



Some of you might remember the song *Magic Bus* performed by the WHO in the '60s. Well, the City has its own bus that is available for residents and staff to take neighborhood tours of code or crime problem areas. The Poinciana Park and Harbordale neighborhoods recently organized and participated in a tour along with city staff.

Due to an increase in prostitution and illegal drug sales on South Federal Highway, an effort to mobilize and clean-up the area was initiated by the leadership of the Poinciana Park and Harbordale neighborhoods. Donna Mergenhagen, Vice President of Harbordale Civic Association, spearheaded a round table discussion with residents of Harbordale and

Poinciana Park, Assistant City Manager David Hebert, Captain Victor London, FLPD, Valerie Bohlander, Director Building Services, Mike Maloney, Community Inspections Manager and me. As a result of the discussions, a tour of the two neighborhoods along South Federal Highway took place on Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. Donna, Paula Pereira, along with contributions from others, created the master list and a map of the sites needing attention. Also joining us on the tour were Mike Ramos from Harbordale HOA, and current and past presidents, Ray Dettman and Dwight Ledbetter from Poinciana Park Civic Association. I think everyone involved would agree the tour was very productive. City staff is now in the process of pulling together an "action plan" based on what was observed and discussed, and is coordinating a concerted effort to address community crime and code issues. Staff will work closely with neighborhood and community advocates to share information and ideas on how residents and business owners can assist in addressing crime and code concerns. A follow-up meeting between City representatives and community advocates is planned for later this summer. I want to personally thank all those who were involved in the effort to "clean-up" these neighborhoods and South Federal Highway (one of the most visible gateways to our city) and for making it a top priority. If you need more information on the date and time of this meeting, please call my aide, Sharon.

The Riverside Park neighborhood is presently planning a similar bus tour. If any other neighborhoods are interested in doing the same, please contact my office.

In more neighborhood news, the Hорт School purchase closed on April 28<sup>th</sup>. The City purchased the property with County Park Bond funds. The School Board has leased back the property for two years as part of the transaction, after which, the property will become a passive park. This is just one example of the cooperative effort between the City of Fort Lauderdale and other public entities. My predecessor, Cindi Hutchinson, played a major role in making this effort a reality.

In that same partnership vein, the Broward County Commission and your Commission held a joint meeting on May 19<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the meeting was to highlight issues of mutual concern. The City Manager and County Manager have assigned staff as the liaisons on these issues. The majority of our time was spent discussing the plans for the new courthouse, Port Everglades (security, proposed hotel and expedited permitting), Airport Expansion (south runway) and the Wave (downtown light rail).

The plan for the new courthouse (to be built on the site of the parking garage west of the courthouse) is to fund the construction with reserve funds and savings from existing bond indebtedness which is due to be paid off.

Both the 2010 Super Bowl XLIV and the Pro Bowl are being hosted in Broward County and numerous events are scheduled for the Convention Center. Pushing back the Port checkpoint is in progress to make access easier. Naturally, the NFL has its own security force to insure safety for all involved. We will continue to work on the checkpoint, security and traffic impact on the neighborhoods and I will be providing you updates on the proposed convention center hotel.

The FAA has formally approved the expansion of the south runway so we discussed moving forward with the construction. While I believe the expansion is vital to both our tourism and business communities, I want to make sure that the impact to our District IV neighborhoods is mitigated especially when runways are shifted for construction purposes. There are federal programs available to assist with the mitigation. Please call my office for details.

The Commission and staff are continually looking for ways of attracting and entertaining visitors to our City and to our beaches. We have been discussing an action plan for the Fort Lauderdale Aquatics Complex and the role the Swimming Hall of Fame will play within the complex. It was decided to place the task of formulating the different activities for the complex on the market place. We asked staff to draft an RFP with the components of a world class swim facility, the International Swimming Hall of Fame, a water park and restaurant and retail facilities with sufficient parking to not only serve the complex but also other beach events such as the Boat Show. This RFP will be made available to the public and we look forward to your input. Please let me know your expectations for this venue.

If you haven't already noticed, we are almost in the dog days of summer. A great way to spend those summer evenings is at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Starlight Musical concert series, presented by the City's Parks and Recreation Department. These FREE outdoor concerts provide a great way to enjoy the summer with family and friends. The concerts are held in Holiday Park, on Friday nights, 7:00 – 10:00 pm, and will run June 19 through August 7, 2009. The concerts will feature an exciting line up of bands ranging from pop to country, rhythm and blues to tropical rock. Why not take advantage of this excellent series?

Finally, don't forget to attend my District IV Pre-agenda meetings here at City Hall on the first and third Mondays at 5:30pm. We have 3 more meetings then the Commission takes their summer recess for the month of August. As always, you can contact me by phone at 954-828-5028 or by email at: [RRogers@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:RRogers@fortlauderdale.gov).