

## Executive Summary

Local governments are required, pursuant to Chapter 163.3191 F.S., to prepare an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) of their adopted Comprehensive Plan every seven (7) years. The report must be prepared by the local planning agency, adopted by the local government and submitted to the State for compliance review in accordance with the schedule established by the State Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Broward County's EAR is due March 1, 2011.

Broward County's EAR process was initiated in the late summer of 2009 and has included an extensive public participation process. Numerous meetings and public hearings were held, including an initial "scoping" meeting with the State review agencies and the public, a public workshop, presentations to the Broward League of Cities and Broward County Planning Council and a formal public hearing before the Environmental Protection and Growth Management Department's Local Planning Agency. The Planning and Redevelopment Division also created an interactive Webpage to allow for additional public input and disseminate up-to-date EAR information. A chronology of the EAR process, including a listing and summary of the public hearings and meetings, is included in the Introduction.

Per direction provided by the DCA, the primary focus of EAR this year is major issues selected by the County in coordination with the State review agencies and Broward municipalities. The County's selected issues include; 1) Planning for Climate Change, 2) Water Supply Planning, 3) Mobility and Land Use in Broward County, 4) Population Growth and Impacts on Public Services, and 5) Housing Challenges in an Economic Downturn.

The EAR also addresses the County's progress in achieving the goals, objectives and policies identified within the County's Comprehensive Plan; assesses the successes and shortcomings of the plan; identifies ways that the Plan should be changed; and ensures effective intergovernmental coordination. In addition, the EAR reviews the County's progress in identifying alternative water supply projects, including conservation and reuse, needed to meet projected demand; and, identifies the degree to which the County has implemented its 10-year Water Supply Work Plan. Upon receipt of the EAR, the DCA has 60 days to complete the sufficiency review to determine if it has been submitted in a timely fashion and contains the components prescribed by the Statutes. The County then has 18 months to amend its comprehensive plan based on the recommendations in the report. A six month extension may be requested for valid planning reasons.

Following is a summary of the findings and recommendations for each of the major issues addressed in the EAR.

### **Major Issue Summary**

#### **1. Planning for Climate Change**

This major issue encompasses the challenges Broward County will begin to address within the Comprehensive Plan in response to the anticipated impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels. Southeast Florida is one of the most vulnerable regions in the United States to the impacts of climate change. With more than 5.5 million people, rich in natural resources and containing the only coral reef in the continental United States, Southeast Florida's economic and environmental sustainability is of utmost importance on a local, state and national level.

Broward County has recognized climate change a central issue over the past few years through several initiatives of the Board of County Commissioners;

- On June 12, 2007, the Board adopted Resolution 2007-391 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in Broward County and support the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement. This resolution established the Board's early commitment to addressing climate change and created a framework to guide the planning and implementation of related measures. Today the County's long-term, county-wide GHG reduction goals are 17% below 2005 levels by 2020 and 82% by 2050.
- On June 24, 2008 the Board approved Resolution 2008-442 which created a Climate Change Task Force (Task Force) to develop recommendations for a coordinated county-wide strategy in mitigating the causes, and addressing the local implications, of global climate change.
- On March 18, 2010, the Task Force approved 126 recommendations, 65 of which were ranked critical to meet the Task Force's mission.
- On May 4, 2010, the Board approved the Broward County Climate Change Task Force's "[Broward's Climate Change Action Plan – Addressing our Changing Climate](#)." The consideration of climate change mitigation and adaptation in planning documents, including the Comprehensive Plan of the County and its municipalities, is one of high ranked recommendations.

The State also passed legislation in 2008, known as HB 697 which required local government's Comprehensive Plan's to address energy conservation, efficiency and

the reduction of GHG's. Broward County amended the Comprehensive plan to include policies to meet these requirements in 2009.

An analysis of the Comprehensive Plan identified existing policies regarding reducing GHG's, but no policy direction addressing measures to mitigate the impacts of rising sea levels. To provide a stronger and more comprehensive approach to climate change, EAR recommends the Comprehensive Plan be amended to:

- Strengthen existing energy conservation and efficiency policies where appropriate. This includes identifying and mapping an "energy conservation area" for Unincorporated Broward County as required by State Statutes.
- Revise various Elements of the Plan to address mitigation and adaptation strategies in a comprehensive manner such as:
  - Mapping areas most vulnerable to sea level rise to identify infrastructure and natural systems impacts and viable improvements.
  - Adopting appropriate short, mid and long term timeframes and measureable targets for implementation.
  - Enhance intergovernmental and regional collaboration, public outreach and educational programs.
- Add a Climate Change Element, which can be used as a model for other local governments, with the following objectives:
  - Achieving a sustainable, climate resistant community, including identification of short, mid and long term timeframes and measureable targets.
  - Identifying cost effective mitigation and adaption strategies.
  - Addressing social, economic and environmental factors.
- Amend the Broward County Land Use Plan to:
  - Include a map which identifies areas in Broward County vulnerable to rising sea levels and high risk areas to be used in evaluating Land Use amendments.
  - Discourage Plan amendments which propose increased density or intensity and are in risk of frequent or continuous flooding due to rising sea levels during the next 50 years.
  - Promote redevelopment in those areas at low risk of flooding or storm surge.

## 2. Water Supply Planning

This major issue reflects the importance and challenges of developing new strategies for providing adequate clean, potable water for Broward County's

residents and visitors in the coming years. Water supply planning is being driven by the following key factors:

- Population growth is expected to result in a 19.8% increase in water demand by the year 2025, which is a minimum increase of 47 million gallons per day. (Though still substantial, these numbers represent recently reduced population growth projections and water demand forecasts, which will result in extended timelines for planned water supply project implementation.)
- While water providers have historically relied on the Biscayne Aquifer as a sole source water supply for meeting urban water supply needs, the South Florida Water Management District's 2007 Regional Water Availability Rule requires that alternative water supplies be developed to meet future increases in urban water demand.
- In 2008, the State adopted legislation addressing closure of ocean outfalls and water reuse which will greatly influence how we meet future water demands.
- There is a growing appreciation among policy makers and water providers of the need to give adequate consideration to the various water resource implications posed by climate change and rising sea levels.

The following focal points have been identified as being integral to the discussion of the water supply planning issue: 1) there are benefits to be gained by considering regional approaches to meeting water supply needs. (i.e. It is important to consider opportunities for implementing projects in partnership with local water providers and neighboring counties in order to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and seek economies of scale for new investments.); and 2) There is a need to promote water conservation as a prominent aspect of viable water supply plans. (i.e. It is important to consider conservation as one of the most promising and cost-effective approaches for meeting future water demands.)

It is important to note that progress has been made toward meeting identified water supply planning challenges through the development and maintenance of partnerships; the leveraging of resources; and the programming of projects (e.g. partnership efforts with the South Florida Water Management District, Broward County Water Advisory Board, Broward County Water Resources Task Force as well as the coordination of a variety of agency plans). However, the Broward County Comprehensive Plan will need to be updated to reflect and continue the progress, and to address the most recent water demand forecasts in view of recent regulatory mandates (i.e. Regional Water Availability Rule, Ocean Outfall and Reuse Legislation). The following recommended plan revisions address changes to several plan elements including the Capital Improvements Element:

- Reflect the heightened emphasis on the need to develop Alternative Water Supplies (AWS) to meet anticipated water demands.
- Address the ocean outfall legislation and increased reuse requirement (60%), including policies to coordinate with transportation planning efforts in the development of a Regional Reuse Master Plan.
- Address the development of a new County ordinance to require the connection of existing and new landscape irrigation systems to available reclaimed water lines
- Pursue the “feasible” establishment of mandatory reuse zones.
- Implement water-efficient landscaping provisions.
- Pursue an amendment of the Florida Building Code to require installation and operation of low-bleed cooling tower systems & condensate harvesting mechanisms in both new and replacement installations.
- Implement the proposed County Water Conservation Incentives program.
- Plan for climate change impacts on water supplies.
  - Develop a stormwater management model to investigate the influence of rising sea level on drainage and flood control.
  - Specifically reference the saltwater intrusion model to protect groundwater supplies in the face of impacts from climate change and sea level rise.
- Revise Alternative Water Supply project timeframes and budgets, as part of the 10-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan, to reflect extended timeframes in keeping with revised population projections.
- Revise and/or add projects to the Capital Improvements Element (and County Capital Budget), with appropriate timeframes and budgets, to reflect updates to the various Water Supply Plans at the local, regional, and state levels.
- Pursue development of mechanisms to coordinate and monitor implementation of water supply planning efforts county-wide.

### **3. Mobility and Land Use in Broward County**

This major issue evaluates the progress that Broward County has made in implementing strategies to coordinate land use and transportation planning. Since Broward County’s roadway network is nearly “built out”, meeting the transportation needs of future development continues to be linked to expanding multi-modal transportation options and transit oriented development. As part of a large metropolitan area, meeting Broward County’s transportation needs must include regional solutions to transportation challenges.

Broward County’s 2004 Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) recommended that, as an overall guiding principle, the County encourage mixed use development, including a variety of housing types and uses, in concentrated centers or nodes. Specific recommendations in the 2004 EAR addressed utilizing existing mixed use land use

categories and creating new transit oriented development categories and applying these categories to existing and planned transit corridors and hubs.

Since 2004, the County has worked effectively to develop measures to advance the strong relationship between land use and transportation planning. Numerous actions Broward has taken include:

- Created and adopted transit oriented and mixed land use categories (TOD, TOC & MU-R) within the Broward County Land Use Plan.
- Approved mixed land use designations along high capacity transit corridors to facilitate linkages between land use and transportation.
- Established transportation concurrency management areas (TCMA's) for the purpose of appropriately addressing existing and future transportation needs.
- Adopted Airport and Seaport Master Plans consistent with the Transportation Element.
- Prepared the "Broward County-Wide Community Design Guidebook". The Guidebook includes recommended design principles to create a stronger sense of place in the County addressing transportation design, urban design, landscape architecture, architectural design and environmental graphics. Among the key transportation concepts addressed in the Guidebook are context sensitive road design, design of safe pedestrian and bicycle routes, land use/transit connections and climate sensitive transit stops.
- Amended the Broward County Trafficways Plan, Broward County Land Development Code and Administrative Code to incorporate context sensitive road designs providing more flexibility in the County's road design standards. These standards allow for alternative road designs in downtown areas and along transit corridors which emphasize pedestrian and transit use of trafficway corridors as opposed to automobile use.

The EAR recommends the following additional effort and strategies to enhance coordination between land use and transportation;

- Incorporate the Mobility Hub concept based on site specific recommendations per Livability Studies being conducted by the Broward MPO.
- Update the Broward County Comprehensive Plan to be consistent with the newly adopted 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan.
- Review and enhance policies that support projects and programs that promote multimodal transportation and attract federal and state funding along specific congested corridors.
- Continue to participate in the A1A Scenic Highway implementation to identify features along the corridor that will provide convenient access to the beauty

- and amenities featured along this corridor, and their potential state and federal funding.
- Evaluate multimodal LOS and policies based upon current and projected financial resources/constraints.
  - Continue to coordinate with Broward MPO in regards to modal split improvements and monitoring.
  - Continue to work cooperatively with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), municipalities and other partners regarding initiatives identifying and addressing impacts to the SIS.
  - Complete on-going planning efforts with the Florida Department of Transportation and municipalities to address impact to the State Intermodal System and other corridors of regional significance.
  - Incorporate recommendations from the State Road 7 Common Vision/Northern Broward Mobility Studies.
  - Complete a comprehensive review of the County's transportation concurrency management system including analyzing the feasibility of the following:
    - Consolidating the Transportation Concurrency Management Areas, including the Southwest and Northwest Standard Concurrency Areas, into a Countywide system focusing on corridors rather than districts.
    - Shifting to a multimodal system including transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and greenways.
    - Expanding eligible transit costs to include operating and maintenance.

#### **4. Population Growth and Impacts on Public Services**

This major issue addresses the impact of revised population and economic growth projections resulting from the housing bubble and economic recession which began in 2006. It evaluates the success and challenges of infill strategies to accommodate future population growth in Broward County. And finally, it evaluates potential Level of Service (LOS) impacts on public services resulting from reduced government revenues due to declining population and economic growth estimates.

The County's 2035 population projections have been lowered 13% from 2.6 million to 2.3 million from estimates prepared in 2005 taking into account the economic recession and housing bubble. Concurrent with the reduced population projections, Broward's projected 2035 housing needs have been decreased by 11.5% from approximately 1 million to 929,000 units. Broward has lost 70,500 private sector jobs since 2007. The unemployment rate increased from 4.4% in October 2007 to 10.1% in October 2010. The impact of the population and economic conditions has been felt in Broward County through reduced tax revenues. In turn, this is reducing the ability of the County and municipalities to provide public services and maintain and improve public infrastructure.

The County's 2004 EAR estimated that an additional 190,000 units would need to

be added to the County's Comprehensive Plan to meet future housing needs. Due to the reduced population and housing projections and the addition of 60,490 units through land use plan amendments (LUPA's) since the 2004 EAR, this gap has nearly been closed and it is now estimated that only an additional 11,000 units are needed by 2035 to meet future growth needs.

Of the units added by plan amendments, the majority (47,728) was within mixed use categories, Regional Activity Centers (RAC), Local Activity Centers (LAC), Transit Orientated Developments (TOD) and Transit Oriented Corridors (TOC) situated in the central and eastern sections of the County, along major transportation corridors. This is a positive sign that infill strategies designed to direct redevelopment and accommodate future growth in a more compact, mixed use, pedestrian friendly style development near transit, are moving forward as planned. Unfortunately, the number of *completed* mixed use projects in these areas is low (*estimated at 2,500 units*) due to the housing bubble and the deep recession which began in late 2006. Given the uncertainty about future economic conditions and population growth, accurate impacts to future public services and capital improvement needs are difficult to evaluate. With that in mind, the EAR recommends that Broward County:

- Re-evaluate its population projections following receipt of the 2010 Census to determine whether future projections should be adjusted.
- Continue to selectively approve amendments necessary to accommodate for future population growth primarily through the application of Mixed Use Land Use designations.
- Maximize the efficient allocation of financial resources to maintain LOS.
- Encourage the Urban School Concept which uses less land and the collocation of school facilities in order to conserve economic and environmental resources.
- Investigate the preparation of an Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan including an analysis of existing and forecasted economic conditions and recommendations for attracting and retaining employers.

## 5. Housing Challenges in an Economic Downturn.

Housing affordability remains a major concern for Broward County, although the housing market and contributing factors have changed since Broward County's last Evaluation and Appraisal Report in 2004. While the collapse of the housing market has dramatically reduced housing prices overall, housing affordability is a continuing problem, especially for very low and low income households. The economic downturn and high unemployment rates, loss of home equity, tighter

lending practices, persistently high average rents, and cost of living increases have all contributed to the affordability problem.

Below is an overview of the major issues that are affecting housing affordability in Broward County followed by a summary of the recommended changes to the Housing Element of the Broward County Comprehensive Plan which addresses the issues.

- **Housing Foreclosure Rates:** Housing foreclosure remains at record levels in Broward County, with 14,290 property foreclosures in 2009 with 2010 on pace to exceed that number. The challenges for the County are managing and mitigating the volume of defaulted loans, keeping “underwater” borrowers from defaulting, and stabilizing neighborhoods and the housing market at the same time.
- **Housing Maintenance:** Maintenance is essential to retaining and expanding the affordable housing supply. Approximately three quarters of Broward’s housing supply is 20 years or older and of that, one quarter is 40 years or older. Foreclosure contributes to declining property maintenance by allowing properties that many times are already in decline to sit and decline further. The economic downturn and unemployment has also reduced the resources available for maintenance.
- **Housing Prices and Affordability:** Although lower property values have expanded the supply of affordable housing, housing prices remain unaffordable for many low and very low income households. Rents have remained high, dropping only slightly from the peak of the “housing bubble”. Over 58,000 households are severely cost burdened in Broward County (spending 50 percent or more of income on housing).
- **Homeownership Barriers:** Many factors are creating barriers for homeownership even though housing prices are lower. Economic conditions such as lack of job security, slow income growth, and tighter lending practices such as requiring increased down payment and higher credit scores, are constraining ownership opportunities. Negative home equity is also constraining the market, keeping households from being able to sell homes or move for employment opportunities. Over 40 percent of homes in South Florida are “underwater” on loans.

- **Cost of Living Increases:** Rising household expenses are contributing to foreclosure and affordability problems. Transportation, healthcare, food, education, utility costs are all on the rise. Transportation is the second highest household cost nationally, when combined with housing costs, accounting for 57 percent of the typical income of working families.

### **Recommended Changes to the Housing Element**

**High Foreclosure Rates:** Add policies incorporating recommendations of the Broward Foreclosure Blue Ribbon Panel established by the Broward County Commission in 2008 to address foreclosure intervention, education, and acquisition, transfer and maintenance of foreclosed properties.

**Housing Maintenance:** Add a policy addressing continued implementation of Broward County's Abandoned/Vacant Property Certification Program and recommend municipalities consider adopting similar programs. This program consists of an ordinance adopted by the County Commission that requires post foreclosure inspection and certification in unincorporated areas to disclose maintenance, code and lien issues to prospective buyers.

**Housing Prices and Affordability:** Add a policy(s) supporting construction of multifamily housing rental units. Add a policy supporting Broward Housing Council recommendations for coordinated and efficient use of financial resources. Add a policy supporting the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. Add a policy(s) addressing funding strategies such as gap financing.

**Homeownership Barriers:** Add a policy supporting increased education about new mortgage modification programs designed to assist households with reducing mortgage payments and negative equity. Add a policy supporting credit counseling services to assist households with budget management and savings. Add a policy promoting education regarding the indirect costs affecting housing affordability such as property taxes, utilities and homeowner's insurance.

**Cost of Living Increases:** Add a policy adding proximity to transit and multi-modal design as a criterion for evaluating funding requests for affordable housing. Add or strengthen policies supporting mixed-use neighborhoods along transit corridors and expanding education about impact of location decisions on transportation costs.