

Community Background Report

Leisure City

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: S.W. 296th Street

South: S.W. 280th Street

West: S.W. 152 Avenue

East: East side of US 1

Community Type

Neighborhood

History

The community of Leisure City was named originally by developers, in hoping to attract retired people seeking a similar lifestyle in the 1920s. Leisure City, was platted as 2,300 acres of pine-dotted farm land. A small area, populated of single-family homes, it is wedged between the Homestead Extension of Florida's Turnpike and South Dixie Highway (Wikipedia: Leisure City). Leisure City's expansion to 6,000 homes were popular with armed service retirees, particularly those from the then active Homestead Air Force Base, just to the east. Leisure City has a long history of community continuity, preserving the community identity through decades of careful planning.

For nine years, community leaders lobbied the County for a public park (Wikipedia: Leisure City). In 1964, Leisure City Park opened with a horseshoe pit and a clubhouse with kilns for ceramics. In 1992, Leisure City was hit by Hurricane Andrew causing substantial damage to the park and widespread structural damage to homes and businesses. The Hurricane's devastation depressed the region to some degree for the following 5 following years (Peacock, Morrow & Gladwin, 1997). Like all of South Miami-Dade, it was also economically hurt by the closing of the Homestead Air Force Base. Retirees took their insurance settlements and left for Miami or cities further north where the standards of living were higher. Though many decided to leave, others stayed, "rebuilding Leisure City [which] has become a pleasant home for many

agricultural workers who maintain a 50-year tradition of turning their backs on the larger metropolitan cities” (Herald Staff, 1998).

Community Dynamics

According to 2000 Census figures, there are 22,152 people, 6,063 households, and 5,044 families residing in Leisure City. The population density is 2,508.2/km² (6,490.0/mi²). There are 6,615 housing units at an average density of 749.0/km² (1,938.0/mi²). Leisure City is predominantly a Hispanic community. Hispanics make for two-thirds of the population, higher than the comparable Miami-Dade figure of 57 percent. African American population which comprised 11 percent in 1990 grew to 25 percent in 2000, higher than the 20 percent reported in 1980 and higher than the County average for 2000 of 21 percent (Epodunk: Leisure City).

There are 6,063 households out of which 50.1% have children under the age of 18 living with them, 54.7% are married couples living together, 21.0% have a female householder with no husband present, and 16.8% are non-families (unrelated persons living together). The average household size, in 2000, was 3.65 and the average family size is 3.94. This indicates more persons per household than the County and national averages. Leisure City’s population age distribution shows concentrations of younger aged populations than the US and the state’s; 30% under the age of 15, 16.6% from 16 to 34 years, 30.1% from 25 to 44, 16.5% from 45 to 64, and 6.3% who are 65 years of age or older. The median income for a household in Leisure City is \$29,091, and the median income for a family is \$29,277 with the per capita income at \$9,966. One quarter of the population and 22.4% of families are below the poverty line. Out of the total population, 33.3% of those under the age of 18 and 18.3% of those 65 and older are living below the poverty line (epodunk; Leisure City).

The educational attainment levels of residents age 25 and over in Leisure City lagged behind the County average. About 54 percent of these adults had not completed high school compared to the County's 15 percent. Only 4 percent completed four or more years of college compared to 21 percent in Miami-Dade (Miami-Dade Department of Planning & Zoning, 2003).

Lack of economic growth and low levels of educational attainment are Leisure City’s biggest problems. Even before the 2000 Census numbers were collected showing low levels of educational attainment, “Economic development in the area is at its lowest rate in 30 years. The Leisure City Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area, despite some improvement in the past decade, continues to face a range of serious social and economic challenges.” (Herald Staff, 1998).

Sources

Epodunk.com. Leisure City, FL. <http://www.epodunk.com/cgi-bin/genInfo.php?locIndex=8671>

Herald Staff . “Where we live”. Miami Herald, The. September 20, 1998. http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/InfoWeb?p_action=doc&p_docid=0EB4DB2963535F37&p_docnum=2&p_queryname=3&p_product=AWNB&p_theme=aggregated4&p_nbid=S62E5AIXMTEzOTU4MDM4NC44NzczNTQ6MToxMzoxMzEuOTQuNTUuMTU1

“Leisure City Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area Profile”. Miami-Dade Department of Planning & Zoning. April 2003. http://www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/planzone/Library/Census/nrsa_leisure_city.pdf

"Leisure City, Florida." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 23 Dec 2004, 23:54 UTC. 9 Feb 2006. http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Leisure_City,_Florida&oldid=15999237

Peacock, Walter Gillis; Morrow, Betty Hearn & Gladwin, Hugh. (1997). Hurricane Andrew; Ethnicity, Gender and the Sociology of Disasters. International Hurricane Center, Florida International University. Miami, FL