

BETTER



&

MORE BEAUTIFUL

ANNUAL REPORT - FISCAL YEAR 2022

CITY OF LAKE WALES

FUN FACTS



Received
Nearly
\$5 Million
in Grants

ELECTED MAYOR HILLIGOSS
ELECTED COMMISSIONER KRUEGER

NEW
AIRPORT
FUEL FARM

Initiated
Park Avenue
Connector
Trail



LAKE WALES
CONNECTED

ADDED
NINE
AFFORDABLE
HOUSING UNITS



Paved
10
Streets

UTILITIES INSTALLED
2100 FEET OF 12"
WATERMAIN & 1705
FEET OF 8" WATERMAIN



Adopted
Parks & Recreation
Master Plan



13
POSITIVE TV
NEWS STORIES



Adopted
Mobility & Multimodal
Transportation Impact Fee



MAKING AN IMPACT



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CITY COMMISSION



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 and the Polk Transit Authority Board of Directors.



Daniel Williams - Commissioner Seat 2
[05/04/21 – 05/7/2024]

Commissioner Williams was elected to his first term on the Commission beginning on May 2, 2021. He serves as liaison to Polk Regional Water Cooperative.



Terrye Y. Howell – Commissioner Seat 3
[05/06/14 - 05/02/23]

Commissioner Howell previously served on the Commission from 2005- 2013, during which time she served as Vice-Mayor from 2010 – 2013. She was elected again in 2014 and in 2020. She serves as the liaison to the Lake Wales Housing Authority and is the City's representative to the Ridge League of Cities.



Danny Krueger – Commissioner Seat 4
[05/3/2022 – 05/07/2024]

Commissioner Krueger was newly elected in 2022 to fill the term for Seat 4. He serves as commission liaison to the Airport Authority and the Polk County Joint Airport Board.



Robin Gibson – Deputy Mayor/Commissioner Seat 5
[05/03/16 - 05/02/23]

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

CITY MANAGER

As the City progresses in 2023, I look forward to building on our achievements in 2022.

The City of Lake Wales 2022 Community Survey yielded positive results. City satisfaction rated at or above the Florida average in 34 of 37 areas assessed. Customer service satisfaction rated 22 percent above the national average. The survey was facilitated by ETC Institute, a recognized leader in market research and community surveys.

In 2022, we reduced the property tax millage rate to the lowest rate in many years, while we maintained fiscal health, invested in our reserves and prepared for the future.

Our pavement management program, created in 2019, is fully funded for the first time this year. We have an inventory and current condition rating of most streets in the city that will guide our resurfacing efforts in 2023.

Pedestrian safety is a priority. We've increased the general sidewalk maintenance budget, and we have allocated \$2.5 million for new sidewalk construction in the historic core. Plans include rehabilitating existing sidewalks and constructing new sidewalks along select streets.

We adopted the master plan for Parks and Recreation. Planning for a better parks system, sports facilities and recreation activities is in the works, as we work through the plan this year.

Team members in the Parks and Horticulture Department played a key role in our efforts toward becoming a city in a garden. More than 2,700 Florida-friendly plants were planted in the parks and along trails throughout the City's historic core. Ten new trees were planted and 78 trees were pruned.

Our Community Redevelopment Agency made great strides by reshaping the northwest neighborhood through the City's affordable housing program. Several new and refurbished housing opportunities were made available to low-to-moderate income homebuyers.

Fifty action steps advanced in the award-winning "Lake Wales Connected" plan. Construction was completed on the Park Avenue Connector Trail, and we adopted the downtown design guidelines for buildings in the city's historic downtown district. In 2023, we will break ground on the Northwest Neighborhood Pedestrian and Sidewalk Improvements project. We will also begin construction on the Park Avenue Streetscape project and redesign of Market Plaza.

Economic growth is key to our success as a city. We partnered with a consulting firm that specializes in tailored solutions to recruit restaurants, hotels and retail businesses. In 2023, we plan to implement a retail recruitment strategic plan and offer new programs to incentivize businesses to relocate to Lake Wales.

There are many more accomplishments highlighted in the annual report. I'm proud to lead an organization made up of hard-working, action-oriented public servants. Our mission is to make Lake Wales better and more beautiful year-after-year. In 2023, people will take notice of the City of Lake Wales.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Slaton'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

James Slaton

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

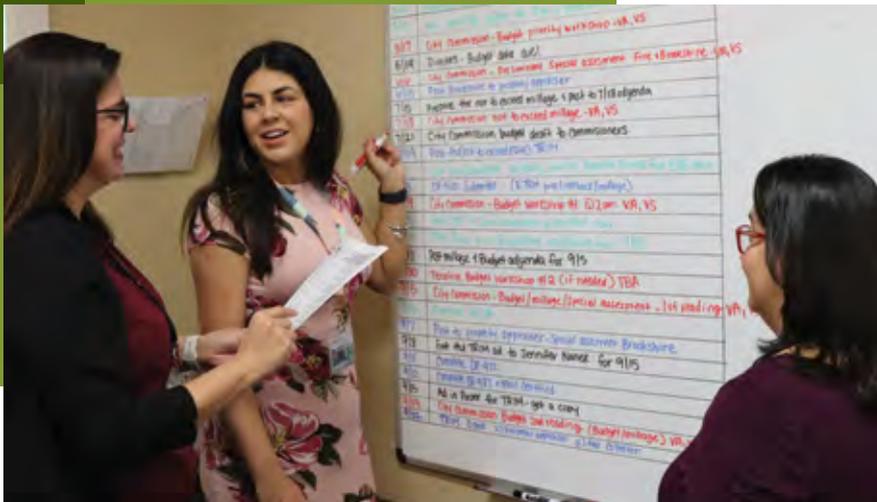
Development Services receives “2022 Plan It Award,” Mobility & Multimodal Transportation Impact Fee

City of Lake Wales Development Services staff recently received the 2022 ‘Plan It Award’ from the Heart of Florida Section of American Planning Association – Florida Chapter.

The award of excellence is for the creation of a mobility plan and the development of a multimodal transportation impact fee. The mobility plan is unique. It focuses on most forms of transportation, not just vehicles.



Finance Department receives the “Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting”



During 2022, the City’s Finance Department received, for the 13th time, the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management, according to the Government Finance Officers Association.

Finance also received for the second time, the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award by the Government Finance Officers Association.

HIGHLIGHTS

Reduced the property tax millage rate to the lowest rate in many years, while maintaining fiscal health, investing in our reserves and preparing for the future.

Funded the pavement management program, created in 2019. We now have an inventory and current condition rating of most streets in the city that will guide our resurfacing efforts.

Increased the general sidewalk maintenance budget and allocated \$2.5 million for new sidewalk construction in the historic core. Plans include rehabilitating existing sidewalks and constructing new sidewalks along select streets.

Adopted the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Initiated Lake Wales Envisioned to guide future development in Lake Wales. Dover Kohl & Partners will consult with City staff and S&ME, a consulting firm, to engage the public in the development of a long-range plan targeted at land use, mobility, sustainability and environmentally focused initiatives.

Enhanced the water system in the northwest neighborhood. Extended a larger water main from the water plant on Sessoms Avenue. The water system will improve the flow of water to fire hydrants and residential and commercial supply lines.

GRANTS AWARDED NEARLY \$5 MILLION

City staff applied for several grants in fiscal year 2022 and were awarded nearly \$5 million to assist the City with infrastructure improvements.

\$1.2 MILLION

NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD

Lake Wales received funding through the Rural Infrastructure Fund and the Community Development Block Grant – CV program, administered by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

Funds will be used to rehabilitate preexisting sidewalks in the Northwest Neighborhood to increase pedestrian safety. New sidewalks will be added along established streets without sidewalks.

\$1 MILLION

AIRPORT

City Commission authorized a public transportation grant agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation.

The grant is for the installation of a new fuel farm designed to efficiently dispense aviation fuel to multiple types of aircraft.

\$946,000

SCENIC HIGHWAY CORRIDOR

The City received a grant from the Polk Transportation Planning Organization for the construction of a segment of the Ridge Scenic Highway Trail System.

\$800,000

ORANGE AVENUE & CRYSTAL AVENUE

Congressman Soto's office secured the grant for the continuation of Olmsted Streetscape projects.

\$750,000

NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD

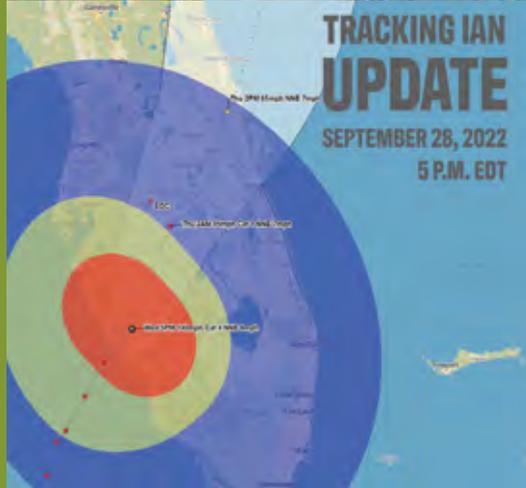
The Community Development Block Grant - Housing Rehabilitation was awarded to the City to help fund the rehabilitation of select houses in the northwest neighborhood.

Currently, five homes are receiving rehab work. One home is being rebuilt. Additional houses will be added to the program.

\$48,000

DOWNTOWN LINEAR PARK

The city is one of 25 small towns across America selected for T-Mobile's Hometown Grants. The funds will help staff to enhance Downtown Linear Park by creating a welcoming public gathering space with trees and Florida friendly plants.



GOING ABOVE & BEYOND

HURRICANE IAN EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

The City's Emergency Operations Center comprises specific departments with staff that work around the clock during emergency situations. Teams monitored Hurricane Ian and took precautionary measures for potential impacts to City residents.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Department building serves as the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for the City. The fire chief and designated EOC staff played a critical role in the city-wide effort to mitigate the effects of Hurricane Ian. Firefighters also coordinated the distribution of sandbags, responded to emergency calls and cleared the streets of debris.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department monitored the weather and traffic conditions to ensure first responders and the community had the latest information. They also handled emergency calls and services with efficiency before, during and after the storm.

STREETS & PARKS DEPARTMENTS

The Streets and Parks Departments were an integral part of the restoration efforts following Hurricane Ian. The teams removed trees from roadways, cleaned water catch basins and disposed of vegetation blocking rights-of-way.

Other duties included: assessment of roadways, redirected traffic away from flooded streets, repaired damaged roadways and reported down utility lines.

Other departments not listed here are an integral part of the City's hurricane restoration efforts.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

I.T. provided and maintained the technology resources needed by staff during EOC activation and monitored critical systems for outages.

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Communications staff monitored the storm with the Lake Wales Fire Department and the Polk County Emergency Operations Center. Staff communicated mitigation and storm updates with residents before, during and after the storm.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM

Four new houses were built and five houses were rehabilitated in the northwest neighborhood through a partnership with the Keystone Challenge Fund, Polk County Housing and Neighborhood Development and SouthState Bank.

One new house was built through a partnership with Florida Development Corporation.

DEVELOPER INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Four new houses have been added to the northwest neighborhood by private developers.

Both City and County impact fees were waived to developers building affordable houses in the core improvement area that lays alongside US Highway 27 and Scenic Highway between Florida Avenue, Emerald Avenue and SR 60.

HOMEBUYER DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Representatives with the CRA coordinated a financial assistance program to assist homebuyers with down payment assistance. Six first-time homebuyers received assistance from the City and SouthState bank totaling \$90,000.

LEGACY HOUSING PROGRAM

Several houses were upgraded in the northwest neighborhood. Five eligible seniors living in the northwest neighborhood received complimentary services, such as new roofs, exterior painting and lawn maintenance.

SHAPING ENTREPRENEURS BUSINESS INCUBATOR

Leaders in the CRA approved funding to help launch a 3,570 square-foot business incubator, BizLINC on Lincoln Avenue in the northwest neighborhood, led by the Florida Development Cooperation.

It's geared to help startup companies and entrepreneurs build successful companies, which in turn creates more job opportunities and drives new innovation and economic development in Lake Wales and beyond.



“Keystone lit the match that ignited the spark, and now the private sector is responding quickly,” said CRA Project Manager Darrell Starling.

RESTAURANT INCENTIVE PROGRAM

City Commission awarded various business owners with funding to help with the costs in opening restaurants in the city's historic core.

Two restaurants, Smokin' DJ's on 1st Street, and Whadda-Wings on Lincoln Avenue, were awarded \$50,000 and \$100,000 respectively through the CRA's restaurant incentive program. Maggie Mae's Ice Cream Shop was awarded \$50,000.

The program offered dollar-for-dollar matching funds for establishing a food-related business within the Northwest Neighborhood and Main Street District.

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. 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; 5:30pm – Commission Chamber

Board of Zoning Adjustment & Appeals

3rd Thursday; 9:00am - Commission Chamber

Code Enforcement Board

2nd Monday; 5pm – Commission Chamber

Historic District Regulatory Board

3rd Thursday, 5:30pm, Commission Chambers

Housing Authority Board

3rd Wednesday, 6pm, LW Housing Authority

Library Board

2nd Wednesday, 4pm, LW Public Library

Planning & Zoning Board (P&Z)

4th Tuesday, 5pm, Commission Chamber

Planning & Zoning Review Board

Meetings when necessary

Recreation Commission

3rd Monday, 12pm

City Manager's Conference Room

General Employees' Retirement Board

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 City Manager's conference room

CITY VOLUNTEER BOARDS

The City Clerk coordinates annual advisory board appointments and maintains records of board activities; manages appointments to City volunteer boards, commissions & committees and non-city boards for City Commission representation, as well as employee safety committee and pension boards.

CITY CLERK

The City Clerk is the official secretary to the City of Lake Wales and the City Commission, 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
- Custodian of the City Seal



City Clerk Jennifer Nanek presents former mayor, Eugene Fultz with a plaque recognizing his 9 years of service.



ELECTION

In April 2022 Commissioner Danny Krueger was elected to Seat 4 District 27. Jack Hilligoss was elected Mayor for Seat 1.

On April 4, 2023 City Commission Seat 3, currently held by Terrye Howell, and City Commission Seat 5 held by Robin Gibson are up for election.

LAKE WALES REDISTRICTING

In 2022, a Census Redistricting Committee was formed to propose new lines for the Seats in accordance with the 2020 Census. This was completed in October.

POLK COUNTY CITY CLERKS ASSOCIATION

Our City Clerk, Jennifer Nanek, is part of the Polk County City Clerks Association (PCCCA) that meets regularly to share what's going on in our respective cities, best practices concerning the Clerk's Office and training opportunities. Ms. Nanek will serve as President of the Association for 2023.



Polk County City Clerks Association meeting

PUBLIC WORKS

The team maintains the City's utilities, streets, cemeteries, facilities, signage, traffic signals, street lighting, sidewalks and rights-of-way.

Secured \$2.1 million in low interest loans for the Northwest Watermain Extension project

Secured \$2.9 million for the Septic to Sewer project

Replaced 2500 feet of damaged sidewalks

Enhanced the interior decor of the City Administration Building



UTILITIES

The Utilities Department comprises six divisions: Water, Wastewater, Reclaimed Water, Stormwater, Administration, and Billing and Collections. The Public Works Director is responsible for a \$25 million utilities budget.

Completed capital projects

- Drying Bed Renovation at the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP)

Completed in-house projects

- Grant Road Watermain Ext
- Mt Lake Cutoff Road Watermain Extension
- Village of Highland Park Connection

STREETS

The Streets Department is responsible for maintaining city rights-of-way, signage, trees, sidewalks, lighting and FDOT highway maintenance.

The Streets Department continues to implement the 6-year pavement management program for the maintenance and resurfacing of the City's 86 miles of streets.

Asphalt Paving Systems was contracted by the City to implement the 6-year maintenance and resurfacing plan.

CEMETERIES

The Cemetery staff maintains three public cemeteries including: Lake Wales Cemetery, Willow Lawn and Lake Wales Memorial Gardens.

Lots Sold

- Lake Wales Memorial Gardens: 122

Burials

- Lake Wales Memorial Gardens: 79
- Lake Wales Cemetery: 81
- Willow Lawn Cemetery: 3

FACILITIES

Staff in the Facilities Department support the core functions of City operations. The team ensures the proper functionality of employee workspaces and supporting assets.

Public gathering spaces are also maintained by the Facilities Department, such as recreation facilities and meeting halls.

In 2022, the team completed 984 work requests.

DRYING BED RENOVATION WWTP

C&T Construction Service started renovation of the drying bed at the Sam P Robinson Wastewater Treatment Plant in December of 2021 and was completed in June of 2022. The drying bed conversion improved the dedicated dumping and drying area for the pumped waste material. The conversion will allow the material to be dried out to a higher level that can be more readily removed and disposed of. In the past, the material contained approximately 85-90% liquid; with the new system, we hope to reduce the liquid down to less than 20% or less.

GRANT ROAD WATERMAIN EXTENSION

The Grant Road Watermain Extension was prompted by proposed development. This project started in January of 2022. The Buckmoore Road area is set to see four to five new subdivisions in the coming years. To provide a higher level of service staff, upsized and replaced 1,100 LFT of existing 6" A/C watermain with 8" C900 PVC pipe. This project is another step in the City's effort to remove A/C pipe from the ground.

MOUNTAIN LAKE CUTOFF ROAD WATERMAIN EXTENSION

As a part of the continued growth in Lake Wales, the water division installed 2,200 linear feet of 12" watermain along Mountain Lake Cutoff Road. This installation expands our water system west on Mountain Lake Cutoff Road and makes the public water system available to the proposed residential communities. The Harper Estates development currently underway will be installing a sewer forcemain which will bring public access sewer to the area.

VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK INTERCONNECT

The Village of Highland Park contacted the City regarding connection to the City's water system to achieve acceptable fire flow protection for their community. This connection will allow Highland Park to draw water from the City's system in the event of a fire. This project is fully funded by the Villages of Highland Park and will consist of one pressure reducing valve, backflow, and 1,100 feet of 8" HDPE watermain. Once the line is in operation it will be the sole responsibility of the Villages of Highland Park. The pressure-reducing valve is to ensure the City's pressure will not overcome the community's water system. The water main was installed in 2022 and is in the process of obtaining water clearance from the Department of Health so the final tie-in can be completed.

2023

CAPITAL PROJECTS

SEPTIC TO SEWER BUCKMOORE ROAD

The project will provide sewer service to all proposed development along Buckmoore Road. It will include a septic to sewer conversion funded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection 319 Grant. The funding will help the City migrate 38 residents off septic and onto City sewer, at no cost to property owners.

NORTHWEST WATERMAIN EXTENSION

The project will bring a new 12" watermain to the northwest area, improving fire flow and level of service. The installation will exist between Sessoms Avenue and the intersection of Washington Street and E Street. State revolving funding from the Department of Environmental Protection in the amount of \$2.1 million dollars was obtained for this project.

ALTERNATIVE WATER SOURCE

Given future expected development and system expansion, the need for additional supply is anticipated. A matrix comparison will be developed and recommendations will be provided for a 20-year planning period. Alternatives for future additional supply may potentially include additional groundwater development, bulk water purchases from the PRWC (Polk Regional Water Cooperative), increased conservation measures and greater reuse of treated wastewater.

WATERMAIN REPLACEMENT PROJECT PHASE 2

The proposed project includes replacing and upsizing approximately 17,600 linear feet (LF) of A/C pipe, upsizing of 5,300 LF of galvanized pipe, extending 500 LF of new pipe, and providing approximately 225 water service connections from the PRWC (Polk Regional Water Cooperative), increased conservation measures and greater reuse of treated wastewater. The Watermain Replacement Project is Phase 2 of the City's continued effort to remove galvanized and A/C pipe from the utility system.

AIRPORT

The Lake Wales Municipal Airport is a general aviation airport with significant recreation users, such as sky diving and paramotoring. The airport averages approximately 10,000 operations each year.

The airport is located on HWY 60 near Central Avenue with easy access to HWY 17, HWY 27 and the city's historic core. The facility offers more than 55,000 square feet of modern hangar and office space with additional accommodations supporting 16 T-Hangars, seven corporate hangars, one aircraft maintenance facility and more than 20 aircraft parking spaces.

“ We’re more than a general aviation airport with growing corporate activity. We attract significant recreation users, such as sky diving and paramotoring,” said Airport Manager Amanda Lomneck.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Repaved and enhanced the east apron where planes refuel. The apron also features short-term and long-term parking spaces for pilots.

Logged an increase of 4,000 landings and takeoffs. The airport averages approximately 10,000 operations each year.

Updated the airport master plan to include additional short-term and long-range projects to better facilitate economic development.

Completed the wildlife hazard assessment which identified the various forms of wildlife on and around the airfield. The study was geared toward identifying migration strategies to prevent aircraft strikes.

Coordinated a ground-lease agreement for on-site aircraft maintenance. Jump Florida funded the construction of a new maintenance facility.

Coordinated a ground-lease agreement with George O’Neill for the new building of corporate hangars that will house small-to-medium size jet aircraft.



2023 CAPITAL PROJECTS

Airport Master Plan Update/Stormwater Master Plan

The update will provide a new aviation forecast and other data to determine eligibility for future projects and a stormwater master plan to accommodate future development of the airport. This project has been submitted to the FAA and is awaiting approval.

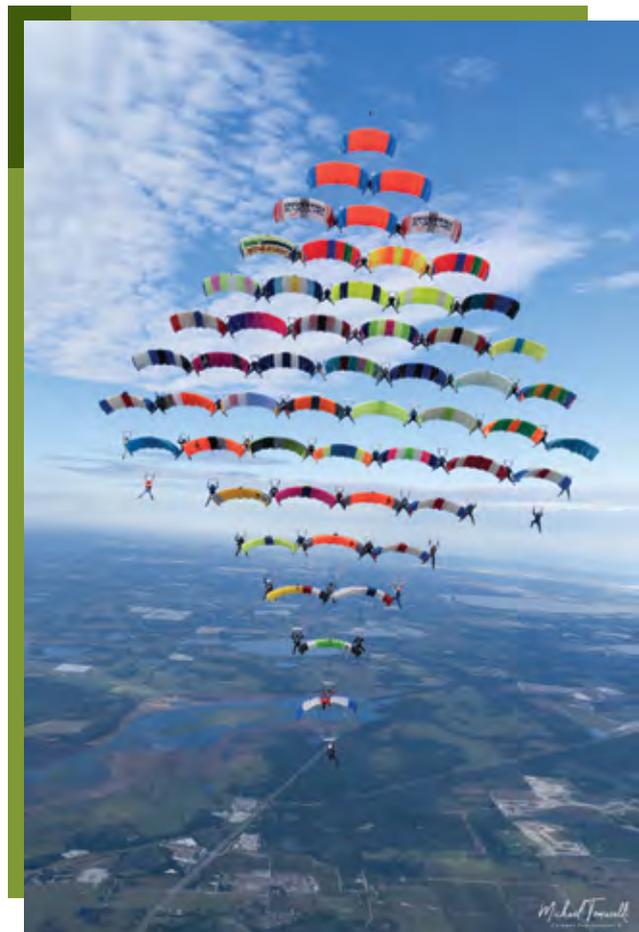
New Fuel Farm

The fuel farm at the airport is outdated and in severe need of replacement or major repair. The airport was awarded a 100% grant from the FDOT and construction is set to begin very soon. This project bid was awarded to L. Cobb Construction and ABACON.

Corporate Hangars

There are four new corporate hangars being built at the Airport that will house either jets or aviation businesses. These hangars are being privately funded and a ground lease has been signed with the Airport and the City. These hangars are almost complete.

The World Skydiving Team Canopy Formation broke the sequential world record with a 55-way sequential jump and a 65-way sequential jump.



PARKS & RECREATION

The Parks & Recreation Department is where the fun exists. City staff offer a good blend of passive and active recreation activities geared to enhance the health and well-being of citizens.

Active recreation involves cooperative or team activity including use of sports fields, playgrounds, skate park and boating.

Passive recreation involves activities, such as walking, hiking, bicycling trails, picnicking and nature observation. Our City's network of trails offers citizens both active and passive recreation activities.

“We offer a good blend of active and passive recreation activities,” said Recreation Manager Stephanie Lutton.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Adopted Parks & Recreation master plan to guide future capital projects and programming

Implemented an online registration and payment application

Facilitated scheduling for more than 15 athletic leagues

Coordinated more than 80 rentals at City facilities

Hosted and participated in more than 15 community events

Introduced self-pay rentable kayaks at Lake Wailes Park

Added new programming





ATHLETIC LEAGUES

The City offers a variety of sports fields and courts for youth and adult sports. City staff maintains the scheduling for each field and partners with area leagues to host competitive leagues, tournaments, recreational and instructional programs.

FACILITY RENTALS

The City offers indoor gathering spaces to citizens for many purposes, such as birthday parties, wedding receptions, committee meetings and other events. More than 80 events were scheduled at City facilities throughout the year.

City staff partner with the Boys and Girls Club of Lake Wales, providing space for afterschool care to children at the J.P. Austin Community Center.

YMCA PARTNERSHIP

- City staff partnered with the YMCA to offer various benefits to city residents.
- 50% discount on YMCA memberships
- Free swim lessons
- Complimentary access to the pool

CITY EVENTS

Connecting with citizens is a primary function of the Parks & Recreation Department. City staff coordinated various events throughout the year.

- Lake Wales Live
- Lake Night Cinema
- Fourth of July
- Christmas Cinema with Santa



PARKS & HORTICULTURE



DOWNTOWN LINEAR PARK

The Lake Wales Park System features several municipal parks and three trails totaling nearly five miles.

- 7 Parks
- 8 Playgrounds
- 1 Dog park
- 6 Picnic pavilions
- 1 Skate park
- 1 Boat ramp
- 1 Pier
- 6 Multiuse fields
- 13 Baseball/softball fields
- 7 Tennis courts
- 1 Beach volleyball court
- 4 Outdoor basketball courts
- 1 Indoor basketball court
- 23 Shuffleboard Courts

DOWNTOWN LINEAR PARK

The city is one of several small towns across America to be selected for T-Mobile's Hometown Grants, a \$25 million, five-year initiative to support the people and organizations who help small towns across America thrive and grow by providing funding to kickstart important new community development projects.

"T-Mobile's investment of nearly \$50,000 will transform our Downtown Linear Park, advancing our efforts to revitalize the historic downtown district," said City Manager James Slaton.

The City plans to use the grant to install a five-foot safety fence along both sides of the existing railroad tracks and add three cathedral live oaks and three Canary Island date palms.

"The new trees are going to make the public space flourish," said Horticulturist Lester Gulledge. "We're also adding 30 new ligustrums and hundreds of Florida native grasses and perennials," Gulledge added.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Installed 1,270 Florida Native plants and 1,721 Florida Friendly plants.

Planted five cathedral live oak trees and five Japanese blueberry trees along Sessoms Avenue.

Completed 19 tree assessments. Nine healthy trees were preserved and 10 unhealthy trees are scheduled for removal. 78 trees were pruned.

Implemented the Tree Advisory Board and currently meet the requirements for Tree City USA designation.

Designed construction ready redesign projects for Scenic Highway Gateway Corridor, Stuart Avenue, Orange Avenue and Crystal Avenue.

PARK AVENUE CONNECTOR TRAIL

The Park Avenue Connector Trail is the City's first step in establishing a network of trails linking residents to parks and area establishments.

Construction of the new 3,000-foot multiuse trail is almost complete. It connects Lake Wailes Park with the historic downtown district at Scenic Highway and East Crystal Avenue.

In 2022, the entire street surface was replaced, new parking spaces were added and new street lighting was installed to make the multiuse trail great for nighttime use.

Next up, the trail will be landscaped to complement the lakeside trailhead that was landscaped in 2022.

Rich in history, the City of Lake Wales was originally intended to be a "City in a Garden." In 1929, leaders of the city retained Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. to create a master plan to help guide the layout of the city. Olmsted submitted the plan in 1931 that drew upon the garden city movement which came from Great Britain in the late 1800's. The plan featured streets lined with trees and a network of trails linking people to parks and area establishments, making Lake Wales the first city in the state to have a comprehensive master plan designed by the Olmsted firm.

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

The Office of Communications and Engagement connects citizens to information on emergency operations, citywide initiatives, public notices and events. The team designs communications campaigns, writes press releases and develops educational outreach materials geared to keep the public informed.

Information is disseminated on a variety of digital platforms, including: the City's website, social media platforms, Nextdoor Neighborhood app and the City's YouTube Channel.

Print publication is used for materials distributed by direct mail and local events.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Published 26 press releases and 10 feature articles

Posted more than 20 social media and website notices, articles and cultural arts stories

Designed and promoted a digital and print campaign for Lake Wales Connected

Coordinated & participated in more than six ribbon cutting events and groundbreaking ceremonies

Tracked an engagement rate of 10.63%. National average is 3.5%

Gained nearly 1,800 followers on social media

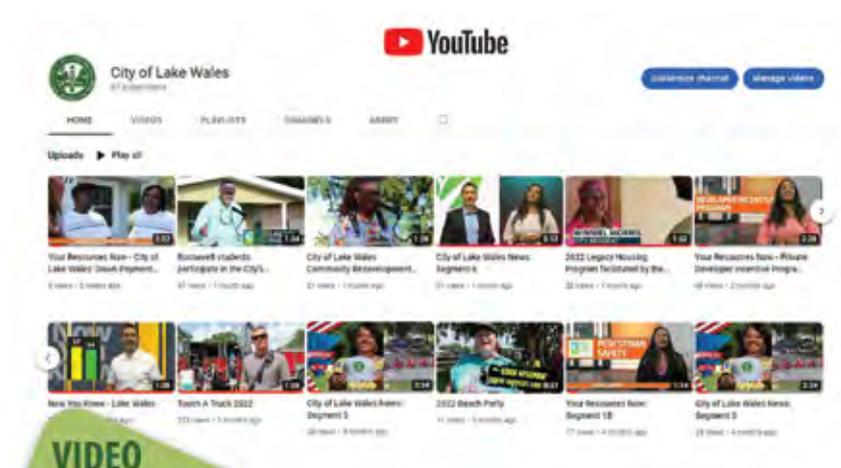
Captured 2,500 new followers by communicating with citizens on the Nextdoor Neighborhood app

Increased captive market by launching a digital opt-in City newsletter

Introduced video news segments on social media that captured more than 37,400 views

Informed citizens of emergency management notifications, mitigation strategies and restoration efforts related to Hurricane Ian.

Participated in Florida Public Relations Association - Dick Pope Polk County Chapter



PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations is the management function that maintains and establishes relationships with its publics, such as citizens and local and national media agencies.

Staff in the Communications and Engagement department work with reporters and subject matter experts to publish concise, easy to understand content.



THE CITY APPEARED IN 13 POSITIVE NEWS STORIES IN 2022.

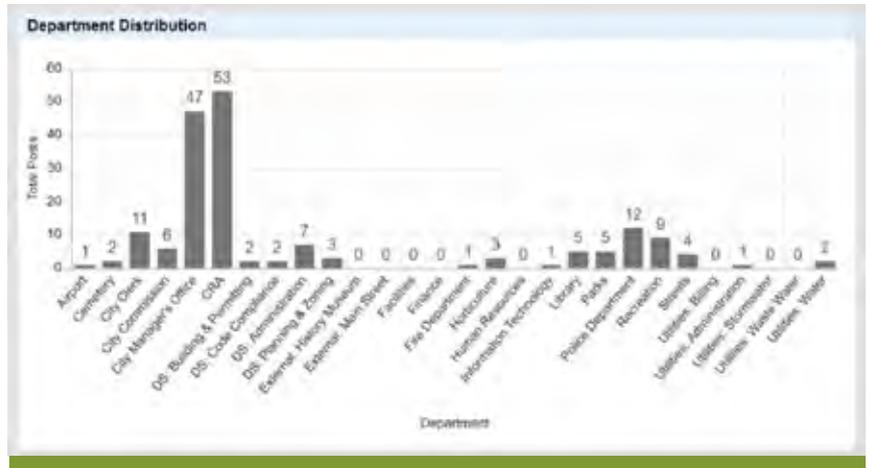


9-year-old boy receives mobility device from Lake Wales Police Officers Association - ABC Action News



Story on land annexations - Spectrum News

ANALYTICS



“Our coverage of Hurricane Ian was accessed more than 15,000 times on social media,” said Director of Communications & Engagement Eric Marshall.



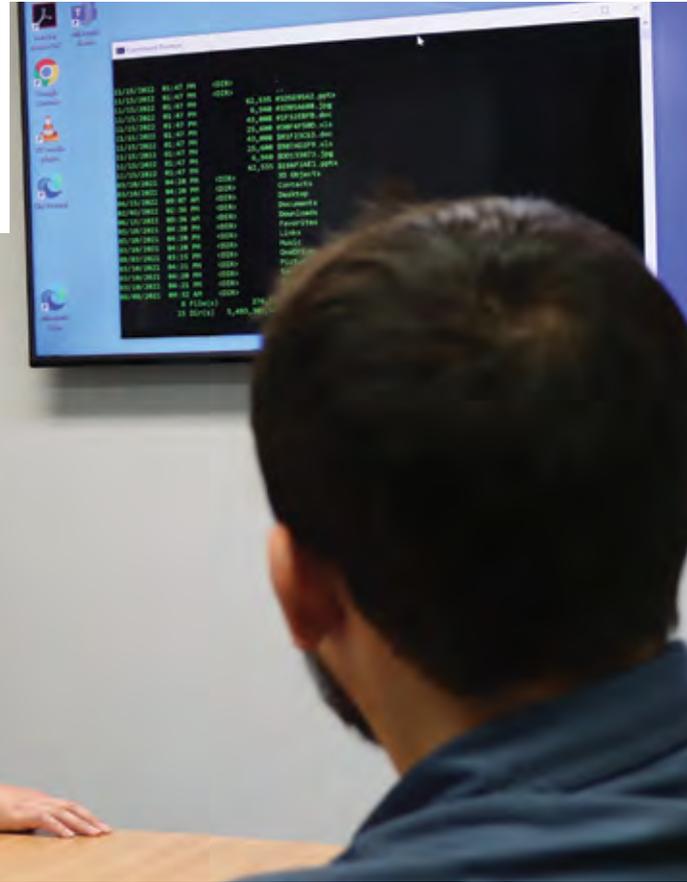
Post engagement rate
The engagement rate for a post counts the percentage of engagements (clicks, likes, shares, and comments) on the post out of the number of people who viewed it.

Post impressions
The number of times your Page's posts appeared on someone's screen. Posts include statuses, photos, links, videos, and more.

ANALYTICS
DECEMBER 2021 - NOVEMBER 1

+ 1,797 SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS
AUGUST 2021 - NOVEMBER 1

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



The City's Information Technology Department closed 2,315 helpdesk tickets in 2022.

The I.T. team provides vital technical support to all departments within the City while maintaining the City's computer, radio and telephone networks.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2022 EQUIPMENT REFRESH

Replaced 32 desktop computers and 15 tablets

Added 20 tablets for various departments to improve their connectivity to resources while in the field.

Replaced a fleet of multifunctional printers throughout various City locations.



FIBER NETWORK LAKE WALES CONNECTED

As part of the Lake Wales Connected project, the I.T. Department created an implementation strategy that will incorporate constructing fiber optic networks underground with the intent to connect the various City locations on a private fiber network. This is an ongoing initiative that will allow the City to benefit from interconnected technology resources and ultimately provide a better level of service to our community.

WEBSITE REFRESH



Conceptual design

The website refresh project was kicked off in 2022. The goal is to implement the most critical enhancements and updates. Plans include a new design and enhanced functionality to provide quick-convenient access to City information.

A new webpage for Lake Wales Connected will provide users access to development plans and conceptual images of the work being performed in the historic core of the city.

New website designs are also in the works for the Library and Police Department.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC) & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The I.T. department plays a vital role in our Emergency Operations Center.

Once activated, I.T. is responsible for setting up the technology resources that are needed while the EOC is active. This includes provisioning laptops, radios, and phones to be available to the EOC staff. During the event, staff monitors our critical systems for outages and respond as needed. In addition, staff provides technical support to staff for the duration of the EOC activation.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Development Services comprises four divisions – Planning, Building, Code Compliance, and the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) – all with a common mission: to foster a safe, attractive and economically healthy community to live in.

In 2022, The Development Services Department welcomed new team members, including Laurie Green, Permit Technician Supervisor; Shelby White, Permit Technician; and Ivo Cardentey, Planning Technician.



PLANNING

Planning staff review plans for all new development, or modifications to existing developments, encouraging quality design and protection of natural resources and historic features. They guide the implementation of the City's Land Development Regulations and Comprehensive Plan, while recognizing the spirit of the Frederick Law Olmsted and John Nolan's "City in a Garden" vision for Lake Wales.

The Planning Division also manages multiple **volunteer boards** appointed by the City Commission, including the Planning and Zoning Board, the Board of Adjustments and Appeals, and the Historic District Regulatory Board.



Signage for Aunt Laurie's Candy Jar approved by the Historic District Regulatory Board

Planning staff, with assistance from VHB, the City's Transportation Planning consultant, presented the Buckmoore Road Corridor study this past year. The Study provided an analysis of needed short-term and long-term improvements, plus a conceptual road design, for this corridor.

Mark J. Bennett, Development Services Director

Autumn Cochella, Assistant Director

Jasmine Khammany, Senior Planner

Ivo Cardentey, Planning Technician

Shena Rowland, Executive Assistant

Corey Stripling, Building Official

Laurie Green, Permit Tech Supervisor

Alisha McClain, Building Permit Tech

Shelby White, Building Permit Tech

Mike Pennix, Building Inspector

Darrell Starling, CRA Project Manager

Cheryl Baksh, CRA Specialist

Jose Lozada, Code Compliance Supervisor

Fany Lozano, Code Compliance Specialist

“PLAN IT” AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

In August, the City was awarded the “Plan It” Award of Excellence from the American Planning Association Heart of Florida Chapter for our **Mobility & Multimodal Transportation Impact Fee Plan**. The impact fee, which came into effect in November, is a one-time fee assessed on new development, and it funds expansions and improvements to facilities for multiple modes of transportation, including walking, biking, transit, micro-mobility, shared mobility and motor vehicles.



Lara Herrscher, APA-HOF Chair with Jasmine Khammany, James Slaton and Autumn Cochella

DOWNTOWN DESIGN STANDARDS

In an effort to continue the implementation of the Lake Wales Connected Plan, Planning Staff advanced significant amendments to the Land Development Code in September with the adoption of new **Downtown Design Standards**. A new code section created architectural and building form standards for Downtown, including a new Downtown Mixed-Use Zoning District, a Downtown Historic Overlay, and a Crystal Lake Overlay district.

The next step in implementing the new standards is to amend the Zoning Map to reflect the new zoning district; this will be accomplished in 2023.



D-MU Map

DOWNTOWN DESIGN STANDARDS

At the November 15 City Commission meeting, the Commission authorized staff to begin the Northwest **Neighborhood Rezoning Study**. This study will further implement Lake Wales Connected Plan by examining this area, and producing recommendations to achieve the Plan’s vision.

LAKE WALES ENVISIONED

In December, the City secured a task order with Dover, Kohl, & Partners, author of the award-winning Lake Wales Connected Plan, to assist the City with the **Lake Wales Envisioned** planning effort. The Lake Wales Envisioned Plan will shape and direct the form of future development, accounting for areas within city limits as well as our utility service area.

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

New **single-family residential development** increased slightly in 2022, with 79 single-family residential permits issued, up from the 24 issued in 2021. As our inventory of platted lots continues to diminish, interest in vacant land for new residential development has increased significantly within the city, with multiple Planned Development Projects progressing through different phases in the development process.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Commercial development in 2022 included many redevelopment projects, and an increased interest in new-construction projects. Two existing neighboring buildings, including an abandoned auto repair shop, have been redeveloped into two restaurants, Locorrito and Brake Burger Garage on State Road 60.



Locorrito Restaurant



Sign – Brake Burger Garage

New commercial projects included the new Dyer Chevrolet site and a Sherwin Williams store on US Highway 27.



Dyer Chevrolet



Sherwin Williams

BUILDING DIVISION

The **Building Division** is responsible for building plan review, the issuance of building permits, conducting inspections, and coordinating the issuance of Business Tax Receipts. Activity increased slightly in 2022, with 1,312 building permits issued and 2,855 inspections completed, up from 2021. Also, 80 Business Tax Receipts were issued.

CODE COMPLIANCE

The **Code Compliance Division** continues 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 32 Service Liens on the County tax roll totaling \$12,687.68, and the **Code Enforcement Board** saw 63 cases. The Board also issued demolition orders for two structures which significantly contributed to blight in the area, 137 East Sessoms Avenue and 930 East Street. The Code Compliance staff produced significant revisions to the Code of Ordinances to update and modify sections of the Code related to community appearance.

2022

Opened Cases	553
Closed Cases	491
Inspections Completed	1,948
Abated/Invoiced Cases	59
Service Liens Recorded	37
Administrative Liens Recorded	30



137 East Sessoms - Before



137 East Sessoms - After



930 East Street - Before



930 East Street -After

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BUSINESS INCUBATOR

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was hard at work in 2022, advancing multiple endeavors identified in the Lake Wales Connected Plan. See page 9.

One big accomplishment included the Lake Wales Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) approving funding for a three-year grant agreement worth nearly \$1 million for the creation of a small business incubator, BizLINC, facilitated by the Florida Development Corporation (FDC).

[About](#)
[Office Space](#)
[FAQ](#)
[Resources](#)
[Programs](#)
[Application](#)

The 3,570 square-foot business incubator will be located on Lincoln Avenue in the city's northwest neighborhood. BizLINC staff will provide qualified entrepreneurs a variety of training and business-related services, such as strategic planning, financial reporting, technical assistance, ecommerce, office space and much more.

The mission of BizLINC is to help startup companies and entrepreneurs build successful companies, which in turn creates more job opportunities and drives new innovation and economic development in Lake Wales and beyond.

LIBRARY

The Lake Wales Public Library promotes lifelong learning and serves nearly one half-million residents annually. Circulation and reference materials, online resources and various programs are available for adults, teens and youth. The library is a member of the Polk County Library Cooperative.



Over 107,318
Library Visitors

Over 249,878
Materials Circulated

Over 1,047
New Borrowers

518
Total Programs

5,497
Program Attendance

19,492
Computer Users

13,825
Reference Transactions

9,216
BMail Items Circulated

16,029
Bookmobile Items Circulated

5,347
Newsletter Subscribers

444
Professional Development Hours

EXTENDING SERVICES BEYOND THE WALLS

Community outreach is a big part of the Lake Wales Public Library. The Bookmobile, Books-by-mail (Bmail) and Library Vending Machine are three programs that extend library services to members of all ages.

These programs offer citizens convenient access to books and printed materials. The programs are a great solution for people who do not have access to transportation or may be homebound due to a physical disability.

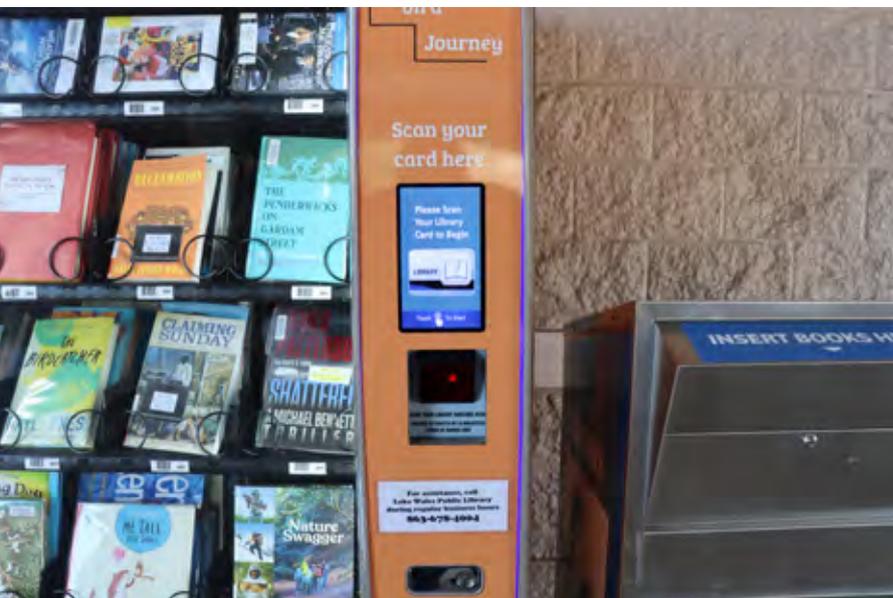


MORE OPTIONS

The Bookmobile stops at 13 locations throughout Polk County. The program is facilitated by staff at the Lake Wales Public Library and services most of Polk County. In 2022, Nalcrest in east Polk County was added to the route.

Bmail is a service where members receive library materials by U.S. mail. It's a great solution for members who are unable to visit the library.

The Library Book & Movie Vending Machine is a 24-hour library. It expands access to library materials during non-business hours.



“The Lake Wales Public Library, as many patrons have told me, is the pinnacle of our community,” said Library Director Belle Reynoso.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Our Social Media committee is charged with goals to oversee, create and cultivate social media interaction with our community. In addition, we are now a part of the City of Lake Wales Digital Media Council.

More adaptable by extending our library reach with a Book and Movie Vending Machine. It assists in our goal of extended outreach, allowing more books and films to circulate in the community. It resides outside the City Administration Building, and it's a great resources for members looking for material during non-business hours.

More accountable by providing the adult programs planned by our newly formed Programming Committee including:

- Speakers Series
- Quarterly Gardening Workshops
- Spanish Classes
- Financial Seminar for Seniors
- Technology Guide Training for the public

More diverse in learning and literacy.

The library offers a range of resources to promote the development of language and early learning skills. Early literacy is a key component for reading readiness for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers.

More sustainable by ensuring responsible recycling of our library materials and reducing our paper imprint. We offer online paperless resources including:

- Meeting Room Reservation Form
- Library Card Application
- Newsletter Sign up



LIBRARY

EXPANDING SUPPORT IN LEARNING & LITERACY

Children are our community's future. Libraries provide a variety of dynamic resources to help encourage the leaders of tomorrow.

Early literacy is a key component for reading readiness for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. The library offers a range of resources to promote the development of language and early learning skills.

The impact of access to books and the importance of the Library is a critical part of a child's life from an early age. Programs like 1,000 Books B4 Kindergarten promote a love of reading and prepare children to enter school ready to learn. Interactive library services also allow youngsters to learn at their own pace on-site or remotely.



Wonderbooks offer internet-free learning experiences. This resource combines audio and print bound together for literacy and fun! Kids will press play to read along (or sing along) with their favorite books and then switch to learning mode for entertaining literacy learning.

LIBRARY COLLABORATION

Library staff work with area partners to offer easy access to community services.

Love Your Library Week, hosted by the Lake Wales Library Association (LWLA) holds fundraisers to support and enhance the programs and services offered by the library.

The annual student art show, presented by the Lake Wales Arts Council, fills the library with vibrant works of art by kindergarten through 12th graders from Lake Wales, Frostproof and Haines City's public, private and home-schooled students.

The Lake Wales Library proudly offers Garden Lane Passes to Bok Tower Gardens. Passes are available to PCLC cardholders and allow patrons access to the gardens at any time during the seven-day checkout period.

Lake Wales Library Association is our non-profit organization, dedicated for the last six decades to supporting and enhancing the efforts of the Lake Wales Public Library through memberships, donations and



volunteerism. LWLA provides crucial funding for new books and materials, public outreach, youth services and technology projects. Donations are accepted on the LWLA webpage.



FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Lake Wales Fire Department is continually striving to improve the level of service provided to the citizens of our community. In 2022, the fire department responded to 3,532 emergency calls with an average response time of 3.5 minutes. The prevention department conducted a combined 1200 fire safety inspections and plan reviews.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As part of the Fire Department's fire safety program, firefighters visit each school in Lake Wales annually.

This year the Fire Department made contact with more than 3,000 members of our community. This includes public education appearances and station tours.

HIGHLIGHTS

Responded to 3,532 emergency calls with an average response time of 3.5 minutes

Conducted a combined 1200 fire safety inspections and plan reviews

Connected with more than 3,000 members of our community

Logged over 5,500 hours of firefighter training



TRAINING

Fire Department personnel are required to train daily. Each member of the department must be proficient in the operation of all rescue equipment. In 2022, firefighters logged more than 5,500 hours of training. Training included emergency vehicle operations, fire suppression techniques, emergency medical skills, vehicle extrication and personal protective equipment.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Lake Wales Police Department is proud to serve the Lake Wales community and provide 24-hour professional law enforcement services to residents and area visitors.

During 2022, 48 full-time law enforcement officers worked together with six support staff and 12 volunteers to maintain peace and ensure the safety of the community. An emphasis on community outreach, employee recruitment and staff development were primary focal points in 2022.



“As we build relationships with our youth and their families, we form partnerships that result in a safer community,” said Police Chief Chris Velasquez.



Sergeant Edward Palmer greeting students after speaking at the Park Avenue Private School graduation.

The department further **enhanced** community relationships through outreach, education and community involvement designed to build trust, reduce crime and improve the quality of life in Lake Wales.

Officers **participated** in several community activities and events, generating awareness about the programs geared to keep the community safe.

in partnership with the Lake Wales Police Officers Association (POA), officers helped coordinate the 14th annual Shop with a Cop event. The event gives less fortunate children the chance to shop and pick out Christmas gifts. Holiday meals were also gifted.

HIGHLIGHTS

Enhanced community relationships through outreach, education and community involvement

Recruited and fully sponsored candidates to become certified police officers by paying all expenses for each candidate

Participated in numerous programs, activities and events

Attended numerous job fairs, police academy classes, high schools and community events

Coordinated the 14th annual Shop with a Cop event

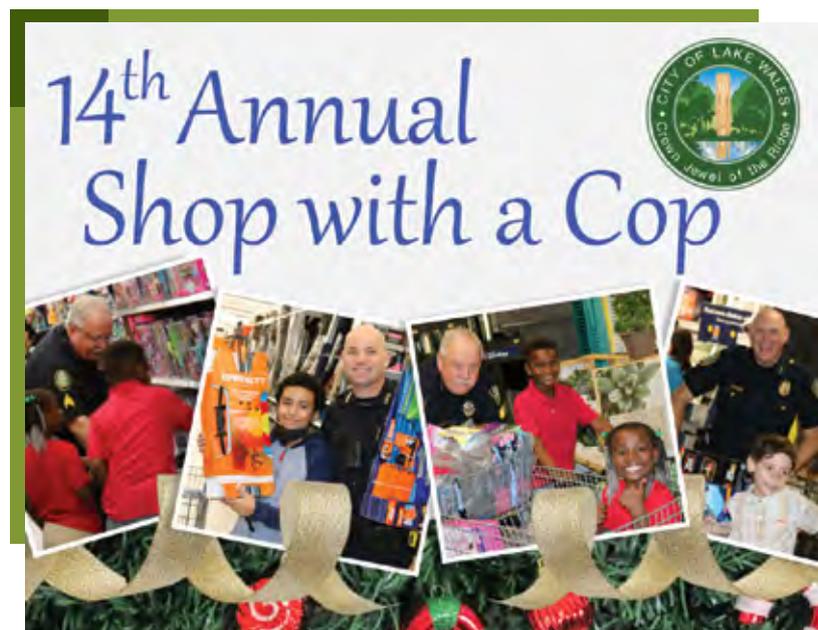
MORE THAN 50 CHILDREN GOT AN EXTRA SPECIAL CHRISTMAS, THE CHANCE TO SHOP AND PICK OUT CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

“What’s special, is that we include the siblings of the eligible children. They get to shop too,” said Sergeant Edward Palmer, Community Liaison Officer.

The POA partnered with schools and the Lake Wales Care Center to identify children who may benefit from the event. Members of the POA worked throughout the year raising donations through fundraising events and community sponsors. Many residents and businesses also donated money for the event.

“This event is just as good for the police officers, and businesses, as it is for the community. It’s rewarding for us to reach out and make a difference,” said Chief Velasquez.

The POA thanks the following community donors for supporting the event: Walmart, Coca-Cola, Dyer Chevrolet, Love’s, Oak Harbor Title Services, Lake Wales Kiwanis, Mayer Jewelers, Marion Nelson Funeral Home, Freedom Church, Charles Schmidt, Michael Matthews, Harry Monti, Century 21 and Lake Wales Moose Lodge.



POLICE DEPARTMENT



2022 LWPD FACTS

Budgeted Law Enforcement Officers: 48

Current Law Enforcement Officers: 43

Part Time Officers: 3

Police Chaplains: 4

Public Safety Cadets: 5

VOICE volunteers: 7

Calls for Service: 21,832

Arrests: 830

Crashes: 1,048

Traffic Fatalities: 2

Traffic Citations: 2,884

Traffic Warnings: 282

Uniform Crime Report (UCR)

UCR crime index: Not available at this time

UCR change: Not available at this time

UCR Clearance Rate: Not available at this time

2021 LWPD FACTS

Law Enforcement Officers: 48

Part Time Officers: 3

Police Chaplains: 2

Public Safety Cadets: 0

VOICE volunteers: 8

Calls for Service: 18,560

Arrests: 586

Crashes: 751

Traffic Fatalities: 4

Traffic Citations: 1819

Traffic Warnings: 234

UCR crime index: 351

UCR change: 19.4%

UCR Clearance Rate: 32.5%

ANALYSIS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

In 2021, the Police Department entered into a contract for an analysis of law enforcement services with the International City/County Manager Association (ICMA). This comprehensive analysis exceeds that of law enforcement accreditation or similar studies and involves the following major outcomes:

- Conduct a data-driven forensic analysis to identify actual workload
- Identify and recommend appropriate staffing and deployment levels for every operational and support function in the department
- Examine the department's organizational structure and culture
- Perform gap analysis, comparing the "as is" state of the department to the best practices of industry standards
- Recommend a management framework to ensure accountability, increased efficiency, and improved performance

DELIVERING HIGHER LEVELS OF SERVICE

Following the analysis, in 2022, of law enforcement services, Center for Public Safety Management (CPSM) provided a list of recommendations to help the department deliver even higher levels of service with increased efficiency. The department is implementing the recommendations while also preparing for our official accreditation through the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc.

2023



ACCREDITATION

An accreditation program has long been recognized as a means of maintaining the highest standards of professionalism.

Accreditation is the certification by an independent reviewing authority that an entity has met specific requirements and prescribed standards.

Law enforcement agencies and Inspectors General in Florida can attain accredited status through the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc.

This process is complex and demands the support and participation of every member of our department.

In January 2023, the department completed the mock accreditation assessment.

In April of 2023, following the on-site assessment, the department will receive its official accreditation in June.

OUTREACH

During 2023, staff in the department will identify new ways to serve while utilizing technology to enhance transparency, reduce crime and safeguard our community.

Staff plan to enhance the outreach efforts on social media to educate the public and provide timely and accurate law enforcement information.

Staff will engage with residents at the Citizens & Police Community Relations Advisory Committee meetings.

Additionally, staff plan to promote citizen involvement by hosting a Citizen's Police Academy, encouraging citizens to ride along with officers and recruit volunteers for our V.O.I.C.E and Public Safety Cadet programs.

FINANCE

The City's Finance Department processes, records and reports the City's financial activities, and ensures that purchases and expenditures stay within budgeted appropriations. The Finance Department maintains financial records that comply with standards prescribed by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and prepares financial statements that conform to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

The Finance Department over the last several years has automated more of the budget process by utilizing data that is exported directly from the accounting system.



WAY TO GO!

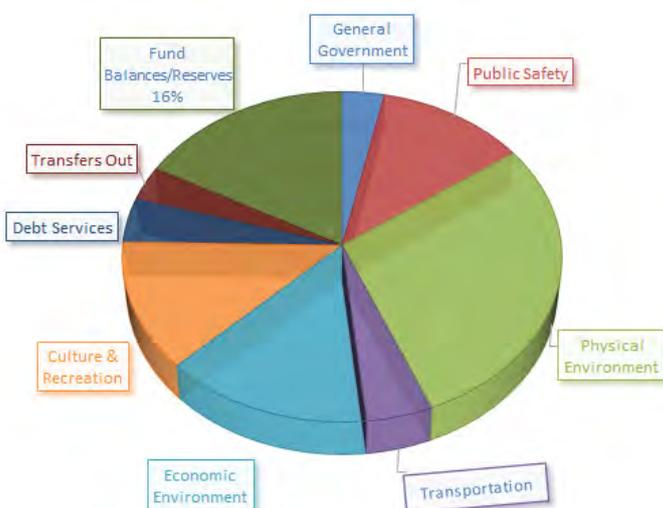
AWARD RECIPIENT

During 2022, the City's Finance Department received, for the 13th time, the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association.

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management according to the Government Finance Officers Association.

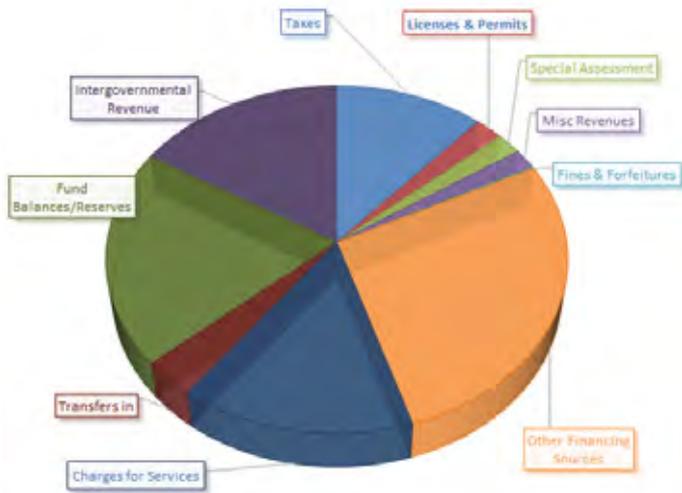
Finance also received, for the second time, the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award by the Government Finance Officers Association.

WHERE ARE CITY DOLLARS APPROPRIATED?



General Government	\$2,738,199	3.3%
Public Safety	\$9,712,032	11.8%
Physical Environment	\$23,650,877	28.7%
Transportation	\$3,779,190	4.6%
Economic Environment	\$11,858,796	14.4%
Culture & Recreation	\$10,394,799	12.6%
Debt Services	\$3,574,885	4.3%
Transfers Out	\$2,779,240	3.4%
Fund Balance/Reserve	\$14,022,635	17.0%
Total primary government	\$82,510,653	100.00%

WHERE DO CITY DOLLARS COME FROM?



Taxes	\$9,444,765	3.3%
Licenses & Permits	\$1,785,000	11.8%
Special Assessment	\$1,632,485	28.7%
Misc. Revenues	\$1,474,565	4.6%
Fines & Forfeitures	\$118,500	14.4%
Other Financing Sources	\$22,817,200	12.6%
Charges for Service	\$12,416,618	4.3%
Transfers in	\$2,779,240	3.4%
Fund Balance/Reserve	\$16,666,671	17.0%
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$13,375,609	16.21%
	\$82,510,653	100%

ANNUAL BUDGET ADOPTION SCHEDULE

MAY

For FY 2022- The City Commission will provide staff with goals and objectives to be included within the next fiscal year. Department heads will prepare budget requests based on goals and objectives set by the City Commission.

JUNE & JULY

Proposed expenditure budget is compiled from department requests. Proposed revenue budget is compiled using state revenue estimates, local user fee estimates, historical experience, and interim millage rate set by the Commission. The City Manager and staff in the Finance Department balance the budget for City Commission workshops.

AUGUST

Balanced, proposed budget will be transmitted to City Commission. Additional workshops will be held and revisions will be made based on consensus derived from workshop discussions.

SEPTEMBER

Two public hearings will be held on the proposed budget. Revisions will be made based on City Commission direction following public hearings. Millage rate is set and budget is adopted following second hearing.



MISSION STATEMENT

We support, attract, and retain high-performing employees who fit our positive, can-do culture, are committed to serving the community, and uphold our City's mission and values. We do this by providing competitive, equitable benefits; resources for personal and professional development; and expectations for high ethical conduct so that employees can be successful in their work – and enjoy doing it.

HUMAN RESOURCES

YEAR IN REVIEW

The year started out as a year full of hope, new goals and initiatives.

We were still navigating the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the need for new policies and application forms. Employees were facing myriad issues, including worries about their own health, navigating a new normal of either telecommuting or working while social distancing, financial concerns, changes in family routines and general uncertainty about the future.

City employees continued to show perseverance and dedication every day providing exceptional services to the community.

HR continued offering COVID guidance to all staff in 2022. Several employees found themselves positive with COVID in 2022, which presented challenges to operations and a number of employees being asked to quarantine and/or isolate due to symptoms. Human Resources was contacted regularly throughout the year on everything from isolation guidance, to close contacts and safety protocol.



PERSONNEL ACTIVITIES

We coordinated personnel activities for a staff of over 202 FTE (full time equivalent) employees. Key areas of responsibility include:

- Recruitment, Selection and Hiring
- Benefits, Compensation and Job Classification
- Policy Development
- Collective Bargaining
- Legal Compliance and Reporting
- Risk Management

“We are talent-seekers, advocates, coaches, resource experts, mediators, negotiators, out-of-the-box thinkers, strategists, wellness promoters, risk managers and leaders. Our comprehensive HR programs and services support the professional growth and well-being of each employee,” said Human Resources Director Sandra Davis.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Offered City employees, at all levels a wide range of training opportunities throughout the year in order to build on their professional competencies, increase their knowledge, and improve their skill sets so as to contribute to the City’s mission.

Amended Ordinance 2022-11,12 & 13 401(a) Cap and Ordinance 2022-39 Commission Salaries.

Processed and reviewed several Family and Medical Leave Act requests.

Conducted research to ensure compliance with federal and state employment laws and updated policies as required.

Provided an enhanced health and wellness initiative to include:

- Forty employees participated in two amazing walking challenges.
- Held an Employee Health & Wellness Fair

Coordinated the United Way Campaign, resulting in City employees contributing \$1,260.00.

Coordinated the Lake Wales Care Center campaign, resulting in City employees contributing \$800.00.

Successfully negotiated the Collective Bargaining Agreements with the Police Benevolent Association and IAFF (International Association of Firefighters).

RISK MANAGEMENT

Renewed the contract with FMIT (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.

Processed several general liability claims, workers compensation and auto claims.

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

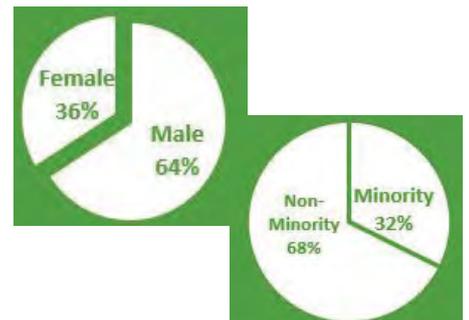
Employees received a 4% COLA adjustment in October.

The City’s budget includes 209.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) positions in FY 2022. Total cost in salary and benefits for FY 2022 is \$14,733,463.

Most Popular Job Postings the following list shows the job with the highest hits during the year.

Job Title	Hits
Customer Service Clerk	273
Firefighter	124
Library Assistant	66
Library Clerk	66

The Workforce includes both represented and non-represented employees who fill technical, public safety, trade, administrative, and managerial roles. Our employees come from a variety of backgrounds and our goal is to represent the diversity of Lake Wales.



BENEFIT ADMINISTRATION

The City’s benefits include health, dental, vision, basic life insurance with premiums paid by the City, voluntary life insurance products, and short and long term disability insurance. Human Resources also administers the retirement plans offered to employees, consisting of a Defined Benefit Retirement Plan, a Defined Contribution Retirement Plan, and Deferred Compensation Plans.

Aetna remained as the health insurance carrier. Open Enrollment was conducted entirely online through the Paycom Portal (HRIS).

ANNUAL REPORT - FISCAL YEAR 2022



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