansion.

Environmental/Infrastructure: Through various efforts to secure funding from the Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program (ELAPP) and other grants, numerous parcels of environmentally sensitive lands have been acquired throughout the City which are being developed into passive parkland for all to enjoy. Examples of these acquisitions include: Cypress Street Park, Blackwater Hammock, South Tampa Greenway, McKay Bay Greenway, Rivercrest Park Addition and New Tampa Flatwoods Park.

Another concern citizens have expressed relates to neighborhood transportation programs. The CIT program includes two million dollars per year to address additional neighborhood sidewalk construction, traffic calming devices, street resurfacing and intersection improvements.

The Sanitary Sewers/Stormwater Department continues to use state of the art technology in the operation of the Howard F. Curren Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant. Employees at the plant are identifying new processes and procedures to help optimize the operations and maintenance of the plant. Early results indicate success in not only reducing costs, but furthering the goal of the program to become a world class utility within four years. The department continues to work with groups like the Bay Studies Team that are leaders in monitoring and research efforts to help clean Tampa Bay. In FY02, Stormwaters' new Street Sweeping Debris and Stormwater Sediments Processing Facility will begin operations. This facility will significantly improve the street sweeping debris collection and disposal process. The Water Department continues to be a leader in water treatment and conservation techniques. The Water Quality 2000 program expanded the treatment capacity of the Hillsborough River Water Treatment Plant from 80 to 100 million gallons per day, and made process improvements to produce water of a higher quality than bottled water. In FY02, the Water Department will also implement a Five-Year Master Plan that outlines the mission for the department and begins a major effort to replace significant amounts of the system's aging pipes. Water conservation techniques such as the Aquifer Storage and Recovery System and the South Tampa Area Reclamation project (STAR) will help reduce our dependency on other more expensive sources of water. In the Solid Waste Department, when the \$88 million retrofit of the McKay Bay Refuse-to-Energy facility is completed in early FY02, the facility will exceed the new Clean Air Act quality standards. In order to afford all residents the ability to recycle various materials, the curbside recycling program will be expanded City-wide during FY02.

After three consecutive years of no utility rate increases, we need to adjust the water rates into a multi-tier program where higher users of water are charged higher rates. This will not only provide funding to begin a systematic replacement of the many miles of aging pipe, but will also act as a conservation measure. We also need to adjust the Solid Waste rates to defray increasing collection contract costs, additional debt service for the retrofit project and the costs of expanding the curbside recycling program City-wide.

As in previous budgets, we continue to be financially conservative. After reviewing one and a half years of actual data, we feel comfortable with the estimates of the financial impact of implementing the Senior Citizen Additional Homestead Exemption. We will take the actions necessary to implement the exemption, for eligible individuals, at the maximum rate of \$25,000 for FY03, the year beginning October 1, 2002.

I am very proud of the way that Tampa's citizens, businesses, and City government are working together to make Tampa a great place to live and work. We will continue to strive to provide a very high level of service and quality of life while keeping taxes and fees as low as possible.

Sincerely,



Dick A. Greco