

## STRATEGIC PLAN: **OUR CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

In 2003, when Miami-Dade County's first ever Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of County Commissioners, the County was on the verge of an unprecedented housing boom and extraordinary increases in property tax rolls. The County's principal challenge at the time was to use these increasing resources wisely by implementing a management framework based on measurable results.

Today, the County faces a different challenge: to provide essential public services that are needed more than ever in this time of economic malaise, while positioning itself to support and respond to an eventual recovery. What has not changed, however, is the importance of setting clear performance objectives, directing our limited resources toward the community's shared priorities, and holding ourselves accountable for achieving results. Arguably, this management framework is even more important today than ever as we endeavor to do more with less.

### **ECONOMIC AND FISCAL TRENDS**

Between 2003 and 2005, median home prices saw single-year increases of as much as 30 percent (National Association of Realtors). Similarly, between 2004 and 2007 the County's property tax roll showed extraordinary increases of 13.4 percent, 18.7 percent, 21.4 percent and 15.4 percent, respectively.

Today, of course, the environment is quite different. The national housing bust that began in 2008 has dramatically depressed home prices; the median sales price of a single family home in South Florida fell from \$274,000 (2011 dollars) to \$186,000 in 2011, a decline of 32 percent (Florida Association of Realtors). Similarly, the County's property tax roll declined ten, thirteen and three percent in the last three years respectively. Other important revenue sources, such as sales taxes and food and beverage taxes, for example, have also experienced declines due to the economic downturn.

In 2003, the County did face a number of important economic challenges. Unemployment was close to nine percent, higher than the national average of 7.6 percent, and median household

income was \$42,000 (2009 dollars), significantly below the national average of \$65,000 (U.S. Census Bureau). Today, the situation is more severe. Unemployment rose sharply in the wake of the nationwide recession, climbing to 14.4 percent in August 2010 (Miami-Dade County Department of Planning and Zoning) before declining to 9.4 percent in November 2011 (Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation). Meanwhile, median household income has stagnated, remaining at \$42,000 in 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau).

Compounding the impacts of the economic downturn were revenue reductions mandated by the Florida state legislature in 2007 and further property tax reductions approved by voters in 2008 prior to the nationwide financial crisis.

As grim as the economic environment has been, one bright spot for the County has been new federal funding. From 2009 through October 2010, the County received nearly \$250 million in stimulus funding. Possible new opportunities may arise for areas such as infrastructure and "green" initiatives.

### **DEMOGRAPHIC & SOCIAL CHANGES**

The County's total population increased by nine percent between 2003 and 2011, and currently stands at 2.5 million. Our population has aged slightly; 78 percent of residents are 18 or over, up from 75 percent in 2003, and 14 percent are 65 or older, up from 13 percent. The percentage of Hispanic residents increased slightly, from 61 to 65 percent, and in 2009 50 percent of County residents were foreign-born (U.S. Census Bureau).

The educational attainment of residents has remained largely unchanged from 2003 levels. In 2009, 77 percent of residents has at least a high school diploma, while 25 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. Educational achievement continues to lag behind the rest of the nation; 85 percent of the country's residents were high school graduates in 2009, while 28 percent had at least a bachelor's degree (U.S. Census Bureau). Our low graduation rates will continue to pose challenges to the community, particularly to economic recovery.



## OTHER IMPORTANT TRENDS

Millions of people around the world now share information and opinions instantly through sites such as Facebook and Twitter, both of which launched subsequent to our inaugural Strategic Plan. The introduction of smart phones such as the iPhone in the last three years contributed to the expanding use of mobile devices, as well as the demand for information on services available through them. Simultaneously, an increasing number of communities across the country are providing free wireless access in public facilities. Since 2003, Miami-Dade County has made strides in this area by, for example, providing transit trip information on mobile phones, providing free wi-fi in certain County parks and introducing a smart phone app whereby residents can report neighborhood issues such as potholes and illegal dumping. Over the coming years, the County will continue to explore ways of using these and other new technologies effectively.

Another important change has been growing sustainability awareness. Although the public continues to debate the best way to address climate change at the national level, public and private organizations across the country have developed robust sustainability programs. For example, Walmart's stated goals include "to be supplied 100 percent by renewable energy" and "to create zero waste" (Walmart). *ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability* reports it has over 1,200 members comprised of cities, towns, counties, and their associations, and many of these organizations have active sustainability programs in place. Miami-Dade County's sustainability office was established in 2007, with the aim of reducing the environmental footprint of County operations and promoting sustainability in the broader community through advocacy, community initiatives, and promotion of policies such as progressive land use planning. The County's community-wide sustainability plan, GreenPrint, was published in 2011 and will guide these efforts in the years ahead.

## LOOKING AHEAD

These are just a few of the major trends that we expect to impact County operations over the next five years. Through its annual business planning process, County departments will continue to scan their business environments to identify important trends, such as:

- Customer trends
- Regulatory changes
- Industry trends
- Potential competitive threats

This analysis will help departments to develop specific initiatives to achieve the goals and objectives in this Plan, and will help to inform future iterations of the Strategic Plan.

*What has not changed... is the importance of setting clear performance objectives, directing our limited resources toward the community's shared priorities, and holding ourselves accountable for achieving results.*