

## Parks Department

Sam Halter, Chief Administrative Officer

Ross J. Ferlita, Director

[www.tampagov.net/dept\\_Parks/](http://www.tampagov.net/dept_Parks/)

### Key Public Service Areas

The Department of Parks is dedicated to planning and providing quality leisure, cultural, educational parks, play-grounds, marinas, cemeteries and natural resources in a safe, clean, operable, and attractive condition to the Tampa community.

### Scope of Department Operations

Tampa Parks Department has 335 employees with annual budget of \$17.9 million. It provides conservation, preservation and maintenance of public property within the City, including maintaining 1,885 acres of City parkland, streetscape and parkways. Inventory maintained by department staff includes 164 parks and 79 playgrounds; 194 racquet and multi-purpose courts; 123 ballfields; 82 public buildings; 89 parking lots; more than 50 miles of fencing; more than 82 miles of irrigation; and 4 City cemeteries.

### Current Initiatives

- Ballast Point Park
- Cancer Survivor Plaza
- CIT Parks & Playgrounds
- Cypress Point Park Beach Restoration & Recreation
- DeSoto Park Improvements
- Cotanchobee Ft Brooke Park
- MacDill Trail (Bayshore to Dale Mabry)
- Museum Park
- New Tampa Community Park
- Recovery Action Program (RAP)
- Ribbon of Green
- Waterworks Park
- 1000 Trees for Tampa
- In addition to the above initiatives the Parks Department has over 100 issues that are currently being addressed.

### Critical Issues and Areas of Concern

- Parks and Recreation Facility and Organization
- Maintenance Staffing Needs
- Long Range Recreation and Parks Plan
- Open Space Initiative and Management Plans
- Implementation of the Greenways and Trails System
- Parking Lot and Hard Surface Maintenance
- Park Facility Security
- Major Equipment Replacement
- 1,000 Trees for Tampa
- NEAT Team Expansion
- Riverwalk
- Seawall & Fishing Pier Replacement/Repair
- Technology
- Lowry Park Zoo
- Rate Structure and User Fee
- Renovations of Parks and Playgrounds
- Departmental Charges
- New Tampa Park
- Cotanchobee Fort Brooke Park Phase III
- Museum Park
- Water Works Park
- Marinas and Boat Ramp Operations

### Status Report

**Parks and Recreation Facility and Organization.** Many of the activities administered by the Parks and Recreation Departments are closely related, and certain economies of scale might be achieved if the departments were located in the same building. The current separation of the departments does not promote the most efficient organization for managing facilities, programs, and personnel. An estimated 35,000 sq. feet would be required to accommodate the Parks and Recreation Central Office Staff. A search for potential sites should be undertaken. Additionally, there are opportunities to evaluate Department functions to identify most efficient operation and delivery of required services, including amount of money that could be saved from bringing the two departments under one roof. Relocation of Parks administrative and maintenance facilities at Lowry Park is needed. The Marcum Street property should be built out and the Fort Hestorly Armory is being considered for relocation of facilities and will require money for build out. [CR-58]

**Maintenance Staffing Needs.** Continued acquisition of new lands and construction of new recreation facilities requires additional staff to man and maintain the facilities at an acceptable level. New sites

## **Parks Department Status Report (continued)**

also require additional expenditures for security and maintenance. In several cases, the Parks Department contracted the needed maintenance performed for the facilities. However, the cost was higher than hiring additional full-time employees to perform the contracted duties.

Such results indicate a need to develop an alternative maintenance delivery system, that uses new technology, reengineers the workflow and provides increased efficiencies. Additional staffing is also needed for the new interstate system, acquired lands, new facilities, natural resources crew, addition of Greenways and Trails system, Meridian St., 40th Street corridor landscaping and 22nd Street landscaping.

**Long Range Recreation & Parks Plan and Park Master Plan Beyond the Recovery Action Plan.** The Recreation Department is currently contracting with a consultant to update the City's Recovery Action Program (RAP). This report will provide an inventory of existing facilities and equipment and provide an analysis of how the existing system is meeting the needs of current and future populations. It will also be used in developing a long-range recreation facility plan. The Parks Department will be overseeing the completion of the RAP for most of FY03 and will begin updating its long-range Parks Master Plan and facilities needs once the RAP is completed. The Master Plan provision should have a 5-year update and 10-year plan should be re-evaluated. The next stage of the RAP will be to begin implementing planned strategies, including master planning of three park sites per year. Funding should be part of the Parks Department's Planning and Management Budget.

A need also exists to create a parks facility layer for the City's GIS System in order to effectively map facilities, manage park planning, and maintain operations.

**Open Space Initiative: Development/Execution of Management Plans.** Open Space and new park development will need funding for management plans, construction plans, development, maintenance, site security and vehicular control. Environmental land reclamation funding is needed to remove invasive and exotic vegetation and replant native vegetation. The Parks Department is working to develop a management plan for its facilities, which will identify the funding needs. Management plans are also required for lands acquired through the ELAPP program. The City has 12 ELAPP sites, five of which have management plans.

**Implementation of the Greenways and Trails System.** The Tampa Greenways and Trails Master Plan was adopted by Tampa City Council on February 1, 2001. The plan reflects the culmination of two years work by the Citizen's Advisory Committee, Tampa Parks Department and consultant, PBS&J. The City has acquired numerous parcels for the planned Greenways and Trails System. However, a lack of funding has slowed the construction of trail facilities. Continued emphasis will need to be placed on acquisition, construction and subsequent maintenance needs associated with the Greenways and Trails System. Improving quality of life the Greenways and Trails System should continue to be supported.

**Park Facility Security.** The Parks Department established a security patrol division and has a security chief plus 10 security patrol persons. Currently, the level of personnel is adequate, but the Department lacks equipment and facilities. To further increase security at the facilities there is a need for additional improvements such as lighting, cameras, etc. These items need to be provided for in the City's annual budget or grant program.

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## Parks Department Status Report (continued)

**Parking Lot and Hard Surface Maintenance.** A lack of a general maintenance scheduled for resurfacing facility parking lots has resulted in neglected and deteriorating parking lots. Parking lots adjacent to facilities need resurfacing and repair, beyond current CIP and CIT funding levels. Various types of hard surfaces within the parks system such as multi-purpose paths, multi-purpose courts, roadways, etc. are in need of repair and resurfacing.

**Major Equipment Replacement.** As the amount of land in the park system throughout the City continues to grow, little has been done to replace or maintain equipment that is needed to keep sites in adequate condition. There is a need to replacement several pieces of equipment, including hydrocranes and packers. There is associated need to establish a replacement and maintenance schedule to ensure the replacement of necessary equipment can be achieved on a long-range basis.

**1,000 Trees for Tampa.** Since 1999, the City has earmarked funding in the CIP for the planting of 1,000 trees within the City limit. The program is planned to continue at the same level, so long as funding is provided. Program could be more effective if leveraged with neighborhood and non-profit programs. If this program is to continue, it should be properly funded. Present funding does not cover the increased cost of trees and does not include associated planting cost. A Public-Private Funding and Implementation Strategy should be pursued that addresses these issues.

**NEAT Team Expansion.** There is an existing need to expand the NEAT Team, if vacant and abandoned lots are to be addressed. Various lots have become havens for scattered debris, litter and overgrown foliage, all of which can detract from the appearance of an otherwise clean and attractive neighborhood. The expanded and enhanced NEAT Team service was designed to remove these eyesores and maintain a positive and attractive pedestrian environment. The expansion of the NEAT Team was not funded in FY00, FY01, and FY02 and FY03.

**Riverwalk.** The Downtown Riverwalk project is designed to provide a continuous pedestrian walkway along the Hillsborough River and Garrison Channel. Approximately 1.27 mile Riverwalk will eventually link the Performance Arts Center and the Garrison Channel Seaport Center. The Ribbon of Green Park System's riverwalk segments have not been started. Funding will be required for the design, construction and execution of the Riverwalk.

**Seawall & Fishing Pier Replacement and Repair.** In general, the seawalls adjacent to a number of park facilities throughout the City are deteriorating and are in need of repair. A lack of a general facility maintenance schedule has resulted in on-going deterioration. Additionally, the piers at Ballast Point Park, Picnic Island Park, Rivercrest Park, Bobby Hicks Park, Al Lopez Park and McKay Bay. These sites should be listed for maintenance and repair as needed.

**Technology.** The Parks Department has identified a need to track and locate vehicles in order to ensure most efficient delivery of services. This can be achieved through the acquisition and installation of Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVL) or Global Positioning Satellites (GPS) technology. As new technology becomes available to acquire equipment and train personnel on the equipment.

**Lowry Park Zoo.** Over the next three to five years, the City expects to incur approximately \$18 million in costs associated with the African exhibitory at the Lowry Park Zoo, bringing the total next generation expenditures to an estimated \$31 million. Of the \$18 million needed for the

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## Parks Department

### Status Report (continued)

African exhibit, \$5.5 million will be funded by City CIT funds, \$4 million from County CIT funds, \$1.5 million in existing pledges not collateralized on existing bonds, and \$7 million in future grants and donations.

**Rate Structure and User Fees.** The Parks Department rental rates were last adjusted in 1995. Parks has opened various facilities and improved others but the rental rates have not been adjusted and Parks' rental rates are below the market rate. The City does not charge for various services: Parking, lighting at courts and ball fields, special events (cleanup, salaries, etc.), swimming pools, canoe rentals, event concession vehicle (popcorn & drinks), boat launching, etc. An assessment of the rates should be completed and adjusted accordingly.

**Renovations of Parks and Playgrounds.** The Parks and Recreation Department initiative, as set forth in the January 1999 MSI Annual Report, was designed to provide a plan to identify and address the needs of the City's Parks and Recreation Departments. Through the Bond Issue and Community Investment Tax some of the issues have been funded, but there are still many identified needs that remain unfunded, including restrooms, shelters, and community centers.

**Departmental Charges.** Capital Improvement Projects need to be funded with Time Sheet Allocation and Department of Work charges. After projects have been funded charges appear causing projects to be reduced in scope or another project funding is reduced to cover these charges.

**New Tampa Park.** The Parks Department has requested funding for the establishment of a new division for the New Tampa Park area. The New Tampa Park will open in February 2003 and the division will be responsible for trees and plans, maintaining the park, ballfields and lighting, medians, bikeways, trails, Cross Creek extension and a substation.

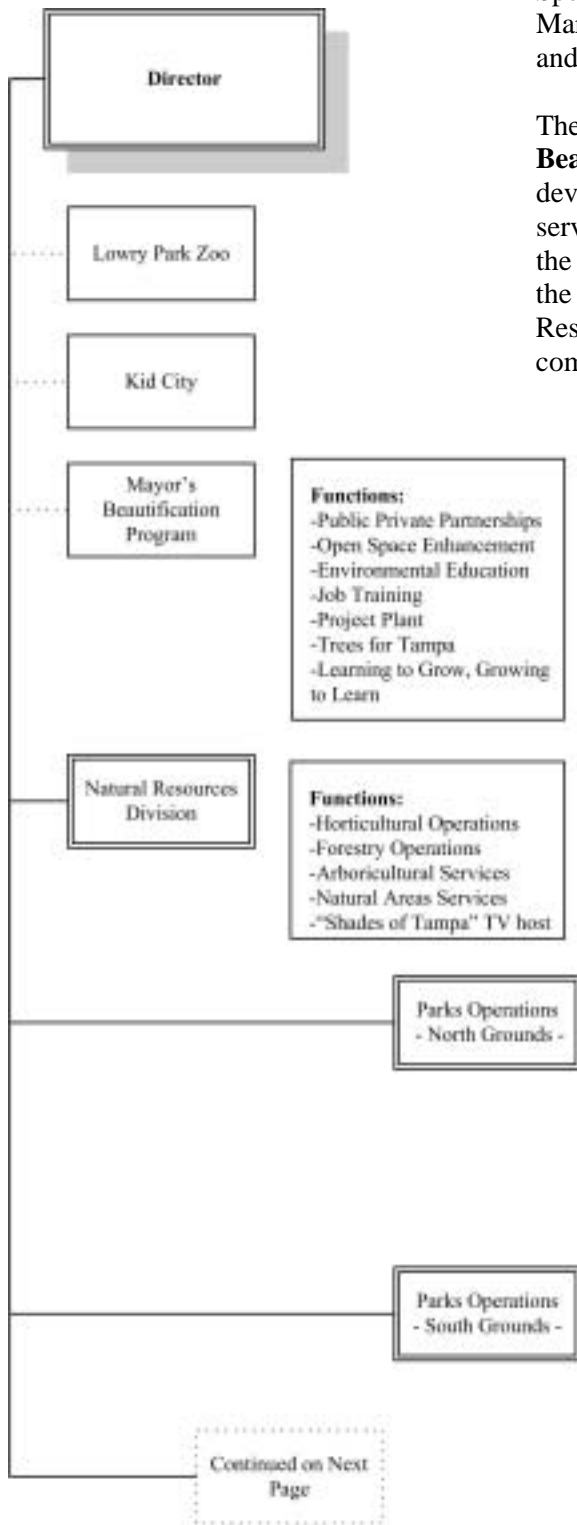
**Cotanchobee Fort Brooke Park Phase III.** The Parks Department acquired 2.47 acres that adjoined Phase I & II. Funding provided for the design, construction drawings and construction.

**Museum Park.** The Museum Park will replace Curtis Hixon Park, which is being demolished to accommodate the new Museum of Art. The consultant for the Museum of Art is designing the park, however, funding for construction drawings and construction has not been identified.

**Waterworks Park.** A consultant has been hired to design and provide construction drawings. Additional funding maybe needed to develop, manage, and maintain this new park.

**Marinas and Boat Ramp Operations.** The Parks Department will manage and operate all City Marinas as they come on line. Marjorie Park Marina will be a full service marina that will include the dock master's office, permanent slips, day (transient) slips, sewer pump out service, a fueling facility, a ships store, laundry and locker facilities. Bayshore marina will consist of permanent slips. Davis Islands Seaplane basin anchorage will consist of approximately 60 slips for boats at anchor and a sewer pump out service. Tampa Convention Center will consist of day (transient) slips for boaters to use during their visit to the City. The City is currently investigating a dry storage marina for future development. Boat ramps and docks within the City limits and managed by the Parks Department will continually be operated and maintained through Florida Boater Registration funds. [\[CR-53\]](#)

## Parks Department Organization Chart



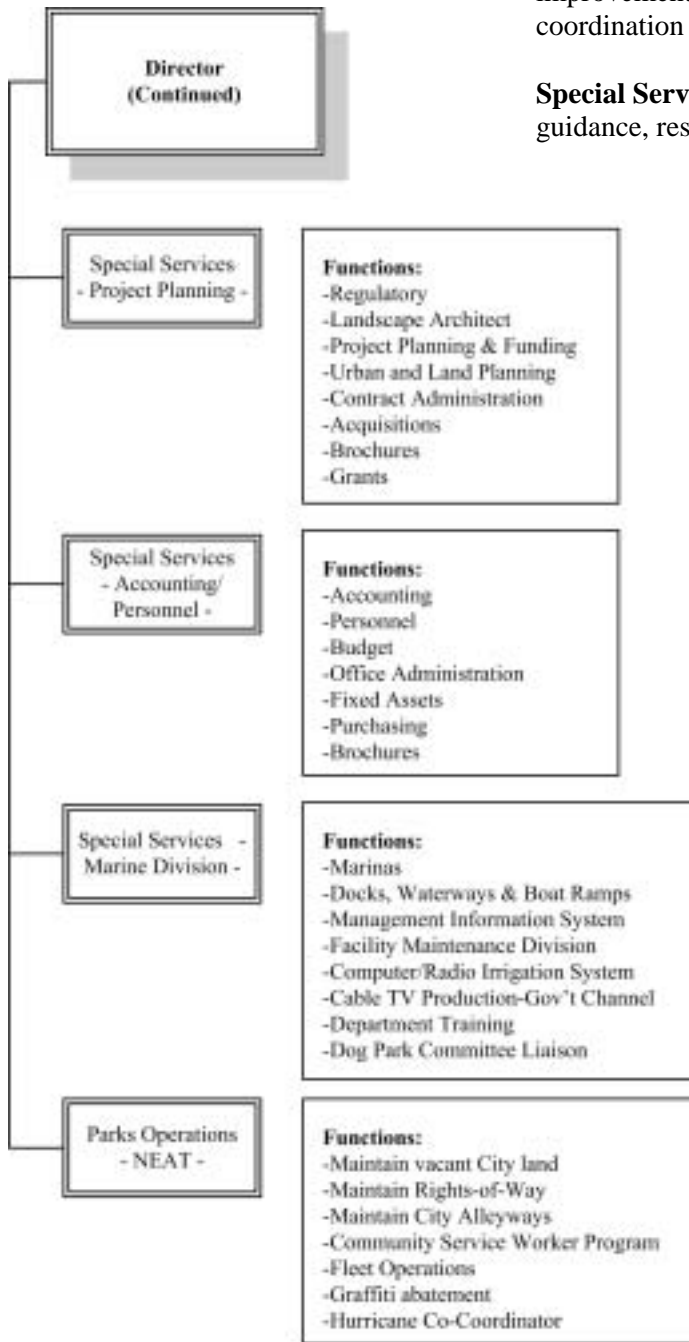
The Parks Department is organized in seven operational divisions: Special Services (Project Planning, Accounting/Personnel, and Marine Division), Parks Operations (North Grounds, South Grounds, and NEAT), and Natural Resources Division.

The Director oversees the City's partnership with the **Mayor's Beautification Program**, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit community development organization with four core programs. The Director serves on the Executive Board, as well as the Executive Boards of the **Lowry Park Zoo** and **Kid City**. The Deputy Director oversees the day to day operations of the six managers and the Natural Resources Division. The Deputy Director also works with the community in the development of community projects.

The **Natural Resources Division** oversees horticulture and forestry operations, arboricultural and natural areas services, and hosts "Shades of Tampa" television program.

**Parks Operations Division** is comprised of two grounds maintenance districts (North and South) providing cemetery, parks, playground and parkway maintenance. Crews mow and provide litter collection for small and major parks, maintain the City cemeteries and their records, beach parks, and athletic fields. They provide custodial, security, and horticulture services for 26 recreation center buildings.

**Parks Department  
Organization Chart (continued)**



**Special Services - Project Planning** is responsible for capital improvement projects; landscape designs; arboriculture, and coordination of park and open space planning.

**Special Services - Accounting/Personnel** provides general guidance, resource management and clerical support for operations.

**Special Services - Marine Division** is responsible for marinas, docks, waterways and boat ramps. This division also controls the computer/radio irrigation system, cable television production for the government channel, department training, and management of information systems and serves as the dog park committee liaison.

**NEAT** provides special clean-up services for City rights-of-way, thoroughfares, alleyways, and out-of-compliance vacant property.