

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-4
September 10, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Jorge Fors**

City Staff

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias
Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz**

Public Speaker(s)

Robert Ruano

Agenda Item G-4 [11:00 a.m.]

A discussion regarding septic vs. sewage systems.
(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Discussion regarding septic versus sewage systems.

Vice Mayor Lago: You want to skip the trolleys?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, we'll do it.

Vice Mayor Lago: Okay, perfect. I sent you all a memo -- thank you, Mayor. I sent you all a memo August 28, after a few meetings that I've had with Congresswoman Donna Shalala and State Representative Xavier -- Javier Fernandez, excuse me. And I have a planned meeting next week with our Lieutenant Governor -- next week or the following week? I have to look at my calendar. And I had the pleasure of running into her, and we had a long discussion about septic tanks and our current sewer and where we stand. I've been meeting with staff, particularly Ed and Peter, to really discuss what is the future. Because from what I'm hearing from my meetings with the Congresswoman, there's going to be funding in the near future for a lot of infrastructure projects that are forthcoming. And I know that we always plan a year or two years ahead; in some cases, even three years ahead in regard to our legislative agenda. I know Naomi does a great job. She's not here today. But what I wanted to do was provide kind of an in-depth understanding to the entire Commission of where we stand, especially in the low-lying areas. What areas are septic? What areas have sewer? And I wanted Ed to give a little bit more of kind of a background of what the costs if we were to even embark on this. I'm not saying -- I'm not proposing to embark on it. What I'm looking at is for us to be as ready as possible in the near future when this does become a serious discussion. Because, as you can see and as you've heard, the Keys underwent this transformation and its paid dividends for them. And hopefully, in the near future, if we do have the resources available at the state and at the federal level, the City of Coral Gables, along with Miami-Dade County can embark in this transformation.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Can I -- before you start, let me give you a little bit of history.

Vice Mayor Lago: Of course.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: In 1970s, the EPA -- well, it was the EPA then -- forced us to go sewer. Forced us to go sewer and we floated a bond, thousands and millions of dollars. And then -- paying interest of 4 percent, 3 percent whatever it was. The Jimmy Carter era came on and interest went

up to 20 percent, and we were making a mint because we were paying 3 percent, 4 percent and we were making 20 percent.

Vice Mayor Lago: The spread.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: At that point -- yeah, the spread. At that point, the EPA said no. Sewer system will soil the bay, will get feces into Biscayne Bay and such, and look at what happened last weekend with Key Biscayne and with Crandon Park. And you have to stay with septic tanks because with the nature of coral rock and the porousness of coral rock, the water, when it gets down to the aquifer, it'll be cleaner than if you throw it into the bay. So, we defeased the bonds and made a heck of a lot of money. This issue reminds me a little bit of coffee. Every three years, coffee is bad for you, and then the next three years, coffee is good for you and prevents cancer. And then three years later, coffee is bad for you and gives you diverticulitis, or whatever it is. What I hear from this is that it'll cost us 300, \$350 million to sewer the city. And it will require us to open up every single street and repave every single street. And I invite you to go down Granada Boulevard south of Sunset and see what that has done to Granada Boulevard south of Sunset, and some of those streets west of that. I am very much opposed to spending \$350 million, plus another \$300 million with the undergrounding of the FP&L lines and everything that we propose on problems that are not necessarily defined yet. Or maybe they are defined today, but the definition will not necessarily be the same one, you know, three years, four years, five years from now. And again, look at Key Biscayne and Crandon Park this weekend, where the beaches were closed for feces. I appreciate the discussion, but I'm very, very much opposed to our taking any action that would lead us down the ruinous path of spending 300, \$350 million and creating another legacy Slesnick-type, you know, \$250 million deficit in our finances.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mayor. My intent is, obviously, not to embark in any legacy that has -- as we've had in the past, obviously. I haven't been in favor of increasing our unfunded liability. The reason why I bring this up is because this is coming to us on multiple fronts. This is coming to us -- in certain cases, when you look at the County, as a federal consent decree, where

you have no other option, where the County has to abide by federal standards and upgrade their existing lines, so it's coming. There's a \$20 billion project -- 18 to \$20 billion project and the County has no other choice but through federal mandate to make sure it gets installed and instituted. What I'm saying here is just for us to become educated so that we have all the information because you've seen that it also happened, by the way, in Key West, in the Keys. That was a federal mandate. They didn't have an option. That's my understanding. Correct me if I'm wrong. It said, listen, this needs to be done. You need to upgrade your facilities, and you've got to figure out how to pay for it with some federal money, but it was an issue that had to be dealt with and it came from the federal government. I'm not saying this is what's happening here. What I'm saying is just trying to educate the Commission, trying to educate myself, along with our colleagues and our employees to ensure that we have all the information at hand. And if there are little tweaks that we can do, for example, in pump stations or if we can correct certain things that maybe are leaking -- because you have seen a change in the water quality. There is a change in the water quality, not only in the City of Coral Gables, but throughout Miami-Dade County. And we need to be cognizant of that fact and do everything in our power to -- maybe it's not rip out our existing system. That's not what I'm calling for, especially when we're embarking in a serious discussion about FP&L undergrounding. I'm just talking about really having a discussion about this issue so that people are aware of where we stand as a city. That's it.

Commissioner Mena: I...

Vice Mayor Lago: That's it.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah. I...

Vice Mayor Lago: If you read my memo, it did not talk about ripping anything out. It did not say anything...

Commissioner Mena: I think it's good to be prepared. I also think, you know, unlike the health benefits of coffee...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: The sea level is rising.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: That's not something that goes back and forth or -- it is rising.

Vice Mayor Lago: It is.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Some people deny the...

Commissioner Mena: And...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Sea level is rising.

Commissioner Mena: And so -- I'm sorry, what was that?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That some people deny that the sea level is rising.

Vice Mayor Lago: And that's a shame.

Commissioner Mena: Well, I think...

Vice Mayor Lago: And that's a shame.

Commissioner Mena: And I think Vice Mayor Lago's underscoring his point here is we shouldn't be one of those people that we should recognize that it's happening. And so, one of the -- from everything I've read -- and I will not purport to be an expert on this -- but from everything I've read, one of the things that will be impacted and will become a significant problem in South Florida will be our septic systems when sea level continues to rise. So, I absolutely am in favor of let's look into this, let's understand what we can be doing in the interim, study it, understand it and to the extent there ever is a mandate or funding available or anything of that nature, be prepared to take advantage of it.

Vice Mayor Lago: If I may just add something that I was going to mention before. And thank you to Commissioner Mena who actually jogged my memory. By the way, we're not the only city doing this, that are having these discussions. Everywhere, Miami-Dade County, Broward, they're having these discussions. They're trying to look to the future to find solutions to prepare for one day when there is federal and state funding, either in a match grant or whatever it may be, or to chip away at this issue over the long term, just like we're discussing FP&L right now. FP&L's a ten-year project. It doesn't happen from one day to the next if we do, obviously, embark on that. So, I just -- the point of this today -- and I spent a lot of time on this memo, like I do on all the other ones that I put up and I post online -- is just to educate myself. I think that's key. I think we need to all be very educated, especially when we speak in public. And also, to really understand what is South Florida. What is going to be the landscape of South Florida? And if you're seeing it happen in the Keys, obviously, it's going to move north. And what happens if there is a federal mandate, like there already is a federal mandate for the County to upgrade their facilities. What if that happens in certain cities. How are we going to find that? Are we going to be first in line with all the information. Are we going to have the topography and all the information that we have that we need at our disposal to make sure that we can embark on this and make the right decisions. Because like I was speaking with Ed before, there's certain remedies that we can do now that we can take to really make a difference.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: We don't have to be so, you know, aggressive and rip everything out and force everybody to take their, you know, septic tanks out. That's not even in discussion.

Commissioner Mena: And the last thing I'd say, though, on that point is, of course, we're not committing to a 300, \$350 million project. But if we ever get to that point, whether on that issue or undergrounding, let me just make my position clear. I think I've said it before, to me, that would be a referendum item that the residents of Coral Gables will decide what they want to do before we make that kind of investment in infrastructure. So, you know, let's not get ahead of ourselves. I think this is a great idea as far as being prepared, but that kind of commitment, in my opinion, shouldn't be made without a referendum item. And I don't -- you know, I don't think anybody's suggesting it should be made.

Commissioner Keon: Right. I...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, thank you. I think that this is -- will be an opportunity to really educate our community on the sewer systems that we have currently in place and where there are septic systems in our city relative to sea level, which I think we are probably in pretty good shape in the city because our low-lying areas are already, for the most part, on sewers. And so, the place where we most have septic tanks, it is on areas that have -- that you're 10 to 12 feet above sea level. So, it is -- we, I think at this moment, are good. Now, granted, things can change, and you may and -- over time. But I think this is a really -- because we keep hearing this discussion. I've heard it, and we get emails once in a while from people about wanting us to go to a, you know, sewer system. And I think it's a really good opportunity for us to have -- to educate the community on exactly where we are and the shape that we're in relative to this discussion.

Vice Mayor Lago: And I think a big...

Commissioner Keon: So, thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: I think a bigger -- the bigger picture too is if it ever -- if we ever do entertain it, like I mentioned -- we've all mentioned it. This would obviously come through referendum. But there are things that we can do now. Like I imagine, there's a lot of our community that not maintaining their septic tanks the way it should be maintained. And if we just do something as simple of maintaining and ensuring that your septic tank is working properly, you won't have leakage. You won't have issues where our water quality is, you know...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Vice Mayor Lago: Getting worse on a daily basis, so...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have Mr. Ruano that wishes to speak.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Mr. Mayor, if you'd like, we can also...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah. I would love to.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Make a presentation first.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Oh, okay. Okay, please.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: So, good morning, Mr. Mayor, members of the Commission. Ed Santamaria, Assistant City Manager. With me at the podium is Hermes Diaz, Director of Public Works. We are here to discuss this item with you and happy to answer any questions that you

might have. It's very, very true that we are -- all of our low-lying areas in the City are served by sanitary sewer systems, which makes us more resilient in terms of any potential sea level rise. In answer to your questions regarding what we're doing at this time already in terms of potential sea level rise, we have a potential sea level rise assessment study which we've completed that's in the final draft stage right now. And it will touch upon some of the potential impacts on sanitary sewer systems and septic systems. Right now, this question is yet to be defined. The Mayor is correct. In fact, Miami-Dade is revisiting their study, a study that they recently conducted because they found that some of their data regarding specifically the City of Coral Gables sanitary sewer systems and septic systems were perhaps not as precise as they needed to be. It's very, very true that septic systems that are in high ground will function much better than those that are in low ground. In fact, they will also be more resistant to any potential sea level rise that we may see down the line. So, that makes us -- makes our city very, very robust in terms of being able to respond to this. That is not to say that we shouldn't pursue any funding opportunities to upgrade our systems. By all means, we should, and that includes any potential changes from septic systems to sanitary sewer systems, perhaps, not on a citywide scale. Perhaps, a little bit at a time. That remains to pan out over the next few years how we pursue this. But I think that we're in pretty good shape as to having an assessment already done to determine which areas we could secure the biggest bang for our investment from, and the ones that we could focus on that would maximize a return on environmental benefits and just having a better system. There is -- right now, we recently had a force main rupture at UM -- right in front of UM underneath the Metrorail that Hermes and I were 48 hours at pretty much. It was quite an experience. That said, there are places in our system that we could improve, and this is already existing force main infrastructure, the pipes that are under pressure. And I think that an evaluation of our system in terms of force main would pay off huge dividends in that we would be able to determine where our faulty force mains are, the ones that need attention to prevent an incident like we just had which involved pretty substantial spilled sewage. Other than that, I think we're on a good track. We are following up on our studies. We have Hazen and Sawyer, who's our consultant that is engaged in evaluating our sanitary sewer systems. We are doing quite a bit along those lines. And I think we'll be very well positioned in the future if there's an opportunity to secure funding from the federal government or from the state.

Commissioner Keon: Could you show the map that shows -- I don't think people realize how much of our city is on sewers now.

Public Works Director Diaz: I'm going to zoom in to the low-lying area so you guys can see it easily.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Public Works Director Diaz: This is the southern portion of the map.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah. I've included -- if you want -- I mean, if anybody's interested, I've included these maps along with my memo on my page. It's pretty simple. I mean, when you look, even though there is some significant portions which a lot of, again, this is the low-lying areas. Most of the areas where you have, you know, the communities, there is still a pretty significant portion, like the Mayor mentioned. You know, the numbers are between anything in the low 200 something million to well over \$300 million would be the cost to upgrade.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Currently, about...

Vice Mayor Lago: And by the way...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: A third...

Vice Mayor Lago: And we also have to be honest too because, as I've done my research, if you upgrade to a sewer septic system, you will be paying more on a monthly basis. The reason why people have such significantly reduced water bills, again, is because they're possibly on septic.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Vice Mayor Lago: They're not on a sewer system.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You don't pay for the water going out.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah. So, that's a big -- that's a -- and it's a pretty significant number.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Currently, about a third of our residential properties -- actually, a third of all properties in the City of Coral Gables are serviced by public sanitary sewer systems. The remainder are on septic.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: Right. But it's important to note that, you know, along Old Cutler, everything east of Old Cutler, which is the ridge that -- when people first settled here, they didn't build east of the ridge because it was low-lying areas. And since, they're waterfront properties and they become valuable and people have built on them. But everything east of the ridge, except one small community, is on sanitary sewers.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: That's correct.

Commissioner Keon: Right? And then in the center of the city it's interesting to see that the area around City Hall, all the way to Granada, there is a large portion of -- a significant part of the city that is also on sanitary sewers. And as...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Keon: And the downtown is on -- all of downtown is on sanitary sewers. And so, the areas that currently are not on sanitary sewers, in general, are 10 to 12 feet above sea level. Is that right? I think that's what I was told.

Vice Mayor Lago: Roughly.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, are all 10 to 12 feet above sea level, so the septic systems, as long as they're maintained, are doing a good job. So, if we were to look at...

Vice Mayor Lago: That's the big -- and that's the big question.

Commissioner Keon: Well...

Vice Mayor Lago: Unless they're maintained. And that's -- I think that's where a lot of us fail.

Commissioner Keon: Right. But I think when you don't maintain your septic system, you know it pretty quickly, no?

Vice Mayor Lago: And just like the undergrounding of the existing FP&L system, which is done when these new projects come online, a lot of these upgrades to the existing sanitary sewer lines are done when the projects come in. They usually have to do runs of a few hundred feet; 100, 200, 300, in some cases, even a thousand feet to your nearest sanitary line. So, we -- we're fortunate that the developer picks up the tab because the City makes it a requirement, and that's helped us obviously extend our existing network of sanitary sewer.

City Manager Iglesias: We have had a number of meetings concerning...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: Sea level rise and what those impacts are. And if we look at the NOAA reports, there are two curves; one is lower and one is higher. We have elected to look at probably a 30-inch or three-foot rise, and that just makes sense from a hurricane preparedness and sustainability point of view. And that would give us 15 to 20 years with that -- with what we're doing now to find out which curve we're on. There's one curve that goes up to 14 inches and another curve goes to 81 inches. So, we don't know -- this is from NOAA. So, we don't know where we're at. So, by looking at this from a sustainability point of view and looking at it from a hurricane sustainability point of view, by going up about 30 to 36 inches, we are hardening our systems, and at the same time, allowing us to look at -- see where we are going to be in that future by giving us about a 15- to 20-year cushion on that. So, that's what we have decided to do and I think it's a rational thing to find out where we're at and where we're going.

Commissioner Keon: So, we are already doing the force main study? Is that...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Well, that's -- this is one of the issues that recently popped up when...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: And no pun intended. But when we saw that rupture in the pipe, we saw that it happened at a high point in the pipe, where the gases inside the pipe had started corroding the metal walls of the pipe. And we want to make sure that the rest of our system, our network of force mains, which is quite substantial, is in good shape and actually be able to address whatever shortcomings it may have, whether it be problems with the pipe or whether it be lacking of valves. One of the issues that we had was that the valves that we could have used to isolate that run of pipe in front of UM, we could not locate.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, you have to do basically...

Commissioner Keon: (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Lago: Run around...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Done in the way.

Vice Mayor Lago: Or go around.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: The repair had to be done in the way.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: And so, we had to shut down all the pump stations. We still had back pressure in the pipes. We still had effluent coming out of the pipe. It was not the easiest work to perform.

Vice Mayor Lago: Not only is it not easy, it's very costly, so...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, I mean, the -- and the fourth -- to answer Commissioner Keon's comments whether we're doing the study or not -- that's why I mention here...

Commissioner Keon: We should.

Vice Mayor Lago: Now's the time to do a preliminary engineering study and start looking at, you know, where we are in the future and to see if we need the additional funding, where are we going to get that funding. Are we going to get that funding at the state or at the federal level. And this is a long-term vision, you know, 30 years out. As long as, obviously, sea level rise is not going

away. It's an issue that we're dealing with today. And if those maps are like they say they're going to be, kind of recalibrated, the idea of sea level rise could be more impactful than we know it is today.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, once the County comes up with their updated study...

Vice Mayor Lago: How far behind are they already, how many years?

Public Works Director Diaz: We were told that they should have an update probably later this month, but...

Vice Mayor Lago: It's been a long time.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, once we get that -- their updated study, we should be able to compare that versus -- because we like to verify the information. They use it based on LIDER, so we should -- you know, once they -- if they identify a number of properties in the City that they may consider to be an issue, we'll have to go ahead and verify those.

Commissioner Keon: But does that...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: We're talking about septic tanks.

Commissioner Keon: Is that why we...

Public Works Director Diaz: We're talking about septic.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: That's septic.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Public Works Director Diaz: The septic -- the report that the County came up a few months up that is...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Public Works Director Diaz: Being updated right now.

Commissioner Keon: Right, right, right.

Public Works Director Diaz: In addition, to add to your point about -- we actually have an inflow and infiltration program where we're lining sewer pipes. Approximately 25 percent of the city has already been lined.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Public Works Director Diaz: And we've concentrated on the low-lying areas where you get the most bang for the buck. That's actually resulted in significant savings because we pay that flow to the County for treatment. So -- and that's an ongoing program.

Commissioner Keon: But -- and my question was -- and I think I asked -- are we currently doing -- are we -- have we -- are we working on a force main study or we're thinking about it?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Well, we're actually starting to evaluate a potential new technology which involves...

Commissioner Keon: Oh, okay.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: A -- the introduction of some sort of -- I would say it's like a mini drone that flows with the flow inside the pipe and starts mapping the entire system and does evaluations of the pipe itself and also of the accessories in the pipe, the valves and whatnot.

Commissioner Keon: Okay, so that's already funded. We have...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: It is not funded, and that's going to be...

Commissioner Keon: Not funded?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Probably an ask for next capital year. We're -- right now, we're looking at this so...

Vice Mayor Lago: So that's why...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: If you look at my memo, the purpose of my memo, again, going back -- just want to make sure we get on the right point.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Is to look for the funding to do all the studies that we need to make sure that we're all on the same page. So, for example, if you need a study to do preliminary engineering study -- it's the fifth paragraph. I keep going back to that paragraph. That's why...

Commissioner Keon: How much is that? Like what...

Vice Mayor Lago: We don't know.

Commissioner Keon: What kind of costs are we talking about?

Vice Mayor Lago: We don't know what we're talking about. That's why I said...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Well...

Vice Mayor Lago: That's why I put it out there.

Commissioner Keon: Study.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Right now, it's...

Commissioner Keon: It's a study cost.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Seventeen dollars a linear foot, and we have how many feet of force main in the city? We have a...

Public Works Director Diaz: Miles.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Substantial amount. We have many miles of force main the city, so...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: We have to select which segments are going to receive the first attention, and that's where...

Vice Mayor Lago: Also...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: We're at right now.

Commissioner Keon: So, it's phased.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah, and without...

Commissioner Keon: Depending on the...

Vice Mayor Lago: And besides that...

Commissioner Keon: Quality of things.

Vice Mayor Lago: Besides that...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Vice Mayor Lago: I also want to make sure that we focus on the quality of the existing septic tanks, and that's what I -- I was looking online to try to find some sort of quality control about existing septic tanks because that is what, again, leaks into the system and really causes issues with our water quality, especially around areas -- you know, individuals or homes that are located on the waterway. Because if you ask anybody that lives on the waterway today and you -- who has been there 15, 20 years and say how is the water quality today, they tell you that it's a lot more murky, you know, it's not as clean as it used to be. And a lot of that's being attributed to the leaking of excess nutrients into the water column.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Vice Mayor, one of the things that we're doing and part of our water quality assessment throughout the waterways is actually getting to a point where we'll be able to pinpoint what the sources are, whether it's just nutrients or phosphates and nitrous -- nitrogen nutrients that are coming from fertilizers and pesticides and whatnot, or whether it comes from a biological source, whether it's fecal bacteria and that type. So, we are -- that's going on right now and that process is starting to kick up on the biological side.

Vice Mayor Lago: That's what I -- that's one of the conversations that I had with the Congresswoman. I want to make sure that for next year when the budgetary season comes around that we try to get some monies for those type of studies, all encompassing, so that we can really get a real detailed outlook of where we are as a city and what we're planning for the next five years because that's going to dictate how much money we have to spend on infrastructure.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: I know that we've asked for grant funding for water quality assessments. I think part of the funding right now that we're expending in terms of the study involves some grant funding.

Commissioner Keon: Is that state or federal?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: It's state.

Commissioner Keon: It's state. So, it's really -- we need the help of our state reps -- our state legislature, okay.

Public Works Director Diaz: Generally speaking, septic tanks are actually regulated by the state, not by the city. The County has something called a reasonable distance. So, if you're doing a development and it's a formula based on the square footage of your improvement. The formula will determine how -- what is reasonable for you to connect, so they may actually, on a case by

case, ask people to extend their sewer system to connect. And that will facilitate adjacent connections along the path.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, that's something that is existing right now, and it's County driven.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Should I call Mr. Ruano?

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah, please. Thank you for the update. I appreciate it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Robert Ruano: Yes. Hi. Thank you. Robert Ruano, 1544 Murcia. I actually signed up to speak when you guys weren't talking about this, but I'm glad that you did. I've been working actually with another city for almost two years now with a septic to sewer project, so I've kind of dealt with WASD and a lot of the different entities. And I'll tell you, I do, as a resident, I think that you definitely should go through this study. It's good to talk about this now for a couple reasons. First of all, you can phase the project. You can put either low-lying areas or areas that tend to flood on your flood maps. You can prioritize those. But secondly, the area -- where are you going to put the pump stations? Pump stations 45 -- typically, 45 by 65 feet. Where are you going to stick them? We've had an issue where I'm doing it where we had to try to get an easement from the School Board. That's not easy. So, start thinking about that now. If you start thinking about that now and strategically start saying, okay, well, the pump station's going to go in this area. When you're buying property, you can get ready for it. I think it's going to be a lot easier, and I appreciate that the City is looking into it. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Mr. Ruano. Thank you very much.