

Remarks of Mayor Pam Iorio State of the City March 2005

Yes, we have accomplished much this past year. In every area of city government – in every service we provide to the community – we have seen improvement. It has been a productive partnership with Tampa City Council – a group of committed public servants with ideas and energy who treat the public with respect.

Let's talk about our future.

As we go forward, let's remember our goal- not just to make Tampa better-but to make Tampa one of the most livable cities in the country.

So how does this shape our agenda?

Livable cities embrace their diversity and encourage participation amongst the broadest cross section of their community. The community partnerships we have created in each of our redevelopment areas reflect this. We must not lose sight of the need to constantly bring new people and ideas into the process, from the young people involved in Emerge Tampa, to the new homeowner in the Channel District, West Tampa, East Tampa or New Tampa. The richness of diversity is the strength of Tampa.

Livable cities continue to attract and retain quality companies that offer good paying jobs. Competition is keen amongst cities – but Tampa can compete with any place in the country. It takes an aggressive spirit as we compete and we must make the most of all of our assets. Our Port has new leadership and a new commitment to an expansion of global trading opportunities. We have had good success in the past year and we must build on that success to attract a broad range of new jobs.

Livable cities have downtowns that are alive, energetic, creative and fulfilling. They include residential communities and real neighborhoods. We have seen this past year the exciting private investment occurring in our downtown core. Now it is our job as city government to clear the clutter of obstacles – to make our streets pedestrian friendly – to change our one-way street to more user friendly two-way streets. To beautify where we can – to preserve our history where we must – to make our downtown a vibrant and welcoming place for festivals. Downtown is everybody's neighborhood.

Livable cities have a commitment to the arts – to the creative arts, performing arts and the preservation of art. We will have a new art museum for Tampa and a new Children's Museum must be coordinated with a new art museum. When one idea falters, it should not be seen as a loss, but as a time for the rebirth of new ideas – as a time for opportunity.

Our even greater challenge is to ensure the proper integration of all the large scale projects planned for our Downtown River District. We are working daily on the Riverwalk. Design will be underway soon on the waterfront park with a redo of Ashley Street. Our Riverwalk will open up the river to the people. We must never take our focus away from completing it – section by section – and never lose sight of how it will

connect people from Channelside to Tampa Heights and integrate the beauty of the river with the enhanced life of downtown. We must work with great care so that this generation and future generations will say, “It was done right.”

Livable cities are committed to improve areas that are economically challenged and need help to become vibrant neighborhoods. We have laid the foundation for economic revitalization in East Tampa- now we must push forward for better housing and most importantly – jobs. It is this model of engagement with the community and the private sector that we replicate in West Tampa and other challenged areas of our city. Residents of Central Park Village deserve better and through a spirit of partnership between government and the private sector, we will make it better.

Livable cities have mass transit that works. Hartline has new leadership – it is time we come together as a community – city-county-Hartline- the citizens- and decide what kind of mass transit system we need and must have for the future – devise a plan and put it before the voters. We cannot fail future generations- let’s plan and fund today alternatives to an ever increasing congested road system.

And finally, a value that I hold dear. It is the concept that all neighborhoods be treated the same – that no neighborhood be left behind. We must invest in continual neighborhood improvements – from parks and recreational facilities to better code enforcement- to sidewalks and street resurfacing – to a continual reduction in crime – to stormwater improvements - to an emphasis on those basic government services that matter to people. It is the first function of government. It is what we should do extremely well.

Yes, we are a large American city, Florida’s third largest and the nation’s 55th largest in fact. But our size and dynamic growth and concentration on all of the exciting projects that are on-going should not cause us to lose focus on the everyday needs of our citizens. Those needs are real – I hear them everyday- the seven council members hear them everyday – and collectively, the improvements we make to every neighborhood fulfills a basic contract we as public officials have with our citizens.

My friends, I look forward to each new day because it is filled with the promise of progress - of new initiatives - of real results - for this great city we call home.

Thank you.