



From The Desk Of **DEAN TRANTALIS**

Fort Lauderdale City Commission • District II

JULY-AUGUST 2014

City makes progress across District 2

Work continues to improve neighborhood quality of life, infrastructure and public safety

With the area's economy rebounding and new development occurring from the beach to downtown, I thought this is a good time to reflect on our recent progress as a city.

We've seen significant strides in improving transportation, public safety and the city's infrastructure. Now, as we look to the future, you can expect many new initiatives on creating a better quality of life for our community.

One area we will focus on is traffic flow and mobility. Fort Lauderdale adopted a Complete Streets strategy a year ago so that streets could be designed as safe and convenient for everyone regardless of the method they use to travel. We currently have several significant projects moving forward in District 2 using this philosophy.

Within the next several months, we anticipate finalizing plans for the redevelopment of Northeast 13th Street as a Complete Streets project. We'll also begin construction in 2016 to rebuild Dixie Highway through the Middle River Terrace as more of a neighborhood street and less of a highway.

Alterations are beginning to be made on Las Olas Boulevard to

improve travel for residents of the beach and the Las Olas isles neighborhoods. We've lowered the speed limit on Northeast 3rd Avenue in South Middle River and soon will make safety improvements to North Andrews Avenue.

The city's transportation office is working on ideas to improve traffic flow at Northeast 15th Avenue and Sunrise Boulevard, and I've asked them to improve pedestrian safety at the Gateway Plaza intersection on Sunrise. The city has also committed \$500,000 to make downtown safer and easier for pedestrians to get around.

And, we're making progress on developing transportation alternatives.

The city has expanded its downtown Sun Trolley to provide better connectivity from Flagler Village to Las Olas Boulevard and areas as far south as the Broward Health Medical Center.

The initial phase of the Wave streetcar could begin operation as early as the end of 2016. In addition, Florida East Coast Industries will launch its All Aboard Florida high-speed passenger rail service that year. Construction on its Fort Lauderdale station in downtown's Progresso area will begin in September.

You can also expect new city initiatives in improving its infrastructure, including drainage improvements and street repair.

Our staff recently presented the commission with a long-range strategy to reduce flooding caused by storms and high tides. The city must identify a



way to pay for much of the work, but the plan includes more tidal control valves, bioswales, seawall repair and stormwater pumping stations.

Phase I would involve upgrading low-lying streets such as the 700 block of Northeast 20th Avenue in Victoria Park, the 1800 block of North Dixie Highway in Middle River Terrace and the 700 to 1000 blocks of West Las Olas Boulevard in Sailboat Bend.

We also recently won \$700,000 in state aid to address flooding. We will make stormwater improvements on Seven Isles, Las Olas Isles and Isle of Venice as we recently did on Riviera Isles and Hendricks Isles.

The city also has agreed to a multi-year plan to repave municipal streets and created a new electronic database of road conditions that prioritizes where repairs are needed.

The commission committed \$2.2 million for repair work this year and plans to spend \$700,000 each of the next four years. Large sections of Poinsettia Heights, Lake Ridge, Victoria Park and South Middle River are being resurfaced this year.

We've paved Northwest 14th Street west of Andrews Avenue, one of the last dirt roads in the city. Next up is paving adjacent Northwest 15th Street. The city manager proposes to





complete the project by 2016. Let's work together to try to get it done sooner.

The city also has been working with the Florida Department of Transportation on several major road construction projects.

Repairs to the Las Olas Boulevard bridge are finally complete, and crews have started rebuilding the Sunrise Boulevard bridge over the Middle River and replacing old bridges in the Nurmi Isles neighborhood and on Isle of Venice and Sunrise Key. Repairs to the section of State Road A1A damaged during Hurricane Sandy will begin later this month, and Sunrise Boulevard and Powerline Road are slated to be repaved soon. Improvements to Broward Boulevard are also forthcoming.

We continue to work with Idlewyld, Riviera Isles, Las Olas Isles and Seven Isles to bury overhead utility lines. Engineering is underway for two of the neighborhoods and will lead to a series of votes in which residents decide if they want to pay for construction.

A public works project is advancing to install sidewalks, drainage and pedestrian lights in Progresso Village.

Dredging will start soon to deepen the Intracoastal Waterway from Port Everglades to north of Las Olas.

The city is also making progress through its public safety initiatives.

The Police Department formed a first-of-its kind partnership with IBM to develop crime prevention tactics using advanced data analysis. We committed \$200,000 to pay for officer overtime to reduce criminal activity based on information gleaned from the data analysis.

Last year saw the successful distribution of high-tech SmartWater crime prevention kits in South Middle

River after the neighborhood was hit hard by a rash of home burglaries. Crime declined, and the city has expanded the program to Middle River Terrace and Lauderdale Manors.

We've started a new monthly crime meeting for South Middle River, Middle River Terrace, Lake Ridge and Lauderdale Manors to better connect police

officers and concerned citizens. On the beach, the city has instituted a zero-tolerance policy toward disruptive behavior and illicit activity and is considering more park rangers and police to patrol the area.

City officials also have met with state judges who oversee juvenile delinquency cases to discuss ways to better monitor teen criminals.

Our homeless initiatives are underway.

We've approved the expansion of the Homeless Assistance Center and are participating in a federal program to offer housing and social services to

the chronically homeless. We're also adopting a series of ordinances to better balance the rights of the homeless with the quality of life for the rest of our citizens. This

includes restrictions on panhandling and outdoor food-distribution programs.

You can also look forward to more work to enhance neighborhoods and improve our parks and recreation system.

On the barrier island, the city is examining how best to spend more than \$70 million in redevelopment money. Plans to rebuild the aquatic center are moving ahead, and we're exploring improvements to D.C. Alexander Park, the construction of new parking garages, enhancements to the streetscape along A1A, an

intracoastal promenade and an expanded marina.

We're working with the county to widen the beach from the northern city limits to Terramar Street. In Victoria Park, the city and the neighborhood association have agreed to plans for a dog play area in Holiday Park. We're also spending more than \$500,000 to improve to South Middle River's Warfield Park and Sailboat Bend's Townsend Park.

We are finalizing plans with the school district to allow the public to use the tennis courts at Sunrise Middle School on weekends. And, the city approved a second phase of the Flagler Drive greenway.

The commission also agreed to improve key gateway entrances to the city and is collaborating with regional transportation planners to establish quiet zones along the railroad tracks so trains no longer need to sound their horns at crossings.

We dedicated money to help the Flagler Village community garden and improve that neighborhood around the new apartment complexes on Federal Highway. And, a recent grant will pay for improvements to the medians on A1A between North Atlantic and Oakland Park boulevards.

In North Beach Village, we're working with residents to improve its streetscape and craft a long-range vision for redevelopment. Meanwhile in Sailboat Bend, the city is exploring how to allow more development while also maintaining a focus on



historic preservation.

That's a lot going on over the next couple years. I promise to keep you posted. If you don't already subscribe to our newsletter, send me an e-mail at dtrantalis@fortlauderdale.gov and I'll add you to our mailing list. Together, we can make Fort Lauderdale a better place to live.

Sincerely,

Dean

A word about marriage equality

City Commission joins other cities to ask state Legislature to allow same-sex marriage

Last month, the City Commission took a historic stand in favor of equal rights for all of its citizens. The commission joined many other communities around Florida in endorsing marriage equality and asking the Legislature to change the law to allow gays and lesbians to wed.

Our decision came on the eve of the 45th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York City where the modern struggle for gay rights began. That was a watershed moment for a group of people who had long been pushed aside and their rights denied to them. Yet, here we are 45 years later in Fort Lauderdale still seeking rights for those in the LGBT community.

There comes a point when leaders of the community must stand up on behalf of those we represent. Equality is an important facet of our everyday lives, and those who live here are entitled to be treated equally and fairly.

Marriage equality is important to many in our community. Just last summer, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in two landmark cases that it was against the Constitution to deny persons based on their sexual orientation the right to marry. Thus, no federal law could be passed treating couples of the same sex differently than any other married couple.

It was a great decision that will go down in the annals of the history as another door opening for those seeking equal rights.

We've since seen a cascade of decisions across the nation overturning various statutes and constitutional amendments that denied persons based on their sexual orientation the right to marry and from receiving those state and federal benefits available to married couples. The fact is that there are well over 1,000 benefits that married couples have long been entitled to as a matter of right.

Marriage equality is really more about equality than it is about marriage. Marriage equality is about being fair and allowing people access to all those benefits.

It's also very important we recognize the significance of the LGBT community to Fort Lauderdale.

When I came to Fort Lauderdale in the early 1980s, it was a different kind of place. It was definitely diverse, but a lot of changes have taken place in the city since.

Neighborhood after neighborhood saw a total renaissance. Victoria Park, Poinsettia Heights and Lake Ridge are among them. And who helped in that renaissance? The people in the gay community who invested in this community and spent millions and millions of dollars of their own money to make this their home.

Today, many thousands of people in the gay community have indeed made this their home. According to the U.S. Census figures from 2010, Fort Lauderdale has one of the highest concentrations of same-sex households in the entire country.

Let me add to that.

According to the Convention & Visitors Bureau, billions of dollars have been spent by visitors from the LGBT community in the Fort Lauderdale area. Billions. Last year alone, \$1.4 billion was spent.

I know there are those people who will say it's against their religion. I respect those who are religious. But when I go to church, I check my



politics at the door. Just so at City Hall. As leaders, we should check our religion at the door because we need to represent all the people as public servants.

There was a particular strategic reason to bring up the marriage equality resolution last month.

In Florida, there are lawsuits underway to overturn the state constitutional amendment and statute that say marriage between persons of the same sex is illegal. When judges look to make decisions, they often look to the court of public opinion and what people are thinking.

It was important, thus, for us – as the seat of this county and the biggest city in this county and the best city in Florida – to take a stand. We were recently designated an All-America City. If we are truly going to be an All-America City, then we have to be a city for all Americans.

Sincerely,

Dean

- Interested in receiving Commissioner Trantalis' newsletters and other city information electronically? E-mail him at dtrantalis@fortlauderdale.gov.
- Want to attend his District 2 pre-agenda review meetings? They take place the Monday before each City Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the 7th floor conference room of City Hall.
- Want to contact his city office? Call his assistant, Scott Wyman, at 954-828-5923 or e-mail him at swyman@fortlauderdale.gov.

Fort Lauderdale offers many online options

Fort Lauderdale has been rapidly expanding ways in which residents can interact with the city online.

The city recently launched Lauderserv as both a web-based application and a mobile device application available for iPhones and Androids users.

Residents can submit requests for service, such as reporting a code enforcement issue, an unlit street light, a pothole or a clogged storm drain. They can then track the status of their request online. A report of current beach conditions is also available on the site.

The online version can be found at fortlauderdale.gov/lauderserv. The iPhone application is listed in Apple's App Store, while the Android version available at Google Play.

Lauderserv replaces older tools used to track requests and is expected to help meet the needs of residents faster.

The city also has started a special website where residents can share their ideas about how to improve the community. The site is WeBuildCommunityFTL.com.

WeBuildCommunityFTL was developed as a result of the success of the website used during the city's long-range visioning process. You can view and comment on other people's ideas. The site also allows the city to survey residents for their opinions on issues or create special forums to discuss a particular idea.

Another way to become engaged on city issues is found as part of the City Commission agendas that are posted online before a commission meeting. Alongside the agenda, you'll find a link that allows you to send an e-comment to the commissioners about any of the items they will discuss.

Also, don't forget about Nextdoor. It's a free, private social networking website for neighborhoods where you can get to know your neighbors, share information about everything from garage sales to crime problems, receive updates from the city and neighborhood association and seek advice about area services and contractors.

Almost all of the neighborhoods in District 2 are participating in Nextdoor. To join, please visit nextdoor.com. Nextdoor also is available as a mobile device application.

Finally, you can follow the city online. The city is on Facebook under the name [cityoffortlauderdale](https://www.facebook.com/cityoffortlauderdale) and on Twitter as [FTLCityNews](https://twitter.com/FTLCityNews).

More is on the way. The city will soon launch an updated web site.



Commissioner Trantalis joins Police Chief Frank Adderley to discuss crime concerns with residents of South Middle River, Middle River Terrace, Lake Ridge and Lauderdale Manors.



Commissioner Trantalis opens a special community forum hosted by the law firm Becker & Poliakoff to discuss recent legislation effecting condominiums.



Commissioner Trantalis helps congratulate students that participated in the city's presentation to the National Civic League in Denver to win the prestigious All-America City award.