

heavy rain overwhelms miami beach

resiliency

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city says pumps worked and cleared flooded areas quickly

Once again, a heavy rainfall overwhelmed Miami Beach on Thursday making it difficult for the City's infrastructure, both old and new, to keep up. But City officials say once the rain began to lessen in intensity, the new stormwater pumps worked and cleared flooded areas quickly.

Businesses in the Sunset Harbour area, the first to see its roads raised to combat flooding from sea level rise, have continued to be impacted by heavy rains that even the new pumps can't keep up with sometimes.

Tonya Daniels, Miami Beach Director of Marketing and Communications, wrote in an email, "At 1:00 pm, 1.73 inches of rain fell in 30 minutes, and another 0.5 inches of rain fell in the following 30 minutes" for a total of 2.23 inches in the one-hour period between 1 and 2:00.

"Our team considers 'heavy rainfall' as 0.30 inches of rain per hour," Daniels wrote. "The rainfall intensity of yesterday's event far exceeded this rate."

For comparison, she said, for the last 30 years, Miami-Dade County has average 5.15 inches of rain during the month of May. "In one hour, we experienced approximately half the amount of rain as averaged in an entire month of May." She pointed out what many experts have said, "Recent data suggests that extreme rain events are occurring more often."

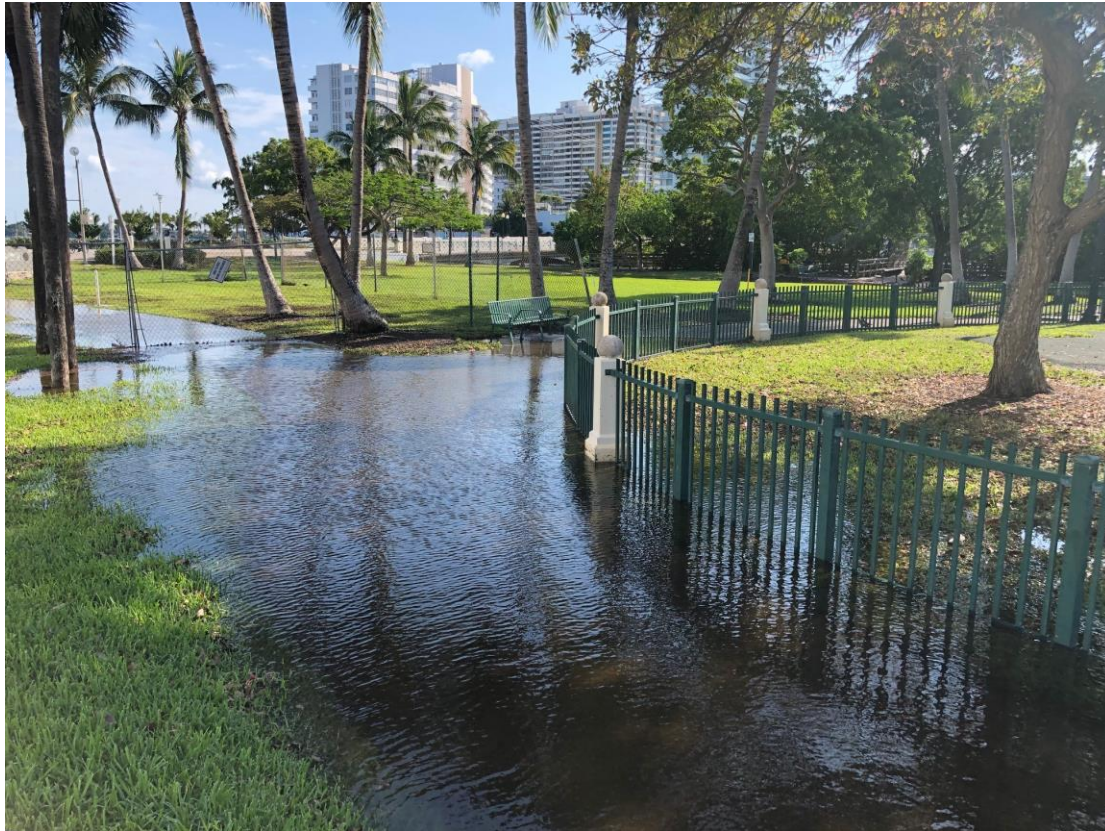
In response to Thursday's rain, Daniels said, "The City immediately deployed specialized teams and verified that pumps throughout the island operated properly. As soon as the rain began to slow down, standing water began to recede quickly. During the peak 30-minute period, we pumped more than 730,000 gallons of water out of the Sunset Harbour Neighborhood, which is more than an

Olympic sized swimming pool (660,000 gallons).”

“Prior to the installation of the pumps, a rainfall event of this magnitude would have caused catastrophic flooding throughout the city – flooding that would not have receded within an hour as we saw yesterday,” Daniels wrote.

The City’s statement came in too late Friday for us to talk with business owners in Sunset Harbour about the latest flooding.

Photo at top: 31st Street and Indian Creek, Thursday, May 16



Maurice Gibb Park in Sunset Harbour after Thursday’s rain.