



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

**JOHN A. DELANEY**  
MAYOR

CITY HALL SUITE 400  
117 W. DUVAL STREET  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202

September 5, 2002  
NEWS RELEASE

Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney and dozens of community leaders marked the second anniversary of voters approving The Better Jacksonville Plan today. On September 5, 2000, voters approved the ½ cent sales tax referendum to pay for \$2.2 billion worth of quality of life improvements.

“We’ve come a long way in two short years,” said Mayor Delaney at today’s breakfast in the Sports Complex. “People are seeing improvements all across the county, from large construction projects downtown to neighborhood street resurfacing. We are on time and on budget, and our community is getting better and better every day.”

The Mayor gave the update on The Better Jacksonville Plan in the Sports Complex, where the \$34 million dollar baseball park is under construction. It will feature a seating capacity of 10,000, with 188 club seats, 12 suites, six covered party decks, and left field berm seating. The ballpark is expected to be complete in the spring, in time for the AA baseball season.

The new \$130 million sports and entertainment arena is also under construction in the Sports Complex. It will seat up to 16,000 people and will feature 1,000 club seats, 28 suites, a party deck, eleven ticket windows, and 27,000 square feet of floor area. It is expected to be dedicated next summer.

At today’s event, models of the other major downtown projects were on display. The new \$95 million Main Library, to be built just east of Hemming Plaza, will be designed by architect Robert A.M. Stern. It will be nearly three times the size of the current Main Library and will feature state-of-the-art technology, a children’s section, a teen area, an African-American collection, a genealogy section, a grand reading room, an exterior courtyard, a grand staircase, a café, a bookstore and a 600-space parking garage with ground-level retail shops across Duval Street. It is expected to be dedicated in late 2004.

-MORE-

Work on the six new branch libraries and renovations of 12 existing neighborhood libraries is also under way. The library in San Marco will be the first to be completed, with an expected opening in the spring of next year.

The model of the new \$211 million courthouse complex was also on display at the breakfast today. The City of Jacksonville is now in contract negotiations with Cannon Design, the architectural firm that won the design competition in June. The complex will be approximately 900,000 square feet, covering several blocks just west of the new Federal Courthouse. It features a lighted dome, a grand exterior staircase and state of the art courtrooms. The City recently reached an agreement with the Federal government to take over the old Federal Courthouse and renovate it to house both the offices of the State Attorney and the Public Defender. The courthouse complex is expected to be dedicated in 2005.

While the major downtown projects are the most highly visible, other projects in The Better Jacksonville Plan are progressing as well. Nearly 795 miles of neighborhood streets have been resurfaced to date. An estimated 30 miles of sidewalks have been completed. Work on the \$1.5 billion worth of countywide road and infrastructure improvements is also well under way.

The Mayor took the opportunity today to review The Preservation Project, which received \$50 million from The Better Jacksonville Plan. Because of recent land acquisitions, Jacksonville now has the largest urban park system in the United States. The entire park system now totals 66,000 acres, which is larger than the entire city of Boston. Improvements at nearly 100 existing parks are under way, thanks to The Better Jacksonville Plan, which sets aside \$15 million for enhancements.

JEA is finishing work on the first of six neighborhoods to phase out septic tanks. Pernicia/Johnny Circle on the Westside was one of a half dozen neighborhoods declared sanitary nuisance areas by the Duval County Health Department and the City Council because septic tanks have been leaking into the St. Johns River and its tributaries. In addition to the \$75 million for septic tank remediation, The Better Jacksonville Plan also includes \$25 million for the clean up of contaminated sites. The City of Jacksonville is continuing to work with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to test various sites to determine a remediation plan.

Areas north and west of the St. Johns River are improving. The Better Jacksonville Plan sets aside \$25 million for the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Trust and businesses are utilizing that fund to make improvements. Construction on the Cecil Equestrian and Recreation Complex on the Westside will start this fall. Construction has already started at the Jacksonville Zoo for the Land of the Jaguar exhibit. It is expected to be complete in 2004.

-MORE-

Mayor Delaney said he is very pleased with the progress of The Better Jacksonville Plan and he thanked voters for having the vision to approve the plan.

For more information, call Sharon Ashton at 630-7377.