



City of Flagler Beach

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Public Service Announcement

A Message from Your City Manager Larry Newsom

January 6, 2017

On October 7, 2016, the City of Flagler Beach was deeply impacted by a Category 3 Hurricane named *Matthew*. We sustained severe damage, mostly to our coastline infrastructure, including our iconic Pier, the 52 Dune Crossovers used by the public to access the beach, and of course, the "shark bites" on SRA1A.

From my experience with similar storm events, e.g., Hurricanes Katrina, Ivan, and Dennis, and as the County Administrator for Escambia County (Pensacola) during the BP Oil Spill off the Deepwater Horizon, I've learned it takes a lot of time to recover. Local agencies have to deal with these events in administrative phases. The primary goal is to reestablish for our citizen tax payers the quality of life they were accustomed to prior to the event. First and foremost is to return all citizens to their homes, issue permits to make repairs, and remove the debris. We are there!

Now staff must work with Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staff to ensure we recover as much revenue as possible spent by the City to deal with *Hurricane Matthew's* aftermath. This is very time consuming, but will be complete within the next 12 months.

Debris Pick-Up

Here is the Funding Process for the debris pickup:

FEMA reimburses 75% of the cost (85% for debris picked up in the first 30 days)

State reimburses 12.5% of the cost

Local Government pays 12.5% of cost

(The Volunteer work for Beach Clean Up activities can be used by the City "in kind" to offset cost).

Pier – Existing Structure

I know the existing pier looks sound, but a structural engineering report prepared within days following the storm identifies major issues underneath, deeming the structure unsafe. Sorry, no access at this time! However, my staff has been working with engineering consultants to implement temporary repairs to the pier you see today in order to regain access by the public and to ensure no further loss to the structure, beyond the missing 160 feet. I am expecting an engineering bid package to repair the existing structure in the near future and look to open what is existing before summer approaches. This will be funded by FEMA at 75% plus insurance.

Pier - New

In late January or early February, I will be holding a workshop, open to the public, to discuss city preferences on the design of a new, more permanent pier. My goal is to be the longest pier on Florida's east coast. I understand the pier and beach is our gem. I must work with FEMA to determine what Federal Funds will be allocated for the rebuild. I anticipate the full rebuild to occur next year.

Dune Crossovers

Our dune crossovers offer safe access to the beach. There are 52 dune crossovers between Beverly Beach and the Flagler/Volusia County line for which the city is responsible. Staff and I have had numerous phone calls on "Why is this particular crossover not open?" or "When will this access be open?" My immediate goal after the event was to open quickly all dune crossovers requiring minimal repairs, and we did that. Now my staff is circling back to review each and every access point to see if any additional crossovers can be "temporarily" repaired. Our City Chief Building Official has reviewed the construction of the crossovers and notes that most will require additional modifications to ensure we meet current Building Code Standards, including the ones open now.

I do expect FEMA assistance on this as well. Keep in mind the storm event may result in the City receiving funding to make improvements that typically would not be affordable. I have procured an engineering firm that works with Disney on boardwalks to make sure we get the best results as a final product. It may take a year to have all dune crossovers rebuilt, but I am dedicated to get as many open as possible as we work through the process. Any beach access deemed a total loss or unsafe will be first to be designed and rebuilt while all temporary openings continue to be used. If I can open a crossover safely, I will!

State Road A1A

We all know what happened to the Scenic Byway. The state lost a 1.3 mile section of A1A on the south end of Flagler Beach, and a second two-block section between North 21st and 23rd Streets. The undermining of the road and the need to restore structural support led to the creation of painful detours to citizens of Flagler Beach. There have been "temporary repairs" to both sections with discussions still continuing on how best to shore up the road permanently. I will continue to work with FDOT District 5, and the State FDOT Secretary during this process toward a final solution.

Prior to my arrival as City Manager a year ago, the County, along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has managed the beach renourishment project for our City. The primary goal is to make sure the final solution by FDOT will not impact the ability of the City or County to apply for Federal funds to maintain our beach for future renourishment projects. In addition, during past workshops, the option was presented to divert traffic to our local roadways to alleviate the need to rebuild two lanes on SRA1A. Let me assure you this is "Not an Option." The state cannot proceed with this without the City's approval, plus the cost/benefit is not there.

I want to thank all citizens for your patience and to assure you City staff is working diligently to seek normalcy after Hurricane Matthew.

Sincerely,

Larry M. Newsom, City Manager
Flagler Beach