



From the desk of
DEAN TRANTALIS
Mayor of Fort Lauderdale

July 2020

The headlines over the past couple months have been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the discussion of racial justice in law enforcement. But behind the scenes, the city of Fort Lauderdale has been making tremendous strides on other issues important to our quality of life as well.

We have made particular progress in replacing the major sewer line across the center of the city. Sections have been laid in Rio Vista, Beverly Heights, Poinsettia Heights and Coral Ridge as two construction companies work simultaneously on the 7.5-mile project. They expect to be completed by the end of year.

Because of a streamlined procurement process that also saved millions of dollars, this work is moving substantially faster than a normal construction schedule, which could have run three years start to finish.

In addition, new auxiliary sewer mains have been installed in the Victoria Park, Coral Ridge and Coral Ridge Country Club Estates neighborhoods, and the second phase of laying a new sewer line along Las Olas Boulevard is underway. Projects to rehabilitate the sewer system in Dorsey Riverbend and Flagler Village are nearing completion.

The City Commission also recently awarded a contract to design and build a new sewer main along Northwest 13 Street. The new 30-inch main will run along 13th from Powerline Road to Andrews Avenue.

At the same time, the city is set to begin the replacement of the aging Fiveash Water Treatment Plant. The budget proposal for the new fiscal year beginning in October includes hiring an outside expert called an owner's representative to take charge of the procurement process for design and construction.

Action has also been occurring to address climate change.

The city has made significant progress on improving seawalls on Cordova Road and on Isle of Palms to address neighborhood flooding. About 2,500 feet of public seawall is being replaced on Cordova between Southeast 7 and Southeast 12 streets, while 900 feet of seawall is being replaced on Isle of Palms.

The Cordova work will be done by the end of the year, with Isle of Palms completed in late August.

Efforts are also underway to clean and restore our waterways that were impacted by the sewer line breaks earlier in the year.

Two environmental firms have completed assessments of George English Lake and the Tarpon River and developed specific work plans to remove sediment and debris. We are now in the process of obtaining necessary fast-tracked permits from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The timeline for these projects is aggressive, with the cleanup at George English Park in September and October and address the Tarpon River in December.

I recently had the privilege to take a boat trip along the waterways of our city with Jeff Maggio of Lunckerdog fishing charters and businessman John Loos to discuss what more we can improve their cleanliness. We discussed a variety of ideas such as socks on more drainage outfalls, the use of aerators at the end of canals, work to skim the surfaces, regulation of leaf blowers on adjacent properties and the planting of more shoreline vegetation.

Here are some other exciting developments that are occurring:

- The City Commission has upgraded the ongoing renovation of the aquatic center to include a 27-meter dive tower and an observation deck. This will be one of the highest dive towers in the world and will add the significant economic driver of extreme sports to the slate of traditional swimming and diving events that will be hosted at the aquatic center when it reopens.

- The commission has also allocated the voter-approved funds necessary to construct the Tunnel Top Park off Las Olas Boulevard by extending the roof deck of the Federal Highway tunnel. This was a signature project promised in the parks bond issue that overwhelmingly passed at referendum last year. The new pedestrian plaza will include shade structures, park benches, landscaping and a wayfinding kiosk. Projects in neighborhood parks are also moving ahead.

- We are working to address aircraft noise from Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. The commission has asked the Federal Aviation Administration to make adjustments to departure procedures at the airport. If approved, these changes should help residents in southwest Fort Lauderdale who are extremely impacted by aircraft noise.

- We have taken action to ensure our sidewalks are better maintained. Neighboring property owners have been responsible for maintenance, but the city is assuming this responsibility. The only exception will be if the property owner caused the damage.

- Design work is underway on the Breakers Avenue streetscape project. We will install pedestrian lighting, trees and landscaping according to a shared-use street design as well as make upgrades to underground water and sewer utilities. The project will create an iconic corridor serving tourists and residents of Fort Lauderdale's beach.

As summer progresses, please continue to be safe and protect the health of yourself and your loved ones during this COVID-19 pandemic. By working together as a community, we will get through this crisis.

Sincerely,

Dean