



Commissioner
Eileen Higgins
District 5

INSIDE

A CLOSER LOOK AT ALL THINGS DISTRICT 5

FIVE

NOVEMBER 2019

Welcome Back to Inside Five

*This is the November edition of our newsletter dedicated to all things District 5!
Watch the video below for a special message from Commissioner Eileen Higgins.*



WHAT SENIORS SAID ABOUT TRANSIT & MOBILITY



Lack of access to transportation makes it difficult for our seniors to buy groceries, visit family, and get to their doctors' appointments. In October, we told you about the Transportation Outreach Workshops being held to engage with seniors throughout District 5 and get their input on transportation and mobility. These workshops were developed by District 5 in order to dig deeper into the mobility issues affecting our older

adults and work with them to find solutions.

With the help of Urban Impact Lab (UI Lab), a local civic innovation firm, the District 5 team planned and led 12 workshops in Little Havana, Downtown Miami, and Miami Beach. At these workshops, groups of 50 to 200 seniors mapped out where they live, the places they go, and how they get around on the weekdays and weekends. They also discussed technology, ridership programs, and new potential transit services.

While the findings are not yet final, here's a sneak peek; what we've learned so far is quite surprising.

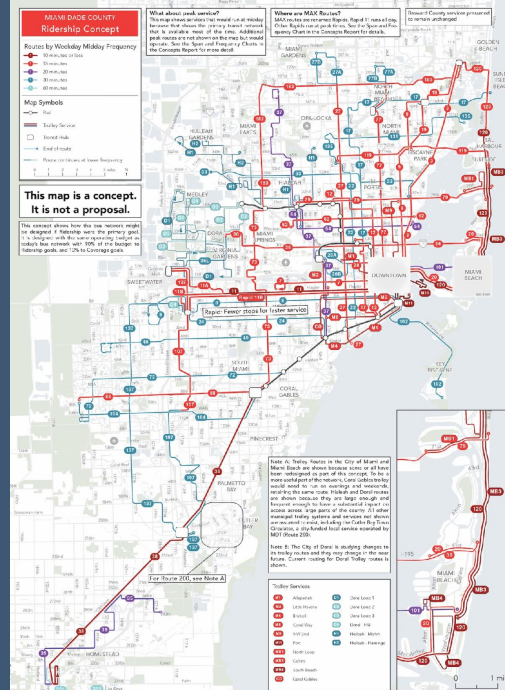
1. Frequency, or how often the bus comes, is the **most** important factor impacting our seniors' transit experience.
2. Seniors use public transportation to travel long distances. One resident we spoke to travels by bus from South Beach all the way to Aventura to spend time with family members.
3. County buses are preferred over trolleys – seniors expressed that they have a hard time boarding the trolleys and don't feel safe while riding. Since residents over 65 are eligible for a free transit pass through the Golden Passport program, it doesn't matter that the trolleys are free to seniors.
4. Seniors would rather take longer routes than shorter options that require transfers.

District 5 and UI Lab are analyzing this feedback in order to come up with solutions to meet senior mobility needs. Stay tuned!

JUMP ON THE BETTER BUS PROJECT

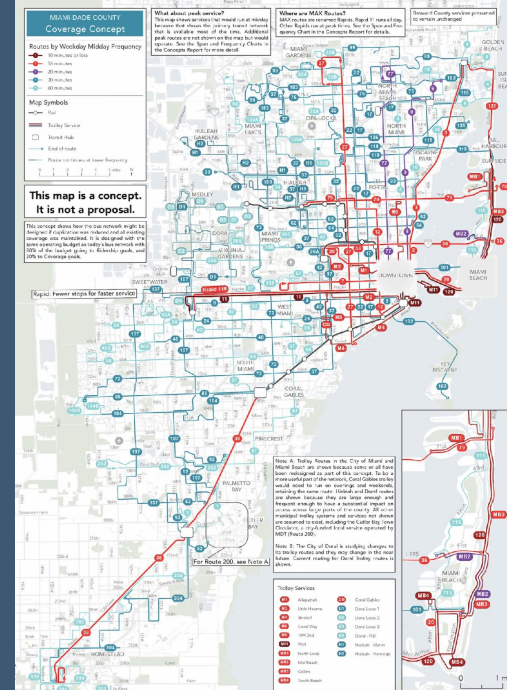
Riding the bus in Miami can be - let's just say - a challenging journey. There may not be a nearby stop, the bus may not go to a desired location, and yes, the schedule can be unreliable. Working hand-in-hand with the County and local municipalities, Transit Alliance Miami (TA) is redesigning the entire Metrobus system to eliminate duplicate routes and get people moving faster. It's called the **Better Bus Project**. Did you know any redesign will be cost-neutral? We like the sound of that.

At this stage, County and city leaders are considering two concepts: ridership vs. coverage. Let's explain:



Ridership Concept

Bus routes cover the entire county, but you will have to wait longer for a bus, like 30–60 minutes longer.



Coverage Concept

Bus routes cover the entire county, but you will have to wait longer for a bus, like 30–60 minutes longer.

No sugarcoating it; tough decisions need to be made. That's why public input is key. Be a part of the Better Bus Project by taking a quick survey. The survey is for everyone who lives or works in Miami-Dade, whether or not you take public transportation. Take the survey here: <https://bit.ly/348sYDW>

KEEPING METROMOVER, WELL...MOVING

Workers, residents, and visitors to the urban core depend on the Metromover as a reliable mode of transportation. But recent disruptions, including systemwide weekend closures, can cause a ripple effect for the over 250,000 daily workers in Downtown and Brickell. One of those impacted workers was Commissioner Eileen Higgins, also a Downtown resident, who was forced to drive to a nearby meeting in Brickell due to a system disruption.



Commissioner Higgins immediately acted and [proposed legislation](#) directing the County administration to prepare a report *within 90 days* on all performance issues on the Metromover over the last two years. The report will include unexpected route changes, system-wide shutdowns, and a detailed reasoning for these shutdowns. In addition, it will lay out how the Department of Transportation and Public Works will communicate with the public if, in an emergency, the Metromover requires closure.

The report is expected by January 2020, and Commissioner Higgins is looking forward to analyzing the results and implementing solutions for a more reliable Metromover system that has the interests of residents, employees, students, and visitors in mind.

NEW YEAR, NEW BUSES



Buses play a key role in Miami's transportation system, carrying thousands of residents, employees, and visitors throughout the County daily. They reduce the number of cars on the streets, make neighborhoods more livable and sustainable, and provide alternative transit options for employees and residents in the community.

But with Florida standing as one of the most vulnerable states to the effects of climate change, Miami-Dade County is working tirelessly to lower its greenhouse gas emissions by delivering clean, quiet transportation. That's why on October 3, as a part of the County's goal towards zero emissions, Commissioner Higgins and her colleagues on the Board of County Commissioners approved the purchase of the first fleet of electric buses in Miami-Dade.

Every zero-emission bus can eliminate 1,690 tons of carbon dioxide over its 12-year lifespan. This is equivalent to taking 27 cars off the road. Commissioner Higgins is looking forward to riding on a completely carbon neutral form of public transportation. Be on the lookout for electric Metrobuses in 2020.

TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY FOR BUSINESSES

Starting a business is not easy and living in a new place with a new language can make it that much harder. But there's no need to go through it alone. Over the last 25 years, Prospera has helped advance the growth of Hispanic-owned businesses all over the United States. They provide entrepreneurs with bilingual assistance, training, consulting services, funding, and educational seminars.

As the daughter of a small business owner, Commissioner Higgins understands the impact small businesses have on the local economy and how important it is to foster their success. That's why the Commissioner sponsored Prospera's Annual Technology Academy in Miami Beach.



The Technology Academy will consist of four sessions that allow local business owners to get a better understanding of digital resources, how to apply technology to their business model, and ways to improve their daily processes. The sessions will focus on technology fundamentals, business connectivity, digital marketing, and cyber security.

Don't miss out on this opportunity – sign up for the next workshop on **Monday, November 25** at 10 am. Registration link: <https://bit.ly/32nsUO>

GETTING TRANSIT DONE

When elected, Commissioner Higgins promised Miami-Dade County residents that she would act on Transit **NOW** -- to get people moving and out of their cars as quickly as possible. The harsh reality is that for more than 30 years transit expansion had stalled. Promises of the past hadn't advanced any solutions. We could no longer afford to delay decisions related to the six corridors in the SMART Plan or as Commissioner Higgins dubbed it, the SLOW Plan.

Since her election, decisions have been made on three transit corridors, with another two underway. One corridor is the Northeast Corridor, where through a public-private partnership, a new high-speed rail system will travel from Aventura to Downtown Miami, in only 15 minutes. The first trains are less than a year away.

On October 29, the Board of County Commissioners approved an additional station for the Virgin Train line at the Port of Miami. Within three years, Florida residents may be able to board their next cruise vacation without worrying about parking fees or expensive Uber rides.

This would be the first-of-its-kind train station at the Port of Miami that would connect the cruise capital of the world with an alternative transit option for the millions of residents, visitors, and employees traveling to the Port daily. This will help increase mobility, take cars off the road, and provide visitors with an easier way to get around.

Miami-Dade County is allowing Virgin Trains USA to use one acre of County land on the Port of Miami for this new station and is expected to generate millions of dollars in revenue for the County over the next 30 years.

THE ROAD TO TALLAHASSEE: ESCALATING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES

Earlier this month, Commissioner Higgins made her way up to Tallahassee to advocate on behalf of Miami-Dade County residents on pressing issues affecting our quality of life.



IN THE NEWS

WINK NEWS



Commissioner Higgins spoke to Sara Girard from WINK News in Lee County, Florida about the 5G

Installations in our neighborhoods and what other counties can do to protect themselves.

See the full story here:

<https://bit.ly/332N3Kr>

The first issue: 5G. She heard the complaints from residents and saw first-hand how the installations have affected Miami-Dade neighborhoods. She met with local contractors and has been a relentless voice for residents. Thanks to the leadership of Commissioner Higgins, the Board of County Commissioners urged the Florida Legislature to allow local governments some control over where the poles are located and how designs standards can be implemented on the street. In Tallahassee, she had many productive conversations around this issue and she hopes it will help pass legislation.

Commissioner Higgins met with Andrea Martinez from NBC 6 News to discuss the utility markings taking over



Downtown Miami due to 5G Installations. See the full story here:

<https://bit.ly/37lCntN>



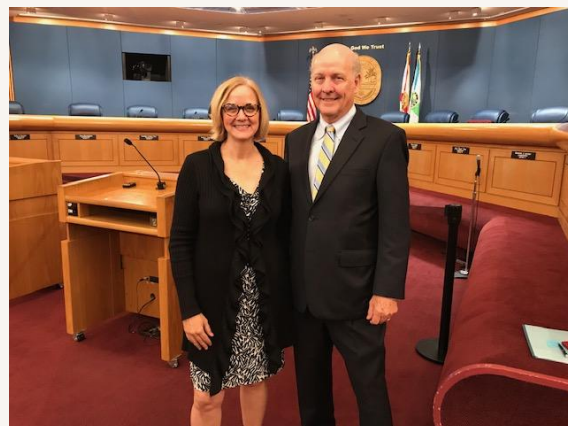
Commissioner Higgins discussed the seaweed crisis in the County and advocated for state funding to assist with seaweed cleanup. After successfully advocating for funding in the County budget for cleanup, the Commissioner is confident the state will pitch in to keep our beaches pristine for residents and visitors.

Last but not least, Commissioner Higgins could not say goodbye to Tallahassee without addressing the affordable housing crisis Miami-Dade is currently facing. With the support of her colleagues, Commissioner Higgins sponsored legislation that demonstrates the County's commitment to addressing the housing crisis by expediting the permitting process for affordable and workforce developments in the County. She advocated that the state also find creative solutions to incentivize the construction of affordable housing.

Thank you to Lieutenant Governor Nuñez, Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Kevin Thibault, Governor DeSantis's team, and all the state representatives and senators who listened to the concerns of Miami-Dade County residents and who will do their part at the state level to address these issues.

UNLOCKING PUBLIC LAND FOR PUBLIC GOOD

Affordable housing is the biggest crisis facing Miami-Dade County. With rents increasing and salaries remaining stagnant, many longtime residents can no longer afford to live here. Last month, the Community Disparities Subcommittee (CDS), chaired by Commissioner Higgins and tasked with addressing inequalities in Miami-Dade, took the crisis head on. At its October meeting, the CDS invited Emory Law School Professor Frank S. Alexander to present "Unlocking Public Land for Public Good." As the co-founder of the Center for Community Progress, Mr. Alexander helps U.S. communities integrate vacant, abandoned, and blighted properties back into their economic and civic life. His presentation focused on the challenges and blessings Miami has when it comes to renewing public assets for community development



including parks, mixed-use development, and affordable housing. He also focused on pricing, affordability, and available inventory in the County.

But how is it possible to identify public land and who it belongs to? Thanks to the University of Miami's [Land Access for Neighborhood Development \(LAND\) Mapping Tool](#), anyone can visualize the distribution of local, institutional, and government-owned vacant and underused properties. This gives stakeholders the opportunity to identify potential development opportunities for affordable housing in transit-oriented areas.

Commissioner Higgins and the Community Disparities Subcommittee are learning more about the LAND tool and the process of activating underutilized land in Miami-Dade County.

APPLICATIONS TO SERVE AS THE D5 APPOINTEE ON THE LGBTQ ADVISORY BOARD NOW OPEN!



Thanks to the leadership of Commissioner Higgins, the Board of County Commissioners approved the creation of an LGBTQ Advisory Board. Every commissioner can appoint one representative, and Commissioner Higgins is committed to appointing a member of the Transgender community.

"Without every letter represented on the board, there is no board," said Commissioner Higgins.

Applicants for the District appointment should have a deep knowledge and involvement in the LGBTQ community, and advocacy experience is preferred. Applicants must be able to commit adequate time to this position and be able to articulate a real vision for how Miami-Dade County can move forward in improving the quality of life for LGBTQ residents and visitors. Applications are open until November 20, apply [here](#).

DISTRICT 5 HAPPENINGS

GROUNDBREAKING AT THE GALLERY AT RIVER PARC



On November 12, Miami-Dade County hosted a groundbreaking for the Gallery at River Parc. The development will include 150 mixed-income units and an innovative, green, and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood where all residents, despite their age or income, can enjoy the highest quality of life. In addition, the Senior Campus Redevelopment Master Plan was unveiled. Martin Fine Villas, which opened last year, was the first of many developments that make up the Senior Campus in Little Havana.

Thanks to leadership of Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez, the Public Housing and Community Development Department, and the Related Group, we are moving closer to the vision of what affordable housing should look like in Miami-Dade. Commissioner Higgins is proud to be part of a County that is actively working to end the affordable housing crisis and committed to improving the quality of life for Miami-Dade residents.

HOUSING WORKSHOPS



District 5 residents dug deeper into Miami-Dade County's Affordable Housing Blueprint and what it could mean for their neighborhoods at public workshops held in Little Havana and Miami Beach. If you couldn't attend, you can still participate and provide feedback by completing this survey:

<http://bit.ly/MDCBlueprintSurvey>

Miami Homes for All, the Department of Public Housing and Community Development, and the FIU Metropolitan Center have developed the

Miami-Dade County Affordable Housing Blueprint to provide pathways and ideas for local governments to address the growth of affordable housing.

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

Together with Urban Impact Lab (UI Lab), Health Foundation of South Florida, Live Healthy Little Havana, Miami Parking Authority, and City of Miami Commissioner Joe Carollo, Commissioner Higgins helped bring life to NW 5th Street for a *Día De Los Muertos* celebration. The community came together to celebrate the traditional Mexican holiday with colorful *calaveras*, *ofrendas*, *calacas*, and *pan de muerto*.

This free community event was the perfect way to remember loved ones who have passed while celebrating the joys of life. This was the first of many events that will help activate this empty, dark spot in East Little Havana for the community to enjoy.



CANCER O.U.T IN MIAMI-DADE



Outreach. Understanding. Transformation. On November 8, the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Beta Kappa Iota Chapter at Miami-Dade College's Padrón Campus hosted the Festival for the Cures to raise awareness for lung, breast, and childhood cancer as part of a Cancer O.U.T. campaign. But they didn't stop there - they brought over 200 people together to raise awareness for cancer in a BIG way. And by big, we mean world-record-breaking big. Commissioner Higgins served as a witness for their attempt to make the world's largest human caduceus formation. What is a caduceus? It is used as the traditional symbol for medicine.

A sea of yellow, blue, and red symbolized the major impact cancer has on someone's life, and the community's commitment to fight for a cure.

SALUTING OUR HEROES ON MIAMI BEACH

On November 11, Commissioner Higgins joined local and state officials at the Miami Beach Veteran's Day Parade to honor our County's heroes. The largest parade in South Florida took place on the iconic Ocean Drive from 5th to 14th Street. The red, white, and blue brigade led to Lummus Park, where residents shared a picnic and watched the high-flying, all-veteran parachute team land on our County's beaches.

Although their days in uniform may be over, they still selflessly serve – as teachers, first responders, role models, and more. Miami-Dade County values the tremendous contributions our veterans make in the community every day and thanks them for continuing to embody the best our County has to offer.



LOST AND FOUND



Have you ever left your sweater on the Metrorail and thought you would never get it back? Before giving up, reach out to the Miami-Dade County Transit Lost and Found Office.

- Over 400 items are collected by the Lost and Found office every month, and only an average of 50 of these items are picked up. Passports, wallets, credit cards, and cell phones are just a few of the items logged and stored daily.

Have you left something behind? Take these steps to get your items back:

- Submit an online request at miamidade.gov/transit
- Visit the Transit Lost and Found Downtown office

701 W. 1st Court, Monday to Friday, 8 am to 5 pm

- Contact the office at 786.469.5564

MEET OUR STAFF

Nancy Jackson, District Director

Nancy Jackson is the District Director for District 5, and oversees all things City of Miami. Nancy is originally from Portland, Oregon, where she worked in the Health and Human Services Department for Multnomah County – the most densely populated county in the

state. Although Nancy spent most of her years in Oregon, she has also lived in Mexico and speaks fluent *Español*. When she's not looking for the best ways to improve the quality of life of District 5 residents, Nancy loves to travel across South Florida to visit local beaches and learn about the nature and history of the Sunshine State!

When it comes to City of Miami, Nancy is here to answer any questions or concerns you may have. You can catch Nancy at local neighborhood association meetings, walking through Downtown, Brickell, Shenandoah, or Silver Bluff, or at the District 5 Coral Way office.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Government Meetings

- **November 19 / 9:30 am** - Board of County Commissioners Meeting (BCC)
- **November 20 / 3 pm** - Citizen's Independent Transportation (CITT) Meeting
- **November 21 / 9 am** - City of Miami Commission Meeting
- **November 21 / 9:30 am** - Zoning Meeting
- **November 21 / 2 pm** - Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Meeting
- **December 2 / 12 pm** - Miami River Commission Meeting (MRC)
- **December 3 / 9:30 am** - Board of County Commissioners Meeting (BCC)
- **December 9 / 9:30 am** - Housing, Social Services, and Economic Development Committee (HSSed)
- **December 10 / 12 pm** - Community Disparities Subcommittee (CDS) Meeting
- **December 11 / 8:30 am** - City of Miami Beach Commission Meeting
- **December 11 / 2 pm** - Transportation and Finance Committee (TAF)
- **December 12 / 9 am** - City of Miami Commission Meeting
- **December 12 / 2 pm** - Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Committee (PRCA) Meeting
- **December 17 / 9:30 am** - Board of County Commissioners Meeting (BCC)
- **December 19 / 9:30 am** - Zoning Meeting
- **December 19 / 2 pm** - Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Meeting

Neighborhood Meetings

- **November 27 / 6 pm** - Commission for Women Board Meeting
- **November 27 / 7 pm** - The Roads Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **December 2 / 5:30 pm** - Flamingo Park Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **December 9 / 7 pm** - Shenandoah Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **December 12 / 5:30 pm** - Brickell Homeowners Association Holiday Party

Community Events

- **November 17 - 24** - Miami Book Fair
- **November 20 / 7 pm** - Viernes Culturales
- **November 22 - 24** - St. Peter and Paul Annual Festival
- **November 30 / 9 am** - Little Havana Walking Group
- **December 5 - 8** - Art Basel
- **December 20 / 7 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



305.375.5924



District5@miamidade.gov

Miami Beach Office

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1st Floor

Miami Beach, Florida, 33139

Tuesday, Thursday

9:30 am to 4:30 pm

Come Visit Us!

[View as Webpage](#)

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