

WOOTON PARK
MARINA/SEAPLANE BASIN
MULTI-MODAL PROJECT
7/14/08

Wooton Park in downtown Tavares, the County seat, is a six acre park multi-use facility on the shores of Lake Dora. Current facilities include a large children's playground, gazebo, picnic shelter, restrooms, boat ramps, a small boat dock and pier and related parking facilities.

Lake Dora is part of the Harris Chain of Lakes in Lake County. Water access to the City of Mount Dora is possible on Lake Dora. Using the Dora Canal, water access is also available to Lake Eustis, Lake Harris and Little Lake Harris and the cities of Eustis and Leesburg.

Wooton Park is singularly unique event/recreation venue in Central Florida in that the facility is accessible by water, air, rail, bicycle and hiking (TAVLEE Trailhead facility), public transit and automobile. As one example, this multi-modal aspect will allow someone arriving by seaplane to take a water taxi to Mount Dora and return to Wooton Park by train.

The Inland Lakes Railway currently provides rail access from Tavares directly into downtown Orlando. While this service is currently limited to tourist/special event activities, this direct rail access provides the infrastructure backbone for future scheduled commuter rail service from Tavares to Orlando and a rail tie-in to a future "freight village" in the Tavares area.

The goal of the City of Tavares is to transform Wooton Park from a place primarily used by local residents into a regional destination waterfront venue with multiple uses that will continue to attract visitors and water related events to the community.

In 2008, the City hosted its annual Dragon Boat Festival, the Sunnyland Classic Antique Boat Festival formerly held in Mount Dora, a Classic Race Boat event, four weekends of "Thomas the Train" Children's event, Planes, Trains and Barbecue event and several national fishing tournaments at Wooton Park. Confirmed and proposed events for 2008 will draw an estimated 110,000 visitors to downtown Tavares and Wooton Park.

The proposed project when completed will be a multi-use park, regional special events venue with a water orientation providing a Marina/Seaplane basin, boat and bicycle rentals, water taxis, and other water related activities including the construction of a sandy beach area on Lake Dora. A loading platform area for rail passengers is also planned.

In April, 2007, the City Council unanimously endorsed the construction of a Marina/Seaplane Basin at Wooton Park. On November 28, 2007, the City Council authorized staff to negotiate a \$7.3 million bank loan to fund the design, permitting and construction of the Wooton Park Marina/Seaplane multi-modal project. This financing was finalized in January, 2008.

This multi-faceted project will consist of the following described project components.

MARINA -- Located in the current boat ramp area, the Marina will include a fishing pier with a Harbor Master/Ship Store which will be constructed to replicate the Woodlea House of Captain Melvin Haynes which was destroyed by arsonists in September 2007. The Marina would also serve as a venue for boat rentals and a water taxi service. An improved boat ramp will be established. A mooring area for seaplanes will be constructed as part of the boat dock construction and a fueling area for the sale of marine and aviation fuels will be established. Once built, it is anticipated that the project will be operated by the private sector under a lease arrangement with a share of the revenues generated returning to the City.

TAV-LEE TRAIL BUILDING AND OTHER PARK RENOVATIONS – An FDOT grant in the amount of \$600,000 has been awarded to construct a boat/bicycle storage building as part of the TAV/LEE Trail project. As part of this project, the large picnic pavilion and adjoining restrooms have been renovated. This project will be completed by August, 2008.

BOAT RAMP IMPROVEMENTS – Due to current low water levels on Lake Dora, the City Council has approved \$100,000 to extend the current boat ramp. Limited dredging was done to ensure the functionality of the boat ramps. These boat ramp improvements were completed in February 2008. It is anticipated that a second boat ramp to double the current capacity will be constructed in the next three years.

PORTABLE BOAT DOCKS AND OTHER VENUE INFRASTRUCTURE – The City Council approved up to \$250,000 to purchase 20 portable boat docks at an estimated cost of \$180,000 to support boating and other water related events at Wooton Park. The remainder of the funds were used for portable event fencing and other event related infrastructure such as an improved public sound system. The portable boat docks were delivered in February 2008.

FUELING AREA -- The sale of marine and aviation fuels will be done from the fueling area that will be built with the latest technology and environmental safeguards and meeting DEP Clean Marina Program standards.

WATER TAXI -- A limited water taxi service between the Marina and Mount Dora will be established. Broward County had 10 surplus 70 passenger water taxis that were purchased with grant funds. Tavares received delivery of two of the water taxis from Broward County in November 2008. The two water taxis will be refurbished and be operational by August 2008.

LOADING PLATFORM FOR RAIL PASSENGERS -- The construction of a loading platform for rail passengers at the location of the former Railroad Station is also planned.

CONSTRUCTION OF LAKE DORA BEACH – The construction of a sandy beach area is planned for a portion of the waterfront area.

CHILDREN'S SPLASH PLAY AREA – The construction of a Children's Splash Play area zero depth pool with active water features is planned for the community area of the Park near the Wooton Wonderland playground. Using a seaplane theme, the Splash Park will be completed by December 2008.

PAVILION – EVENT CENTER -- A Pavilion – Event Center will be constructed at the end of a dock/promenade area over Lake Dora. The Pavilion – Event Center will be constructed to replicate the former Tavares Pavilion building that was built at the Park in 1912 and demolished in the early 1950's. The Pavilion – Event Center will serve as the "headquarters" building for numerous regional events that are scheduled to be held at Wooton Park.

PRELIMINARY ESTIMATED PROJECT BUDGET:

BICYCLE/BOAT STORAGE AREA	\$ 600,000
HARBOR MASTER/SHIP STORE BUILDING	\$1,400,000
DOCKS AND MOORING AREA	\$ 620,000
WATER TAXIS (2) - Refurbish and transport	\$ 50,000
FUELING FACILITY	\$ 325,000
P, D & E	\$1,115,000
LOADING PLATFORM FOR RAIL PASSENGERS	\$ 100,000
CONSTRUCTION OF LAKE DORA BEACH	\$ 200,000
CHILDRENS SPLASH PLAY AREA	\$ 200,000
TAVARES PAVILION – EVENT CENTER	<u>\$2,750,000</u>
	\$7,360,000
CONTINGENCY – 10%	<u>\$ 736,000</u>
PRELIMINARY ESTIMATED COST	<u>\$8,096,000</u>

Of the above \$8,096,000, an estimated \$800,000 has been designated through a \$600,000 FDOT grant for the Bicycle/Boat storage area and a \$200,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to help offset the costs of the docks and mooring area. Staff will continue to apply for appropriate grants to offset the costs of this project. Two Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program grants totaling \$262,000 have also been approved to assist with the construction of the Children's Splash Park and the construction of the sand beach area.

This would leave an unfunded balance of \$7,034,000. In January 2008, the City Council approved and closed on a \$7.3 million bank loan for the design, permitting and

construction of the Wooton Park Marina/Seaplane Basin multi-modal project. BESH Engineering and a team of subcontractors was also approved in January 2008 to do the design, permitting and construction oversight for the project. Permitting and design work on the project began in March 2008.

The project will transform Wooton Park from a place where primarily local residents enjoy the children's park and other water related amenities into a regional "destination" venue attracting an estimated 110,000 annual visitors to downtown Tavares. The multiple events will create business and employment opportunities in downtown Tavares.

The Wooton Park project will serve as a regional multi-modal transportation hub that will be an "economic engine" serving as catalyst for revitalization of downtown Tavares into a regional destination and waterfront event venue.