



# CITY OF HOMESTEAD CITY MANAGER'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT

September/October 2024

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## ELECTED OFFICIALS 2024

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**Mayor**

Steven D. Losner



**Vice Mayor**

Sean L. Fletcher  
Seat 2



**Councilman**

Tom Davis  
Seat 1



**Councilman**

Larry Roth  
Seat 3



**Councilwoman**

Jenifer N. Bailey  
Seat 4



**Councilwoman**

Erica G. Ávila  
Seat 5



**Councilman**

Clemente Canabal  
Seat 6

# CITY MANAGER MESSAGE



Zerry Ihekwaba,  
PhD, PE

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

Reflecting on our September Budget Hearing, I am grateful for your continued leadership and dedication to ensuring Homestead's readiness for growth and sustained success. The FY 2025 budget we approved is more than just a financial plan; it is a strategic roadmap that proactively addresses both our immediate needs and long-term opportunities.

In October, we began actively implementing our FY 2025 strategic objectives, focusing on our Infrastructure Master Plan across Water & Sewer, Transportation, and Stormwater, to ensure resilience as we prepare for future growth. Working closely with consultants, we have launched a series of studies that will inform our Comprehensive Infrastructure Master Plan. Our Pavement Management System is already providing critical data to guide street and sidewalk improvements, setting a strong foundation for future upgrades.

We are also expediting key projects funded by ARPA, such as the Microsoft Exchange migration and enhanced GIS capabilities, marked by the first-ever GIS Strategic Plan to expand utilization across departments. Alongside these technological advancements, we are undertaking essential code amendments to clarify property maintenance standards, creating a foundation for more effective processes citywide.

Another highlight of this budget year is the rollout of a Citywide Permitting & Electronic Plans Review Solution to streamline permit processing, code compliance, and business licensing. This transformation is designed to enhance efficiency, reduce turnaround times, and elevate service quality for residents and businesses.

Organizationally, we've established a standalone Code Compliance Department, allowing for greater specialization, and realigned the Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces Department to focus on core services. Our new General Services Department will centralize asset management, fleet, and facilities maintenance, supporting proactive city asset management.

Looking forward, we have identified a consulting firm to assist us in developing the City's first Strategic Plan, which will be brought forward to Council in the next couple months for consideration. This plan will chart a clear course for Homestead over the next 3-5 years, directing our resources toward meaningful progress. Projects such as the redevelopment of the Old City Hall site, plans for a VA Hospital, and a multi-purpose entertainment venue demonstrate our commitment to shaping Homestead's future.

Thank you for your collaboration throughout this budget process. Together, we are creating a foundation for a stronger, more resilient Homestead poised for the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Zerry Ihekwaba, PhD, PE

Nov 10 Veterans Day Celebration

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Nov 12 Council Workshop Meeting

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Nov 12 Committee of the Whole Meeting

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Nov 20 Council Meeting

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Dec 7 Holiday in Homestead

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Visit the City of Homestead's  
Flickr account to see event  
photos.

[HOMESTEADFL.GOV/FLICKR](https://www.homesteadfl.gov/flickr)



[HOMESTEADFL.GOV/CALENDAR](https://www.homesteadfl.gov/calendar)



Veterans Day  
Celebration



National Night Out



Breast Cancer Walk

## PUMP STATION #22/BASIN MORATORIUM (ARPA CONTRIBUTION \$3,641,905)

The City of Homestead's Public Works Department is currently advancing the PS22 Super Bypass project, a critical infrastructure upgrade to bring Pump Station 22 into compliance with Miami-Dade County Water and Sewer Department standards and lift the station's moratorium status. Funded primarily by ARPA and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), this project will redirect wastewater flow from PS22 to Influent Pump Station #1 at the City's Wastewater Treatment Facility.

**Phase 1** of the project, which began in September 2024, involves installing a new sewer force main using trenchless technology methods to minimize road disruptions and neighborhood impacts. This phase of the project will be completed in December 2024.

**Phase 2** will involve procuring bypass pumps necessary to divert wastewater flow from PS22 to the newly installed force main, achieving compliance and removing the moratorium. Public Works and Engineering is collaborating with Procurement to issue a purchase order to Tom Evans Environmental, Inc. by early November for the purchase of these bypass pumps, totaling **\$159,180**. Additionally, to maintain project momentum, Murphy Pipeline Contractors will rent pumps for approximately one month at an estimated cost of **\$14,000**. Completion of Phase 2 is expected by end of January 2025.



## HOMESTEAD REGIONAL PARK (ARPA CONTRIBUTION \$750,600)

Homestead Regional Park is an eight five (85) acre Park. The phase one (1) of this multi phased project consist of developing an artificial turf soccer field surrounded by a rubberized track with sports lighting. Other amenities will consist of restrooms, offices, shaded pavilion structure, concession area, restrooms performance stage, storage, soccer mini pitch and parking areas, lighting (sports and walkway lighting), CCTV security system, landscaping and irrigation system.

In September, the Council approved additional services to address unexpected soil investigations and incorporate enhancements to the scope bringing the total contract amount for design services for Phase 1 to **\$731,041**. The expanded scope includes a soccer mini-pitch and additional parking lot.

These new features will be integrated into the final design, with the entire project design of Phase 1 anticipated to be complete by February 2025 and submitted for regulatory permitting.



## OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Residents have been actively submitting public records requests through the new online portal launched by the City Clerk's Office and the Department of Innovation and Technology via **JustFOIA**. This platform allows residents to easily submit requests, track their progress, make payments, and receive documents online. By addressing these requests efficiently, the system enhances transparency, reduces wait times, and improves accessibility for the community. This streamlined process not only minimizes paperwork but also ensures that residents' needs are met promptly, significantly improving service delivery.

In September, a total of **57** public record requests were processed through the Public Record Request Portal. Of these, **24** requests were for the Homestead Police Department (HPD) and **33** requests were for the City of Homestead. All of the requests have been processed with the exception of two that are pending payment from the requester.

In October, a total of **218** public record requests were processed through the Public Record Request Portal. Of these, **158** requests were for the Homestead Police Department (HPD) and **60** requests were for the City of Homestead. Throughout the month, **68** requests from HPD and **55** requests from the City Clerk's office were successfully processed and completed.

# COMMUNICATIONS | PIO

## EXCITING INITIATIVES

The City of Homestead Communications Department is dedicated to engaging and informing the community through innovative content and strategic initiatives. In September, the department received the **Award of Excellence in Video Education and Training** from the **City-County Communications & Marketing Association (3CMA)** for their superhero-themed video, "**How to Use Fix It! Homestead,**" which encourages residents to report local issues for prompt resolution. The department also launched the "**Common Code Violations**" video series to help residents address frequent code issues and avoid fines.

In October, the department coordinated promotional items and signage for the implementation of the logo for the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It also worked on a **City Manager's ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act)** report, showcasing the impact of federal funds on the community. This report provides important updates on expenditures of funds that must be encumbered by December 2024.



## OPERATIONAL UPDATE

The Code Compliance Department is enhancing efficiency and community support through new tools and initiatives. Mobile printers and tablets are being deployed to allow officers to print documents and open cases in the field. Today, they have to make a note and return to the office to open cases. This improvement will make fieldwork faster and more effective.

### Lot Clearing

The department has re-launched a lot-clearing program aimed at maintaining vacant properties that have been mismanaged or abandoned. As part of this effort, they are working with Procurement to establish a pool of landscaping contractors who can quickly respond to the City's needs for clearing overgrown lots.

### New Officer Role & Fleet Upgrades

The FY2025 budget added a Code Compliance Officer II position to conduct annual business inspections, ensuring compliance with city licenses and codes. Additionally, **2** new trucks will replace older vehicles to better support field operations.

### Streamlined Liens and Assessments

The department has faced a longstanding backlog in managing liens and assessments. To address this, they are finalizing an agreement with a selected vendor for an eRecording solution, allowing staff to record liens directly from the office and streamline the process. This new system is a key step toward improving efficiency in lien management.

## CITATIONS UPDATE

In September, Code Compliance Officers opened **207** cases with over **252** violations, including **118** related to quality-of-life issues. In October, **212** cases were opened with **235** violations, focusing on maintaining a safe and clean Homestead.

### SEPTEMBER TOP 10 VIOLATIONS

Violation	Cases Opened
Improper Bulk Trash Disposal	49
Improper Landscaping Maintenance	21
Animal Impound Record	19
Overgrown Vacant Property	19
Overgrown Improved Property	17
Storing Materials Outside Of Enclosing Walls Or Roof	14
Working Outside of Enclosing Walls or Roof	14
Dogs Running At Large	13
Maintaining a Public Nuisance	9
Non Permitted Structure or Work	9

### OCTOBER TOP 10 VIOLATIONS

Violation	Cases Opened
Improper Bulk Trash Disposal	63
Improper Landscaping Maintenance	24
Overgrown Vacant Property	22
Overgrown Improved Property	15
Storing Materials Outside Of Enclosing Walls Or Roof	13
Working Outside of Enclosing Walls or Roof	13
Dogs Running At Large	11
Non Permitted Structure or Work	8
Maintaining a Public Nuisance	8

## IMPROVING COMMUNITIES ONE GRANT AT A TIME

The Homestead Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) continues to strengthen the community through residential and commercial grant programs, focusing on home improvements, safety upgrades, and business development. These initiatives help low-to-moderate-income families with essential home repairs and support local businesses to promote economic growth and long-term community stability.

### Recently Completed Projects:

- Diane Brown: In **March 2024**, Diane Brown received a Residential Rehabilitation Grant, which has successfully funded exterior painting and the installation of an ADA-compliant bathroom, improving both accessibility and comfort in her home.



### Grants Awarded in September and October:

- Mr. and Mrs. Jorge Lugo: The couple was awarded a **\$20,000** Residential Rehabilitation Grant in October for vital home improvements, including replacing their roof and garage door. These upgrades enhance safety and protect their home for years to come.
- Ms. Cynthia Thompson: She received a **\$20,000** Residential Rehabilitation Grant in September for essential home improvements, including a privacy fence, exterior painting, and driveway repair. These improvements boost her home's safety and appearance.
- Esoteric Networks (Why Reboot): This business was awarded a **\$25,000** Commercial Enhancement Grant in September to install impact-resistant windows, improving both the safety and energy efficiency of their facility.
- Stainless Depot & Associates, Corp: In October, this commercial business was selected for the Commercial Enhancement Grant, receiving up to **\$25,000** in reimbursable funds. The grant will help cover the costs of connecting a new sewer main to the City's public sanitary system, benefiting public health and increasing property value.

### Grants in Process:

- Sak Pase Restaurant, LLC: This new downtown dining venue received a **\$75,000** Business Incentive Grant from the CRA in **October** to support its buildout expenses. The restaurant, offering a mix of Haitian and American cuisine, plans to open before the **end of 2024**.
- La Patrona Bakery, Corp: An established bakery in downtown Homestead, La Patrona is expanding into a larger space with help from the CRA's Business Incentive Grant. The new location will feature an indoor eatery and is expected to open in **Spring 2025**.



## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

The Customer Service Department continues to enhance its operations for improved convenience and efficiency for the online platform. In early September, several updates were implemented to streamline services, they include:

- **Online Attachments:** Customers now have the ability to include attachments with their applications when applying online, simplifying the process of submitting necessary documentation.
- **Application Requirements:** A comprehensive list of requirements for starting, stopping, and moving services is now provided at the beginning of the online application process and included in the confirmation of submission. This list is also available on the City's website for easy reference.

In October, the department made key improvements to enhance customer service:

- **Commercial Notifications:** Commercial customers will soon receive email reminders, rather than in-person notifications, for missed payments and follow-ups, streamlining the process for greater speed and convenience.
- **Meter Assistance:** The City of Homestead is implementing a buried meter accessibility program requiring homeowners and tenants to keep their meters readily accessible for reading. In cases where a meter is not accessible, the customer service team will assist residents in locating hard-to-find meters. This initiative is aimed at improving meter reading efficiency and ensuring ongoing adherence to city regulations.

Looking ahead to November, the department is implementing paperless billing for all customers. This change will reduce paper waste, lower costs, and provide instant, secure access to bills. This transition supports the City's commitment to sustainability and modernizing services for greater efficiency and customer satisfaction.

# DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

The Development Services Department is transitioning key processes related to land development, including planning, zoning, and traffic reviews, to Calvin, Giordano & Associates (CGA). With Homestead's rapid growth, the demand for development services has increased significantly. CGA, a multidisciplinary firm with over 85 years of experience, will support the city with services such as planning, civil engineering, transportation, landscaping, and GIS support.

This transition allows Development Services to be overseen by a city employee who also serves as the department's interim director, David Hennis, focusing on three critical areas:

- **Planning:** Granting development entitlements and ensuring that all applications comply with existing codes and regulations.
- **Permitting & Inspections:** Overseeing the permitting process and conducting inspections for approved developments to ensure compliance with all standards.
- **Business Tax Receipts:** Issuing and updating business tax receipts to ensure all operating businesses meet city requirements.
- **Special Events:** The department coordinates with event organizers to ensure all special events comply with city regulations, manage permits, enforce safety standards, and collaborate with other departments on logistics.

## PLANNING

In October, planning efforts included preparing two items for the November council meeting—a rezoning application for Homestead Business Asset LLC and a site plan with a special exception for New Hope CORPS LLC.

## BUSINESS LICENSING

The Business Licensing division sent out **2,469** renewal notices in late July, receiving **1,574** renewal payments by the end of October. The division also issued **44** new business licenses, approved **40** yard sales, and provided **12** special event permits and **1** film permit.

## BUILDING PERMITS

For the months of September and October, the department received a total of **1,784** permit applications and issued **1,906** permits. In September, **963** permits were received, with **527** assigned permit numbers, including **100** permits processed specifically for Lennar. October saw **821** new applications, with **1,379** permits issued, including **45** for D.R. Horton and **1,137** for Lennar.

The current review queue as of the end of October contains a total of **265** items, categorized as follows:

- Building: **15**
- Electrical: **30**
- Structural: **27**
- Plumbing: **30**
- Mechanical: **13**
- Zoning: **145**
- Roofing: **5**

## ART IN PUBLIC PLACES

### **William Krome Sculpture:**

The bronze casting for the William Krome sculpture, created by artist Lee Leuning, is now completed, welded, and polished. The next step involves a city representative visiting the artist's studio in Sioux City, South Dakota, to review the piece before finalizing installation plans. Efforts are underway to complete the design and fabrication of the sculpture's base, with installation at Losner Park expected in December 2024.

### **Seminole Theatre Murals:**

At the September City Council meeting, the contract to refinish and seal the exterior walls of the Seminole Theatre was approved. This process will enable mural artists Kenny Macguire and AJ Davis to properly plan and begin their artwork. The contractor and artists will coordinate the refinishing and waterproofing of the walls, with mural painting expected to start in the first quarter of 2025.

### **City Council Charrette Workshop: Shaping Homestead's Future**

Following the Visioning Charrette held earlier this year, the City of Homestead invited the community to join a public workshop on Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 5:01 PM in the City Hall Council Chambers. During this workshop, City Council members and staff will review and discuss potential plans that reflect the community input gathered at the charrette. This meeting is a key step in transforming residents' ideas into actionable plans for future development and improvements in Homestead, fostering a collaborative approach to shaping the city's future.

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

Training for the Crisis Track Damage Assessment System began in September, a tool that will boost situational awareness during disasters and track flood locations, severity, and history, aiding in future resilience planning.

### COLLABORATING WITH OUR PARTNERS

In September, the City of Homestead deepened collaborative efforts, meeting with newly appointed Director Pete Gomez of the Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management. This meeting marked a milestone for future partnerships as the county's Emergency Management office transitions into its own department.

### HELPING THE COMMUNITY IN A TIME OF NEED

In August, the City of Homestead launched the Elderly and Disabled Assistance Program (EDDA), led by the Emergency Management Department. At launch, they had **22** individuals registered, with staff coordinating face-to-face meetings to verify eligibility and assess needs. The program saw its first major use in October. With the approach of Hurricane Milton, **85** new clients were enrolled within 24 hours. During the City's coordinated sandbag distribution, **95** eligible residents were contacted to verify their need for sandbags. Of those, **40** residents requested sandbags and had them delivered to their homes by the Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces staff. Currently, **98** residents are eligible for the program, with a total of **130** applications received.



# ELECTRIC UTILITY | HPS

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### ALWAYS READY TO ASSIST

In September, HPS Energy deployed two line crews of Powerline Specialists to Tallahassee ahead of Hurricane Helene, joining over **100** utilities from **20** states to provide vital support. Following the hurricane, HPS crews worked to restore power to over **50,000** homes and businesses in Tallahassee, and continued their efforts in South Carolina, assisting communities with debris removal and infrastructure assessment. By collaborating with other municipalities, HPS Energy bolstered collective resilience in the face of severe weather events.

In October, HPS line crews stepped up again to provide Mutual Aid support following Hurricane Milton, traveling to Central and North Florida. Locally, crews quickly responded to minor outages caused by storm-related wind gusts, ensuring continuity of service for Homestead residents.



**Special Street Lighting Taxing Districts** In both September and October, HPS Energy managed over **30** street lighting districts in Miami-Dade County, generating approximately **\$550,000** annually in revenue. With a new district in progress, HPS is working with County representatives to enhance installation and billing processes for these essential services.

HPS has the necessary electrical capacity to support these new residences. Some of the infrastructure projects that HPS Energy is currently advancing include:

- **Celeste Mixed-Use Site**

Location: Campbell Drive and NE 30th Ave (across from Homestead Hospital)

Units: 354 residential units and 43,000 sq ft of commercial space

Current Phase: Design

Key Milestones Achieved: Plans received, HPS is finalizing the engineering design.

Expected Start Date: 2025

- **Magnolia Point**

Location: Miami-Dade County, US 1 north of SW 292 St

Units: 760- unit apartment complex

Current Phase: Design

Key Milestones Achieved: Plans received, HPS is finalizing the engineering design.

Expected Start Date: 2025

## READY FOR THE RACE

In September and October, HPS Energy prepared for the upcoming NASCAR race at the end of October. This included executing its Pre-Race Preparation Plan. With pre-identified issues addressed, HPS provided reliable energy support throughout race weekend, ensuring a smooth experience for all attendees.

## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### In Progress

#### **Donnie Avocado Substation Construction**

Current Phase: Design and Material Bidding

Key Milestones Achieved: Council approved EPC vendor on 8/6/24. Preparing limited notice to proceed.

Completion: 25%

Expected Completion: Q1 2026

Project Description: To meet growing demand and ensure reliable service, a new electrical substation will be built in northeast Homestead, enhancing capacity and grid flexibility.

#### **Transmission Line 4 Protective Relay Replacements**

Current Phase: Design

Key Milestones Achieved: Awarded to PowerServe Technologies on 9/18/24.

Completion: 10%

Expected Completion: Q1 2025

Project Description: To ensure reliable electric service in Homestead, outdated ABB relays will be replaced with advanced Schweitzer digital relays, enhancing protection and diagnostics for the transmission line between Lucy and Renaissance Substations.

#### **NW Undergrounding of Overhead Power Lines**

Current Phase: Construction

Milestone: Engineering completed 6/2024.

Completion: 20%

Expected Completion: Q3 2026

Project Description: This project upgrades Homestead's NW section by replacing overhead lines with underground infrastructure to improve storm resilience, safety, and aesthetics while reducing maintenance costs.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATE

In September, the Finance & Budget Department secured a **\$5.165 million** loan for a new electrical substation and presented the FY 2025 Proposed Budget. After final adjustments, the City Council approved the **\$274 million** budget, with **\$78 million** allocated to the General Fund.

With the fiscal year ending on September 30, the new budget became effective October 1, ensuring uninterrupted city services. The Finance & Budget team is now reviewing FY 2024 financials for any necessary budget adjustments, preparing key funds for rollover into FY 2025, and preparing budget amendments to be presented at the November City Council meeting.

Additionally, the department received the **Distinguished Budget Presentation Award** from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), on October 31st, 2024 for the annual budget document for the period beginning October 2023.



### NEW CAPABILITIES

The department is currently looking into a new automated time collection system that would track employee work hours and schedules more efficiently. It will provide self-service options for employees, help manage overtime and job costs, and improve payroll accuracy while reducing errors and expenses. To date, they have met with 3 potential solution providers.

## GRANTS

### OPERATIONAL UPDATE

In September and October, the City of Homestead continued its commitment to enhancing community services and infrastructure by pursuing diverse funding opportunities. In September, the City applied for **6** grants totaling **\$6.16 million**, and was awarded **1** grant in the amount of **\$700,000**.

In October, the City submitted **2** additional grant applications totaling **\$166,300**, received **2** grants worth **\$274,962**, and was awarded a non-financial technical assistance grant. These efforts reflect Homestead's dedication to improving public services, safety, and infrastructure for its residents.

#### Accepted Grants in September & October:

- **\$700,000** from **The Children's Trust** for the **Safe Families Partnership Network**, which provides critical services to children and families in South Dade facing challenges such as violence, trauma, and poverty.
- **\$25,000** from the State of Florida Department of State for the **Historic Preservation Small Matching Grant** to support a historic resource survey in Homestead, promoting the preservation of local history. The City will hire a historic preservation consultant to conduct the survey and ensure the accurate identification and documentation of historically significant sites.

# GRANTS

- **\$249,962** from the Department of Justice (DOJ) COPS Office for the **Law Enforcement Accreditation project**, funding training, software, evidence lockers, security cameras, and safety equipment to assist Homestead Police in gaining CALEA accreditation.
- A **Direct Technical Assistance (DTA) Grant** from the FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program to provide extensive support for hazard mitigation. This grant offers non-financial assistance in climate risk assessments, community engagement, partnership building, and planning for climate adaptation, all aimed at making Homestead more resilient.

## Grants Applied For in September & October:

- **\$5 million** from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration for the **City's Broadband Infrastructure Project**. This initiative, already underway as part of ARPA, includes the creation of an Innovation Hub at the Cybrarium, the provision of mobile hotspots, and expanded coverage. Additionally, we will extend and install infrastructure at Homestead Regional Park and the Biscayne Everglades Greenway Trail.
- **\$720,000** from the **Department of Transportation's Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program** for electric vehicle charging stations at **11** locations across Homestead.
- **\$400,000** in two applications to the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection** to upgrade playgrounds at Audubon and Wittkop Parks.
- **\$112,000** from the **Florida Highway Beautification Grant Program** for landscaping improvements along SR 997/Krome Avenue, Campbell Drive, and US 1, enhancing the City's aesthetics and promoting a higher quality of life.
- **\$54,300** from the **Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program** to fund the **Officer Wellness App**, which supports mental and physical health for police officers, aligning with the City's Community Policing Initiative.
- **\$13,199** from the **Florida Department of Law Enforcement** for Community Policing and engagement.

# HUMAN RESOURCES

## RECRUITMENT UPDATES

The Human Resources Department is actively working to fill City vacancies.

For the months of September and October there were:

- Job applications processed: **655**
- Hired employees: **6**
  - Police Dispatcher Trainee: **2**
  - Risk Analyst: **1**
  - Risk & Safety Manager: **1**
  - Reserve Police Officer: **1**
- Current vacancies: **73**



## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

The Human Resources department was busy in September and October. This includes:

### TRAINING IS ALWAYS IN SESSION

In September, the Human Resources Department hosted Safety Training classes focused on Back Safety – Back Injury Prevention, where **39** employees learned proper techniques to prevent back injuries in the workplace. The October Safety Training class focused on fire safety, where **25** employees learned about fire extinguisher use and fire prevention techniques.

In addition, HR hosted Miami-Dade Fire Rescue’s HELP class, which covered topics such as CPR, recognizing life-threatening emergencies, stopping bleeding, and handling blocked airways. Attendees earned an American Heart Association Family & Friends CPR certificate.

### TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

- The department also supported the Homestead Police Department through various initiatives. Life Scan Testing, which began in late August, covered all police officers and select classifications and continued through September.
- They hosted the second bargaining session with the South Florida Police Benevolent Association and a Police Pension Workshop for all plan participants. The workshop included information on topics such as the retirement process, the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP), additional deferred compensation, payout structures, retirement timelines, and monthly retiree premium costs.

### NEW INITIATIVES

The Department hosted a kick-off meeting for the **NEOGOV** job applicant tracking software implementation, with the project management team. Implementation will be ongoing for several months, with a projected launch date in late December 2024.

In October, the Department led a Breast Cancer Awareness initiative, encouraging employees to wear pink every Friday throughout the month. This initiative included sharing information on preventive screenings and health resources, culminating in a raffle for participants in the “On Fridays, We Wear Pink!” campaign.

They also hosted the **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Miami for a kick-off meeting to connect mentors with the upcoming School to Work program.** City employees serving as mentors, or “Bigs,” completed their background screenings to support local students in this meaningful initiative.

Furthermore, Human Resources Department attended the Miami Dade College Job Fair on October 17 at their Kendall Campus, where they shared information about current job opportunities and answered questions about the City’s application process, helping to connect the community with potential employment opportunities within the City of Homestead.



## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### Innovation & Technology Department Updates for September and October

In September and October, the Innovation & Technology Department focused on improving cybersecurity, enhancing infrastructure, and exploring new technologies to better serve the community.

In September, the department partnered with the University of South Florida to offer self-paced virtual cybersecurity training in compliance with Florida Statute 282.3185 – **Local Government Cybersecurity Act**. This initiative was designed to equip employees with the knowledge to help protect the city from cyber threats, fostering a more secure environment for employees and residents.



Additionally, the department completed an upgrade to the **Wi-Fi infrastructure** on the 3rd floor of City Hall. This upgrade enhances network coverage, reduces dropouts, lowers maintenance costs, and provides secure Wi-Fi access for city employees, while offering a separate public network for visitors.

The City continued its technological advancements with an upgrade to its **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)** system. This upgrade is aimed at improving efficiency and enhancing data security.

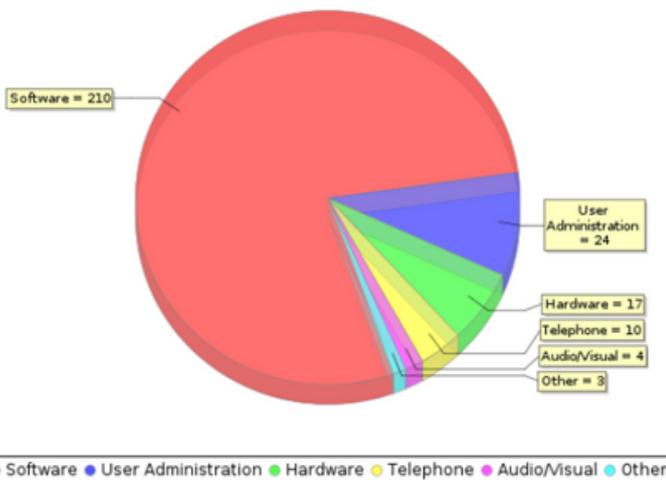
### STRIVING FOR BETTERMENT

Assistant Director Juan M. Lopez also attended the inaugural **South Florida Digital Government Summit**, where he explored new technologies that could further enhance city services.

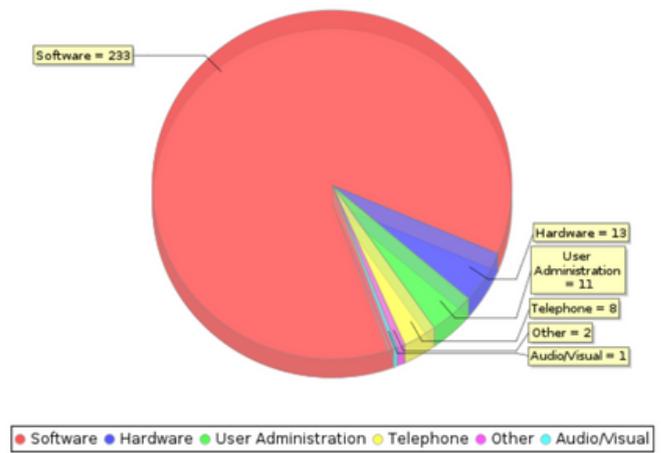
### Helpdesk Ticketing Statistics:

For the months of September and October I.T. closed a total of **268** tickets. Broken down by category and priority in the pie chart.

## September



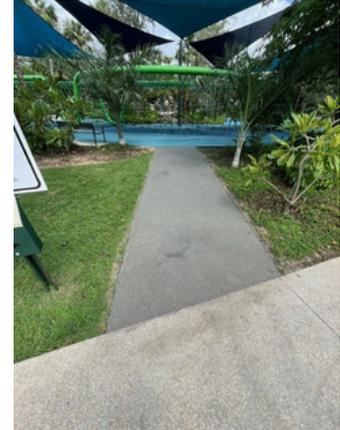
## October



## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

In September and October, the Parks, Recreation, & Open Spaces Department achieved several key milestones:

- **City Hall Council Chambers:** Repairs were completed on the ceiling lights and the new podium was installed, which features wheels for easy mobility. They are pending carpet restoration to complete the project.
- **Consulting Services:** A meeting with J Kardys Strategies was held to discuss consulting services for the Parks Master Plan, focusing on evaluating youth sports, recreational program usage, and developing a plan to optimize programming. The goal is to explore new city-managed programming opportunities instead of relying on external vendors.
- **Park Improvements:** The crushed granite walkways at Losner Park's received a refreshing upgrade.
- **Sandbag Distribution:** Held at Roby George Park and Homestead Regional Park, with sandbags delivered to eligible homes on the EDDA list.
- **Seminole Theatre Waterproofing:** A kick-off meeting was held with the contractor to start this critical project, aimed at preventing water damage and preserving the structural integrity of the historic Seminole Theatre.
- **Blakey Park Playground Grant:** A **\$200,000** grant has been awarded to enhance playground facilities. The grant requires \$200,000 to be matched which will be paid from park impact fees.
- **Harris Field Park:** Installed new water fountains at the football and baseball restrooms and LED lighting around the gymnasium.
- **Veterans Memorial Upgrade:** Installed new armed forces plaques at Losner Park's Veterans Memorial.



## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### In Progress

#### JD Redd Park - Roof Replacement

Current Phase: Permitting

Key Milestones Achieved: Vendor is working on permits.

Percentage Completion: 10%

Expected Completion: 60 days after permit issuance

## Harris Field Park - Baseball Restroom Renovations

Current Phase: Construction

Key Milestones Achieved: Plumbing, electrical, floors, and paint completed.

Percentage Completion: 90%

Expected Completion: November 15, 2024

## James Archer Smith Splashpad Renovation

Current Phase: Permitting

Key Milestones Achieved: Plan revisions nearing final approval.

Percentage Completion: 60%

Expected Completion: 60 days after permit issuance

## William F. Dickinson Community Center Roof Replacement

Current Phase: Permitting

Key Milestones Achieved: Work scheduled to begin week of November 12th.

Percentage Completion: 15%

Expected Completion: February 2025

## Harris Field Press Box Roof Replacement

Current Phase: Permitting

Key Milestones Achieved: Permit obtained; work scheduled for November 18, 2024.

Percentage Completion: 15%

Expected Completion: February 2025



# POLICE

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

The Homestead Police Department had a busy and impactful September and October, with various activities and community-focused initiatives.

**Firearm Qualifications:** They are currently conducting annual departmental firearms qualifications through October.

**IT Upgrades:** The IT department completed a department-wide phone system upgrade moving from Cisco Unified Communications to the ATT Office@Hand cloud-based system.

The **Group Violence Intervention (GVI) program** was active in both months, conducting eight custom notifications and three shooting reviews in October. GVI also held four consultation meetings with John Jay College, and developed new partnerships with Latamer and the Community Police Relations Foundations. Their continued collaboration with agencies like Miami-Dade PD, the FBI, and the Department of Juvenile Justice strengthened the program's efforts to address gun violence in the community.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### Community Policing Unit (CPU):

The CPU was active in community engagement throughout September, conducting and attending events such as:

- Conducted REMS assessment at Keys Gate Charter school for all 3 locations.
- Hosted Cookies with Rookies at new Publix locations.
- Police Explorers participated in the HPOA event at the Homestead-Miami Speedway.
- Attended Miami Dade College public safety day along with HPD SWAT and K-9 units.
- Conducted a safety presentation at South State Bank.
- Police Explorers participated in the Freedom Walk held for military veterans at our local VFW.
- Hosted Tip-A-Cop event at Longhorn Steakhouse. The event raised funds which will assist in supporting activities for the Police Explorers and PAL youth.



- Police Explorers participated in the Sickle Cell Walk held at Roscoe Warren Park.
- PAL youth participated in the Car seat inspection event at the PAL gym.

Throughout October, the **Community Policing Unit (CPU)** was engaged in various community events. They hosted **National Night Out**, participated in **Walk to School Day**, and coordinated the **Breast Cancer Awareness walk**. The CPU also conducted safety presentations and station tours, fostering stronger relationships with local residents.



In October, **HPD's Disaster Response Team (DRT)** prepared for Hurricane Milton, though the storm ultimately caused minimal impact. The DRT responded to disaster relief efforts in Bradenton and Holmes Beach, Florida, as part of a **Miami-Dade County Task Force**. After the storm, they assisted with security and traffic operations during the **NASCAR Cup Series** at the **Homestead Miami Speedway**, and then returned for a second deployment to assist in the Tampa area.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

The Procurement & Contract Services Department completed the FY24 year-end inventory with a discrepancy of less than **1%**. From September 24th to September 30th, the division was closed to complete these procedures.

During this time, staff worked on **44** formal solicitations and **66** informal solicitations through the new OpenGov e-bidding platform, issued **2,608** purchase orders, and scheduled meetings with departments, including PROs and the Police Department, to plan projects requiring procurement services.

The department has launched the contract module in OpenGov to replace the Contract Summary Form and automate the contract review process. In Q1 2025, the integration with DocuSign will streamline the process by allowing the City Manager's Office to sign contracts digitally, eliminating the need for printing and manual routing. Meanwhile, Fleet Management is working to add the nation's 250th-anniversary logo to all city vehicles, promoting pride and visibility of this historic celebration throughout Homestead.

## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### Completed

#### **40 year building certification electrical mitigation for the Procurement building**

Current Phase: Closed out

#### **40 year building certification structural mitigation for the Procurement building**

Current Phase: Closed out

#### **Heavy Duty Industrial Ceiling Fan**

Current Phase: Closed out

### In Progress

#### **Phase II Construction of New Windows**

Current Phase: Permitting

Key Milestones Achieved: Permits were submitted.

Percentage Completion: 10%

Expected Completion Date: 60-90 days after permit approval

# PUBLIC WORKS & ENGINEERING

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

In September and October the City of Homestead made significant progress across multiple Public Works divisions.

The **Water Treatment** division completed essential tasks, including replacing the SBR Jet Pump, installing a new influent actuator for SBR #1, replacing one-inch services at **5** locations, and repairing **7** fire hydrants. The team also addressed a 12-inch water main break, replaced **81** broken water meters, installed **74** new accounts, completed **376** customer service work orders, and conducted **206** utility locates to support water and sewer connections. Major repairs were also carried out on water mains, fire hydrants, and sewer systems across the city.

They processed **421** million gallons of drinking water and **377** million gallons of wastewater were processed, with key repairs made to the Wittkop Park well and a wall at the wastewater facility.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

The **Streets & Stormwater** division focused on maintaining public areas, collecting **742** trash bags, **411** shopping carts, and **510** palm fronds, while filling **145** potholes and repairing **520** square feet of asphalt, and clearing **734** yards of debris. Street sweeping covered **19,500 feet**, and **2,437** miles of City roadways were cleared to ensure safety and cleanliness.

Additionally, the **Right-of-Way Permitting** division processed permits for public space work, completing inspections and approvals to support safe construction and maintenance activities in Homestead. The department closed **3** permits, reviewed and extended **7** permits, approved **6** permits, and is currently reviewing **14** permits, **7** of which are new applications received for the month of October.

### NEW INITIATIVES

In addition to ongoing maintenance, the City launched new initiatives in September & October.

A **hydraulic modeling and analysis of the water and sewer systems** was initiated to evaluate the impacts of new developments, including Century Royal Estate and Armstrong Group International. Required infrastructure improvements for these projects totaled over **\$35,000**.

The Water Treatment division also began implementing the **Lead and Copper Rule** revisions, which will allow residents to access information about the pipe materials at their points of connection. This is a federal regulation as part of the Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 141, Subpart I.

Looking ahead to October, new developments in the Public Works & Engineering division now require a water and sewer capacity analysis to ensure the City's infrastructure supports continued growth.

## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### In Progress

#### Traffic Signalization

Current Phase: Permitting and Procurement

Key Milestones Achieved: Notice to Proceed issued to AUM Construction Inc.

Percentage Completion: 10%

Expected Completion Date: August 2025

Project Description: Installation of a Traffic Signal Installation at SW 152 Ave/Alex Muxo Jr. Blvd. as well as coordination with FPL to install new streetlights at this intersection.

#### FTA Grant – Roadway and Transit Project

Current Phase: Design

Key Milestones Achieved: Project scope established; design and permitting in progress.

Percentage Completion: 50%

Expected Completion Date: Mid-2026

Project Description: Enhance the multi-modal transportation within the project area. The enhancement includes the installation of sidewalks and accessibility ramps, new trolley shelters, reconstruction of the underground utilities along Krome Avenue from NW 4 Street to the Miami Dade County Busway, and installation of new lighting, new landscaping, and irrigation along this portion of the Krome Avenue corridor.

## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### **Transportation Master Plan**

Current Phase: Planning

Key Milestones Achieved: Proposal awarded to Kimley-Horn and Associates.

Percentage Completion: 5%

Expected Completion Date: Mid-2025

Project Description: The 20-year Transportation Master Plan will enhance the multimodal connectivity and access while understanding capacity on the existing roadway network. This involves an assessment of roadway capacity and the development of strategies to address demand due to land use changes and/or new developments/redevelopment, as well as changing mobility needs and multimodal connectivity through the City. This plan will establish a long-term vision to optimize connectivity and access for Homestead residents, workers, and visitors.

### **Trolley Efficiency Study**

Current Phase: Evaluation

Key Milestones Achieved: Consultant engaged for technical evaluation.

Percentage Completion: 15%

Expected Completion Date: March 2025

Project Description: The City operates the Homestead Trolley system with three (3) routes serving various neighborhoods within the city limits and providing connections to Miami Dade Transit. The system is being evaluated for operation, stop locations and efficiency.

### **Racetrack Booster Pump Station**

Current Phase: Construction

Key Milestones Achieved: 99% completion.

Expected Completion Date: October 31, 2024

Project Description: The City of Homestead owns and maintains three (3) water towers used to stabilize and maintain the water system pressure. The Racetrack water tower has not been in operation due to saltwater intrusion in the area. This project consists of the installation of water booster pumps to supply adequate flows and pressures to fill the 1-million-gallon tower and connect to the water treatment's Supervisory Control & Data Acquisition system to provide a more reliable water system pressure.

### **Avocado Villas Potable Water System Improvements**

Current Phase: Construction

Key Milestones Achieved: Notice to Proceed issued to JVA Engineering Contractor, Inc.

Expected Completion Date: TBD

Project Description: The City of Homestead owns and operates water treatment facilities and the water distribution system that serves the City residents, businesses, and a portion of Incorporated Miami-Dade County. The Avocado Village development was constructed in the mid 1970's and the water mains are approaching 50 years old and therefore have reached their useful service life. The PW&E Department is replacing the existing water main within the Avocado Village development and surrounding areas.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

In September, the Solid Waste division completed **19** new residential service locations as well as installed and fulfilled **45** repair/replacement requests. They continued their participation in the recycling rewards program in collaboration with the supercan manufacturer and reclaimed **310** residential cans.

**October** saw further accomplishments, including hauling over **66** tons of garbage from the NASCAR race event. The division also added **30** new residential service locations and fulfilled **87** repair or replacement requests, with a total of **117** customer requests completed for the month.



# COH EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

In September, the City of Homestead hosted its popular Eats and Beats Summer Concert Series at Losner Park, bringing residents together for evenings of live music, great food, and community fun. The event featured a variety of performances, including a special Country Music Night with Jamie Davis, whose energetic set had the crowd dancing and singing along to classic country hits. Families and friends relaxed on the lawn, enjoying the music under the stars while savoring gourmet options from local food trucks. The excitement continued with a vibrant Latin Night, headlined by 3RG Miami, who electrified the park with lively beats and Latin rhythms. The fusion of music and culture created an unforgettable experience, encouraging residents to come together, celebrate, and dance the night away. Eats and Beats remains a community favorite, offering live performances, delicious food, and quality time with neighbors.



In October, the Homestead Police Department hosted National Night Out at Losner Park, bringing residents together for an evening of community building, live music, and family fun. The event featured interactive booths, kids' activities, and demonstrations from local police officers, promoting neighborhood bonds and safety. Later in the month, the Halloween Spook-tacular took place at Losner Park with costume contests, a haunted house, food trucks, and plenty of candy for trick-or-treaters—providing families with a safe and fun way to celebrate Halloween in the heart of the community.



Additionally, the Homestead-Miami Speedway hosted the NASCAR Playoff Race in October, attracting thousands of tourists and motorsport fans, providing a significant boost to local tourism and the economy.

