



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

November/December 2024

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## ELECTED OFFICIALS 2025

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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,

As we embark on a new year, I am excited to share the initiatives and priorities that will shape the City of Homestead in 2025. This year represents an opportunity to build on our achievements, tackle longstanding challenges, and strategically position our city for continued growth and success.

One of the most significant undertakings this year is the launch of our Strategic Plan. Before diving into this crucial initiative, we will be hosting an executive team-building retreat to collaborate with all departments. This retreat will provide a platform for open dialogue, idea-sharing, and alignment across the organization to lay a strong foundation for the Strategic Plan. The plan itself will serve as a comprehensive roadmap for aligning resources, setting clear priorities, and ensuring accountability in delivering exceptional services to our residents. By engaging with Council, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders and focusing on measurable outcomes, we aim to foster innovation, enhance quality of life, and reinforce our commitment to sustainable growth.

We are also making strides in modernizing the city's permitting process. This modern permitting system will streamline services, enhance efficiency, and deliver a more user-friendly experience. Key features of the new permitting system include an online payment option, enabling users to conveniently pay fees remotely, as well as improved application tracking and communication tools to ensure a seamless and transparent process. A robust permitting system is vital to a thriving community, and we are committed to introducing one that reflects the highest standards of service delivery.

In terms of infrastructure, we are wrapping up the essential forcemain improvements at Pump Station #22 and preparing to transition into the next phase of work. These efforts bring us closer to lifting the moratorium, a vital step toward unlocking development connection opportunities and ensuring the reliability of our utility services. Simultaneously, our team is advancing the Transportation and Water & Sewer Master Plans, which will guide investments in critical systems and ensure Homestead is equipped to meet future demands.

On a broader scale, we are ramping up our preparations for state and federal legislative priorities. These priorities are essential for securing the resources and support needed to realize our vision for Homestead. Visit [www.homesteadfl.gov/legislative](http://www.homesteadfl.gov/legislative) to view the City of Homestead's 2025 Legislative Priorities. By working collaboratively with policymakers and advocating for funding and initiatives that benefit our community, we can achieve transformative outcomes for our residents.

This year, as we focus on these significant projects, we remain dedicated to providing transparent, responsive, and effective governance. The year ahead holds tremendous promise, and I am confident that with your leadership and the support of our talented team, Homestead will continue to flourish.

Sincerely,

Zerry Ihekwaba, PhD, PE

# CALENDAR

JAN 10 - MAR 10

Jan 17

Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast

Jan 24-26

Homestead Rodeo

Feb 8

Southwest Beautification Day:  
A Celebration of Black History

Feb 14

Movies in the Park: UP

Feb 21

Homestead Poetry Slam,  
A Black History Experience

Feb 22

Homestead Black History Block Party

Feb 28

Movies in the Park: Princess & The Frog

Mar 10

Movies in the Park: Moana 2

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

[HOMESTEADFL.GOV/FLICKR](https://www.flickr.com/photos/cityofhomestead/)



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



Movies in the Park



Gingerbread Contest



Holiday in Homestead



CITY OF  
**HOMESTEAD**

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

### **Pump Station #22/Basin Moratorium**

The City of Homestead's Public Works & Engineering Department is advancing the critical PS22 Super Bypass project, which aims to bring Pump Station 22 into compliance with Miami-Dade County Water and Sewer Department standards. Phase 1, which involved the installation of a new sewer force main using trenchless technology, was completed in December 2024. Phase 2 will focus on procuring bypass pumps and ensuring compliance, and is expected to be completed by January 2025. The project is supported by ARPA and FDEP funding.

In addition to getting Pump Station #22 into compliance, the project also addresses the 13 station basins that feed into this pump station. These basins must be brought into compliance as part of the overall effort to improve the station's functionality and meet regulatory standards. After the completion of Phase 2, the project will enter an evaluation phase in February 2025, which is expected to last for one month. Following this, a certification process will take place, also anticipated to last one month. If all goes well with DERM (Department of Environmental Resources Management) and WASD (Water and Sewer Department), the city hopes to be out of moratorium by April 2025.

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

### **Homestead Regional Park (Phase 1)**

Homestead Regional Park, an 85-acre facility, is advancing with Phase 1 of design and permitting. This phase includes an artificial turf soccer field with a rubberized track, restrooms, offices, a shaded pavilion, concession area, performance stage, storage, parking, lighting, CCTV security, landscaping, and irrigation. Supported by a \$750,600 ARPA contribution, the park will serve as a major recreational hub.

### **Design Services Expansion**

In September, the City Council approved expanding design services to include a soccer mini-pitch and additional parking, increasing the Phase 1 design contract to \$731,041. These features will be included in the final design, expected by February 2025. A recent agreement revision removed \$262,493 in construction administration services, reducing the total agreement to \$478,548 and adding a \$10,000 Master Plan cost estimate task.

### **Project Updates and Next Steps**

Phase 1 design is 90% complete and under review, with an estimated project cost of \$17 million.

- Permit Approvals: Submit for permits (90 days).
- Finalize Construction Drawings: By June 2025.
- Bid Procurement: 60 days.
- Construction Contract Award: 30 days.
- Construction: Estimated duration – 24 months.

These steps mark significant progress toward delivering a premier community recreational facility.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Residents continued to utilize the City of Homestead's Public Record Request Portal, powered by **JustFOIA**, for easy access to public records. This system, managed by the City Clerk's Office and the **Department of Innovation and Technology**, enhances transparency and improves service delivery by reducing paperwork.

In November, **139** requests were submitted, with **85** directed to HPD and **54** to the City Clerk's Office. A total of **83** requests were processed—**28** by HPD and **55** by the City Clerk's Office.

In December, **163** requests were submitted, with **113** directed to HPD and **50** to the City Clerk's Office. A total of **96** requests were processed—**56** by HPD and **40** by the City Clerk's Office.

These efforts underscore the City's commitment to providing timely, transparent, and efficient service.

## COMMUNICATIONS | PIO

### BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THROUGH COMMUNICATION

The City of Homestead Communications Department achieved remarkable engagement growth across platforms during November 2024 through strategic messaging and impactful content. Post engagement increased by **25.2%**, reaching over **70,000** interactions, while impressions rose by **51.1%**, totaling more than **571,000** views. In November, **668** posts were published—a **64.9%** increase from previous months—resulting in a **76.4%** rise in reactions and likes, a **66.6%** jump in shares, and a **59.9%** increase in comments. Facebook led in overall engagement, with spikes following updates like the **Hurricane Milton Emergency Declaration** and **Veterans Day Parade** coverage, while Instagram experienced the highest growth in shares and engagement rates, driven by posts featuring events such as the **Chick-fil-A ribbon cutting**.

LinkedIn and Twitter maintained steady performance, delivering professional updates and fostering connections. Top-performing posts included timely **Hurricane Milton updates, Veterans Day Parade celebrations, and the Chick-fil-A ribbon cutting**, which highlighted community pride and local economic growth.

In December, the Communications Department unveiled a fresh batch of promotional items like mugs, water bottles, rubber bracelets, tumblers and more! These exciting new items will be available at our upcoming city events, so be sure to stop by and check them out. We can't wait to share them with the community!



## OPERATIONAL UPDATE

The Code Compliance Department continues to enhance services and expand its impact across the City of Homestead. Recent updates include:

### New Staff & Expanded Services

The department is in the process of onboarding three new Code Compliance Officers, including a newly created **Code Compliance Officer II** position. This officer will focus on **annual business inspections, business licensing compliance, and building recertifications**, providing expanded coverage and services citywide.

### Uniform Updates

As part of the department's transition from the Homestead Police Department, all Code Compliance Officers will receive updated uniforms, including polos, jackets, and caps featuring the City of Homestead logo. These changes reflect the department's renewed focus and direction under its new structure.

By embracing these changes, the department aims to improve operational efficiency and continue providing exceptional service to the community.

## CITATIONS UPDATE

In November, **143** cases were opened with **173** violations, including **63** related to improper bulk trash disposal, **24** for improper landscaping maintenance, and **22** for overgrown vacant properties. The department continued its focus on maintaining a safe and clean Homestead, with notable shifts in violation trends between the two months.

### NOVEMBER TOP 10 VIOLATIONS

Violation	Cases Opened
Improper Bulk Trash Disposal	35
Non Permitted Structure or Work	21
Dogs Running At Large	19
Overgrown Vacant Property	16
Littered Condition	12
Improper Landscaping Maintenance	9
Animal Impound Record	9
Overgrown Improved Property	9
Maintaining a Public Nuisance	8
Fence Erected Without A Permit	8

## STRENGTHENING HOMESTEAD, ONE GRANT AT A TIME

The Homestead Community Redevelopment Agency (HCRA) continues to empower the community through residential and commercial grant programs that focus on home improvements, neighborhood beautification, safety upgrades, and business development. These initiatives provide essential support to low-to-moderate-income families for critical home repairs while fostering economic growth and long-term community stability for local businesses.

### Recently Completed Projects:

- **Shawn Baker:**

Shawn Baker was awarded a **\$20,000 Residential Façade Improvement Grant** to enhance her property's curb appeal. This project included installing an aluminum privacy fence and a new front yard planter, creating an inviting and attractive exterior. These upgrades not only improved her home's appearance but also contributed to the neighborhood's beautification and value.

- **Mr. and Mrs. Burger:**

The Burgers were awarded a **Residential Rehabilitation Grant** in December to address urgent home repairs. The project included leak mitigation and electrical repairs in both bathrooms, improving safety and functionality. These upgrades contribute to the overall property values in the neighborhood, demonstrating the CRA's broader mission of community revitalization.

### Grants in Process:

- **La Nostalgia/Throwback:**

La Nostalgia/Throwback, a Business Incentive Grant recipient, is developing a multi-purpose space combining a tattoo parlor, art gallery, and retail store. The retail component will feature original artwork, vintage t-shirts, retro games, comic books, and skateboarding products. This venture, set to open in early 2025, aims to celebrate creativity and individuality while fostering economic growth in the community.

- **Cynthia Harvey:**

Cynthia Harvey received a Residential Façade Improvement Grant to enhance her property with fresh exterior paint, driveway repairs, and an aluminum privacy fence. The painting phase is complete, significantly boosting the home's curb appeal. Upcoming improvements include driveway repairs and fence installation, further elevating the property and its neighborhood.

BEFORE



AFTER



## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

The Customer Service Department continues to enhance its operations to improve convenience and efficiency. In November and December, several updates and initiatives were implemented, including:

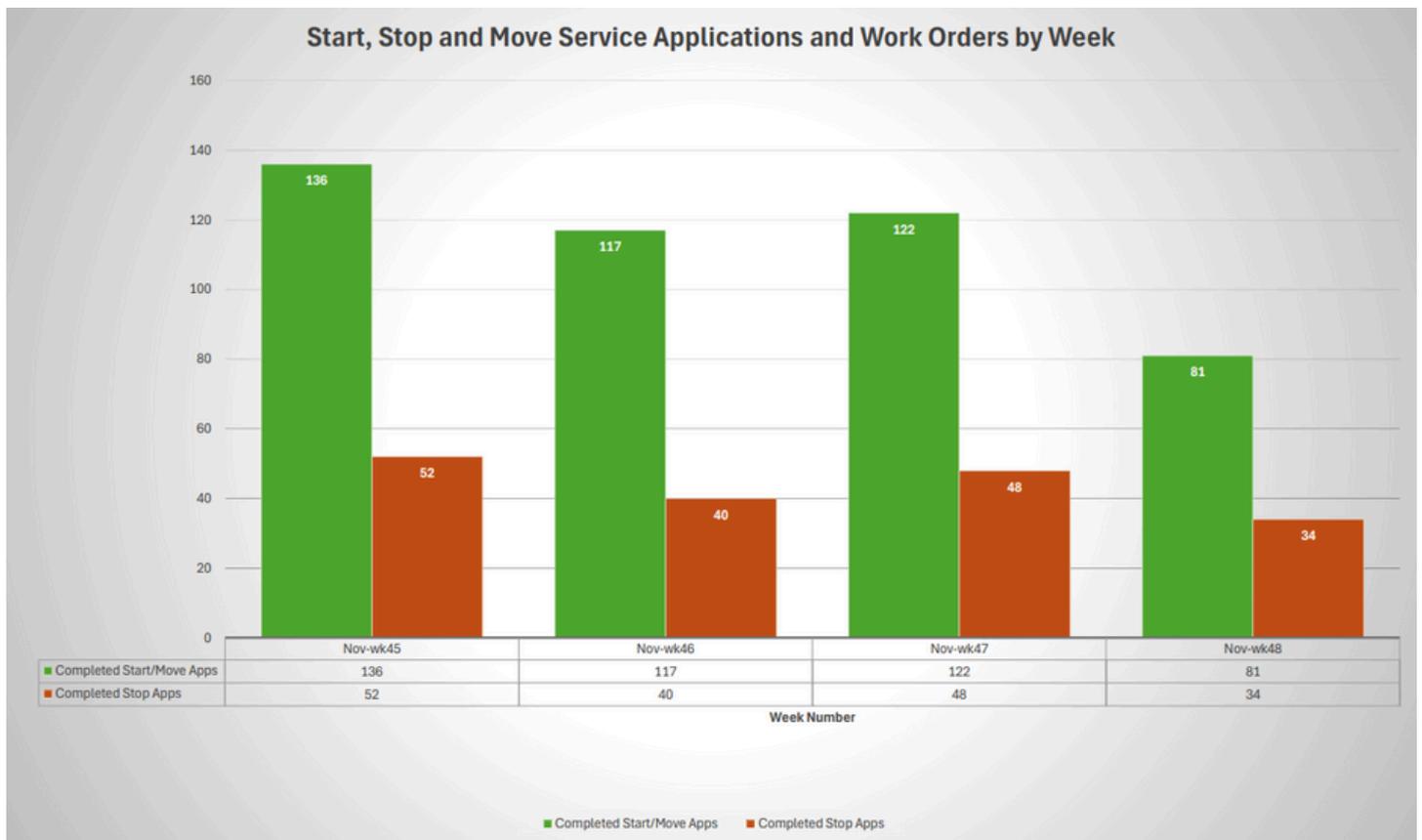
**Commercial Collections Process:** The department finalized processes for commercial collections related to master-metered accounts, improving efficiency and clarity in handling these specialized cases.

**Buried Meter Process:** A new buried meter accessibility process has been implemented, requiring meters to remain accessible for accurate readings. The customer service team will assist customers as needed to ensure compliance.

**Non-Communicating Water Meters Initiative:** The issue of non-communicating water meters prompted a focused troubleshooting and ERT (**Endpoint Receiver Transmitter**) replacement effort. The solution has proven successful, with **94%** of the meters whose ERTs were replaced now communicating remotely, reducing the need for field visits and improving operational efficiency. Additionally, the department will continue to monitor the performance of the initiative to ensure the remaining meters are addressed and remain functional.

### Looking Ahead

The department is preparing to address overdue payments for master-metered accounts. If payments are not received, disconnections may be scheduled in January. This proactive approach ensures that all customers are aware of their responsibilities while maintaining transparency in service operations.



## PLANNING

In November and December, planning efforts included preparing **7** items for two council meetings—**5** items for November and **2** for December. These included a rezoning application, three final plats, a special exception, a site plan, and a site plan extension request (which was later removed from the agenda by the applicant).

## NOVEMBER CITY COUNCIL APPLICATIONS

- PH2024-52: Homestead Business Asset - Rezoning (2nd R)
- PH2023-71: Mario's Corner - Final Plat
- PH2024-25: North Canal Shops - Final Plat
- PH2023-15: New Hope CORPS - Special Exception
- PH2023-14: New Hope CORPS - Site Plan

## DECEMBER CITY COUNCIL APPLICATIONS

- PH2024-45: Eastgroup - Final Plat
- PH2024-80: RBS Homestead - Site Plan Extension

## BUSINESS LICENSING

For November and December, the division issued **25** new business licenses, approved **50** renewals, **26** yard sale permits, **3** special event permits, and **1** film permit. As the first quarter of the year concludes in December, the division is working with Data Prose to compile a list of businesses delinquent in renewing their licenses. These businesses will face a **15%** penalty for non-renewal, and notices will be sent in late January. The Business Licensing Division worked alongside Code Compliance to canvas the business community and verify that businesses are in good standing with their Business Tax Receipt (BTR). Courtesy notices were issued to businesses without proof of a valid BTR. The city is also accepting applications for the vacant Business Licensing Manager position.

## BUILDING PERMITS

In November, **728** permit requests were received, with **540** assigned permit numbers. December saw **827** permit requests, with **650** assigned permit numbers. All inquiries were completed within **2** working days, and all permits were processed within the required **30** days. The division also assisted Lennar in processing certificates of occupancy for **100** new dwelling units before the end of November. The current review queue as of the end of December contains **217** items, categorized as follows:

- Building: **58**
- Electrical: **10**
- Structural: **49**
- Plumbing: **30**
- Mechanical: **5**
- Zoning: **53**
- Roofing: **12**

## SHAPING HOMESTEAD'S FUTURE

### City Council Charrette Workshop:

Following the Visioning Charrette in April 2024, a public workshop was held on November 12, 2024, where City Council members and staff reviewed and discussed proposed opportunities and visions. A special meeting on December 4, 2024, resulted in the acceptance of the concepts as "**The Citizens Master Plan**". The next step is to prepare a comparison piece for zoning code variations, expected in the first quarter of 2025.

## ART IN PUBLIC PLACES

### **Seminole Theatre Murals:**

Contracts for the exterior refinishing of the Seminole Theatre were approved, with work expected to begin in February 2025. The refinishing will take approximately **90** days. Once completed, mural work by two artists will begin. The murals should take about **90** days to complete with expected completion in August 2025, weather permitting.

### **William Krome Sculpture:**

Efforts in November and December were focused on finalizing the sculpture base design and language for a bronze plaque. Permits for the base were applied for in December, and construction is expected to begin after approval in January. The construction of the base is set to be finalized in late January but will require 28 days for the concrete to cure. The artist will transport the sculpture from South Dakota to Homestead in mid-February 2025, with installation expected soon after. The City Council also finalized plaque language during this time.

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### **STRENGTHENING EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

In November, Emergency Management worked with the Procurement & Contract Services Department to coordinate the selection process for primary, secondary, and tertiary vendors to provide Disaster Recovery Assistance, the selections will be then brought to Council for final approval. Additionally, the **Florida Recovery Obligation Calculation Disaster Readiness Assessment** was completed and submitted for 2025, ensuring compliance with future resilience requirements.

### **UPGRADING INFRASTRUCTURE**

Collaborating with IT, Emergency Management coordinated a review of the **Emergency Operations Center (EOC)** infrastructure, exploring improvements to outdated technology. Discussions included implementing a robocalling system for **Elderly and Disabled Disaster Assistance (EDDA)** clients to expedite pre- and post-disaster item distribution. The goal is for the system to be implemented by the 2025 Hurricane Season.

### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND TRAINING**

Currently, **97** clients are registered for the EDDA Program, demonstrating its growing reach. On December 11, select city staff attended a WebEOC training at the Miami-Dade Emergency Operations Center, enhancing coordination of disaster-related mutual aid and resources.

### **UPDATING PLANS FOR COMPLIANCE**

In December, Emergency Management updated the **Debris Management Plan** to ensure compliance with the **Florida Recovery Obligation Calculation (FROC)** through annual reviews. Additionally, the **Hurricane Plan** was revised to include procedures for maintaining pump station operations, aligning with recent infrastructure upgrades.

### **Upcoming Events**

The **Turkey Point Power Plant** annual emergency drill is scheduled for February 11th, highlighting ongoing efforts to strengthen preparedness and response capabilities.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

In November, HPS-Energy made significant strides in improving the reliability of the City's electrical distribution system. Year-to-date (YTD) 2024 statistics show a **29%** improvement in reliability compared to the same period in 2023. Despite a **2%** increase in customers served, the minutes of power outage service interruptions have decreased by **29%**. This improvement is attributed to a targeted approach that addresses frequent causes of power outages and the addition of round-the-clock Power Lineworker Specialists, ready to respond to outages and grid concerns at any time.

HPS-Energy continues to maintain one of the lowest electric rates in Florida, with the average residential bill being **10%** lower than the typical Municipal Electric bill and **29%** lower than that of Investor-Owned Utilities like FPL.

In December, HPS-Energy maintained steady progress, with operational and CIP project updates remaining consistent with the strong performance reported in November.

### Employee Achievements

HPS-Energy proudly recognizes Luis Gonzalez Jimenez, Compliance Engineer, for earning his **North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) System Operator Certification**, a prestigious credential demonstrating expertise in power system operations. Luis achieved this significant milestone on his first attempt, showcasing exceptional dedication and skill.

Additionally, congratulations to Assistant Director William Branch, Power Plant Supervisor Anthony Sturm, and Power Plant Operator Victor Palenzuela for earning their **Electrical Comprehensive Safety Specialist Certifications**. Their year-long training encompassed critical safety practices and standards, further reinforcing our commitment to safety and operational excellence.

### Employee Recognition & Facility Tour

We would like to extend congratulations to Esteban Hernandez, our Distribution Supervisor, for winning the **"No Shave November"** shaving kit prize! Additionally, HPS-Energy had the honor of hosting Assistant City Manager Kemarr Brown for a tour of our facilities, providing an opportunity to showcase our operations and the vital work our team is doing.



## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### HPS/Energy Projects:

#### 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: Electrical Infrastructure Design Complete

Key Milestones Achieved: Engineering design finalized

Expected Construction Start Date: 2025

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### **Magnolia Point**

Location: Miami-Dade County, US 1 north of SW 292 St  
Units: 760-unit apartment complex  
Current Phase: Electrical Infrastructure Design Complete  
Key Milestones Achieved: Engineering design finalized  
Expected Construction Start Date: 2025

### **Rancho Grande**

Location: West of SW 187th Avenue and North of SW 316th Street  
Units: 150 Single Family Homes  
Key Milestones Achieved: Engineering design finalized  
Expected Construction Start Date: Q2 2025

### **Town Center**

Location: North of Mowry and West of the Turnpike  
Units: 13 Retail Bays  
Key Milestones Achieved: Engineering design finalized, invoicing for costs  
Expected Construction Start Date: Q1 2025

## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### **In Progress**

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

Current Phase: Design and Material Bidding  
Key Milestones Achieved: EPC vendor approved by Council on 8/6/24. Finalizing contracts. Preparing limited notice to proceed.  
Completion: 25%  
Expected Completion: Q1 2026

Project Description: A new substation in northeast Homestead to meet growing demand and improve grid flexibility and capacity.

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

Current Phase: Procuring Materials  
Key Milestones Achieved: Awarded to PowerServe Technologies on 9/18/24. Design work completed. Awaiting a schedule for work.  
Completion: 25%  
Expected Completion: Q1 2025

Project Description: Replacing outdated ABB relays with Schweitzer digital relays for enhanced protection and diagnostics on the transmission line between Lucy and Renaissance Substations.

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

Current Phase: Construction  
Milestone: Engineering completed 6/2024  
Completion: 30%  
Expected Completion: Q3 2026

Project Description: Upgrading the northwest section by replacing overhead power lines with underground infrastructure to improve storm resilience, safety, and aesthetics while reducing maintenance costs.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATE

In November, the Finance & Budget Department successfully completed two critical tasks for the fiscal year: the FY 2024 budget true-up, as mandated by Chapter 166.241 of the Florida Statutes, and the rollover of purchase orders from FY 2024 to FY 2025. These items were presented for their first reading at the November 20, 2024, Council Meeting and were adopted.

In December, the department continued its essential operations, including invoice processing, cash collections, bank reconciliations, journal entry posting, payroll processing, budget monitoring, contract approvals, and requisition approvals. The team also focused on the FY 2024 Year-End Audit, while the Budget Staff worked to finalize the FY 2025 Adopted Budget Book for submission to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the annual Budget Award.

Looking ahead, the department will focus on the financial and single audits for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and prepare for the FY 2026 Budget Development kickoff.

### New Capabilities

The Finance & Budget Department is advancing plans for an automated time collection system designed to streamline time and attendance tracking, improve overtime and job cost management, and enhance payroll compliance. The system will also feature employee self-service options to increase efficiency and reduce errors and expenses. To date, the team has engaged with **3** potential solution providers to explore implementation options.

## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### In Progress

#### Project Name: CP0679 - Automated Time Collection

Project Description: This project will implement an automated time collection system to streamline employee time tracking, scheduling, and payroll management, improving accuracy and reducing errors.

Current Phase: Planning

Key Milestones Achieved: Met with 3 potential solutions.

Percentage Completion: 15%

Expected Completion Date: September 30, 2025

# GRANTS

## OPERATIONAL UPDATE

In November and December, the City of Homestead continued advancing its community initiatives by actively pursuing and securing vital grant funding to enhance public safety, infrastructure, and environmental resilience. The City was awarded six grants totaling **\$465,913** and applied for additional funding opportunities amounting to **\$22,899,391**. These efforts reflect the City's dedication to improving public services and infrastructure.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATE

### Accepted Grants in November & December:

- **Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP):** The State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection awarded **\$200,000** for improvements at Blakey Park. Planned upgrades include demolishing the old playground, constructing an expanded playground, and adding a shade structure near the basketball courts.
- **Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG):** The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) awarded **\$13,199** to the Homestead Police Department for a Community Policing and Engagement program. Funds will support officer overtime, ensuring continued community policing without reducing patrol and violence reduction efforts.
- **Occupant Protection Grant:** The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) awarded **\$87,000** to fund law enforcement overtime for initiatives aimed at reducing traffic fatalities and injuries due to lack of seatbelt use. The program includes enforcement efforts and community education forums.
- **Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA) Grant:** The State of Florida, Office of the Attorney General, awarded **\$110,281** to support crime victims through advocacy programs. Funding provides judicial support, relocation assistance, safety planning, and other resources to mitigate trauma.
- **Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program:** The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) awarded **\$55,433** to the Homestead Police Department to enhance its Community Policing Initiative and implement an Officer Wellness Mobile App, addressing physical and mental health needs. Funds will also cover police overtime and grant management costs.
- **Creating Resilient Water Utilities (CRWU):** The Environmental Protection Agency awarded technical assistance for a climate change risk assessment. This assistance will help evaluate prospective projects, develop a climate action plan, and apply for additional funding opportunities.

### Grants Applied For in November & December:

- **Brownfield Assessment Grant:** A **\$400,000** application was submitted to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a **Community-Wide Assessment Program**. The program focuses on evaluating two target areas in the Southwest neighborhood for contaminants.
- **Environmental & Climate Justice Grant:** The City requested **\$19,999,391** from the EPA to support "**Homestead Rising – Resilience as a Revitalization Strategy**". This comprehensive project proposes improvements such as roadways, green spaces, underground utilities, landscaping, and electric vehicle charging stations in a 0.83-square-mile area centered around SW 4th Street.
- **Older Adults Home Modification Grant:** A **\$1,000,000** request to the **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development** aims to fund home modifications for low-income older adults in Homestead, including plumbing, electrical, and structural enhancements to improve safety and accessibility.
- **Transportation Alternatives Program:** The City of Homestead applied for **\$1,500,000** from the **Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)** to fund the **Redondo Neighborhood Pedestrian Improvement Project**. This complete streets project will enhance connectivity and promote safe access for all users. Proposed improvements include new water lines, stormwater drainage systems, street and pedestrian lighting, roadway reconstruction, sidewalks, ADA-compliant ramps, bike lanes or sharrows, and updated pavement markings and signage.

# GENERAL SERVICES

## WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

We are excited to introduce the newly formed General Services Department, led by Israel Salgado. Mr. Salgado brings a wealth of experience to this role, having previously served as the Management Director at Ocean Reef Club, where he oversaw facilities management and a large staff. His background in managing complex operations and ensuring the efficiency of high-profile properties will be instrumental in shaping the General Services Department into a cornerstone of municipal support.



Under Mr. Salgado's leadership, the General Services Department will play a critical role in enhancing the City of Homestead's ability to meet the needs of both residents and city staff. This department consolidates key services to improve efficiency, streamline operations, and maintain the high standards our community expects.

The General Services Department will oversee:

- **Facility Management:** Ensuring all city buildings and facilities are well-maintained, functional, and welcoming.
- **Fleet Management:** Managing the city's vehicles and equipment to minimize downtime and ensure operational readiness.
- **Asset Management:** Implementing systems to track and manage city assets effectively, optimizing resource use and longevity.

This new department is a reflection of the City's commitment to operational excellence and responsive service. Mr. Salgado's leadership and expertise will undoubtedly help us achieve our goals as we continue to build a strong foundation for the future.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATE

In December, the **Fleet Department** has been hard at work placing the new **250th anniversary decals** on our vehicles. Among the additions were new **Solid Waste, Police Department, and Waste Water Collection** vehicles, among others. These efforts ensure that our fleet is always ready to serve the community.



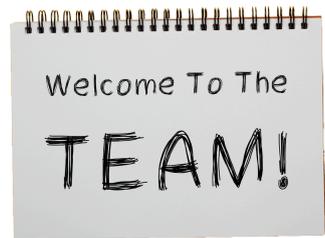
# HUMAN RESOURCES

## RECRUITMENT UPDATES

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

For the months of November and December:

- Job applications processed: **590**
- Hired employees: **9**
- Current vacancies: **72**



## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

The Human Resources department was busy in November and December. This includes:

### Building a Strong Workforce and Promoting Wellness

Throughout November, the department led the **Annual Men's Health & Wellness Campaign**, sharing information on recommended health screenings and providing resources for those dealing with related health issues. The campaign concluded with a **"No Shave November"** raffle. Additionally, the **3rd Quarter Employee Birthday Luncheon** was held on November 7th, featuring a meal, Bingo, and a prize wheel for employees celebrating birthdays in July, August, and September.

On November 12th, Safety Training classes on **Bloodborne Pathogens** were conducted, with **25** employees participating in hands-on training. The department also held **2** bargaining sessions with the **Police Benevolent Association** on November 15th and 25th, focusing on collective bargaining agreements for various police ranks.

In recognition of workplace safety, **3** employees were honored in November for maintaining an accident- and injury-free record over the past **6** months: Austin B. (Code Compliance), Michael C. (Fleet), and Carlos P. (Solid Waste).

The department also hosted **Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Miami** for the first visit of the **School to Work Mentorship Program** on November 14th. Mentors ("Bigs") and students ("Littles") participated in a scavenger hunt and learned about the history and operations of different City departments, marking a successful start to the program.

The Human Resources Department had a productive December, hosting several key events and initiatives. On December 5th, in collaboration with the **Homestead Police Department**, the second visit from student "Littles" took place as part of the **School to Work Mentorship Program**, allowing students to explore careers within law enforcement. Later in the month, the Annual Employee Luncheon was held on December 13th at the Phichol Williams Community Center. During the luncheon, employees were honored for their years of service, with awards recognizing milestones of **5, 10, 15** years, and more.

### Upcoming Initiatives

Exciting developments are on the horizon for the Human Resources Department. On **Ask UHC Day**, employees will have the chance to meet with our **United Healthcare (UHC)** Account Manager to address questions about healthcare plans, claims, and other insurance-related topics. Additionally, we are thrilled to announce the launch of the **NEW Domestic Partnership Policy**, effective January 1, 2025. This policy allows eligible employees to extend certain benefits to their domestic partners and dependents. To facilitate this change, a special Open Enrollment period will take place from January 1 to January 10, 2025, offering employees the opportunity to enroll in these benefits.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

In November, the Solid Waste Department made significant strides in serving the Homestead community by completing **87** residential repairs, which included trash carts and bins, and adding **30** new residential service locations. The team also fulfilled **27** commercial repair/replacement requests for containers and equipment and added **1** new commercial service location.

In December, the division completed **68** new residential service locations and addressed **110** residential repair/replacement requests for trash carts, bins, and containers. Additionally, **15** commercial repair/replacement requests for containers and equipment were successfully fulfilled. These accomplishments reflect the division's ongoing dedication to providing efficient and reliable waste management services for both residential and commercial customers.

The Solid Waste Department also received the ARPA funded side loader at the beginning of December. They are still pending the delivery of a roll off container.



# INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### **Innovation & Technology Department Updates for November and December**

In November and December, the Innovation & Technology Department focused on enhancing cybersecurity, modernizing infrastructure, and embracing new technologies to better serve the City of Homestead.

#### **Firewalls Replacement**

In December, the IT Department replaced outdated firewalls with advanced systems to ensure a secure, high-performance, and scalable network. This upgrade improves protection against evolving threats, enhances network performance, supports modern technologies, and ensures regulatory compliance.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### Citywide Workstation Replacement (ARPA Contribution \$246,000)

Status: Deployment began December 9, 2024, and is scheduled for completion by end of January 2025.

Project Description: A three-year project to replace citywide workstations with mobile laptops, docking stations, and related equipment, enabling a more mobile-friendly and efficient setup.

### Internet Circuit Upgrade

Status: Equipment installed; ISP is finalizing circuit configuration.

Project Description: Upgrading to a higher bandwidth internet circuit supports the City's shift to cloud-based applications, improving performance, reliability, and overall user experience.

### Wi-Fi Deployment in City Parks (ARPA Contribution \$170,225)

Status: Equipment and internet services are being installed at JD Redd and Harris Field Parks.

Timeline: Project completion by July 1, 2025.

Project Description: Expanding Wi-Fi in parks enhances visitor experiences, supports smart city initiatives, and provides social, economic, and operational benefits. Wifi will be available at all city parks and two community centers with the exception of Homestead Regional Park and the Biscayne Everglades Greenway Trail.

### Agenda Management Software (ARPA Contribution \$43,123)

Status: Implementation of system

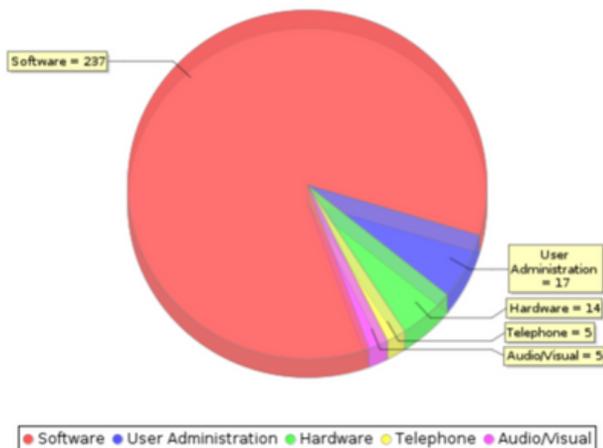
Timeline: Completion by July 1, 2025.

Project Description: A cloud-based solution to replace legacy systems, improving public meeting workflows.

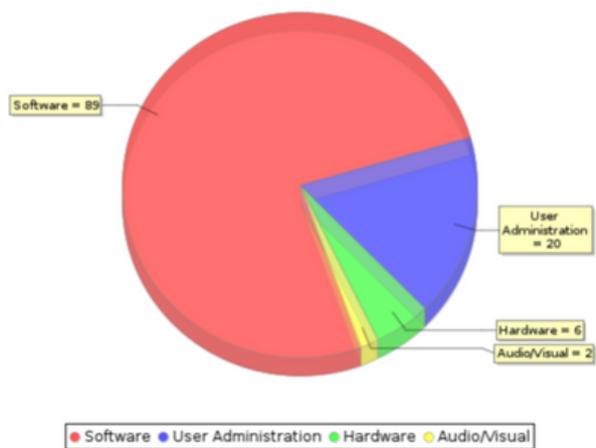
### Helpdesk Ticketing Statistics:

For the months of November and December, I.T. closed a total of **395** tickets, which are broken down by category and priority in the pie chart.

### November



### December



## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

In the months of November and December, the Parks, Recreation, & Open Spaces Department made significant progress across various initiatives. Citywide holiday decorations were installed, with new enhancements added at Losner Park and City Hall to brighten the festive season. The 2nd-floor balcony at City Hall underwent waterproofing repairs, ensuring its longevity and safety. At Harris Field Park, the exterior of the restrooms received a fresh coat of paint, while repairs to the entrance sidewalk at Phichol Williams Community Center enhanced accessibility and safety for visitors.

## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### Completed

#### **JD Redd Park - Roof Replacement**

Current Phase: Closeout

Key Milestones Achieved: Project completed.

Percentage Completion: 100%

#### **Harris Field Park - Baseball Restroom Renovations**

Current Phase: Closeout

Key Milestones Achieved: Project completed.

Percentage Completion: 100%

### In Progress

#### **James Archer Smith Splashpad Renovation**

Current Phase: Construction

Key Milestones Achieved: Construction

Percentage Completion: 65%

Expected Completion: February 2025

#### **William F. Dickinson Community Center - Roof Replacement**

Current Phase: Construction

Key Milestones Achieved: Work began on December 2, 2024.

Percentage Completion: 25%

Expected Completion: February 2025

#### **Harris Field Press Box - Roof Replacement**

Current Phase: Construction

Key Milestones Achieved: Permit obtained; work began on November 25, 2024.

Percentage Completion: 50%

Expected Completion: February 2025

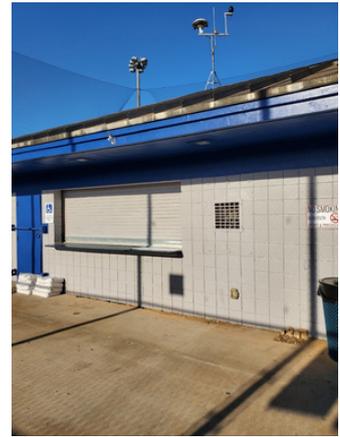
#### **Harris Field Gymnasium - LED Light Upgrade**

Current Phase: Permitting

Key Milestones Achieved: PO issued.

Percentage Completion: 25%

Expected Completion: March 2025



## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### In Progress

#### Mayor Roscoe Warren Municipal Park - Dog Park Fence & Shades

Current Phase: Bidding

Key Milestones Achieved: Requisition entered.

Percentage Completion: 5%

Expected Completion: April 2025

#### Blakey Park Playground

Current Phase: Design

Key Milestones Achieved: Design finalized; awaiting grant funds to enter requisition.

Percentage Completion: 15%

Expected Completion: July 2025

#### Audubon Park Playground

Current Phase: Planning

Key Milestones Achieved: Vendor site walkthrough completed to discuss ideas.

Percentage Completion: 5%

Expected Completion: September 2025

#### Wittkop Park Playground

Current Phase: Planning

Key Milestones Achieved: Vendor site walkthrough completed to discuss ideas.

Percentage Completion: 5%

Expected Completion: September 2025



## EVENTS HOSTED

- Veterans Day Celebration - November 10th, 2024
- Movies in the Park: Wonka - November 22, 2024
- Orange Bowl Fall Family Fest - November 23, 2024
- The 18th Annual Haitian Community Thanksgiving Brunch - November 28th, 2024
- Holiday in Homestead - December 7th, 2024
- Pictures with Santa - December 14 & 21, 2024
- Movies in the Park: The Grinch - December 27, 2024



## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

The Homestead Police Department remained committed to enhancing public safety and community engagement throughout November and December 2024. By prioritizing crime prevention and fostering positive relationships with residents, the department ensured a safe and supportive environment for all, particularly during the holiday season.

### Special Investigations Unit (SIU)

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) played a key role in addressing crime and safeguarding neighborhoods. In December, SIU conducted targeted operations that led to significant arrests and the seizure of illegal narcotics. They worked closely with local and federal agencies to disrupt organized crime activities, including the successful recovery of **2** vehicles, now being used by the City of Homestead. Their efforts also extended to supporting Florida City Police Department in a carjacking case, resulting in the arrest of **4** suspects.

### Group Violence Intervention (GVI)

The Group Violence Intervention (GVI) program continued its mission to reduce violence and provide support to individuals seeking positive change. In December, GVI conducted 8 Custom Notifications, delivering personalized messages of accountability to individuals and their families. Social workers offered tailored resources, and community messengers provided guidance to promote nonviolence. Additionally, the program held **3** Risk Assessment Meetings and hosted **2** Shooting Review Presentations, fostering dialogue on recent incidents and preventative strategies.

### Community Policing Unit (CPU)

The Community Policing Unit (CPU) focused on strengthening community bonds through outreach and holiday events. On December 5, they welcomed **Big Brothers Big Sisters** for a station tour, followed by several holiday initiatives. These included the **10th Annual "Shop with a Cop"** event on December 12, where children were paired with officers to shop for holiday gifts. Other events included the **Heroes and Helpers** initiative sponsored by **Target** on December 17, **AJ's Toy Collection and Distribution** at Le Jardin community centers on December 18, and a **COPs for Kids Christmas Party**. The CPU also hosted the **first Annual PAL Holiday J.V. Basketball Tournament**, which provided a platform for local youth to engage in sports and community camaraderie.

### The Police Officer Support Team (POST)

The Police Officer Support Team (POST) demonstrated compassion and generosity by partnering with SOS on December 16 to support a local family in need. Together, they raised **\$2,786** to provide toys and clothing for a family with **8** children, including **1** battling serious health challenges. This gesture of kindness provided much-needed relief to a family facing significant difficulties.

The Homestead Police Department made significant strides in ensuring the safety and well-being of the community through proactive crime prevention, community service, and holiday outreach, reinforcing their commitment to public safety and quality of life for all residents.

# PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTS

## OPERATIONAL UPDATE

In November, the Procurement Division conducted fiscal year kick-off meetings to address CIP and grant projects with PROs, Police, Public Works, Solid Waste, and Energy Departments. The team collaborated with Risk and the Communications Department to streamline vendor registration and enhance the Procurement web pages, improving accessibility for vendors. Upcoming efforts include coordinating vendor and legal counsel training with OpenGov. Additionally, staff will attend the Miami Dade College Supplier Development and Opportunity Exchange on February 5, 2025.

In December, Procurement successfully issued all ARPA-related purchase orders before the December 31, 2024, deadline. The team also worked with General Services Department to transition the Fleet Division.

### Additional Update

Procurement is planning an auction, tentatively scheduled for late February or early March, with dates to be finalized.

## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### 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

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

Current Phase: Planning

Expected Completion Date: September 30, 2025

#### Heavy Duty Industrial Ceiling Fan

Current Phase: Planning

Expected Completion Date: September 30, 2025

## Competitive Solicitations Status Report

Title	Project ID	Status	Department
Interior Renovations to Police Athletic League (PAL) Building		Coming Soon (FY25)	Police
Fairbanks-Morse OP Blower rebuild/repair		Coming Soon (FY25)	Electric Utilities
DCP For Flagler Sewer Line Replacement		Coming Soon (FY25)	Public Works and Engineering
Professional Architectural and Engineering Services - for Miscellaneous Projects		Coming Soon (FY25)	Procurement & Contract Services
Line #4 Transmission Relay replacements		Coming Soon (FY25)	Homestead Public Services - Energy
Facilities Maintenance Support Pool of Contractors		Coming Soon (FY25)	Parks & Recreation Services
Demolition of City Properties		Coming Soon (FY25)	Community Redevelopment Agency
Electric Motors, Pumps, and Generator Repairs		Coming Soon (FY25)	Public Works & Engineering
Sidewalk Repair & Installation		Coming Soon (FY25)	Public Works & Engineering
Street Resurfacing		Coming Soon (FY25)	Public Works & Engineering
HVAC Repair & Refrigeration Equipment		Coming Soon (FY25)	General Services
Janitorial Services		Coming Soon (FY25)	General Services
Temporary Staffing		Coming Soon (FY25)	Human Resources
Citywide Entertainment Events		Coming Soon (FY25)	Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces
Homestead Station Parking Garage Surveillance Cameras	ITB#202508	Open	Grants & Special Projects
Krome Marketplace Entertainment & Dining Destination in Downtown	RFP#202505	Open	Community Redevelopment Agency
Shotgun Property Redevelopment - 866 SW 7th Street, Homestead, Florida	RFP#202504	Open	Community Redevelopment Agency
Seminole Theatre Business Operator	RFP#202503	Open	Parks & Recreation Services
Professional Services for Permitting, Plan Review and Inspection Services	RFP#202436	Pending	Development Services
Replacement of the Diesel Fuel Valves at G. W. Ivey Municipal Power Plant		On Hold	Electric Utilities
Transportation Master Plan	RFQ#202434	On Hold	Public Works & Engineering
RFQ# 202404-City of Homestead Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment	RFQ# 202404	On Hold	
RFQ# 202502 Architectural & Engineering Services for Wittkop Park Water Treatment Facility Project (Chlorination)	RFQ# 202502	Pending advertisement	Public Works & Engineering
ITB#202507 Ernestine Jackson Seymour Park Playground Replacement	ITB#202507	Evaluation	Parks & Recreation Services
Call Center Support	RFP#202415	Evaluation	Customer Service
City Hall Generator Project Re-Bid	ITB#202438	Award Pending	Grants & Special Projects
RFP#202427 Disaster Recovery Management Consulting Services	RFP# 202427	Award Pending	Finance

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### Right-of-Way Permitting

In November and December, the Public Works & Engineering Department advanced its mission of supporting safe and efficient development within the city's right-of-way. The team conducted **5** preliminary inspections, approved **13** permits, and is actively reviewing **20** applications, including **7** submitted during December. The department continues to streamline processes to support infrastructure development and utility operations across Homestead.

### Treatment Division

During these months, the Treatment Division processed **845.6 million** gallons of drinking water and **755.6 million** gallons of wastewater. The team completed critical repairs, including Wittkop Park Well #2 and a drying bed wall at the wastewater facility, ensuring uninterrupted water services for residents and businesses.

### Distribution & Collections

The Distribution & Collections team facilitated **385** new water and sewer connections, installed **233** water meters, and completed over **500** customer service work orders. Crews repaired sewer lines, replaced water services, fixed **8** fire hydrants, and reviewed multiple project plans to meet community needs.

### Streets, Stormwater, & QRT Teams

These teams enhanced city cleanliness and infrastructure by:

- Collecting **1,465** trash bags, **815** shopping carts, and **1,020** palm fronds.
- Filling **290** potholes, repairing **1,040** square feet of asphalt, and clearing **1,460** yards of debris.
- Sweeping **4,874** miles of roadways and inspecting stormwater basins to prevent flooding.

## NEW INITIATIVES

In November and December, the Public Works & Engineering Department launched several forward-thinking initiatives to support Homestead's growth and sustainability.

- The department continued hydraulic modeling and analysis of the city's water and sewer systems to evaluate the impacts of new developments, such as **Century Royal Estate**, which required over **\$35,000** in infrastructure improvements.
- Efforts to implement the revised **Lead and Copper Rule** also progressed, ensuring residents have access to information about the pipe materials at their points of connection, in compliance with federal regulations. The information can be found at [www.homesteadfl.gov/lcrr](http://www.homesteadfl.gov/lcrr)
- Additionally, the department introduced a water and sewer capacity analysis for new developments to ensure the city's infrastructure can support ongoing expansion and future growth.

## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### Avocado Villas Potable Water System Improvements

Current Phase: Construction

Key Milestones Achieved: Notice to Proceed issued to JVA Engineering Contractor, Inc. on October 24, 2024.

Percentage Completion: 10%

Expected Completion Date: August 20, 2025

Project Description:

This project replaces aging water mains in the Avocado Villas development, constructed in the 1970s. The existing water mains have reached their service life and are being upgraded to ensure reliable water distribution for the community.

## CIP PROJECT UPDATE

### In Progress

#### **Traffic Signal at SW 152 Ave/Alex Muxo Jr. Blvd**

Current Phase: Construction

Key Milestones Achieved: Contract awarded to AUM Construction Inc., construction documents submitted for review, and preliminary fieldwork started.

Percentage Completion: 10%

Expected Completion Date: August 2025

Project Description:

The project involves installing a traffic signal at SW 152 Ave/Alex Muxo Jr. Blvd. and coordinating with FPL to install new streetlights. Construction documents have been submitted, and long-lead equipment is being ordered. Preliminary fieldwork and Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) setup began in January 2025.

#### **FTA Grant – Roadway and Transit Project**

Current Phase: Design

Key Milestones Achieved: Design approximately 60% complete.

Percentage Completion: 60%

Expected Completion Date: March 2028

Project Description:

This project aims to enhance multi-modal transportation by installing sidewalks, accessibility ramps, trolley shelters, and lighting, and upgrading underground utilities along Krome Avenue. The project design is on hold for four months to incorporate findings from the Trolley Efficiency Study, which will evaluate current trolley stops and recommend improvements.

#### **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 aims to enhance multimodal connectivity and address roadway capacity, demand due to land use changes, and mobility needs. The plan will establish a vision for optimizing connectivity for residents, workers, and visitors and aid in securing state and federal funding.

#### **Racetrack Booster Pump Station**

Current Phase: Construction

Key Milestones Achieved: 99% completion; contractor addressing punch list items.

Percentage Completion: 99%

Expected Completion Date: January 31, 2024

Project Description:

The Racetrack Booster Pump Station project includes installing booster pumps to supply adequate water flows and stabilize system pressure. The tower will be connected to the Supervisory Control & Data Acquisition system, enhancing reliability for current and future demands.

# COH EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

In November, the City of Homestead honored its veterans with a weekend of meaningful celebrations and community pride. The festivities began on Sunday with the annual **Veterans Day Celebration** at Losner Park. Attendees enjoyed live music, inspiring speeches, and a special luminary walk, where individuals had the opportunity to light a candle in honor of a veteran. The evening concluded with Homestead's first ever drone show, captivating the audience with patriotic imagery and heartfelt messages of gratitude.

On Veterans Day, the celebration continued with the **Veterans Day Parade**. Families and friends lined the streets to cheer for local veterans, marching bands, and participants riding in decorated cars, on horseback, and even mini toy cars, showcasing the community's appreciation for those who have served our country



In December, the City of Homestead hosted its beloved **Holiday in Homestead** on Saturday, December 7, 2024, at Losner Park. The event brought the community together for an evening filled with festive activities such as sledding, ornament decorating, and mailing letters to Santa. The event featured live entertainment, food trucks, and a beautiful tree lighting ceremony, creating a joyful atmosphere for attendees of all ages.

The holiday spirit continued with **Pictures with Santa** on Saturday, December 14th, 2024, and Saturday, December 21st, 2024. Families enjoyed fun activations such as Lowe's Holiday Arts & Crafts Station, story time with the Cybrarium, and hot cocoa and cookies. Visitors also voted and toured the gingerbread house contest, adding an interactive element to the experience. Both events saw incredible turnouts, with residents coming together to celebrate the season and create lasting memories with friends and family.

