

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting  
Agenda Item H-13  
August 25, 2020  
City Commission Chambers  
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli  
Vice Mayor Vince Lago  
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.  
Commissioner Pat Keon  
Commissioner Michael Mena**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias  
Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria  
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos  
City Clerk, Billy Urquia  
Economic Development Director, Julian Perez  
Economic Development Assistant Director, Belkys Perez**

**Public Speaker(s)**

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Agenda Item H-13 [12:46 p.m.]  
An update on the 2020 Census in Coral Gables.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Next is update on 2020 Census.

City Manager Iglesias: Mr. Mayor, I will pass that on to Julian Perez, our Economic Development Director.

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Vice Mayor Lago: Julian, you're on mute.

Economic Development Director Perez: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Manager. Julian Perez, Economic Development Director. At this time, I would like to pass on the presentation to Belkys Perez, who is leading the effort on the census.

Economic Development Assistant Director Perez: Thank you, Julian. Alex, if you can give me sharing capabilities. One second. Let me get it up and running. Can you see my screen?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We can see you.

Economic Development Assistant Director Perez: My PowerPoint?

Commissioner Mena: No.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: There we go.

Economic Development Assistant Director Perez: Can you see it in full screen now?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

Economic Development Assistant Director Perez: Okay, great. So, we are approximately a month from the deadline to complete the census, and so we wanted to take this opportunity to just review on the status of the 2020 Census in the City Beautiful. Basically, as of April 2020, Coral Gables has 17,615 households. The IT Department was very involved early on with the County and the Census to ensure that the correct number of correct households, current households, and those projected to be new to market was correct by April 1, 2020. This is the status right now of the response rates for Florida and how we compare to Coral Gables. So, basically, right now our total self-response rate is 61.1 percent for Florida. In Coral Gables, we're a little bit higher. We've had

a total self-response rate of 66.3. When you look at the numbers a little bit deeper, you know that internet self-response rate, that's online rates, we're at 59.8 percent. And the comparison to the last time we did the census, which was 2010, we had a total self-response rate of 69.5, so we're just about three points away from reaching that goal, at least to meet what we did in 2010. Alright, so hard to count areas. There are multiple hard-to-count areas across the nation. What we found is that here in Coral Gables, we have an undercount risk for young children, specifically as you can tell the entire boundaries of the City are at a high risk and there's a particular area of the City where it's very high risk. There are other sectors that are very hard to count as well, but this one stood out. This is one of the more important slides. The census is currently in the NRFU phase, and that's the non-response follow-up phase. Census takers have been in the City since August 11. We've seen them out there. These efforts will continue until September 30, which is the deadline to complete the census, which was moved up from October 31, and that's really important. Census takers work from 9 am to 9 pm, including weekends. If you're concerned about the validity of the person that's knocking at your door, you can actually call the census regional office, which is the number that's on your screen there. There are about 60 million households that this year -- that is the estimated the census takers will have to go to. I do want to mention that since the NRFU phase started, the response rate for Coral Gables increased one percent. And if you've been following daily or weekly, the response rates to Coral Gables, which we have been intently, you can vouch for the fact that one percent is a big increase for us. We stayed stagnant at a specific amount for a long period of time, so it's a positive step in the right direction. So, the 60 million households that our census takers are going to have to visit because people are not responding to the census is the largest number in census history. And despite the shortened timeline, they should be making up to six attempts per household to reach a member of each of those households, if they haven't responded. Now, what we've noticed is that the National League of Cities is hearing from other cities that census takers are not exhausting their visits to households. Instead, they're going maybe perhaps one visit, two visits and then going to a proxy source, which could be a neighbor; it could be a mailperson or public records, none of which are considered as accurate as actually filling out the census or having that personal contact with the person that's in the household. So what are we doing? The City submitted and was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the National League of Cities.

We used a third of the funds for a social media campaign on Facebook to urge residents to complete the census, basically add an “I Counted” frame on their profile picture and to challenge others to do the same. Now, this was a one-month campaign and we started the campaign while we were at a 63.3 percent response rate, and we ended it with a 64 percent response rate. While it was not the conversion rate that we wanted, it did reach a large number of people, which you can see right here. There was 86,000 people that engaged with it, so they either commented, liked it or shared it. And so, it helped to keep the census top of mind. So, this is the second phase of our outreach. We're in the second phase. The rest of the National League of Cities grant will be used for this. We are creating door hangers with specific messaging for census tracts or areas that are underperforming in the City. I'm going to only highlight the top three areas in the City that are underperforming. The first one is number -- Census Tract 74.3, so this is the area south of Bird Road and then north of Ponce; you've got University Drive on the west, and on the east, you've got Douglas. Forty-six percent is the response rate right now. The internet response rate was 42 percent. We were able to find information specific to this census tract, so we're looking at household income, we're looking at renter versus owner and other things. The specific data is being used to create message that resonates with these neighborhoods. So, door hangers will be placed directly into this household and they will have specific information that will appeal to this census tract. This area in particular that we're looking at, lies in the lowest 20 percent of underperforming tracts in the nation, which is also -- which was also the case in 2010. So, the other one, number two, is Census Tract 72. This is the MacFarlane District and Golden Gate District. They're at 48 percent and 40 percent on the internet response. Basically, the same information was collected, and so we will be sending door hangers to these areas with specific information for them. And then the last one is the North Ponce area. You've got Ponce right here, and you are bordered by Salzedo on one side and Douglas on the other. This is 8th Street and (INAUDIBLE) on the south. For your information, 57 was that response rate; 51 by the internet. And aside from that, the census is also -- aside from our municipal efforts, the census is also acknowledging the condensed timeline and is sending out an additional mailer in September. They're calling households. They're calling your house line, if you have one. If you are concerned that the number that is calling you is actually the real number, you can verify it at this customer

service number right here, the 1-800. They're also texting us. They're also calling our cell phones. They are doing it with any of these numbers that you see on your screen. And they are also emailing us as well. They're emailing individuals. This is the official email address that they are doing it with. And aside from that, they have also secured some additional paid media. And the - we're getting close to the end. The additional outreach that the City is doing is that we have placed a request to the census for census response representatives. And basically, we want them to position themselves at two of Publix locations that are located in the city during peak times and days that we have recommended already. We have also been invited to apply for additional funding through the National League of Cities, which we're now considering. And our message is being amplified thanks to our Coral Gables Census Working Committee, which is chaired by Commissioner Mena, with active participation from our stakeholders, most notably from the Chamber of Commerce and the BID, homeowner associations, religious institutions, professional organizations, educational leaders and more. And we hope that with this level of outreach, the support that we will be able to do our best to reach every household. And that is the presentation. I want to tell you that Mark Trowbridge is on the line as well. He's been a good -- a very active participant as well in this process. We have Julian that's on the line as well, and we have Naomi. But a lot of departments have been really helping us through this process, so we want to thank them.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Belkys, a wonderful presentation. And is very, very, very important for this for Coral Gables. And I would like to urge -- request the Commissioners to write to their list of supporters, the list of people who they communicate with, urging them and telling them how important the census is and urging them to fill out the census. It takes five, seven minutes; it's totally private. And if you all please would like -- would do Coral Gables the favor of contacting your contacts to urge them to fill out the census forms and participate. Thank you, Belkys. And it is very, very important. And Commissioner Mena, thank you for your efforts, and I hope you get on our backs for us to do this. Thank you.

Commissioner Mena: It's been difficult this year for whatever reason. It's kind of hard to really understand or pinpoint why across the board response rates are so low given that people are home and you would think have plenty of time. It's easier than ever to do. But I just think people are distracted with everything else that's going on and have bigger issues on their mind.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's not your fault. Thank you very much.