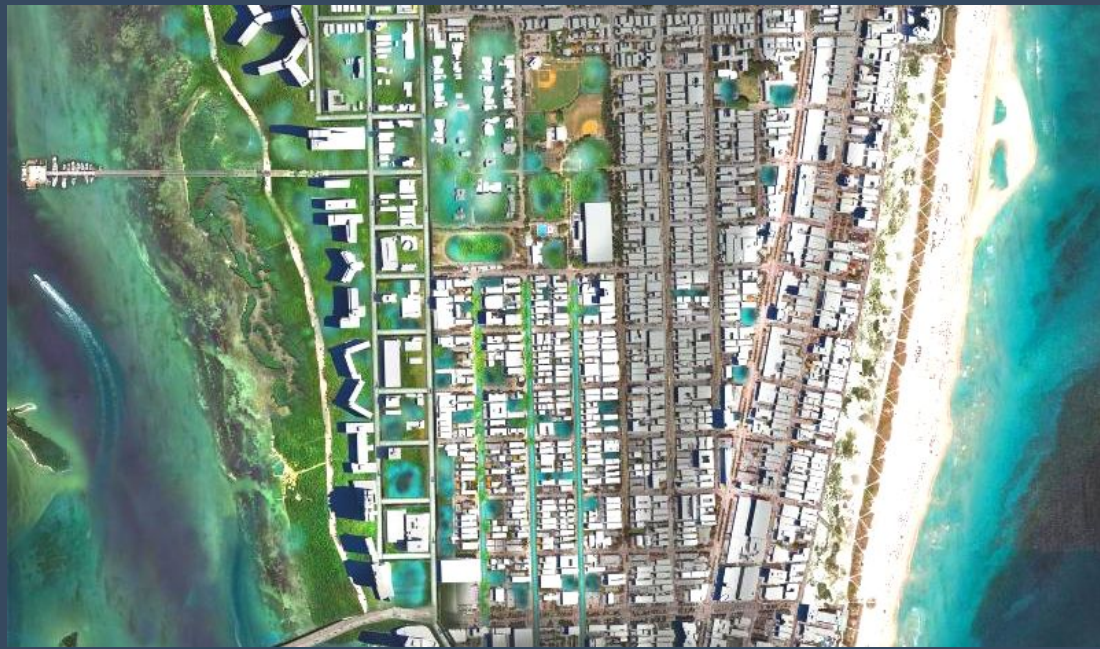


## Advocate for Residents of Miami Beach

We are a community-based 501(c)4 not-for-profit organization providing Miami Beach residents a cohesive voice for city-wide issues that impact our quality of life. Click here to [join us](#)!



## Miami Beach and Sea Level Rise - RISING ABOVE OR FLOATING AWAY?

**The question was...will a rising tide float all boats, or doom us to the same fate as the mythical city of Atlantis?**

If you were able to join us last week, we had an excellent panel discussing important information regarding our City's resiliency efforts. But if you weren't, don't feel bad - you can catch up via the links below. As a reminder, our speakers were, in alphabetical order:

### **Eric Carpenter**

Miami Beach Assistant City Manager since 2015, primarily responsible for the Departments of Capital Improvement Projects, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works. Oversees the delivery of City measures to adapt to sea level rise.

### **Brian McNoldy**

Senior Research Associate at the University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science

### **Glenna Norton**

Residential real estate agent serving Miami Beach and the surrounding areas, and resident of North Bay Road – potential neighborhood for improvement project

### **Mark Samuelian**

City of Miami Beach Commissioner; Chair, Sustainability and Resiliency Committee

Engineer, educated at Georgia Institute of Technology  
Sponsor of resolution inviting Urban Land Institute to review City's resiliency efforts

### **Laura Weinstein-Berman - guest moderator**

Managing Director, Historic Division at Vagabond Group Consulting, LLC  
Board member of the MiMo Biscayne Association  
Manager, Miami Design Preservation League's Center for Resiliency and Sustainability

### **Special Guest**

#### **Mrs. Willemijn Kallenberg**

Deputy Consul General

of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Miami

Willemijn Kallenberg began her career with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1997. She studied International Law at Leiden University in The Netherlands, and has held a number of posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague, including in the field of asylum; political, security and legal affairs; and she has covered bilateral relations with Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Furthermore, she has served at the Dutch Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan; Tbilisi, Georgia; and Rome, Italy. She took up her appointment as Deputy Consul General in Miami in August 2015.

### **As promised, here are links to the materials referenced during the event.**

Click [here to watch video of the Forum event](#) or via the YouTube link on our [website](#).

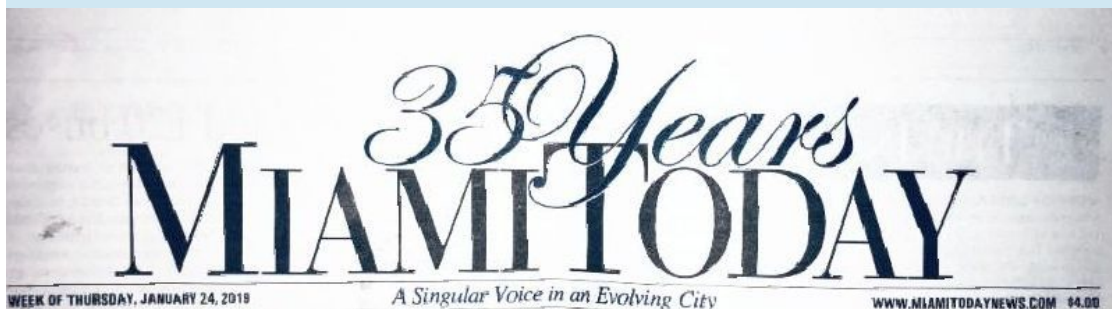
Click [Miami Beach Rising Above](#) to explore the City of Miami Beach's website dedicated to resiliency topics.

[Click here to read the full report](#) from the [Urban Land Institute's collaboration with the City of Miami Beach](#) on how to improve its climate change resiliency strategy.

Learn more about the City's Environment and Sustainability Department [here](#) and Committee [here](#), and get involved!

[Explore the presentation](#) shared by Brian McNoldy of the University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science

The [recent article](#) mentioned during the Forum [referencing a potential crisis threatening our drinking water](#) is below:



# \$3.3 billion septic tank peril nears county action

By JESSE SCHECKNER

In the wake of a blockbuster report predicting rising sea levels will cause up to 64% of Miami-Dade's septic tanks to malfunction by 2040, county personnel say they'll have a plan for how to start solving the roughly \$3.3 billion conundrum within four months.

The November 2018 report, published by the county's regulatory and economic resources department, department of water and sewer, and Florida Department of Health, listed vast public health, financial and environmental impacts—including contamination of the Biscayne Aquifer, the county's sole source of potable water—unless expensive countermeasures are taken.

Last week, Miami-Dade Commissioner Jean Monestime asked what those countermeasures are.

"What is currently being done?" he asked at a Jan. 15 committee meeting. "What can we say to the residents... so they can know the ship is being steered in the right direction?"

Kevin Lynskey, director of water and sewer, told Mr. Monestime the county should first address septic systems either already failing or identified as most vulnerable.

Of the 67,234 properties with septic tanks expected to be "periodically compromised dur-

ing storms or wet years" in the next 25 years, up to 7,000 already show problems, he said.

"Sea level rise is just fairly, slowly exacerbating an issue that exists independently," he said. "What I'd like to do, along with the department... is to come back, identify the subcategory of septic systems that really need to be addressed and attempt to see what kind of financial resources are available."

That process should take three to four months, he said, during which county personnel will identify which septic tanks to prioritize and what funding options exist to fix or connect them to the county's sewer system.

But money remains a significant issue. While residential properties could spend a combined \$3.3 billion to solve the problem, Mr. Lynskey said fixing commercial properties could cost an additional \$250 million.

And while customers now using the county's sewer system pay about \$65 monthly, he said, those converting from septic to sewer will see their monthly water and sewer bills grow by \$220 if they are required pay the full conversion cost.

"That would be on the bill for quite some time," he said. "When you work out the monthly math to that, it's really astonishing." There are other options, he said.

"In the past, when people have come onto the [sewer] system, they've generally done so because they've paid a fee... or there's been a general obligation bond which has helped come onto the system," he said. "In some cases, there have been special taxing districts."

Whatever the solutions are, they're long overdue, said Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz, adding that he recalled a prior effort by US Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart to deal with the impending crisis.

"[The cost] then was unbearable," he said. "I can just imagine the cost after you do the report now. It's not just [\$220] we're looking at [per month]; it's the actual connection fees, changing the system and then taking care of the septic tank itself. It's pretty intense."

Mr. Diaz, who estimated those extra costs could range from \$20,000 to \$50,000 per septic tank, said he agreed with Mr. Lynskey's suggestion of a phased approach.

But without outside funding, the already daunting dilemma will be doubly difficult.

"Unless there's a lot of federal money attached, I wouldn't want to be in the position to deal with this head-on, because it's going to be incredible," he said. "If it was [so] incredible back then that the federal government backed up out of this whole thing, imagine now."

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### Our Mission

Dedicated to improving the quality of life for Miami Beach residents, managed and measured growth of our city, and ethical leadership of government – for a vibrant city rooted in history, its people, resources and neighborhoods, with focus on the future – by



providing educational and analytical focus on the organization, structure, policies and performance of Miami Beach government.

Learn more at [miamibeachunited.org](http://miamibeachunited.org) .

Thanks to Diane and Alan Lieberman, our hosts at the Miami Beach Woman's Club, and to Alison Colberg for facilitating our events at this historic and lovely space in the heart of Miami Beach. [Click here to learn more about this unique venue and its history.](#)

