



May 16, 2017

Dear Neighbors,

The Sun-Sentinel article about Fort Lauderdale's infrastructure that was published on Sunday, May 14, identifies a \$1.4 billion cost for City water and sewer improvements without clarifying that the estimate includes a multitude of projects over 20 years with varying degrees of urgency, not all directly related to water and sewer main breaks.

Perhaps space limitations made it difficult for the article to include a complete picture as to previous decisions made regarding program priorities or our ongoing efforts to address concerns and make improvements. To that end, we feel it is important that our neighbors be provided with balanced information.

In 2001, Fort Lauderdale initiated the Water Works program to prioritize elimination of most septic tanks and to connect homes to the City's sewer system. That project cost \$700 million over 10 years and achieved a number of benefits for residents and the environment.

When Water Works was completed, the Great Recession ensued, causing significant impacts to City revenues and hampering the ability to pay for major improvements. With a successful recovery, in 2015 the City initiated steps to prioritize and focus resources on important infrastructure needs.

The recently completed Comprehensive Utility Strategic Master Plan (CUSMP) provides a holistic evaluation of our entire water and wastewater system, identifying both needs and desires, to operate, maintain and improve systems, performance, efficiency and quality of service to meet our growing needs over the next 20 years.

This plan provides the City Commission and staff with the information needed to establish new priorities for water and wastewater system repair and replacement within the Community Investment Plan for fiscal years 2018 through 2035.

The cost identified in the newspaper article is the sum total of six major initiative categories and represents the maximum cost identified within each, including energy conservation, water conservation, treatment improvement, infrastructure renewal, sea level rise adaptation, and reduction of solid waste.

It was never contemplated to simply find the largest number in the report and, without further review, provide it as the published cost necessary to maintain and upgrade our current utilities. The City must now review the recommendations within the Reiss Engineering Report in order to prioritize requirements and prepare future budget recommendations.

Both our cooperative efforts with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to develop a program within a consent order addressing high risk issues, and the establishment of the City's Infrastructure Task Force to help guide the City in developing this prioritization, will result in a clear path to a successful outcome.

The City is pleased to offer the following clarifications, as well as information about additional projects designed to strengthen, enhance and upgrade our infrastructure:

- The newspaper article references a pump station in downtown that is nearly at its maximum capacity. This pump station is located at the northwest entrance to the Riverwalk Complex at 150 SW 2 Street, and collects wastewater from Downtown Fort Lauderdale and pumps it to the George T. Lohmeyer wastewater treatment plant. Plans for a new pump station are moving forward. The new pump station will be located at 216 SE 8 Avenue and will divert approximately 1 million gallons per day away from the existing pump station. The project is expected to be completed in May of 2018.

Several additional projects have been completed or are in various stages of planning, design or construction to address the growing needs associated with new development, including:

- Completed construction of a new pump station serving the East Las Olas area.
- Completed the installation of new water and sewer mains under the Intracoastal Waterway.
- Replacing a pump station in the City's north beach area that is scheduled for completion in February of 2018.
- Rehabilitating a pump station in the Citrus Isles neighborhood.
- Soliciting bids to rehabilitate a pump station in the Imperial Point neighborhood.
- Awarding a construction contract for the Lake Estates watermain replacement, which is scheduled to come before the City Commission on June 20.
- Plans are underway to replace a sewer main along a stretch of Las Olas Boulevard leading to the Finger Isles.
- Completed design of a \$30 million reliability upgrade project for the Fiveash Water Treatment Facility to address aging infrastructure and ensure greater reliability of the plant. The project is currently being reviewed to meet permitting requirements and will be put out for bid in the coming months.

The complete 839-page Reiss Engineering Report is available online at www.fortlauderdale.gov.

As you have seen in countless local and national news reports, many cities in South Florida, across our state, and throughout our country are facing the challenges of aging infrastructure. We are proud to report that the City of Fort Lauderdale is proactively and strategically replacing aging infrastructure. The Reiss Engineering Report will serve as a blueprint to assist us in meeting the current and future needs of our growing and robust community.

Sincerely,


John P. "Jack" Seiler
Mayor


Lee R. Feldman
City Manager