



From The Desk Of **DEAN TRANTALIS**

Fort Lauderdale City Commission • District II

FEBRUARY 2014

New city homeless initiatives take shape

Las Olas Blvd. traffic improvements receive OK; Victoria Park dog park proposed

Last fall, we hosted a watershed meeting with major social service providers to discuss how best to address the problem of homelessness in Fort Lauderdale. We are now witnessing those efforts bear fruit.

The city is participating in a ground-breaking federal program called Housing First to provide housing and support services to the chronically homeless. The City Commission also has agreed in concept to two significant ordinances to address the public safety and business concerns that have arisen both downtown and neighborhoods such as Victoria Park.

The first ordinance being drafted prohibits panhandling on streets and sidewalks. The other sets standards for public behavior with prohibitions against camping on public property, sleeping on sidewalks, urinating in public and using public property to store personal goods.

City staff is working on a third proposal to regulate outdoor food service. Permits would be needed, the number of meals provided at any location would be limited and certain food safety standards would be established. The goal would be to divert homeless feeding programs to more suitable indoor locations.

This is a good first step. As a society, we should endeavor to assist those in need. At the same time, the City Commission is committed to preserving the quality of life for the community as a whole.

Within the last month, a variety of projects throughout District 2 have advanced.

Las Olas Boulevard. The City Commission is taking steps to improve traffic flow and make the street safer for pedestrians. These improvements should help residents of the beach and the Las Olas isles travel between their homes and downtown more easily.

The city will modify the signal timing at Southeast 15th Avenue and Las Olas to reduce the amount of



traffic backing up on 15th to turn left on Las Olas. Crosswalks will be better marked. A right-turn-only lane will be created on Las Olas at 15th.

The lane markings at 15th and Broward Boulevard will be altered to better facilitate turning trucks. Electronic signage will be installed that flashes a driver's speed. Depending on the success of these measures, the four-way stop at 15th and Southeast 2nd Street would be removed.

Victoria Park. After months of discussion with residents and city staff, we recently presented Victoria Park a proposal for a dog play area within Holiday Park. Located to the northeast of War Memorial Auditorium, it would have fenced-in sections for small and large dogs.

South Middle River. The city has hired a contractor to pave Northwest 14th Street, one of the two remaining unpaved streets in South Middle River. The work should be completed this summer.

Middle River Terrace. The city applied for a \$914,000 grant from the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization to install traffic calming features such as raised intersections, crosswalks and pedestrian lighting on Dixie Highway. The commission pledged to make these improvements as part of transforming Dixie into a neighborhood street.

On Feb. 1, we hosted a town hall forum about how best to improve Northeast 13th Street. Broward

County committed \$1.5 million in redevelopment assistance last fall. Ideas discussed at the meeting included bike lanes, better lighting, improved landscaping and on-street parking.

Flagler Village. In January, the city launched an

expansion of the Sun Trolley's downtown service to provide better connectivity between Flagler Village, the downtown, Las Olas Boulevard and areas as far south as the Broward Health Medical Center.

The city also expanded its commitment to improve the streetscape around the Henry Square and Pearl apartment complexes under construction off Federal Highway. Fort Lauderdale has now earmarked up to \$811,000 from the Northwest Community Redevelopment Agency. That will be matched by the developers.

As we look toward spring, mark your calendars for two major upcoming events. The Pride Fort Lauderdale festival will be held March 1-2 at Holiday Park. Then on March 8, the St. Patrick's Day Parade will take place beginning at noon on Las Olas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Trantalis".

Dean



Las Olas, Sunrise bridge updates

The Florida Department of Transportation is about to complete one major bridge project in our district and is beginning another one.

FDOT anticipates that the renovation work on the Las Olas Boulevard bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway will be completed sometime in March.

Construction crews were tasked with removing part of the concrete deck, installing new railings and sidewalks, and painting. The old open, steel sidewalk grating on the movable bridge span was removed and replaced with a solid, aluminum plating that is slip resistant.

At the same time, FDOT has begun work on replacing the Sunrise Boulevard bridge over the Middle River.

The current bridge was built in the 1950s, and transportation engineers consider it to be structurally deficient and in need of replacement. That is primarily because of the years of exposure to salt water.

The new bridge will have a similar configuration with four traffic lanes and adjacent sidewalks. The new bridge will be 3.8 feet higher to accommodate more boats docked farther north on the river. There will be 6-foot-wide sidewalks on each side.

Westbound Sunrise will be squeezed to two lanes, and a temporary bridge will be built over the Middle River. FDOT anticipates shifting westbound traffic to the temporary bridge in August.

During construction, FDOT has prohibited left turns on westbound Sunrise at Northeast 20th Avenue. Converting it to a through lane will facilitate the flow of westerly traffic in two lanes.

The north sidewalk on the bridge will be closed throughout the project. Pedestrians will be detoured to the southern side, but also will have a sidewalk available on the north side of the temporary bridge beginning in August.

FDOT anticipates completing the bridge work in early 2016.

Upcoming District 2 meetings

Commissioner Trantalis invites you to join him twice a month to review the agendas for upcoming City Commission meetings.

The forums are held the first and third Monday of the month, the day before commission meetings. They take place at 5:30 p.m. in the 7th floor conference room of City Hall.



Commissioner Trantalis joins executives at the Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach in toasting the unveiling of the new wind turbines atop the hotel on State Road A1A.



Commissioner Trantalis joins Mayor Jack Seiler, Vice Mayor Bruce Roberts and Police Chief Frank Adderley for the city's Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade.



Commissioner Trantalis joins other officials and the Rev. Chris Metropulos for the opening of St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church's annual festival.