The following information is provided by
EAR Task Force Member Christianah Oyenuga
(representative of The Nature Conservancy)

Miami-Dade County
Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)
Task Force

Recommendations to Miami-Dade County Comprehensive Development Master Plan

by

The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

FUTURE GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Maintain the Urban Development Boundary

Miami-Dade County's long-term viability depends on a firm and defensible Urban Development Boundary (UDB) and to account for a 2050 planning horizon, the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) should be updated to uphold the County's urban development boundary. Keeping the existing UDB intact protects agricultural lands, wetlands, working lands, and wildlife habitat, while emphasizing infrastructure investments and delivery of services remain efficient within the UDB. The updated CDMP should codify distinct land use designations and effective land use techniques and policies that direct future growth and development/redevelopment within the Urban Development Boundary. Policies governing land use plan amendments, text amendments, and/or zoning actions should be codified to discourage and limit UDB expansion and make any expansion an extraordinary exception rather than a routine growth strategy.

Future growth outside the UDB or in any identified Urban Expansion Areas (UAE), Miami-Dade should codify the Design Guidelines for Corridor Compatible Communities (CCC)—an evidence-based system of guidelines and qualities that are widely practical, promote low-impact development and retention and enhancement of wildlife corridor functions, preserve vital ecological connections while also sustaining a high quality of life for residents. These CCC Design Guidelines can serve as a balanced approach to developing in-sync with healthy, functioning natural ecosystems that provide valuable ecological services for Miami-Dade's residents and protect the County's diverse, natural ecosystems for people and nature to thrive. The updated CDMP should clearly define the boundaries of the Redland area and codify land use policies that prevent incremental encroachment to this functioning natural ecosystem.

Direct Growth Inward Through Infill and Redevelopment

To accommodate growth through 2050, the amended CDMP should codify infill development and redevelopment, adaptive reuse and higher densities along existing serviced areas within the UDB. Increased density enables the cost-effective delivery of transit, water, sewer, and emergency services while minimizing development pressure on agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands. Land Use policies, zoning and subdivision codes should be updated to remove regulatory and procedural barriers that inhibit compact development and mixed-use projects. The CDMP should require increased densities through infill development and redevelopment that promote safe walkability, maintain and restore tree canopy, integrate green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) practices, and improve connectivity to parks and greenspaces.

Expand Transfer of Development Rights and Purchase of Development Rights

The amended CDMP should prioritize areas "that shall not be considered" for development and remove barriers to fully adopting Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to protect ecologically sensitive lands. The County should continue strong support for and fully implement the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program to supplement the TDR and avoid the conversion of agricultural lands to development. The CDMP should clearly identify TDR receiving areas within the UDB, and

TDR sending areas that prioritize agricultural lands, wetlands, and wildlife corridors outside the UDB to protect and conserve environmental resources. This market-based approach balances future growth with permanent land conservation.

Protect Agricultural Lands Inside and Outside the UDB

Agricultural lands provide food security, economic value, climate resilience, and flood attenuation in Miami-Dade. The CDMP should be updated to explicitly protect agricultural lands both outside and within the UDB. Agricultural uses within and outside the UDB should be safeguarded from premature conversion through expanding buffering requirements, integrating design compatibility standards outlined in the CCC Design Guidelines, and providing incentives that discourage speculative land banking. Clear geographic boundaries must be established to protect the Redlands and prevent incremental encroachment. Agricultural areas that provide ecological benefits and economic value to people and nature should be identified and designated for conservation in perpetuity. Miami-Dade County should adopt distinct goals, objectives and land use policies that minimize negative impacts on and avoid incompatibility with agricultural lands.

Focus Development Along Established Transit Corridors

The CDMP should emphasize future growth along existing transit corridors within the UDB including strengthening policies that channel future growth along major roadways and established transit corridors, consistent with the Corridor Compatible Communities design principles. This low impact development approach supports multimodal transportation, reduces vehicle miles traveled, and minimizes outward growth into natural and agricultural areas. Low impact development incentives, zoning flexibility, and expedited permitting should be targeted to these existing transit corridors. The CDMP should emphasize that publicly funded infrastructure investments outside the UDB and beyond established transit corridors should remain limited unless necessary for public health, safety, or environmental protection. The CDMP should clarify that infrastructure investments may not be used to justify future land use changes that induce sprawl or habitat loss. Publicly funded infrastructure should ensure compatibility with the land use designations and policies. The CDMP should limit zoning approvals and development incentives to publicly funded infrastructure inside the UDB.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Strengthen Protections for Wetlands, Natural Lands, and Wildlife Corridors

Miami-Dade County's CDMP should be strengthened to codify land use policies that protect wetlands, environmentally sensitive lands, and designated wildlife corridors. Land use amendments including text amendments that fragment or degrade these vital natural resources or negatively impact environmental quality should be explicitly discouraged. Expanding protective buffers around sensitive installations, including Homestead Air Reserve Base, should be codified to reduce exposure of residents to pollution, protect wildlife habitat, and advance connectivity to the Florida

wildlife corridor. The CDMP should reinforce protections for "Wetlands of Regional Significance" and protections for natural and working lands through integrating the Corridor Compatible Communities Design Guidelines within land use and development review processes including development designs to prevent sprawl and promote restoration of these regionally significant ecosystems and connectivity between remaining natural systems.

Integrate Natural Climate Solutions for Climate Resilience

The CDMP should codify land use policies that require the integration of natural climate solutions—such as restored wetlands, living shorelines, urban greening, and floodable open spaces—to mitigate flooding, sea-level rise, and extreme heat. The County should codify green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) best management practices as incentives within the development review process to replace or supplement conventional stormwater solutions. These strategies restore ecological function, prevent nuisance flooding, improve neighborhood aesthetics, promote mental well-being, and enhance community resilience to climate change while providing long-term cost savings compared to grey infrastructure alone.

Secure Dedicated Funding for Land Conservation and Water Quality

The County should establish a dedicated conservation funding source—such as a sales tax or real estate millage—to support natural infrastructure investments including land acquisition, habitat restoration, septic-to-sewer conversion, and green infrastructure. Dedicated, long-term funding stability is essential to achieving CDMP goals for land conservation and water quality by 2050.

BISCAYNE BAY

Reduce Nutrient Loading and Stormwater Runoff

The CDMP should be updated with explicit, enforceable land use policies that reduce nutrient loading and stormwater runoff into Biscayne Bay. Development approvals should require best-in-class stormwater treatment and codify green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) and low-impact development (LID) practices as cost-effective tools for managing stormwater, improving water quality, and cooling urban heat islands in both new development and redevelopment areas. The CDMP should require infrastructure planning and capital investments to incorporate climate resilience, including flooding, heat, and sea-level rise. The updated CDMP should encourage emerging technologies and leverage predictive analytics to improve flood control and water quality. The amended CDMP should require nature-based water treatment solutions such as Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) wherever possible to improve the water quality in Biscayne Bay.

Accelerate Septic-to-Sewer Conversion

Septic systems are a major contributor to nutrient pollution in Biscayne Bay. The CDMP should strengthen land use policies to accelerate septic-to-sewer conversion, particularly in areas draining

directly to the Bay. Any redevelopment, up-zoning, and/or land use changes should be contingent upon sewer connection or firm conversion timelines to mitigate nutrient loading and protect the health and resilience of Biscayne Bay.

Biscayne Bay Watershed Restoration and Management Plan

Miami-Dade County should adopt the comprehensive Biscayne Bay Watershed Management Plan which focuses on a unified approach to restoring and protecting Biscayne Bay to improve human and ecosystem health and resilience. Recommendations listed in the Watershed Plan are central to the recharge and protection of the Floridian Aquifer. CDMP objectives and policies should codify this watershed-based approach as the framework for improving water quality in the Bay and sustaining water supply from the aquifer through 2050 and beyond. The updated CDMP should codify County review of development applications to ensure new developments will not adversely impact the Bay.

Secure Dedicated Funding for Land Conservation and Water Quality

The County should establish a dedicated conservation funding source—such as a sales tax or real estate millage—to support land acquisition, habitat restoration, septic-to-sewer conversion, and green infrastructure investments. Establishing stable and dedicated long-term funding for land conservation and water quality is essential to achieving CDMP goals by 2050.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Prioritize Infrastructure Investments Within the UDB

The County should adopt land use objectives and policies that prioritize publicly funded investments within the UDB to support infill, redevelopment, and transit-oriented growth. The County should ensure that any new roadways outside of the UDB prioritize effective wildlife crossings to enable safe wildlife movements and maintain the continuity of habitats along ecologically sensitive corridors. The CDMP should codify land use policies and development standards to ensure wildlife crossings are provided at new public roads that cross river systems, wetlands, ecologically sensitive lands, and other potential wildlife corridors outside the UDB. Extending infrastructure beyond the UDB should remain highly constrained to prevent growth pressure on agricultural and natural lands, wetlands and river systems.

Support Multimodal Transportation Within the UDB

The CDMP should codify a multimodal transportation system that integrates land use, transportation strategies in the provision of a sustainable transportation and mobility infrastructure for all users. The County should support the development of multimodal transportation corridors to increase the viability of walking, biking, and transit that protect wildlife crossings and habitats.

Capital Improvement Projects Within the UDB

Miami-Dade County should ensure that any substantial new infrastructure are not developed in areas that are contrary to land use goals, objectives, and policies protecting the UDB. The updated CDMP should require that the location and design of capital improvement projects are consistent with the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact's uniform sea level rise projections and the Miami-Dade vulnerability assessment. The CDMP should codify an updated development process that uses the best available data, models and resources, including adopting the Compact's Regionally Unified Sea Level Rise Projection, and trusted tools developed by academic institutions and government agencies to inform planning, prioritizing and dedicated annual funding. Regional Climate Action Plan 3.0 (RCAP 3.0)

Advance Green and Climate-Resilient Infrastructure

The CDMP should require infrastructure planning and capital investments to incorporate climate resilience, including flooding, heat, and sea-level rise. Miami-Dade is considered "ground zero" for climate change risk such as sea level rise and severe flooding. The CDMP should codify green infrastructure best management practices and nature-based solutions should be prioritized as cost-effective tools for stormwater management, water quality improvement, and urban cooling. Emerging technologies and predictive analytics should be leveraged to improve flood control and water quality outcomes.

AGRICULTURE

Protect Agricultural Lands Inside and Outside the UDB

Agricultural lands provide strategic and economic value, climate resilience, and flood attenuation in Miami-Dade. The CDMP should be updated to explicitly protect agricultural lands both outside and within the UDB. Agricultural uses within and outside the UDB should be safeguarded from premature conversion through expanding buffering requirements, integrating design compatibility standards outlined in the Corridor Compatible Communities (CCC) Design Guidelines, and providing incentives that discourage speculative land banking. Clear geographic boundaries must be established to protect the Redlands and prevent incremental encroachment. Agricultural areas that provide ecological benefits and economic value to people and nature should be identified and designated for conservation in perpetuity. The updated CDMP should adopt distinct goals, objectives and land use policies that minimize negative impacts on and avoid incompatibility with agricultural lands inside and outside the UDB.

HOUSING SUPPLY AND AFFORDABILITY

Support Housing Supply Within the UDB

Land use policies in the CDMP should be amended to establish a clear, enforceable framework that aligns increased density and infill development with reasonable housing outcomes and along existing transit corridors. This requirement ensures development remains within the UDB and

increased housing supply minimizes displacement. The County should leverage its position to expand funding for the Community Land Trust (CLT) program through dedicated financing mechanisms to secure permanent housing affordability along transit corridors within the UDB. The County should require the use of the best available data, models and resources in the development approval process for the location and design of new development projects within the UDB consistent with the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact's uniform sea level rise projections and the Miami-Dade vulnerability assessment. Regional Climate Action Plan 3.0 (RCAP 3.0).