



As the global economic crisis deepens, the Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects calls on the Florida Legislature to act now. Together, we can *rebuild* and *renew* the Florida economy.



***Florida's Architects believe that the economic crisis presents an opportunity not only to build, but to build better.***

## Rebuild and Renew Florida Stimulus Plan Proposal

*The Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects Plan for Restoring our Economy and Greening Our Communities in Florida*

President Obama called the 2009 economic stimulus measure the most sweeping economic legislation passed in the nation's history. *He said the law will fund record investments in education, new energy research and new infrastructure* - spending he said, that will lay the foundation for the nation's economic future.

On June 28, 2008, at the "Serve to Preserve Summit" on Global Climate Change, Governor Crist said, "We must develop the talent and expertise in our people so they can fill the high-wage, high-demand jobs in the green tech field."

**To that end, Florida's architects believe that the economic crisis presents an opportunity not only to create jobs, but to build and to build better.**

The Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects (AIA FL) believes that the economic crisis presents an opportunity not only to build, but to build better - greener buildings, vibrant communities, and a 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation network that is good for both the environment and the economy. AIA FL believes that any funding for infrastructure projects or stimulus funding for business enterprises and individuals that the Florida Legislature appropriates should be prioritized with these *shovel-worthy* and business incentives principles in mind. It is critically important to get the stimulus plan money into the hands of businesses and consumers that will properly reinvest the dollars back into the marketplace. Examples are as follows:

- *Projects for which the design process can start within 6 months of enactment and for which construction can commence within 24 months of enactment of the economic recovery legislation.*
- *Projects that rebuild and improve safety of existing infrastructure.*
- *Projects for new infrastructure that are more energy efficient, sustainable and help create healthy, livable communities.*
- *Incentives for businesses and individuals to enhance sustainable operations and lifestyles.*
- *Funding to help businesses lower operational costs and save existing jobs.*

***The AIA FL believes that the best way to meet these goals is to ensure that any economic recovery spending provides funds for the planning and design process for new projects as well as for "shovel-ready" projects.***

**Ensure that economic recovery provides funds for the planning and design process for new “shovel-worthy” projects as well as for “shovel-ready” projects.**

To achieve these goals, AIA FL has developed policy ideas in [six key areas](#) that, if enacted now, would invigorate the design and construction industries, in turn providing an immediate stimulus to the economy. These proposals would either maintain jobs that are in jeopardy of being eliminated or create new jobs and get Floridians back to work.

### 21st Century Schools

- *Invest in, and direct school districts to repair, modernize and green existing school buildings and campus facilities.*
- *Immediately upgrade the energy efficiency of public schools, community colleges and university buildings.*
- *Create a pilot program that would provide grants for local education agencies to develop model school campuses in each region of the state, utilizing 21st century design and construction techniques that align to support 21st century teaching and learning methods.*
- *Provide tuition credit for university or community college to high school students who pledge to walk, ride a bike, or take public transportation to school for all four years of high school. This will increase energy efficiency, cut costs for school bus transportation and create a generation of students who practice sustainable living.*
- *Develop a statewide school construction plan to build only smaller neighborhood-based elementary, middle and high schools that will allow students to walk, ride a bike or easily take public transportation to school and that will make access easier for parents to participate in the education system as volunteers.*
- *Provide rebates or salary adjustments to teachers and school employees who choose to live in the neighborhood where they teach and who walk, ride a bike or take public transportation to school daily.*

### Green Buildings

- *Provide funding for energy efficiency retrofits to public (state and local), residential, commercial, industrial and healthcare facilities where the design process can start within 6 months of enactment and construction can commence within 24 months of enactment.*
- *Implement property tax credits for individuals and businesses that install energy efficient products in their homes/buildings that reduce their energy consumption by a minimum of 25%.*
- *Mandate priority entitlement review, plan review and discounted permit fees for any project that meets state sustainability standards.*
- *Provide funding for state building energy efficiency upgrades and modernization for projects where the design process can start within 6 months of enactment and construction can commence within 24 months of enactment.*
- *Provide funding for the design and construction of green affordable housing, for projects where the design process can start within 6 months of enactment and construction can commence within 24 months of enactment.*

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- *Create programs for the retrofitting of existing low and moderate income residences for energy efficiency and storm resistance by installing high-efficiency and storm resistant windows and doors [increased energy efficiency of homes with insulation upgrades, HVAC upgrades, thereby decreasing the energy demands].*
- *Incentivize insurance companies to write reduced homeowner policy premiums to individuals/businesses who implement the sustainable principles, energy efficient products and hurricane/storm damage protection provisions of this plan.*
- *Provide a direct dollar for dollar property tax rebate for all approved sustainable products used in homes or businesses (light bulbs, light fixtures, ceiling fans, low flow plumbing fixtures/accessories, cleaning products, bike racks, shade trees, bus shelters, etc.).*

### Transit and Livable Communities

- *All future communities in the state should be created as compact, walkable communities focused on village live/work centers that result in energy independence, that ultimately encourages urban redevelopment, slows suburban sprawl, and improves the general health of the citizens of Florida.*
- *Invest in local and statewide energy efficient transportation systems to connect existing and new community developments. Initial planning has already taken place for a local light rail system for Orlando's SunRail (Senate Bill 1212), and expansion of the TriRail system north to the cities of Stuart and Vero Beach. Construction could begin almost immediately on local light rail and intercity high speed rail that would connect Florida's population centers and make Floridian's more energy independent.*
- *Provide a tax rebate for expenses to individuals who reside in affordable housing or urban housing who do not own an automobile and who walk, ride a bike or use public transportation.*
- *Provide priority access to tax credits and develop new tax credits to entities that develop projects adjacent to, or planned with public transit.*
- *Provide density bonuses and reduced parking requirements to entities that develop housing where residents are incentivized to not own an automobile and who can walk, ride a bike or use public transportation for their live/work needs.*

### Historic Preservation

- *Provide grants through the State Historic Preservation Officers and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers for historic preservation projects involving restoration and/or repair to historic infrastructure, renovations of historic school buildings for modern classroom use, and projects incorporating green building technology and methods into historic buildings and neighborhoods. All of these would provide jobs and could spur the revitalization of the communities where each project is located.*
- *Prioritize funding for projects which would restore/reuse historic buildings, schools, and existing historic infrastructure based on the sustainability of historic resources.*
- *Provide priority access to tax credits for entities that utilize existing or historical structures to create affordable housing projects.*

**For more  
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- *Provide low interest loans to modernize existing occupied historic structures/buildings to promote sustainable operation and provide the support for occupants to walk, ride a bike or take public transportation.*

### Alternative Energy Rebate Program for Home Owners and Businesses

- *Maintain and increase the funding for Florida's current Solar Energy System Incentives Program. Created in 2006 by the Florida Renewable Energy Technologies and Energy Efficiency Act, the program was structured as a four-year program. Any resident of Florida who purchases and installs a new solar energy system from July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2010, is eligible for a rebate on a portion of the purchase price of that solar energy system. Funding for FY2008-2009 is already exhausted. Currently, a solar water heater costs \$4,000 for installation, and can provide 80% of a home's hot water needs equal to 15% of the total electric bill.*
- *Provide a property tax rebate for individuals who install products or perform renovations on homes to strengthen the structure against hurricane/storm situations by utilizing materials that meet the hurricane/wind born debris requirements of the Florida Building Code.*

### Business Incentive/Assistance Programs

- *Provide low interest emergency loans or grants to businesses to avert the need to shut down operations or lay-off employees. The payment plan can include principal reduction by implementing provisions described in items 1 through 5 of this plan.*
- *Provide a program to allow small businesses and associations to utilize the "strength in numbers" theory to provide affordable and reasonable health insurance plans for employees.*
- *Provide rent rebates to businesses that use the sustainable incentives of this plan.*
- *Provide low interest loans to businesses that develop/purchase a building to house their operations provided they install the proposed provisions outlined in this plan.*