



August 12, 2004

PAM IORIO
MAYOR

Honorable Chairman
and Members of City Council

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to present to you the Recommended Annual Budget for the City of Tampa for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2004 and ending September 30, 2005. There are no increases in the property tax millage rate or any rate increases. The property tax rate for our city will remain at 6.539 mills for the 16th consecutive year. The budget for fiscal year 2005 totals \$674 million. This budget supports the provision of city services for a population of 321,487 living in over 116.1 square miles by a staff of 4,935.

The theme of this year's budget is "Investing in Tampa" and it reflects our strategic plan for Tampa's growth and development. It reflects your input as Council members. Throughout the year you have indicated individually and collectively the needs of our community you believe warrant attention. It reflects a process of listening to the public, hearing what they would like to see improved and enhanced. It reflects the input of the outstanding professionals who work for city government and want to see quality in our delivery of services to the public. In short, this budget truly reflects the different constituency groups of Tampa - it seeks to improve the quality of life throughout the city.

Many cities in America can boast of all kinds of special amenities but if citizens and visitors don't feel safe then there is not positive quality of life. That is why this budget first looks to our law enforcement and fire rescue needs, adding personnel and equipment, and improving their pension benefits to attract and retain quality employees. We can already see real results from the outstanding efforts our police department made with their effective community policing and crackdown on street level crime and drug dealing.

Fire Rescue will be continuing its multi-year program of adding 7 firefighters per year to assist in manning its equipment at higher levels. Nearly \$1 million is earmarked for fire station improvements, which will address the remaining life safety code issues and begin to address quality of life issues for our firefighters.

Throughout this budget you will see improvements to parks and recreation and numerous transportation projects. Investments are being made in our water and wastewater systems. Last year we increased our expenditures for street repaving, sidewalks, signage, traffic calming and neighborhood roadway enhancements by a substantial amount. We continue that emphasis this year with a 16% increase to help maintain quality neighborhoods.

From Port Tampa to New Tampa we are focused on improving those quality of life issues that mean so much to our citizens. Many of the problems we face have been around for a long time. But we can tackle these problems, one by one, and give the people of this great city the kind of government they deserve. It will take a commitment to our strategic plan and the five areas of focus that are our blueprint for the future. And it will take budgets that continue to wisely invest our tax dollars in Tampa.

It is an honor to serve the people of Tampa and I thank you for our positive partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pam Iorio".

Pam Iorio
Mayor