



Commissioner
Eileen Higgins
District 5

INSIDE

A CLOSER LOOK AT ALL THINGS DISTRICT 5

FIVE

JANUARY 2020

2020 - Time for Action and Implementation

It's incredible to think that it has only been a year and a half since you entrusted me with the awesome responsibility of representing you on the Miami-Dade County Commission. Since then, District 5 has built the best team around and developed strong relationships with residents and colleagues at the cities of Miami and Miami Beach, as well as the County Commission and Administration. We expedited lagging road projects like West Flagler Street; issued hundreds of grants and provided training to impacted small businesses; and listened to our seniors about their transportation priorities.



We have approved legislation to get residents out of their cars and moving; to fast-track and expand affordable housing; to ensure workers' safety and wages; to protect the environment and Bay; and to enhance the quality of life for our seniors and underrepresented residents. We secured millions of dollars in County funding to address community disparities; innovative solutions for affordable housing and historic preservation; and maintenance of our beautiful beaches. It's amazing what's been accomplished – I must thank my team, County officials, cities, partners, and you for helping us achieve so much so quickly.

Now, in 2020, it's time for action and implementation - and we are ready to go. This year, you will see District 5 launch new programs like Greener Coral Way, First Time Homebuyers, and

Senior Mobility Programming, as well as outreach plans for increased participation in the Census 2020. We will break ground on neighborhood pocket parks and dog parks. We will release the vision that creates a neighborhood in the Government Center Campus Rapid Transit Zone, as well as issue solicitations for the first of these projects to begin. We will expedite affordable housing development. We will test historic preservation in Little Havana to protect naturally occurring affordable housing. Transit will be expanded – after 30 years of waiting. We will hold the first meeting of the County's newly established LGBTQ Advisory Board. The first phase of the long-awaited Underline will open to the public. We will be ready for seaweed. The Metromover will no longer close for private construction. Streets will be safer for pedestrians and cyclists across the district.

It is sure to be a productive year and we will need all hands on deck to get things done. Will you join us?

DISTRICT 5 NEWS

HIGGINS TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESS

On January 15, Commissioner Higgins was in Washington, DC to testify before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Aviation regarding the treatment of airport ground workers who unload passenger bags, clean planes between flights, and push elderly and injured passengers in wheelchairs. These are the unnoticed and underappreciated workers who make our airports tick.



Since early 2018, Commissioner Higgins has worked hand-in-hand with U.S.

Representatives Donna Shalala, Frederica Wilson, and Debbie Mucarsel-Powell to shed light on the treatment of airport ground workers by airline subcontractors, including at a Congressional Roundtable where workers shared their health and safety concerns, and reiterated stories of intimidation and fear of losing their jobs.

At the Aviation Subcommittee, Commissioner Higgins described the unsafe conditions and her first-hand account of the intimidation tactics employed by Eulen America, an airport subcontractor at many of our nation's airports. "Companies that provide unsafe work conditions and operate under a culture of fear make worksites less safe. I'm glad that Congress has shined a light on the treatment of these workers by unscrupulous companies," said Commissioner Higgins.

This month Commissioner Higgins introduced legislation to implement a new County process for permitting airport ground services that will evaluate companies not only on their technical merit but also on employment conditions such as health and safety protections, wage rates, and violations from regulatory agencies. "The intent of my legislation is to reward companies who treat their employees with respect and decency and ensure that our airport continues to

be a beacon of light for our County."

[Watch Commissioner Higgins' full testimony here.](#)

ADVOCATING FOR MIAMI-DADE IN WASHINGTON

While in Washington, DC, Commissioner Higgins also met with South Florida Representatives, Housing and Urban Development, and the Federal Transportation Administration to advocate for local projects.



Commissioner Higgins met with Representative Debbie Mucarsel-Powell to discuss Miami-Dade County's transportation needs. As a leader on the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Representative Mucarsel-Powell's advocacy is imperative to get the funding we need to get our residents, visitors, and workers moving.

Thanks to Representatives Mario Diaz-Balart and Donna Shalala for taking the time to discuss the issues that matter to us in South Florida. From transportation to the horrible situation in Venezuela, Commissioner Higgins had a productive discussion with our representatives on how they can work together to improve the quality of life for residents.



Housing and Urban Development Director Tom Davis sat down with Commissioner Higgins to discuss how counties across the country are using HUD's new innovative financing programs to build more affordable housing. Miami-Dade County is already taking advantage of the new RAD program to finance hundreds of units in District 5.

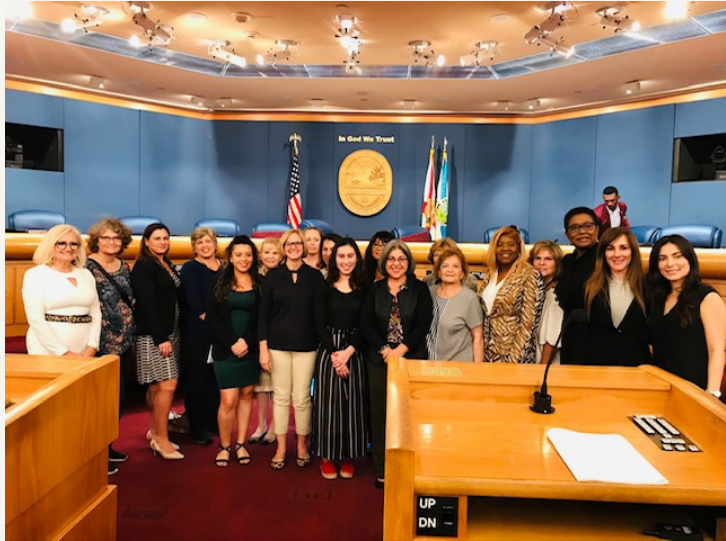
Commissioner Higgins met with Federal Transit Administration's Acting Administrator, Jane Williams, and her team to discuss federal funding for our County's SMART transit corridors. The Commissioner appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the federal scoring process for transit projects like the South Dade and Beach Corridors.



THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN MIAMI-DADE

At the December Community Disparities Subcommittee (CDS) meeting, the Miami-Dade County Commission for Women and the FIU Metropolitan Center presented the data and recommendations from the 2019 Status of Women report.

The report analyzes the critical disparities among men and women and tracks the progress towards closing the gender gap. The report highlights a range of indicators across the areas of economic development, education, health, and safety.



After the presentation, Commissioner Higgins led a discussion on why the gender gap exists within the County workforce and what is being done to close it. Arlene Cuellar, Director of Human Resources for Miami-Dade County, informed the subcommittee that there are many different factors within the employment structure that effect pay equity, such as changes in pay structures over time and the effects of the economic recession.

The County has worked to mitigate the effects of these complex factors, and progress has been made. Since 2016, the pay gap in Miami-Dade County has decreased by 9%. The County is heading in the right direction, but there is still work to be done. The subcommittee has made the recommendations from the 2019 report a committee item to be discussed with the full Board of County Commissioners.

Thank you to Dr. Maria Llecheva, Marie Woodson, Jennifer Hill, and the entire Miami-Dade Commission For Women for continuing to update the data year-after-year and for providing recommendations that can move our County forward.

Missed the December CDS? Watch the entire meeting [here](#).

DO YOUR PART DURING SUPER BOWL LIV

Superbowl LIV will bring thousands of visitors to Miami-Dade between January 25 and February 2. While enjoying the festivities, it's important to remember that large-scale events can bring more human trafficking to the hosting cities. To prepare, the Miami Super Bowl host committee in partnership with Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, The Woman's Fund Miami-Dade, and other community partners have launched the 'Stop Sex Trafficking' campaign to educate the community on

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the common signs out of human trafficking and how to report suspected crimes.

Learn more about the signs that can indicate a person you meet or see may be a victim of human trafficking [here](#).

Suspected crimes can be reported to the Miami rapid response team at **305-FIX-STOP (305-349-7867)**.

See it. Snap it. Send it

TAKE A LOOK

STRICTLY BUSINESS



Commissioner Higgins is dedicated to helping small businesses in District 5 grow by connecting entrepreneurs, business owners, and local organizations to the resources and tools

available in Miami-Dade County. Commissioner Higgins launched "Strictly business," a monthly email newsletter that includes information for workshops, networking events, and courses taking place in District 5. In addition to events, there's also a monthly update for current and interested applicants of the District 5 Mom and Pop Small Business Grant Program. If you want to be more engaged with the District 5 small business community, meet local business owners, apply for the Mom and Pop Grant, and learn more about county resources for small businesses, sign up to receive "Strictly Business" [here](#).

If you run small business programming or events in District 5 and would like to be featured in "Strictly Business," please contact Rachel Cohen at Rachel.Cohen@miamidade.gov.

DISTRITO CINCO PARA TI

Inscríbese a Distrito Cinco Para Ti, un boletín informativo donde recibirán todas las

noticias, los acontecimientos, y los eventos ocurriendo en el Distrito 5 del condado de Miami-Dade. También incluirá los temas importantes legislativos que ocurren al nivel



LEGISLATIVE NEWS

CREATING SAFER STREETS

Commissioner Higgins knows firsthand that being a pedestrian in this city can be a scary and a sometimes unsafe experience.

In recent years, Miami-Dade County has had a higher percentage of pedestrian and bicyclist related deaths than any other county in the State of Florida. One of the top priorities for Commissioner Higgins is making the most dangerous intersections in the District 5 community safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. In District 5, our busiest main roads also happen to be where families live. But pedestrian deaths and near-crash experiences happen frequently throughout the County.



At the November 19 Board of County Commissioners meeting, Commissioner Higgins sponsored legislation to identify and prioritize the most critical locations where crosswalks should be added throughout the County.

This study is the first implementation of the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) "Vision Zero" program. "Vision Zero" is dedicated to eliminating deaths and serious injuries related to mobility. The goal is to bring pedestrian and bicyclist deaths down to zero within the next ten years.

EXPANSION OF THE NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM



At the December 3 Board of County Commission meeting, Commissioner Higgins Co-Sponsored legislation to expand the IDEA Exchange program countywide. The Infectious Disease Elimination Act (IDEA) Exchange launched in 2016 as a five-year, needle and syringe exchange pilot program led by the University of Miami.

After Commissioner Higgins invited the director of the program, Dr. Hansel Tookes, to present on the progress of the pilot program at the Community Disparities Subcommittee, it was clear that the services offered were essential to combating the severe HIV rates in Miami-Dade County. The program allows

injection drug users to trade in a used syringe for a clean one to avoid spreading blood-borne diseases.

In addition to the distribution of clean needles, the IDEA exchange offers life-saving services like free HIV testing, overdose reversal medication, and pathways to substance abuse treatment. Commissioner Higgins is proud to support this program, and looks forward to increasing access to prevention efforts and medical services to residents countywide.

HOLDING CONTRACTORS ACCOUNTABLE

Across neighborhoods in District 5, hundreds of underground pipes and utilities have been cut into by negligent contractors. Not only do these breaks cause increased traffic and disruptions, but they lead to thousands of gallons of sewage to leak into our waterways. Last year in Miami Beach, contractors broke into a main and covered up the damage, resulting in 750,000 gallons leaking into our environment. In November, Brickell residents were placed under a water boil advisory after yet another break caused sewage to leak into the system. These are recent examples, but there have been over 500 sewage leaks in the last two years throughout the County caused by contractors.



On December 17, Commissioner Higgins directed the administration to provide a report on the sewage leaks caused by contractors and the permitting process for work done on county roads. The report will include the following details about the leaks in the past two years; the location of the leak, number of breaks, frequency of leaks, whether the leak caused electrical outages, which breaks have caused environmental impacts to Biscayne Bay, which contractors caused the breaks, and any other relevant information regarding sewage leaks. The report is expected by March 2020.

DISTRICT 5 HAPPENINGS

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) began in 1999 to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a black transgender woman and community activist who lost her life to anti-transgender violence. Since then, a commemoration of all lives lost due to anti-transgender violence is observed annually on this day.

On November 20, Commissioner observed TDOR at an event organized by Arianna's Center. The Commissioner was honored to receive 'The Ally Award' for her work to establish the LGBTQ Advisory Board and make sure the Transgender community is supported and represented. Thanks to Arianna's Center for bringing together advocates, elected officials, and community members to recognize this important event and for helping make Miami a safer place for our transgender community.



BRINGING ENTREPRENEURS TOGETHER AT CKO BRICKELL



CKO Owner, Fernando Andrade, opened his doors for a networking event that allowed local entrepreneurs to promote their businesses and discuss the challenges of being a business owner in Miami. The District 5 team took the opportunity to educate small business owners on the County resources available to them.

At the event, attendees brainstormed different ways they can work together to overcome challenges and grow their businesses.

Attendees were excited to learn more about the Mom and Pop Grant Program and the "Strictly Business" newsletter. The District 5 team was happy to be involved and will continue strengthening the connection with the small business community.

Thank you, Fernando, for planning this event and for inviting us to participate.

FESTIVAL OF WISHES

It was a true miracle on 5th street as the Little Havana community rang in the holidays with its very own 'Festival of Wishes.' There was ornament-making, churro-eating, and a special visit from Santa Clause. Commissioner Higgins helped the children get into the holiday spirit by telling holiday stories and asking them about their wishes for the holiday and new year.

Thanks to the work of Urban Impact Lab, Live Healthy Little Havana, and the Health Foundation of South Florida, and the support from the City of Miami, SW 5th Street by José Martí Park has been officially recognized as a Play Street. The Commissioner is excited for future



MANUEL GONZALEZ PLAZA NAME UNVEILING



On November 21, Commissioner Higgins hosted the official unveiling of the "Manuel A. Gonzalez Plaza" on SW 14th Avenue and 8th Street.

Mr. Gonzalez was a pillar of the Kiwanis of Little Havana. He served the children and families of the neighborhood for decades, creating programs like the Kiwanis Club of Little Havana Foundation, where he raised over \$3 million in scholarship funds for low

income Hispanic students and enabled more than 300 students to attend higher education institutions.

Commissioner Higgins was honored to celebrate his everlasting impact surrounded by his friends, families, and colleagues.

LITTLE HAVANA UMBRELLAS

In the spirit of Art Basel, Commissioner Higgins participated as a judge for the 7th Annual Umbrellas of Little Havana Art Festival that showcased the work of local and invited artists.

Beautiful, hand-crafted patio umbrellas adorned the Futurama Art Building in the Little Havana Art District on 8th Street.

The festival was a collaboration of the City of Miami and its community partners, and ran for a total of three days. Residents and visitors enjoyed the colorful exhibit in the vibrant Calle Ocho gallery.



MAKE A BOOKMARK CONTEST

After thousands of entries were submitted to the annual Miami-Dade Public Library System 2019 "Make a Bookmark Contest," Commissioner Higgins awarded prizes to participants for their winning designs.

This year's theme was "Take Your Story Further," where participants told the story of how the library has taken their life to new heights.



Commissioner Higgins loved being a part of this experience, as the library has always been a big part of her life. Like the artists who entered the contest, the library takes Commissioner Higgins' life to new heights by giving her access to thousands of e-books to read on the bus, making sure she's always prepared for her book club.

Check out the grand prize-winning bookmarks at every Miami-Dade Public Library this month.

THREE KINGS DAY PARADE

On January 12, in celebration of the Three Kings Day holiday, thousands of families and children lined SW 8th Street to take in the sights and sounds of the 50th Annual Three Kings Day Parade sponsored by Univision.

Attendees enjoyed food from local restaurants and enjoyed marching bands, folkloric groups, live animals, and floats. Special guests such as Pitbull or "Mr. 305," Univision TV Personalities, the Miami Heat, and Los Tres Reyes Magos made an appearance.



Commissioner Higgins rode in style with the Miami-Dade Fire Department, and loved being a part of a tradition that is so important to the local Hispanic community.

OUR COUNTY IS HERE TO HELP

MEET OUR STAFF

Liane Sippin, Operations Manager and Special Projects

Liane Sippin is the Operations and Special Projects Manager for District 5 and oversees all internal processes of the District 5 team. She schedules all the meetings for Commissioner Higgins and works first hand with community partners throughout our district.

Liane was born and raised in Miami, FL and graduated from Florida International University

with a Bachelor's degree in Communications Arts. She bleeds blue and gold, as she was also FIU's SGA President and a part of the Board of Trustees. Liane loves being involved in the community and has participated in Leadership Miami as a participant and now a group leader for two years. On her time off, she loves to travel and take beautiful pictures. Fun Fact: she's also a triplet!

When it comes to general office inquiries, Liane is here to answer any questions or concerns you may have.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Government Meetings

- **January 30 / 2:00 pm** - Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Meeting
- **February 3 / 12:00 pm** - Miami River Commission (MRC)
- **February 4 / 9:30 am** - Board of County Commissioners Meeting (BCC)
- **February 7 / 9:30 am** - Miami DDA Urbanism Committee Meeting
- **February 10 / 2:00 pm** - Housing, Social Services and Economic Development Committee (HSSSED)
- **February 11 / 9:30 am** - Public Safety and Rehabilitation Committee (PSR)
- **February 11 / 2:00 pm** - Infrastructure and Capital Improvements Committee (ICI)
- **February 12 / 9:30 am** - Tourism and the Ports Committee (TAPS)
- **February 12 / 2:00 pm** - Transportation and Finance Committee (TAF)
- **February 13 / 9:30 am** - Health Care and County Operations Committee (HCCO)
- **February 13 / 12:00 pm** - Community Disparities Subcommittee (CDS)
- **February 13 / 2:00 pm** - Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Committee (PRCA)

Neighborhood Meetings

- **February 3 / 5:30 pm** - Flamingo Park Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **February 5 / 5:30 pm** - Midbeach Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **February 10 / 7:00 pm** - Shenandoah Neighborhood Association Meeting

Community Events

- **February 3 / 10:30 am** - New Civil and Probate Courthouse Groundbreaking Ceremony
- **February 8 / 2:00 pm** - Little Havana Barrio Party
- **February 8 / 3:00 pm** - Marlins Fan Fest
- **February 9 / 6:00 am** - Miami Marathon
- **February 13 / 3:00 pm** - Centro Mater Community and Health Fair

[Miami-Dade County Commission Calendar](#)

CONTACT OUR TEAM

OFFICES

District Office

2100 Coral Way, Suite 400
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Monday - Friday

9:00 am to 5:00 pm



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1st Floor

Miami Beach, Florida, 33139

Tuesday, Thursday

9:30 am to 4:30 pm

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