

Regional Housing Strategy Intro

The cost of living in South Florida has exploded in recent years. This increase can be seen in the costs people must pay for insurance, medical services, consumer goods and housing. The growing disparity between living costs and wages have created a crisis for the residents of South Florida, who want to stay in the region and raise families here. Recent statistics have been published which estimate that the median home in Broward is already at \$367,000 and nearly \$355,000 in Miami-Dade, while the average household incomes are only at \$57,478 and \$51,924, respectively. People who work in jobs as nurses, firefighters, teachers and police are no longer able to afford the cost of living in South Florida. As a result, the quality of the workforce is undermined, which in turn threatens the viability and growth of the regional economy.

The South Florida Regional Planning Council has been aware of the importance of issues relating to housing and affordability since its work on the redevelopment initiative known as Eastward Ho!, and has anticipated the crisis that has come to pass. A rapidly growing population and the depletion of developable land have created an extreme affordability problem in the local market. The region's strategic policy plan, which was developed with significant input of housing experts, has provided a framework for the development of a regional housing strategy to help the region tackle this seemingly insurmountable dilemma. Since the adoption of the *Strategic Regional Policy Plan for South Florida*, Council staff has been studying the housing conditions in all three counties of its jurisdiction to understand the broad context for housing in South Florida and the opportunities to effect change.

The South Florida Regional Planning Council is in a unique position to address housing needs because of the scale of the problem. Housing is a complex economic issue, one that municipality acting alone would unlikely be able to resolve without the support of a larger framework. Since many of the issues affecting affordability are regional in nature, the strength of a regional housing strategy is that it can consider housing at the appropriate scale. An important regional role for the Council to play is to inventory where available affordable housing supply is located across the region and to quantify each local government's responsibility for providing affordable housing to meet local needs. Various organizations throughout the region have been actively working to resolve the affordable housing issue, and the South Florida Regional Planning Council can, with the help of its partners, consolidate all of this good work to bring the region closer to a uniform housing strategy. The regional housing strategy will be a cooperative strategy that considers as many interests as possible. This requires the input and cooperation of all the individual factions who acknowledge housing in South Florida as a serious problem.

The ultimate goal of the regional housing strategy is to provide partners with tools and information that will lead to housing opportunities across a wide spectrum of income levels and lifestyle choices. It is understood that truly healthy and vibrant cities need to provide opportunities for all of its citizens to succeed. The South Florida Regional Planning Council's commitment to a regional housing strategy is made in the interest of our economy, our families and our future here in South Florida.