

## OUR REGION

South Florida is comprised of complex and unique places, people, and opportunities. Sustaining these elements, while providing choices and access regarding employment, housing, and activity, is a true challenge. This document discusses opportunities for us to address this challenge and further enhance our Region.

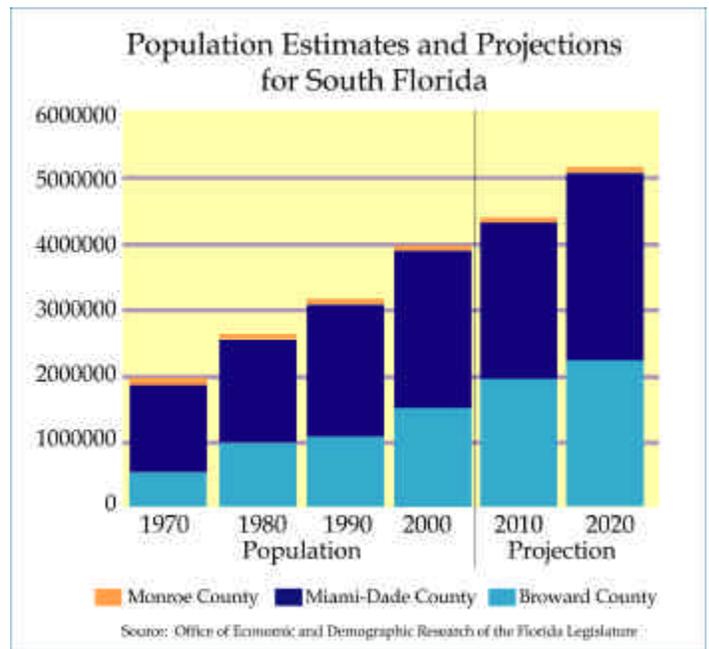
## Our People

The 2000 Census has provided us further information regarding who we are, where we live, and how we are faring in South Florida. The demographics of the Region are described below.

### ***Our Population Growth***

In 2000, South Florida had a larger population than 24 states. The Region adds more than 160 new residents each day, which translates to an increase of almost 1.2 million people in the next two decades (from just under 4.0 million in 2000 to 5.1 million in 2020).

- According to the most recent official projections, Broward and Miami-Dade Counties each are expected to contribute close to 600,000 new residents to the regional total in that period; Monroe County, meanwhile, will experience a much smaller amount of growth (just over 5,000 new residents).
- As a region, South Florida will have average annual rates of growth around 1.4%, slightly lower than the projected growth of the State of Florida (1.5% per year).
- Broward County is expected to continue to outpace the State of Florida as a whole (with annual rates of growth around 1.7%), while Miami-Dade County will grow more slowly than the state (about 1.2 % per year), and Monroe County will remain essentially stable.



## ***Our Diversity***

International migration is the most significant source of population growth in the Region, accounting for more than seven of every ten new residents in the last decade.

- Latin America and the Caribbean continue to be the primary sources of international migration into South Florida, but there is growing diversity as new immigrants are attracted to the Region from Europe and Asia.
- The net increase in foreign-born residents between 1990 and 2000 was 489,000; of these, 273,000 (56%) settled in Miami-Dade County, another 212,000 (43%) settled in Broward County, and 4,000 in Monroe County.

The ethnic and racial composition of South Florida's population continues to grow more diverse.

- Four in ten of South Florida's residents today are Hispanic or Latino, or nearly 1.6 million people. This ethnic group, which may be of any race, is a majority in Miami-Dade County (57%); it grew by 151% in Broward County, increasing to 17% of the total population in 2000. Stated differently, 430,000 more Hispanics live in South Florida now than in 1990.
- The Hispanic population continues to grow more diverse, as new residents from Puerto Rico, Colombia, Nicaragua, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Honduras, and Venezuela have established significant communities in the Region (each with more than 30,000 residents), even as the Cuban community has grown and firmly established itself. These, and other communities from Haiti, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Brazil, now attract direct migration from all around the Region.
- The Asian and Pacific Islander population increased by 60% over the decade, to 71,000, more than twice the pace of the population as a whole, although it still represents less than 2% of the region's population.
- The African-American population in South Florida grew by 199,000 residents over the last decade to 794,000, increasing its percentage of the overall population to 19%. This racial group is diverse as well, including not only African-Americans, but also Haitians (119,000), Jamaicans (95,000), and people from other Caribbean and Latin American nations, whose populations together may represent as much a third of the group.
- Racial and ethnic characteristics of public school students suggest that the non-Hispanic Black population will continue to increase its share of the population as a whole. Non-Hispanic Blacks were almost a third of the student body in the Region in 2001-02, much larger than their proportion of the population as a whole in 2000 (19%). Hispanic students (42%) and Hispanics in the population at large (40%) were comparable proportions of the total. However, non-Hispanic Whites represented 37% of the population in 2000, but only 23% of students in 2001-02. Viewed from a different angle, during the 12 years, 62% of the 207,000 new public school students in South Florida were of Hispanic origin, and 33% were Black non-Hispanic

South Florida's population is older than the rest of the nation, but it is getting older more slowly now. In fact, the age composition of the Region's population is influenced by conflicting trends. Among these are:

- A gradual slowing in the growth of South Florida's elderly population, as those who retired in the 1970s are not being fully replaced by additional incoming retirees.
  - The 488,000 residents 65 years or over in 1980 (18% of the total), grew to 540,000 in 1990 and to 573,000 in 2000, although this represents a decline to only 14% of the total population. Broward County's elderly population grew by only 369, and Monroe County actually lost 808 elderly residents. Still, South Florida had more residents 65 years or over in 2000 than 28 states.
  - More than 150,000 (26%) of the residents 65 years or over in South Florida in 2000 lived alone, similar to the proportion of elderly living alone in the state and the US.
  - The very old population (85 years or over) in the region was among the fastest-growing age groups in the last decade (a 47% increase), rising to 82,000 –more very old residents than 32 states.
  - While the nation's median age rose from 32.9 to 35.3 in the 1990s, Florida's median age rose from 36.3 to 38.7. However, the estimated median age in the region rose only from 35.6 to 36.6 between

1990 and 2000. Miami-Dade County's median age in 2000 (35.6) was lower than the State average and only slightly higher than the country's; Broward County's median (37.8) was less than the Florida average, although still higher than the US. The region's age distribution of the population is expected to look more like the rest of the nation over the next decade, but a little less like the rest of the State of Florida.

- The impact of the "Baby Boom" generation, which is being felt across the nation – The current 35-54 age cohort grew at a rate of 3.6% annually over the last decade, increasing by 344,000 between 1990 and 2000, to 1,168,000 (30% of the total population, up from less than 25% in 1990). This group will cause a bulge in the 45-64 cohort by the time the next census is carried out in 2010.
- A new bulge in the distribution as the larger than average cohort of children of "boomers" reaches adolescence - The number of young people in the 10-19 age cohort grew by 138,000 in the last decade, to 528,000, or 13% of the total, up from 12% in 1990. This could lead to an increased importance for issues that correlate with high school students and young adults. An associated trend will be a leveling off in the growth in the youngest age cohort, 0-9, with a corresponding slowdown in the growth of the elementary and middle school population.
- A preponderance of international in-migrants who tend to be younger than the existing population as a whole - the overall age composition of the population in the region is most influenced by the age distribution of in-migrants, due to the significant role they play in overall population increase.

### ***How Are We Doing?***

Population growth continues to be a major factor in a changing South Florida, affecting the age, race, and ethnic composition of the population in complex ways. South Florida's public sector, non-profit organizations, and private sector have all initiated programs to address socio-economic challenges facing our residents, including job generation, higher wages, and the provision of affordable housing. Some local governments and private companies are beginning to address the issue of affordability and livability by instituting a minimum livable wage for their employees. The major socio-economic activities of the South Florida Regional Planning Council are listed below.

#### ***Revitalization & Economic Development***

South Florida was designated an Economic Development District (EDD) in 1994 by the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) in order to foster and promote economic growth in the Region. EDA granted the South Florida Regional Planning Council the authority to operate a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program in 2000. The overall goal of the RLF program is to create private-sector jobs within the regional economy and to diversify and strengthen the economic base.

The Eastward Ho! Brownfields Partnership is targeting the remediation and sustainable reuse of contaminated and abandoned or underused sites as part of the larger Eastward Ho! urban infill and redevelopment effort. One of the Partnership's significant tools is the Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund, which assists for-profit, non-profit and governmental agencies with remediation activities.

#### ***Affordable Housing & Services***

The 2001 Regional Housing Summit and subsequent roundtables convened by the Council assessed the issues and challenges facing our Region in regard to the provision of adequate and affordable housing for our residents and developed strategies to deal with the issue.

The South Florida Regional Planning Council is engaged in an on-going collaboration with The Coordinating Council of Broward (CCB) to support integrated planning for health, education and human service delivery in Broward County.

## ***How Can We Improve?***

### ***Improving Regional Equity***

Regional equity refers to the fair provision and distribution of economic opportunities and public facilities services within a region. Numerous components of this concept are addressed within the *SRRP*. Goals 1 through 3 of the *SRPP* outline specific steps to improve our Education and Workforce Development, Wages and Affordability, and Human Health, Safety and Welfare. Goals 4 through 10 provide guidance as to improving the quality and distribution of our Region's infrastructure, including School Facilities and Housing. Goal 22 addresses ways to increase our cultural competence, our understanding and ability to help those of different backgrounds become a part of our Region, achieve economic success, and enjoy an improved quality of life. Through implementation of the *SRPP* and related efforts, we will enhance the Region's equity, livability, and sustainability for all South Floridians.

## **Our Places**

South Florida's places include the developed portion of our landscape, our rural and agricultural lands, and the Region's unique and diverse natural resources. A compilation of the significant regional facilities and natural resources of South Florida is available within the Appendices, which can be found on the Council's website, [www.sfrpc.com](http://www.sfrpc.com).

### ***Our Urban Places***

As of 2004, South Florida consists of three counties and 69 municipalities, stretching from Deerfield Beach in the northeast all the way to Key West. Many of these cities, towns, and villages are highly urbanized and suburbanized, creating a non-stop stretch of development along the eastern coast. Major downtown areas, including Fort Lauderdale and Miami, are home to businesses, shops, tourist destinations, and government agency headquarters. Many suburban areas are currently looking to diversify their land uses so as to offer residents jobs, services, and other opportunities within their communities. The provision of adequate schools and affordable housing are major issues throughout the Region. The future will offer fewer opportunities for continued sprawl, which could deplete many of our remaining rural and agricultural lands, and will provide increased opportunities for infill and redevelopment activities.

### ***Our Rural Spaces***

Our Region is home to one of the nation's most unique and productive agricultural areas. South Miami-Dade County contains a broad mixture of agriculture, including winter vegetables, tropical fruits, and nurseries. Economic and market conditions, as well as population growth, continue to place strong development pressure on these remaining areas. The South Miami-Dade County Watershed Plan is currently underway and will address ways to help sustain this area's agricultural economy. Smaller pockets of rural and agricultural lands, such as those within southwest Broward County and portions of Monroe County, face similar challenges.

### ***Our Natural Resources***

The natural resources of South Florida are many and varied. Although dominated by the Everglades landscape, the Region is also home to such diverse habitats as beaches, estuaries, coral reefs, and tropical hardwood hammocks. The Biscayne Aquifer, our main drinking water supply, underlies almost the entire Region. Historic development patterns have had negative impacts on these habitats and resources. Efforts towards conservation and restoration of these resources, many of which are already underway, are essential for the Region's sustainability.

## ***How Are We Doing?***

### ***Revitalization of Our Urban Places***

As the Region runs out of developable land, the Council is working with communities to promote more efficient and sustainable patterns of development with a particular focus on redevelopment and infill opportunities. Such development opportunities and patterns, as well as the need to provide adequate public facilities and services, were strategic issues identified in the 1995 *SRPP*. Since then, the Council has pursued these opportunities through vigilant review of local government comprehensive plans, developments of regional impact, and federal and state permits, and through encouragement of the concepts of Eastward Ho!, the Brownfields Partnership, and the State Road 7/US 441 Collaborative. The Council has also encouraged integrating land use and water resource planning through such efforts as the South Miami-Dade Watershed Plan.

#### ***The State Road 7/US 441 Collaborative***

The State Road 7/US 441 Collaborative is a unique partnership that shares one common goal: to coordinate local resources and planning in order to promote the economic vitality of the corridor through:

- Aesthetic improvements,
- Redevelopment,
- Enhanced mobility, and
- Safety of the corridor.

The Collaborative's membership includes each of the 14 local government jurisdictions that span the State Road 7/US 441 corridor in Broward County.

#### ***The Eastward Ho! Brownfields Partnership***

Designated a National Brownfields Showcase Community in 1998, the Eastward Ho! Brownfields Partnership is a regional collaboration around shared environmental restoration and urban revitalization interests. It allows local, state, regional, and federal agencies and private-sector, nonprofit, and community organizations to bring their skills and resources to bear on the shared problem of Brownfields (sites of perceived or actual contamination) in Southeast Florida's urban core in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties.

### ***Restoration of Our Natural Resources***

The citizens of South Florida, with our federal and state partners, have made significant progress towards addressing each of the strategic issues regarding Natural Resources of Regional Significance identified within the 1995 edition of the *Strategic Regional Policy Plan for South Florida*. Through the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, the Lower East Coast Water Supply Plan, general management plans for Everglades National Park, Dry Tortugas National Park, and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, the Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study, and others, we have made progress towards creating an integrated comprehensive natural resource protection and management plan, balancing recreation and conservation needs in our open spaces, and determining water resource management for the future. Through Florida's Communities Trust and local bond issues (which have never been turned down by our electorate), we have seen increased funding for habitat protection and management.

## ***How Can We Improve?***

### ***Enhancing Connectivity and Preserving Our Resources***

With all of this work, we still are only beginning to make the connections necessary to sustain our places for the future. We only now are starting to implement the planning efforts listed above. In the future, we will do more. We are prepared to support the connections between land use and water resources. We are proposing to use our land in more efficient, sustainable ways through our support of public transportation and pedestrian-oriented urban corridors. We will address the preservation of our historic resources, urban parklands, and community character within our redevelopment framework. The residents of South Florida have no lack of energy, ambition, and commitment to make the connections necessary to reach and sustain our vision of the future.

Goals 4 through 16 of the *SRPP* address specific ways to improve our infrastructure and developed areas and to conserve our rural, agricultural, historic, and natural resources.