

# Community Background Report

## City of Florida City

### County

Miami-Dade

### Boundaries

North: Lucy Street / S.E. 8th Street

South: S.W. 67th Avenue

West: Tower Rd. / S.W. 192nd Avenue

East: S.W. 360th Street

### Community Type

Municipality

### History

The municipality of Florida City is located in southern Miami-Dade County, just south of Homestead and east of Everglades National Park. Although Florida City was not a planned development of the Florida East Coast railroad, the arrival of the railroad helped nurture the city. Some of the city's first settlers were largely from Topeka, Kansas and moved from Homestead into the Florida City area in 1910. Florida City began as a part of 22,000 acres of swampland purchased by the Model Land Company of Detroit, Michigan in 1913. Florida City was one of the few black settlements established in the 1900s and the third oldest municipality in Miami-Dade County.

During the early 1900s, the Florida City area was heavily advertised in the northern Miami-Dade County as "The Garden of Eden" by its advertisers in order to attract residents. Detroit natives heavily populated the area naming it "New Detroit". The area's name soon changed again due to conflicts between the native southerners and newly arrived northerners. In 1914 Florida City was formerly incorporated. Just one year after incorporation, the city served as a home to 368 residents. By 1922, Florida City contained over 800 residents with a drug store, a hardware store, and a three-story hotel. In 1936, there was an attempt to consolidate the city with Homestead but the Florida city residents voted it down. Today the city contains a population well over 8,000 residents.

## Community Dynamics

Florida City has undergone a rebuilding process from the devastation caused by Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Hurricane Andrew unequally affected Florida City and the city's recovery has been a slow process. Historically, Florida City was generally thought of as the poor black city across the tracks from Homestead, but in actuality, both cities have comparable populations of modest to low income residents. In 1993, a report listed Florida City as one of the five poorest municipalities in the United States. Since then, the town of Florida City has made it a mission to become more responsive to the needs of its residents, businesses and visitors. The city council of Florida City is one of the most culturally diverse of all the municipalities in Miami-Dade County. The area hosts two major events that stimulate the local economy.

In response to the traffic problems that arose during the hurricane evacuations in 2004, a proposal has been put forth to begin construction on the "Gateway to the Keys", widening the section of U.S Highway 1 from Florida City to Key West. In February, Florida City hosts the Everglades Seafood Festival, a two-day festival during the first weekend in February. The area also hosts the Winston Cup races in November, which brings an estimated 73,000 visitors to the area for the weekend. Florida City remains one of the smallest and least technologically developed of the municipalities in Miami-Dade County. Their economy places emphasis upon agriculture compared to the rest Miami-Dade County, where hospitality, tourism, industrial and manufacturing industries drive the economy.

## Sources

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