

JUNE/JULY 2017 - DISTRICT 1 NEWSLETTER

VICE MAYOR BRUCE G. ROBERTS



MIAMI, FORT LAUDERDALE RANK AS TOP “BUY” MARKETS FOR RETAIL ASSETS (as reported in the

RealDeal): As the nation’s retail market struggles amid store closings and mounting pressure from online shopping, South Florida stands out as a top market for retail assets, according to a newly released report. Ten-X’s Retail Market Outlook ranked Miami as the top long-term “buy” market, based on demand, followed by Fort Lauderdale, Houston, Austin and Tampa. In Miami, retail vacancies dropped by 0.05 percent to 5.7 percent at the end of last year. Rents averaged \$23.37,

and are projected to rise to \$25.79 by 2020, according to the report. Fort Lauderdale retail vacancies fell to 8.9 percent last year, with rents averaging \$17.86. Rents in Fort Lauderdale are forecast to rise to \$20.20 in 2020. Overall, retail vacancies were 9.9 percent nationwide at the close of 2016 and are projected to remain at that level in 2020.

SUN TROLLEY CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY: In 1992, the transit service launched with Lolly the Trolley. Today, it’s fully modernized with a new Tracker App that lets customers track each bus in real time; an updated website and a 24/7 customer service hotline. Riders run the gamut from snowbirds who spend a few months in town to locals who take the trolley to work. The nonprofit LifeNet4Families depends on it to deliver meals to the needy. Its busiest route - based on ridership per hour - is the airport link. Folks ride between Fort Lauderdale’s international airport and the city’s historic arts and entertainment district downtown. Additionally, the free on-demand Riverwalk Water Trolley ferries riders to eight points around the channel and to the Las Olas shopping and restaurant row. Folks can call the hotline and take the option to speak with the captain for personalized service. In the future, the association plans to start guided tours for visitors. Areas under consideration include the developing Flagler Village Arts and Technology District.

PROPOSED CANAL CLEANING ASSESSMENT: The City of Fort Lauderdale owns 57 miles of navigable canals that require periodic dredging to remain navigable. In an effort to improve the level of service to our neighbors and maintain property values, we are considering implementing a proactive program to dredge City-owned canals on a seven-year cycle. The first two years of each seven year cycle of the dredging program would consist of surveying the condition of the City-owned canal system, prioritizing the dredging program for the upcoming five years, and designing and permitting of the canal dredging plan. During each year of the dredging plan, the canals to be dredged that year would be surveyed again to verify the current conditions prior to commencing dredging. A canal must also be surveyed after dredging to confirm that the construction work authorized was completed according to the specifications set during the design stage and shown in the plans.

Funding Needed Improvements: Implementing a proactive canal dredging program will incur costs associated with surveying, permitting and dredging. In order to fund the associated dredging costs, the City is considering an annual assessment for properties along the City-owned navigable canals. An ongoing dredging program could benefit property owners by maintaining access to the navigable canal and preserving property values. The assessment would be based on the number of linear feet of private property that front a City-owned canal. Only the cost of dredging navigable canals will be included in the assessment – the cost of dredging non-navigable drainage canals will be funded through the City’s stormwater program.

For more information you can visit www.fortlauderdale.gov/canal. As part of the public input, please email or call us with your viewpoint on this issue.

ESTIMATED IMPACT OF APPROVED HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION BILL: As you may be aware, the Florida House voted 83-35 to put a constitutional amendment on the 2018 ballot that would allow homeowners to shield an additional \$25,000 of the value of their home from most property taxes. The additional exemption would not apply to taxes charged by school districts. The Senate approved the measure (HB 7105) in April. The measure calls for the average homestead exemption to jump to \$75,000 from \$50,000 on the first \$125,000 of a home’s taxable value. The measure must be approved by at least 60 percent of voters to take effect. As a proposed statewide amendment to Florida’s constitution, it cannot be vetoed by Governor Rick Scott. If approved by voters, this would apply to over 25,000 parcels in the City and the estimated annual revenue loss at the current millage rate would be \$2.5 million or 2.1% of the city’s current ad valorem revenues. I will keep you updated as time goes on.

RECOGNIZING PARTICIPANTS OF THE FIRST NEIGHBOR LEADERSHIP ACADEMY: Office of Neighbor Support recognized the participants in the first City of Fort Lauderdale’s Neighbor Leadership Academy Class at a Commission Meeting. The goal of the Neighbor Leadership Academy is to build community leaders. The first 20 participants in the Neighbor Leadership Academy are from all four Districts and were selected in conjunction with the Council of Civic

Associations. The participants are ready to put their learned skills into action and will be organizing a **Meet Your Neighbor Block Party** in September 2017 as part of a Community Service Project. Each participant was presented with a City of Fort Lauderdale's Neighbor Leadership Academy Certificate and a Neighbor Support Pin in recognition of their participation. The following people represented District 1:

*Peter Cooper, Coral Ridge Country Club
Roy Grimsland, Coral Ridge*

*Laura Depenbrock, Imperial Point
Diana Hanford, Knoll Ridge*

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR DISTRICT ONE PARTICIPANTS!

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR SUNRISE BOULEVARD BETWEEN THE SEARSTOWN AND GATEWAY SHOPPING

PLAZAS: The Florida Department of Transportation, District 4, Planning and Environmental Management Office (FOOT) recently completed a planning study focused on improving traffic operations and safety along SR 838/Sunrise Boulevard between SR-5/US-1 at Searstown Shopping Plaza and the Gateway Shopping Plaza. Under existing conditions, the corridor is operating at capacity with heavy vehicular congestion and queues throughout the day. By year 2040, traffic volumes are expected to increase up to 66,500 vpd (vehicles per day). In general, existing intersection delays can be expected to double and vehicular queues are expected to increase up to 34% at the critical left-turn movements. More notable, the existing triple eastbound left-turn lane at US 1/Gateway will exceed its capacity and significant delay and queues are expected. FDOT recommends the following improvements to address existing and expected conditions:

- **Corridor wide Improvements:** Includes upgrades to crosswalk ramps and sidewalks within the project limits to comply with ADA requirements, and signage modifications and additional pavement marking at specific locations.
- **Sunrise Boulevard at US 1/Searstown:** Improving the operations of the intersection by constructing an additional westbound left-turning lane (provides queue reduction of 28%) and installing a queue detection system on the eastbound direction. The queue detection system will be designed to relieve eastbound stopped traffic if queues reach a point close to the railroad tracks.
- **Sunrise Boulevard at NE 15th eastbound direction:** Install a dynamic lane system for the eastbound direction. It consists of the use of the inside through lane to be converted to a shared through/left by using a dynamic display signal creating an effective dual left-turn lane which will operate during peak hours only. It includes widening in the north approach to receive the dual lanes.
- **Sunrise Boulevard at US 1/Gateway:** Convert the existing signalized intersection to a multilane roundabout with an eastbound to northbound grade separated movement. This proposed 'flyover' ramp carries traffic destined to US 1 northbound relieving the at-grade movements. The combined improvements are expected to reduce delays by up to 58% during the peak hours. In addition, the roundabout conversion is expected to reduce the total intersection crashes by 44% based on nationwide studies and creates fewer pedestrian conflicts with less crossing distance. Bicyclists were considered in the roundabout concept for the Sunrise Boulevard intersection at Gateway. Bicycles are accommodated in the proposed design by providing a bike ramp from the roadway to a multiuse path around the circle.

A Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study for the improvements recommended above is proposed as an addition to the 2018/2019 Multimodal Surface Transportation Priorities List which will enable the programming of future available funds through the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization's 5-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as well as the Florida Department of Transportation's Draft Tentative Work Plan. The PD&E will further evaluate the recommendations listed above to determine the associated social, economic, natural and physical environmental impacts in order to develop the best solution for the multimodal, operational and congestion management challenges in this area. If you would like the entire memo and drawing attachment, let Robbi know and she will email it to you.

OFFICE CONTACT: Robbi Uptegrove – 954-828-5033; email: ruptegrove@fortlauderdale.gov

In addition to hosting two pre-agenda meetings twice a month, I am also available to attend your HOA meetings to update your neighborhood on what is going on in the City as well as answer any questions/concerns you may have. Please contact Robbi to schedule.

EMAIL LIST: If you would like to be on our email list so that you receive information pertaining to the City – especially District 1 (i.e. news releases, meeting notices, events), please let Robbi know and she will add you.