

Ripped From (or by) the Headlines: Effective Climate Change Messaging

Doug Yoder, Deputy Director
Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department

Four Steps to Success

1. Background Brief: Assignment?
Goals? Audience? Knowledge?
2. 27 (words)/9 (seconds)/3 (concepts/
facts) problem statement
3. The Message Map
4. Deploying the Message Map

Background Brief

1. Assignment: Create messages to communicate an adaptive management approach to sea level rise
2. Goals: Communicate the need, the rationale, and an overview of MD's adaptive management approach
3. Audience: Customers; Environ Groups; Public; Staff
4. Knowledge of Audience: Media coverage of consent decree, rate increase proposals, climate change

The 27/9/3 Problem Statement

“MD WASD is using an adaptive management approach to the problem of sea level rise to ensure that current and future customer needs are met in a timely and sustainable (financially, environmentally, and socially responsible) manner.”

Develop a Message Map

Key Point 1: Higher global average temps= higher sea level; sea levels are already rising

Facts: Sea level has risen 9" since the 1930's

All major studies show SLR is accelerating

MD Task Force projects 3'-5' by 2100

Key Point 2: Adaptive management, based upon best available science, is the most sustainable approach

Facts: Investment today tied to asset life and potential consequences of a range of SLR possibilities

Harden existing facilities to storm surge

Incremental responses allow for new tech.

Message Map (con't)

Key point 3: Utility service must be provided as long as customer demands are in place....MDWASD is the caboose on the SLR adaptation train

Fact: Some customers live in areas that may be flooded in the future.

Fact: Some MDWSD facilities will be threatened by SLR in the future

Fact: Relocating facilities now in the absence of better defined future demands could strand significant investment

Deploying the Message Map

- Key points and facts provide a consistent basis for interviews and articles in the press
- Relevant portions of the Department website draw upon the message map
- The map has been used in internal staff communications, updates to the Mayor and Commission, and as a basis for scoping design contracts to address SLR adaptive management

Some Headlines

“Goodbye Miami” (Rolling Stone Magazine)

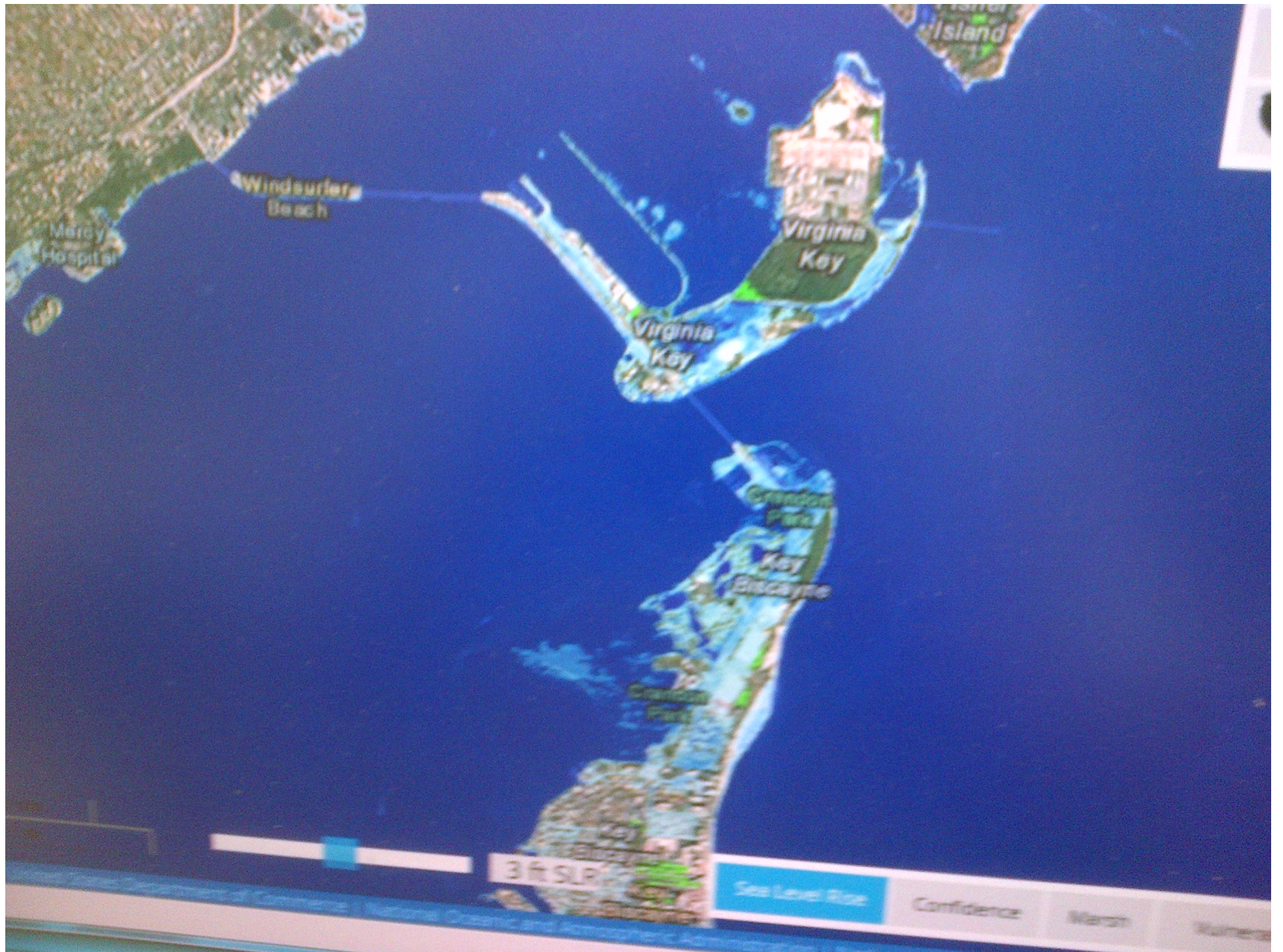
“Zero Sea Level Rise Consent Decree” (Bisc Bay Water Keepers)

“S. Florida Praised as Model for Climate-Change Planning” (Miami Herald)

“County Infrastructure Moves Must Now Consider Sea Levels” (Miami Herald)

“Mayor to Appoint Economic Task Force for Sea Level Rise” (Miami Herald)

IT'S WORKING!!!



Miami Beach moving to fight back

BY PHILIP LEVINE

PhilipLevine@miamibeachfl.gov

10/16/2014 5:40 PM

10/16/2014 5:40 PM

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/op-ed/article2920486.html#storylink=copy>

Miami Beach Prepares For Annual 'King Tide' Flooding And A Taste Of Future Sea Level Rise

Reuters | By Zachary Fagenson and David Adams

Posted: 10/03/2014 7:00 am EDT Updated: 10/03/2014 9:59 am EDT



'King tide' will be first test for Miami Beach's new pumps



By Joey Flechas
jflechas@MiamiHerald.com

10/06/2014 8:35 PM

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/miami-beach/article2541332.html#storylink=copy>



Today's SLR Reality: Miami Beach

"The truest measure of any society, or any person, is the willingness to protect a future they will never personally experience"

Philip Levine, Mayor of Miami Beach

Are water utility leaders interested in being climate change communication leaders?

What do you think are the local – regional – national opportunities?

What are the pros and cons of being a communication leader?