

City of Mount Dora 2014 State of the City



Prepared by:
Cathy Hoechst, Mayor

Greetings,

It is my honor and pleasure to address the citizens, community organizations and businesses of Mount Dora with the mayor's annual State of the City. Together we are continuing to work through one of the most challenging times in our nation's history. Last year marked the City of Mount Dora's 103rd anniversary of incorporation.



As we begin the 104th year of our incorporation we must continue to honor the intentions of the City's founders as we work together to create a legacy for future generations of Mount Dora residents. Adjustments and transitions are necessary during periods of turmoil and the City's government has modified its business plans, expenditures and investments accordingly.

The City continues to plan for and invest in the future even during times of economic hardship. Our duty as a City Council is to be responsible stewards with the resources and services available to current residents while planning for future residents.

Our business community saw several new businesses launched and expanded in the past year. Our community service organizations continue to address the needs within the local community that government can no longer afford to provide.



We are fortunate to have business and civic groups actively involved in a variety of areas including, organizing large-scale festivals and events, decorating our City for the holiday season and promoting our town on a continual basis. These collaborative efforts support the overall goal of drawing visitors to our vibrant, destination City.

The following City departmental summaries will serve to highlight important facts and accomplishments from the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Financial Highlights

The City’s Department Directors continue to develop ways and means to do more with less. Last year the City of Mount Dora’s ad valorem revenues were held constant. Our residents continue to pay the lowest ad valorem tax millage rate of all the Golden Triangle Cities, while enjoying higher property values. The City Council must assess each year if we will be able to offer the safety, services, maintenance and amenities that our residents have come to expect with the current millage rate, or if cuts in services are necessary and/or adjustments to our millage rate. Each year the City Council weighs the needs and priorities of the community against the available funding.

Other sources of revenue have been affected and most have been significantly reduced. The City’s revenue from discretionary sales tax, grants, investments and service fees are down from the highs of several years ago. The City has planned well and kept a sharp eye on the trends affecting operating and capital improvement funds. The City administration continues to keep tight controls on all spending.

As is required, the City delivered a balanced budget for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. Mount Dora experienced an increase of 1.45 percent in property values for the 2013-14 fiscal year, indicating the economy is on the rise. ***This is the first increase in property values since the budget year 2007-08 when values were \$1,059,952,506.***

With current values at \$846,434,428, Mount Dora fared better than the other municipalities in Lake County. On average, the increase for the other 14 cities was 0.25 percent, with a range of -5.26 percent to a high of 3.29 percent.

While Lake County’s other 14 cities had an average millage rate of 5.9793, Mount Dora maintained a lower than average millage rate of 5.6667.

Among the three Golden Triangle Cities, Mount Dora maintains the highest taxable value. This allows Mount Dora to maintain a lower millage rate, even though the City’s population is 30 percent lower than Eustis and eight percent lower than Tavares.

City Comparison Chart

	Population	Taxable Value	Per Capita Taxable Value	Millage Rate	Tax Levied
Mount Dora	12,883	\$846,434,428	\$65,702	5.6667	\$4,796,376
Eustis	18,573	\$731,877,188	\$39,405	7.5810	\$5,548,361
Tavares	14,056	\$602,559,312	\$42,868	6.9064	\$3,888,376

In May of 2013 the City elected to finance the downtown improvements by issuing a revenue bond in the amount of \$25 million. The bond is secured by the taxes received on the incremental value of the property within the Community Redevelopment Agency. A favorable interest rate of 2.17 percent was acquired with a final payment due in July of 2028.

Throughout 2014, the City will be exploring the financing of the remaining portion of the eastern water plant, wastewater treatment pump building and clarifier replacements, as well as an extension down Britt Road which would also provide a redundancy loop in the northeast section of the community. The project and amounts are under evaluation.

In the past the City has purchased three to four new police vehicles each year. The estimated cost of continuing the program was estimated at \$655,000. With the enhancement in engine technology we have approved a program to finance approximately half of the fleet at a total cost of \$523,940, which provides a savings of approximately \$131,060; this saving includes interest at a rate of 3.10 percent.



With fuel economy and bumper-to-bumper maintenance for the first three years, the City will experience annual operational savings of approximately \$161,600. The Police department did a thorough job in the research provided to allow Council to approve this measure.

A comparison of utility customers indicates that the City is continuing to experience population growth. While our numbers grow, the average daily consumption continues to decrease. Many customers are becoming cognizant that water is a precious resource. While the number of reclaim customers decreased, the utilization of reclaimed water for irrigation increased, supporting the continued trend of Mount Dora residents conserving potable water.

Customers Serviced Chart

	2012	2013	%	2012	2013	%
Water (Hcf)	8,142	8,369	2.8%	3,291	3,152	(4.2%)
Wastewater	5,709	5,901	3.4%	1,866	1,859	(0.4%)
Reclaimed (Hcf)	1,425	1,142	(19.9 %)	1,022	1,527	49.4%
Electricity (kWh)	5,691	5,709	0.3%	2,963	2,650	(10.6%)

Human Resource Highlights

The City is currently staffed with 183 full-time and 21 part-time positions. In addition to continuously managing and aligning HR strategies with departmental goals, in 2013 the HR Director & City Manager entered into collective bargaining with the City's Fire, Police and General Employees Unions. In February of 2013, the first of three collective bargaining agreements was reached with City Council ratifying the Firefighters' collective bargaining agreement. Bargaining sessions with the Police and General Employees Collective Bargaining Unions were completed and ratified by City Council in March and September of 2013, respectively. Reopeners for all three agreements will convene in May of 2014.



It's worth noting that in both Police and Fire Collective Bargaining Agreement, it was agreed that bargaining unit members will contribute more to their respective defined benefit pension plans over the three duration for each contract. Police will contribute an additional two percent and Fire will contribute 1.5 percent.

In 2013, as things picked up in the local labor market, 12 employees were promoted while others left our employment, creating 31 vacancies over this 12 month period. Each position took approximately 45 days on average to fill, down from 46 days the previous year.

In 2014 the Human Resources staff will conduct a comprehensive wage study of forty-seven (47) benchmark positions in ten (10) municipalities within our competitive market. The selection of these municipalities will take into account the operational makeup (full service utilities) of each, as well as the special events that are unique to each as a "destination city." A comprehensive wage study provides yet another tool to gauge the competitiveness of our compensation to City employees and notes trends and concerns for future hires.

The Employee Health and Wellness Center had a very successful year in 2013 and utilization continues to increase as employees and their dependents develop a comfort level with the new concept. For the rolling 12 month period, utilization for 2013 was up from an average of 75 percent in 2012 to almost 90 percent in 2013. Providing a cost effective alternative to the traditional delivery of medical care allows us to smooth out the increases in costs of health insurance year to year.

Public Works and Utilities Highlights

In 2013 the electric division serviced 5,709 customers with the yearly sales total of 84,496,567 kWh. The average monthly usage for residential was 822 kWh while the monthly commercial demand averaged 25,338 kWh.

In 2013 the Storm Water Resource Division completed eight major storm water projects, 29 minor projects and a number of smaller tasks. Approximately 1305 cubic yards of debris was collected and removed from the City's stormwater system by various methods including street sweeping (1160 cubic yards), structure and pipe cleaning (39 cubic yards), stormwater treatment units (87 cubic yards), inlet filters (13 cubic yards) and StormX traps (six cubic yards).



In 2013 the Water and Waste Water Division provided 999,880,000 gallons to 30,000 customers and 2,565 work orders were completed. The City's Sewage Facilities treated a monthly average of 334,928 gallons of septage/grease from septic tank haulers.

The Public Works and Utilities department has worked extensively in developing an innovative Solar Drying and Pasteurization Process for Biosolids at Wastewater Treatment Plant No. 2. This \$2 million dollar project will allow the City to recoup over \$600,000 annually in disposal cost in an environmentally friendly manner. With a 3.25 year pay back, this project is a financially prudent alternative to the current compost process.

In 2014, the City will complete the Eastside Water Treatment Plant on Niles Road. This \$4 million facility will allow the City to be positioned for future growth. This water plant is integral to the successful establishment of the Economic Development District on SR 46. The Eastern Water Plant will also even out pressures throughout the water system and help eliminate low pressure zones in certain areas.



Inter-connecting the City's existing water plant with the Eastern Water Plant will also provide a continuous water supply should an emergency failure occur at either water plant. The department applied for a Community Development Block Grant to increase the size of the water lines on Lincoln Avenue, Robie Avenue and Clayton Street, which will increase water flow in those areas.



The Public Work and Utilities department has been involved in a number of ongoing capital projects. In 2013, the Public Works department worked closely with the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to complete much needed infrastructure improvement related to water, sewer and stormwater. By completing these improvements, the City is able to provide improved and more reliable water and sewer services to the businesses and residents in portions of our historic downtown.

Additionally, the stormwater improvements will help to alleviate several severe drainage issues that have plagued portions of downtown through the years.

This partnership between the Public Works department and the CRA will continue in 2014 as downtown utility improvements continue on Donnelly Street from 4th to 5th Avenues and 3rd Avenue from Dora Drawdy Way to Baker Street.



Utilizing grants from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Lake County Water Authority, the Public Works department will embark upon the installation of stormwater piping and treatment from Donnelly Park along Baker Street to 8th Avenue and Tremain Street. This \$1.3 million dollar project has been delayed for many years due to design concerns and funding. The downtown area and Lake Dora water quality will benefit from this project.



In addition to these critical and exciting project outlined above, the City of Mount Dora will be working in the coming years on extensive utility relocation projects in support of widening US Highway 441 and State Route 46. As the City continues to coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation on State Road 46, the Public Works department will be installing the utilities necessary to support the City's Economic Development District in the vicinity of State Road 46 and Round Lake Road in Mount Dora.

Police Department Highlights

During fiscal year 2013 the Mount Dora Police Department went through its 4th consecutive Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation Certification. An important part of maintaining a professional organization is to perform at a higher and more consistent industry standard. The accreditation certification process in all industries is the "gold" standard. The Police department will continue to operate at this professional level.



Chief John O'Grady

The transition from Chief Scoggins to Chief O'Grady has been completed. The City Manager, with the assistance of an interview committee, interviewed the top candidates. After the interviews and substantive consideration, Mr. Quinn offered the position to John O'Grady. Chief O'Grady took over as the 15th City of Mount Dora Police Chief on January 1, 2014.

The Police department is in the process of conducting a review of all police service functions and operations to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

The Police department will deploy two K-9 teams. The two K-9 teams are currently in training and will be “on the street” in April 2014.



The department will be analyzing the cost/benefit impacts of transitioning the School Resource Officers positions from the Lake County Sheriff’s office to the City’s Police department. This will not only be a good move for the Police department logistically, but this transition could continue to enhance the community’s pride in its City.

Fire Department Highlights

The Mount Dora Fire Department (MDFD) consists of about 25 personnel, including 21 fire fighters, who staff two fire stations divided between three 24-hour shifts (seven fire fighters per shift).

All personnel are a minimum of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT’s) with half of the department’s personnel being Paramedics (PM’s). The other four personnel include: the City’s Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Inspector, Staff Assistant and a quarter-time Fire Inspector. In 2013, the department responded to 3,338 emergency calls and completed 935 inspections.



In 2013, the Fire department completed its Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating inspection. The ISO rating of a Fire Department is the system upon which insurance costs are calculated for businesses (and to some extent used for residential rates depending on the insurance agency). In the past, this inspection/evaluation was conducted every 5 to 10 years. Because of changes that have been made to the rating system, ISO is looking to inspect all departments every five to seven years.

2013 marked the Fire department’s first inspection completed under the new changes. Because of these changes the department hoped to maintain its current ISO rating or possibly improve by one level.

The ratings ranged from a 1 (the best you can attain) to a 10 (meaning no viable fire protection available). The Mount Dora Fire department is currently rated as a 4 (Eustis is currently a 3 and Tavares is a 5).



The rating system takes a vast variety of factors into account, including water supply (the size of water mains, hydrant locations and inspection schedules); communications (the dispatch center run by Lake EMS); and training hours. The rating system also takes into account if automatic and mutual aid agreements are established with neighboring fire departments.

With the addition of a quarter-time inspector, the department has revamped the inspection department and business inspection rotation to align them into zones, making for a much more efficient inspection process. The department has also been able to complete 75 percent of the pre-fire plan inspections required by ISO and other agencies.

The department is also preparing this coming month for its state EMS inspection and its inspection by American Heart Association (AHA). Because it is a training site for AHA, the city's Fire department is required to be inspected every two years by its 'mother' training center. The state visits the department every two years to insure compliance with state patient care and emergency medical services equipment requirements.

In 2013, the Fire department was recently awarded two grants. The first was a 75/25 percent matching grant for two new Lifepak 15s with approximately \$50,000 from the grant and a \$16,000 match.

The second grant was a 100 percent grant for smoke detectors. Since receiving that grant, MDFD has installed over 500 smoke detectors for the protection of our residents.

The department has applied for and is waiting responses on four other 95/5 percent matching grants. They include a water craft (\$40,000), a fire truck (\$400,000), a self-contained breathing apparatus (\$112,000), and health and wellness equipment (\$30,000).



In order to be considered for promotion or for the opportunity to ride in the capacity of an officer when one is off, personnel must complete the Fire Officer 1 certification. This is an instructional program consisting of seven classes (plus three online classes), usually taking between one to two years to complete, at a cost of \$205 per class.

By coupling with other City departments, the Mount Dora Fire department was able to send seven fire fighters through the program in eight months at a cost of less than \$600, thereby saving the city \$9,000. The department has also had five fire fighters recently complete their Associates Degrees, bringing the total of degree-holding fire personnel to 13.

Library Department Highlights

Mount Dora's W.T. Bland Public Library continues to be one of the City's most used and appreciated facilities. The 2013 renovations increased the library's square footage from 15,000 sq feet to 22,666 sq feet.

Some of the major improvements include:

- A larger community room with seating for up to 150
- A youth program room for up to 100 children
- Three individual study rooms
- 38 internet accessible computers available to the public



The Mount Dora Library Association and the Friends of the Library continue to be essential elements of volunteer hours and financial support.

In 2013 the library had 17,609 registered borrowers, and a collection of 83,839 items with a total circulation of 250,597. All of these numbers are up from the previous year.

Our Library is another City resource that is a recipient of citizen contribution, involvement and volunteerism. There is no way the City could continue to provide over 67 adult and 212 children programs without the support of the volunteers who so willingly give of their time and services.



The following is a list of the established programs of our Library:

- AARP Tax Aide
- AARP Arrive Alive
- Classic Film Series
- Friends of the Library Book Sales
- Cyber School
- Presidents and Their First Ladies
- Programs through Agriculture Extension Services (University of Florida Institute of Food & Agricultural Services)
- Scrabble Club
- Mah-Jong Club
- Writing Classes and Writers' Café
- Literacy Programs
- Chess Club
- Waterman "Book Mobile"
- Art Exhibits

Mount Dora is very fortunate to have a Library children's department that has a strong presence in the community through a variety of programs, including Summer Reading, Easter Egg Hunt, Family Earth Day, Pre-Kindergarten Story Time, Toddler Story Time, Library Christmas Tree Lighting with Santa, Living Chess, Chess Club and Make 'N Take a Craft for seasonal celebrations.

In 2013, the Library's little visitors created Valentine cards that were given to two local assisted living/nursing centers in town.



The Simpson Farmhouse next to the Library continues to be a welcome addition to the communal space available within the City. Over 16 civic organizations conduct their meetings in both the Simpson Farmhouse and the W.T. Bland Public Library.

Parks & Recreation Department Highlights

The City of Mount Dora Parks & Recreation department is committed to providing high quality programs and services that meet and exceed expectations. The department's number one priority is to meet the needs of the citizens that they serve. The department is dedicated to creating a comfortable environment that encourages a sense of creativity, teamwork, and achievement. Its promise is to provide multiple levels of service with integrity and the highest degree of professional standards.

Like other departments within the City, the Parks and Recreation department has wrestled with providing quality programs and services to citizens with fewer resources. The challenges faced with this type of compression of services is that the needs have become greater now more so than ever. Even as the economy improves, Mount Dora residents are looking for events or activities that they and their families can enjoy without much cost to them.

With that in mind, the Recreation department has transitioned itself into a more service level department with many of the events costing little or nothing to the participants who come to them. Some examples are the Halloween Spooktacular, 2nd Friday Movies in the Park, Holiday Concerts in the Community Building, the Summer Kickoff Splash Bash at the pool, the Leprechaun Treasure Hunt at Gilbert Park, the Fall and Spring Trash to Treasures Yard Sale, Christmas in the Park, and the Lincoln Park Disc Golf course to name just a few.



This approach has led to an increase in participant levels at all the activities. In 2013 the department saw an overwhelming response from the citizens who came out to these events.



This year the participation level climbed to over 14,000 visits to our programs and events. In youth sports we continue to strive to build a fun and skills-orientated environment by offering a variety of sports including, spring and fall Soccer and winter youth basketball.



For those children who cannot afford our programs, we have increased our efforts to gather support through donations to our scholarship program with outstanding results. Because of those donations we have been able to give children a chance to be a part of our summer camp and sports programs.

The Cultural and Special Events Coordinator duties have expanded, and as a result, so have the number of activities the City has been involved in. The Community Building rentals and revenues have increased a substantial amount over last year and bookings for the coming year are already ahead of schedule.

With the assistance of our Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, The Parks and Recreation department does all this while at the same time operating and maintaining 26 parks, all cemetery services, all city facilities rentals and repairs, custodial and grounds maintenance support and pool operations with 23 staff members.



2013 marked a turning point for special events in the City. The department has been able to foster a cohesive community response to events which led to better cooperation between the different agencies that use our facilities. A plan was initiated to reduce the City's cost for events through a change in the City ordinance. This change defined "cornerstone events" where the City would be the sole supporter, while other events would become self-supported by the event organizers.

Sponsorship brochures were developed for the events at the Community Building and were very successful in bringing in new supporters. The Special Events office successfully created its own events for the building, including the Night of the Scot and Night for the Irish, which were both successful events. The profits from those events helped us to make some much needed upgrades in sound and lighting in the Community Building.



There has been an increased the department's community programs as evidenced by the provision of programs like "Men United", additional summer activities, the annual Back to School Event, an increased emphasis on youth sports, the St. Patrick's Day leprechaun treasure hunt, Adopt-A-Park and the increased department support for community events. Santa's Switchboard was a great success and should be even bigger this year.

The Co-Ed Softball program grew this year from last year with an increase in types of leagues (Men's, Church, and Co-Ed) from 9 to 19 teams. League play now runs three times a year in the winter, spring and summer seasons.



Improvements to the Mountain Bike trail in the Lincoln Park Recreation and Nature Park were completed in a partnership with Ocala Mountain Bike Association. Trails have been developed to accommodate those who enjoy mountain bike activities in a park setting. In 2013, the entrance was reconstructed and the new trails connected. Trail markers were added to assist with emergency responses by the Fire department.

The Recreation and Nature Park welcomed a new playground which was named Forres Playground in honor of our Sister City, Forres, Scotland. This playground is the first and only of its kind in Lake County with an artificial grass surface.





With the completion of the 4th Avenue Docks the City finally has a front porch in which to greet visitors from the waterfront. These docks boast the largest pavilion on a floating dock in the state of Florida.

Nature hikers and tourist are drawn to the newly reconstructed Palm Island Boardwalk. With both sections of the boardwalk expanded, visitors are once again discovering this special place on the water. The Parks department manages over 26 parks with a land amount of over 206 acres. Work was done to reduce the air potato vines within the parks and shoreline work was done during scheduled clean-ups. Docks and pavilions are regularly power washed and playground equipment inspected and repaired.



Planning and Development Department Highlights

Vision Plan Implementation

Through an inclusive community-based visioning process, the project known as Envision Mount Dora focused on clarifying the City of Mount Dora's values, economic position and desired development characteristics. That clarity is needed to guide potential changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan and its Land Development Code. Those changes will help ensure compatible future growth and redevelopment that respects the community's unique character and assets, while positioning the City for long-term economic prosperity and the supporting services and public facilities to sustain it. The results of the visioning process entail a set of strategic design concepts, priority target areas and suggested policy changes that will be further defined and carried out through the City's planning and regulatory framework, as well as its capital budgeting process.

Residents and businesses alike participated in a series of small group discussions, large community-wide workshops, a three-day community design charrette, open forums and presentations at meetings. The City created a project web site, www.envisionmountdora.org, as a means of gathering input, surveying preferences and posting interim and draft study work products. Participation exceeded expectations. At one community workshop, more than 200 people attended to share their ideas about Mount Dora's future. A project steering committee comprised of 12 Council-appointed citizens met monthly throughout the 10-month study to guide the work activities and recommend priorities to the City Council. On October 18th, the Mount Dora City Council voted to adopt the Citywide Vision, with the next steps to entail a series of workshops to further discuss the vision elements and priorities that will be carried out through the City's budget process and Comprehensive Plan amendments.

Envision Mount Dora examined development patterns throughout the City, including the two Community Redevelopment Areas and the Joint Planning Area with Lake County that lies outside the current municipal boundary. However, the visioning process centered on the following target areas where future development or redevelopment is expected and generally more desirable than in other established residential or more natural areas of the community:

- The Downtown Redevelopment Area and Historic District
- The Highland Street corridor
- The Northeast Redevelopment Area centered on Grandview Street
- The Lake Dora lakefront
- The Golden Triangle Shopping Center area
- The US 441 corridor, and
- The future employment center located east of the City limits



Those target areas represent a combination of historic, cultural and natural assets, established redevelopment areas, declining commercial areas and emerging opportunities for job growth. The visioning effort quickly focused on guiding appropriately scaled and compatible development to these target areas, while strengthening and building upon the features that make them valuable to the City's long-term future and quality of life. In addition, the vision addressed the needs of residential areas outside of these target areas by improving connectivity, access to parks and recreational opportunities, diversifying the economy in the area, and ensuring responsive public services to foster a more unified City identity.



Ultimately, the visioning process affirmed much of the City’s prior planning and development activities, while highlighting some new strategic concepts and ideas that can better position the City for future prosperity that respects its unique character and historic charm. Exercises with community participants to define a core set of values centered on the topics of the Environment, the Economy, and the Social Equity of a vibrant, diverse and welcoming community. The values statements played a central role in defining and evaluating concepts for future development.

Projects that have been completed which were approved as part of the visioning process include:

1. Fourth Avenue docks
2. Palm Island Boardwalk reconstruction
3. Parking structure connection to the Tremain Street parking lot
4. Acquisition of easements for the east side water plant
5. Downtown Streetscape Phase 1
6. Sunset Park improvements
7. Update comprehensive plan policies and land development code



Projects approved and underway this year include:

1. Gateway monumentation final design and construction on Donnelly Street and First Avenue.
2. Coordination with County on Employment Center Study
3. Construction of east side water plant
4. Downtown Streetscape Phase 2 – Donnelly Street and Third Avenue
5. Tremain Street Greenway construction
6. Lincoln Avenue Trail construction
7. Employment Center Master plan
8. Evans Park Improvements



The Vision Plan will continue to act as a guide to the City’s long-term capital planning as projects are completed.

Ad Valorem Tax Incentives

In 2010 the electorate of the city gave the City Council the authority to grant ad valorem tax exemptions to new and expanding businesses in the city. The impetus of this was to provide incentives to encourage employment based businesses to locate in Mount Dora. Additionally, as discussed during the Visioning process, tax exemptions can be used as an incentive to encourage the type and location of development that has been envisioned through the extensive public input provided in this process.

The City Council adopted legislation that will allow the implementation of the tax exemptions. Development eligible for the exemptions include new or expansions of existing businesses that include 10 or more employees in manufacturing or target business industries as defined in the Florida Statutes; existing businesses that expand by 25 or more employees outside of the categories; any business located in a Brownfields area that increases operation; new businesses that further the vision of the city as defined in the Citywide Visioning Plan; an office space newly domiciled in the state consisting of 50 or more employees; a business that is situated on property annexed into the City and that, at time of the annexation, is receiving an economic development ad valorem tax exemption from the county.

The exemption may be granted for up to one hundred (100%) percent of the assessed value of all improvements to real property made by or for the use of a new business and of all tangible personal property of such new business, and up to one hundred (100%) percent of the assessed value of all added improvements to real property made to facilitate expansion of an existing business and the net increase in all tangible personal property acquired to facilitate such expansion of an existing business, provided that the improvements to real property are made, or the tangible personal property is added or increased, on or after the day the exemption

The tax abatement does not apply to the underlying property, only improvements to the property and tangible personal property.

**Lincoln Avenue Trail (in the North East Community Redevelopment District)
\$489,000 Florida Department of Transportation Grant**

The purpose of the trail project is to create a safe pedestrian and bike route to the middle school, Lincoln Avenue parks complex, Grandview Street commercial area, and other destinations near Lincoln Avenue. The trail connect to the Tremain Street Greenway that extends to Fifth Avenue and provides access to downtown and lakefront.

The project was awarded a \$489,000 grant for Safe Routes to School funding to pay for 100 percent of the project construction cost. This trail is scheduled to be complete by April 2014.



Donnelly Street 5th to 4th Avenues– Sidewalk/ Streetscape Project (in the Community Redevelopment District)

City Council approved the preliminary design and scope of work in August 2011. The project involves sidewalk replacement, paver crosswalks, storm water drainage, landscaping and irrigation, electrical service, street lighting, road pavement milling and restriping, and sanitary sewer and potable water lines. Preparation of construction drawings is complete. The utility work, storm water drainage, potable water, and sanitary sewer lines, will be funded by the Public Works Department.



The sidewalk and streetscape portion of the project will be funded by the Mount Dora Community Redevelopment Agency.

Construction will occur May 1 – October 1. An enhanced promotional effort will occur to encourage visitors to continue to shop in the area.



Downtown Utility & Streetscape Design (Public Works & Community Redevelopment Agency)

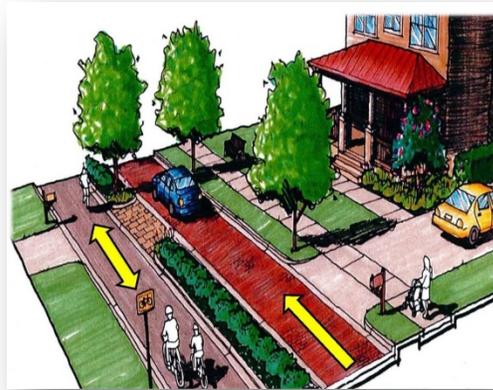
Complete preliminary engineering and streetscape design plan and prioritize blocks for construction. The purpose of the project is to improve pedestrian movement throughout the CRA, with the initial focus on the downtown commercial core area. Conceptual design has been completed. Phase 2, which in addition to Donnelly Street includes Third Avenue, will be constructed from May 1 to October 1. Additional phases will be scheduled as funding is allocated.

Tremain Street Greenway \$595,000 Florida Department of Transportation Grant

Prepare construction drawings and specifications for greenway.

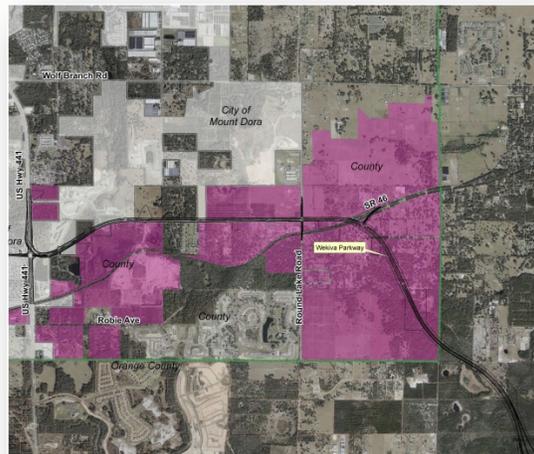
This project, which extends from Fifth Avenue north to Lincoln Avenue, is a priority project in the Mount Dora Trails Master Plan. It involves installing a 10' one-way street northbound vehicle lane on the east side of the street with a 10' shared use trail on the west side. This innovative conversion of a two way residential street to a one way street and pedestrian trail is a first of its kind in the nation that will serve as a model for future conversions. At the final public meeting on this project the project gained near unanimous support from the dozens of residents along the street.

Construction will occur March to September 2014. The construction is being funded by a FDOT Enhancement Grant.

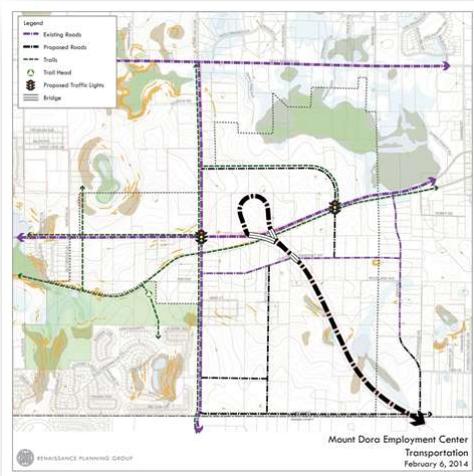


Employment Center Master Plan

For the last several years the City has worked with the County to establish an area east of town within the City's Joint Planning Area for the establishment of an employment based economic development district. This area is ideally located to take advantage of the imminent construction of the Wekiva Parkway and improved transportation system along State Road 46. To date, the City and County have jointly developed and adopted consistent land use designations to allow for higher intensity office, light industrial and support retail uses.



The next step in the process is to gauge market demand within the region to potentially target market sectors that are unaddressed in the central Florida region; develop a master plan for the area; and prepare a marketing package to promote the area and its assets for development. The City has attempted to work with the County for the last two years to build a funding partnership to advance this project. Unfortunately, the County has not moved forward to budget funds to match those encumbered by the City. The County has committed to work with and support the City in our efforts in terms of staff time and web site development at the conclusion of the process.



Based upon the funding challenges, staff applied for a technical assistance grant for the State Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) to assist in accomplishing the next steps in the process. \$50,000.00 was budgeted this year in anticipation of the county matching that amount to move forward with the project. Without the County’s financial participation, \$75,000.00 is proposed in the FY14 budget. Based upon this funding level, staff approached the State to bridge the gap.

The DEO anticipated that they would fund select projects throughout the State to a maximum of \$25,000. Based upon the quality of our application, the regional significance of this project, the potential economic benefits to the state and the proximity to the Wekiva Parkway, the City was granted \$37,500 to accomplish the project. This exceeded their maximum anticipated grant by 50 percent and was the highest grant awarded statewide.

Gateway Signage

Another short term, high impact project as outlined in the Vision Plan is to develop a standard for gateway monumentation to be constructed at major and minor entrances to the City. This system will act as an anchor to an updated wayfinding system to assist in directing people to points of interest within the City, with the primary destination being downtown and the lakefront.

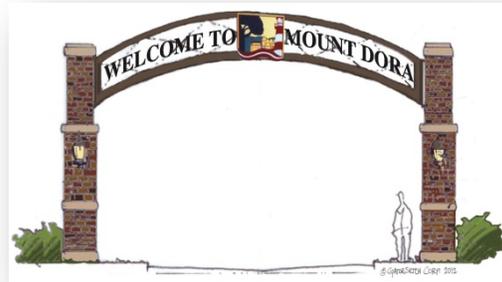
The Vision Plan proposed primary gateways at the following locations:

1. Round Lake Road and SR 46
2. US 441 and 1st Avenue
3. US 441 and Limit Avenue
4. US 441 and Donnelly Street
5. Eudora Road and Old 441



Secondary monumentation is proposed at the following locations:

1. US 441 and Lincoln Avenue
2. Donnelly Street and Lincoln Avenue
3. Highland Street and Camp Avenue, 1st Avenue and 5th Avenue
4. US 441 and Eudora Road



The City will phase the construction of these signs with the signage on Donnelly Street south of US 441 and at the intersection of Highland Street and First Avenue being constructed this year. Construction is anticipated the summer of 2014.

I am so honored and privileged to serve as Mayor of this great City. As we progress and prepare for future growth and development, we also hold firmly to our rich history. Forward-thinking leadership combined with an informed and engaged citizenry have benefited our City greatly over the years. Our future looks bright.

I encourage each resident to be involved, and to be confident that our City is well-managed, that our City is financially sound. We should all be proud that Mount Dora continues to be known as "Someplace Special."

Thank you,

Catherine T. Hoechst
Mount Dora Mayor

