

## FROM COMMISSIONER BRUCE G. ROBERTS

### November/December 2014



**HOLIDAY MESSAGE:** The Holiday Season is right around the corner so I would like to wish you all a safe and family-filled time. Our District continues to grow with new neighbors, projects and enhancements. I have seen first-hand how neighborhoods are working together with the City to solve problems, share ideas and sponsor events. We truly appreciate the opportunity to work with and serve you, as we find solutions that will allow the City to remain one of the most beautiful and best cities in which to live, work, play and raise a family. Be safe and let us all welcome 2015 with high spirits, a vision for the future and a pride in our home - Fort Lauderdale!

#### **HOMELESSNESS:**

In order to provide a better understanding of the City's holistic approach to our homeless situation, and to respond to the inaccurate sensational media accounts of recent enforcement actions, I have taken the liberty to reproduce our webpage explanation. Interestingly, an overwhelming number of opponents to the recent regulatory ordinances are posting from out of the State; I speculate that they are not aware of the all-encompassing approach to the problem as described below. Web Page: [http://fortlauderdale.gov/news/2014/110514mayors\\_update.htm](http://fortlauderdale.gov/news/2014/110514mayors_update.htm)

#### **Innovative Leadership Key to Addressing Homelessness - Let's set the record straight.**

Contrary to media reports, the City is not banning groups from feeding the homeless. We have established an outdoor food distribution ordinance to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our community. The ordinance does not prohibit feeding the homeless; it regulates the activity in order to ensure it is carried out in an appropriate, organized, clean and healthy manner. While the ordinance regulates outdoor food distribution, it permits indoor food distribution to take place at houses of worship throughout the City. By allowing houses of worship to conduct this activity, the City is actually increasing the number of locations where the homeless can properly receive this service. At recent outdoor food distributions, citations were rightly issued for non-compliance with the process enacted to ensure public health and safety. Contrary to some reports, no one was taken into custody. Experts agree that homeless individuals need more than just food. The homeless need shelter, clothing, and comprehensive medical and social services to help them get back on their feet. Few cities have done more for the homeless than Fort Lauderdale. We are taking a comprehensive approach by working with numerous agencies, non-profit, charitable and faith-based organizations that, like us, are dedicated to effectively addressing this complex and important issue. Our overarching goal is to provide a long-term comprehensive solution for the homeless population. While aiming for that goal, we are concurrently working to protect public safety and maintain quality of life for our neighbors, businesses, and visitors. Our initiatives include:

- Fort Lauderdale was the first city in South Florida to establish a Police Homeless Outreach Unit, which currently makes 8,000 referrals a year providing access to housing, critical medical care, and social services. The award-winning initiative has been replicated by law enforcement agencies across the country.
- Since 1999, Fort Lauderdale has been home to the only full service comprehensive Homeless Assistance Center in Broward County. The City recently approved expanding the center's size and scope of services.
- The City maintains an active partnership with Mission United, a program dedicated to providing housing and social services to homeless Veterans.
- The City also supports Broward County, the Broward Partnership for the Homeless, Housing Authority of the City of Fort Lauderdale, Salvation Army of Broward County, United Way of Broward County, Hope South Florida, the Task Force for Ending Homelessness, and many others.
- Fort Lauderdale is the only city in South Florida and one of only 235 communities nationwide participating in the 100,000 Homes Campaign (Housing First) to move disabled and chronically homeless people into permanent housing.
- Our Housing First initiative was recently re-funded for a second year, giving us an additional \$455,000 to continue to operate and expand this effort to serve even more homeless.

As part of our comprehensive strategy, the City has passed new ordinances that aim to reduce the public safety hazards and inappropriate nuisance activities that are negatively impacting our community. Our quality of life and our economic viability are directly linked to our stewardship of public spaces. As such, we have a responsibility to ensure that all of our public spaces are accessible and can be safely enjoyed by everyone - families, children, residents and visitors. The City, our neighbors, and our businesses have a long and distinguished history of compassion toward those in need. We encourage those groups that are feeding the homeless to partner with agencies and organizations that, like Fort Lauderdale, are taking a comprehensive approach to this issue so that we can begin to make real progress - instead of enabling the downward cycle of homelessness to continue.

John P. "Jack" Seiler  
Mayor, City of Fort Lauderdale

**ALL ABOARD FLORIDA:** On October 30, 2014, Broward County Mayor Barbara Sharief, City of Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jack Seiler and other dignitaries joined All Aboard Florida to mark the start of construction for All Aboard Florida's downtown Fort Lauderdale station. The existing building was demolished so construction on the nearly 60,000 square foot station and platform can begin. This represents the first groundbreaking for one of its three South Florida stations along the Miami-to-Orlando corridor and is the latest announcement in a series of significant milestones as plans for the highly-anticipated project move full steam ahead. The Fort Lauderdale station will be located on 4.8 acres of land adjacent to the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) corridor on NW 2nd Avenue, between Broward Boulevard and NW 4th Street. Located at the northern end of downtown Fort Lauderdale, the station will stimulate a currently underutilized area, driving new visitors into downtown and the surrounding cultural, economic and shopping destinations. It should also be noted that All Aboard Florida and the Broward Metropolitan Organization (MPO) have dedicated funds and will construct "Quiet Zones" at FEC crossings.

#### **A1A GREENWAY PROJECT UPDATE:**

##### **Some key items from the project to-date are Sunrise to 18th:**

- Construction of three beach access openings to facilitate beach renourishment has begun.
- Decorative wall (concrete blocks & reinforcement) and footer construction has begun from 9th street to the front of Birch State Park.
- Conduits have been installed and continue to be installed for the wall lighting, pedestrian lighting and signals.
- Four of the seven drilled shafts have been installed for the mast arm foundations.
- Drainage installation is ongoing- Northwest end of the project.
- Utility adjustments are ongoing by TECO & City of Ft. Lauderdale.
- No changes to the Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) pattern.

##### **A1A from Oakland Blvd to City Limits:**

- 30% of the design has been reviewed with recommendations on including raised crosswalks.
- All of the pink signature sidewalk on the Galt will be retained.
- Retain the signature crosswalks on the Galt.
- Some signed agreements for the parking improvements at the Shoppes have been obtained.
- Expect 60% of the design to be reviewed by the end of November.

**NOVA HELPS BUILD COMMUNITY:** The City of Fort Lauderdale issued a call for volunteers for a recent Adopt-A-Neighbor event to assist a local homeowner with property improvements. The response from the City's neighbors, local businesses, and community organizations was tremendous, but there was one group of zealous students that really embraced the spirit of volunteerism! Nova Southeastern University's Office of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement recruited so many volunteers that the City's Neighbor Volunteer Office created "Nova Southeastern University Day of Service."

**APP FOR EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS:** The City of Fort Lauderdale uses CodeRED® to send emergency notifications to registered phone numbers. In the event of an evacuation notice, utility outage, water main break, flood, or other emergency situation, the system will deliver a recorded message to an individual, an answering machine or to voicemail. Residents and businesses are encouraged to sign up for CodeRED®, registration is free and personal information will be kept confidential. CodeRED® now also features a free mobile alert app, which can deliver messages directly to your smartphone.

**NOMINATE A NEIGHBOR:** The City is now accepting nominations for the 2014-2015 Citizens' Committee of Recognition Awards. Visit [www.fortlauderdale.gov/ccr/](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/ccr/) for details and a nomination packet. Nominations are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, December 12, 2014. For more information, email [petulab@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:petulab@fortlauderdale.gov) or call 954-828-4742.

**SEASONAL HIGH TIDES:** Flooding in low-lying areas is more likely in the fall months, as the close proximity of the moon, high tides, rising sea levels and inclement weather conditions combine to exacerbate flooding risks. As a coastal community with numerous low-lying areas and 300 miles of canal coastline, Fort Lauderdale neighbors are advised to be especially vigilant during the months of October and November. While the City maintains an extensive storm water master plan and is instituting both aggressive maintenance and innovative adaptation solutions to address drainage, including the installation of tidal valves, the location and natural geography of the City makes neighborhoods susceptible to flooding. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is offering the City grant funds in the amount of \$700,000 for additional valves. Visit [http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/high\\_tides.html](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/high_tides.html) for important information regarding seasonal high tides. To report flooding in your area, please call 954-828-8000.

#### **EVENTS:**

**Light Up Lauderdale:** Light Up Lauderdale is a ten week celebration of glittering holiday lights and holiday garland presented by Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale and the City of Fort Lauderdale. Join us as we light the switch to kick off this year's festive Light Up Lauderdale display at Esplanade Park on Thursday, November 13, 2014. In its sixth year, this free holiday spectacular showcases the two and half mile brick Riverwalk pathway on both sides of the New River in Downtown Fort Lauderdale. Parking may be easily found in multiple garages, parking lots or at meters throughout Downtown area. Visit <http://www.goriverwalk.com/> for more information.

**Light Up The Beach:** Join us at the spectacular Light Up the Beach event at **5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 25, 2014**. Enjoy holiday music and a lighting ceremony, followed by a live performance of the American Legion Symphonic Band.

**Light Up Sistrunk:** Save the date for the annual Light Up Sistrunk event, which will start at **5 p.m. on Friday, December 5**, on Sistrunk Boulevard, between NW 9th Avenue and NW 12th Avenue. Bring the whole family to experience this exciting event that will feature music, live entertainment, food, vendors, kids' activities and more. Look for details about Light Up Sistrunk on the City's website in the coming weeks. If you would like to participate as a vendor or sponsor, please call 954-828-4742.

**Winterfest Boat Parade:** Mark your calendar- the Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade sets sail on the New River on **Saturday, Dec. 13, 2014**. Visit the Winterfest Boat Parade website <http://winterfestparade.com/> to find out everything you need to know about this spectacular signature Fort Lauderdale event!

**OFFICE CONTACT:** Robbi Uptegrove – 954-828-5033; email: [ruptegrove@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto: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.