



“A Healthy Winter Park for 2010” State of the City Address January 13, 2010

Presented by
**The Honorable Kenneth W. Bradley
City of Winter Park Mayor**

CITY OF WINTER PARK

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Winter Park, Florida

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The state of our city is alive and healthy. In 2010, with diligent work and focus—Winter Park can be even more thriving and vibrant.

Today we talk about the health of our city government, the health of our downtown and the health of our residents.

Let’s talk about the “Health of our City”

The health of our city relies upon the health of our finances. In 2009, we worked diligently to assure our citizens tax rate would remain the same while maintaining city services. We adopted a balanced budget. We also refinanced a majority of our water, sewer and electricity bonds to achieve a present value savings in excess of \$2.5 million.

Our City Commission and staff fully understand the difficult economic times. We must continue to be cost effective. With a budget themed “Maintaining Today for a Stronger Tomorrow” we are able to focus on rebuilding our reserves and maintaining our city assets. Reserves have been increased by 11 percent and \$150,000 has been devoted for an expanded maintenance program for city parks and facilities.

This means projects such as resurfacing tennis courts, re-sodding Little League fields, or replacing items such as picnic tables, pavilions and gazebos will be taken care of this fiscal year. In fact, this very building, the Rachel D. Murrah Civic Center, was the first project under the new expanded maintenance program and was closed last week for extensive maintenance and painting. You’ll see more city facilities undergoing similar maintenance on a rotating basis throughout the year.

In addition, we’ve restored full funding to repave 9.5 miles of our roads because maintaining the good condition of our roads is a vital asset to keeping our city strong.

Thanks to city staff

One of the things I enjoy the most about being mayor is having the opportunity to tout the excellent work of our City Commission and devoted city staff. If all of the city staff present could please stand—please join me in recognizing their work and devotion. Thanks also to Commissioners Bridges and Diebel, who complete their terms in March.

City utility performance

I'm very pleased with the continual improvements that have been made to our electric utility. SAIDI is considered as the best overall measure of reliability and measures the average customer outage time. MAIFI measures momentary outages of less than one minute.

To compare when we took over the system in 2005 to now, here's where we stand:

- In 2005 - SAIDI average was 104 minutes
- Last year - SAIDI average of 80.69 outage minutes per customer

- In 2005 - MAIFI average 22 momentary outages per customer
- Last year - MAIFI average 2.21 outages per customer

These dramatic improvements show that our proactive measures such as vine removal and tree trimming combined with strategic decisions in infrastructure improvements and undergrounding is what makes for a very successful and reliable utility.

Last year we also replaced all of our electric meters with new Smart Meters that now allow the city to read meters remotely. This enhances the accuracy of electric readings and will ultimately further the city's Green Local Government initiatives by reducing the number of vehicles on the road, reducing pollution and traffic while saving fuel.

Some other major green initiatives we implemented in 2009 were:

- addition of recycling receptacles at all of our major city events
- addition of the Green Button on the city's Web site
- hiring of WastePro as our new solid waste and recycling provider
- enforcement of St. John's new irrigation rules
- the most recent conceptual approval of the construction of solar panels on top of Rollins' College's SunTrust Parking Garage

Our infrastructure is strong, our utilities are reliable, our finances are sound...the health of our city is in thriving condition, however, we can't think about the health of our city without thinking about its heart.

Let's talk about the "Health of our Downtown"

With the nation still living through the impact of a down economy, it was pertinent the city do what it could to help our businesses in 2009.

Our Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board worked diligently to implement plans and continue its active involvement with our commercial residents through creative new ideas, programs and incentives.

1. Business Façade Program

- 13 businesses
- Over \$130,000 to enhance the look of commercial districts and support small business

2. CRA Housing Rehab Program
 - Assisted over 130 homes since its inception in 2002 with 19 homes completed in 2009
3. Improve the traffic flow
 - Orange Avenue, Webster and Pennsylvania
 - Will be completed under budget
 - strong partnerships with commercial businesses
 - major transformation into premiere corridors of the city
4. Wayfinding
 - Working with the Florida Department of Transportation in getting approval for the signs to direct visitors to our downtown core and amenities.
5. Park Avenue Strategic Plan: Britt Beamer
 - founder of America's Research Group and leading expert on consumer and retail trends
 - two surveys and six public meetings over a five month period
 - assess the issues and opportunities facing the Park Avenue Area
 - help understand how to keep our crown jewel alive and thriving
 - Results helped develop the Park Avenue Area Strategic Plan that addresses the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of the Park Avenue Area.
 - shop local and support our merchants
6. Winter in the Park Ice Skating Rink:
 - one of the "coolest" things we did in 2009
 - this was an effort to keep our downtown thriving and healthy by bringing more people to our core
 - also to complement our already successful holiday festivities
 - six week timeframe, almost 10,000 skaters enjoyed the rink on the ice and that's not counting all those that chose to enjoy the rink off the ice
 - made over \$120,000 in revenues from this new venture
 - will be deciding at the CRA and Commission level on where to glide from here

2009 was also the year that we welcomed many new businesses to Winter Park and supported those that we are growing.

Companies such as:

- Full Sail University celebrated its 20th Anniversary
- FCTN (Fiction Creative), a new creative studio specializing in direction, post-production, graphic and motion design
- AeroClave, a new company that using bio-technology to keep our community safe
- Bonnier Corporation, one of the largest consumer-publishing groups is headquartered in Winter Park Village

All of these companies represent an exciting era for our city and I am thrilled to see the city expanding its opportunities into the creative world of the digital and technological age. I am pleased to have such a variety of economic engines right in our hometown.

As you saw in the Downtown Video, many of our local businesses and institutions have risen to the top of the lists in many national and local publications and it is because of these types of programs and initiatives that we are growing and being recognized.

The heart of our city is beating strongly and as our economy strengthens, so will our downtown.

Healthy residents

We cannot have a healthy government or a healthy Park Avenue unless the health of our citizens is vibrant.

It seems very appropriate to talk about our health now when many people make healthy New Year resolutions to eat better and exercise more. These resolutions fulfilled can make our city better. Fortunately, we offer many parks, recreation and amenities to encourage a healthy lifestyle. The city also partners with wonderful organizations to help us achieve our personal goals.

LIFE, the Lake Island Fitness Experience at Lake Island Park is one of those new amenities.

- Paid in part by a grant from the Winter Park Health Foundation
- Features nine pieces of equipment positioned outdoors to be used as an intensive training circuit to complement a nice jog or walk along the half mile lakefront walkway

If trail walking is your exercise of choice, through a partnership with Winter Park High School, the city, the Winter Park Health Foundation and Rotary, we will be breaking ground on a new fitness trail next to Winter Park High School very soon.

For our bicycle enthusiasts, also made possible by a grant from the Health Foundation, we installed 34 dual bicycle racks along the easterly side streets of Park Avenue and in various parks throughout the city. Those who choose bikes now have many more places to park. Making sure our city is bicycle and pedestrian friendly is very important to the health of our community.

It is evident the health of our residents is important. In fact, our parks and recreation needs are so important that they always rise to the top of the list in city surveys. Your city staff and city Commission do what needs to be done to ensure the quality of our parks is outstanding.

This often results in spirited debates and heated discussions, as we experienced with Fleet Peoples Park, the Azalea Lane Tennis Center and Central Park. I'm happy to say that it is because of the deep love we have for our city that we have healthy debates about amenities we care about. I'd take passion over indifference any day.

Another example of minding our health in 2009 was taken by our Fire-Rescue Department, when prior to the flu season they conducted Flu Shot Friday's. Arming our residents with both the seasonal and H1N1 vaccines, we offered the community these clinics to keep us healthy, especially at when the effects of the new strain of H1N1 were unknown.

In addition to the Fire-Rescue Department protecting the health of our citizens, the Winter Park Police Department has been working hard to protect our city. In 2009, our police department worked tirelessly to combat crime.

Unfortunately, we don't live in a bubble and we aren't immune to violent crime as we tragically experienced on Halloween, but the proactive measures our police department continues to take resulted in a **reduction** in crime of over 19 percent when compared to the previous year.

This is almost twice the reduction in crime experience statewide. This fact makes me appreciate living in our great city.

Social media

At the beginning of 2009, I thought Twitter was something that happened to my heart when I saw my wife! Now, Twitter is one of the new ways our city communicates with each one of you and our "fans". Since December 1, we have secured almost 500 fans on Facebook and over 50 followers on Twitter. The city also created a new website along with video highlights of our city. So if you want the city to tweet you or if you are Facebooker, follow us on these two new communication tools so you can find out about all the exciting new things we will be doing in 2010. Yes, Winter Park has entered the social media world in order to communicate with each one of you.

2010 opportunities

Now only 13 days into the New Year and three months into our actual fiscal year, we have some exciting projects ahead of us. These projects and decisions will make us thrive in 2010.

The construction of a new **Winter Park Community Center** is at the top of our list. The new center is designed to serve the entire city with 38,000 square foot of space for brand new classrooms, meeting space, fitness center, double sized gym, parks and pool facility.

The new plans call for Shady Park to be an integral part of the new center. These plans will nearly double the size of the existing center. Construction starts this year and our grand opening should be in spring 2011.

We have some exciting new streetscapes planned for the **Fairbanks Avenue Intersection** at Orange and Pennsylvania avenues making traffic and pedestrian safety improvements to one of Winter Park's most prominent intersections.

Morse Boulevard will get a face lift with two separate projects both to incorporate underground electric and improvements to the water system. West Morse from US Highway 17/92 to New York Avenue will be resurfaced with decorative lighting and landscaping.

East Morse Boulevard from Park Avenue to Interlachen Avenue - sidewalks will be widened for café dining, streets will be bricked, decorative lighting will be added, green space will be enhanced, and a piazza will be built.

These improvements will make this very important commercial side street even more welcoming for the thousands of visitors and guests of Winter Park and the Scenic Boat Tour.

After many years of research, education, public referendums and political discussions, **SunRail** passed through the Florida Senate and we will continue to develop our plans along with the reconstruction of our **Amtrak station** in Winter Park.

We have some major items to address in 2010:

- fate of the state office building
- which sections of our city charter will be approved at the referendum on March 9
- what revisions to our residential codes will be approved to ensure the scale and character of new development or redevelopments are compatible with existing single-family neighborhoods

But what I do know for sure, in 2010 these things will happen:

- Our roads will be safer with the installation and implementation of our red light cameras
- The Bach Festival will celebrate its 75th anniversary
- The Women's Club will turn 95
- Our two major educational institutions, the Winter Park Public Library and Rollins College will turn 125
- And we will continue to be the best place to live work and play in Central Florida by preserving a superior quality of life for today's residents and for future generations.

May God bless each of you and our beloved city--Winter Park.