

## **SUMMARY RESULTS**

### **Emerging Consensus and a Call for a New Model**

The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, working through its long-standing Workforce Housing Committee, crafted, conducted and evaluated a diagnostic on workforce housing in the spring of 2008. The confidential, third party conversations, guided by the Committee team's diagnostic tool and managed by an outside firm specializing in leadership and market competitiveness, included participation of 40 leaders, with a subset of 16 mayors and 7 city managers and planners from Miami-Dade municipalities. After testing results and recommendations with a May 2008 Roundtable of municipal leaders, and articulating consensus items before a Chamber Forum of approximately 150 leaders, it was clear that a new collaborative model would inspire the confidence and participation of leaders throughout Miami-Dade. Though there are a number of conditions and decisions required to move forward, leaders show a willingness to tackle common frustrations, gaps in information, and other concerns about the reputation of Southeast Florida or Miami-Dade.



Local jurisdictions are far too diverse in location, scale, and socio-demographics to impact a consensus, regional reputation of workforce housing on their own. Local successes, when present, do not add-up to the scale of success required to attract and retain essential talent. We need to think, measure, and collaborate regionally.



Leaders were candid about measuring success and failure in workforce housing on an intuitive basis, but they want data that can be used to build consensus across all jurisdictions. They want benchmarking systems that inform them about how the Region is performing and what their jurisdiction is doing to help.



Even if measures of success are available for a jurisdiction, it does not necessarily lead to understanding of the greater marketplace or Region.



Policy options may be available on a local level, but the scale of policy reform and the independence of municipal action will not move the "needle" for the interconnected Miami-Dade market, or the greater Southeast Florida Region. Innovation is required as well as inter-jurisdictional success, shared targets but discrete roles, and a new public-private model.

Of the 12 areas (A-L) of inquiry in the diagnostic, four areas produced the greatest level of consensus and perceived opportunity:

#### **Part E of Diagnostic Resource and Information**

Leaders do not have ready access to critical data regarding how their municipality, Region or enterprise stacks up in affordable and workforce housing.

#### **Part G of Diagnostic Regional Concept and Reputation**

With few exceptions, leaders think Southeast Florida has a big problem regarding its reputation for workforce housing. Nothing short of a regional portfolio of solutions and a shared, long-term scorecard for success is required. Leaders are ready and willing to break the boundaries of jurisdiction to make progress and champion results.

**Part I of Diagnostic  
Who Helps Solve**

A new public-private model is required, and the Greater Miami Chamber needs to ensure that all the necessary parts (research, targets, rules, and participants) come together. The Chamber has strong equity to convene and ensure progress and may be the only team with the standing to pull this off. Businesses must play a new role, beyond the perceived self interests of development and capital investment, in supporting longer-term scorecards, advocating the right policies in the right places, and sharing expertise outside the context of single projects. Though language like “sharing” and “collaboration” is used throughout this report, it is important to note that participation in a new model has a major condition: **Strong Regional Project and Directional Management.**

**Part K of Diagnostic  
If We Take No Action**

Leaders have a tough appraisal of the future if no action is taken. Looking 10 years out, there is a threat (and a tangible threat based on the stories told by mayors and business leaders) that Miami-Dade will face: erosion and loss of its middle class; and ever poorer access to talent for essential services in healthcare, education, safety and disaster recovery, and facilities maintenance. Leaders intuitively believe this links to the attraction and retention of all talent required to help the market grow and create wealth.

Leaders are open to taking action now but their conditions for engagement require: evidence that participants in the new model will have the “long view”; development of shared successes and shared research; and managing with a centric, leadership approach. Given the scale and complexity of the Miami-Dade market, and a call for alignment with Broward and Palm Beach Counties to the north, the Chamber may have uncovered the makings of a playbook that is unprecedented in linkage to other critical infrastructure and policy issues (transportation, talent and education, essential services and contingency planning, market reputation and recruiting, etc.).

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The Workforce Housing Committee of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce determined in 2007 that benchmark success in workforce housing required outreach to and discussions with local governments throughout the County. The Committee team assumed that creating and managing a plan to make measurable and sustainable improvement in workforce housing would be a long-term and resource-driven task. Potential collaboration and alignment of local leaders needed to be evaluated and tested. As a result, the Committee team launched their inquiry with a number of overarching questions, including:

- **Common Interests and Aspirations** -- *Do our local leaders, especially those working in the public sector, have common interests and aspirations in the field of workforce housing?*
- **Confidence to Take Action** -- *If the Committee team made a longer-term commitment to workforce housing, what agenda or action items would attract the attention and support of leaders and build confidence within the Chamber family of investors, members, partners and committees?*

The Committee team retained Fairfield Index, Inc., a firm specializing in regional competitiveness, and leadership and market diagnostics, to help build and manage a third party diagnostic.

The Committee team made it clear that a primary guiding principle of the diagnostic was recognition that the work could potentially result in no or limited opportunities to strike out on a uniform, Miami-Dade path. Acknowledgement of dead-ends was important to the team. Should the diagnostic uncover opportunities, signals of alignment and potential collaboration had to be clear and re-tested with leaders in roundtable or workshop sessions.

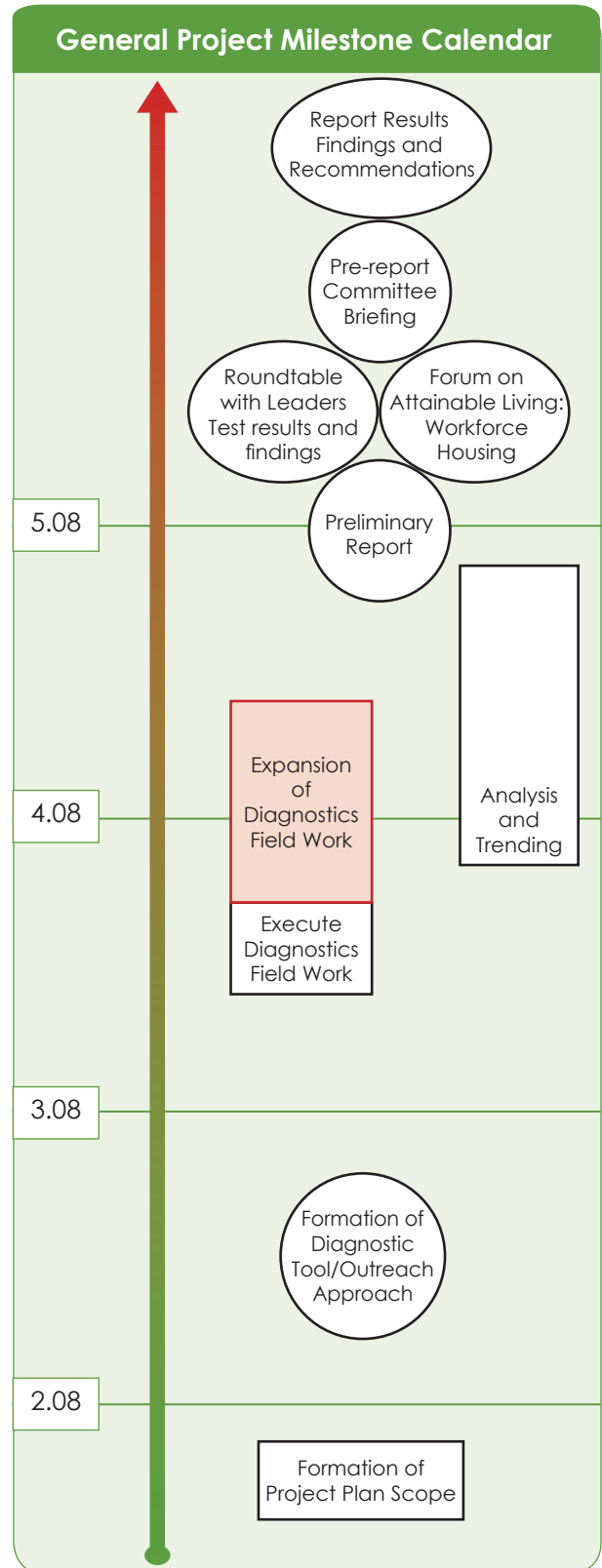
An additional guiding principle concerned the active and candid participation of leaders in the diagnostic. The team and the Chamber needed to clearly articulate the purpose of the inquiry and make clear commitments to confidentiality of the results relative to name, title, location, and enterprise or municipality.

The diagnostic process required the courtesy of a reasonable interview time for leaders but inquiries and follow-ups that were deep enough to explore and confirm potential alignments. A well-paced, thorough diagnostic needed to take approximately 40 minutes, but most leaders extended the conversation on their own initiative and many extended beyond one hour. The diagnostic tool was not adjusted during the project calendar in order or prompts. The diagnostic component of the project calendar was extended in order to include an ever-increasing base of leader interviews, essentially doubling the scope of the diagnostic. More than 90% of the diagnostic involved open-ended questions in order to capture and honor the language of leaders rather than the language of academics and experts. From April 11 through April 29, Fairfield Index conducted 40 interviews. Participants included 16 mayors, seven city managers and planning directors, and 17 influential leaders, including private sector enterprises and chambers.

The Committee team received routine updates on the diagnostic progress, and worked to ensure results and findings could be tested, prior to roll-out, in a Roundtable of diagnostic participants, and then rolled out in a Forum on Attainable Living. Both events took place on May 6, involved over 150 leaders, and provided no clear or emerging challenges to project findings. The Roundtable group spent nearly three hours working through the diagnostic information and reached consensus that all opportunities and shared perceptions were accurate and actionable. The Committee team was updated prior to the release of Fairfield Index's findings and recommendations, and counseled that an inventory of region-wide alignment and opportunity had emerged, and a new model for public-private teamwork was required and likely to get broad-based public sector support and participation if executed properly.

**KEY RESULTS:**  
**Dealing with Affordable Housing and Workforce Housing - Definition and Context**

Leaders believe workforce housing concerns individuals involved in law enforcement, education and training, public and private sector administration, first responders



and other essential services (utility activities,) hospitality, and health care. Leaders sought to define workforce housing by linking income data (usually provided in ranges) to occupations, or housing costs to occupations. Signaling their emerging demand to succeed and measure with regional rather than local resources, they provided wide and sometimes extreme ranges on income-to-essential services jobs, including:

*\$75 to 80 thousand • \$80 to \$100 thousand  
Under \$40 thousand • Under \$45 thousand  
Under \$150 thousand • 80 to 120% of AMI  
80 to 140% of AMI*

When considering housing costs, ranges on costs-to-essential services jobs included:

*Under \$332 thousand • Under \$250 thousand  
Under \$240 thousand*

It was clear that the differences were driven by both the wide ranges of communities in Miami-Dade (housing, businesses, and incomes), and the perceived limited availability of up-to-date economic data.

A small number of municipal leaders saw no impacts, current or long-term, in their own jurisdictions. However, the vast majority of the interviewees saw workforce housing as a big if not the dominant problem for the region. Their language was sharp and focused on the likelihood of a declining regional reputation.

For the handful of leaders who saw their communities as having adequate workforce housing or plans that

**A BIG IF NOT  
DOMINANT PROBLEM**

*“Tremendous Impact”*

*“Enormous”*

*“The Fabric of the Community  
[is at-risk]”*

*“Huge Needs”*

*“An American Nightmare”*

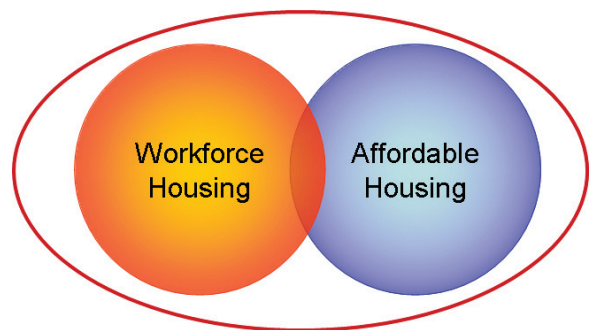
*“Desperate”*

*“Pretty Large”*

provided meaningful housing agendas, it was clear that they were also dependent on the availability of housing resources in adjoining or nearby jurisdictions, and the benefits of a well-functioning, regional transportation system(s). It was not unusual for public sector leaders to express interest in the portfolios of housing options and plans in other markets from which they could derive talent. For instance, there

were expressions of interest in promoting and even investing in housing in nearby jurisdictions if there was a nexus for talent and vibrancy in the interviewee's own municipality. How this nexus is established, communicated and measured, of course, is the real subject of this report and the top, shared aspiration of Miami-Dade's leaders.

Leaders provided counsel on housing nomenclature and service to families. They believe that residents of Miami-Dade's communities and public and private sector leaders expect workforce housing to be considered in the context of affordable housing. Workforce housing may have competitive and essential services values that make quality of living better for all residents, but there is a continuum of participation in the housing market (both rental and ownership) for individuals and families. To encourage proximity to work, lifelong learning, safe places to live, suitable places to begin careers, and appropriate places to age in place or recover from health or financial crises, this continuum must be respected and always articulated. Leaders communicated the importance that workforce housing has in the competitiveness and quality of living, but believe the regional project at hand needs to reach into affordable housing.



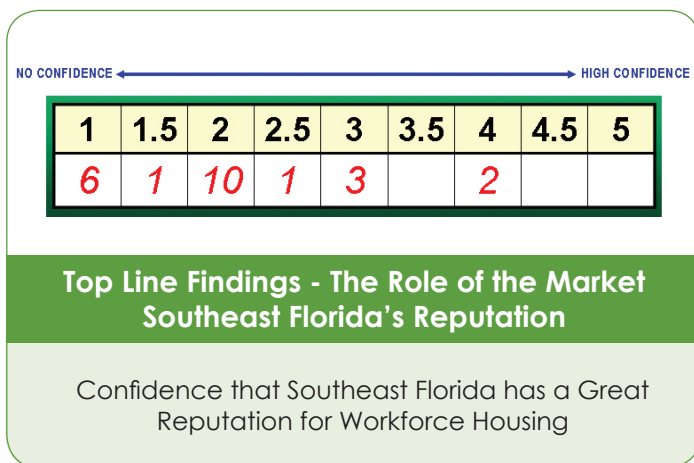
**Top Line Findings - Affordable Housing**

- Pay close attention to the overlaps
- All-in-one approach shows respect for families
- Our service/hospitality industry has been “rocked”, and the all-in-one supports some workforce requirements for legacy industries
- A larger definition supports the sense of Miami-Dade as a destination for talent and careers

On one hand, leaders made it clear in the interviews, and reemphasized in the Roundtable, that working under one overarching term of “affordable housing” draws out difficult assumptions and stereotypes related to long-standing perceptions of inhuman design and lack of community vibrancy. On the other hand, a workforce housing agenda could be too narrow to inspire public support unless it connects with bridging gaps in opportunity, travel, and lifelong learning and career development. Workforce erosion, as articulated by interviewees, extends far beyond essential services personnel, setting the stage for an expanded definition of workforce housing (perhaps to all jobs in legacy and target industry clusters).

**KEY RESULTS:  
Reputation and Measurement of Success**

Only two city leaders have some confidence that Southeast Florida has a great reputation for workforce housing.



On an independent basis, municipalities and local housing developments do not have the scale, measures, or connections with others to impact the long-term reputation of Miami-Dade or the greater, Southeast Florida Region. With few exceptions, interviewees indicated that they are not in a position (because of scale and resources; and access to consensus market data) to quantify success. There is a sense that Miami-Dade and the greater Region are most-vulnerable to global criticism on the workforce housing and affordable housing fronts. The stories of failure may be told from one community at a time, but the message ends up as regional. There are no

positive counter-stories, counter-initiatives, or counter-data; and municipalities and individual enterprises are not in a position to build credible responses on their own, in a vacuum.

One of the most common, recurring statements was, “This is about economic development.” Leaders want to impact retention of existing employers by inspiring all talent to locate and stay. Leaders want to impact the location and growth of enterprises by stating decisive progress in workforce housing. Otherwise, there will be a decline in confidence in the health, safety, vibrancy and overall access to talent in Miami-Dade.

**KEY RESULTS:  
No Action Means Big Trouble**

If no action is taken, leaders see three problem areas in 10 years:

**Problem Area 1**

Tangible decline in essential and support services

**Problem Area 2**

Less desirable place to locate or stay for individuals, families, and businesses; and resulting tax/infrastructure crisis

**Problem Area 3**

Division between upper and poorer classes will get worse/ loss of middle class

Perhaps an additional problem area creates the real call-to-action for leaders:

*“I have no idea [what it will look like in 10 years]”*

This is a call for data, a portfolio of interrelated solutions, a role for all leaders and jurisdictions, and regional benchmarks for success.

**KEY RESULTS:  
The Region and Regionalism**

For the most part, leaders see the term Region as, at a minimum, Miami-Dade. In order to set aspirations and targets for workforce housing success, leaders are generally comfortable with Miami-Dade. Over time, however, there is an expectation that data, successes,

and roles be handled in the greater Southeast Florida Region. This greater Region is made up of Broward and Palm Beach Counties, and the reasons for this leap come from leaders' assumptions about industry clusters, interconnected transportation and port systems, news commentary that treats the greater Region as one place, and existing region wide agencies.

With respect to leaders with alternative views, there are two small groups. Group one sees the region as a collection of municipalities, up to one-half of Miami-Dade County, that must collaborate and plan based on interconnected systems and work forces; and Group two sees a three-county Region as too small to represent the larger interconnected marketplace northward up I-95. There was also an indication that best practices in the greater Region could be shared with more chance of replication and success due to the similarities of issues, demographics, industries, and infrastructure.

During the Roundtable meeting and Forum of May 6, there was a strong indication that workforce housing and the building of a portfolio of success could inspire a new spirit of regionalism. Because the call for collaboration and data is so strong in the diagnostic, workforce housing's connection to all other competitive issues (transportation, target industries, retention, customer services and visitor relations, access to education, access to talent, vibrancy, design, contingency planning, healthy communities and healthcare, sound and informed public administration, and essential services including energy and telecommunications) could make it the centerpiece for regional collaboration and action.

**KEY RESULTS:**

**The Role of the Greater Miami Chamber**

The Chamber and its Committee team need to confront some important requests. Leaders strongly endorsed the diagnostic step and held out the Chamber enterprise as having unique standing to help the Region move forward on workforce housing. It was not unusual to hear public sector leaders make statements like, "I applaud the Chamber" and "This shows courage". The following, consensus requests to the Chamber were also confirmed as accurate during the Roundtable:

**Request #1**

Be a great facilitator for all and offer strategic capabilities. The Chamber has or can identify assets and resources that are critical to sound management systems and success

**Request #2**

Be a coalition-builder and help us think regionally

**Request #3**

Get the private sector to the table as experts, advocates and citizens. Business needs a new, expanded voice that serves and informs our communities for the long-term, not just project-to-project

**Request #4**

Champion collective solutions for the Region and prevent exodus of the working class

**Request #5**

Be (or enable) the clearinghouse for critical data and ensure leaders are able to bridge information gaps. Identify what data and indicators matter most

Leaders are open to taking action now but with very clear conditions. These conditions were also tested at the Roundtable with unanimous support. Leaders will support and engage now if:

**The Public and Private Sectors Are Convened for the Long-Term**

- No single projects, no unfaithful comments about overnight solutions
- Emergence of a plan with horizontal outlook and measures
- Provision of data and benchmark successes will be maintained over time, through changing economies and through political cycles

### A Centric, Leadership Approach Is Developed

- This is so serious, we need a showing of a commitment to sound project management over time
- A collaborative requires committed regional hand of leadership
- Centric means we share and manage measures of success together
- Centric means we have a project coordinator that helps us add our own unique capabilities to the portfolio

### The Complexity of the Issue Is Recognized

- There is a commitment to helping regional leaders, governments and enterprises tap into the right tools and resources
- There is no fear about the inter connectedness of the issue to transportation, healthcare, education, etc.

### We are Actively Provided Counsel and Resources on Where We Share Agendas

- Connectivity and support seems possible, but resources cannot be raised at a local level
- We want to know where our local assets are strongest
- We want to know where to support our neighbors

### It is Clear Other Critical Infrastructure and Policy Issues Are Considered and Leveraged

- This work may create a stronger voice for and participation in improvements in ground transportation and connectivity
- This work may better connect other initiatives to the right housing scorecard
- Tie-in mobility, insurance, and taxes where possible

### KEY RESULTS:

#### Signals of an Emerging Collaborative Spirit

Public and private sector leaders feel unprepared to take on the complexities of workforce housing over the next decade, but have confidence that a new model can produce the information they need to govern, make management decisions, and work as a team with other regional partners. They see workforce housing as a zone of vulnerability for market reputation and the success of businesses in the Region. They see workforce housing as an area where they can intervene as a team, but only on condition of great project management and straightforwardness about the complexities of the challenge. On a trended basis, there was a consensus that a regional team and system is worth the effort. In two public forums, there were no objections to the concept of a regional portfolio of assets and actions. In fact, the following questions and answers were held out to Roundtable and Forum participants as consensus:

*Have workforce housing agendas of the past failed due to isolation from related issues? **YES.***

*Have workforce housing agendas of the past failed due to isolation from adjoining jurisdictions? **YES.***

*Is the private sector playing the interpreter and expert role as powerfully as they could? **NO.***

And, in creating a regional portfolio for action, leaders ask the following, formative questions:

1. *If I believe that essential personnel should have a choice about where and how they live, how do I measure the market's ability to produce choice (when my point-of-view is local or jurisdictional)?*
2. *If I believe proximity to the workplace is essential for careers in essential services and customer service, and overall quality of living, how do I monitor the regional portfolio of housing?*
3. *If I want to build or support this portfolio (even outside my jurisdiction), how do I know where to place resources and support?*

**NEXT STEPS AND CRITICAL ACTION ITEMS**  
**The Questions that Matter Most**

The Chamber and its Committee team have been confronted with a list of challenges and requests (see KEY RESULTS: The Role of the Greater Miami Chamber, page 6), and it is reasonable to believe that some time and resources will be needed to confirm the Chamber's role and next steps. In the meantime, participants in the diagnostic, other committees, and senior Chamber leaders and volunteers need to be aware of the milestone dates for these decisions. Because leaders are expressing patience for the long-term, there appears to be broad latitude to reconvene as necessary to test regional approaches.

Using the diagnostics, the following questions should be answered by the Chamber, its Committee team, and its partners:

-  *What will we use as the regional marketplace on "day one" in order to build teamwork and make progress?*
-  *What approach will we take to providing leaders with critical and consistent data on trends and opportunities?*
-  *How do we ensure one, well-managed project team while leveraging the institutional, academic, business, and agency resources already available?*
-  *How do we make an early, credible expression of a commitment to find a way for all discrete municipalities to contribute value to a regional portfolio?*

-  *Will we make credible responsiveness to the reputation blows we are taking around the globe a near-term priority?*
-  *What kind of system will we create to identify successes, manage information across jurisdictions, and show incremental progress?*
-  *How and when will we map all strategic partners?*
-  *What assets are actually in our portfolio? Housing assets, future housing assets, critical state and local policies, employer assisted practices, etc.?*
-  *What will it take to sustain this regional effort in terms of human resources, volunteers, dollars, and other infrastructure?*
-  *What must be done to honor the candor and breakthrough thinking of the leaders involved in the diagnostic?*
-  *What is the comprehensive statement of the business of this new regional enterprise or collaborative?*

**CLOSING STATEMENT**  
**Florida Benefits**

Finally, there is a realistic curiosity about how the Region can improve Florida's standing and reputation around the globe. The regional scale – Miami-Dade or the greater three-county Region – matters to all people who call Florida "home".