

**MINUTES OF THE  
SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL**

**March 18, 2024**

The South Florida Regional Planning Council met virtually and in person on this date at the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization, 150 West Flagler Street, Suite 1924, Miami, FL 33130. Chair Geller welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:42 a.m. He reminded everyone of the meeting's procedures and asked Councilmember Garcia to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. The recording of this meeting can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2TvYgfhbQY>

**I. Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call**

Chair Steve Geller  
Councilmember Mario J. Bailey  
Councilmember Frank Caplan  
Councilmember Craig Cates\*  
Councilmember Joseph Corradino  
Councilmember Beam Furr\*  
Councilmember René García  
Councilmember Oliver Gilbert, III\*\*  
Councilmember Cary Goldberg\*  
Councilmember Denise Horland\*  
Councilmember Samuel Kaufman\*  
Councilmember Michelle Lincoln  
Councilmember Kionne McGhee\*  
Councilmember Greg Ross\*  
Councilmember Michael Udine\*

\* Virtually Present

\*\* Absent

SFRPC Executive Director Isabel Cosio Carballo and Legal Counsel Sean M. Swartz were present.

The following Ex-Officio Member was present:

Armando L. Vilaboy, representing the South Florida Water Management District

The following Ex-Officio Members were virtually present:

Dat Huynh, representing the Florida Department of Transportation, District VI

Jon Moore for Sirena Davila, representing the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Kent Walia, representing the Florida Department of Transportation, District IV

Sean M. Swartz, Legal Counsel, stated for the record there is a quorum.

## **II. Welcome by Aileen Bouclé, Executive Director, Miami-Dade TPO**

Chair Geller recognized Councilmember Garcia who welcomed the councilmembers to Miami-Dade County.

Councilmember Garcia congratulated Chair Geller on a successful joint meeting with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council last Friday in West Palm Beach.

Chair Geller then recognized Aileen Bouclé, Executive Director of the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization (TPO).

Executive Director Bouclé welcomed the Councilmembers and stated how it was always a pleasure to collaborate with the SFRPC. She noted that she is a former ex-officio member of the Council and has made presentations to SFRPC Councilmembers in the past.

### **Approval Council Agenda**

*Motion was carried by unanimous consent.*

## **III. Presentations (Time Certain: 11:00 AM)**

### **Presentation # 1: Evaluation of Agricultural Land Use Trends and Outlook in Miami-Dade County, Florida Study**

Executive Director Cosio Carballo introduced Alexander "Alex" Dambach, AICP, Planning Development Manager, Planning Division, Miami-Dade County Regulatory and Economic Resources Department, and Charles LaPradd, Agricultural Manager, Miami-Dade County Regulatory and Economic Resources Department. Mrs. Cosio Carballo shared with councilmembers Mr. Dambach's and Mr. LaPradd's vast professional experience, background, and achievements.

Mr. Dambach detailed the Evaluation of Agricultural Land Use Trends and Outlook in Miami-Dade County, Florida Study completed in October 2023. The study was initiated by resolution of the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in May 2022. The County worked with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) and other divisions of the university in creating this study.

His presentation included the following updates:

- Evaluation of Agricultural Land Use Trends and Outlook in Miami-Dade County.
- Overview of agriculture in Miami-Dade County: Land Area.
- Farm size distribution in Miami-Dade County, 1997-2017.
- Overview of agriculture in Miami-Dade County: Economics.
- Overview of agriculture in Miami-Dade County: Population.
- Agriculture's importance to the County and beyond.
- Miami-Dade County's Industry Rankings.
- Economic trends for major agriculture crops.
- Major factors affecting profitability and sustainability.

- Emerging technological changes.
- Recommendations to improve economic sustainability.
- Future agricultural land use needs for 2030, 2040, and 2050.

Mr. Dambach stated that the County's Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) policies have long supported agriculture as a viable economic use of suitable lands. He concluded his presentation by stating that "the future viability of the agricultural industry in Miami-Dade County depends on maintaining profitability, securing resources to support the capacity to produce, and being resilient in adapting to change." He further stated that "wise policy choices regarding land use, regulations, labor, and other issues affecting agriculture are critical to meet this need over the next three decades and beyond." [Link to Mr. Dambach's PowerPoint Presentation](#)

Chair Geller introduced Mr. LaPradd, Miami-Dade County's Agricultural Manager. Mr. LaPradd stated that the significance of agriculture in Miami-Dade County has been of longstanding importance to the United States. He stated that Miami-Dade County is strategic to the food source of the rest of the continental United States and no one else in the country can farm like South Florida other than Southern California. He said that if you want something fresh between November and April it is either from South Florida, Southern California, or an offshore foreign entity. Because of Miami-Dade County's tropical climate, it can produce very high value crops. Many of Florida's crops are valued by the square foot not by the acre.

Chair Geller asked if Miami-Dade County has the same concerns regarding "agritourism" being used as an event space in areas that are not zoned for event spaces. Mr. LaPradd responded that Miami-Dade County has the same problems everybody else has, sometimes more. He stated that he would send Mrs. Cosio Carballo a memo from the Florida Department of Agriculture clarifying agritourism.

Chair Geller then asked if Mr. LaPradd had any comments regarding the importance of protecting the Urban Development Boundary (UDB) versus the need for affordable housing. Mr. Dambach replied that he views one of the main findings of the report to be the importance of maintaining the UDB. The County receives a lot of requests to expand out of the UDB, some are legitimate requests others are not valid. He further stated that the County looks closely at ways to be able to support the development of affordable housing while maintaining the UDB. Miami-Dade County has had a lower loss of agricultural land than other parts of the United States. Mr. LaPradd added that much of the land outside the UDB that is farmed is not even owned by the farmers. It is owned by real estate speculators and that is a concern.

Chair Geller noted that there is a famous issue of "Hertz rent-a-cow" which occurs in Broward County. This is when individuals clear land and then put three or four cows on it just to get the agricultural exemption for taxes. Chair Geller completed his comments by stating that any reasonable comprehensive immigration plan must account for more workers whether or not they are citizens, or permanent or temporary workers. He added that those workers are needed not exclusively in agriculture but including in agriculture.

Councilmember Bailey asked about the number of Miami-Dade County's sheep, wool, and goat sales. Mr. Dambach stated that Miami-Dade County is fifth in the state in terms of sheep, goat, wool, mohair milk, and agriculture sales value. He stated there are also a few fish farms in the region. Miami-Dade County leads the nation overall in nursery greenhouse and floriculture sales.

Councilmember Garcia stated that it is important to find a way to coexist with development and agriculture.

Councilmember Caplan asked if oyster cultivation would be suitable in this area. Mr. LaPradd stated that the temperature is too hot for cultivation, maybe on the north end of the bay but that has its issues since the southern end is a national park.

Mrs. Cosio Carballo stated that these presentations will inform the Council's process moving forward as it looks to update its strategic regional policy plan (SFRPP). She hopes to take that on later this year and is collecting information on various topics.

### **Presentation # 2: Miami-Dade County Flood Response Plan**

Mrs. Cosio Carballo introduced Pete Gomez, MA, Director, Miami-Dade County Department of Emergency Management, and Jesse Spearo, PhD, CEM, MEP, FPEM, FMI, Assistant Director, Miami-Dade County Department of Emergency Management. Mrs. Cosio Carballo shared with councilmembers Mr. Gomez's and Dr. Spearo's vast professional experience, background, and achievements.

Mr. Gomez began the presentation by stating that Miami-Dade County and Broward County no longer have a hurricane season from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>. He stated that in April, Fort Lauderdale and Broward County suffered damage from a "rain bomb". These "rain bombs" are bringing tropical storm-type weather conditions to South Florida, and hurricanes are getting stronger and more powerful. Concerned by this activity, Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava called for the Department of Emergency Management to create a plan and coordinate with Ms. Marina Blanco-Pape from Miami-Dade County, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), and Miami-Dade County's 34 municipalities. Other stakeholders included community-based organizations, government organizations, and elected officials.

Dr. Spearo led the rest of the presentation. He stated that a few weeks ago, the first-ever flood response exercise was held in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Emergency Management Institute. Ongoing outreach and communication with partners will be done throughout the entire year ahead of flood season. An annual tabletop partners series with relevant agencies will also be organized. Dr. Spearo went on to discuss challenges to roads, airports, and fuel terminals that result from flooding and concluded the presentation. Councilmember Bailey asked that the Miami-Dade League of Cities and local chambers of commerce such as the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce become part of the flood response plan committee so local businesses are engaged. Mr. Gomez agreed that the Miami-Dade League of Cities should be included. He noted that when Mayor Levine Cava has events regarding hurricanes she has calls with the Miami-Dade League of Cities.

### **Miami-Dade County Flood Control / Salinity Control Structures Update**

Mrs. Cosio Carballo introduced Marina M. Blanco-Pape, P.E., MSME, B.Arch with Miami-Dade County's Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources. She is the Division Director for Water Management in the Division of Environmental Resources Management. Mrs. Cosio Carballo shared with councilmembers Ms. Blanco-Pape's professional background and achievements. Ms. Blanco-Pape began by stating that she appreciates Chair Geller's enthusiasm about working to alleviate flooding challenges in South Florida.

She stated that Miami-Dade County has been working closely for many years with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) in analyzing, modeling, and engineering for a strong water management system. The County is a technical cooperating partner with FEMA. The County shares all engineering analysis and models, and recommendations with FEMA which uses that information to create the FEMA maps.

Ms. Blanco-Pape stated that Miami-Dade County has sixteen control structures, three of which have studies by the SFWMD known as Phase Two advancement. The current study by the Corps/SFWMD plans to take on two more control structures in Miami-Dade County and a couple in Broward County. That leaves eleven structures in Miami-Dade County that remain to be tackled. The SFWMD has done a Phase I analysis for those structures. The Corps has studied them previously, but they remain to be moved beyond Phase I.

For three years or more, SFWMD has been looking at grants and has partnered with Miami-Dade County in applying for some of them. There have been two awards granted for FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grants for the C7 and C8 basins in Miami-Dade County which are among the most critical basins in terms of priorities. Those grants involved design and construction funding and will typically have some local match. The funding agreements are very slow and have been delayed. Miami-Dade County, SFWMD, FEMA Region 4, and Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) will be engaging together to see how to move those funding agreements forward.

She went on to state that Miami-Dade County has been doing modeling for the countywide water system for many years, in a formal way since the mid-1990s. In late 2021, the County completed an overhaul of all its hydraulic and hydrologic models countywide. It also looked at different scenarios including years 2040, 2060, 2080, and 2100. With that information, the County updated its Capital Improvement Plan and has identified \$500 million in improvements to be implemented over the next 20-30 years. About 80% of those improvements are to the secondary canal system. It was recommended and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in October 2022. These improvements will bring a 10-year one-day protection for storage and conveyance up to a 25-year 3-day protection in a 2060 scenario.

The County has more than \$32 million under procurement for construction contracts that will be completed in 2026 to upgrade all the C7 secondary canals to the new level of service for 2060 as well as about half of the secondary canals in the C8 basin. C9 is being put together right now and then the County will continue with C6, C4, and so on to the South in the order of priority. The SFWMD has for the next fiscal year been approved \$150 million in funding and is looking into how that money can be used for design and the next steps.

Chair Geller stated that the SFRPC strongly requested this year that the SFWMD not reduce its millage as it has done in all prior years, and it agreed.

Ms. Blanco-Pape noted that the County has more than 200 miles of secondary canals countywide, and it has identified through the entire network which canals have banks that are too low to meet the higher level for storage capability. The upgrades of the secondary canal will be fixing or elevating the canal banks so that the storage capability or detention capability from the prior canal can happen.

Councilmember Caplan asked whether the water ultimately goes out to the bay.

Ms. Blanco-Pape stated that some of it goes to the bay, depending on whether it is retained or detained.

## II. Action Items

### A. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

*Chair Geller motioned to approve the Meeting Minutes for February 26, 2024. Councilmember Lincoln moved the motion and Councilmember Caplan seconded the motion, which was carried by a unanimous vote.*

### B. Financial Report

The Director of Finance and IT Leo Braslavsky Soldi presented the Financial Report in detail.

*Chair Geller motioned to approve the Financial Report. Councilmember Caplan moved the motion and Councilmember Ross seconded the motion, which was carried by a unanimous vote.*

### C. Consent: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Reviews

Legal Counsel, Sean Swartz, read the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Reviews, Proposed.

#### **Proposed:**

- City of Dania Beach 24-01ESR
- Town of Davie 24-01ESR
- City of Hialeah Gardens 24-01ESR
- Village of Virginia Gardens 24-01ER

#### **Public Hearing**

Chair Geller opened the Public Hearing and asked if there were any comments or questions.

#### **Public Comments**

There were no comments or questions from the public in person or virtually.

*Chair Geller motioned to approve the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments. Councilmember Bailey moved the motion and Councilmember Garcia seconded the motion, which was carried by a unanimous vote.*

Legal Counsel, Sean Swartz, read the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Reviews, Adopted.

#### **Adopted:**

- Broward County 23-04ESR

#### **Public Hearing**

Chair Geller opened the Public Hearing and asked if there were any comments or questions.

**Public Comments**

There were no comments or questions from the public in person or virtually.

*Chair Geller motioned to approve the adopted Comprehensive Plan Amendments. Councilmember Bailey moved the motion and Councilmember Ross seconded the motion, which was carried by a unanimous vote.*

- D. Regional Issues: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Review
- E. Agricultural Land Use Trends in Miami-Dade County Presentation
- F. Miami-Dade County Flood Response Plan Presentation
- G. Miami-Dade County Flood Control / Salinity Control Structures Update

**Public Hearing**

Chair Geller opened the Public Hearing and asked if there were any comments or questions.

**Public Comments**

There were no comments or questions from the public in person or virtually.

**V. Program Reports and Activities**

- A. SFRPC Revolving Loan Funds Status Report

No status report was given. A report will be given at the next council meeting.

- B. SFRPC CARES Act RLF Status Report

No status report was given. A report will be given at the next council meeting.

**VI. Discussion Items**

- A. Executive Director's Report

Mrs. Cosio Carballo stated that the SFRPC is planning to have its regional conference on May 31, 2024. The subject of the conference will be the intersection of mental health, housing, and continual care. Councilmember Garcia and his Chief of Staff Iraida Mendez-Cartaya are working with Council staff and guiding the development of the conference agenda. Key Council staff are Eralda Agolli, Community & Economic Development Program Manager, and Randy Deshazo, Deputy Director, who are planning and organizing the primary components of the conference with support from Kathe Lerch, Director of Administration. Mr. Deshazo stated that the plan is to convene with policymakers and professionals across South Florida to help bring more focus to the needs of people with mental health struggles and the importance of creating transformative housing and continual care policies.

- B. Legal Counsel Report

Mr. Swartz did not have any legal updates for the Council.

C. Council Members Report

Chair Geller noted that Council staff have been extremely busy with the property insurance press conference last Thursday and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) and SFRPC Joint Meeting last Friday in West Palm Beach. He stated that the idea has been to hold two joint meetings a year between SFRPC and TCRPC, at least one with a theme. Last year's theme was water, and this year's was property insurance but also included other matters. In addition, once a year the SFRPC and TCRPC have a joint conference. Two years ago, a conference was held in Palm Beach and focused on solid waste. Last year's conference was on recycling. A topic has not been selected for next year. In addition, once a year the SFRPC has its own conference. The topic of Last year's conference was First / Last mile connectivity to transit. This year's conference will be focused on mental health and housing.

Chair Geller stated that the SFRPC and the Comprehensive Development Strategy (CEDS) are becoming strongly relevant and well-known in the tri-county areas of Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe.

Chair Geller recognized in the audience Mr. Jim Murley, Senior Resilience Advisor, Miami-Dade County Office of Resilience. He recently transitioned out of the role of Chief Resilience Officer for Miami-Dade County. He is a former Executive Director of the SFRPC. He first began working for the SFRPC 50 years ago as a planner after his service in the Vietnam War.

Councilmember Bailey asked for an update on Florida's Coral Reef. Chair Geller advised Councilmember Bailey that an update had been given at the March 15, 2024 Joint Meeting. SFRPC staff will send the update to Councilmember Bailey. Mrs. Cosio Carballo reminded the Council that an SFRPC / TCRPC Florida's Coral Reef Work Group exists and there is planned an afternoon workshop on April 15, 2024.

D. Ex-Officio Report

Ex-officio member Dat Huynh (FDOT, District 6) shared that a transportation planning exchange will be May 7-9, 2024 in St. Petersburg. It will be held jointly with the Florida Puerto Rico District of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). Link to registration: <https://www.flprite.org/transportation-planning-exchange.html>

Ex-officio member Armando Vilaboy (SFWMMD) shared that they received \$150 million from the state for infrastructure upgrades and operations. He was not sure how much of that would go to planning. He stated there has not been a final discussion yet regarding \$18 million. Mr. Vilaboy also updated the Council regarding the C-4 detention basin canal. The SFWMMD received funding from FEMA for raising the canal banks eight feet, so they become uniform; this helps with retention and emergency management.

Ex-officio member Kent Walia (FDOT, District 4) stated that FDOT is finishing a corridor study for SR A1A in Broward County. Once finalized it will be shared with the SFRPC.

**VII. Announcements and Attachments**

A. Attendance Form

B. Correspondence and Articles

C. Upcoming Meetings

- 1) Monday, April 15, 2024, 10:30 a.m. (SFRPC)
- 2) Monday, May 20, 2024, 10:30 a.m. (SFRPC)

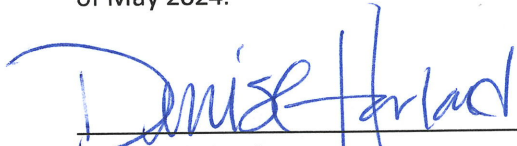


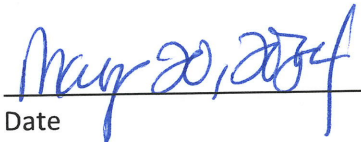
3) Friday, May 31, 2024, SFRPC Regional Conference (Time/Location TBD)

**VIII. Adjournment**

Chair Geller adjourned the meeting at 12:42 p.m.

This signature is to attest that the undersigned is the Secretary of the SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL and that the information provided herein is the true and correct minutes for the March 18, 2024, meeting of the SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL adopted on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of May 2024.

  
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Denise Horland, Secretary  
Commissioner, City of Plantation

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

