2019 YEAR IN REVIEW
2019 WAS A YEAR OF SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS
for the City of Tallahassee. With the leadership of the Mayor and City Commissioners and in coordination with my fellow appointed officials, we set ambitious goals and focused on tackling the biggest issues facing our community, carving a path toward a bright future.

Key among our accomplishments was the establishment of the 2024 Strategic Plan. This comprehensive, five-year plan touches every element of the organization, establishing metrics and goals by which we will measure our success as we reach our bicentennial.

As part of the plan’s development, a workgroup of City employees and residents revised the City’s mission, vision and organizational values, which had not been updated in 22 years. The City’s bold, new mission is to be the national leader in the delivery of public service, and we are well on our way.

As the largest single provider of municipal services in our region, the City of Tallahassee is a driving force for creating a strong, vibrant community with a balanced budget totaling $900 million. The City’s workforce, which is made up of more than 3,000 employees, is innovative, dedicated and invested in the success of the organization and the community. They work to ensure every citizen is proud to call Tallahassee home because it’s their home, too.

This past year, we’ve accomplished a great many things toward improving Tallahassee’s quality of life, safety, economy and infrastructure, including expansion of the TEMPO program to aid at-risk youth and combat the impacts of poverty; completion of a robust process for a nationwide police chief search; implementation of a site selection process for the new police headquarters; creation of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to further the development and implementation of the City’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives; adoption of the Clean Energy Resolution to secure our energy future by setting milestone markers, moving us toward 100% net renewable energy; recruited MetroNet, a broadband provider, to make an initial investment of $75 million in Tallahassee that will create jobs and make us the state’s first Gigabit City; acquisition of the Northwood Centre for redevelopment; and achieving a 10-year high in passenger travel through the Tallahassee International Airport.

Within the pages of this Year in Review, you’ll read more about the groundbreaking things happening throughout the organization. You’ll also get a glimpse into the immense impact the City makes in the community.

While we created positive change in many areas, the multi-faceted, systemic issues facing our community are not ours alone to solve. Therefore, we enhanced citizen engagement, involving residents in neighborhood visioning, community planning, disaster response and more. We strengthened partnerships with neighborhood associations, faith and educational institutions and peer agencies. Collectively, we are stronger.

We know where we are headed, and our horizon is bright. We are leading with integrity. We are investing in excellence. We are doing the work required to ensure Tallahassee sets the standard for others to follow.

City Manager
Reese Goad

THE CITY OF TALLAHASSEE
was founded 195 years ago as Florida’s capital city. Today, the City proudly serves a diverse community of nearly 200,000 neighbors in all facets of life, work and recreation. Each day, a devoted workforce of approximately 3,000 people come together to ensure the needs of the community are met through municipal service. To guide this effort, the City Commission has adopted clear statements on why we exist, what we aspire to be and how we work.

OUR MISSION
To be the national leader in the delivery of public service.

OUR VISION
A creative capital city that supports a strong community with vibrant neighborhoods; an innovative economic and educational hub serving diverse and passionate people, protecting our natural resources and preserving our unique character.

OUR VALUES
- Honor public trust through ethical behavior
- Provide exceptional citizen service
- Lead with integrity at every level
- Collaborate to reach common goals
- Invest in employee excellence
- Promote equity and celebrate diversity
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$900 MILLION
BALANCED BUDGET

25 MILLION
GALLONS OF
DRINKING WATER
PER DAY

MORE THAN 3,000
employees

3.3 million
StarMetro Rides

410 SWORN OFFICERS

2 SOLAR FARM
COMPLETED CONSTRUCTION

1,300 MILES
OF WATER MAIN PIPING

600+
VOLUNTEER HOURS
$195,000
BUILD
3 NEW H4H HOMES

25 MILLION
GALLONS OF
DRINKING WATER
PER DAY

88 Parks, 70 Miles of Trails, 55 Tennis Courts, 29 Playgrounds, 11 Pools, 4 Dog Parks, 2 Disc Golf Courses & an Interactive Fountain

650 mi of streets
356 signalized intersections

500 mi of sidewalks

10 Year High in Passenger Traffic @ TLH

TALLAHASSEE:
AT A GLANCE

THE CITY OF TALLAHASSEE

YEAR IN REVIEW
To achieve our vision, the Tallahassee City Commission identified seven priority areas to guide service efforts.

**QUALITY OF LIFE**
Be a creative and inclusive community with beautiful public spaces that protect and promote resources and cultures.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
Advance the City of Tallahassee as a competitive, innovative and sustainable regional economic hub.

**PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE**
Be a leading publicly owned utility that supports a growing and progressive community. Be a city with an efficient public transit network supported by well-connected roads, sidewalks, transit amenities and public transportation.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**
Be a safe, resilient and inclusive community.

**IMPACT OF POVERTY**
Be a leading community partner that actively connects residents to resources that remove economic and social barriers.

**ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**
Be an impact-focused workforce that is inclusive, pioneering and technology-driven.

**PUBLIC TRUST**
Enhance public trust through ethical business practices and transparency.
Quality of life is the general health, well-being, comfort and happiness experienced by citizens. With a continued focus on maintaining financial stability, providing quality services responsive to customers and enhancing community and neighborhood vitality, the City is ensuring all residents are proud to call Tallahassee home. Ongoing quality of life efforts include sustainability initiatives, maintaining the urban canopy, housing options for every income level, healthy neighborhoods and consistent community engagement.
Key 2019 Highlights

- Adopted the Urban Forest Master Plan to ensure the City’s tree canopy is healthy and maintains its current 55 percent coverage.
- Designated a segment of Orange Avenue as “C.K. Steele Highway” to honor local civil rights activist.
- Removed non-gender neutral language from City Charter and other governing documents.
- Recognized nationally by the Human Rights Campaign as an LGBTQ Inclusive Municipal Employer with a score of 99/100 in the Municipal Equality Index.
- Provided $100,000 in grant funding for large public events held in the downtown area.
- Held inaugural “Taste of Tallahassee” event to showcase local culture and flavors to visitors and new residents.
- Unveiled Frenchtown Historical Marker Trail to tell the history of Frenchtown, one of Tallahassee’s oldest African-American communities.
- Awarded $8,800 AARP grant to construct pocket parks in the Greater Bond Neighborhood.
- Added four new outdoor pickleball courts and a new pump track in Tom Brown Park.
- Broke ground on the Southeast Park.
- Implemented the Frenchtown Placemaking Plan and the Greater Bond Neighborhood First Plan.
- Expanded wayfinding signage in Midtown.
- Awarded $429,000 grant from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation for Hurricane Michael recovery.
- Held more than 130 community meetings, workshops and citizen working group meetings.

Moving Forward with Purpose / Revitalizing Our Neighborhoods

Tallahassee is a community of neighborhoods, and the neighborhoods in which we live contribute to who we are. Each Tallahassee neighborhood is unique with its own set of advantages and challenges.

To help ensure that all residents can enjoy an excellent quality of life, the City invests resources into every pocket of our community to address challenges, be those issues of connectivity, economics or livability.

These efforts coupled with strong citizen engagement have led to the creation of action plans that set the course for neighborhoods to be vibrant and safe. These plans include the Frenchtown Placemaking Plan and the Greater Bond Neighborhood First Plan.

The Frenchtown Placemaking Plan was the first neighborhood plan to be officially approved, and several noticeable elements were implemented in 2019. This includes new neighborhood designation signs that top street signs throughout the area, nine “Soul Voices” audio markers that detail the neighborhood’s rich history and large-scale block party events, dubbed “Frenchtown Rising,” that take place on Friday nights before Florida A&M University home games. Each of these elements addresses a different objective set forth in the plan, which is ongoing in its execution; however, they all work together to build a stronger Frenchtown for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Similarly, the Greater Bond Neighborhood First Plan addresses the residents’ top priorities and concerns. Approved soon after Frenchtown’s plan, a key element came to fruition this year, securing additional funding of $8,800 from AARP to construct linear pocket parks.

Nearby, South City was designated a “Purpose Built Community” by the Atlanta-based non-profit Purpose Built Communities Inc. Its three-pronged approach focuses on affordable housing, cradle-to-college education and community amenities that promote a healthy lifestyle. To complement this effort, the City allocated more than $1 million in support and will collaborate with residents and stakeholders in 2020 on a comprehensive neighborhood plan.

The City also installed new gas street lights along Seventh Avenue for the Levy Park neighborhood and provided support to help the Eastgate and Bull Run V neighborhoods host socials for their residents.

Through steady visioning and a strong commitment to its residents, the City is bringing value to all areas of our community to ensure that Tallahassee flourishes.
With a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of $13.8 billion, Tallahassee has one of the fastest-growing economies in Florida. Through coordination and cooperation with multiple stakeholders, the economic development efforts of the City of Tallahassee have advanced local business.
Key 2019 Highlights

- Approved a joint-use agreement for City-owned power poles, making way for MetroNet, a fiber optic telecommunication service provider, to invest $75 million in the Tallahassee market.
- Purchased the Northwood Centre at auction to spur development along the Monroe Street corridor.
- Received $17.5 million in aviation grant funding for the design of a new International Passenger Processing Facility at the Tallahassee International Airport (TLH).
- Increased airport passenger traffic by 6.6 percent up to 852,855 total passengers, a 10-year high.
- Established Elevate Florida’s Capital for Business Grant Fund to invest in and provide a strong talent development and retention network for employees and employers in Tallahassee.
- Contributed to a 38 percent decrease over five years in the unemployment rate, bringing the rate to 3.5 percent.

Making Tallahassee Florida’s First Gigabit City

Success in today’s modern world requires a stronger connection to technology than ever before. From basic research for a school project to sealing international business deals, a fast, reliable and affordable internet connection is crucial. Two important steps were made this year to further these services for Tallahassee residents.

First, the City Commission requested two studies. One looked at municipal broadband networks. The other analyzed fiber optic networks and broadband internet accessibility in Tallahassee. For the latter, a partnership was formed with a research team from Florida A&M University’s School of Business and Industry.

Research sought to analyze the feasibility of utilizing or expanding the City’s existing municipal fiber network to provide broadband internet to residents and businesses. The basis of the discussion was rooted in the perception of a “digital divide,” in which a lack of internet access acts as a social and economic barrier for economically-disadvantaged residents. Highspeed internet, or broadband, is instrumental for residents as it relates to providing economic opportunity, job creation, education and civic engagement. However, there are many areas in this country where broadband access is unavailable. In urban areas, 97 percent of Americans have access to high-speed fixed service. In rural areas, that number falls to 65 percent. Nearly 30 million Americans are currently unable to benefit from the advantages of being a part of the digital age (Federal Communication Commission, 2019).

While the conversation and research occurred, the Commission acted on the City Manager’s recommendation to immediately move the needle and enhance economic development opportunities in this space. The vote to adjust the City’s policy for joint use of utility poles opened the door for private utility providers to share space on 9,000 City utility poles, roughly 15 percent of the City’s inventory.

This approach proved successful, as MetroNet, a fiber optic telecommunication service provider, announced its intention to expand services to Tallahassee, bringing a planned investment of $75 million to the Capital City. Recognizing the City’s desire to close the digital divide, MetroNet agreed to invest in the Bond, Frenchtown and South City neighborhoods. The company’s arrival will make Tallahassee the first Gigabit City in Florida.
Enhanced efficiency, innovative approaches and streamlined processes for maintaining our infrastructure are allowing the City to provide high quality services in a fiscally responsible way while meeting the needs of a growing community.
Enjoying a clean, healthy environment is a hallmark of Tallahassee's high quality of life. To ensure that this continues for future generations, the Tallahassee City Commission formally adopted the Clean Energy Resolution in February 2019. This action affirmed the City's goal of moving the organization and community to 100 percent net renewable energy by 2050. To guide these efforts internally, the City set milestone markers that touch on such things as increasing solar energy production, reducing greenhouse emissions and shifting StarMetro fixed route buses to 100 percent electric. Progress is well underway.

- Construction occurred in 2019 for Solar Farm 2, a 40MW facility. It is expected to be operational in 2020.
- The Electric Utility has already reduced emissions beyond the set goals for both the 2020 Paris Accord and the Kyoto Protocol, and it is on track to surpass the 2025 Paris Accord goal well before that time.
- StarMetro purchased 15 new, all-electric buses this year as part of a partnership with Florida State University, making one-third of the City's daily bus fleet electric.

To meet the resolution's goal, the City is developing a Clean Energy Plan – the actionable blueprint that will guide efforts through 2050. The plan will lay out how to approach the reinvention of our City's energy future.

From programs to aid residents like free energy audits to community partnerships like the Capital Area Sustainability Compact, the City's wide-ranging endeavors continue to reduce the community's dependence on fossil fuels, enhance sustainability, and ultimately, create a flourishing environment for future Tallahasseans.
The City’s continued commitment to addressing crime in our community through a collaborative, community-focused approach is working. Over the last year, community-centered events such as Operation Safe Neighborhoods, Splash & Jam, Water Warz and the Neighborhood Public Safety Initiative have helped TPD’s officers build stronger bonds with thousands of residents. From working directly with neighborhoods to address concerns to providing a pathway for disconnected youth to connect with educational and career opportunities, the City is working holistically to address public safety and the systemic issues that contribute to it.
In 2019, our community had energetic and robust conversations about public safety. Like never before, residents participated in activities and contributed to decisions relating to the Tallahassee Police Department.

One of the largest engagement efforts of the past year was the process to identify a location for the next police headquarters. TPD has outgrown its current headquarters, which was originally built as a school and is nearly 100 years old. Building a new facility will require a large public investment and have ripple effects for the surrounding community. Ensuring residents have a voice in the process is vital.

Launching the effort, 68 site proposals were received from the community. Through multiple rounds of evaluation and public input, the list was narrowed to two top locations.

Launching the effort, 68 site proposals were received from the community. Through multiple rounds of evaluation and public input, the list was narrowed to two top locations.

Leading the charge will be the newly hired Chief of Police who was selected from a nationwide pool of 52 candidates. The process for hiring a new chief began in August 2019 with a search conducted by the Florida Police Chief’s Association (FPCA). Of the 52 resume submissions accepted, FPCA recommended 20 candidates to the local Community Partners Committee, which was comprised of community, faith, business and law enforcement leaders. These community stakeholders twice narrowed the list down during public meetings and unanimously voted to advance three finalists for consideration. City Manager Reese Goad made the final selection in December.

Additionally, TPD continues to implement proactive, community-based solutions that complement law enforcement efforts, from prevention campaigns like #9PMRoutine to community philanthropy like Bigs in Blue to educational classes like RAD (Rape Aggression Defense).

These efforts reflect the holistic approach required to affect real change in public safety. In 2020, the City and TPD will continue to work hand-in-hand with residents to make Tallahassee safer, resilient and inclusive.
Impact of Poverty

Rising economic inequality and the human impact of poverty nationwide continue to be challenges that demand a collective community response. The City supports multiple local programs and services to address nearly every influencing factor of poverty, including the education of disconnected youth, job training, health and wellness and affordable housing.
"TEMPO refocused my life and changed it for the better," Casey Hayes, 21, said. "I now know that I can do more."

Casey, a graduate of the TEMPO program, is one of 740 young individuals whose lives have been forever changed by the City’s efforts to meaningfully connect with our community’s disconnected youth.

TEMPO, which was founded in October 2017, provides people ages 16-24 who are out of school and out of work (defined as disconnected youth) with educational and employment opportunities. According to data, these young people have the greatest potential to be gun violence offenders and victims. TEMPO provides a better alternative.

Participants connect with resources, including mentoring, education, career training and local support options, such as childcare providers. By tapping participants into these networks, TEMPO has been described as a lifeline, echoing Casey’s sentiments by the hundreds.

Seeing the priceless transformation of the more than 700 young adults who have participated in the TEMPO program since its inception, the City Manager, with support from the City Commission, expanded the program’s staffing and resources this year. The new caseworkers are helping grow the reach and effectiveness of the program, helping local youths see their potential and find their own path to success.
The City is the largest provider of municipal services in the region. A workforce of more than 3,000 employees works around the clock to provide best-in-class services to Tallahassee. To provide these services, which include everything from utilities to law enforcement and fire protection to aviation, the City operates a balanced budget of $900 million. While external services are frequently at the forefront, internal services, such as human resources, financial services and fleet, provide a vital support structure to ensure the City continues to operate efficiently, effectively, transparently and ethically.
Our community celebrates its bicentennial in 2024. To set the groundwork that will guide our community into its 200th anniversary, the Tallahassee City Commission approved the 2024 Strategic Plan in 2019. This plan, the first overarching plan of its magnitude in the City's history, set forth the framework for us to chart our progress toward achieving our collective aspirations for who we are as a community, while solidifying the City as the national leader in the delivery of public service.

The five-year strategic plan seeks to build a creative Capital City that supports a strong community with vibrant neighborhoods and diverse, passionate people; that thrives as an innovative economic and educational hub; and that protects our natural resources.

To address and streamline organizational efforts for key elements in the strategic plan, City Manager Reese Goad created two new departments: the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Department of Community Services.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is responsible for the further development and implementation of the City’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. One of its directives is ensuring the City’s workforce is reflective of the community it serves. This includes developing a strategic focus on recruiting, retaining and promoting the best and most diverse talent available.

The City’s award-winning programs Tallahassee Engaged in Meaningful Productivity for Opportunity (TEMPO) and the Tallahassee Future Leaders Academy (TFLA) are now housed within the Department of Community Services. These programs directly combat the impacts of poverty by connecting local youth with education and employment opportunities.

These two new departments were created within the existing Fiscal Year 2020 budget – a testament to the City’s commitment to fiscal responsibility. This commitment has helped the City achieve “AA” bond ratings and keep the cost of municipal services among the lowest for peer cities in the state. The City remains committed to its transparent, year-round budget process.

The effectiveness of any organization begins with its credibility among the community it serves. The City is committed to honoring public trust by being transparent, accountable, accessible and open.

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**Key 2019 Highlights**

- Adopted the 2024 Strategic Plan to guide City operations toward its bicentennial.
- Adopted new mission, vision and values statements, which had not been revised in 22 years.
- Created the Department of Community Services to directly combat the impacts of poverty.
- Held accelerated job fair for 300 job seekers, of which at least 90 received a conditional offer of employment on site or a call-back for a second interview.
- Implemented a new Parental Leave Policy providing new parents up to six weeks of paid leave.
- Created the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to further the development and implementation of the City’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.
- Established a recruitment pipeline for engineers with the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering.
- Significantly increased the diversity of the City’s Leadership Team through the hiring and development of five Department Directors.
The City is committed to demonstrating fiscal responsibility, ethical decision making and efficient use of resources, while maintaining transparency and encouraging citizen engagement.
On Dec. 4, 2019, the Tallahassee City Commission unanimously passed the most comprehensive ethics reform ordinance in City history, creating one of the strongest ethics packages for any municipality in Florida. The package aims to strengthen public trust in local government and enhance transparency.

The new and strengthened provisions dictate the high ethical standards required of all City employees, from the highest level of the Commission to seasonal part-time work. For example, an updated gift policy prohibits the solicitation or acceptance of gifts from any entity or individual who conducts or wishes to do business with the City. The expanded financial disclosure provision requires elected officials to submit a document consistent with a Florida Form 6 reflecting full disclosure of their financial interests. Hotline calls alleging ethical violations are now afforded the same confidential protections as any other ethics complaint. These are only some of the changes that comprise the Ethics Reform Package.

In a fast-paced, ever-evolving world, these new standards set pillars for the organization and provide clarity for decision making that create consistency at all levels and greater accountability. Becoming the national leader in the delivery of public service requires a strong foundation and a strong vision, both of which were set in 2019.

Key 2019 Highlights

- Achieved 100 percent participation in ethics training by all employees.
- Adopted Ethics Reform Package, including a zero gift policy, expanded jurisdiction of the Independent Ethics Board and expanded financial reporting requirements.
- Held three City Commission meetings outside City Hall (Gilchrist Elementary School in April 2019 and the Smith-Williams Community Center in January and June 2019).
- Expanded mailing and notice radius for public hearings related to site plan reviews, re-zonings and the sale of City property.
- Eliminated the 30-minute provision for agendaeed items for public comment at City Commission meetings.
- Implemented an opportunity for public input at the time each agenda item is taken up at City Commission meetings.
- Placed the full list of current lobbyists and vendors on Talgov.com.
With a nod to our delicious dining scene and vibrant districts balanced by our beautiful natural surroundings and opportunities for outdoor adventure, Tallahassee was named one of the South’s Best Cities by Southern Living Magazine, making it the only Florida city to be recognized in the category.

Amenities, civics, demographics, economy, education, health, housing and infrastructure all helped Tallahassee earn a spot on this prestigious list.

The City’s Natural Gas Utility was named the best in the nation in 2019 when it won the Public Gas System Achievement Award. This award is presented annually to one public gas system for its substantial contributions to the community, other utilities and the goals of APGA.