

George Gretsas

PROFILE

Almost 30-years of experience working in government and educational institutions with a strong record of accomplishment in land use planning & zoning, managing finances, developing and implementing policies and strategies, working with boards and community organizations, team building, modernizing infrastructure, and revitalizing downtowns.

HIGHLIGHTS

City of Homestead, Homestead, FL (pop. 70,000)
City Manager

11/10-01/20

Responsible for carrying out the policies of a 7-member City Council and managing the daily operations of the City government with a \$190 million budget and a staff of 500.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Improved Historic Downtown

- Developed and implemented a \$125 million downtown improvement plan including the construction of a new City Hall, a new Police Headquarters, and the restoration of a 1921 historic 420 seat performing arts theater.
- Ran two successful bond referendum campaigns that raised \$26 million for the downtown projects.
- Secured \$40 million in funding for the construction of a downtown transit center including a 1,100-space parking garage and retail liner.
- Worked with Miami-Dade County on the implementation of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that will reduce transit times from downtown Homestead to Dadeland Station by 30-40%.
- Created a national recruitment plan that resulted in a public/private partnership for the financing and operation of a family entertainment center, which includes 10 movie screens, 14 bowling lanes, a video arcade, and food & beverage service. (*Construction completed on time and on budget.*)
- Conceptualized a revolutionary plan that will reinvent the public library. (*Construction in progress; Estimated completion date for Phase 1: 1st Quarter 2020.*)

Stabilized City Finances

- Implemented "belt tightening" measures to help offset a 55% reduction in property assessments caused by the Great Recession.
- Submitted eight out of eight consecutive budgets to the City Council with no increases in the millage rate, no layoffs, no increases in fees, and no reductions in service. (Two out of the eight budgets reduced the millage rate).
- Lowered Electric Utility rates.
- Water and Sewer rates are the lowest in all of Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties.

Improved Quality of Life and City Services

- Reduced Crime – Increases in staffing, improvements in operations, and dedication of police officers led to the lowest crime in Homestead in 30 years. Homestead has fewer total crimes today with a population of 70,000 than 30 years ago when the population was 25,000.
- Significantly improved turnaround time for building permits.
- Oversaw the construction of several new City parks.
- Collaborated with the private sector to construct 4 new charter schools. Public schools also saw major performance successes. Homestead now has 7 “A” schools, 8 “B” schools and 7 “C” schools. For the first time in almost 20 years, there are no schools in the city with a “D” or “F” rating.
- Partnered with Miami-Dade College on a plan to build an entrepreneurial/student center on City property.
- Implemented an award-winning communications operation that has resulted in 31 national awards for government transparency, information flow, and public outreach. City’s Facebook page has over 25,000 followers and City video programming regularly receives views in the tens of thousands.

Implemented Green Initiatives

- Secured a contract to produce half of the City’s base power needs utilizing “waste to energy” process.
- Participated in the Municipal Solar Array project which will provide about 10% of the City’s power generation capacity.
- Partnered with South Dade Soil & Water Conservation District to construct and operate a biosolid compost facility that converts treated sewage into fertilizer.
- Obtained LEED certification for new City Hall.
- Achieved Green Globe certification for new Police Headquarters.
- Established an award-winning ecotourism partnership with the National Parks Service

City Awards

- National Park Service Director's Partnership Award (Homestead National Parks Trolley)
- City-County Communications & Marketing Association (3CMA) – 25 separate awards since 2015 for government communication and citizen outreach.
- The 40th Annual Telly Awards – won 6 separate awards for innovative video and social media work.
- American Water Works Association Region VII (Florida Section) Drinking Water Taste Test “Best of the Best” Winner
- 54th International Making Cities Livable Designing Public Places for Community, Democracy, Health & Equity Award Finalist
- American Public Power Association's Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) Diamond Level designation
- American City and County's 2017 Crown Communities
- Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards
- Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting

City of Fort Lauderdale, Fort Lauderdale, FL (pop. 180,000)
City Manager

8/04-7/10

Responsible for carrying out the policies of a 5-member City Commission and managing the daily operations of the City government with a \$600 million budget and a staff of 2,600.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Led City Out of a Financial Crisis

- Restored Fort Lauderdale's finances after a damaging financial crisis had left them with no reserves, a major insurance deficit, loss of services, downgraded bond ratings, an employee exodus, and general public dissatisfaction.
- Grew the undesignated fund balance to largest in City history.
- Eliminated insurance deficit and built a \$10 million surplus.
- City bond rating upgraded and ranked among the best of Florida's largest cities.
- Reduced tax rate to lowest level since 1985.
- Property taxes rank amongst lowest in Broward County.
- Negotiated historic pension reform with general employees union that will save the City in excess of \$100 million.

Oversaw Community-Wide Planning Effort

- Led an effort involving over 2,000 residents to ensure that future development in the City is better controlled and more compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Completed a number of master plans that set new guidelines to improve the quality of future development in the City.
- Long-term vision has been established for major areas in the City such as the downtown, riverfront, beach, and commercial corridors.

Enhanced Quality of Life and City Services

- Crime rate dropped to 30 year low.
- Property crimes reached their lowest levels in over 30 years.
- Proactive Code Enforcement Effort initiated to help beautify the City.
- Individual performance measures for code inspectors implemented that measure productivity, responsiveness and efficiency.
- Implemented new noise ordinance to address complaints from residents.
- Strengthened City codes to hold code violators more accountable and speed up the process for compliance.
- Raised standards on cleanliness of roads and sidewalks and improved procedures to address issues such as graffiti and illegal dumping.

Modernized Infrastructure

- Oversaw the largest capital improvement effort in Fort Lauderdale's history.
- More than \$500 million in improvements to City's water and sewer systems were made.
 - Constructed 100 miles of sewer lines (approximately 80% of the new sewers constructed under the modernization program).
 - Expanded the City's wastewater collection system by over 30%.
 - Completed 6,500 new sewer connections.
 - Constructed 60 miles of water mains.
 - Constructed a new \$26 million water treatment plant.
 - Replaced 42 wastewater pump stations.
 - Rehabilitated 49 wastewater pump stations.
 - Completed \$20 million in improvements at wastewater treatment plant.
 - Completed 45 miles of sanitary sewer re-lining.
- Over \$110 million in capital improvement projects were completed including the construction of:
 - Five new fire stations
 - A cemetery administration building.
 - New City parks.
 - Upgraded City beaches and tourist areas.

Implemented Green Initiatives

- City fleet operation became a zero-waste generator due to recycling initiatives.
- Implemented water conservation ordinance.
- All City marinas designated “Clean Marinas” from Florida Department of Environmental Protection, a designation reserved for only 10% of Florida’s 2,000 marinas.
- Added 42 acres to City’s open space inventory.
- Converted 74% of the City’s multi-space parking meters to solar powered.
- Strengthened tree ordinance to protect tree canopy.
- Conducted audit process to research current usage of resources and respective efficiencies/inefficiencies and documented rate of waste generation.

Overhauled Emergency Management Operation

- Coordinated City response to 5 hurricanes including Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma and several tropical storms.
- Completed construction of new Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- Significantly improved City’s ability to be self-sufficient in the aftermath of a disaster including establishment of Rapid Impact Assessment Teams (RIAT), GIS mapping, Debris Removal Plan, Points of Distribution (POD) Sites, and the purchase of mobile tanker trucks, refrigerated vans, and a cache of traffic control devices.
- Implemented Departmental Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP).
- Restructured Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) Program and expanded community participation.
- Expanded staff training/exercising in Incident Command System (ICS), Crisis Communication, Points of Distribution (POD) Team, and EOC Training.

City Awards

- Blue Wave Award – *Clean Beaches Council*
- Clean Marina Designation – *Florida Department of Environmental Protection*
- Park of the Year – *Racquet Sports Industry Magazine*
- Tree City USA – *Arbor Day Foundation*
- Ranked #3 of “100 Best Government Fleets” in North America – *Government Fleet Magazine*
- Crystal Award for National Fleet Certification – *Fleet Counselor Services, Inc*
- Achievement of Excellence in Procurement – *National Purchasing Institute*
- Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting – *GFOA*
- Distinguished Budget Presentation Award – *GFOA*
- Best Civil Project of 2008 – *Southeast Construction Magazine*
- Broward Utility of the Year – *Florida Water and Pollution Control Operators*
- Distribution System of the Year Award – *American Water Works Association*
- Community Airport of the Year - *FDOT*

City of White Plains, White Plains, N.Y. (pop. 50,000)
Executive Officer

1998-2004

Responsible for carrying out the policies and administrative procedures of the City including the daily management of the City government with a \$100 million budget and a staff of 900. Duties included providing oversight and direction to the City's 20 department heads, negotiating agreements with developers and government agencies, providing advice on short-term and long-term policy, organizational and administrative matters.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Planned and implemented the City's economic development initiative, which led to over \$600 million of new investment in the City and key improvements to the downtown.
- Resolved a 20-year-old problem known as the "Hole in the Ground Saga" that resulted in the revitalization of an abandoned site at the City's gateway.
- Negotiated a complex public/private agreement between the City and private sector which resulted in the development of a \$300 million movie theater, retail, and residential complex in the heart of downtown White Plains.
- Made significant changes in the area of technology, including major systems overhauls in a number of departments.
- Negotiated an agreement between the City and Westchester County for a lakefront park, the first of its kind in White Plains.
- Developed a variety of new programs including CyberSeniors, the Digital Divide Initiative, Access White Plains and the Clean Streets Initiative.

Westchester County Board of Legislators, White Plains, N.Y.
Program Coordinator

1996 -1997

Responsible for managing the Legislature's press office. Duties included writing press releases and newsletters for all 17 members of the Board of Legislators, providing advice to legislators on policy issues, coordinating press conferences and media initiatives, creating and maintaining the Legislature's website, and responding to inquiries by the media and the public.

Gretsas Communications, Park Ridge, N.J.
Campaign Manager/Political Consultant

1989 -1996

Managed a variety of campaigns for candidates running for elective office and advised

elected officials on political strategy and policy matters. Duties included strategic planning, implementation of campaign plan, managing paid staff and volunteers, budget administration, establishing and maintaining media relations, preparing candidates for debates and major speeches, and coordinating overall print and electronic advertising plan.

Westchester County Board of Legislators, White Plains, N.Y. 1993
Assistant to the Chairman

Chief advisor to the Chairman of the Westchester County Board of Legislators. Duties included carrying out the policies and administrative procedures of the Chairman, lobbying legislators, representing the Chairman at various meetings, handling intergovernmental matters and serving as spokesperson for the Chairman.

Park Ridge Board of Education, Park Ridge, N.J. 1990 - 1998
Trustee

Served three terms as an elected trustee of a 7-member school board responsible for a kindergarten through twelve school district. Duties included setting policies in the areas of instruction, personnel, general administration, fiscal and business management, physical plant and community relations. Served in a variety of leadership roles including President, Vice-President, Chief Negotiator for collective bargaining, and a member of the Budget Committee.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Raised academic standards by implementing a number of educational reforms resulting in higher test scores and statewide recognition. High School earned a ranking in the top 8 in Bergen County and in the top 35 in New Jersey.
- Implemented cost-saving measures that resulted in awards from the State of New Jersey for administrative efficiency. Those efforts led to a reversal of a past pattern of voter rejection of the annual school budgets and established strong public support for the schools.
- Improved school facilities and established the first district-wide technology program.
- Created the district's first ever after-school day care program for working parents.
- Debt reduction effort led to elimination of debt by 1997.
- Sports program excelled with a number of County and State championship teams.

EDUCATION

J.D., New York Law School, New York, N.Y. 1995

B.A. (Political Science), Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y. 1990