

# Why two South Florida cities are partnering to face climate change | Opinion

The Middle River separates Wilton Manors and Oakland Park, two Broward County cities that are collaborating on a plan to get ready for sea-level rise, saltwater intrusion and other threats that climate change is expected to bring. (Sun Sentinel)

## **Oakland Park Mayor Tim Lonergan and Wilton Manors Mayor Gary Resnick**

As has been said before, cities are at the tip of the spear in climate resiliency. Despite opinions to the contrary, we can say for sure that climate change, rising seas and increasing extreme weather events are real.

As Mayors of two adjacent Broward County cities, we hear from our staff with increasing urgency about the need to retrofit existing water and sewer infrastructure to cope with age, [flooding and saltwater intrusion](#). Add to that a very real potential for a future where water sources are limited and uncertain and you have, in our view, a recipe not for disaster, but for opportunity.

Oakland Park and Wilton Manors are both relatively small in population (45,000 and 12,500 respectively) and geography (8 and 2 square miles respectively) and while we are different in many ways, we have many priorities and challenges in common. We share both land and water borders, and we know these issues aren't confined within our boundaries.

We aspire to provide leadership, service and assistance that minimize those artificial boundaries and leverage our common interests. We encourage other

cities and communities to follow our lead and form collaborative relationships to fight the challenges that would otherwise be tough to do independently. In teaming up to plan responsibly for increased municipal resilience by creating a joint Climate Action Plan, we are collaboratively ready to implement changes that will affect our community as a whole for years to come.

To our knowledge this is the first time two local jurisdictions have joined forces and ironically, when we applied for a grant to help us create the plan, we were excluded from consideration because of our desire to collaborate. That didn't stop us.

In the coming months we will be reaching out to our stakeholders to educate them on our effort and seek input for improvement. We are hopeful that the final plan will reflect common goals and objectives for increasing resiliency, as well as leverage our resources and economies of scale.

Stay tuned as we become the change we wish to see in the world.

***Tim Lonergan is mayor of Oakland Park. Gary Resnick is mayor of Wilton Manors.***