

# Memorandum



**Date:** September 1, 1009

**To:** Honorable Katy Sorenson  
County Commissioner

**From:** George M. Burgess  
County Manager 

**Subject:** Climate Change and Sustainability Plan for Miami-Dade County

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Thank you for your memorandum of July 2, 2009 regarding Climate Change and Sustainability Plan and for the excellent suggestions contained therein. I am pleased to inform you that we are well on the way to accomplishing many of the items mentioned in your memo. I am committed to moving Miami-Dade County forward as a continued leader with our climate change mitigation and adaptation planning and I am therefore devoting the necessary resources to actively move forward on these important issues.

The County was fortunate to be chosen by ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability as a pilot for their Sustainability Planning Toolkit. In fact, the development and implementation of a comprehensive Sustainability Plan (Plan) is not only a key to the success of our community's future, but also as the appropriate vehicle for proactively and effectively moving our climate change mitigation and adaptation plans (Climate Action Plan) forward. As you know, Susanne M. Torriente was recently appointed Director of the Office of Sustainability (OOS); therefore she will be coordinating and managing the development and implementation of the Plan. She has created a Sustainability Plan Coordination Team comprised of key staff from several departments who will be actively involved in its development. The Plan will integrate the County's Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP), Open Space Master Plan, Aesthetic Master Plan, and Water Use Efficiency Plan, as well as developing the Long Range Transportation Plan, and the Solid Waste Master Plan.

Currently, the Sustainability Plan Coordination team is reviewing these plans as a key first step in the process, to leverage and incorporate existing sustainability goals and initiatives, and develop new ones where needed. This planning process incorporates public outreach and feedback, an Interdepartmental Team, and a Mayor's Advisory Board to ensure that the plan is comprehensive, balanced, and most importantly, actionable.

As you suggested, and as the ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability/PlaNYC Toolkit recommends, climate change mitigation and adaptation are fundamental elements of a comprehensive and holistic sustainability plan, rather than a separate effort. As such, development of the goals and initiatives for climate change action is being incorporated into the overall analysis and coordination being undertaken for the Plan. One of the first steps is the establishment of a Greenhouse Gas emissions baseline which is well underway and should be completed by September. The draft of a new "community greenprint" should be available in June 2010, and the final plan should be released in the fall of 2010.

As you noted, several of the Climate Change Advisory Task Force's (CCATF) recommendations have already been acted upon. OOS is evaluating each of the recommendations along with current and future projected resources, to determine the feasibility of implementation. A report will be provided to the Board and CCATF this fall that will address each recommendation and provide a status update of the implementation if actions have already been taken. If no action has been taken, a brief analysis of the ease and feasibility of implementation will be provided, along with a general timeframe. This analysis will help us determine which recommendations can be implemented and allow us to prioritize and develop a plan for implementation that can be incorporated into the comprehensive Sustainability Plan.

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Collaboration with key organizations and agencies has already played an important role in the County's climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts and is integral to the efficient and successful development of our plans. The CCATF is a valuable resource and will continue to be engaged as we move forward with the County's overall sustainability planning, and more specifically with the County's climate change mitigation and adaptation planning. As you noted, they have already provided useful recommendations for emission reduction goals and initiatives, some of which have already been acted upon and others that can be incorporated into the new Sustainability Plan. Significant progress has been made in the development of the sea level rise scenario maps and the Department of Environment Resource Management (DERM) is currently working with the CCATF Science Committee to develop and refine a base elevation map and initial sea level rise scenario maps for incremental sea level rise from one through five feet.

DERM is also collaborating with several key agencies such as the National Hurricane Center, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and working with the South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC), to host a sea level rise mapping technical meeting to address base elevation map compatibility at a regional scale. The utility of the sea level rise scenario maps as a planning tool will be greatly enhanced in the future as the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department, in partnership with the U.S Geological Services (USGS), develops a surface/groundwater flow model for Miami-Dade. This model will simulate surface water and groundwater level responses to climate change, and will be able to incorporate the range of sea level rise and precipitation change predictions. As OOS coordinates the inventory of public assets and planned capital projects that could be affected by climate change impacts in the 2050 planning horizon, these tools will be utilized to develop an effective strategy to reduce or avoid the anticipated impacts from climate change. OOS and DERM staff will continue to collaborate with the CCATF, County departments, and key state and federal agencies to gather necessary data and tools for the County's climate change efforts.

As you can see, the County is already making great progress on these important initiatives. I am confident that our sustainability planning process will effectively utilize the wide array of resources available to us and incorporate the essential components of our climate change mitigation and adaptation plans. I know that the additional resources at OOS will provide the linkages among the CCATF's work, the overall sustainability plan and ongoing changes in our business models. I look forward to working together as we move forward on our path to a more sustainable future. I have asked the OOS Director to keep you apprised of our progress in this area.

If you have any questions, please contact OOS Director Susanne M. Torriente at 305-375-5593 or me directly at 305-375-1880.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

C: Honorable Carlos Alvarez, Mayor  
Denis Morales, Mayor's Chief of Staff  
Climate Change Advisory Task Force Members  
Alex Munoz, Assistant County Manager  
Howard Piper, Special Assistant to the County Manager  
Susanne M. Torriente, Director, Office of Sustainability  
Carlos Espinosa, Director, Department of Environmental Resources Management  
John Renfrow, Director, Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department  
Amy Knowles, Sustainability Plan Coordinator  
Sustainability Plan Coordination Team