

## **Escambia County Investing Millions in Brownsville Revitalization**

Escambia County has invested millions of dollars into revitalizing Brownsville over the past several years, with millions in additional improvements planned for the Brownsville neighborhood.

Improvements so far include over 4 miles of new sidewalks, more than 7 miles of repaved roadways, and additional playground and exercise equipment at the Brownsville Community Center park.

Escambia County has also purchased the old Masonic Lodge building to renovate into a new 8,000-square-foot library and community space in the heart of Brownsville, which is expected to be completed in early 2025.

"I'm very excited to make these investments in Brownsville that will continue to make it a neighborhood we can truly be proud of," District 3 Commissioner Lumon May said. "The Brownsville community is such an integral part of District 3, serving as the western gate that welcomes residents and visitors into Pensacola. I look forward to continuing this positive transformation for our citizens, and I know this is just the beginning of the exciting things to come for Brownsville."

Since June 2023, Escambia County Engineering has resurfaced more than 37,000 feet of roadways in the Brownsville area, representing a nearly \$2.35 million investment. Another \$4.1 million has been invested into the addition of more than 22,400 feet of sidewalks, including a walking path near the Brownsville Community Center to help improve walkability in the area for residents and local youth participating in community center programming. An additional 3,815 feet of new sidewalks are planned for a section of Green Street between Mobile Highway and Kirk Street.

Escambia County has continued to make improvements and increase programming at the Brownsville Community Center since it opened in 2017, also hosting a variety of community events over the years.

Escambia County Community Center Manager Leroy Williams said the community center has been an impetus for positive change in Brownsville, in conjunction with the other improvements the county has made in the neighborhood.

"It's been just overall phenomenal to see," Williams said. "The building was dormant when I first got here, there wasn't a lot going on, but now it's like a big light bulb of inspiration that takes place here. And the best is yet to come, because we're going to continue to increase our programming and continue to increase our community outreach."

The latest addition to Brownsville Community Center programming is performing arts, which Williams said he hopes to continue to expand into a more robust program with the help of community partners.

One recent success at Brownsville Community Center was the Escambia County Real Change event on Sept. 26, which drew over 200 attendees and featured more than 50 community partners working together to provide resources to the community. Escambia County Area Transit provided free transportation to the event, which offered free haircuts, lunch, support services and more. Escambia County plans to host additional Real Change events in the future to help connect the community with valuable resources and assistance.

"As your local government, we shouldn't make people come to us for resources," Commissioner May said. "We should be proactive and bring resources into the community, which is exactly what events like this accomplish."

The Brownsville Community Center is also home to a Little Free Library, a free community pantry in partnership with Leadership Pensacola Class of 2023, and a free prom shop in partnership with Project Formal.

"It truly has made a difference having this community center open," Williams said.

Williams grew up in the Brownsville area, which makes it particularly special for him to be part of the neighborhood's transformation. Williams said he's excited to see Brownsville's first library come to life, which represents a \$3.1 million investment in the community. ECUA is also completing a \$17 million sewer expansion project that includes the Brownsville area, which will make it easier for businesses looking to relocate or start a new business in Brownsville.

Revitalization efforts in Brownsville have involved dedicated efforts from multiple Escambia County departments and divisions, including Animal Welfare, Community Redevelopment Agency, Engineering, Environmental Code Enforcement, Facilities Management, Neighborhood and Human Services, Neighborhood Enterprise, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works.

Escambia County Public Works has completed numerous improvements in Brownsville since June 2023, patching more than 260 potholes, removing 2,160 cubic yards of debris, collecting over 1,500 bags of trash, and trimming trees in the area. Code Enforcement is also partnering with CRA and Neighborhood Enterprise to provide assistance to property owners who are elderly, disabled or struggling financially to address Code Enforcement issues on their properties countywide, including in Brownsville.

Escambia County was also awarded \$350,000 in RESTORE Act funding for the design of a business incubator, which will be constructed near the new library to provide services and resources to business owners or anyone looking to start a new business. The business incubator will include office space and commercial space, offering networking opportunities, business mentorships, and more.

"We have lots of improvements," Williams said. "You can see businesses start to bloom a little more. I think more businesses will want to come into the community, and I even think the ones that left might want to come back. It's just phenomenal what the county has done to give back to this community. It's been great."

To learn more about the Brownsville Community Center and all Escambia County community centers, visit the [Escambia County website](#). For more information about Brownsville Community Center programming, events or partnerships, please call 850-426-1156.



**New sidewalks on Z Street**



***Walking path near the Brownsville Community Center***



***New sidewalks on West Blount Street***



***Exercise equipment at the Brownsville Community Center***



***District 3 Commissioner Lumon May at the Real Change event at the Brownsville Community Center on Sept. 26, 2023.***



**Over 200 people attended the Real Change event at the Brownsville Community Center on Sept. 26, 2023.**



**Future site of the new Brownsville Library, which is expected to be completed in early 2025.**



***Resurfacing on West Lee Street***