



# BETTER

*MORE BEAUTIFUL*



**2024 ANNUAL REPORT  
CITY OF LAKE WALES**

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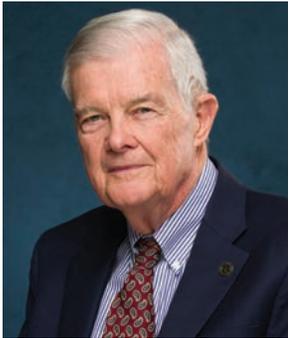
# CITY COMMISSION

*Growing Responsibly*



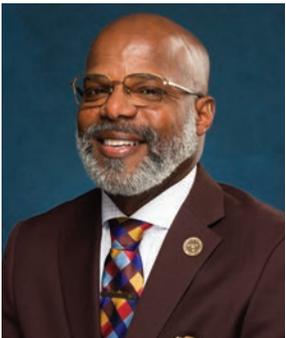
Jack Hilligoss – Mayor/Commissioner At-Large  
[05/03/22 - 05/06/25]

Mayor Hilligoss was elected at-large, Seat 1, in April 2022, after serving as an Interim Commissioner for Seat 4, beginning in August 2021. Mayor Hilligoss represents the City on the Polk Transportation Planning Organization, Airport Authority and the Polk Transit Authority Board of Directors.



Robin Gibson – Deputy Mayor/Commissioner Seat 5  
[05/03/16 - 05/02/26]

Commissioner Gibson was first elected to the City Commission in 2016 and was reelected in 2020 and 2023. He serves as Deputy Mayor, Chair of the Community Redevelopment Agency and serves on the General Employees Retirement Board.



Daniel Williams - Commissioner Seat 2  
[05/04/21 – 05/4/2027]

Commissioner Williams was first elected to the City Commission in 2021 and was reelected in 2024. He serves as liaison to the Lake Wales Housing Authority.



Keith Thompson – Commissioner Seat 3  
[05/3/2023 – 05/06/2026]

Commissioner Thompson was elected to Seat 3 in 2023. He serves as commission liaison to the Polk Regional Water Cooperative.



Carol Gillespie – Commissioner Seat 4  
[05/7/2024 – 05/04/2027]

Commissioner Gillespie was newly elected to the City Commission in 2024 to fill the term for Seat 4. She serves as commission liaison to the Airport Authority, Polk County Joint Airport Board and the Ridge League of Cities.



# CITY MANAGER

Our two award-winning **Long-range Plans**, Lake Wales Connected and Lake Wales Envisioned, are helping us revitalize the historic core and grow responsibly into the city's utility service area. We've begun modernizing our networks of water, wastewater and storm water.

The City made considerable investments in public safety in 2024. Land was procured for a future southern fire station, construction documents were prepared for the expansion of the City's northern fire station, three full-time firefighter positions were added, and a new frontline fire engine was added to our fleet.

Increased efficiency was a focus of the Lake Wales Police Department. Officers directed their attention to new laser technology to help investigate death-related crime scenes and vehicle crashes. Preliminary work has been completed to implement a program to minimize high-speed motorists in school zones and detract red-light runners. Finally, a new facility was purchased to accommodate our growing police force.

For the first time in Lake Wales' history, the City adopted an **Economic Development** strategy with innovative objectives to attract new businesses and high-paying jobs. Our programs to support Community Development are reaching more citizens and business owners in the historic core.

We focused on **Quality Development** by simplifying the process for in-fill development, which helps us revitalize neighborhoods quicker and maximize resources and infrastructure in the historic core. We made great progress in **Community Redevelopment**. Park Avenue and Market Plaza are now open. We completed the design phase for Central Avenue, Crystal Avenue, Orange Avenue and First Street streetscapes. Plans are also in place to complete four new multi-modal trail segments.

Looking forward, as we focus on mobility and implement key projects geared to activate the historic core and make Lake Wales a vibrant and livable environment, we must demonstrate agility in our workflow. Staff in each department must stay flexible, respond quickly and professionally to unanticipated changes and look for innovative ways to stay efficient.

James Slaton

As we continue building on our tremendous accomplishments from 2024, to make Lake Wales "Better & More Beautiful," the City must stay focused on elevating the services and programs we provide to citizens.

We made commendable progress last year by completing various objectives and priorities detailed in our City's strategic plans, master plans and long-range plans. In these efforts, we captured nearly \$30 million in grant funding to accelerate key infrastructure improvement plans for the historic core.

Our top priority to enhance the **Quality of Life** of our citizens was met with great achievements. We emphasized pedestrian safety in the Northwest Neighborhood by constructing new sidewalks and repairing existing sidewalks. The City enhanced pedestrian safety zones in the downtown historic district on Park Avenue, First Street and Scenic Highway. And we launched a micro-transit shuttle service to transport citizens from parking areas to establishments in the downtown historic district.

Lake Wales is more illuminated. Thirty new streetlights were added to preexisting poles in the Northwest Neighborhood and all streetlights have been upgraded with brighter, energy-efficient LED lights.

Nearly 2,500 members are now part of the Lake Wales Family Recreation Center. Our city's horticulture team beautified the gateway entrances to the city on Central Avenue, Highway 60 and Scenic Highway, along with creating botanical-rich green spaces in the historic core. Even our city's soccer fields got a makeover and look better than ever.

Nearly 9 miles of roadways were resurfaced through our City's Pavement Management Program. Two new roadways were added to our city's roadway inventory.



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

*Nearly \$30 million in grants*

## **\$22.9 Million RAISE Grant**

Awarded a \$22.9 million grant to fund the redevelopment of four road segments: First Street, Lincoln Avenue, A Street, and Central Avenue in historic downtown Lake Wales. The funding was awarded by the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program.

The City's project plan is one of 148 nationwide projects to be awarded funding by the RAISE program.

## **\$750,000 HUD Grant - First Street**

Awarded a \$750,000 grant by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to redevelop a segment of First Street between Park Avenue and Orange Avenue.

## **\$940,000 Grant- Ridge Scenic Hwy Trail**

Awarded \$940,000 by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for the design and construction of a 3,975-foot segment of the Ridge Scenic Highway Connector Trail.

## **\$282,380 Grant - Tower Boulevard Trail**

Awarded a \$282,380 grant by the Recreational Trails Program for the design and construction of a 4,300-foot multi-use trail to connect Lake Wales Park Trail to Bok Tower Gardens.

## **\$200,000 Grant - Soccer Complex**

Awarded a \$200,000 grant by the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program to enhance the Lake Wales Soccer Complex with new field-leveling equipment, sod replacement, lighting, picnic tables and trash receptacles.



## **\$100,000 Grant -Lake Wailes Park**

Awarded \$100,000 grant by the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program to enhance Lake Wailes Park with fitness trail equipment, picnic tables, trash cans and small pavilion.

## **\$174,000 Grant - Kiwanis Park Trail**

Awarded a \$174,000 grant by the state's Recreational Trails Program, (RTP) to construct the Kiwanis Park Loop Trail.

## **\$50,000 Grant - Frazier Field**

Awarded a \$50,000 grant by the Florida Recreational Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) to rehabilitate Frazier Field with new basketball courts, new nets for the tennis courts and new picnic tables.

# AWARDS

## LAKE WALES ENVISIONED

**Awarded** the “*Best Practices*” *Award of Excellence* by the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association for its premier award.

**Awarded** the *Outstanding Study/Plan* by the Florida Planning & Zoning Association.

## LAKE WALES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**Awarded** the 2024 *Aliceann Wohlbruck, National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)*. The award is nationally recognized for efforts in advancing regional planning, economic development and resilience.

## FINANCE DEPARTMENT

**Awarded** the *Achievement of Excellence Award* by the the Government Finance Officers Association. The award recognizes innovative programs - contributions to the practice of government finance that exemplify outstanding financial management.

**Awarded** the *Distinguished Budget Presentation Award* by the the Government Finance Officers Association GFOA. The award recognizes governmentfor preparing budget documents of the very highest quality that reflect both the guidelines established by the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting and the GFOA’s best practices on budgeting.

## COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

**Awarded** the *Best Campaign & Series - Now You Know* by the Communicator Awards. The award recognizes excellence, effectiveness, and innovation across all areas of communication.

**Awarded** four Telly Awards for Lake Wales Police K-9 Unit - Locating a Missing Person: *People’s Telly Award, Best Education & Training, Public Relations and Health & Safety*.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

# CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES



The City of Lake Wales has many Boards, Commissions, and Committees comprising many volunteers including citizens, business owners, and non-residents who are property owners in the City.

Volunteering on a City Board, Commission, or Committee provides a wonderful way for citizens to offer guidance and expertise on issues that directly impact their community and to become engaged in our local government. Volunteering also provides an opportunity to do something for others and allows our citizen leaders to give back to their community.

The City encourages residents to take an active role in their community by volunteering to serve in one of the various vacant positions. If interested in serving, contact the City Clerk at 863-678-4182, ext. 1254 or [jnanek@lakewalesfl.gov](mailto:jnanek@lakewalesfl.gov). Applications and a list of vacancies are available in the City Clerk's Office, Customer Service and on the City's website.

## **Airport Authority**

1st Monday, 12 p.m. – Commission Chamber

## **Board of Zoning Adjustment & Appeals**

3rd Thursday, 9 a.m. - Commission Chamber

## **Code Enforcement Board**

2nd Monday, 5 p.m. – Commission Chamber

## **Historic District Regulatory Board**

3rd Thursday, 5:30 p.m. - Commission Chamber

## **Housing Authority Board**

3rd Wednesday, 6 p.m. - LW Housing Authority

## **Library Board**

2nd Wednesday, 4 p.m. - LW Public Library

## **Planning & Zoning Board (P&Z)**

4th Tuesday, 5 p.m. - Commission Chamber

## **Planning & Zoning Review Board**

Meetings when necessary

## **Recreation Commission**

3rd Monday, 12 p.m.  
Commission Chamber

## **General Employees' Retirement Board**

Meets quarterly - City Manager's conference room

## **Firefighters' Retirement Board**

Quarterly - LW Fire Department

## **Police Officers' Retirement Board**

Quarterly - LW Fire Department  
(Meetings held jointly with Firefighters' Retirement Board)

## **Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Board**

4th Monday of the Month, 6 p.m. - location varies

## **Tree Advisory Board**

Meets quarterly in the Commission Chamber

# CITY CLERK



| Former Commissioner Danny Krueger receives his appreciation plaque. |

The City Clerk is appointed by the City Commission to serve as the official secretary to the City of Lake Wales and as such serves as the following:

- Official documents and Public Records Custodian
- Records Management Liaison Officer with the State of Florida
- Secretary to the City Commission
- Chief Elections Official



# ELECTION

In April 2024, Commissioner Daniel Williams was reelected to Seat 2.



| Commissioner Daniel Williams at the swearing in ceremony. |

Commissioner Carol Gillespie was elected to Seat 4.



| Commissioner Carol Gillespie at the swearing in ceremony. |

# PUBLIC WORKS

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### STREETS

**Resurfaced** nearly 9 miles of roadways.

**Added** 2.8 miles of new roadways.

**Analyzed** solutions for roadway assessment technology and uplink technology.

**Removed** nearly 9 tons of invasive weeds and debris from Lake Wailes lake, Lake Cooper and Lake Weaver.



### CEMETERY

**Partnered** with consultant, Hoyle Tanner to begin engineering design plans for expansion at Memorial Gardens.

**Initiated** plans to repave the roadways at the Lake Wales Cemetery.

**Sold** 58 burial lots. **Conducted** 107 burials.

### FLEET

**Implemented** the Fuel Master Cloud System in partnership with the I.T. Department. The system features advanced reporting capabilities and fuel usage monitoring.

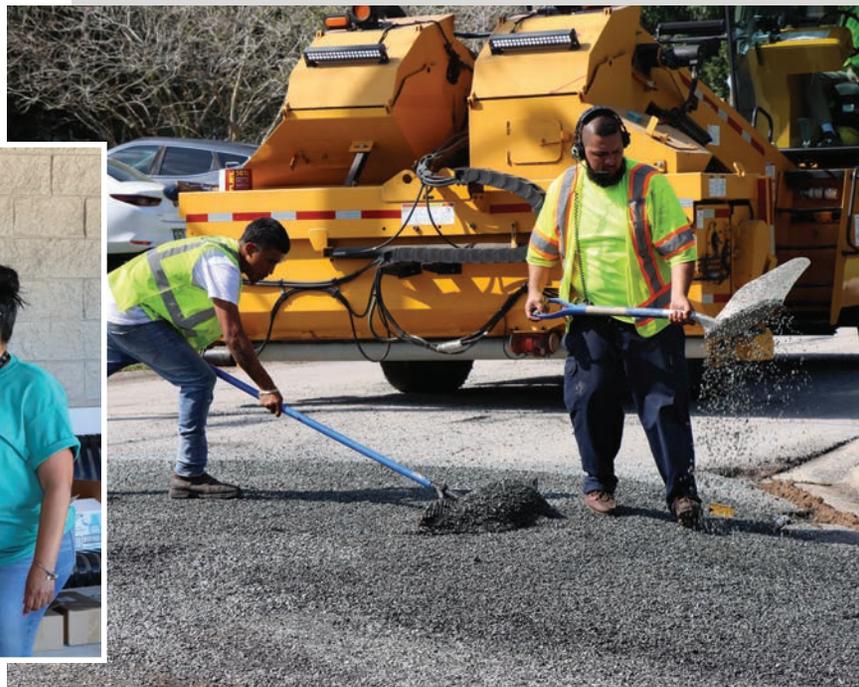
**Procured** eight vehicles for City operations.

### FACILITIES

**Archived** video and still images of City facilities for future insurance claims.

**Commissioned** Parlier & Crews to design the restoration of the Market Street Plant Building on Sesoms Avenue.

**Upgraded** security systems at City Hall, Recreation Center and Kirkland Gym.



## LIFT STATIONS

**Conducted** assessment of lift stations.

**Removed** and replaced old ductile iron force mains at lift Station 1, initially installed in 1986.

**Investigating** old clay sanitary gravity sewer lines for infiltration and intrusion of groundwater.

**Planning** to purchase diesel pumps to provide a power source at smaller non-repump lift stations without generators.

## SEWER LINES

**Planning** to repair deteriorating sewer lines.

## WATERSHED MASTER PLAN RESTORATION

**Planning** to repair deteriorating sewer lines.

**Repairing** storm pipe on Johnson Ave.

**Drafting** plans to address stormwater runoff at Lakeshore Blvd.



## WATER MAIN EXTENSION - COUNTRY OAKS

**Completed** design plans in-house, cost savings of 60K.

**Extending** service mains for increased fire protection.

## WATER MAIN - STATE ROAD 60 AT EVERGREEN

**Identified** a restoration plan for a prior water main break at intersection.

## PRESSURE REDUCING VALVES

**Conducted** a system analysis for the replacement of six valves to alleviate reported low water pressure in the Whispering Ridge subdivision.

## UTILITY EXPANSION

**Designing** plans to expand utility lines to Hunt Bros. Road and area designated for new fire station.

## WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT PHASE 2

**Completed** looping the water main system from Scenic Highway to Northwest Water Main Extension.

**Expanded** water main to increase water volume to area fire hydrants for increased fire protection.

## WATER PLANT #2

**Extending** the concrete slab to allow for the replacement of the chlorine tank, and the addition of a tank for built-in redundancy.

## WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT

**Evaluated** old head works equipment to be replaced with current industry standard equipment.

**Planning** to increase efficiency by upgrading the sludge basin with three new pumps and variable frequency drivers.

# PARK AVENUE & MARKET PLAZA





# OPEN FOR BUSINESS



# COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

A Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is a dependent taxing district established by local government for the purpose of carrying out redevelopment activities that include reducing or eliminating blight, improving the tax base, and encouraging public and private investments in the redevelopment area.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM

Offers citizens the ability to obtain home ownership. City staff works with private and public developers to build affordable housing.

## HOME REHABILITATION PROGRAM (COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDING)

Home rehabilitation program for qualified homeowners in the Northwest Neighborhood.

## HOMEBUYER DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

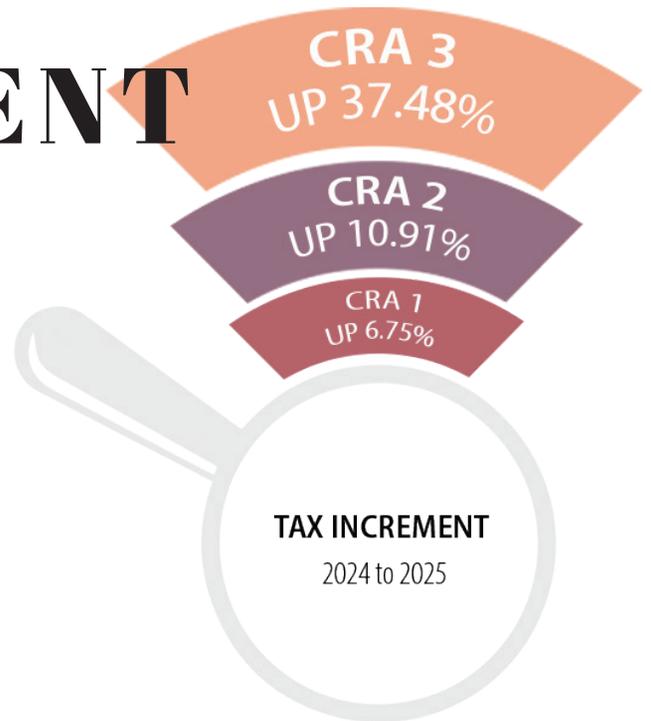
Provides qualified first-time homebuyers down payment assistance through CRA funds and a partnership with SouthState Bank.

## LEGACY HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Provides eligible seniors 60 years-of-age and older complimentary home improvements. The enhancements also help the visual aesthetics of the neighborhood.

## DEVELOPER INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Both City and County impact fees are waived to developers building affordable houses in the core improvement area.



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### HISTORIC RESTORATION FACADE PROGRAM

**Awarded** two businesses with CRA grant funding:

- 1) Yeomans Feed & Farm Supply
- 2) Scenic West, LLC.

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

**Rehabilitated** the building occupied by the Woman's Club of Lake Wales

## RESTAURANT INCENTIVE PROGRAM

**Awarded** two businesses with CRA funding to help open establishments in the historic core:

- 1) Smokin' DJs
- 2) Thirsty Dragon

		2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
City & County Tax Increment	CRA 1	\$155,346	\$176,762	\$185,526	\$217,604	\$250,322	\$267,223
			↑ 13.79%	↑ 4.96%	↑ 17.29%	↑ 13.07%	↑ 6.75%
	CRA 2	\$1,780,797	\$1,848,566	\$2,109,817	\$2,490,083	\$3,172,530	\$3,518,552
			↑ 3.81%	↑ 14.13%	↑ 18.02%	↑ 21.51%	↑ 10.91%
	CRA 3	\$85,731	\$92,409	\$108,191	\$151,240	\$204,493	\$281,128
			↑ 7.79%	↑ 17.08%	↑ 39.79%	↑ 26.04%	↑ 37.48%

# PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

## *NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS*

New sidewalks were added along 13 established roadways without sidewalks to help improve pedestrian safety. Pre-existing sidewalks were repaired.

It's action step number 11 in the City's Lake Wales Connected Plan. Future landscape plans include new street trees and native plants.

Roadways: Alabama Street, Booker Avenue, Dr. J.A. Wiltshire Avenue, E Street, F Street, Florida Avenue, G Street, Harding Avenue, Jewel Street, W. Jackson Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, Pearl Street and Washington Avenue.



## *“THE SQUEEZE” SHUTTLE SERVICE*

A microtransit golf cart shuttle service is now available to citizens in the downtown historic district. It's a safe and convenient method to get citizens and visitors from adjacent parking areas to restaurants, bars and businesses.

The service is powered by the Citrus Connection and free to citizens. It runs from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays. The route features seven pick up and drop off locations.

## *LAKE WALES CIRCULATOR*

The Lake Wales Circulator now stops at the Lake Wales Public Library. It's a new stop on the route of six pickup and drop off locations: Eagle Ridge Mall, Health Department, Publix, Walmart, J.P. Austin Community Center and the Lake Wales Public Library.



# AIRPORT

*24,221 aircraft landings or take-offs*

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### AIRPORT MASTER PLAN

**Received** FAA approval.

### T-HANGAR TAXILANE RECONSTRUCTION

**Coordinated** plans to repave Taxiway B Connector and T-hangars on north side of airfield.

### RUNWAY 6-24

**Began** design phase to replace all lights, signs and markings.

### AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE FACILITY

**Signed** 22,000 square-foot ground lease to offer aircraft maintenance facilitated by third party.

### FIXED BASED OPERATIONS

**Installed** new security cameras.

*Captured*  
**\$1.3 MILLION**  
*in grants*



# ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

## Economic Development Strategy

Published five strategies to guide future public investment and policy decisions.

### INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES

Streamlined approval process for Industrial development.

### RETAIL STRATEGIES

Recruited Starbucks, Panera Bread and Chipotle.

Program 1: Historic core

Program 2: Beyond historic core

### BUSINESS IMPACT FEE MITIGATION

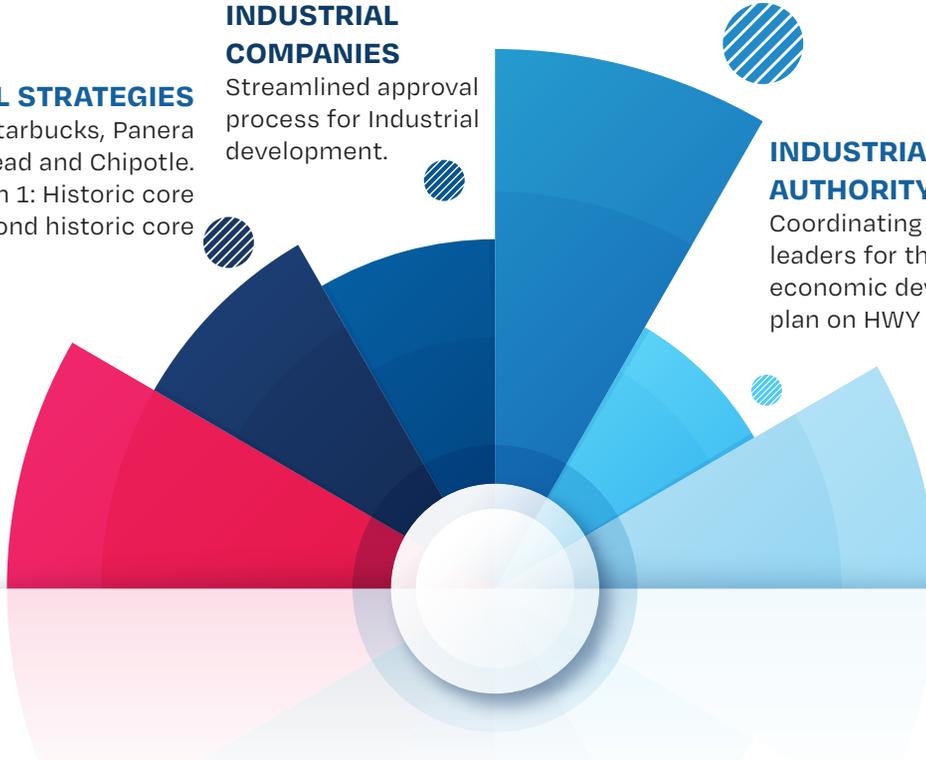
Increased incentives.

### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Coordinating with neighboring city leaders for the multi-jurisdictional economic development strategic plan on HWY 60.

### ADVANCED DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

250 new jobs headed to Lake Wales.



| Conceptual rendering of ADS building. |





# PARKS, RECREATION & HORTICULTURE



# PARKS INVENTORY

The Lake Wales Park System features several municipal parks and more than five miles of trails.

- 10 Parks
- 8 Playgrounds
- 1 Dog park
- 9 Picnic pavilions
- 1 Skate park
- 1 Boat ramp
- 1 Pier
- 7 Multiuse fields
- 16 Baseball/softball fields
- 7 Tennis courts/pickleball courts
- 2 Beach volleyball courts
- 5 Outdoor basketball courts
- 1 Indoor basketball court
- 23 Shuffleboard courts

*Four new trail segments in development*



*Community-based vision*

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Implemented** landscape design plans for pollinator and sculpture garden.

**Replaced** irrigation at the Park Avenue Connector Trail.

**Completed** Ground preparation and installation of landscape vegetation on Central Avenue.

**Began** design phase: Crystal Lake Park

**Began** design phase: Kiwanis Loop Trail

**Partnered** with Duke Energy to pilot a smart nodes lighting program at Lake Wailes Park.

**Replaced** swing sets at Lincoln Avenue Stoudemire Park.

**Initiated** an Adopt A Park Program with Janie Howard Wilson Elementary School.

## MASTER PLAN

**Updated** Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

**Integrated** community feedback from charrette into conceptual design plans.

**Explored** funding sources to help implement the master plan.



*\$300,000 in grant funding*

# RECREATION

# RECREATION



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Recorded** nearly 2,500 members at the Lake Wales Family Recreation Center

**Offered** 45 group exercise classes per week.

**Facilitated** free swim lessons to youth and adults.

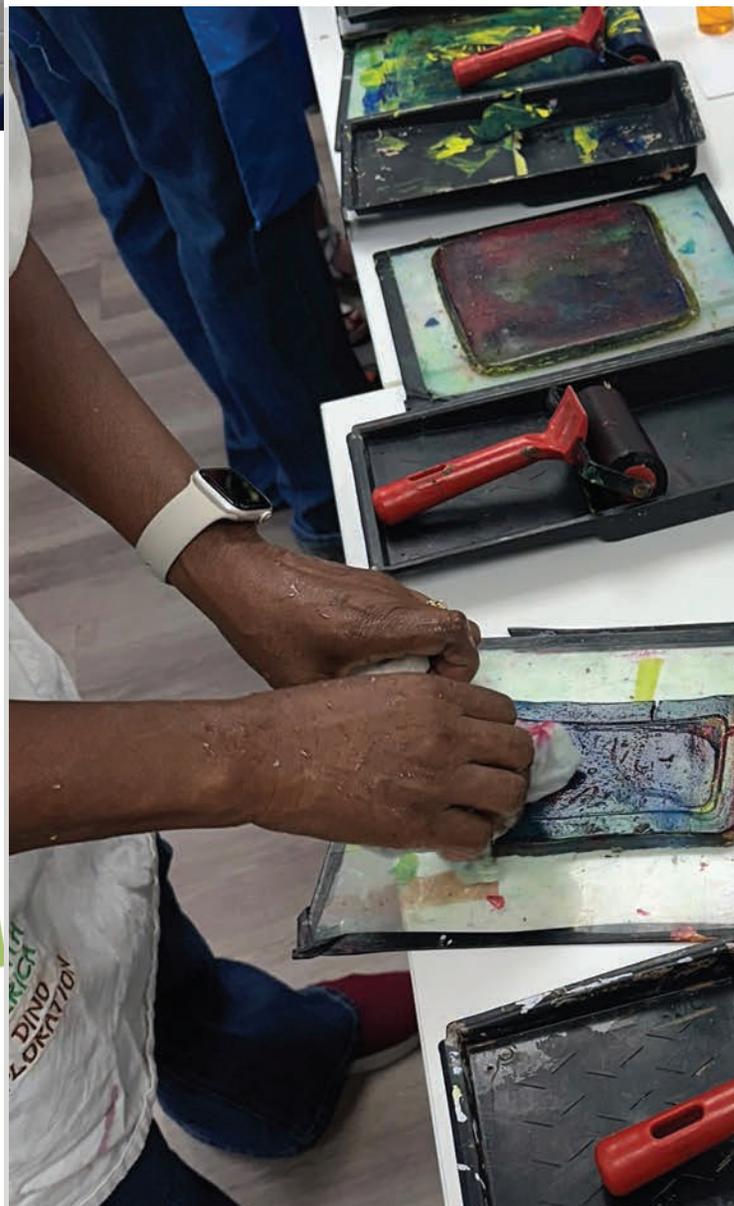
**Featured** a scuba diving class.

**Initiated** the restoration of the hardwood floor at Albert Kirkland Gymnasium.

**Hosted** citizens at **four** various holiday events and **four** event series throughout the year.

**Launched** four new family-fun programs and camps.

**Provided** workspace to accommodate Lake Wales Heritage organization.



# HORTICULTURE



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Received** Tree City USA designation.

**Enhanced** Crystal Lake Overlay District by trimming and removing decayed trees and invasive plants around the lake.

**Redesigned** the green space in Market Plaza; **installed** a unique collection of landscape vegetation.

**Designed** landscape plans, **added** irrigation, **planted** vegetation and **painted** light poles and the bench-seating patios at park across from the library.

**Restored** the irrigation on Stuart Avenue.

**Designed** a light streetscape plan to plant crepe myrtle and native trees and landscape vegetation along new and rehabilitated sidewalks in the Northwest Neighborhood.

**Preserved** trees and tree canopies on neighborhood streets.

**Implemented** landscape design plans on West Central Avenue; **relocated** and installed native trees and vegetation (Gateway features).

**Prepared** landscape design plans with FDOT for the intersection of HWY 60 and HWY 27 (Gateway features).

**Developed** plan to purchase a water truck to keep vegetation hydrated.



# SPORTS FIELDS & TURF



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Implemented** regular maintenance practices, such as seeding, watering, and mowing, as well as more intensive restoration techniques.

**Constructed and Implemented** an Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM) through Best Management Practices (BMP).

**Applied** nutrient rich applications to revive the current field's soil and turf.

**Reconfigured** the irrigation for better coverage and more resourceful water usage; installed different nozzles to increase pressure.

**Collaborated** with UF/IFAS staff and other industry members for planning out an IPM program.

**Repaired** front gate and added another to the north east for better maintenance access.

**Uplifted** pine trees to generate proper growth.

**Purchased** a new finishing mower to get the proper cut and height for sports turf's needs, as well as, a new Precision Turf Sprayer for the best management practices.

# COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

up 24%

12,040 followers  
**FACEBOOK**  
(9,733 FOLLOWERS IN 2023)

2,112 followers  
**INSTAGRAM**

(1,716 FOLLOWERS IN 2023)

up 51%

692 connections  
**LINKEDIN**  
(457 FOLLOWERS IN 2023)



3714 followers  
**NEXTDOOR**

(3,297 FOLLOWERS IN 2023)

up 126%

6,795 views  
**YOUTUBE**  
(3,000 views in 2023)



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Received** Award of Distinction for best social media video by the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts, Communicator Awards - *Now You Know* video series.

**Awarded** four Telly Awards, including a bronze People's Telly Award - *How to Locate a Missing Person*, Lake Wales Police Department K-9 Unit.

**Launched** two digital campaigns to promote merchants in the historic core during construction, *Hot Spot to Shop* and *Shop Downtown*.

**Created** a digital and print economic development campaign to promote the City's incentive programs and long-range plans, *Grow With Us*.

**Designed** the branding for *A City in a Garden*.

**Produced** a video series to educate citizens on how to approach displaced wildlife, *Critter Tales*.

**Developed** a video strategy on Instagram to attract the younger demographic to engage in the City's digital platforms, *Lake Wales High School Sports*

**Compiled** content and **Developed** the City's 2023 Annual Report, 2024 Strategic Plan Results presentation and the Lake Wales Connected Plan Staff Update presentation.

**Coordinated** the City's parade floats in both the Lake Wales Christmas and Mardi Gras parades.



| Educational video series, *Critter Tales*. |



| Downtown merchants promotional video series, *Hot Spot to Shop*. |

# GROW WITH US CAMPAIGN

PROGRAM A	NUMBER OF JOBS CREATED	REQUIRED % OF POLK COUNTY'S AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE	CAPITAL INVESTMENT	MITIGATION AMOUNT*
QUALIFIED TARGET INDUSTRY HIGH-WAGE JOB CREATION	10 - 50	115%	\$3 MILLION	50%
	\$1 - 100	115%	\$3 MILLION	70%
	101+	115%	\$3 MILLION	90%
	MINIMUM OF 10	125%	\$3 MILLION	90%

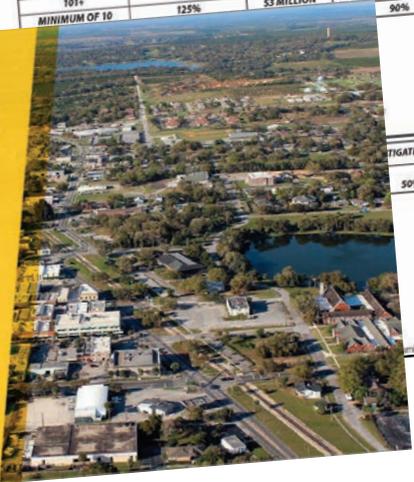
**TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT (TND)**  
 A traditional neighborhood development (TND) is either a new or infill development that creates, or contributes to an existing, complete, walkable neighborhood consisting of a mix of uses including residential, commercial, and civic uses and a range of building types, such as single detached homes, cottage courts, townhomes, duplexes, row houses, live/work units, corner stores, main street buildings and the like, each fronting streets and public open spaces, all connected by a fine network of low-speed, tree-lined streets, alleys and shared-use paths.

THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAMS IS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS WHILE PROTECTING THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE LAKE WALKS RIDGE.

**GROW WITH US**  
 BUSINESS IMPACT FEE MITIGATION  
 WE SUPPORT THE USE OF INNOVATIVE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AND INCENTIVES TO ATTRACT SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES TO COMPLEMENT THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

PROGRAM A  
 QUALIFIED TARGET INDUSTRY  
 HIGH-WAGE JOB CREATION

PROGRAM B  
 BUILDING INVENTORY DEVELOPMENT



**GROW WITH US**  
 TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES & IMPACT FEE MITIGATION  
 WE ENCOURAGE INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT OF URBAN AREAS THROUGH FLEXIBLE LAND USE REGULATIONS AND EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESSES.

PROGRAM A  
 DEVELOPMENT WITHIN PRESERVATION AND INFILL AREA/PLANNED GROWTH AREA

PROGRAM B  
 DEVELOPMENT WITHIN LIMITED GROWTH AREA

AREA MAPS



# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Initiated and upgraded** server farm/equipment and network infrastructure.

**Researched and Developed** conceptual plans for a virtual infrastructure.

**Identified** network security measures.

**Setup** redundancy to help increase the transfer of data.

**Implemented** the Fuel Master Cloud System in partnership with Public Works.

**Closed** 2,478 help desk support tickets.

**Replaced** 25 desktop and 20 laptop computers for our end users.



# GROWTH MANAGEMENT

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Zoning Land Use & Development Regulations

**Streamlined** the site development approval process for qualifying projects.

**Amended** Land Use Zoning Regulations to feature better descriptions of development and activity intended for industrial districts.

**Amended** Land Use Zoning Regulations to strengthen the definitions of heavy and light manufacturing, to help simplify the Permitted Use.

**Enhanced** the Business Impact Fee Mitigation program to attract businesses of varying sizes.

**Adopted** new development regulations for Planned Development Projects, PDP, increasing the minimum standards for neighborhood design.

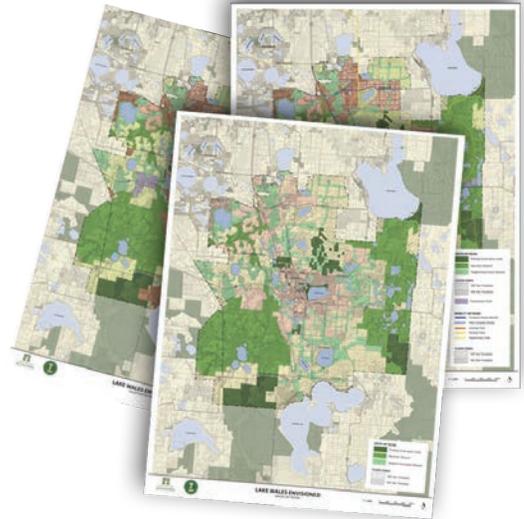
### Quality Development

**Adopted** Ordinance 2024-11 Impact fee Mitigation to incentivize Traditional Neighborhood Development.

**Recommended** revision to simplify the development process for non-conforming multi uses within CRA areas and Core Improvement Area.

**Advanced** new code language to permit the development of duplexes within single-family residential neighborhoods.

**Recommended** the annexation of a new site proposing a vertical mix of residential and non-residential uses.



# CODE ENFORCEMENT

The Code Compliance Division continued to see a high rate of compliance by property owners. Much of this success can be attributed to the division's proactive, resourceful, and courteous approach to enforcement.

Staff recorded 20 Service Liens on the County tax roll totaling \$95,834.30, and the Code Enforcement Board saw 100 cases.

The following properties were demolished/achieved compliance by property owners in accordance with demolition orders issued by the Board.

106 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd (demolished)

112 B Street (demolished)

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Opened Cases	625
Closed Cases	688
Inspections Completed	3,077
Abated/Invoiced Cases	45
Service Liens Recorded with the Clerk of Courts	30
Administrative Liens Recorded	75



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In March, the code compliance division held its 2nd annual community cleanup events, Dump Your Junk and Great American Cleanup.

Twenty-eight resident volunteers participated in picking up debris in select parts of the city. Dumpsters were onsite for citizens to discard junk and other large household items.



# LIBRARY



## Five new programs & services

### NEW PROGRAMS & SERVICES

**Introduced** the *Teen Job Prep Workshop*.  
Three-part series designed for teens and young adults who are on the cusp of entering the workforce.

**Activated** the *Zero to Hero Workout* series.  
Introduced an exciting new way to stay active through virtual based applications that stimulate aerobic stepping.

**Published** the *Lake Wales Potluck Cookbook*.  
Citizens combined recipes throughout the county into one recipe book.

**Launched** *NewsBank*.  
A new online service that provides access to hundreds of newspaper articles around the country.

130,500
Library Visitors
220,500
Materials Circulated
2,500
New Borrowers
737
Total Programs
10,725
Program Attendance
60,384
Computer Users
10,612
Reference Transactions
6,270
BMail Items Circulated
10,000
Bookmobile Items Circulated
5,383
Newsletter Subscribers
550
Professional Development Hours
990
Vending Machine Checkouts

# LIBRARY

# LIBRARY



## YOUTH SERVICES SUMMER PROGRAM

Library staff is thrilled to see classrooms full of students utilizing the library to read and learn. This summer, the Lake Wales Public Library was one of the first public libraries to host two pop-up exhibits from the Mel Fisher Maritime Museum in Key West, Florida, offering a unique opportunity to learn more about Florida's history. Additionally, the Youth Services Department brought back our beloved program for children aged 4-8, Curious Kids.

Bok Academy North, Candlelight Christian Academy, and Park Avenue Private School visited the library on a weekly or biweekly basis. Bok Academy students benefit from the Polk County Library Cooperative's PLUS account, which allows every student in Lake Wales Charter Schools and Polk County Schools to check out items using their school ID number, without needing a physical library card.



## RECURRING ADULT PROGRAMS

- Coloring for Grownups
- Needlework Arts & Chatty Crafters
- Mahjong for Beginners
- Genealogy 101
- Jigsaw Puzzle Club
- Papercraft Club
- Two Writing Clubs a month
- Two Book Clubs a month
- Chair Yoga
- Movie Nights



# POLICE DEPARTMENT



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Responded** to 22,389 calls for service.

**Acquired** a building to use as an annex for Support Services: Criminal, Investigations, Crime Suppression, Traffic & Supply.

**Adopted** an ordinance to enact a camera enforcement program to detect traffic violations in school zones and interactions with traffic lights.

**Procured** a new laser scanner to help investigate major crime scenes and traffic crashes resulting in serious bodily injury or death.

**Created** a trial assessment plan to determine the effectiveness of fixed patrol shifts.

**Promoted** four lieutenant positions to enhance leadership/supervision in patrol and investigations.

**Acquired** a new canine and added a new K-9 officer position.

RESPONDED TO  
**22,389 CALLS**  
FOR SERVICE

# FIRE DEPARTMENT



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Responded** to 4,034 calls for service.

**Conducted** fire safety inspections and plan reviews.

**Partnered** with consultants to draft architecture and engineering plans for the expansion of the North Fire Station.

**Procured** property for new South Fire Station.

**Added** three new firefighter positions.

More than half, 51% of the Lake Wales Firefighters are **certified** as paramedics. Projected to reach 66% in 2025.

**Promoted** fire prevention month at all schools and most daycares in Lake Wales. **Educated** the students about fire safety and **demonstrated** the emergency equipment.

**Hosted** the annual *Fishing with Firefighters* event.

**Received** three new vehicles: 2024 Pierce Saber Fire Engine, 2024 Ford F-150 and a 2024 Kawasaki Mule Pro DXT.



RESPONDED TO

**4,034 CALLS**

FOR SERVICE

# HUMAN RESOURCES



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Coordinated** personnel activities for 265 staff; **processed** 41 new hires.

**Negotiated** a multi-year Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Police Benevolent Association and International Association of Firefighters.

**Renewed** the contract with the Florida Municipal Insurance Trust to provide insurance coverage for general liability, automobile, property, public officials' errors & omissions/employment practices liability, airport and workers' compensation coverage.

**Renewed** the employee benefit package with Aetna in October and kept costs low with a flat renewal rate to include health (Health Reimbursement Account), basic life insurance with employee premiums paid by the city. Dental, vision, volunteer life insurance products and short and long-term disability insurance are also available.

**Coordinated** the United Way Campaign resulting in city employees contributing \$728.00.

**Promoted** the Lake Wales Care Center campaign resulting in city employees contributing \$1,040.00.

Processed  
New Hires  
41

Average Age  
of Staff  
39

Female  
37%

Male  
63%

Non-  
Minority  
60%

Minority  
40%

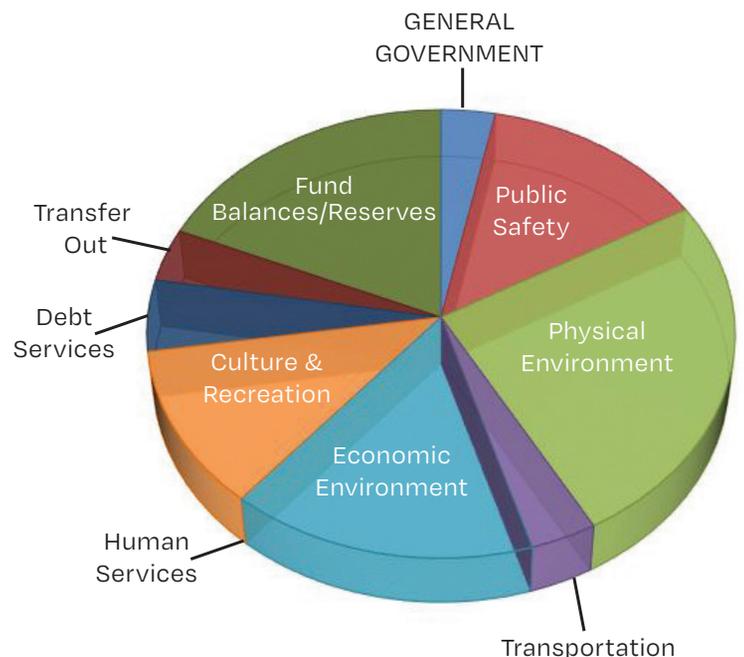
# FINANCE DEPARTMENT



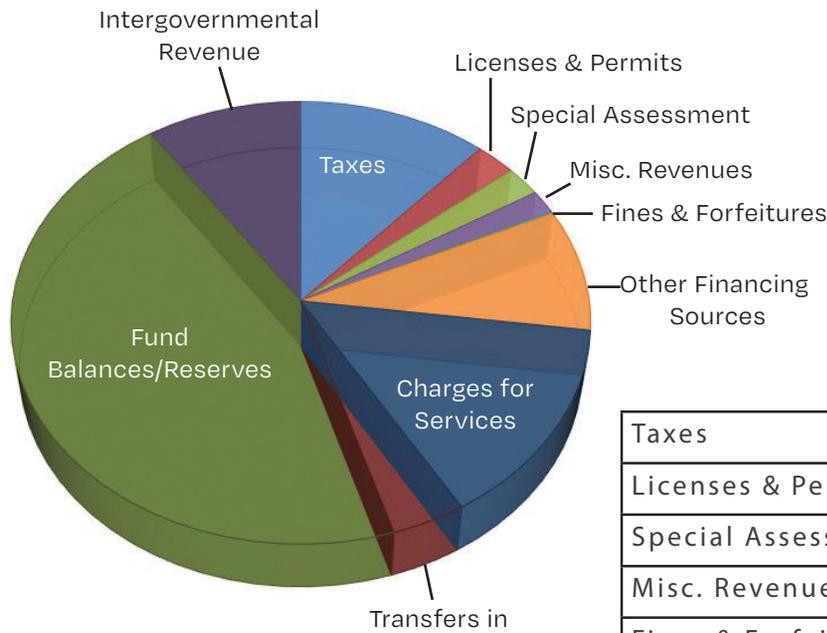
The Finance Department is responsible for processing, recording, and reporting the City's financial activities, ensuring that all purchases and expenditures remain within budgeted appropriations. Additionally, the department maintains financial records in compliance with the standards established by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and prepares financial statements that adhere to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

## Where are City Dollars Appropriated?

General Government	\$4,631,103	4.7%
Public Safety	\$12,772,319	12.8%
Physical Environment	\$32,436,116	32.6%
Transportation	\$3,750,205	3.8%
Economic Environment	\$13,150,549	13.2%
Human Services	\$90,000	0.1%
Culture & Recreation	\$11,549,321	11.6%
Debt Services	\$4,015,969	4.0%
Transfers Out	\$5,197,412	5.2%
Fund Balances/Reserves	\$11,984,530	12%
Total primary government	\$99,577,524	100.00%



# Where do City Dollars Come From?



Taxes	\$11,971,307	12.02%
Licenses & Permits	\$2,325,000	2.33%
Special Assessment	\$2,569,605	2.58%
Misc. Revenues	\$1,616,400	1.62%
Fines & Forfeitures	\$125,200	0.13%
Other Financing Sources	\$22,057,295	22.15%
Charges for Services	\$14,625,294	14.69%
Transfers in	\$5,197,412	5.22%
Fund Balances/Reserves	\$30,899,671	31.03%
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$8,190,300	8.23%
	\$99,577,524	100%

## AWARDS

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the City was honored for the fourteenth consecutive year with the **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting** by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). This prestigious award is the highest recognition in the field of governmental accounting and financial reporting, signifying a continuing achievement by the City and its management.

Additionally, the City of Lake Wales received the **Distinguished Budget Presentation Award** from the GFOA for the third time during the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

In recent years, the Finance Department has streamlined the budget process by automating various tasks, utilizing data directly exported from the accounting system to improve efficiency and accuracy.





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