



Lake Worth Beach Housing Emergency Study and Rent Control Ordinance Analysis

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Context: Rapidly Rising Housing Costs across South Florida

- Only 13% of PBC residents can afford a median value home
- Shortage of at least 78,000 workforce/affordable units across PBC
- PBC loses an additional 17,000 affordable units to appreciation each year
- Two-thirds of LWB renters were cost-burdened according to 2021 PBC Housing Assessment
- LWB's median asking rent has since increased to \$2,214
- 48.1% of South Florida households believe they are “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to face eviction or foreclosure within the next two months



Purpose of Emergency Housing Study

- Characterize the extent, nature, and causes of housing distress in Lake Worth Beach
- Determine the effects rising housing costs have had on individual households and community stability
- Identify policies that would improve housing access, affordability, and equity
- Determine whether the City has the legal authority to implement rent control
- Determine whether a rent control ordinance would improve housing outcomes
- Forecast the city's future housing needs for effective urban planning



Research Question #1

- What constitutes a “grave housing emergency?” What constitutes a “serious menace to the general public?”
 - Review housing research and previous emergency resolutions to interpret the meaning of Florida Statute 166.043
 - Develop an objective method for assessing whether a municipality faces a “housing emergency” that legally justifies price controls



(2) No law, ordinance, rule, or other measure which would have the effect of imposing controls on rents shall be adopted or maintained in effect except as provided herein and unless it is found and determined, as hereinafter provided, that such controls are necessary and proper to eliminate an existing housing emergency which is so grave as to constitute a serious menace to the general public.

(3) Any law, ordinance, rule, or other measure which has the effect of imposing controls on rents shall terminate and expire within 1 year and shall not be extended or renewed except by the adoption of a new measure meeting all the requirements of this section.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, no controls shall be imposed on rents for any accommodation used or offered for residential purposes as a seasonal or tourist unit, as a second housing unit, or on rents for dwelling units located in luxury apartment buildings. For the purposes of this section, a luxury apartment building is one wherein on January 1, 1977, the aggregate rent due on a monthly basis from all dwelling units as stated in leases or rent lists existing on that date divided by the number of dwelling units exceeds \$250.

Research Question #2

- Is there a grave housing emergency in the City of Lake Worth Beach? If so, what is its extent, scope, and nature?
- Data to be collected:
 - Housing costs relative to historical norms
 - Relationship between housing costs and residents' economic means
 - Incidence and level of cost-burden
 - Incidence of eviction and payment delinquency
 - Ability of support agencies to satisfy demand for housing services
 - Incidence of substandard and/or dangerous housing
 - Public perception of emergency



Research Question #3

- What effects have rising housing costs had on the health, safety, and welfare of Lake Worth Beach residents? Do these effects pose a “serious menace to the general public?”
- Data to be collected:
 - Effects on residents’ economic vitality and overall well-being
 - Effects on neighborhood stability (displacement, gentrification, loss of community character)
 - Effects on community stability (labor shortages, school performance, public safety)
 - Incidence of detrimental housing outcomes (overcrowding, eviction, homelessness)
 - Incidence of exploitative and abusive landlord practices (illegal eviction, extraneous fees, price gouging, extortion)



Research Question #4

- What are the underlying causes of housing unaffordability and distress in the City of Lake Worth Beach?
- Factors to be analyzed:
 - Population growth
 - Real estate speculation
 - Short-term vacation rentals
 - Seasonal migration
 - Growth management policies and land development regulations
 - County-level economic development and housing policy
 - Rising insurance rates
 - Macro-level factors (federal housing policy, supply chains, interest rates, etc.)



Research Question #5

- What measures would most improve housing conditions in the City of Lake Worth Beach? What housing policies would best protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents?
- Factors to be analyzed:
 - Policy options and recommendations
 - Anticipated impacts of policies and timelines for relief
 - Sequencing suggestions
 - Recommended resources for affordable housing development and preservation



Research Question #6

- Is a rent control ordinance necessary and proper for addressing Lake Worth Beach's housing needs? Would a rent control ordinance conform to state legal requirements?
- Analysis to be provided:
 - Definitive answer supported by comprehensive data
 - Implementation options and recommendations





Timeline for Study

- Complete all aspects of study by **January 31, 2024**
 - Collection and mapping of relevant quantitative data (Census, market listings, etc.)
 - Interviews with community stakeholders (tenants, landlords, housing providers, etc.)
 - Analysis of public records (real estate transactions, evictions, emergency assistance, etc.)
 - Field observations of housing conditions
 - Review of City housing policies and LDRs
 - ***Our timeline can be phased and/or modified based on the City's needs and priorities (e.g., expedited delivery of vacation-rental analysis)***
- Final report
 - Interpretation of Florida Statute 166.043 with procedures for evaluating future emergencies
 - Comprehensive overview of local housing conditions/needs for future planning
 - Policy recommendations for improving housing access, affordability, and equity
 - Guidance on rent control ordinance



Budget

- Total anticipated cost: **\$57,034.18**
 - Summer and fall course release for principal investigator - **\$22,678.20**
 - Funding for two graduate research assistants - **\$16,000**
 - Interview transcription - **\$3,750**
 - Public records - **\$1,164.80**
 - Indirect institutional costs to FAU - **\$13,441.18**

Questions?

