

THE BRIDGE

**NEW PORT
RICHEY**
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cityofnewportrichey.org

13th Edition | May 2022

MEADOWS PARK



► In 2021, the City of New Port Richey contracted with Wannamacher Jensen Architects to re-design the current Meadows Dog Park, located on Larch Lane and Meadowbrook Lane. The project will bring many updates and new features to the park, including dog play areas and added amenities for families and people of all ages. To highlight the additional amenities, the park's name will be updated to Meadows Park.

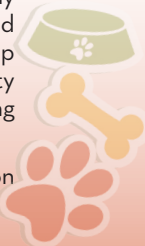
The dog play areas will be divided into two sections, one for small dogs and one for large dogs. It will include new fencing, sod, hoops, tubes, steppers, and hurdles for canines to run through and jump on.

The updated park design will feature an improved parking area, picnic tables, shade structures, lighted pathways, updated restrooms, and water fountains. A new walkway from the parking



area will lead to a crushed gravel pathway trail surrounding the park. Three new play areas with swings and play structures that accommodate all ages and abilities will replace the aging play structure. A bouldering section is planned for older children, and a Ninja climbing apparatus for teens and adults promises to help adventurers develop their climbing skills. Due to the popularity of pickleball and the increasing demand for courts, the existing hardcourt will be developed into three Pickleball courts.

The project is in the final design phase with construction underway later this fall.



Citizens Academy



► The City of New Port Richey launched a Citizens Academy on January 5, 2022, with an inaugural class of ten participants. The nine-week program provided an in-depth look at how local government is organized and how services are funded and delivered. Classes were held at different locations throughout the city, including City Hall, Public Works, Public Library, Police Department, Fire Station, Recreation & Aquatic Center, and the Wastewater Treatment Facility. The graduation ceremony was held on March 15, 2022, during the regular City Council meeting.

For information on the next Citizens Academy, please visit <https://www.cityofnewportrichey.org/city-departments/city-clerk/citizens-academy/>.



< Jennifer Reznick volunteered to be the "patient" during the Fire Department's session about Emergency Management.



▲ Deputy Chief Lauren Letona highlights the features of the Sally Port at the NPR Police Station.

▲ In photo (from left to right) Deputy Mayor Chopper Davis, Mayor Rob Marlowe, City Manager Debbie L. Manns, Jennifer Reznick, Joe Wolf, Diane Kline, Jason Vargas, Councilman Peter Altman, Kenneth Stevens, Launi Harden, Frank Ferreri, Councilman Matt Murphy, City Clerk Judy Meyers, Jeremy Dunn, and Councilman Mike Peters. (participants not pictured - Beth Sander and Robert Marin.)

MAYOR'S LETTER

Greetings, Friends:

As a longtime resident of New Port Richey, I am pleased with the improvements in our vcity. I hope that everyone, from our residents, businesses, and visitors, enjoys the continuous progress in our hometown.



It was enjoyable listening to a full slate of talented performers at the Concert in the Park series, and I know many residents are already looking forward to summer events scheduled at the city parks, Recreation and Aquatic Center, and Library. So here are just some of the stories in this issue I'd like to point out to you.

Read up on all the work our Public Works Department is doing with regard to water conservation, the Grand Boulevard Path Project, Yard Debris Pick-up, and our expanding fleet of electric vehicles (EV).

Speaking of EVs, you may have seen our two courtesy tolleys, the DARTs, ushering people back and forth from the new Parking Structure to the downtown area. They have proven most beneficial during large downtown events when public parking quickly fills up. In addition, the EV DARTs are equipped with solar panel backup power. This helps keep our city more eco-friendly and moving toward the EV directive. I was proud to be on the maiden voyage.

Lastly, I would like to thank all city residents who exercised their civic duty and voted in our recent election. It's a duty, right, and freedom we must fully take part in to keep leading the City into the future. It's my pleasure to welcome incoming councilmember Kelly Mothershead and returning councilmember Peter Altman to the dais. I look forward to working with all of the councilmembers and all of you to continue advancing city projects.

Sincerely,

Rob Marlowe
Mayor

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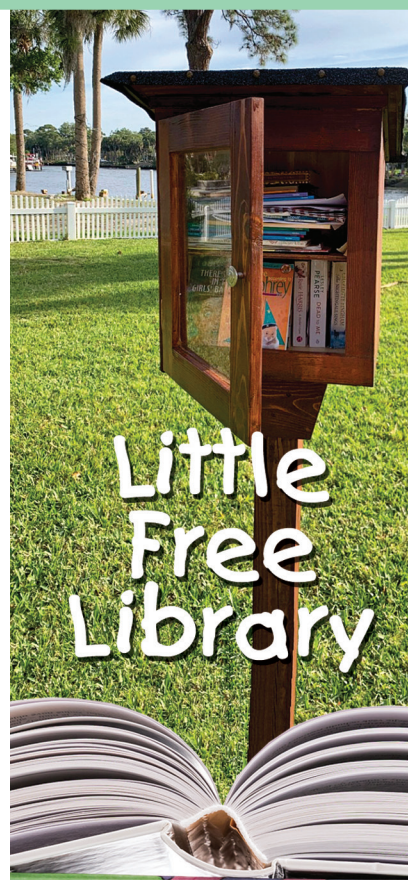


Downtown Area Roundabout Trolley: A Great Start for the DART

► The Downtown Area Roundabout Trolley (DART) is the green way to get around downtown. Starting at and returning to the new Parking Structure located at Main Street and U.S. Highway 19, the DART provides residents and visitors a convenient ride to popular destinations around the downtown area. When downtown parking is full, you can park at the Parking Structure and be safely transported to different stops to explore unique shops, dining establishments, and entertainment! There is no fee to park in the Parking Structure, and the DART is a courtesy service of the City of New Port Richey.

The two ADA-accessible DARTs are electric vehicles with solar panel backup power. Mayor Rob Marlowe had this to say about the inaugural voyage: **"As a big advocate of eco-friendly EV transportation, I love to see the City continue using more EVs to help protect the environment as well as New Port Richey. In addition, the DART will transport people to different parts of our historic downtown."**

The DART operates on Thursdays and Fridays from 5 pm until midnight, Saturdays from noon to midnight, and Sundays from noon to 6 pm. Hours will vary with holidays and special events. The Parking Structure is open daily from 7:30 am until midnight, with extended hours during special events. Any DART or parking updates will be available on the official City Downtown NPR website at downtownnpr.org or Facebook page or Instagram account, both found at @downtownnpr.



Little Free Library

► Handy with a hammer? The Library Advisory Board and Friends of the New Port Richey Library are looking for volunteers to construct Little Free Libraries which will be placed in various locations throughout the city. They will offer readers a chance to take a book, read a book, and share a book. Interested? **Contact the Library at 727.853.1279**

Host your Event at a Premier City Venue

► No matter the occasion, the City of New Port Richey can provide the perfect venue to celebrate your next event. From baby showers to retirement parties to weddings or a business meeting, the City has numerous indoor and outdoor spaces for you to choose from.

Located adjacent to Sims Park and Orange Lake, the historic and charming Peace Hall is perfect for a wedding, reception, or shower. There are many options to include personalized touches in this facility with all-wood floors, high ceilings, a low stage, and a refreshment area.

For a nearby outdoor scenic location, take a stroll on the beautiful boardwalks at Orange Lake. Not only are they great locales for a

party or wedding, but the view of the lake and picturesque boardwalk are perfect for photos, videos, and those local New Port Richey vibes.

Room rentals for meetings are also available at the Public Library, while the Recreation and Aquatic Center offers rental options for private parties and gatherings. During the summer, you can rent pools for non-exclusive parties during regular hours as well as for after-hours private parties on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

Reservation forms and fee information may be found on the City's website at <https://www.cityofnewportrichey.org/city-departments/parks-recreation/reservations/>.

CITY MANAGER'S LETTER

Dear Neighbors:

We only have a few more weeks before the summer heat arrives, so I encourage you to enjoy the outdoors and everything New Port Richey has to offer.

This issue of the Bridge will inform you of exciting upcoming City projects at Meadows Park and Frances Avenue Park. Improvements at these two parks will include pathways, benches, picnic tables under new covered shelters, and much more. These attractive locations will be perfect for outdoor excursions in addition to our other remaining parks.

Residents of all ages can get involved with exciting activities this spring and summer. Check out the library's new loanable laptop and Wi-Fi hotspot kits while preparing for the Summer Library Challenge. Learn more about these programs on page 6.

Congratulations are in order to the graduates of the City's first Citizens Academy. For nine weeks, participants took an in-depth look at how local government is organized and how services are funded and delivered. I presented and attended many of the classes, and it was rewarding to talk with residents who share the same passion for building a better community.

I am grateful for our community and am eager to work with you as we continue moving forward. And, as always, if you have a question, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Debbie L. Manns
City Manager



The first fire brigade was formed in September 1922 with Fire Chief JW Clark, Jr. and 18 city residents who served as volunteer firefighters.



A rendering for the new fire station #2

► The **New Port Richey Fire Department's** proud tradition of providing emergency services started 100 years ago, making the Department the oldest in Pasco County. Established in 1922 as a volunteer fire department, the New Port Richey Fire Department has continued to evolve and provide the highest level of emergency services through fire suppression, advanced life support medical care, rescue operations, fire prevention, and public education. The Department is composed of 22 full-time Firefighters/Paramedics, and operates out of two strategically located fire stations. Last year, the Department responded to a record number of nearly 6,000 emergency calls with an average emergency response time of four minutes.

Future plans have been completed to construct a new fire station #2 located at 5220 Grand Boulevard, replacing the current station on High Street. The new facility will help meet the increasing calls for emergency services throughout the City and allow for quicker response times to the busy U.S. Highway 19 corridor. In addition, activities celebrating the centennial will occur in September.

Spring Neighborhood CLEAN-UP DAY

► The City of New Port Richey will host a Spring Neighborhood Clean-up Day on **Saturday, May 21, from 8 am to 5 pm.** City residents are encouraged to properly dispose of unwanted items and help keep our City beautiful. Dumpsters will be placed at Frances Avenue Park, 5580 Frances Avenue, and at the former River Road Church property at 6131 South River Road. The River Road site will also accept up to four boxes of paper per household for the on-site paper shredder in addition to undamaged TVs and computer monitors. A current Florida Driver's license or City utility bill proving residence within the City of New Port Richey is required to participate.



For additional details and allowable materials, visit the City's website at www.cityofnewportrichey.org or contact the Public Works Department at 727.841.4536.

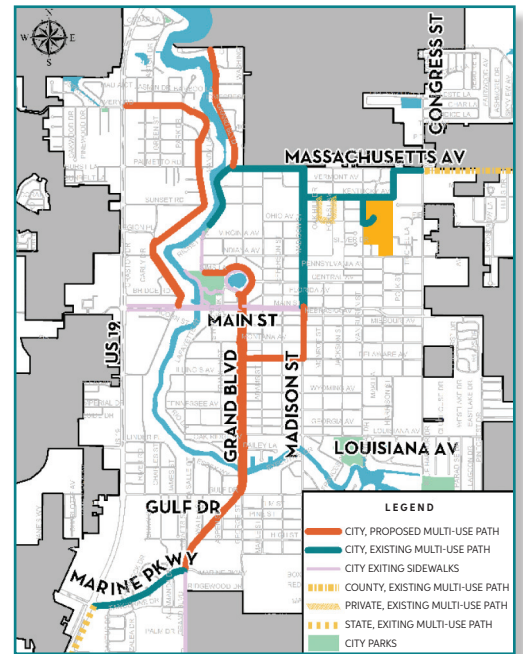


TREE CITY USA

▶ The City of New Port Richey celebrated Arbor Day on January 21. The celebration included the annual tree-planting ceremony at Frances Avenue Park. This was the City's 33rd Arbor Day celebration. An event that shows the community's continuing commitment to the ideals of the National Arbor Day Foundation, this annual tradition also contributes to New Port Richey's official designation as a "Tree City, U.S.A." Mayor Rob Marlowe stated, "The annual tree planting is one of many ways that demonstrates the commitment that the City of New Port Richey has to environmental sustainability." This year's event included local students planting a live oak tree. In addition, the City's Environmental Committee partnered with Keep Pasco Beautiful and Friendship Farms & Fare for a tree and plant giveaway immediately following the event.

Grand Boulevard Multi-Use Path Project

▶ The Grand Boulevard Multi-Use Path will connect the existing Multi-Use Paths at Marine Parkway and Madison Street. Once complete, the Grand Boulevard Multi-Use Path will join the City to the Pinellas and Starkey Trails. The Grand Boulevard Multi-Use Path Project is currently in design, for the first phase of the project which will span from Marine Parkway to Gulf Drive. Amenities will include a 10ft. wide path, landscaping, stormwater drainage improvements, seating areas, and decorative lighting.



SUMMER LIBRARY CHALLENGE

▶ Are you looking for engaging ways to keep kids reading, writing, exploring, and learning throughout the summer? Then, check out the Library's Summer Library Challenge! This year's theme champions a "Summer of Kindness." The challenge offers plenty of opportunities to immerse kids, teens, and even adults in language and stories while inspiring creativity and making enriching learning experiences possible.

Registration begins in May, with activities and fun challenges scheduled throughout June and July and culminating with great prizes at the program's finale. The "Summer of Kindness" challenge is available in a paper format or online by visiting npplibrary.beanstack.org.

For more details about The Summer Library Challenge or other library offerings, call the Library at 727-853-1279 or email npplibrary@npplibrary.org.



Name The Alley Contest

UPDATE

▶ Thank you to everyone who submitted entries for our Name the Alley Contest! Staff received over a thousand entries and are diligently reviewing and sorting the names into categories. Once complete, a final list will be presented to City Council for review and selection. Winners will be posted on the city's website at www.cityofnewportrichey.org.

Your City Council

(L-R)

Deputy Mayor, Mike Peters

Petersm@cityofnewportrichey.org

Councilperson, Pete Altman

Altmanp@cityofnewportrichey.org

Mayor, Rob Marlowe

Marlower@cityofnewportrichey.org

Councilperson, Matt Murphy

Murphyrm@cityofnewportrichey.org

Councilperson, Kelly Mothershead

Mothersheadk@cityofnewportrichey.org



What Are Ad Valorem Taxes



Ad Valorem, more commonly known as property taxes, are annual taxes assessed on a percentage property's real estate value. Local governments use the revenue to pay for local services, such as public safety, culture and recreation, and other government services. Ad Valorem is Latin for "according to value" and is thought to be a fair basis for collecting taxes because you pay your proportional share based upon the value of your property.

How Is It Calculated?

Ad Valorem taxes are calculated by dividing the taxable value of a property by 1,000 and multiplying this by the millage rate. For example, consider a property with a taxable value equaling \$110,000 and a homestead exemption of \$10,000. If the annual millage rate is 8.5000, the amount of property tax due for that property on a yearly basis equals \$850.



The City's Environmental Committee and Cultural Affairs Committee have immediate openings for members. The Environmental Committee serves as the planning committee for the City's environmental and recycling events and advises City Council on environmental initiatives.

The Cultural Affairs Committee takes part in creating cultural activities for the education and recreation of residents and reviews all requests for co-sponsorship of cultural events. **If you are civic-minded and wish to take a more active role in our community, applications are available on the City's website at <https://www.cityofnewportrichey.org/city-departments/boards-committees/>.**



FRANCES AVENUE PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Expect beautiful changes at the Frances Avenue Park! Improvements are planned for this quaint 6.63-acre neighborhood park located along the Pithlachascotee River off of Louisiana Avenue. The park provides residents and visitors a variety of amenities including an ADA accessible playground, covered picnic shelters, restroom facilities, a basketball court, open field space, and a kayak launch to the Cotee River.

The City hired Ayres and Associates to design the project, which was made possible through funding in the City's Capital Improvement Plan and a matching grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Land and Water Conservation Fund. Once the improvements are complete, families and visitors of all ages can enjoy a picnic in one of the newly renovated shelters or walk on the new bench-lined walkways, while kayak and canoe enthusiasts can continue to enjoy the updated kayak launch area.

EV Charging Stations/City Vehicles



There is no fee to use the charging station at this time.



Go Green with us!

The City is driving forward with environmentally friendly enhancements by adding four electric and two hybrid vehicles to the fleet. By September 2022, The City will add an additional electric and eight hybrid vehicles.

Residents and visitors can use one of the six electric vehicle charging stations conveniently located throughout the city. The charging stations are located at the Parking Structure, Gloria Swanson Parking Lot, Sims Park Parking Lot, Thomas Meighan Parking Lot, City Hall Auxiliary Parking Lot, and the Recreation & Aquatic Center. Each station is equipped with two charging ports. There is no fee to utilize these charging stations at this time. In addition, the Thomas Meighan Parking lot on Nebraska Avenue will remain free of charge thanks to a Duke Energy grant. Please note that the EV parking spaces are only to be utilized while your EV is plugged in and being charged.



CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY

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Borrow a CHROMEBOOK KIT

► **Borrow a Chromebook and Wi-Fi hotspot to use at home!** Funded by the FCC's Emergency Connectivity Grant, the kits are available to adults with a valid New Port Richey Public Library card in good standing on a one-per-family basis. The kits are available for remote learning and access to other digital services. There is no charge to borrow a Chromebook Kit.

For more information about the Chromebook Kits or how to obtain your library card, call 727.853.1279 or visit www.nprlibrary.org

CHROMEBOOK

Save Water and Money with Conservation Program

► As the population in the Tampa Bay region continues to grow, so does the need for water. City residents and businesses can make a lasting impact now and in our future. Together, we can save water and delay the need to build new water supplies.

Tampa Bay Water Wise is a regional water conservation program offered by Tampa Bay Water, its member governments, and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The program helps homeowners and business owners save water and money by providing 11 different rebates ranging from \$75-\$40,000 for using water-efficient equipment.

Some of the ways to earn rebates:

RESIDENTIAL:

- 💧 Up to \$100 for High Efficiency Toilet Retrofit
- 💧 Up to \$1,000 for Shallow Wells for Outdoor Irrigation

BUSINESS (NON-RESIDENTIAL):

- 💧 Up to \$1,000 for Cooling Towers
- 💧 Up to \$400 for Energy Star certified dishwashers.

This rebate program aims to save up to 11 million gallons of drinking water per day by 2030, at a quarter of the cost of the least expensive new water supply source. When everyone does their part, the savings really add up!

To see more available rebates visit www.tampabaywaterwise.org/en/npr/

