

Section 8 Policy Recommendations



Sunlit Ship
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8. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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Section 8

Policy Recommendations

Introduction

Section 5 Planning Guidelines includes an inventory of existing resilience plans and polices at the Federal, state, regional, and local level. These guidelines have developed and matured at different levels over the last few years. During the MIRR planning process, the project team observed and noted the policy recommendations outside this scope of work. These recommendations are presented here for further review in the next phase of implementation.

National Recommendations

Expanding the Scope of MIRR Studies to Include U.S. Coast Guard Installation

While the regional footprint of this MIRR study encompassed several critical USCG facilities, they were not formally included in this study due to the Congressionally defined scope of the MIRR program. The MIRR program and funding is offered to communities through the DoD. USCG falls under the Department of Homeland Security.



Because DoD and DHS support each other, expanding that authority beyond DoD installations to include USCG facilities in future MIRR is highly recommended, especially given their frequent co-location, national security importance, and climate vulnerability.

Funding of Implementation Efforts

This grant-funded project opens the door for continued dialogue between community planners and military planners. Interim implementation steps will be managed by the SFRPC; however, dedicated funding and staff will ensure long-term implementation and coordination. OLDCC should consider and fund MIRR Phase 2 activities to support the creation and staffing of a formal “Mission Assurance through Community Resilience” partnership to maintain momentum, synergy, and communication as stakeholders work to secure funding and implement resilience projects identified in the South Florida MIRR.

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Allow Local Design Guidance Inside the Fence Line

The DoD should develop department-wide guidance directing installations to adopt local, science-based resilience and design standards to address regional climate conditions and concerns. There was consensus among the installations that the local resilience plans and policies address local future and current conditions. Installations would be stronger and more resilient by following local guidance.

Regional Recommendations

Inclusion of Installation Representatives in Community Planning

South Florida has a history of reaching across boundaries in its community resilience planning. It is highly recommended that communities leverage the relationships built or strengthened through the MIRR process to also include military installations in any ongoing planning processes for their community. The recommended local JPAs provide an excellent forum to address more inclusion as implementation is rolled out.

Additionally, the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact is a model for regional collaboration, planning, and information sharing. Since its inception, the Compact has strategically reached beyond the original four counties to collaborate with cities, academia, chambers of commerce, and the business community. It is recommended that the Compact partners consider opportunities to include military priorities and issues in the next regional climate action plan, annual summits, annual state and Federal policy statements, and periodic subject specific workshops.

Along these lines, South Florida installations should continue to actively communicate and coordinate with their surrounding cities and counties for the express purpose of increasing resilience on both sides of the fence line.



Mixed-use Construction

Local Recommendations

Attainable Housing

Housing affordability and attainment is a well-known top stress in urban centers across the country and is a priority being addressed in South Florida. Local governments are addressing both affordable housing options (subsidized housing) and attainable housing (non-subsidized, yet still more affordable).

This is a stress for military families in South Florida as well. Addressing this crisis will take the combined efforts of all stakeholders. In addition to the several recognized areas that can be influenced as noted in this strategy, military families should be part of the attainable housing conversations and prioritized as part of the resilience agenda in South Florida. The following housing strategies should be further explored in the next phase of implementation.

Land Management

The key attributes of land management, including local planning, development, land use, and zoning policy decisions, are governed by city and county charters and ordinances. Land management differs from city to city and county to county. Cities and counties can, however, and often do have a bigger role in controlling the costs through several means including as noted in the following text. These too can be further reviewed in the next phase understanding best applicability from city to city.

The high cost of land is one of the primary drivers of new home prices and a significant barrier to affordability. There are few real means to reduce this burden beyond pure subsidy; however, additional options may include:

- Vacant or underutilized government-owned or acquirable property that has a higher-and-better commercial use should be identified and considered for assembly or for strategic trades for alternate sites that might otherwise be cost-prohibitive for residential development.
- Land registries can be created, maintained, and made available through public, online mapping tools. Such tools can provide a big picture of opportunities for public land that may be suitable for affordable/attainable housing, as well as strategic, privately owned parcels that could be traded as noted in the preceding recommendation.
- Local governments can offer developer incentives (such as increased density, height, permitting fee waivers, or discounts, or expedited permitting) in return for the inclusion of affordable or attainable units within an otherwise market-rate development. A “sliding scale” of incentives may be offered to stimulate desired levels of affordability based on the population to be served.
- Zoning changes that allow smaller single-family homes or lots (e.g., micro units), accessory dwelling units (e.g., garage apartments or “granny flats”), and mixed use can stimulate lower-cost housing options by reducing the effective land cost per unit. Such approaches have already been incorporated in some South Florida governments.

Cost of Construction

Escalating construction costs – including both labor and materials – are another significant barrier to affordability. The carrying cost of undeveloped property such as accrued interest and property taxes adds to the importance of speed in mitigating the risk (which directly impacts the costs) associated with new construction. Local governments can help to control these costs by adding predictability and expedience to their development review processes, with priority for projects that deliver the desired levels of affordability. This may include:

- Reduce permit costs to incentivize and expedite construction and development timelines.
- Streamline the planning and zoning process to accelerate desired development.
- Identify opportunities to promote housing near job centers and/or transit stops where parking requirements may be reduced, lowering development costs.

Product Type Beyond Single-family Homes

Single-family homes are the predominant product type in most suburban communities. It is generally understood that single-family homes, while highly desirable especially for families, require more land and more infrastructure per unit than denser product types. This plays a role in their high cost. For decades, the main alternative to single-family housing in U.S. suburbs has been the garden-style or mid-rise apartment community. This type of development is driven by institutional investment that typically requires a large number of units with high monthly rents to justify construction.

In response to the shortage of attainable housing, the notion of “missing middle” housing has gained traction in recent years. This refers to the types of housing that fall between single-family homes and apartments (such as duplexes, townhomes, or courtyard clusters), which used to be common but are often forbidden by local zoning codes. Missing middle housing can often be delivered faster and at a lower cost per unit than single-family or midrise products. Strategies to allow or encourage this type of development include:

- Ensure that local zoning ordinances allow for townhomes, duplexes, courtyard clusters, or other missing middle product types appropriate to the local context and market demand.
- Encourage communities to promote innovation in design and construction techniques. This could include sponsorship or coordination of symposiums, demonstration projects, or research.
- Encourage communities to study and potentially allow for the construction of accessory dwelling units, micro-units, or single-room occupancy housing communities and other non-traditional housing structures.

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These steps can be implemented by:

- Achieving Critical Mass with Mixed Use through Planned Unit Development, and designating a minimum percentage of units for installation personnel in that development.
- Building Public-Private Partnership Pilots for development. Tools for successful pilots include:
 - Advocate for a special zoning overlay encompassing a 5-mile radius around the installation within which the development of attainable housing is prioritized and incentivized.
 - Conduct a detailed Housing Market Study/Needs Analysis to identify specific gaps or opportunities in the local area.
 - Convene a Developer Roundtable where local developers and builders can share their experience in the market, identify specific local barriers to affordability, and discuss potential solutions. There may be opportunities to leverage regional or national housing advocacy organizations to support such an effort.
 - Explore the potential to create a Housing Trust Fund or other dedicated funding mechanisms to provide direct support to potential homebuyers or renters that have been or are at risk of being priced out of the market.

Define and Study Encroachment at HARB

HARB and Miami-Dade County should leverage their current coordinated efforts and enlist the City of Homestead's assistance to create a natural conservation buffer that will protect HARB's airfield from encroachment without interfering with flight operations. This could begin with a land use study to understand current development patterns and HARB's space needs.

Innovative Redundant Utility Options

It is also recommended that installations pursue backup utility options inside the fence lines to increase resilience in times of disaster. There are several programs through agencies and grants to help improve resilience for the power grid and transmission lines. These programs are to modernize, strengthen, reduce emissions, and improve energy efficiencies. For communication systems, it is recommended to research satellite-based providers to reliably meet increasing future demand.