



Commissioner  
**Eileen Higgins**  
District 5

# INSIDE

A CLOSER LOOK AT ALL THINGS DISTRICT 5

# FIVE

FEBRUARY 2020

## *Welcome to Inside Five*

Welcome back to the **February** edition of 'Inside Five', a newsletter dedicated to all the news, happenings, and events in Miami-Dade County Commission District 5.

As we leap our way into March, we reminisce all that the District 5 team has accomplished in just 29 days! After a year of preparation, planning, and hard work, we have officially launched [Greener Coral Way](#), a voluntary business certification program in one of the

most beautiful, vibrant parts of the County. The program encourages Coral Way restaurants to remove or replace Styrofoam and single-use plastic, while helping the businesses thrive by recognizing them as environmental stewards of the neighborhood. We have six amazing, and delicious, restaurants enrolled in the program, and soon there will be even more!

Also, the 2020 Mom and Pop Small Business Grant Program will kick off next week, and we're planning some special programming for our seniors. Finally, and most importantly, we are making sure all of our residents are counted with Census 2020 education and outreach in Little Havana, Downtown, and Brickell. It is going to be an busy next few months so stay tuned!

Our office is always here to answer any questions you may have. Do not hesitate to contact us at 305-375-5924 or at [District5@miamidade.gov](mailto:District5@miamidade.gov).



## HIGGINS NAMED A CHAMPION OF SAFE STREETS



On February 7, Commissioner Higgins was recognized as the **Complete Streets Champion for Miami-Dade County** at the [2020 Safe Streets Summit](#) held in Fort Lauderdale. As Chair of the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Urban Mobility Task Force and a transit rider herself, Commissioner Higgins was selected for her strong advocacy for better streets and networks in Miami-Dade, including her work to get lagging projects completed, improve dangerous intersections, add dedicated bike lanes and

additional crosswalks, and make sure that pedestrians have a safe and clean place to travel, especially on main roads where families live.

Commissioner Higgins was in good company at the summit. [Healthy Little Havana](#) was also honored as the **Complete Streets Community Award Winner in Miami-Dade County** for emphasizing the importance of creating safer, more accessible transportation options that give Little Havana residents the opportunity to accomplish their daily tasks. She looks forward to continuing to make an impact with Safe Street Summit partners and fellow Miami-Dade nominees including Alfredo Quintero, Public Works Director, Town of Cutler Bay; Eli Stiers, Esq., Stiers Law, P.A.; and Eric Tullberg, Secretary, Green Mobility Network.

## A BUS NETWORK THAT WORKS FOR US

After over 100 community events, workshops, and presentations, as well as hearing from thousands of residents, the **draft new network for the Better Bus Project** was released by Transit Alliance (TA) Miami on February 26 at the CIC Miami. Last year, TA, Miami-Dade County, and many cities embarked on the ambitious task

of redesigning our bus network. The [new network](#) will drastically improve service and connect more residents to more opportunities – in fact:

- **370K more residents** have access to frequent service
- The average resident can access **33% more opportunities** (jobs and services)
- **Better all-day, evening and weekend service**

**But now we want to hear from you!** Learn more about the new concept and provide feedback at the following **public information sessions in District 5:**

### Hispanic Branch Library

March 5, 2020 3:30 - 5:30 PM

1398 SW 1st St #100, Miami, FL 33135

[RSVP](#)

Shenandoah Branch Library

### Downtown Main Library

March 18, 2020 3:30 - 5:30 PM

101 W Flagler St, Miami, FL 33130

[RSVP](#)

Miami Beach Regional Library



March 6, 2020 4:00 - 5:30 PM  
2111 SW 19th St, Miami, FL 33145  
[RSVP](#)

March 3, 2020 5:00 - 7:00 PM  
227 22nd Street, Miami Beach, FL, 33139  
[RSVP](#)

## D5 MOM & POP GRANT PROGRAM TO LAUNCH



Get ready District 5 small businesses! The 2020 Mom & Pop Grant Program **applications will be available on March 3, 2020!**

In Miami-Dade, small businesses are the lifeblood of our local economy. As a previous small business owner, Commissioner Higgins knows how important it is to take businesses to the next level and grow their footprint in the community. Being a small business owner isn't easy, but you don't have to go through it alone!

Through the [Miami-Dade County Mom and Pop Small Business Grant Program](#), small businesses are offered funding opportunities to purchase equipment, supplies, advertising and marketing, minor renovations, and more. In the past two years, Commissioner Higgins is pleased to have **awarded grants to over 100 Mom and Pop** businesses in District 5.

See important program dates below:

- Applications available on March 3-13
- Optional information sessions will be held:
  - **March 9** at Miami Beach Regional Library at 6:00pm and
  - **March 11** at Shenandoah Park at 6:30pm
- Original applications must be **turned in** by hand at one of the District 5 offices between March 16 – 20
- Online applications and deadlines are based on your commission district.

To receive a reminder email when the applications are open or to ask for additional information about the program, contact District Manager, Rachel Cohen at [Rachel.Cohen@miamidade.gov](mailto:Rachel.Cohen@miamidade.gov).

## IT'S A BARRIO PARTY ON 5TH STREET

On February 8, Commissioner Higgins, along with [Urban Impact Lab \(UI Lab\)](#) and other community partners, hosted the first of many *Barrio Parties* on SW 5<sup>th</sup> Street for the families of East Little Havana to celebrate the Play Street designation and the completion of the first step of *Transform 5th*. A street that previously lacked design, color, and activities was filled with the children and residents of Little Havana. There were activities for all ages, including painting, Jenga, a mom's basketball tournament, and an obstacle course.

Thanks to the legislation sponsored by City of Miami Commissioner Joe Carollo, SW 5<sup>th</sup> Street by [Jose Marti Park](#) has been designated as a Play Street. Many thanks to UI Lab, Healthy Little Havana, and The Health Foundation of South Florida for their advocacy.



The focus of the *Transform 5<sup>th</sup>* Project is to turn the street between 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Little Havana into a fully accessible public space for the community. The portion of 5<sup>th</sup> Street that separates Jose Marti into two disconnected sections will be revamped for community events, a place where community members can meet, and where residents can feel safe and enjoy our beautiful city.

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

### CONNECTING CITIES THROUGH TRANSIT



Transit is really beginning to move in 2020... like quickly. In only the first two months, two [SMART Plan Corridors](#), the South and Beach corridors, received long awaited news to thrust these projects forward.

Ever since meeting with the Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in January, Commissioner Higgins was eager to learn what the **South Dade Corridor Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** project rating would be.

In order to receive federal funding, it had to be rated medium high or high. On February 11, the County learned it was rated HIGH – which means **construction could start as early as 2020 and completed by 2023**. This will be first SMART plan expansion in years.

In addition, after putting off the decision for 30 years, in January, the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) finally chose its **preferred transportation method for the Beach Corridor**– across the Bay an elevated, fixed guideway rapid transit mode, either Metromover or monorail; and the expansion of the Metromover toward the Design District to connect with the dedicated bus lanes planned for the Julia Tuttle Causeway. The vision is for a fully integrated system through the area connecting Downtown, Brickell, Miami Beach, Wynwood, Edgewater, and the Design District without ever having to get into a car.

Commissioner Higgins strongly advocated for both of these projects and is excited to move forward with a quick and reliable transit option that will dramatically transform the quality of life for thousands of residents and workers who commute throughout the County, including the cities of Miami and Miami Beach.

### EXPEDITING AFFORDABLE HOUSING PERMITTING-A CASE STUDY

Miami-Dade is the epicenter of the severe crisis of housing unaffordability. It is well known that many counties and cities throughout South Florida are unaffordable as a result of high housing costs and low wages.

In October 2019, Commissioner Higgins sponsored legislation to **expedite the permitting process for affordable and workforce housing** developments in



Miami-Dade. The Commissioner recognized that the first step, and the step which the County has the most direct control over, is our own internal permitting and review process, which can add years to the development of housing.

As a result of the legislation, all affordable housing projects now go to the top of the list across county departments, which will **reduce the amount of time it takes for affordable housing** developments to get permitted and built throughout the County.

The **first application for an affordable housing development under the new process** is for Cannery Row at Redlands Crossings in South Dade. This development will include 112 units and is currently going through the process. Miami-Dade County is working with the developer, Pinnacle Housing Group, to **use this application as a case study in order to continue making improvements.**

When done right, affordable housing can create safe, successful, connected communities, and Commissioner Higgins is dedicated to providing innovative solutions that will address one of the biggest problems existing in District 5.

## DISTRICT 5 HAPPENINGS

### SHENANDOAH DAY GOES GREEN



For the fifth year in a row, the Miami Shenandoah Neighborhood Association held **"Shenandoah Day"** on January 25, a family-fun festival for the neighborhood. At the event, the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, local businesses, and thousands of residents came together for a day of games, arts and crafts, and delicious goodies.

This year, the District 5 table was dedicated to promoting **"Greener Coral Way,"** a voluntary certification program developed

by Commissioner Higgins, in partnership with The CLEO Institute, a nonprofit focused on climate education, to **help Coral Way restaurants thrive by recognizing them as environmental stewards of the neighborhood.** By removing Styrofoam, reducing single-use plastic, and addressing food waste in our local businesses, we will help our main road become a Greener Coral Way! To learn more, visit [www.greenercoralway.com](http://www.greenercoralway.com).

### A VISIT TO FLAMINGO PARK

Enhancing the quality of life of our neighborhood starts with the help of the active residents who live and work in the community. Earlier this month, Commissioner Higgins visited the monthly **Flamingo Park Neighborhood Association** at a new location at the Miami Beach Police Athletic League building. Residents voiced their concerns

about the issues affecting their neighborhood, including pedestrian and cyclist safety, transportation options, and the progress of the new rapid transit connection between Miami Beach and the mainland.

Commissioner Higgins enjoys visiting the neighborhood association and connecting to the District 5 community. These monthly gatherings help bridge the gap between residents and local government.



## OLDER ADULT FAIR



Commissioner Higgins, in partnership with Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez's Initiative on Aging, hosted an **Older Adult Job Fair** at the Hispanic Branch Library in Little Havana. Hundreds of Miami-Dade residents, **ages 50 and up**, met with **dozens of employers hiring** for positions in retail, customer service, security, and more. Employers from the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, Miami Dade College, and Carrfour Supportive Housing were just a few of the businesses who participated in the job fair. In addition, Miami-Dade Public Library

offered job preparation workshops and job seeker resources for participants.

## MEET DISTRICT 5 MIXER

On February 19, Commissioner Higgins hosted a **networking event for District 5 board appointees** to dozens of advisory boards, including but not limited to Community Relations, Black Affairs, Hispanic Affairs, Asian American, Elder Affairs, LGBTQ+, Cultural Arts, Planning, Commission of Women, and more. Over 50 people **gathered to share the great work they are doing for the community and within their boards**. New relationships were forged, and experiences shared, while everyone enjoyed delicious bites from a founding member of the Greener Coral Way initiative, Doggi's Arepa Bar.



## GAY8 FESTIVAL

A parade of colors and pride filled the streets of Little Havana for **the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Gay8 Festival** during Presidents' Day weekend. Over 60,000 people enjoyed live music, art, culture, and food at **the largest Hispanic LGBTQ festival** in the country.



The festival itself was preceded by two days of activities, including the 4ward Gala and the 4ward Americas LGBTI Human Rights Symposium and Business Expo in Miami Beach. At the 4ward Gala, Commissioner Higgins recognized four amazing Miamians with the Pa'Lante Awards for their pioneering spirit and the work they have done to make Miami-Dade a better place for all residents.

The Gay8 Festival is a unique Miami gathering that showcases the rich diversity of Miami and the willingness to embrace people for who they are and who they love.

## A CHAMPIONS CELEBRATION

On February 8, Commissioner Eileen Higgins attended a “Champions Celebration” at Marlins Park, a student-athlete showcase hosted by the Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department. Student athletes from around Miami-Dade County were recognized for their leadership and sportsmanship. Following the ceremony, attendees had the opportunity to meet their favorite Miami Marlins players, play interactive games, and enjoy fireworks at the Miami Marlins Fan Fest.



The Marlins Fan Fest is the first opportunity of the season for Marlins fans to interact with the players and enjoy the famous ballpark.

## OUR COUNTY IS HERE TO HELP

### MEET OUR STAFF

#### Sandra Manso, District Coordinator for the Greater Little Havana Area



Sandra Manso is the District Coordinator for the Greater Little Havana Area in District 5 and oversees all things in the colorful center of *La Pequeña Habana*. Sandra was born and raised in Miami, Florida, but fully embraces her Cuban roots. Before bringing her talents to the District 5 team, Sandra spent years working in the field of linguistics and is fluent in four languages – a true renaissance woman! Besides being

passionate about her job and spending time with our seniors, Sandra loves the outdoors. When she's not hard at work in Little Havana, she's rowing, riding her bike, or enjoying the arts and culture our beautiful County has to offer.

When it comes to everything *Pequeña Habana*, Sandra is here to answer any questions or concerns. You can catch Sandra at a senior center, a community event in Little Havana, or at the District 5 Coral Way office.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Government Meetings

- **March 2 / 12:00 am** - Miami River Commission General Meeting (MRC)
- **March 3 / 9:30 am** - Board of County Commissioners Meeting (BCC)
- **March 3 / 11:00 am** - Special Meeting - Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners
- **March 9 / 9:00 am** - Housing, Social Services and Economic Development Committee (HSED)
- **March 10 / 9:30 am** - Public Safety and Rehabilitation Committee (PSR)
- **March 10 / 12:00 pm** - Community Disparities Subcommittee (CDS)
- **March 10 / 2:00 pm** - Infrastructure and Capital Improvements Committee (ICI)
- **March 11 / 9:30 am** - Tourism and the Ports Committee (TAPS)
- **March 11 / 2:00 pm** - Transportation and Finance Committee (TAF)
- **March 12 / 9:30 am** - Health Care and County Operations Committee (HCCO)
- **March 12 / 2:00 pm** - Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Committee (PRCA)
- **March 17 / 9:30 am** - Board of County Commissioners Meeting (BCC)
- **March 18 / 9:30 am** - Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP)
- **March 19 / 9:30 am** - Zoning Meeting

### Neighborhood Meetings

- **March 2 / 5:30 pm** - Flamingo Park Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **March 3 / 6:00 pm** - West Avenue Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **March 4 / 5:30 pm** - Mid Beach Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **March 9 / 7:00 pm** - Shenandoah Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **March 25 / 7:00 pm** - The Roads Neighborhood Association Meeting

### Community Events

- **March 3 / 5:00 pm** - Better Bus Project Miami Beach
- **March 5 / 3:30 pm** - Better Bus Project Little Havana
- **March 6 / 4:00 pm** - Better Bus Project Shenandoah
- **March 18 / 3:30 pm** - Better Bus Project Downtown
- **March 20 / 7:00 pm** - Viernes Culturales

*Miami-Dade County Commission Calendar*

## CONTACT OUR TEAM

# OFFICES

### District Office

2100 Coral Way, Suite 400  
Miami, Florida, 33145

**Monday - Friday**

**9:00 am to 5:00 pm**

### Miami Beach Office

Miami Beach City Hall  
1700 Convention Center Drive,  
1st Floor  
Miami Beach, Florida, 33139

**Tuesday, Thursday**

**9:30 am to 4:30 pm**



**305.375.5924**



**District5@miamidade.gov**

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