



# City of Downey

2013 CITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS





**Fernando Vasquez**  
Mayor



**Luis H. Marquez**  
Mayor Pro Tem



**Dn. Mario A. Guerra**  
Council Member



**Roger C. Brossmer**  
Council Member



**Alex Saab**  
Council Member

**Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Council, Downey Residents and Friends:**

In 2012, the City Council established five enduring policy guidelines, which inform the Council's Annual Goal-Setting, the formation of the City's annual budget and the planning of public services for the fiscal year. This report, the second Annual Report on the Council's priorities, encapsulates the hard work and accomplishments of City Council, staff, volunteers, residents and businesses.

New events have engaged the public; new construction projects have given a face lift to numerous intersections and parks; new technology has increased transparency and efficiency. The "new" is exciting and attention-garnering. But in the Council's wisdom, staff was directed to focus most of their time and talent, and taxpayer dollars, into the physical and personnel infrastructure that is the basis for the high quality of life for Downey residents. Fundamental services, such as pothole filling, the upkeep of landscaped medians, and water and sewer pipe maintenance, were emphasized. New personnel infrastructure was added, such as new canine officers, new police officer recruits, new ambulance operators, and new water and maintenance workers.

The Healthy Downey/Stay Healthy campaign has established both the "people" infrastructure and the support services network to support long-term changes in residents' health and fitness habits.

This past fiscal year, the Council determined that the one-time income of nearly \$14 million due to the sale of city property should replenish the City's depleted general fund reserves. In addition, the City garnered more than \$21 million in grant project funding. Moreover, due to the Council's respect and appreciation for the outstanding efforts of a smaller city staff working harder than ever, the City was able to develop a balanced budget that awarded the non-safety bargaining groups their first cost-of-living wage increase in seven years.

I am appreciative of the Council's guidance and support throughout this economically challenging fiscal year; despite the hardships, there are a tremendous number of accomplishments to celebrate. I would like to thank all City staff for their contributions to these accomplishments, and commend the Council on their vision.

Respectfully submitted,

**Gilbert A. Livas**  
City Manager

# Fiscal Responsibility



An information-sharing agreement with State Department of Finance has enhanced accuracy in local business tax collection.

## PRUDENT FINANCIAL PRACTICES

The City's prudent financial practices include the implementation of all seven of the recommendations from the Independent Cities Association (ICA) to safeguard debt credibility and ratings. These recommendations include right-sizing the organization, changes in service delivery, program reductions, employee benefit concessions, reductions to employee benefit packages, deferring non-essential equipment replacement, and reduced General Fund capital costs. These measures and others have resulted in a FY 2014-2015 balanced budget that maintains available reserves at approximately \$32 million.

## SERVICE CONTRACTS & GENERAL FUND RESERVES

Additional fiscally sound practices have included the Council's directives to issue new RFP/RFQs for all service contracts not renewed in the last 5 years and the placement into general fund reserves of most of the \$14 million revenue received from property sales this year.

# A+

STANDARD & POOR'S RATING SERVICES

## ADMINISTRATIVE INTERN PROGRAM

The administrative intern program has been streamlined and a new inter-departmental intern exchange added to enhance the intern's experience and provide staff support without incurring additional lost time due to training and onboarding.

## REDEVELOPMENT SUCCESSOR AGENCY

Staff supporting the Redevelopment Successor agency have filed the necessary reports for the City's HUD, CDBG, and HOME funds; and have assisted 25 low-mod income households through the cost-saving, revamped Grant & Rebate program.



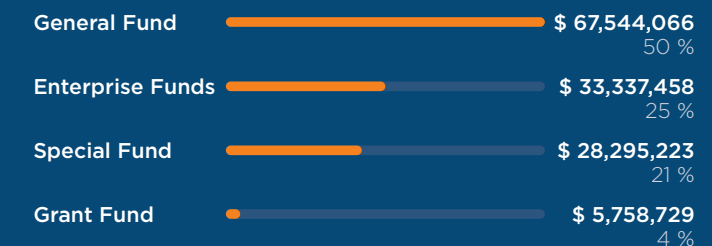
## GOLF COURSE REFINANCING

 **\$ 720,000 SAVINGS**

This past year, the City Council refinanced the 2002 Certificates of Participation for the golf course, which will save the City up to \$720,000 over the next 14 years.

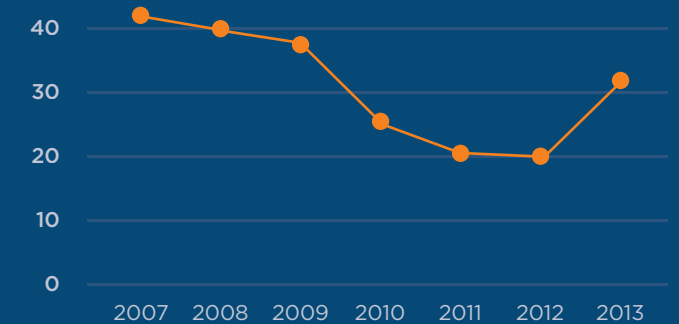


## 3RD CONSECUTIVE BALANCED BUDGET



## RESERVES

In Millions of Dollars



City staff drafted a balanced budget for a third consecutive year. The total budget for 2013-14 was \$140,311,664.

# Fiscal Responsibility



14 construction-related contracts were awarded in the past year.

## COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- ✓ Balance the budget.
- ✓ Reorganize the budget as a user-friendly document.
- ✓ Law student summer internship program.
- ✓ Absorb, where appropriate, responsibilities of risk manager.
- ✓ Continue reducing legal fees and recovering legal costs.
- ✓ Automate water billing.
- ✓ Continue to work collaboratively with the collective bargaining units.
- ✓ Reorganize the Finance Department for efficiency and professionalism.
- ✓ Evaluate the Utilities Division operations and implement the necessary changes / modifications.
- ✓ Automate Business License system and tie to State of California's sales tax database to properly capture data and revenue.
- ✓ Issue new RFPs / RFQs and secure new contracts for all service contracts which have not been renewed in the last five years.

## FINANCIAL FORECASTING



Regular revenue and expenditure updates and financial forecasting at regular Budget Subcommittee meetings have allowed Council to make adjustments and recommendations in a timely fashion.



## AWARDED GRANTS

- Kaiser Community Benefits*  
\$25,000
- Prop A/Supervisor Knabe*  
\$300,000 for Apollo Park walking trail
- State Habitat Conservation Fund*  
\$200,000 for Wilderness Park ponds
- Federal Highway Bridge Program*  
\$19 million for Florence Ave/San Gabriel River bridge replacement
- Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program*  
\$390,000 for West Firestone project and Paramount traffic signal upgrades
- Prop 84 Stormwater Grant*  
\$538,000 for Green Streets implementation



73

RESOLUTIONS

19

ORDINANCES



## AWARDED & IMPLEMENTED GRANTS

- First 5 Grant*  
\$125,000 for Brookshire Park playground & trail installation
- Prop A/Supervisor Knabe*  
\$300,000 for Furman Park walking trail
- Kiwanis Foundation*  
\$263,000 for playground renovation at Furman Park

56

SERVICE AGREEMENTS

\$14 MILLION

ADDED TO RESERVES

# Economic Vibrancy



*"I must say, your staff at the building & planning counters are top notch."*  
- Local Contractor

## FORESIGHT AND PLANNING

Through the Community Development Department, major strides were made in economic development and redevelopment, despite the hardships of the elimination of redevelopment. Lynx Grills located their manufacturing facility in Downey this past year specifically because of our City's great location, infrastructure and helpful staff. New restaurants such as Joseph's and Lock and Key are demonstrating the revitalization of the Downtown, thanks to the Council's foresight and planning with the Downtown Specific Plan.

## STREAMLINED SERVICE

The implementation of a first-floor "One Stop Shop" in city hall has streamlined the planning and permitting process for businesses. The Red Team has helped the City to reinforce its relationships with major businesses and employers, helping to retain them and to bolster the City's business-friendly reputation. Several new economic development tools have also been rolled out, including an online property finder for businesses seeking to locate in the City, and a local Job Creation Partnership Program through the Los Angeles Small Business Development Center.

*"Lorraine in Building is an asset to your company. She is very knowledgeable and helped me with all my questions! I have been to other City Halls to look for permits and Lorraine is by far the best. She has great customer service."*

- Local Contractor

*"Very good customer service; it's a rare find in this day and age."*  
- Downey Resident

## COMMUNITY PRIDE

Upholding community pride and appearances, Keep Downey Beautiful held monthly cleanups, recognized businesses and homes with beautification awards, and repainted 400 galvanized posts city-wide. Infrastructure was upgraded at various city facilities to better serve and retain local businesses, including constructing street and water improvements on Brookshire Ave, Columbia Way and Paramount Boulevard. Traffic signals were upgraded to improve the flow of goods and traffic at Woodruff and Washburn and Imperial and Columbia Way as well as along Paramount Blvd.



## BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED



**PERMIT TYPES**  
Commercial 373  
Residential 1,613

During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, Community Development issued 1,986 building permits.

# Economic Vibrancy



115 new housing units were constructed in the 2013 calendar year.

## COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- ✔ Complete the Gateway Project.
- ✔ Finish construction of The View Housing Development.
- ✔ Redevelop key available properties: Lakewood / Gallatin.
- ✔ Redevelop key available properties: Former Verizon site next to Downey High School.
- ✔ Implement Metered Parking Exemption for Military Veterans - Ordinance that exempts military veterans with special license plates from paying metered parking.
- ✔ Aggressively pursue multiple aspects of economic development (including marketing vacant sites).
- ✔ Provide information on what resources and staffing will be needed to aggressively pursue economic development.
- ✔ Connect local people to local jobs through the Chamber of Commerce (local businesses with job openings promoted through the Chamber of Commerce).
- ✔ Provide Council with report on staff and funding requirements to assist businesses in forming a Property Business Improvement District (PBID).



**5,290**  
BUSINESS REGISTRATIONS

**259**  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS



**20**  
REHABILITATION GRANTS ISSUED

**10**  
POWER BOX MURALS IN DOWNTOWN DOWNEY

# Efficiency & Adaptability



Human Resources hosted **11 Supervisory & Management Skills** training sessions and processed **648 Personnel Status Report** forms.

## TOP-NOTCH SERVICE

The City has continued providing top-notch service to residents and businesses, keeping fire's average citywide response time to five minutes or less; expanding the K9 program to add two additional police dogs, adding public events and expanding public services.

## TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION

During this last fiscal year, we have emphasized teamwork and collaboration, fostering staff unity through employee retention and teambuilding exercises; instituting an internal grants team; and implementing the use of a resource-sharing database to eliminate duplicative rental or purchases for equipment and supplies.

## INFORMATION TRANSPARENCY

Information-sharing with the public has also become more efficient. through the Laserfiche system that enable online storage and public access of documents for City Council and all City commissions and boards. Likewise the Community Development department is ensuring the preservation of building plans and permits by archiving these public documents in laserfiche, and staff have begun the process of scanning and uploading historic Los Angeles County Records from the time before the City of Downey was incorporated.

## HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS

Moving to CalPERS Health Insurance for most employees has reduced cost and saved staff time while maintaining while preserving benefit levels.



## INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Other efficiencies have been achieved through new online business license renewals, which saved staff time and paper filing costs. Approximately 284 businesses renewed online in the first renewal season. The online registration system, transitioning dog license renewals to SEACCA has been more efficient for city staff as well as the public, since SEACCA also provides pet owners with access to updated rabies vaccination boosters (required for dog licenses) and other pet-related services.



## DIGITAL AGENDA PACKETS



E-readers for agenda packets halved the staff time required for agenda packet assembly and reduced paper use copying costs by more than 60%.



## TRANSPARENCY & EASE OF ACCESS



### DOCUMENT TYPES

- Agendas
- Reports
- FPPC 806 Filings
- Minutes
- Ordinances
- Resolutions

26,810 City documents were placed online for quick public access, increasing transparency and efficiency.

# Efficiency & Adaptability



100% of City Computer upgraded to Windows 7.

## COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- ✔ Efficiency and Adaptability is an objective the City Council directed the City Manager to focus on with every department goal.
- ✔ Streamline operations through teamwork approach.
- ✔ NIXILE implementation of body-worn cameras; make traffic collision reports available online through LexisNexis.
- ✔ Implement online employee performance evaluation system.
- ✔ Employ technology to increase efficiency: Update to Windows 7 and Office 2010.
- ✔ Strengthen Human Resources and Finance Departments.
- ✔ Establish programs to enhance employee retention.
- ✔ Complete city-wide equipment inventory & roll-out database.
- ✔ Institute comprehensive database for street pavement requests.
- ✔ Launch Business Ombudsman program.
- ✔ Implement use of animal license tracking software.



**81,269**  
COUNTER VISITS

**97.9 %**  
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION



**10,373**  
BUILDING INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED

**506,987**  
LIFETIME COMPUTER LAB SESSIONS





# Quality of Life



Downey has always been a “lovable community” with traditions, gatherings, a sense of place, and a sense of purpose.

## COMMITTED TO THE COMMUNITY

There is a burgeoning movement in cities and towns across the nation to create “lovable cities” in which residents and businesses are committed to the community and to each other. Downey has always been a “lovable community” with traditions, gatherings, a sense of place and a sense of purpose. But this feeling of community has intensified over recent years, as the recession has motivated folks to consider what truly matters, and what contributes to overall quality of life. The city’s branding program is the unifying language by which the community is brought together. Discover Downey, approved by the Council this fiscal year, encourages residents to rediscover what makes our City special, and invites outsiders to come experience all that the city has to offer.

## COMMITTED TO ART

An increasing emphasis on community-building has galvanized the arts and cultural movement in the City, providing public support for the Stay Gallery, managed by the Downey Art Vibe, and for dramatic productions such as Defying Gravity, produced by the Downey Arts Coalition and hosted at the City’s own Columbia Memorial Space Center. The Art in Public Places pilot program is showcasing Downey’s history through murals on power boxes throughout the City.

*Healthy Downey* has become a sustainable coalition of advocates that are working to change the fabric of life, from promoting exercise and bike riding to air quality, mental health, nutrition, and education.

The City’s branding program is the unifying language by which the community is brought together.

## COMMITTED TO CULTURE

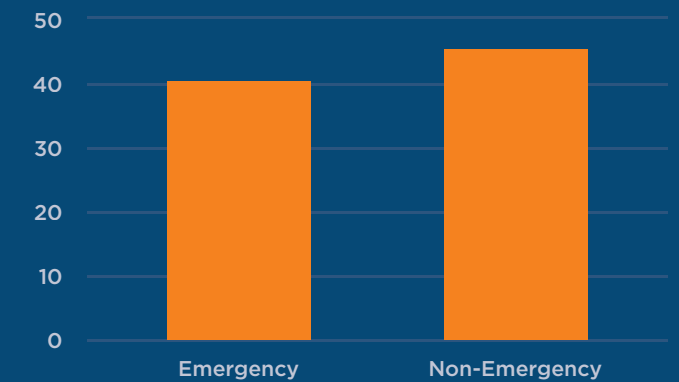
Two million people enjoyed the cultural, recreational and educational offerings of the City’s Library, Civic Theatre, Columbia Memorial Space Center and City parks. Among the notable events was a partnership between the Downey Arts Coalition, the City and the Columbia Memorial Space Center which resulted in the production of the drama Defying Gravity exploring the events and emotions surround the 1986 Space Shuttle Challenger disaster. The City also welcomed local authors Tyler Dilts and Shaun Morey for an engaging literary discussion, while the Theatre hosted the Russian National Ballet and Al Jarreau.



## POLICE 911 CALLS

CALLS TO DISPATCH  
In Thousands

85,754  
CALLS RECEIVED



Downey Police Dispatch received 85,754 calls during the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

# Quality of Life



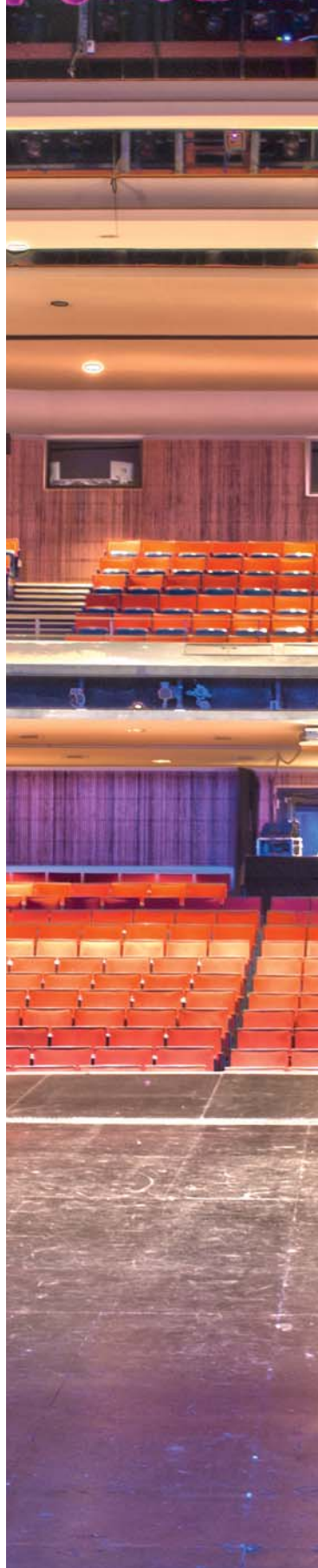
Downey LINK provided 220,453 rides.

## COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- ✔ Complete Parks & Recreation Preliminary Needs Assessment.
- ✔ Complete assessment of city facilities.
- ✔ Publish a comprehensive five (5) year CIP.
- ✔ Create walkable paths and bike trails; Prepare report on staff and funding requirements.
- ✔ Maintain public safety; Provide recommendations on resource sharing; Identify the funding requirements for expansion / improvements.

Implement SAFER grant award by hiring and training nine (9) additional firefighters all of which will also be certified paramedics. These new city employees will enable us to place Engine 61 into active service no later than July 1, 2013. The grant award of 1.88 million will be recognized over a two year period. The selection of paramedic certified firefighters will show a cost savings of \$540,000 - the cost of training and educating firefighters to the paramedic certification level.

- ✔ Increase our daily deployment of Basic Life Support (BLS) treatment and transportation units based on operational needs and revenue recovery. This cost neutral / positive strategy is an increase in our service delivery.
- ✔ Promote school safety and increase face-to-face interaction with school administrators through weekly police officer visits on school campuses.
- ✔ Focus on park safety.



15,930  
CITY TREES

60,152  
ROUNDS OF GOLF PLAYED

5 MIN  
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIME

112  
ACRES OF PARKS



# Neighborhood & Infrastructure



This past fiscal year, 17,500 acre feet of water was delivered from the City's twenty ground water wells.

## A SOLID FOUNDATION

Downey's water and sewer lines, roadways and sidewalks aren't the most glamorous but they are the literal solid foundation in which residents and businesses rely. This past fiscal year the City completed 16 major infrastructure improvement projects, completed 570 plan checks to facilitate various developments and issued 715 encroachment permits for activities taking place in the public right-of-way.

## MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Several major construction projects began this year, including the Firestone Boulevard renovation, with an emphasis on "complete streets" and a dynamic, pedestrian-scale downtown area. The grant-funded Brookshire Park renovations began in March, to make way for a new tot lot, updated landscaping and a walking trail. Also, the City began the Florence to Gallatin segment of the multi-year Lakewood Boulevard Improvement Project which is enhancing traffic flow, as well as improving the landscape and aesthetics of the corridor and extending the life of the infrastructure.



**36** STREET SEGMENTS SLURRY SEALED

## REGIONAL PROJECTS

The City is also responsible for representing Downey's interests in regional projects such as the I-5 freeway expansion, the I-710 freeway expansion, the I-605 Freeway Congestion Hot Spots Study and the Gateway Cities Strategic Transportation Plan, all of which are intended to ease traffic congestion and facilitate goods movement through the Gateway Cities region.

## KEEPING OUR WATER SAFE

To protect our local water supply seven ground water wells were rehabilitated this year, 30% of our sewer main system was flushed, 6,000 water samples were collected to ensure safe drinking water, and approximately 500 catch basins were cleaned quarterly to prevent flooding or debris from entering local waterways.

## ESSENTIAL SERVICES PROVIDED TO

**111,807**  
RESIDENTS

PLUS

**5,290**  
BUSINESSES

OVER AN AREA OF

**12.6**  
SQ. MILES



## FIRESTONE BLVD. BRIDGE PROJECT



The Firestone Boulevard bridge over the San Gabriel River is an approximately \$11 million grant funded project.

# Neighborhood & Infrastructure



40,000 ft of asphalt striped and 60,000 ft of streets paved.

## COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- ✔ Implement infrastructure improvements: Create a plan for street improvements; provide a staff report on solutions (funding options); explain how potholes are handled; schedule a study session.
- ✔ Secure, at least, \$1 Million in grant funds for Public Works projects.
- ✔ Secure funding for Lakewood Boulevard Phase 3B (Florence to Gallatin) for implementation in 2013-2014.
- ✔ Complete design of two new water wells.

## GRANT FUNDS



The City sought to secure at least \$1 million in grant funds for Public Works projects...



The City exceeded this goal by securing \$22 million in grant funding.



**16**

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

**626,827**

SQ. FEET OF GRAFFITI REMOVED

**210**

MILES OF PAVED STREETS

**112**

POTHoles FILLED



# Public Information & Engagement



At the twenty sixth annual KidsDay Hall of Fame, 214 outstanding Youth were recognized for their academic, athletic, artistic and volunteer achievements.

## EMPHASIS ON ENGAGEMENT

This fiscal year saw the 151st Neighborhood Watch group, Veterans and Memorial Day commemorations, 24 public hearings, and record-breaking attendance at the City's summer concert series. The community rallied around the Parks Needs Assessment focus groups. We emphasized engagement tools such as Nixle and NExdoor.com as well as Facebook and Twitter to engage and inform our residents and businesses. Crime prevention tools such as 3rd Row Seat Engraving, Unwanted Medicine Collection and Return Home Registry demonstrate the commitment of public safety officials to safe, positive interactions between residents and law enforcement.

## OUTSTANDING PROGRAMS

More than 9,000 people attended the annual Halloween Pumpkin Patch while 8,000 were in attendance at KidsDay Fair. The Bunny Breakfast and Spring Eggstravaganza were reinstated after a decade hiatus, while middle school movie nights and teen forums provided a safe haven for young people.

## OUTSTANDING TRADITIONS

This past fiscal year saw the Inaugural Dia De Los Muertos festival at the theater, the second annual Make Music Downey, the third annual Rocket Fever festival, and fourth annual Youth in Government Day. The City also coordinated with the Downey Unified School District on the first-ever Walk to School and Bike to School days in the City.

The Fourth Annual Taste of Downey, initially conceived as support for local restaurants, has morphed into a social and artistic event as well.

The community rallied around the Parks Needs Assessment focus groups.

## OUTSTANDING SERVICE

At the Downey City Library, E-books were launched to resounding success, allowing patrons to borrow books on smart phones, tablets and dedicated e-readers without ever needing to enter the building. And, in addition to lending nearly 400,000 items from the Library this year, the computer lab surpassed the half a million visitors milestone, furthering the City Library's mission of bringing people and ideas together.



## DIA DE LOS MUERTOS FESTIVAL




Ten thousand people attended the inaugural Dia De Los Muertos event at the Downey Civic Theatre in November 2013.


# Public Information & Engagement





1,347 volunteers participated in 24 Keep Downey Beautiful Projects.


## COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 

Increase participation in community events (e.g., art walks, Taste of Downey): Provide a report to Council on what it would cost the City to host the Memorial Day event at city hall, Fourth of July and other events; quantify what the City is doing in all special events in terms of staff time and other costs to help the Council determine what events the City can support.
- 

Implement recommendations from the Green Task Force report: Staff to review the task force report and identify items that can be implemented through routine types of work; identify what has a cost and what may not, and what could be done as part of the budget cycle.
- 

Review boards and commissions: Provide a report to the Council on the purpose and activities of each board and commission; the Council could give direction on what the focus should be for the year for each board and commission.
- 

Increase information about public safety policies: Meetings with Public safety Chiefs to provide briefings on activities, policies, annual reports and programs.
- 

Increase communications between City staff, Council and residents: Provide advance information about upcoming agenda items (tentative schedule), more information about furlough coverage, and more information about events.



 **100**  
PRESS RELEASES

 **300**  
PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS



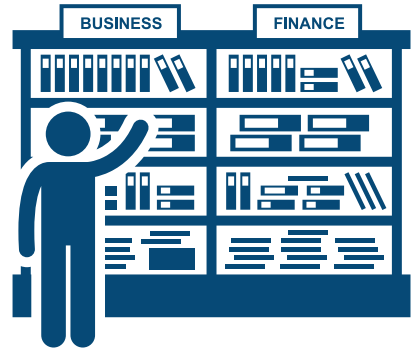
 **19**  
PUBLIC HEARINGS

 **34**  
COUNCILS, BOARDS & SUBCOMMITTEES

# greatService



# greatDedication



**363,640**  
LIBRARY PATRON VISITS



**30,540**  
COLUMBIA MEMORIAL SPACE CENTER VISITS



**1,548**  
PUBLIC WORKS SERVICE REQUESTS



**10**  
HEALTHY DOWNEY EVENTS



**27,907**  
DIAL-A-RIDE TRIPS



**1,404,361**  
PARK VISITS



**164,724**  
BARBARA J. RILEY COMMUNITY & SENIOR CENTER ATTENDANCE



**395,106**  
ITEMS BORROWED FROM THE DOWNEY CITY LIBRARY



**\$11,571,148**  
APPROPRIATED IN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FUNDS

**276**

RIDERS IN DOWNEY'S INAUGURAL TOUR DE DOWNEY



**600**

TLC 5K PARTICIPANTS



**7,733**

DOGS & HUMANS PLAYED AT RSG DOG PARK



**9,523**

EMERGENCY RESPONSES



**9,184**

REPORTED CRIMES & INCIDENTS



**33,795**

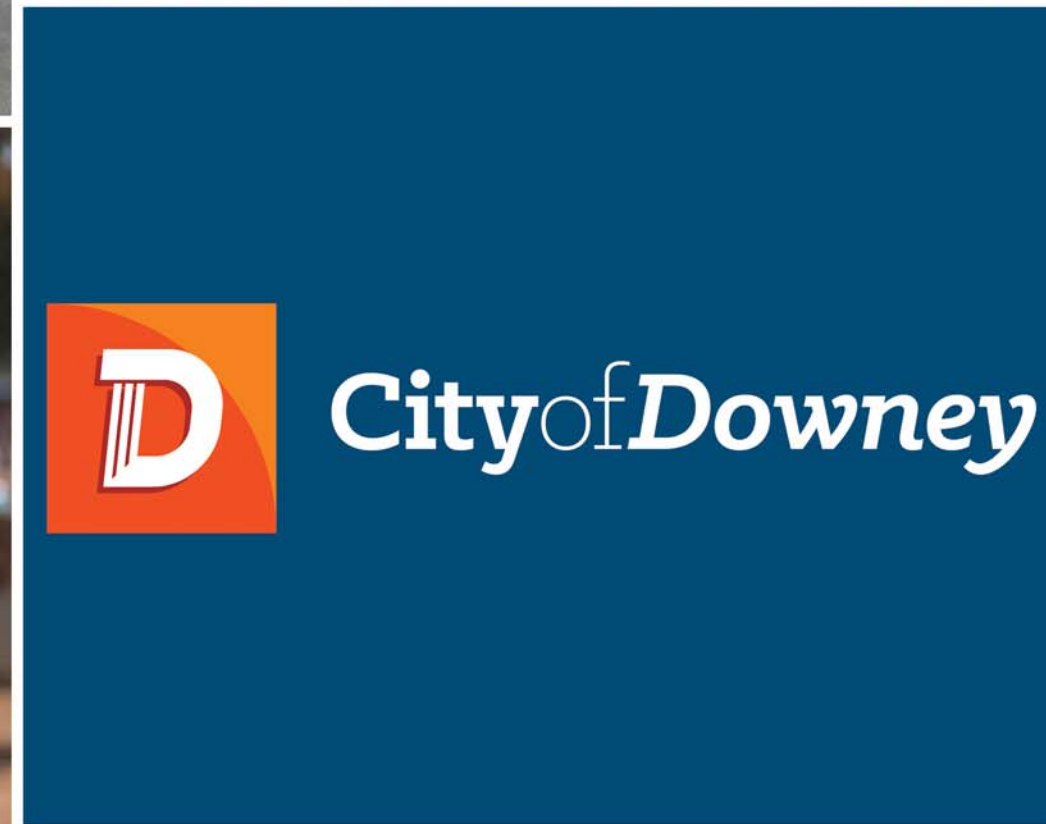
TRAFFIC CITATIONS



**3,322**

ARRESTS







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