



From the desk of the Vice Mayor  
**DEAN TRANTALIS**  
 Fort Lauderdale City Commission • District II

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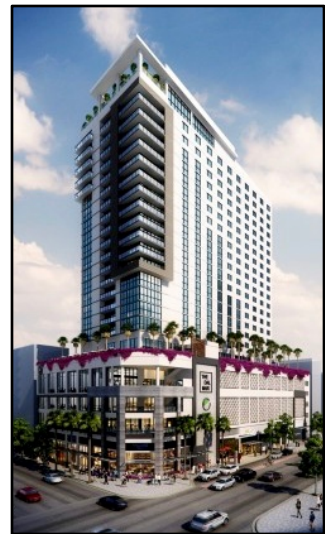
# Flagler Village blossoms as new urban core

What a difference a decade makes. Once considered nothing more than a dustbowl of abandoned lots, Flagler Village today is a place where new businesses have opened, high-rises and housing complexes are being built, festivals regularly draw huge crowds, and even smart hotels and a streetcar are on the horizon.

A handful of visionaries foresaw the neighborhood's potential years ago to become a vibrant urban center. Following the setbacks caused by the recession, those dreams are coming true. We are witnessing Flagler Village and surrounding neighborhoods transform into a truly great downtown with a slate of options for people to live, work and play that other communities wish they could offer.

More than 1,000 residential units and 100,000 square feet of retail space are under construction downtown. Dozens of other projects are under review or have the go-ahead to begin work.

The ORA Flagler Village and Wisdom Village Crossing apartment complexes should open by summer in Flagler Village. Among the many places under construction are the Whitney mixed-use apartment community, a dual-branded Starwood hotel, and Quantum at Flagler Village – a 15-story residential building with a 9-story hotel.



In adjacent areas, workers have topped off the 42-story Icon and construction should begin this spring on the 45-story 100 Las Olas with its Hyatt

Centric hotel. The city also has approved the construction of the 42-story Residences of Las Olas and the redevelopment of Las Olas Riverfront entertainment complex with two high-rises of more than 40 stories each.

New entertainment and retail options will be located throughout these buildings as they have been in the Manor and Edge complexes that opened a couple years ago. The Riverfront project alone will have 40,000 square feet of shops and restaurants. The Flagler Village Art Walk and Food in Motion event each have become popular attractions for people throughout the community.

The city has taken steps to ensure the downtown will be as robust as possible. We recently secured a land use plan amendment from Broward County that raises the cap on downtown housing by 5,000 additional dwelling units.

While downtown develops, we must be vigilant of the needs of old and new residents and ensure that we maintain our quality of life.

For instance, I want the expanding mix of retail to include grocery stores and other places people can buy essentials so downtown residents aren't required to hop in their car and drive for daily needs.

Open spaces are vital in areas filled with high-rises. I was disappointed to see the decline of Las Olas Riverfront because it could have been an oasis amid the high-rises with its open-air plaza. That makes it even more important for us to press hard for the city to keep its promise of a park on the site of the old City Hall/One Stop Shop.

The city also must move ahead with the FATVillage Art District streetscape plan. This will be a signature project that defines the city as an arts destination. Northwest 1st Avenue will feature pocket parks, shade trees, outdoor seating, bike



lanes, covered walkways, designer crosswalks and an elevated street terrace.

Improved mass transit is on its way to help with traffic flow.

The Brightline train system that will connect Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach is almost completed, as is its modern-looking Fort Lauderdale station downtown. Service should begin later this year.

Meanwhile, downtown officials hope to begin work on the Wave streetcar system late this year, with ridership anticipated in 2021. The route will connect the hospital-courthouse area south of the New River to the Flagler Village-Sistrunk Boulevard area with stops in between at downtown office buildings, the Broward College/FAU campus and entertainment/shopping districts.

I can't wait to see the result of all this work. We will have a truly remarkable downtown, and Flagler Village will be the cornerstone.

In closing, I'd like to invite everyone to join me for the grand opening of the new dog park at Holiday Park. The event will take place at 9:30 a.m. March 4 just northeast of War Memorial Auditorium.

Sincerely,







# St. Patrick's Day Parade & Festival

## March 11

The parade will take place from noon-1:30 p.m. The route will go along Las Olas Blvd. from SE 5th Ave. to Las Olas Riverfront. There will be more than 100 floats, marching bands and performers involved.

After the parade, head to the festival at Huizenga Plaza and along Riverwalk. There will be live bands, cultural attractions, Irish dancers and a special Kids Zone.



Vice Mayor Trantalis discussed various beach redevelopment projects during the January meeting of the Central Beach Alliance at the B Ocean Hotel.



Vice Mayor Trantalis attended the Friends of Birch State Park 75th anniversary gala that honored Ken Evans, Tyler Chappell, Linda Carter and Joe and Wini Amaturo.



Vice Mayor Trantalis introduced city commissioners during the annual Neighbor Support Night at City Hall where the work of city departments is showcased.



Vice Mayor Trantalis and the rest of the City Commission joined the consulate general of Israel from Miami in planting a tree at Holiday Park in honor of Tu B'Shevat.