



X-Plan for Housing

Creating a safe environment around affordable housing is my first priority for all residents of Miami-Dade County who are in need of housing assistance. I support the neighborhood-approach for the redevelopment of Liberty Square, and applaud the work Commissioner Audrey Edmonson has done to ensure that the process of renovating the housing facilities protects current, qualified residents. However, I must emphasize that, in order to truly preserve and strengthen communities, the rehabilitation of any area must include these five basic requirements:

I. Safety/Surveillance

We need to address emergency, safety and security needs at the properties and implement measures to fight crime and drug activity. Measures should include: (1) extensive, state-of-the-art lighting of public spaces; (2) surveillance cameras monitored by local police; (3) advanced crime detection systems such as ShotSpotter Gunshot Detection and Location Service, that use “acoustic sensors,” are powerful microphones that track the exact location of gunshot-like sounds and instantly notify law enforcement officers. Additionally, all subsidized housing communities should have a neighborhood crime watch organization that is supported by the Miami-Dade Police Department.

II. Safe Harbor for Single Mothers

Safe zones for single mothers and their children need to be established. Dr. Marvin Dunn’s vision to set aside a portion of all housing projects for households headed by single mothers, and to lift them up through mentorship and enrollment in programs for self-improvement and parenting skills, will give these families the tools to grow out of poverty (see attached summary of Safe Harbors). Establishing the presence of an officer in-residence will be a major deterrent to crime and drug activity and will help build trust among the residents.

III. Rent-to-Own Housing Program

Allowing residents the option to work towards homeownership, and equipping them for responsible ownership through financial education and first-time homeownership classes, encourages growth and appreciation of the home as an investment. As stated by several of my colleagues on the Board of County Commissioners, the enforcement of existing leases is also imperative.

IV. Sustainable Landscaping

Neighborhoods should be enhanced with trees and flowers, along with creative open spaces, that will encourage residents to enjoy the outdoor public spaces and most importantly take pride in their community.

V. Displacement

Displacement has historically been a devastating consequence of housing redevelopments. In addition to strategic temporary housing, and before initiating the process of moving the actual residents, case managers should assist with the prequalification of residents, in particular those who have issues that might preclude public or affordable housing eligibility.

These five standards for Liberty Square and all future housing developments will ensure that Miami-Dade County does not repeat its mistakes, but instead creates housing communities that enhance the quality of life for all of its residents.