

FY 2024 General Government Accomplishments Listed by Department

The following provides a compilation of accomplishments during FY 2024 under the leadership and supervision of the City Manager, Cynthia W. Curry.

Office of the City Manager:

The City Manager led efforts to develop the City of Gainesville's gun violence prevention initiative, IMPACT GNV, in accordance with the policy direction set by the Gainesville City Commission. The initiative pulls a number of programs under a unified banner. It also moves quickly to put boots on the ground, working with neighborhoods, schools, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, grassroots advocates and formerly justice-involved individuals, among other partners.

On the financial front, the City of Gainesville's credit rating was upgraded by Fitch Ratings. Gainesville's series 2020 special obligation revenue bonds, series 2014 capital improvement revenue bonds, and series 2003A and 2003B pension obligation bonds were upgraded to 'AA' from 'AA-'. In addition, Fitch has also affirmed the city's Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'AA'. The Rating Outlook is Stable and the IDR and bonds have been removed from Under Criteria Observation. This positive move is evidence the city has continued to improve its financial position through collective and steady efforts.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the City Manager's Office completed City Hall security upgrades, Old Library security upgrades and City Hall IT upgrades. The City Manager's Office also took the lead in negotiating a new annual contract with GRACE Marketplace.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the City Manager's Office handled planning and logistics for the City's first holiday parade in more than three decades. A Very GNV Holiday Parade was supported by 35 community sponsors and brought an estimated 5,000 participants and spectators to downtown Gainesville on Dec. 2, 2023. During this timeframe, the parade page was the third most popular destination on the City's website, logging a total of 19,878 visits. The 10 parade posts on Facebook delivered a total engagement of 30,370.

To address issues of organizational health, the City Manager organized a Workplace Stewardship Committee to examine feedback from the Organizational Health Survey completed in FY 2024. The committee is comprised of representatives from each department with a mission to design and introduce a more fulfilling way of working that fosters collaboration, promotes engagement, and helps community builders partner more effectively together. The committee has created subcommittees to examine the City's health insurance options and benefits package. Additional areas of focus include safety and security, salary and advancement, maintenance for facilities, citywide efficiency and better communication across all departments. The Workplace Stewardship Committee also organized and held an Employee Awards Ceremony in November 2024 and is coordinating a Community Builder Gathering for March 2025.

American Rescue Plan Act:

The American Rescue Plan Act funding is administered through the City Manager's Office. Through September 30, 2024, \$17.8 million or 55.0% of the \$32.4 million of the allocation has been spent. This represents 22 different projects and subrecipient agreements with over 40 nonprofit organizations or external partners. Seven projects are fully completed (Aid to Non-Profit Organizations, Energy Rehabilitation, Homeless Outreach, Gainesville For All, Central Receiving Facility, Cultural Arts Center Feasibility Study, and Non-Profit Capacity Building).

Government Affairs and Community Relations:

Government Affairs and Community Relations worked with planning teams to coordinate Neighborhood Association meetings in the Community F.I.R.S.T. neighborhoods. They assisted: the Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area (GCRA) with community engagement workshops in Porter's Quarters; the Gainesville Police Department with a "Meet and Greet" in Phoenix Neighborhood; and with Impact Duval, a faith based initiative formed to enhance the Duval area. Additionally, Government Affairs and Community Relations worked to support the Gainesville Housing Authority in work associated with the FY 2023 Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

This team also participated in planning and/or attending 35 City events and 46 community events in Fiscal Year 2024; coordinated the myGNV community training initiative; and attended weekly Senior Center activities at the Clarence R. Kelly Center. They coordinated multiple meetings and reviews with Procurement, the Office of Equity & Inclusion, and the Office of the City Attorney regarding the City's policy and disparity study findings to address needs and gaps.

Government Affairs and Community Relations made presentations to the City Commission on findings, recommendations, and actions specific to federal funding programs and garnered analysis on newly adopted state legislation related to climate, procurement matters, background checks, housing and other areas. The team assisted in bringing on a new state lobby firm; planned and hosted a Job Corps workforce development workshop; and secured 54 letters of support from congressional delegation members, local governments and community-based organizations to assist the City's application efforts for federal grants. Government Affairs and Community Relations also coordinated community events including the Dylan Roberts Memorial Crosswalk dedication, the 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony and Indigenous Peoples' Day.

As the office overseeing the administration of One Nation One Project (ONOP), a two-year City of Gainesville initiative to reduce the incidence of youth gun violence by exposing young people to culture and the arts, Government Affairs and Community Relations tracked the implementation of six awarded projects through the spring and summer of 2024. ONOP Team members completed the Bloomberg Harvard Data Track process to strengthen the performance management process of the initiative. The initiative reached its culmination with the July 27th "Summer (YOU)!th Celebration" at the Cotton Club Museum and Depot Park, attracting over 800 neighbors.

As part of the culmination, a local talent search was held, providing an opportunity for two local youth to travel to New York City to perform at Amateur Night at the Apollo. One of the selected artists has continued to advance through the performance rounds.

Data analysis from the funded and partner projects is under way. A final report and best practices guide are in development. The ONOP Team presented this data at a state conference, the Florida Afterschool Network. The Youth Steering Committee presented their work on local gun violence solutions to the City Commission in August.

Climate Change & Resiliency:

The Office of Climate Change made substantial progress in advancing the City's climate goals in Fiscal Year 2024. The U.S. Green Building Council selected Gainesville as one of 12 cities for the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Cities cohort program. Staff teamed with RTS and other City departments to secure \$28 million in federal and state funding. This office also helped implement an EV charging station dashboard and a smart trash collection system. Additionally, staff supported Gainesville Regional Utilities in obtaining a \$47 million Grid Resilience Innovation Partnership (GRIP) grant from the Department of Energy, aimed at bolstering resilience against extreme weather and preparing for green energy integration.

Over the past year, the office held or participated in over 70 community events, gathering valuable input from local groups and stakeholders ranging in age from five to 97. Through collaboration with over 100 City staff and community partners, Gainesville's draft Climate Resiliency Plan was completed ahead of schedule in spring 2024 with final Commission approval expected in early 2025.

Communications & Marketing:

The Office of Communications & Marketing fully designed and branded the 2023 A Very GNV Holiday Parade, the Arts, Culture and Entertainment Districts and the City's new GNV Hurricane Season preparedness brochure. The team also launched a new City of Gainesville TV talk show called GNV on the Move, coordinated 22 events, managed 550 media requests and published 98 news releases.

The team supported other departments through creation of print and digital collateral, instructional and promotional videos, and public outreach for events including: The State of the City Address, A Very GNV Holiday Parade, the 50th Anniversary of RTS, the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire, the Downtown Festival and Art Show, One Nation One Project, Heat Wave and Teen Midnight Basketball. Communications also produced educational campaigns for the Arts, Culture and Entertainment Districts, Downtown Parking and Gun Violence Prevention, among others.

The Broadcast team developed and produced the first three episodes of GNV on the Move; covered more than 258 hours of live meetings; produced and distributed 22 video news releases (VNRs); and produced 41 unique videos for Channel 12, including the "Meet Your Community Builders" series, packaged versions of live events, and tutorials about City programs, services and facilities.

Fiscal Year 2024 data indicates Creative Services sent more than 480 e-newsletters and email updates; achieved a social media reach of more than 2.4 million; and received more than 3.5 million unique page views on the City website.

The team served on Alpha and Bravo shifts at the Emergency Operations Center during activations for Hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton. Information to the public was sent via news release in both English and Spanish. Updates were posted on the City's social media channels and the Emergency Preparedness

page on the City's website.

Communications & Marketing also provided more than 100 hours of document translation; improved the City's bilingual digital presence; provided translation services across departments; refreshed and updated the 2025 Open Enrollment Booklet; participated in the rollout of Power DMS as part of the project team; and continued designing bilingual outdoor signage for the Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs.

Financial Services:

For the first time in six years, Financial Services completed the Fiscal Year 2023 audit and issued the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) with no new or repeat findings. The Fiscal Year 2023 ACFR also received the GFOA Certificate of Achievement.

The general ledger has been closed by the 20th of each following month, supporting consistency and internal controls. Continuous reconciliation of major accounts (Cash in Bank, Investments, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and Debt balances) is underway. Financial Services finalized and issued the City's Fiscal Year 2023 Full Cost Allocation Plan, based on audited financials, to support budgeting for Fiscal Year 2025 indirect costs. Meetings with central service areas and departments have been held to ensure a fair and transparent cost allocation report.

The Florida Division of Emergency Management approved the City of Gainesville's 2024 application to the Florida Recovery Obligation Calculation (FROC) program, enhancing disaster readiness and recovery planning.

Financial Services also filled key vacancies including: Finance Director, Controller, Accounting Manager, Revenue & Receivables Supervisor, three accountants, an Internal Control Specialist, and a Contract Specialist.

Gainesville Fire Rescue:

Gainesville Fire Rescue responded to approximately 28,509 service calls, which included 8,298 fire-related incidents and 18,721 emergency medical service (EMS) calls. Additionally, they handled 922 rescue operations and addressed 568 special hazard situations. The GFR team was called for Hazardous Materials (HazMat) incidents on 304 occasions, including 10 responses at the University of Florida and 20 mutual aid requests beyond City limits. Technical Rescue operations, which cover high-angle rescues, confined space rescues, sinking vehicle rescues, and elevator rescues, were conducted 260 times. Five of these included mutual aid assistance outside the City of Gainesville.

In Fiscal Year 2024, Gainesville Fire Rescue administration moved into the Catalyst Building, now serving as the new GFR Administration Building. Additionally, the agency moved to a unique 24/72 staffing model that will permit GFR firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to work a 24-hour shift followed by three consecutive days off. Gainesville is one of a select few municipalities across the state, and the first in North Florida, to switch to the 24/72 model. The change is expected to help with firefighter recruitment.

The City's gun violence prevention initiative, IMPACT GNV, was established in the Office of the City Manager and later transitioned to Gainesville Fire Rescue, where it is currently housed. Staff supporting this initiative hold bi-weekly meetings with community partners, generate quarterly newsletters, and convene

with the members of the Gun Violence Prevention Alliance monthly for discussions around strategic planning, sharing of public safety data and more.

Gainesville Fire Rescue collaborated with Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs as the partner department to implement and administer One Nation One Project (ONOP), a two-year City of Gainesville initiative to reduce the incidence of youth gun violence by exposing young people to culture and the arts. Positioned under the Community Health arm of the agency, One Nation One Project concluded in Fiscal Year 2024 after funding 29 programs and an additional 85 artists, organizations and partners. The project involved 3,605 youth participants, with post-project data analysis showing a statistically significant uptick in feelings associated with wellbeing.

In February 2024, Gainesville Fire Rescue was awarded Accredited Agency Status at a hearing in Orlando. This honor from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) marked the third time Gainesville Fire Rescue has earned this prestigious recognition. It indicates an adherence to best practices, an ability to meet high standards in training and facilities, and the existence of programs that look after the health and wellbeing of their first responders.

Gainesville Fire Rescue promoted fire safety in the community by inspecting 24 million square feet of built space in more than 4200 buildings. The fire investigator conducted 128 investigations, and the department completed 103 public education events. Risk Reduction conducted 336 construction plan reviews and collaborated with operations to install 140 smoke detectors throughout the community.

The Community Resource Paramedicine (CRP) program is staffed at its highest level in program history with a Program Coordinator, four Responder Is (EMT) and two Responder IIs (Paramedic). CRP program enrollment continues to increase as referrals from GFR crews, the Gainesville Police Department Co-Responders and multiple community partners increase. The team also began a results-based accountability process with the Office of Equity & Inclusion. This has generated performance measures and program-wide indicators that will be tracked, analyzed and shared to demonstrate the work of the program and identify health disparities throughout the community.

CRP program is partnering with GRACE Marketplace Street Outreach to offer services to unhoused neighbors. CRP partnered with Meridian Healthcare under the Treatment for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness grant to have a peer specialist attend visits alongside the Homelessness Outreach and Prevention team. The team has conducted over 72.5 hours of visits. In addition to the 10 beds funded in the spring of 2024, the City has funded 10 more beds at Grace Marketplace to get individuals connected to services and in shelter.

The City also has received funding through the Opioid Abatement Settlement. Among other initiatives, some of the funding has been used to purchase Narcan and to contract services to provide educational workshops for incarcerated individuals impacted by the opioid epidemic.

Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area:

The Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area (GCRA) moved forward with many projects and programs during Fiscal Year 2024. At the Eastside Health and Economic Development Initiative (EHEDI), the UF Health Urgent Care Center opened and the \$3.8 million infrastructure project that will provide roadway, stormwater retention and lighting for the Cornerstone Phase 2 is expected to be completed in late spring 2025. Nearby, GTEC is being rebranded from "Gainesville Technology and Entrepreneurship Center" (GTEC)

to “Center for Gainesville Training, Entrepreneurship, and Community” (GTEC Center). The center currently hosts 16 businesses, 94% of which are minority-owned and 50% women-owned.

In June 2024, City Commission approved a contract with NV5 (formerly CHW) to develop a land use and design study for the 36-acre redevelopment of the transformational Sports Complex at NE Eighth Avenue and Waldo Road.

In winter and spring 2024, the City took major strides to make Downtown GNV an economic development priority and one of GCRA’s five major transformative projects. Activities undertaken include: reallocating more than \$12 million in GCRA’s Fiscal Year 2020/2029 budget to focus on Downtown; creation of a pilot Downtown Events Program to support events through grants; establishing a Downtown Advisory Board; initiating a Downtown Ambassador Program; developing plans for “The Streatery”; participating in planning, payment and signage for the Arts, Culture and Entertainment Districts.

GCRA continues to work with Community Planning Collaborative (CPC) to implement the Historic Heritage Trail project for Fifth Avenue /Pleasant Street and hold community engagement projects. CPC was selected in fall 2023 by City Commission to manage the project. CPC began stakeholder engagement in early 2024.

In the Porters Quarters neighborhood, GCRA conducted three community engagements in Fiscal Year 2024 to identify projects to be completed. GCRA will develop affordable housing on city-owned land at the corner of Southwest Fifth Avenue and Southwest Fourth Street, using the Community Land Trust (CLT) model (provided a local CLT provider becomes available), with units made available to low-to-moderate income residents. Construction is expected to begin in April 2025.

Additionally, GCRA has budgeted nearly \$600,000 for Porters Quarters improvements that could potentially improve infrastructure, aesthetic conditions and safety. Community members provided feedback on desire to move forward with the fencing replacement along Depot Avenue, adding additional streetlights, and the Pink House renovation/rebuild. Fencing is in the bidding process with a deadline for receipt of quotes in December. Streetlight locations are currently being identified. The plan to renovate the Pink House are moving forward with construction expected to begin in April 2025.

Housing & Community Development:

As a part of the America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding set aside for affordable housing, Neighborhood Housing & Development Corporation (NHDC) completed construction on the first single-family home and sold it to an eligible homebuyer; four additional homes are under construction with two under contract to be sold to income eligible homebuyers once completed. HCD continues to work with Jessie’s Village and Woodland Park to bring 166 affordable rental housing units online.

In the last six months, HCD has invested over \$2 million to support housing programs and outside agencies. The bulk of this comes from entitlement programs such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) and State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP).

Bright Community Trust (BCT) completed construction of one single-family home and three others are currently under construction. BCT has partnered with Alachua Habitat for Humanity to built the initial four homes and recently placed a solicitation on street for additional builders to build the remaining six homes under the current agreement with the City. The ribbon-cutting for the first home was held on Aug. 9, 2024. Tentative plans are set for another ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the construction completion of

the next set of homes after the first of the year.

HCD completed the rehabilitation or replacement of 31 homes (14 major rehabilitation, 15 roof replacements, and two home replacements), provided 20 neighbors with down payment assistance, conducted 12 Homebuyer Education workshops, assisted five neighbors with utility connections and served 18 neighbors with Rental Eviction Prevention services.

Under the ConnectFree program, HCD is working with five developers on the grant agreement which will offset the water/wastewater connection charges in exchange for long term affordability for income eligible tenants/homeowners. In an effort to improve water quality and increase connectivity, staff is currently working with four individual homeowners (or future homeowners) to connect to public utilities.

Under the HOME-ARPA program, the Department of Housing & Community Development and the Department of Sustainable Development have collaborated to redevelop five city-owned lots which will be used as a model to encourage the development of more affordable Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Each parcel will contain a primary single-family unit and up to two Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Tentative construction commencement is Dec. 2024.

Through SHIP, the City received \$1.6 million in funding to support owner-occupied home rehabilitation, mortgage foreclosure intervention assistance, down payment assistance and developer's subsidies to produce affordable housing.

Human Resources:

Human Resources (HR) completed the Organizational Health Survey in Fiscal Year 2024 with results released in early spring. This team has also been appointed lead in facilitating the progress of the Workplace Stewardship Committee, which included organization of the refreshed Employee Awards nomination process and ceremony. HR also supports the one-on-one listening sessions that continue on a monthly basis.

In Fiscal Year 2024, HR managed labor relations by participating in the negotiations of union contracts with the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), Communications Workers of America (CWA) Non-Supervisory, CWA Supervisory, the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF).

HR also developed a Compensation Review Committee to provide oversight and create efficiencies for job audits, reorganizations, progression plans and equity analysis. HR services were streamlined to provide improved processing times in multiple HR divisions, including Talent Acquisition and Classification & Compensation. The team also has used Emerging Leaders, an 18-month intensive leadership development program, to equip community builders with the tools to move the organization forward. The next class graduation is scheduled for summer 2025.

Office of Management & Budget:

The major accomplishment for the Office of Management & Budget was the successful completion of the Fiscal Year 2025 budget process. Led by Executive Chief of Staff Cintya Ramos, OMB staff worked to build upon the comprehensive Financial and Operating Plan for the new fiscal year. This has significantly increased the level of information provided to the community, Commission and staff.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs:

In October 2023, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs (PRCA) earned reaccreditation by achieving all 154 reaccreditation standards set by the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and the National Recreation and Park Association. The perfect score was a first in the City's history.

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs has initiated countywide youth resiliency and wellbeing programming. They have worked with Communications to produce the City's inaugural seasonal guide outlining PRCA-produced programs and events. This also highlights PRCA facilities for nature, culture and rentals.

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs completed the audit of Ironwood Golf Course including a cost of service study with outside consultants BerryDunn. The team also has completed the refresh of Haisley Lynch Park, renovating the landscape, removing hazardous horticulture, opening the tree canopy to allow more light, installing new, native plants and new grass, and enlarging the dog park space.

Cultural Affairs held 26 Free Friday concerts with an accumulated total of 7,525 neighbors in attendance; held an additional 289 City-sponsored or produced events at Bo Diddley Plaza with an accumulated total attendees in the 35,000 range; and hosted and produced the Downtown Festival and Art Show with 281 vendors, an estimated 40,000 attendees and revenue generation of \$106,872.

The One Nation One Project (ONOP) program partnered with the Willie Mae Stokes Community Center to produce the second iteration of "Who's in the Box?" at the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. ONOP culminated with a summer 2024 event at Depot Park titled the Summer (YOU)th Celebration! featuring the winners of the City of Gainesville Apollo Theater Talent Search. This was one of more than 77 free public events and programs at Depot Park, which logged more than 152,000 visitors over the course of the fiscal year.

Youth Services and Education, with Recreation Operations, enrolled 12,963 children in After-School Attendance programs; enrolled 470 in Youth Basketball; and enrolled 532 in Pop Warner Football and Cheer. Youth Athletics continued its successful Teen Midnight Basketball and Heat Wave summer programs at the MLK Center, adding a neighborhood pop-up basketball event that traveled across the City to different locations to facilitate broader youth participation.

Finally, Park Operations provided 45,853 hours of park maintenance; removed 104 tons of trash and 2,702 cubic yards of debris; targeted 34 acres for invasive plant removal; treated 80 acres with prescribed burns; and logged 630,120 users on the City's nature trails.

Gainesville Police Department:

The Gainesville Police Department (GPD) has moved from a 10-hour shift to a 12-hour shift, with the goal of providing more police officers per shift and lowering overtime from \$2.47 million to \$971,000 in the coming fiscal year, a reduction that will fund recent raises to keep GPD competitive in the field of law enforcement. The Patrol Bureau was restructured with two captains, each assigned to one district. The department also established a clearly defined mission focused on violent crime, traffic safety, homeless outreach and recruitment.

GPD established a Gun Violence Initiative (GVI) in August 2023 as a temporary unit to combat violent crime and it has since transitioned to a full-time unit. From April 1 – Sept. 30, 2024, the City saw overall reductions in the following:

- The incidents of stolen firearms reduced from 32 to 25 (down 21.88%).
- The incidents of shots fired reduced from 35 to 24 (down 31.43%).
- The incidents of persons shot reduced from 16 to 8 (down 46.67%).
- The incidents of homicides reduced from 2 to 0 (down 100%).

From Jan. 1 – Sept. 30, 2024, proactive efforts resulted in firearms seized and arrests of convicted felons in possession of firearms.

- The firearms seized or recovered by law enforcement was 204.
- The stolen firearms seized or recovered by law enforcement was 47.
- The number of arrests of convicted felons found in possession of a firearm was 36.
- The number of arrests of Adjudicated Delinquent Juveniles found in possession of a firearm was 7.

The Traffic Safety Team has collaborated with the Alachua County Sheriff's Office, University of Florida Police Department, Florida Department of Transportation and the High Springs Police Department to promote roadway safety, also continuing bicycle and pedestrian education efforts. The number of Traffic Homicide Investigations is at 17 for 2024; the traffic safety team completed 11 educational events in the community; and officers completed 14% more traffic stops compared to the same period in 2023 (Jan. 1 – Sept. 30), with 5,895 traffic stops in 2024 in comparison to 5166 in 2023.

GPD has partnered with internal and external agencies to assist neighbors experiencing homelessness. This includes the four Co-Responder teams that responded to 142 calls for service from April 1 – Sept. 30, 2024.

Recruitment moved ahead when a review of other Florida agencies led GPD to raise the starting pay to \$60,000 to stay competitive. In the 2024 calendar year, the department is on track to hire 30 individuals in comparison to 22 individuals in the previous year, a 36% increase. From Jan. 1 – Sept. 30, 2024, GPD received 336 applications for police officer positions as compared to a total of 201 application in 2023, a 67% increase.

Community engagement remains important. GPD has 34 active Neighborhood Crime Watch groups. The Phoenix neighborhood was a focus as GPD's assigned neighborhood for Community F.I.R.S.T. The department has hosted multiple events. The neighborhood has a community center where the Police Athletic League utilizes the space for mentoring and tutoring students.

Public Works:

Public Works completed preparing the site of the Eastside Health and Economic Development Initiative (EHEDI) for the summer 2024 opening of the UF Health Eastside Urgent Care Center. Work continues on construction of the streets, sidewalks, stormwater facilities, utility infrastructure, street lighting and landscaping to support the future building sites. Roadway resurfacing on North Main Street from 39th Avenue to 53rd Avenue was completed in March 2024. In-street bike lanes and ADA modifications were incorporated. The Southwest 62nd Boulevard Extension from Southwest 43rd Street/Clark Butler Boulevard to Southwest 52nd Street opened in summer 2024, providing an interconnected, multimodal grid system in accordance with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Public Works also completed Vision Zero project designs for Waldo Road at Northeast Third Avenue, the Southeast 18th Street sidewalk, and the Southeast Fourth Place sidewalk. Construction was completed on the Florida Park Berm as part of the City's flood mitigation. The Catalyst Building renovation was completed, allowing the building to be used for GFR Administration. Southwest 43rd Street was resurfaced and received updated bike lanes and sidewalk. Security renovations were completed on the ground floor of City Hall and some exterior portions of the building.

In Downtown, the project to provide sidewalk accessibility for all users, primarily financed through use of Tree Mitigation funds, was completed along Southeast First Avenue (Main Street to Southeast First Street). This included southern parking bay re-configuration to parallel parking spaces and reconstruction of the brick pavers in the roadway. On Southeast First Street (Southeast First Avenue to Southeast Second Avenue), the tree re-planting project was completed on the west side, replacing the Shumard Oaks with more appropriate Bluff Oaks with engineered root volume and root resistant infrastructure.

Risk Management:

The Benefits Division completed the selection of a Broker/Consultant to address two concerns of our customers. The first was to ensure the City's Group Health Plan was being administered in the most cost efficient manner and to provide for choice in the selection of a health plan. The results of those efforts determined that the City's current provider, Florida Blue, offered access to the most cost effective networks to provide health care services to our employees, retirees and their families. The additional cost associated with another provider would result in an additional \$7 million in claims cost.

The result of their work with the consultant allowed for the addition of a second health plan choice that will save employees \$75-\$200 per month in their health insurance premiums. This plan was successfully integrated into our Open Enrollment Period for Plan Year 2025.

Employee Health Services continued to integrate in-house DOT physicals, conducting 96 RTS re-certifications saving the City approximately \$36,000 off our outside contractors' cost of service. In addition, by scheduling around RTS's services, it reduced the time an Operator was unavailable for service delivery.

The Wellness Division provided multiple opportunities for employees and their dependents to improve their health. One of particular interest was a focus on mental health by providing invited guest speakers both in person and via Zoom focusing on grief counseling, trauma, addiction and providing access to mental health providers to our employees. Both the Step Challenge and Lighten Up programs remain popular and allow for a team approach to healthy living. Finally, the Wellness crew performed over 500

health assessments for employees and developed individual home workout and nutritional guidance to help employees attain their health related goals.

The City continued to be a leader amongst its peer group with respect to its Worker's Compensation Modification factor, while it did tick up this year to .70, it is still 30% below our peers. This is accomplished through actively managing an injured employee's claim to ensure efficient access to the appropriate care to ensure a successful return to a normal work schedule and life.

The City also was able to negotiate a property insurance renewal with a rate increase of approximately 2.3%. This rate was bound as two hurricanes were hitting Florida and reflects the quality of risk that the City presents to the market place.

Streets, Stations and Strong Foundations:

Projects funded by the infrastructure surtax branded as Streets, Stations and Strong Foundations (SSSF) that entered or progressed beyond the design phase in Fiscal Year 2024 include: road surfacing and bike lane improvements for NE Ninth Street, the SW Public Safety Center, Fire Station 9, the Gainesville Fire Rescue Administration Building, the Eastside Fire Station, the Public Works Hurricane Hardened Building and the Gainesville Police Department Property and Evidence Building.

Through the funding provided by the Streets, Stations and Strong Foundations surtax, the Department of Housing & Community Development will be adding to the inventory of affordable housing units through targeted purchases of improved and unimproved properties across the City. This funding will help distribute more affordable housing into high opportunity areas of the City.

Department of Sustainable Development:

The Department of Sustainable Development (DOSD) presented the most recent draft of the Comprehensive Plan update to the City Commission after more than three years of cross-departmental collaboration. As requested by the Commissioners, a more traditional revision will be presented in early 2025 along with a draft equitable development framework.

DOSD staff presentations informed and supported City Commission decisions to approve Inclusionary Zoning and Single Family Lot-Size Reform. Staff are continuing to develop associated implementation procedures in collaboration with other departments, property owners and stakeholders. DOSD also is working to implement the City's Downtown Strategic Plan, working with the newly created Downtown Advisory Board. The GIS Specialist completed the Affordable Housing Dashboard to assist with assessing and visualizing data and programs associated with affordable housing policies.

DOSD has developed "in-house" design plans for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) with design work by the City Architect and the Deputy Chief Plans Examiner. Final plans will be available to the public for use in designing their own ADUs with the ultimate goal of reducing cost and technical barriers that impede the creation of more housing.

DOSD also is implementing process changes for private providers of building inspections and the development of subdivisions. Recent changes in Florida statute require local jurisdictions to develop these processes.

Technology:

The City hired outside consultants BerryDunn to review the current state of technology needs for the City. On June 18, 2024, BerryDunn provided a presentation to the City Commission along with a recommendation for the City to move forward with setting up its own in-house Technology department. BerryDunn and staff have completed the visioning and fact finding phase of the project. Transition steps are in the progress for a return to General Government of technology services provided by Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU), with an estimated full transition no later than December 2025.

Transportation Department:

The Transportation Department received an FDOT grant of \$1.5 million for the University Ave/West 13th St PD&E study and an additional FDOT grant of \$1.4 million for the Northeast 3rd Avenue/Waldo Road project. The department has completed design on the following projects and transferred them to Public Works for construction: W 10th/12th Street One-Way Pairs; Northeast 3rd Avenue/Waldo Road; Northwest 8th Avenue/6th St Lane Repurposing; Southeast 18th Street Sidewalk.

The Vision Zero Plan was completed in October 2024. It was updated in-house, led by the City's Vision Zero Coordinator. A Vision Zero Open House was held on Feb. 20, 2024. Projects include: University Avenue and West 13th Street Complete Street; Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Transportation has completed the ADA Transition Plan finding that approximately \$5.1 million is needed to bring all curb ramps within City limits into compliance with current ADA standards. The Trail Wayfinding Plan is also complete, which was developed in coordination with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs and will be implemented in Fiscal Year 2025 with funding from WSPP.

The Trails and Greenway Plan is in progress with estimated completion in late 2025, along with the completion of the Transportation Mobility Plan.

Fleet:

The Fleet Division reviewed the City Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) and it is ready for approval. The team is working with the City of Alachua on a new SLA for part of the City's fleet. The Vehicle Utilization Plan was revised and completed, with disposition of underutilized vehicles, and a fleet audit report has been conducted with the division implementing all audit report recommendations.

Fleet delivered 18 new replacement buses in Fiscal Year 2024, reducing the average fleet age to 7.4 years for RTS. The team replaced 36 emergency vehicles, 22 light duty vehicles and nine heavy duty vehicles. They also replaced 12 trailers.

Parking:

Completion of the downtown parking plan study and implementation of approved changes occurred near the end of Fiscal Year 2024. Staff is monitoring changes, making modifications to address concerns and providing reports.

A draft Valet Ordinance was introduced to the Commission for future approval and continues to

meet with potential valet operation agencies to modify ordinance.

Regional Transit System:

Gainesville Regional Transit System (RTS) celebrated 50 years in service in Fiscal Year 2024, during which time RTS continued its upward passenger trend. Despite driver shortages and other challenges, ridership increased 7.3% from 5.1 million to more than 5.5 million passenger trips, and productivity increased by more than 10.3% on passenger trips per hour.

RTS received a \$26.4 million Low or No Emission (LoNo) grant to purchase 19 Hybrid-electric buses and install a solar facility at the RTS employee parking lot. Buses are expected to arrive by the end of calendar year 2026. RTS also completed design of Phase I of ADA improvements for bus stops. Construction on the ramps, shelters and sidewalks for 98 bus stops is underway, with planned completion in spring of 2025. The Phase II engineering and design firm has been selected and is under contract.

Contracts have been executed with Santa Fe College (through June 30, 2026) and Alachua County (through 9/30/25). Negotiations are underway for a new University of Florida service contract starting 1/1/25.

The cross-functional team consisting of staff from RTS, the Department of Financial Services and the Office of Management & Budget collaborated to address the concerns identified through the Management Watch process by developing the RTS Financial Monitoring Guideline; this Guideline was approved by the City Manager on September 18, 2024.

Transit Route Restoration Plan (TRRP) is near completion and consists of reimagining the current transit network to enhance ridership by improving service operability and mobility options for residents and visitors. The goal is to develop alternatives for enhancing services to achieve pre-COVID-19 ridership levels.

RTS identified funds and is currently undergoing a Transit Development Plan (TDP) major update, which is the strategic guide for public transportation in the community over the next 10 years. TDP requirements were formally adopted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in order to receive annual allocations of Operating Assistance (Block Grant funding).

Wild Spaces Public Places:

Wild Spaces Public Places (WSPP) completed Lincoln Yard Park, a new neighborhood park in east Gainesville, in summer 2024. The team completed universal access improvements at Bo Diddley Plaza, Fred Cone Park, Possum Creek Park, Bivens Arm Nature Park, Albert “Ray” Massey Park and Lincoln Park. An accessible ramp and deck to the schoolhouse structure at Morningside Nature Center were finished, along with roof replacement for Hogan’s Cabin. Drainage improvements were completed on Field Two at Tom Petty Park. Roof and gutter improvements were completed at the Hippodrome Theatre (Old Post Office).

Publication reach grew, with readership of the electronic annual report increasing from 2,513 in Fiscal Year 2023 to 3,451 in Fiscal Year 2024. WSPP also sent more than 20 electronic mailers with an average open rate of 38%.

Additional projects completed in Fiscal Year 2024 include upgrades at Massey Park to the lighting on the softball field, basketball courts and baseball fields one and two, along with lighting upgrades on the two baseball fields at Greentree Park. The WSPP team also completed construction on the Split Rock Conservation Area boardwalks and finished renovation of the H. Spurgeon Cherry Pool Slide, an upgrade that included replacing structural supports.