

# THE METRO

150 SE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite 500, Miami, FL 33131 **T** 305 349 1251 **F** 305 349 1271 **W** metropolitan.fiu.edu  
Florida International University

**Upcoming Events:** MetroForum Breakfast “2010 U.S. Census: Key Economic and Social Trends”  
Location: Downtown Courtyard Marriott, 200 SE 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, Miami, Florida, USA, 33131  
Date: February 23, 2011 at 8:00 AM

## Message from Our Director



Let me take this opportunity to introduce myself. I have been a faculty member of FIU's Department of Public Administration since 1988. My major areas of interest are local government public finance and policy. During my 23 years at FIU, I have held a number of administrative posts including Director of the Institute of Government from 1999 to 2004. In addition to my teaching and research, I also serve as Managing Editor of the *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting, & Financial Editor*. Prior to joining FIU, I worked for the Delaware Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Broward County Office of Planning.

Since starting at the Metro Center this past July, I have been truly impressed with our “bench strength.” All in, this group can tackle just about any applied social science problem, deploying a multitude of approaches (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, geographical information systems, policy analysis). Equally important, our team can convey research findings to a variety of stakeholders with an eye to “real world” implementation.

Given our longstanding work in the community, we are able to bolster core staff with experts in housing policy, strategic planning, and economic development. Most notably, John Talmage, former CEO of Social Compact, has joined the Metropolitan Center as a Senior Research Fellow and will bring his vast expertise in locating and assisting underserved markets to our outreach efforts.

The upshot is that the Metropolitan Center is strengthening its role as one of South Florida's premier social science research and training centers. During the past 13 years, we have developed an excellent reputation as a generalist “think tank.” We will build on that reputation while bolstering FIU's strong commitment to civic engagement from our venue in downtown Miami. The challenges of the “Great Recession” are forcing many public and nonprofit organizations to follow Abraham Lincoln's admonition to “think anew and act anew.” I am confident that the Metropolitan Center will enable many organizations in South Florida to follow Lincoln's advice!

## Metropolitan Center Training Offerings 2010

For over 10 years, the Metropolitan Center Training Institute at Florida International University has offered high-quality, moderately-priced training to cities throughout Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. Delivering needs-based training is one of the Metropolitan Center Training Institute's principal missions. Many municipal employees throughout the region have benefited from our work.

**For front line employees:** Customer Service Success: Government in the Front-line, Cultural Sensitivity & Sexual Harassment, Administrative Professional Certification, Business Writing for Professionals, Stress Relief for Government Workers, etc.

**To mid-level training such as:** Fundamental of Finance, Professionalism & Ethics, The Empowering Supervisor, etc.

**To senior-level training in:** Performance Measurement, Strategic Planning, Team Building, Organizational Development, etc.

The Metropolitan Center Training Institute has hosted the Academy for Strategic Management for over 13 years. The Academy is a program in which public servants of Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe Counties are trained and develop state-of-the-art strategic management techniques and

ethical leadership skills to enable them to become change agents within their organizations. Today, over 600 professionals from 26 jurisdictions within the tri-county area have graduated from the Academy. On February 23, 2011



Florida International University Metropolitan Center's Training Institute will honor Merret Stierheim for mentorship and instruction as well as Judith Cannon for committed leadership of the Academy for Strategic Management.

Our staff tailors and delivers training to meet the specific needs of your employees, in either our state-of-the-art classrooms throughout South Florida or onsite. We have gifted and enthusiastic instructors who bring a wealth of experience from the public, private, and non-profit sectors to each session. Training is immediately evaluated and student feedback is “looped” into future content.

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## Economic Development and Housing Policy

In 2010, the FIU Metropolitan Center completed the *Broward County Affordable Housing Needs Assessment* on behalf of the Broward County Housing Council. The housing study provided a current market perspective on the key supply and demand factors impacting the production and availability of affordable housing in Broward County. Housing affordability was defined as the capacity of households to consume housing services and, specifically, the relationship between household incomes and prevailing housing prices and rents. The standard housing affordability index used is that households should spend no more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs.

In terms of supply, the assessment of Broward County’s affordable housing factors and conditions found that increasing levels of affordability for existing single-family and condominiums brought on by the collapse of the housing bubble had not improved overall housing affordability for existing owners and renters, alike. This is due to a number of contributing factors including loss of equity, prolonged job loss and persistently high average rents. In fact, only first-time homebuyers and investors were able take full advantage of existing single-family and condominium sales prices. Meanwhile, monthly owner housing costs increased by 58 percent since 2000 while cost-burdened renter households increased from 43.5 to 57.2 percent in the County.

An analysis of existing single-family home sales by bedroom size determined that affordability gaps remain for 3-bedroom homes at the County-level and the majority of the largest municipalities. Substantial affordability gaps were found at the County-level and all major municipalities for 4-bedroom single-family homes. Further, Broward County’s \$440,372 median sales price for a “new” single-family home was unaffordable to the vast majority of the County’s households.

Broward County’s average rent price of \$1,203 had remained high despite a general increase in rental vacancies in the County. The increase in rental vacancies did not translate into significantly reduced rent prices.

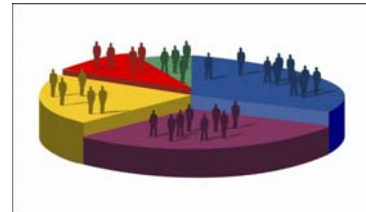
In terms of demand, The County lost 56,500 private sector jobs since January, 2007 with an unemployment rate of 9.7%. This translates into large affordability gaps between what owners and renters could afford and the actual prices of housing. In fact, from 2000-2008, cost-burdened renter households increased from 43.5% to 57.2% in the County (those paying 30% of household income or higher in housing expenses) while “extremely” cost-burdened renter households ( $\geq 50\%$  of household income on housing costs) increased from 20.8% to 29.7% and in 2009 represented 58,752 households.

## Performance Management, Survey Research and Outreach

In 2010, the FIU Metropolitan Center conducted numerous surveys for both the private and public sectors. The Digital Literacy study consisted in surveys in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties for the Miami Broadband Coalition and the South Florida Workforce Investment Board. The Metropolitan Center surveyed businesses and workforce members in both counties assessing the need for a technologically advanced workforce and the need for training in digital literacy.

The Center also conducted its fifth annual Women Led Businesses Leadership Study surveying Florida women in executive positions to obtain an understanding about the demands and satisfaction of their work, their future goals, the impact of their choices on their personal lives, and the strategies they used to advance their careers. The Metropolitan Center renewed its annual Hurricane Mitigation study assessing the preparedness of Florida residents for a hurricane.

In terms of performance measurement, the Metropolitan Center conducted a citizen satisfaction survey of residents of South Miami to



gauge satisfaction with different departments. The Center also conducted interviews with the different department heads in City Hall. In 2010, the Center concluded its three year evaluation of quality assurance of the concessionaires at Miami International Airport. Shops

were conducted before and after security checkpoints in Spanish, English and Creole. 311 Evaluation 2009 involved quality assurance reports of recorded calls placed to agents in the Miami-Dade Government Information 311 in Spanish, English and Creole.

In terms of outreach, the Metropolitan Center updated the Citizens’ Guide to Transportation that provides information with regards to transit services (MDT family of services, Jitneys, TriRails, Local Circulators, etc.), highway services (Service Patrols, SunGuide, SunPass ,etc.), and alternate mass transit services (vanpools, taxis, airport shuttles, carpooling ,etc.). The Metropolitan Center prepared an annual newsletter for the MPO. The newsletter was published in the Miami Herald and local newspapers. It served as a public relations tool as well as a mechanism for encouraging customer feedback.

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## Economic and Demographic Research

Following the recommendations of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) “Round 3” Certification Report for the Miami-Dade County Transportation Management Area, the Metropolitan Center approached the Miami-Dade MPO to create the Community Characteristics Program to enable transportation planners to review the social, economic, and geographic characteristics of an area before public involvement efforts are initiated. In 2010, the program was expanded to include Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. A web-based tool is used to disseminate information concerning the planning and development of local and regional transportation plans and projects.

Community Background Reports provide boundary definitions and narrative information about the origins of the community’s incorporation or relative cohesiveness as well as community dynamics and historical events. These reports are routinely updated with the most recent Census data concerning literacy rates; income levels; ethnic/racial composition; and the median age of residents in the community. Newly narrated materials include relevant housing and commercial developments as well as land use patterns. Community dynamics are explored in regards to how the neighborhood relates to existing and planned roadways and public transportation.

Public involvement strategies used by federal, state, and local governments are reviewed and evaluated as to their fit for communities. These strategies are integrated with community background reports in a toolbox that ranks the usefulness of a technique per the community of interest. The ranking takes the demographic profile and the suitability of each strategy for each demographic group into consideration. The score for each strategy is calculated as a weighted sum of all variables multiplied by the proportion of the population represented. The resulting score is used to rank by demographic category, including age groups, income, language spoken at home, race, vehicle status, etc... These methods have been developed in order to increase the effectiveness of public outreach while simultaneously increasing public participation.

The application of appropriate strategies for well-understood places allows planners to address low literacy areas with visual aids, Haitian communities in Creole, low computer literacy neighborhoods with familiar technology and a radio-listening public with radio programming. Printed materials such as brochures, handouts, and other reading materials should be distributed only when appropriate. These reports and the application can be found at: <http://itis.fiu.edu>

## Planning and Land Use Policy

In 2010, the FIU Metropolitan Center conducted numerous planning and land use planning studies for Miami-Dade County and surrounding municipalities. The Metropolitan Center assisted the City of Sweetwater in making changes to its municipal Comprehensive Plan. In addition to providing data and analysis of proposed land use changes through 2030, the Center also studied the impact of future land use and development on public facility needs including water supply and treatment facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, and roads. The analysis gauged the effects of land use on transportation, education, housing, capital improvements and infrastructure.

The 2010 *Miami-Dade County Shared-use Trail Maintenance Study* provides a current perspective on the management and maintenance issues confronting Miami-Dade County’s shared-trail system. The study incorporated the following research methods: 1) a field inventory and assessment of the existing trail system, 2) a “user survey” to determine current modes of activity, user satisfaction, and perspectives on maintenance and funding, 3) interviews with department/agency officials regarding management and maintenance issues, and 4) targeted “best practice” case studies to help inform the study’s recommendations. Recommendations included: establishing



the types and Frequencies of Maintenance Activities with Budget Frameworks, establishing shared-use trail maintenance policies and practices, incorporating shared-use trail performance measures, setting aside dedicated funding for shared-use trail maintenance, creating a division for trail facilities management, and establishing a community public/private partnership.

In 2010, the Metropolitan Center completed the Evaluation and Appraisal Report-based Amendments for the City of Opa-Locka. The study focused on increasing land use density especially in relation to transportation and connectivity; City and government affairs; and housing. Recommendations included developing rail-oriented public transit systems, amending the Comprehensive Plan to allow for annexation and developing affordable housing facilities in high density areas.

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