

# Long Term Financial Plan

## PLANNING PROCESS

The long-term financial plan is the foundation of the strategic planning process. The plan provides direction for the allocation of resources and ensures fiscal responsibility. The long-term plan is reviewed and revised each year after the annual financial audit and during the annual budget preparation. The timing of the review allows staff an opportunity to evaluate existing policies in order to implement new strategies before fiscal constraints impact the budget. This practice allowed the City to remain fiscally sound during the past recessionary period.

The General Fund, Utility Fund and Stormwater Fund are the City's main operating funds and therefore a priority when evaluating the long-term financial plan. Long-range planning for capital funds are discussed in the Capital Improvement Program section later in this document.

## PERSONNEL

As economic conditions improve, the job market is becoming more competitive. This has been apparent over the past two years as long-time employees have left employment with the City to pursue new endeavors. In an effort to mitigate the loss of talented staff, and to remain competitive in the current job market, the fiscal year 2017 budget includes a base salary adjustment of 2% as well as provisions for merit increases not to exceed an average of 2% department wide. For the second year, City Council also approved an additional 1% merit increase in the fiscal year 2017 budget to recognize high performing employees.

## IN-HOUSE PROJECTS

One way that the City continues to maintain lean operating costs, while raising the bar on the level of service being provided, is by evaluating all project needs before using an outside contractor. Whenever possible, our talented staff is used to complete projects that would have otherwise be outsourced. During the planning stage, staff completes a cost-benefit analysis to make a determination as to whether work should be completed by staff or be outsourced.



In fiscal year 2013, landscaping services were brought in-house allowing the City to reduce its costs for maintaining city facilities while increasing the level of service. In fiscal year 2015 the Fleet Management division took over the maintenance of Fire fleet. Over the last several years City crews have completed the construction of many miles of popular multi-use paths within the city.

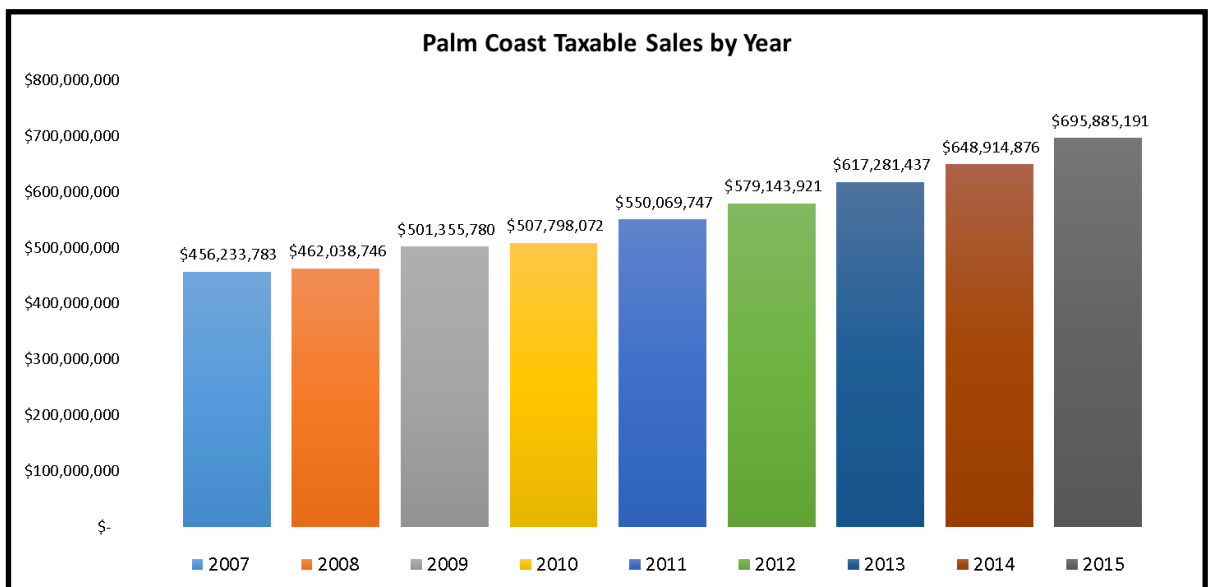
These changes continue to produce cost savings while boosting morale among employees. Staff continues monitoring in-house programs closely to ensure the changes made continue to produce a cost savings while providing citizens with a high level quality of services.

## REVENUE

In an ongoing effort to keep City Council well informed, staff provides an annual review of all funding sources. This includes information about restrictions on revenue sources and funding options available for future needs. There are two funding sources which are not currently in use and are available for future funding. These include the Public Service Tax and Utility Franchise Fees. Both of these funding sources represent the potential for nearly \$8 million of new revenue annually. This discussion takes place each year during the budget preparation process.

## LOCAL ECONOMY

A strong economic environment is critical to the long range financial health of the city. Taxable sales continue to rise and have indicated that tourism efforts as described in City Council's goal 2 of the strategic action plan have had a positive impact on the community.



New home construction continues to increase and the number of single family residential permits are at an all time high since 2009. After several years of declining property values during the recession, property values have increased for the fourth consecutive year and the trend is expected to continue. Improving economic conditions as well as City Council's focus on beautification and strengthening neighborhoods is believed to have contributed to the continuing increase in property values.

As with many municipal golf courses in the area, the City's golf course is seeing declining revenues and is being subsidized by General Fund revenue. The Parks and Recreation Department however, is seeing an increase in rentals and participation in recreational activities offered by the City. At the end of fiscal year 2016, summer camp registration was at an all time high since 2010. Community Center reservations also continue to climb and have more than doubled since 2012. The growing number of athletic tournaments being held in Palm Coast are having a positive impact on sales tax collections within the county. The economic impact in the community of sporting events since 2011 is estimated to have increased from \$1.6 million in 2011 to \$5.7 million in 2016.

## FORECAST ASSUMPTIONS

<u>Statistical Data</u>	<u>Source</u>
POPULATION	Based on Bureau of Economic Business Research (BEBR) annual estimates
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI)	US Bureau of Labor statistics, <a href="http://www.bls.gov">www.bls.gov</a> , based on 10-year avg.
MARKET VALUE CHANGE	Estimated increase in assessed value in addition to new construction for current fiscal year
TAXABLE SALES	State of Florida, Department of Revenue

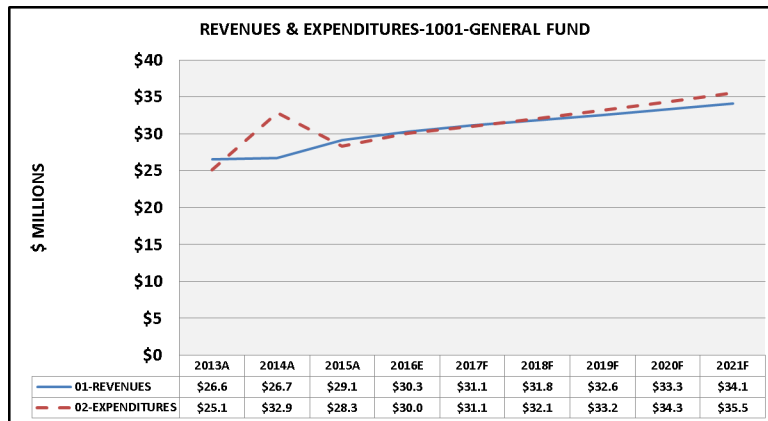
<u>Revenue Source</u>	<u>Assumption</u>
AD VALOREM TAXES	Assume average increase of new construction of 1.25% over prior year, 1% annual market value change, and flat millage rate
SMALL COUNTY SURTAX	Based on historical data increase 4% per year
LOCAL OPTION FUEL TAX	Based on historical data keep flat
COMMUNICATION SERVICE TAX	Due to a continuing decline in this revenue source, assume decrease of 1% per year
PERMITS, FEES AND SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS	Increase 3% per year based on residential permitting trend
STATE REVENUE SHARING	Based on historical data, increase 4% per year
1/2 CENT SALES	Based on historical data, increase 4% per year
CHARGES FOR SERVICES	Based on historical data, increase 4% per year
STORMWATER FEES	A .5% increase per year has been assumed based on an estimate of potential commercial properties being developed each year.

<u>Expenditures Type</u>	<u>Assumption</u>
PERSONNEL SERVICES	4% increase per year based on currently approved staffing level
PROFESSIONAL AND CONTRACT SERVICES	Increase by CPI
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	Increase by CPI
STREET LIGHTS EXPENSES	Based on historical data, increase by 5% per year
CAPITAL OUTLAY	Based on 5 year CIP and 10 year infrastructure funding plan which is revised annually
PROPERTY, LIABILITY AND AUTO INSURANCE	Based on historical data, increase by 15% per year

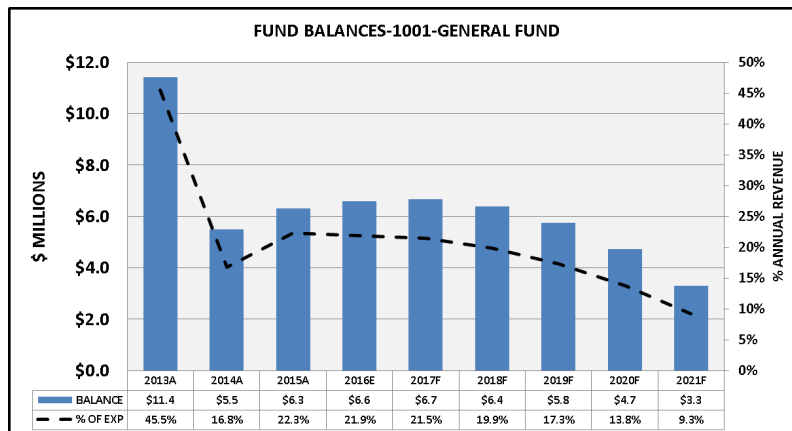
## GENERAL FUND

This year City Council adopted a millage rate of 4.2450 for the third consecutive year. This was possible because of gross taxable property values increasing 4.9% from \$4,142,103,986 in fiscal year 2016 to \$4,346,135,923 in 2017. This is the fourth consecutive year that taxable values have increased.

Property taxes account for approximately 12% of the total City revenue. However, it is the largest single revenue source for the General Fund. City Council is sensitive to the public's desire to maintain level property taxes, but inflationary pressure and future infrastructure needs will inevitably have an effect on future millage rates. Residents also continue to request additional services. Without significant and continuing growth in the taxable value of property, keeping the millage rate flat is not sustainable.



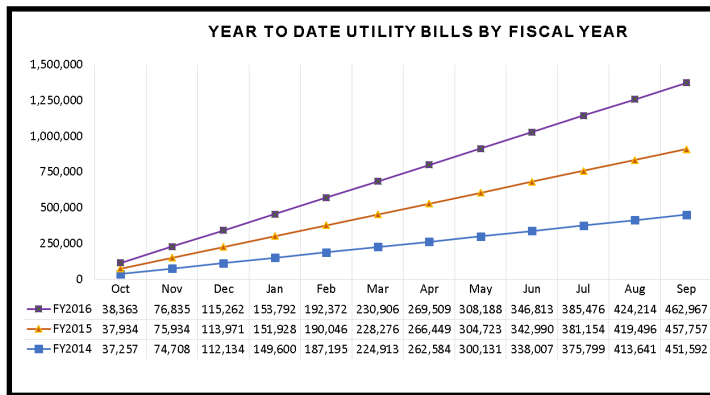
Other major sources of tax revenue for the General Fund include the Communication Services Tax and the Half-Cent Sales Tax. Although sales tax revenue has been increasing, the Communications Services Tax has been steadily declining. Continued pressure on General Fund revenue raises concerns about the ability to remain in compliance with the fund balance policy in future years.



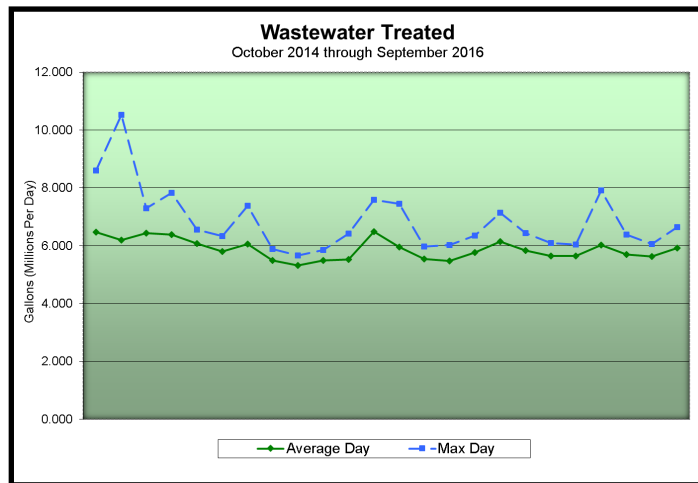
Personal services, totaling \$17.4 million of the \$32 million fiscal year 2017 General Fund budget, accounts for more than half of the total expenditures in the General Fund. Public safety is the largest function supported by the General Fund with general government being the next largest followed by transportation and recreation.

## UTILITY FUND

During the recent recession, growth within the Utility service area decreased significantly. Growth is at an all time high since the recession and the Utility Fund is now feeling the impact of increased needs in utility services. Based on recent trends for new utility service accounts, residential building permits and population projections, an increase in growth in the current water and wastewater customer base is expected.



In order to continue to meet capacity needs, construction of a second Wastewater Treatment facility has begun. This \$30 million project is being funded through state loan program proceeds at an interest rate of only .67%. This will save over \$6 million in interest costs over the life of the loan. The facility is expected to be operating at the end of fiscal year 2018.



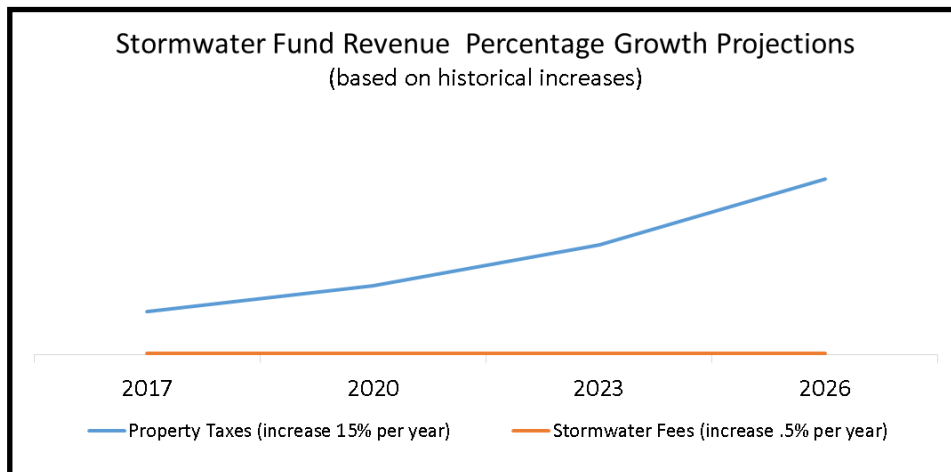
In 2013 the City refunded its 2003 Utility Revenue Bonds which produced a present value debt service savings of over \$6 million. The City also issued an additional \$20 million for immediate capital needs. Due to the debt service savings, the additional borrowing only netted an overall annual increase in debt service of approximately \$500,000.

As a result of a 2013 rate study, a series of rate increases took place ending in October 2014. This allowed for contributions to the Utility Capital Projects fund to be increased from 5% of gross revenues to 10% for the repair and renewal (R&R) of aging infrastructure. These rate increases have helped stabilize the fund balance in the Utility Fund and will support future debt service resulting from the additional Wastewater Treatment facility without increasing utility rates. To stay ahead of rising operating costs and capital infrastructure needs, City Council has instituted a new program of updating the rate study every few years. Long-range planning for utility capital projects is further discussed in the Capital Improvement Program section of this document.

## STORMWATER FUND

In 2004, the City of Palm Coast established the Stormwater Fund in order to support the maintenance and improvement needs of the City's stormwater system. Residential developed properties within the stormwater service area are currently billed a flat fee monthly while residential undeveloped properties are billed annually. For commercial and larger parcels, the fee is calculated based on a combination of factors including impervious and pervious area, the size of the parcel and the property's use. Some of these properties may also qualify for a reduced service credit.

Revenue generated by the stormwater fee is used solely for the maintenance and rehabilitation of the stormwater drainage system. Improvements and maintenance of the system is supported primarily by charges for service however, due to constricted revenue in this fund, a small portion of property taxes are used to help support the fund as well. This contribution has historically been increased 15% each year. Because both developed and undeveloped property being charged a stormwater fee, revenue increases resulting from an increase in stormwater fees as a result of new development has historically been less than 1% per year. As operating costs continue to increase, the fund's ability to support the current level of service without additional revenue is diminishing.



Funding to support the stormwater system is discussed each year during the annual budget process. Pressure from citizens to keep stormwater rates flat makes it difficult to address funding needs without decreasing the current level of service. City Council will be deliberating on indexing the stormwater fee to keep pace with inflationary pressure on construction costs. To date, major revenue sources that are used for construction purposes in other funds have automatic increases tied to various indexes. By indexing the stormwater fee, the erosion of purchasing power can be mitigated. Keeping a flat stormwater fee will decrease program results over time and is not sustainable.

## CONCLUSION

Maintaining a conservative long range financial plan is a critical component of the City's long term planning process. To ensure financial sustainability, staff regularly looks for ways to expand the use of grants, maintain lean operating costs and manage long-term fixed costs. With rising demands for City services, coupled with the continued increase in the cost of services, an annual evaluation of the long-term financial plan is key to the long term fiscal sustainability of the City.