

Chapter 1: Introduction

Broward County is well known for its brilliant coastline of white, sandy beaches, natural areas and diverse economic and cultural assets. Positioned at the center of Southeast Florida, Broward County is a gateway to the international marketplace and those seeking the unique South Florida lifestyle.

Broward is an urbanized county, consisting of thirty (31) unique municipalities, from the bustling urban center of the City of Fort Lauderdale, to the tranquil rural lifestyle found in the Town of Southwest Ranches. The diversity of businesses, lifestyles and population have contributed to Broward becoming the second most populated county in the State of Florida, second only to Miami-Dade County.

Broward County is bounded by Palm Beach County to the north, Miami-Dade County to the south, Hendry and Collier Counties to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean on the east. The County population has increased from 5,135 in 1920 to more than 1.77 million in 2010. This dramatic increase has made Broward County the 18th largest County (in terms of population) in the United States and the second largest in the State of Florida, just behind Miami-Dade.

During the 1990's, Broward County had an annual population growth rate of 2.9 percent. During the 2000's growth dropped to an annual average rate of 0.95 percent. This decrease was primarily attributable to the effects of a housing bubble and severe economic recession which began in late 2006 and continues today. The first part of the decade, from 2000 through 2005 saw an average annual growth rate of 1.44 percent, while the last 4 years, 2006 through the end of 2009, saw an average annual growth rate of 0.27 percent. Even with this declining rate, it still will translate into a projected amount of 525,946 new residents from 2010 to 2035. The majority of this future growth will come from natural increase (births exceeding deaths) versus immigration from outside the county which has been the primary source of County growth in the past.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) for the Broward County Comprehensive Plan is to evaluate how well the Broward County Comprehensive Plan has served the County since the last EAR was found sufficient by the Florida Department of Community Affairs in 2004. The 2011 EAR is used to determine what revisions Broward County needs to make to best reflect the vision for the future. Specifically, the purpose of the evaluation process is to:

- Identify major issues facing Broward County.

- Review the implementation of the plan since the 2004 EAR.
- Assess the degree to which the plan objectives have been received.
- Assess the successes and shortcomings of the plan.
- Identify ways that the plan should be changed.
- Ensure effective intergovernmental coordination.

The focus of the EAR, as stated in Florida Statute 163.3191 “is to respond to changes in state, regional, and local policies on planning and growth management and changing conditions and trends, to ensure effective intergovernmental coordination, and to identify major issues regarding the community’s achievement of its goals.” Broward County has the opportunity, with this 2011 EAR, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan and to make necessary changes to the plan. This process begins with developing a set of major issues that the county will face related to the comprehensive plan. A major issue is considered to be:

- An impediment that prevents a community from getting to where it wants to be in the future
- A problem that needs to be overcome before a community’s vision can be achieved
- A widely held concern that impacts planning for future growth in a community

Once the major issues have been identified, they must be evaluated from the perspective of the current comprehensive plan and its implementation. The successes and failures of the current plan are recognized and recommendations for changes to portions that have not been successful are given. This process ensures that Broward County’s Comprehensive Plan remains an effective foundation for growth management.

1.2 Community Description

Broward County is an urbanized county located in southeast Florida. It is bounded by Palm Beach County to the north, Miami-Dade County to the south, Hendry and Collier Counties to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The County covers approximately 1,197 square miles. A major feature of Broward County is the western designated conservation area which is two-thirds of the County. It contains portions of the Water Conservation Areas 2A, 2B, 3A, and 3B, which are managed by the South Florida Water Management District, the Miccosukee Indian Reservation, and a small portion of the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation.

The remaining land area (410 square miles) is located east of the protective levee. This is considered the developable area or the urbanized area. **(Map 1, Ch. 1.2)** The largest city in the County, by population, is the City of Fort Lauderdale with 178,457 –residents in 2010. Several other cities in Broward County have populations exceeding 100,000, including the City of Pembroke Pines, the City of Hollywood, the City of Coral Springs, the City of Miramar, and the City of Pompano Beach.

Early Settlement.

Archeological evidence indicates that “Archaic” Indians were Broward County’s first known residents, 2,000 to 4,000 years ago. In 1567, Spanish explorers visited South Florida and found a Tequesta Indian village near the mouth of the Miami River. The Tequesta population declined as Spain ceded the state to Great Britain. In 1763, at the end of the French and Indian War, Spanish rule was reestablished. Twenty years later, the first non-Indian settlers came to Broward. In 1821, the United States obtained Florida from Spain. In 1895, the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railroad was extended south from Palm Beach which made it possible for more settlers to reach Broward. In 1904, Dania Beach became the first incorporated community followed by Pompano Beach in 1908 and Fort Lauderdale in 1911. By 1912, the New River had become one of the largest vegetable shipping ports in the United States. In 1915, Broward County was formed from portions of Dade and Palm Beach Counties and named for former Florida governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward.

Development Milestones.

In the 1920s, growth was fueled by the post war economic boom. Broward County’s population quadrupled, from 5,135 in 1920, to 20,094 by 1930. Also in the 1920’s, the cities of Deerfield Beach and Oakland Park and the Town of Davie were incorporated.

In the 1930s, the nationwide economic depression impacted investment in Broward County, and the pace of growth slowed. In the 1940s, During World War II, training bases were established throughout Broward County, including the future sites of Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International and North Perry airports. The U.S. Navy established a base at Port Everglades. The construction of numerous military bases in the area provided for the beginnings of the postwar development.

The 1950s became the first major decade of growth in Broward. After the war, veterans returned home to their families. This resulted in a postwar economic boom for the construction industry in Broward. In the 1960s, the population continued to grow and seven new municipalities were formed. The Federal Highway (U.S. 1) tunnel under the New River opened, and has remained the only tunnel in Florida.

In the 1980s, Broward County’s population exceeded one million. Rapid growth continued with development concentrated mainly in the southwestern and northwestern parts of the County. This expansion was helped by the completion of the portions of Interstate 75; the Sawgrass Expressway in northwest Broward; and Interstate 595 which

forms a major east-west expressway link from Interstate 75 to Port Everglades and the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. In addition, the Tri-Rail commuter rail system was established in 1989, linking Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade Counties.

In the 1990s, an economic recession slowed the growth of Broward County. A significant in-migration of people and businesses from Miami-Dade County occurred as a result of Hurricane Andrew. Major expansion plans were developed and implemented for Port Everglades and the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. Broward County also saw a dramatic increase in cultural and recreational facilities, including the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, the Museum of Discovery and Science, the Museum of Art, and the Bank Atlantic Center.

In the previous decade, 2000-2010, Broward experienced continued growth throughout the first half, evidenced by robust residential development, quickly rising property values and low unemployment. Broward saw the start of a planned expansion of Interstate 595, legalization of casino gambling and the addition of the 31st municipality, West Park. However after 2006, a housing bubble and severe economic recession followed. Record foreclosure and unemployment rates marked the close of the decade. Population growth slowed to record levels as well, and school enrollments declined for the first time, from 2007-2009. The effects are still being experienced, reducing historically robust growth and population projection levels to historic low levels. By the close of the decade the decline had stabilized and a very slow recovery had begun.

Population Growth.

During the 20th Century, rapid population growth transformed Broward County into the eighteenth largest County in the United States and the second largest County in the State of Florida. However, growth has slowed over the last few decades. It will continue to grow, albeit at a slower rate. Population in Broward County grew by 9.2% from 2000 to 2010.

In 2000, 8 percent of county residents lived in the Unincorporated Area. Due to annexations and incorporations, only an estimated 13,582 residents or less than 1 percent, currently still reside in the Unincorporated Area.

Government

County Government.

Broward County is one of three Counties within the South Florida region. Since 1974, Broward County has been a “home rule” County. The basic concept of home rule is to shift much of the responsibility for local government from the state legislature to the local community. The County Charter as amended establishes a nine-member Board of County Commissioners, elected by single district. The chair serves as the County Mayor; however, the County remains a strong administrator form of government and has a County-wide land use planning agency (Broward County Planning Council).

Annexations and incorporations have reduced the unincorporated area and the demand for municipal-type services. The Board of County Commissioners intends to actively encourage all unincorporated areas outside of the conservation area to be annexed into adjoining municipalities when the opportunity arises. Broward County Government has focused on its role as a regional service provider, with emphasis on redevelopment, the environment, economic development, and transportation. Based on its population and location, Broward County has been recognized by the U.S. Bureau of the Census as a Metropolitan Statistical Area (Fort Lauderdale MSA).

The Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an agency responsible for transportation planning, intergovernmental coordination and transportation funding allocations in Broward County. Land use planning is coordinated through the Broward County Planning Council, which is responsible for preparing a County Land Use Plan and certifying municipal land use plans that are in compliance with the County-wide Plan. The Environmental Protection and Growth Management Department is responsible for maintaining the Land Use Plan for the Unincorporated Area and various Comprehensive Plan Elements having both local and County-wide planning areas. (BMPO will provide

Municipal Government.

There are thirty-one (31) municipalities in Broward County, which range in size from less than 40 to more than 178,000 residents.

Unincorporated Neighborhoods.

In 2000, the Unincorporated Area had 88,156 residents. However, annexations and incorporations have reduced the population of the Unincorporated Area in 2010 to 13,582 in seven neighborhoods scattered throughout the County. **Map 1, Ch. 1.2** shows the Unincorporated Area, to which Volumes 2 and 4 of the Broward County Comprehensive Plan relate.

Physical Features.

Broward County has generally flat topography. Elevations range from sea level to 25 feet above sea level with most of the County below 10 feet elevation. Broward County lies over large sections of two major aquifer systems, the Floridan and Biscayne Aquifers. While the Floridan is brackish and not a source for potable water, the Biscayne aquifer provides potable water for Broward County. Most of the water recharge for the Biscayne comes from the Everglades. Currently, restoration of the Everglades, a \$7.8 billion, project is underway and planned to be fully implemented by the year 2036. This project is designed to restore the Everglades and Florida Bay ecosystems and ensure a stable water supply for South Florida.

Climate.

The climate of Broward County is sub-tropical and humid. Average annual temperature is 75.4 o F. The winter mean temperature is 66.5 o F and the summer mean temperature is 84.2 o F. This climate and extensive sand beaches makes the County attractive to tourists year-round and especially during peak season from November through March. Though storm systems from the tropics can affect the County most any time during the year, the official hurricane season runs from June 1st to November 30th. South Florida is particularly vulnerable to these storms and the accompanying storm surges, which mandates evacuation of populations in risk areas during a storm event.

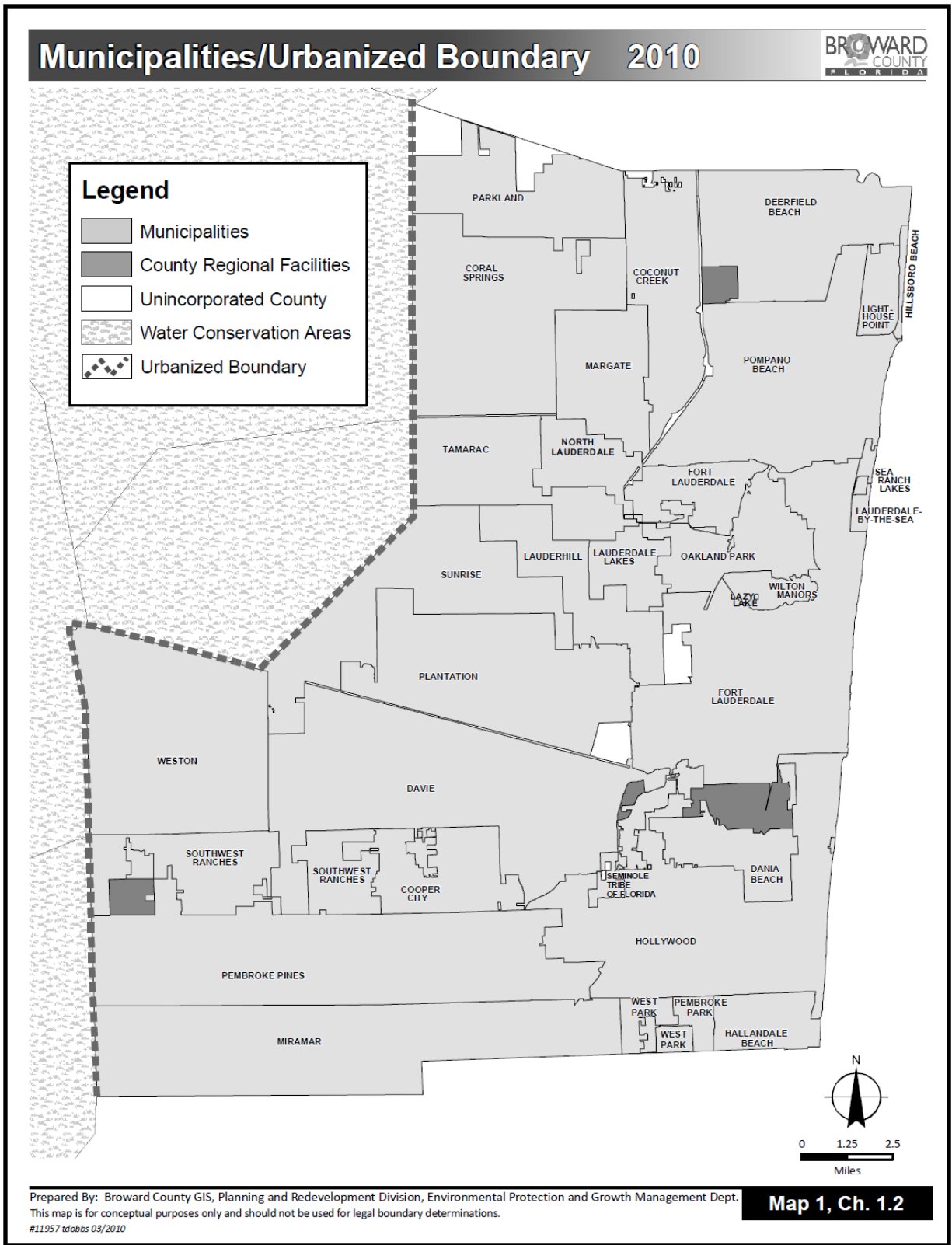
Conservation Area.

The East Coast Protection Levee, completed in 1959, represents the limit of “developable” area. West of the levee is designated “Conservation” by the Broward County Land Use Plan and will remain undeveloped. This was done not only to protect a significant part of the Everglades, but also protect the major source of water recharge for the Biscayne Aquifer. In an effort to increase water supply and mitigate the effects of cyclical droughts, several parcels totaling approximately seven square miles east of the levee have been purchased by the South Florida Water Management District. This land will remain undeveloped and become part of the East Coast Buffer.

Development Patterns.

During the past thirty years, development has grown westward from the three main coastal cities: Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood, and Pompano Beach. However, the development was not uniform. The movement of development leap frog through central areas of the County because it was more profitable to build on undeveloped land in the west, than to redevelop the existing infrastructure and subdivisions in the eastern corridor. Development continued in the western suburbs and now, for the most part, the County is built out. Historically, municipalities which have approached build-out typically are communities with smaller infill sites, substandard housing and businesses, and underdeveloped parcels available for redevelopment. However some communities have bigger infill sites available to build single family developments.

Since 2005, numerous communities have begun the process of redevelopment by adopting mixed use categories along transit corridors to redirect growth eastward and provide new types of housing and expanding commercial opportunities. These new investments are being supported and encouraged by initiatives such as Eastward Ho!, Transit, Housing Orientated Redevelopment (THOR), Livability Center studies, the designation of the Urban Infill Area, Redevelopment Areas and other local initiatives.



1.3 Public Participation Process

The Planning and Redevelopment Division (PRD) of the Environmental Protection and Growth Management Department (EPGMD) began work on the evaluation of the Broward County Comprehensive Plan in late summer of 2009. The PRD had discussions with the Broward County Planning Council, and other County agencies on several issues regarding to the County's physical growth and development in order to outline the major issues facing Broward County.

February 17, 2010: After sending out a draft list of Major Issues to the reviewing agencies, the County met with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to discuss additional concerns and ideas for the potential major issues for consideration.

February 25, 2010: The PRD held a scoping meeting to discuss potential major issues which were facing Broward County. The workshop was well attended. More than 150 written comments were provided, and additional comments were recorded. The workshop was advertised in the local newspaper, and a memorandum was sent notifying interested parties including local government officials, state agencies, homeowner associations and other interested parties.

During this period, the PRD added an EAR webpage to the PRD Website, regularly posted updates and information to provide an additional method to receive comments and ideas by the public.

April 29, 2010: The PRD sent a Letter of Understanding to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) confirming the major issues to be contained in the 2011 EAR. These issues included:

- Planning for Climate Change
- Water Supply Planning
- Mobility and Land Use in Broward County
- Population Growth and Impacts on Public Services
- Housing Challenges in an Economic Downturn

September 2, 2010: Department of Community Affairs (DCA) agrees to the 2011 EAR scope including the list of major issues.

October 18, 2010: The PRD held a joint workshop with the Broward County Planning Council and South Florida Regional Planning Council to present Draft major issue recommendations. The Workshop was well attended with more than 65 members of the public participating. The workshop was advertised via- e-mail notifying interested parties including local government officials, state agencies, homeowner associations and other interested parties. Numerous comments were received and recorded at the meeting.

November 22, 2010: Broward County presented the Proposed EAR major issue recommendations before the Broward League of Cities meeting in Lauderhill to receive comments and answer questions. Staff discussed the five (5) major issues and timeline to adoption in February, 2011. Staff participated in discussion and several comments were received.

January 19, 2011: The Proposed 2011 EAR was presented before the Local Planning Agency (LPA) which recommended the Broward County Board of County Commissioners adopt and transmit it to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for their review. This was an advertised public hearing to ensure that the public had an additional opportunity to provide comments on the EAR. The meeting was attended by more than 23 members of the community. Staff discussed the five major issues of the EAR and numerous comments and questions were received and incorporated into the Report.

January 27, 2011: The Broward County Planning Council recommends that the County Commission approve the Evaluation and Appraisal Report for the Broward County Land Use Plan.

February 22, 2011: The Broward County Commission adopts the 2011 Proposed EAR and transmits to DCA for their review.

The effort to complete the 2011 EAR, which includes five major components; EAR Requirements, Major Issues, Evaluation of Goals, Objectives and Policies (GOP's volumes I & II) and Changes to Florida Statutes and Administrative Rules was accomplished over a year-long period. The successful completion of this document could not have been accomplished without the dedicated effort from the staff of numerous County departments, input from concerned public citizens and support from our thirty (31) municipalities.