

City of Homestead

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: Southwest 296th Street

South: Southwest 352nd Street

West: Southwest 192nd Avenue

East: Southwest 132nd Avenue

Community Type

Municipality

History

Homestead was incorporated as a town in 1913 and as a city in 1923, making it the second-oldest city in Miami-Dade County, after Miami. The name originated when the Florida East Coast Railway extension to Key West was being built. The rail line was passing through an area that had been opened for homesteading in 1898. As the construction camp at the end of the line did not have a particular name, construction materials and supplies for the workers were consigned to "Homestead Country", shortened to "Homestead" by the engineers who mapped the area.

The City of Homestead is a suburb of Miami and a major agricultural area, located approximately 26 miles southwest of Miami and 25 miles northwest of Key Largo. It is situated between two major protected natural areas, Biscayne National Park to the east and Everglades National Park to the west. The city functions as a touristic gateway to these parks, offering dining, lodging, shopping, and information for visitors.

The original Homestead Air Force Base operated several miles to the northeast of the city. After the base sustained major damage from Hurricane Andrew in 1992, it eventually was rebuilt and converted to become the Homestead Air Reserve Base. The loss of a full-fledged military base resulted in an economic loss for the community.

Aside from the extreme devastation wrought by Hurricane Andrew in 1992, subsequent storms have brought economic challenges to the area. Hurricane Katrina caused flooding in Homestead in August 2005. The following

October, Hurricane Wilma damaged light poles, grandstands, garages, and sections of catch fence at the Homestead-Miami Speedway, a motor racetrack built in the years following Hurricane Andrew. When Hurricane Irma struck Florida in September 2017, parts of Homestead lost electric power. The South Dade Center, a low-income housing project for farmworkers, was flooded with rainwater. Residents were without electricity and waste collection for about a week without relief.

Homestead has a mayor-council form of government. Agendas and minutes of meetings, an audio/video archive of meetings, a calendar of meetings, and a link for live viewing of meetings are all available on the city's municipal website.

Community Dynamics

As of 2020, Homestead had a population of 68,937. The median age was 30.8 and the median household income was \$50,723. Between 2019 and 2020 the population of Homestead grew from 68,438 to 68,937, an increase of .729%. At the same time, the median household income rose from \$47,508 to \$50,723, an increase of 6.77%. Regarding ethnicity in 2020, 49.6% of the population was White Hispanic, 20.5% was Black, 12.3% was White non-Hispanic, 8.07% was Multiracial Hispanic, and 5.58% was Other Hispanic. None of the households in Homestead reported speaking a non-English language at home as a primary language, and 78.9% of the population were US citizens. As of 2020, 37.4% of the residents of Homestead were born outside the US, which is much higher than the national average of 13.5%. In 2019, the percentage of foreign-born citizens was 37.3%, indicating that the rate has been increasing. In 2020, the median property value was \$235,800 and the homeownership rate was 41.4%.

Business Landscape

As of 2023, the City of Homestead's zoning map showed a large area of agricultural use along the east-central edge of the city, as well as a massive zone slated for high-flexibility "planned unit development" in the city's southeast corner, where the Homestead-Miami Speedway is located.

Agricultural production is still a major source of revenue and serves as a mainstay of the economy. The Homestead Air Reserve Base is in operation but remains underutilized. The Homestead-Miami Speedway attracts visitors, hosting major NASCAR racing events. Everglades National Park and Biscayne National Park, as well as smaller attractions like Coral Castle and the Fruit and

Spice Park, are not located within the city's boundaries but draw tourists to Homestead as a base for local sightseeing.

Homestead Station, completed in October of 2019, is a mixed-use entertainment and community center in Homestead at 4 South Krome Avenue. The complex includes ShowBiz Cinemas, retail space, a public parking garage that serves the City of Homestead Park-N-Ride, and the world's first Cybrarium, a technology-driven public library, education, and entertainment complex.

Homestead has a Community Redevelopment Agency, whose stated mission is to combat neighborhood deterioration and eliminate economic blight. The CRA area is a section of Homestead that consists of the Historic Downtown District and the Southwest Community. In August of 2023, the city launched its "Rock the Block" initiative, aimed at revitalizing the city's southwestern neighborhood and eliminating slums and blighted conditions in residential areas. Volunteers were invited to attend a groundbreaking ceremony for construction of new homes, and to assist with landscaping, trash pickup, and mailbox installation. Other recent projects were centered on repaving, offering small business training, and attracting partners for mixed-use, mixed-income transit-oriented development.

Transportation Characteristics

Homestead has several main arteries connecting it with the rest of Miami-Dade County. US 1/Homestead Boulevard runs diagonally from the northeast to the southwest through the western half of Homestead and is the only way to the Florida Keys. The Ronald Reagan Turnpike bisects the city, also running diagonally from northeast to southwest, and connecting with US1/Homestead Boulevard beyond the city's southwestern boundary. North Krome Avenue/State Road 997 runs north-south through the northwestern section of Homestead. State Road 997 turns to the east at Campbell Drive and runs through the city's historic downtown district.

According to DATA USA 2020 statistics, most people in Homestead drove alone to work, with an average commute time of 40.1 minutes. The average car ownership was two cars per household.

Homestead is served by Miami-Dade Transit buses, with service concentrated mostly in the western and northern sections of the city.

The City of Homestead offers free transportation on the Homestead Trolley. The trolley operates daily, except on major holidays, and serves principal

residential and commercial areas. The trolley connects with the Metrobus system at the South Miami-Dade Busway, which runs a few blocks west of and parallel to US1/Homestead Boulevard.

The innovative Homestead National Parks Trolley offers free transportation to the Everglades and Biscayne National Park from pickup points located in downtown Homestead and at the Marriott Hotel. Both Everglades National Park and Biscayne National Park have partnered with the city to offer free park admission to trolley passengers.

As of 2023, the City of Homestead was continuing to work with the National Park Service, Miami-Dade County, the State of Florida, and the Federal Government to secure funding to construct the Biscayne-Everglades Greenway project. The Greenway project is a 42-mile round trip bicycle path that will connect Biscayne National Park with Everglades National Park. The project, which was first developed by Homestead Councilwoman Judy Waldman, would be the first and only bike trail in the U.S. to connect two national parks and would offer an immediate economic benefit for Homestead and the surrounding communities. As of April 2023, the first section of the Greenway was completed, running from East Mowry Drive to Southwest 137th Avenue.

Sources

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