



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

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# Gaps remain in development of urban core

## Focus on bars, restaurants falls short. Village atmosphere must include groceries and shops

Everywhere around us we hear the buzz of growth, leaving no corner of the city untouched. We hear it in conversation, in debate, and unfortunately, the buzz that rings our ears caused by the noise of cement trucks, steel-hauling cranes and trucks that beep-beep-beep annoyingly at the wrong hours of the day.

In our newsletter last month, we spoke of all the new development we have been witnessing in our downtown and in Flagler Village. Hotels, apartments and condo buildings are filling in urban spaces that were once abandoned parts of our city.

Almost 7,000 units are in some phase of development. It's all very mesmerizing.

We are told by the experts that in order to attract amenities into these regions, we need to establish a "critical mass" of residents. That translates into having a sufficient number of people in a small enough area who would patronize the restaurants and bars that create an exciting urban scene.

No one really knows what that number is, but you can be sure that businesses will soon feast on the harvest that this new bumper crop of units will soon produce.

Yet there is a missing element to all this.

We keep hearing about amenities, but that so far has almost universally meant

bars and restaurants. People don't really eat at restaurants every day and they don't sip cocktails or chug down beer as often as these developers would have you believe.

Nowhere, and I repeat, nowhere, in all these conceptions of new modernism is space yet dedicated for grocery stores, pharmacies, a florist or even a drycleaner. When asked why, developers wince and are more convinced that there is a greater profit to be realized from selling condos than pushing free-range chickens.

Indeed, this is very shortsighted.

Urban dwellers choose the urban lifestyle so that they do not have to get into their cars and drive to places such as these. Eschewing the vehicular conveyance is all about the livable, walkable city I hear at every visioning session I ever attended.

To me, the value of an urban setting is the easy access to all the amenities of daily life. If I were choosing to live in a high-rise, I would much prefer to live in a building where everything was within walking distance.

Developers who ignore such prerogatives will find their projects languishing in price and interest as people will chase the home environment that satisfies all their needs, not just to party.

I cannot understand why our own city staff has not been leading this effort. After



all, these ideas are not all that novel. They need to be part of the conversation.

Ignoring them frustrates the vision that has been articulated again and again. Fort Lauderdale is the place you never want to leave. Let's not give people a reason to do so.

Sincerely,





Vice Mayor Trantalis opens the annual Greek Festival at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church with Father Jim Katinas and Jim Carras of Carras Community Investment.



Vice Mayor Trantalis joins Sheriff Scott Israel and city commissioners Robert McKinzie and Bruce Roberts at the annual Sistrunk Parade and Festival.



Vice Mayor Trantalis discusses a proposed housing development with builder Rob Stiegele during a recent meeting of the Middle River Terrace neighborhood.



Vice Mayor Trantalis welcomes some 30,000 people to Pride Fort Lauderdale, which marked the 40th anniversary of the festival and the first time it was held on the beach.



Vice Mayor Trantalis speaks at the meeting of the Broward League of Cities, which Fort Lauderdale hosted in March at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts.



Vice Mayor Trantalis joins Mayor Jack Seiler, other city officials and leaders of the Victoria Park Civic Association to open the new dog park at Holiday Park.