



Commissioner  
**Eileen Higgins**  
District 5

# INSIDE

A CLOSER LOOK AT ALL THINGS DISTRICT 5

# FIVE

OCTOBER 2019



## *Welcome Back to Inside Five!*

"Inside Five" is a newsletter dedicated to all the news, happenings, and events in Miami-Dade County Commission District 5. In this month's edition of "Inside Five," we welcome the new fiscal year which began on October 1, and cover events and accomplishments achieved in the District!

Approving the Miami-Dade County budget is one of the most important responsibilities held by the Board of County Commissioners (Board). In fact, it's the most significant piece of legislation adopted every year by the Board since priorities can only be implemented if funded.

This year, the Board came together and put forward a plan that aims to serve every resident that calls Miami-Dade home. I advocated on behalf of District 5 constituents for many initiatives that were funded in the FY 2019-20 Adopted Budget! Some of these include seaweed removal and additional beach maintenance shifts in Miami Beach, the reimaging of 22nd Avenue for road and pedestrian safety in Miami, and the removal of debris in the Miami River.

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

## DISTRICT 5 NEWS

A COUNTY BUDGET THAT WORKS FOR ALL

Commissioner Higgins believes that Miami-Dade County should work for all of us, not just some of us. That's why it was a top priority to secure funding for the expansion of Miami Community Ventures (MCV), a pilot program led by the Beacon Council to help the "structurally unemployed" get and stay in living wage jobs by providing a menu of wrap-around services tailored to each participant. Services provided include transportation assistance, success coaching, job training, childcare, financial literacy, and more.

After Beacon Council President & CEO Michael Finney presented the MCV program to the Community Disparities Subcommittee, which was created by Chairwoman Audrey M. Edmonson to address inequalities, Commissioner Higgins successfully secured \$1 million in the FY 2019-20 County Budget for the MCV program expansion.

Two hundred families enrolled in the local Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) program will now have access to the MCV program. Today, more than 40 percent of HE/EHS parents are unemployed or underemployed. By getting these parents into living wage jobs, the program aims to make real and lasting changes for families in Miami-Dade County.

Commissioner Higgins also secured an additional \$1 million for the Community Disparities Committee to fund demonstration or pilot projects, as approved by the Board.



*Michael Finney and Sheri Colas-Gervais, President and Chief Executive Officer, and Vice President Economic Development and Urban Initiatives of the Miami-Dade Beacon Council.*

## KEEPING OUR BEACHES CLEAN



Earlier this year, Commissioner Higgins met with Miami Beach City Manager, Jimmy Morales, to discuss the City's priorities for the FY 2019-20 County Budget. It became apparent that the maintenance of County beaches, the largest park in Miami-Dade, was not being prioritized. Coupled with the unprecedented amount of seaweed, Commissioner Higgins took action and made beach maintenance a priority for the District.

Due to her unyielding persistence, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez allocated funding in his FY 2019-20 Proposed Budget for beach maintenance operations to ensure pristine beaches for all residents and visitors. Additional items funded include:

- \$2.8 million to continue seaweed removal from hot spot locations
- Two additional beach maintenance crews to add night and weekend shifts
- Funding to replace old and inefficient beach maintenance equipment and trucks
- Funding to begin the planning and design phase for a new beach maintenance facility that better protects the new equipment and supports maintenance staff

All these items together demonstrate Commissioner Higgins' commitment to Miami Beach residents, our tourism economy, and the environment.

## SOLVING THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

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Many cities and counties are facing an affordable housing crisis – and Miami-Dade is ground zero. Renters say they can't afford to buy a home and saving for a down payment is only getting harder. Affordable housing should be built as quickly as possible.

That's why Commissioner Higgins sponsored, and her Board colleagues supported, legislation to expedite the permitting process for affordable and

workforce housing developments in Miami-Dade. The permitting process is the first and easiest thing the County can do to expedite and incentivize affordable housing. As a result of the legislation, affordable housing permitting will be prioritized across ALL County departments. Additionally, the administration will move all County departments to electronic and concurrent permit review, dramatically shortening the entire process.

This could not have been more timely. Only four days after the legislation passed, with the leadership of Housing Committee Chairman Dennis C. Moss, the County held its first-ever Affordable Housing Summit, "Closing in on 10,000 – A Housing Summit," on October 7, 2019. At the event, over 400 attendees learned about affordable housing projects and best practices. Attendees also engaged with local government, community members, developers, bankers, and investors on specific projects such as transit-oriented developments, elderly housing, rental assistance demonstration projects, and the use of the public land. The Summit, together with the prioritization of affordable housing permits, are just a few of steps that must be taken to solve our most pressing local issue.

## LOOKING TO BUY A HOUSE? THESE PROGRAMS CAN HELP!

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Buying your first home can seem daunting, overwhelming, and intimidating. But know you are not alone. Homeownership is one of the biggest financial investments one can make, and Miami-Dade County is here to help. Through the Miami-Dade County Public Housing and Community Development's First-Time Homebuyer Program, homebuyers can get a below-market mortgage rate for the purchase of a single-family detached home, townhouse, condominium, twin-home or studio. For more information on the program and eligibility requirements, visit [here](#).



Not ready to purchase your first home? No problem! I begin preparing for homeownership by visiting an approved Home Buyer Education and Counseling [Service Center](#). These agencies

cover topics such as fair housing practices, credit counseling, budget and money management, home maintenance, and the mortgage approval process. Service Centers are required to provide guidance on how to navigate through the PHCD First-Time Homebuyer Program.

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

### A WIN FOR EQUALITY WITH FIRST-EVER LGBTQ BOARD



October 3 marked a big step for equality in Miami-Dade County as the Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the creation of the County's first ever LGBTQ Advisory Board. Sponsored by Commissioner Higgins, the LGBTQ board will work with community advocates to address the matters affecting the quality of life of LGBTQ residents and visitors to the county. This body will be dedicated to advancing equality and inclusion throughout Miami-Dade.

The work of the board will help send a message to our LGBTQ residents and visitors that they are welcome and an important part of this community. Once established, the LGBTQ Advisory Board will hold monthly meetings to address the social, economic, cultural, and political problems facing the LGBTQ community.

Commissioner Higgins is committed to appointing a member of the Transgender community as the District 5 representative. Having all letters seated at the table is the only way the board will be able to make a difference in this community. The application for the District 5 LGBTQ Advisory Board appointee will be open this **Friday, November 1**. The link to the application will be available on our website and social media pages. Stay tuned!

### 5G TAKES OVER OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

Living in Downtown Miami and being an avid walker and transit-user, Commissioner Higgins noticed huge, concrete poles going up in front of historic and residential buildings, businesses, and art in public places. In addition, she saw spray paint for utility markings graffitied all over sidewalks and streets. 5G had taken over neighborhoods across the entire county, and unfortunately, nothing could be done about it.

In 2017, the State of Florida Legislature approved a bill that blocks local government from



controlling this process. The bill hinders local elected officials from telling contractors where they can place these poles or what kind of paint they can use. Not deterred, Commissioner Higgins called all telecom companies to her office to discuss the 5G installations. She urged them to “think like a resident” when in the planning stage and demanded compassionate construction in our neighborhoods.

In addition, Commissioner Higgins has sponsored legislation urging the State of Florida to repeal the law that prevents local governments from regulating small wireless facilities. The urging asked that local government have a say in how the polls look and where they can go, as well as the type of paint used to identify underground utilities.

Both urgings were on the October 29 Board of County Commissioners' Agenda. If you would like to get involved, please call or email your state representatives today. Find out who your representatives are [here](#).



## DISTRICT 5 HAPPENINGS

### BISCAYNE BAY SUMMIT & THE BAY'S FUTURE

This year's Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit focused on water quality, and the sessions brought residents, scientists, advocates, and elected officials together to focus on ways to take the leap from studies and reports to implementation and action. At the event, Commissioner Higgins advocated in favor of the creation of a board or authority for the Bay.

Last year, the Board of County Commissioners created the Biscayne Bay Task Force (BBTF) to review relevant data, prior studies and reports related to Biscayne Bay to determine how various issues may affect residents and property owners. The work of the BBTF is currently underway, and Commissioner Higgins looks forward to receiving their recommendations. Based on the conversations in the Summit, one of the recommendations should be the creation of an entity dedicated to improving the quality of Biscayne Bay. Like the Chesapeake Bay, this entity could have the power to filter and protect drinking water and support millions of people who live around the Bay.



As we wait for the BBTF recommendations, the Division of Environmental Resources Management (DERM) has embarked on a comprehensive study of the Bay's water quality. This 6-8 week special

water sampling program includes four teams testing the water two days each week at roughly 55 locations. This will allow the County to better understand the sources of pollution, enabling the implementation of solutions. Stay tuned!

## "TOGETHER, WE CLEAN" WITH URBAN HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS



After a week of residents "Taking the Pledge" to pick up five pieces of trash and report illegal dumping in Little Havana, Commissioner Higgins and the District 5 team joined community partners, local leaders, and volunteers for a neighborhood cleanup. Attendees included State Senator Jose Javier Rodriguez, City of Miami Commissioner Joe Carollo, and members of Urban Health Partnerships, Live Healthy Little Havana, Miami-Dade College, Kiwanis of Little Havana, and the Miami Marlins. It was great to celebrate a cleaner community while instilling

pride in everyone who lives and works in the neighborhood!

## FARM SHARE IN LITTLE HAVANA



On October 19, in collaboration with ConnectFamilias, The Children's Trust, and Miami Parking Authority, the District 5 team hosted a Farm Share event for families and seniors in Little Havana. Over 500 residents received fresh groceries in just one hour! This event brought community members together to make sure no family goes hungry in District 5.

## MIAMI BEACH SENIOR EXPO

Every year, South Florida Seniors in Actions hosts a Senior Health Expo for Miami Beach residents. This community-based event focuses on providing accessible health resources to older adults. On October 5, Commissioner Higgins and the District 5 team participated for a second year in a row. They enjoyed talking to senior residents about the programs available in District 5. Thanks to Farm Share, seniors took home a bag of fresh groceries for the week. A big thank you to South Florida Seniors in Action for being dedicated to improving lives in Miami-Dade County!



## CALLE OCHO "COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS" HONORED



On October 9, Calle Ocho News held its first annual Community Champion Award Cocktail Party, in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. Commissioner Higgins was honored to be recognized, along with other community leaders, for her tireless work to improve the quality of life of residents and businesses in Little Havana. It came as a big surprise that Commissioner Higgins was named the 2019 Top Community Champion for spearheading the effort to complete the West Flagler Construction which created hardships and caused many small businesses to close over the course of three years.



## OUR COUNTY IS HERE TO HELP

### RECYCLING DO'S AND DON'TS

#### *Don't just recycle, recycle right!*

We have all been guilty of "wish-cycling," but not everything we "wish" to recycle can be recycled. When we contaminate our recycling bins, we minimize the chances anything in the bin gets recycled.

Waste enforcement officers from the Miami-Dade County Curbside Recycling Program targeted specific Miami Beach neighborhoods to tag contaminated bins and place door hangers on homes where the recycling carts were found. The purpose of this effort is to educate the residents on what they can and can't put in their carts.

**RECYCLE OFTEN.  
RECYCLE RIGHT.**

**RECYCLE OFTEN:**

<p><b>Steel, Tin &amp; Aluminum Cans</b> Latas de acero, hojalata y aluminio Bwat metal ak bwat aluminim</p>	<p><b>Plastic Bottles &amp; Containers</b> Botellas y envases de plástico Boutily ak bwat plastik</p>	<p><b>Office Paper, Brown Paper Bags, Newspaper</b> Bolsas de papel marrón, papeles de oficina no confidenciales, periódicos, Papeles blancos no son bien aceptados Papier ak papye blan</p>
<p><b>Paper Cardboard, Dairy &amp; Juice Containers</b> Envases de papel cartón, productos lácteos y jugos Bwat katon, bwat lit ak bwat ji</p>	<p><b>Flattened Cardboard &amp; Paperboard</b> Cartón y cartulina aplastados Gwo bwat katon ki plati ak ti bwat katon</p>	<p><b>Junk Mail &amp; Magazines</b> Revistas, correspondencia no solicitada Vye papye laplo ak magazin</p>

**RECYCLE RIGHT:**

~~Food waste~~

~~Plastic bags~~

~~Polystyrene foam cups~~

~~Glass bottles~~

**DO NOT INCLUDE:** Food waste, plastic bags, polystyrene foam cups & containers or glass bottles  
**NO INCLUIR:** Comida desechada, bolsas de plástico o vasos y contenedores de goma de poliestireno o botellas de vidrio  
**PI GA OU METE:** Patra manje, saché plastik, tas ak veso polistiren, ou dun materyau en verre

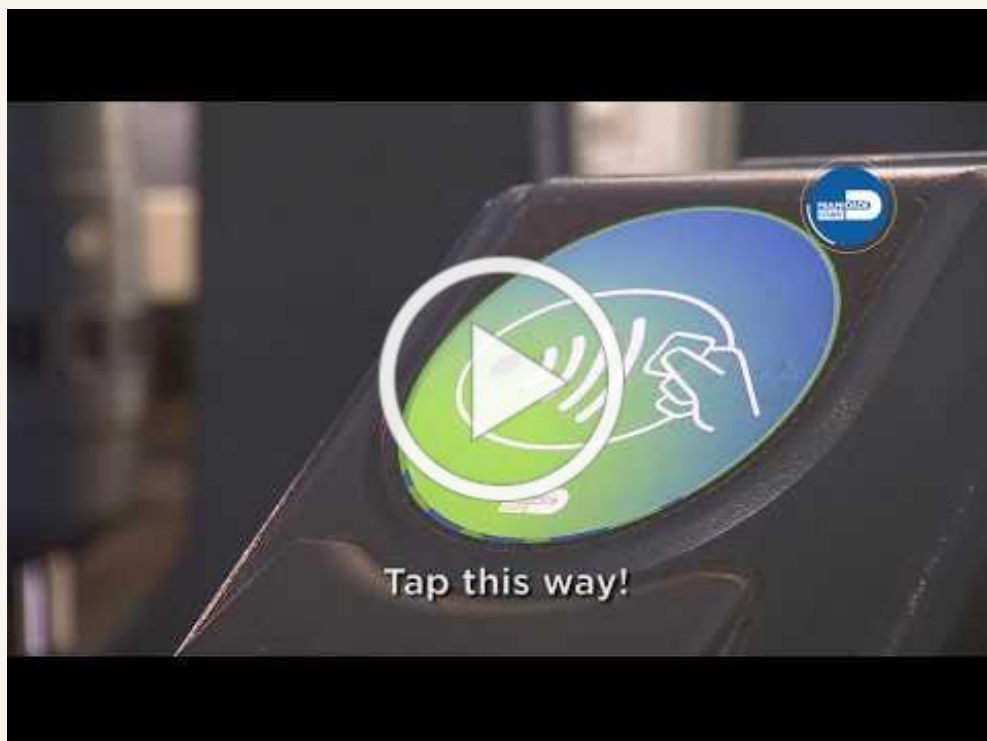
**Single-Stream Recycling**  
 Reciclaje de corriente única  
 Yon sèl resiklaj melanje



Commissioner Higgins joined Miami Beach Commissioner John Elizabeth Aleman for a tour of Waste Management's Reuter Recycling Facility, where all recycling is sorted and processed. The Commissioners learned the in-and-outs of the recycling process and the best ways to improve how our County recycles. Do your part to improve your recycling habits by making sure that NO plastic bags get in your recycling bin!

Not sure what can and can't be recycled? Take a look at the guidelines provided by Solid Waste Management here: <https://bit.ly/2JHlgHI>

## SAVING TREES BY RIDING TRANSIT



Have you ever been in line to buy a transit ticket and the Metrorail car passes you by? How about losing your ticket? Well, not anymore! Transit riders can now pay directly at Metrorail stations using



contactless-enabled bank cards or digital wallets.

"Just Tap" your contactless-enabled American Express, Visa, Master Card, or digital wallet to pay directly.

Contactless payment includes a fare-capping feature, which guarantees a maximum cost of \$5.65 per day for unlimited rides on the Metrorail. This fare is equivalent to a one-day pass. Discounted fares are not available through contactless payment.

So, who's in for saving trees?

## MEET OUR STAFF

### Daniel Reyes, Constituent Advocate

Daniel Reyes, as known as Danny, is the Constituent Advocate for District 5. Danny was born and raised in Hialeah, FL. He graduated from Hamilton College in Clinton, New York with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. Upon graduation, he followed his heart back to Miami. Before working in District 5, he worked with several community organizations including Americorps Vista and Live Healthy Little Havana. Danny believes in the importance of community involvement. On his time off he loves to cook and try out new recipes!

He is available for any questions or concerns you may have. Danny can connect you to the resources and services of District 5. Make sure to visit him at District 5's Miami Beach office every Tuesday and Thursday.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Government Meetings

- **October 30 / 9:30 am** - Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) Meeting
- **October 31 / 9:30 am** - Zoning Meeting
- **October 31 / 2 pm** - Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Meeting
- **October 31 / 12:30 pm** - BCC Special Meeting - Head Start Program Training
- **November 8 / 10 am** - Building Better Communities GOB - Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

- **November 13 / 12 pm** - Housing, Social Services and Economic Development Committee (HSSSED) Meeting
- **November 14 / 12 pm** - Community Disparities Subcommittee (CDS) Meeting
- **November 14 / 2 pm** - Transportation and Finance Committee (TAF)
- **November 15 / 2 pm** - Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Committee (PRCA) Meeting
- **November 19 / 9:30 am** - Board of County Commissioners Meeting
- **November 20 / 3 pm** - Citizen's Independent Transportation (CITT) Meeting

## Neighborhood Meetings

- **October 30 / 7 pm** - The Roads Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **October 30 / 6 pm** - South of Fifth Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **November 4 / 5:30 pm** - Flamingo Park Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **November 6 / 5:30 pm** - Midbeach Neighborhood Association Meeting
- **November 12 / 7 pm** - Shenandoah Neighborhood Association Meeting

## Community Events

- **October 30 / 5 pm** - Live Healthy Little Havana Halloween Trunk or Treat
- **October 31 / 6 pm** - Shenandoah Halloween Block Party
- **October 31 / 6 pm** - The Roads Spooky Halloween
- **November 1 / 7 pm** - Dia de los Muertos
- **November 4 / 6:30 pm** - Community Meeting Brickell Avenue Bridge Rehabilitation Project
- **November 11 / 9:30 am** - Miami Beach Veterans Day Parade
- **November 15 / 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**

## 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**

**Come Visit Us!**

[View as Webpage](#)

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