



Incentives & Recommendation Report (IRR) 2021

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AHAC)

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ALACHUA COUNTY AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2021 INCENTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

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420.9076 Adoption of affordable housing incentive strategies; committees.

(1) Each county or eligible municipality participating in the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program, including a municipality receiving program funds through the county, or an eligible municipality must, within 12 months after the original adoption of the local housing assistance plan, amend the plan to include local housing incentive strategies as defined in s. 420.9071(16).

(2) The governing board of a county or municipality shall appoint the members of the affordable housing advisory committee. Pursuant to the terms of any interlocal agreement, a county and municipality may create and jointly appoint an advisory committee. The local action adopted pursuant to s. 420.9072 which creates the advisory committee and appoints the advisory committee members must name at least 8 but not more than 11 committee members and specify their terms. Effective October 1, 2020, the committee must consist of one locally elected official from each county or municipality participating in the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program and one representative from at least six of the categories below:

- (a) A citizen who is actively engaged in the residential home building industry in connection with affordable housing.
- (b) A citizen who is actively engaged in the banking or mortgage banking industry in connection with affordable housing.
- (c) A citizen who is a representative of those areas of labor actively engaged in home building in connection with affordable housing.
- (d) A citizen who is actively engaged as an advocate for low-income persons in connection with affordable housing.
- (e) A citizen who is actively engaged as a for-profit provider of affordable housing.
- (f) A citizen who is actively engaged as a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing.
- (g) A citizen who is actively engaged as a real estate professional in connection with affordable housing.
- (h) A citizen who actively serves on the local planning agency pursuant to s. 163.3174. If the local planning agency is comprised of the governing board of the

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county or municipality, the governing board may appoint a designee who is knowledgeable in the local planning process.

(i) A citizen who resides within the jurisdiction of the local governing body making the appointments.

(j) A citizen who represents employers within the jurisdiction.

(k) A citizen who represents essential services personnel, as defined in the local housing assistance plan.

(3) All meetings of the advisory committee are public meetings, and all committee records are public records. Staff, administrative, and facility support to the advisory committee shall be provided by the appointing county or eligible municipality.

(4) Annually, the advisory committee shall review the established policies and procedures, ordinances, land development regulations, and adopted local government comprehensive plan of the appointing local government and shall recommend specific actions or initiatives to encourage or facilitate affordable housing while protecting the ability of the property to appreciate in value. The recommendations may include the modification or repeal of existing policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan provisions; the creation of exceptions applicable to affordable housing; or the adoption of new policies, procedures, regulations, ordinances, or plan provisions, including recommendations to amend the local government comprehensive plan and corresponding regulations, ordinances, and other policies. At a minimum, each advisory committee shall submit an annual report to the local governing body and to the entity providing statewide training and technical assistance for the Affordable Housing Catalyst Program which includes recommendations on the implementation of affordable housing incentives in the following areas:

(a) The processing of approvals of development orders or permits for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects, as provided in s. 163.3177(6)(f)3.

(b) All allowable fee waivers provided for the development or construction of affordable housing.

(c) The allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing.

(d) The reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons.

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- (e) Affordable accessory residential units.
- (f) The reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.
- (g) The allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line configurations for affordable housing.
- (h) The modification of street requirements for affordable housing.
- (i) The establishment of a process by which a local government considers, before adoption, policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan provisions that increase the cost of housing.
- (j) The preparation of a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.
- (k) The support of development near transportation hubs and major employment centers and mixed-use developments.

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The Alachua County Advisory Committee created by Section 8. Of Ordinance 93-11, as amended, shall be composed of nine (9) members who shall serve two (2) year terms of office. The Advisory Committee shall include the following:

- A. One citizen who is actively engaged in the residential building industry.
- B. One citizen who is actively engaged in the banking or mortgage industry.
- C. One citizen who is a representative of those areas of labor engaged in home building.
- D. One citizen who is designated as an advocate for low-income persons.
- E. One citizen who is a provider of affordable housing.
- F. One citizen who is a real estate professional.
- G. Three citizens at large.

AHAC INCENTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. EXPEDITED PERMITTING:

The processing of approvals of development orders or permits for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects, as provided in s. 163.3177(6)(f)3.

Existing Strategy:

Permits as defined in s. 163.3177(6)(f)(3) for affordable housing projects are expedited to a greater degree than other projects. Expedited building permitting is available for affordable housing, as detailed in Sec. 402.03.5 of the Alachua County Unified Land Development Code (ULDC). This applies to permits for housing units funded by affordable housing programs such as CDBG, SHIP, Housing Tax Credit Programs, and more. Qualification is verified by the Alachua County Housing Programs Office. The building permit is then processed within six (6) business days from the day the permit application is found sufficient and complete.

AHAC Recommendation: Keep the existing strategy.

B. MODIFICATION OF IMPACT FEES:

The modification of impact-fee requirements, including reduction or waiver of fees and alternative methods of fee payment for affordable housing.

Existing Strategy:

The County previously provided General Revenue Funding to offset the cost of impact fees for affordable housing units. For reasons of budgetary considerations and lack of effectiveness as a means of achieving affordable housing, the County recently decided not to pursue this strategy.

AHAC Recommendation: Keep the existing strategy. Do not recommend reinstatement.

C. FLEXIBLE DENSITIES:

The allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing.

Existing Strategy:

The Unified Land Development Code, Chapter 404. Article II, includes provisions to allow single family attached units by right in residential zoning districts without restricting the number of units in a row that may be attached. Homes in Cottage Neighborhoods may be within single unit, duplex, or triplex buildings.

AHAC Recommendation: Keep the existing strategy.

D. RESERVATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY:

The reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons.

Existing Strategy:

The Unified Land Development Code, Sec. 407.121(b), provides that a preliminary certificate of level of service compliance (CLSC) may be issued for affordable housing developments for time periods established by the phasing schedule of the project's approved preliminary development plan. Reservation of public-school capacity associated with this provision can be made through a development agreement between the developer, county, and the school board in accordance with the Interlocal Agreement for Public School Facility Planning.

AHAC Recommendation: Keep the existing strategy.

E. ALLOWANCE FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS:

The allowance of affordable accessory residential units in residential zoning districts.

Existing Strategy:

The Unified Land Development Code, Sec. 404.24, provides that in the A, RE, RE-1, R-1aa, R-1a, R-1b, and R-1c districts, located within the rural/agriculture, estate residential, low density, or medium density residential land use designations, a single accessory dwelling unit is allowed as an accessory use to a principal structure, without being included in gross residential density calculations. All accessory dwelling units must comply with standards such as owner-occupancy, size, access, etc., as identified in Sec. 404.24.

AHAC Recommendation: Keep the existing strategy.

F. REDUCTION OF PARKING AND SETBACK REQUIREMENTS:

The reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.

Existing Strategy:

The Unified Land Development Code, Sec. 407.17, allows a reduction in the number of required parking spaces for a mixed-use project or for uses which are located adjacent to one another and have different peak parking demands and operating hours. Sec. 407.18 provides for reductions in the required number of off-street parking spaces through documentation of reduced parking demand. Reduction in setback requirements for zero lot line housing is noted below under “allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero lot line configurations, for affordable housing”.

AHAC Recommendation: Keep the existing strategy.

G. FLEXIBLE LOT CONFIGURATIONS:

The allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line configurations for affordable housing.

Existing Strategy:

The Unified Land Development Code, Chapter 403. Article III, implements density-based zoning districts that allow for flexible lot sizes and better utilization of densities allowed within land uses. Chapter 404. Article II includes provisions to allow mixed unit types by right (single family detached units and single family attached units) in residential zoning districts, allowing for more density and a greater range of unit prices. This in turn creates opportunities to include affordable housing units in market rate developments. Sec. 403.07 and Sec. 407.67 allow for zero lot line units in single family districts and in Traditional Neighborhood Developments and Transit Oriented Developments. Minimum side setbacks do not apply to zero lot line developments provided the building spacing requirements of the Florida Building Code are met.

Future Land Use Element Objective 1.8 in the Comprehensive Plan and ULDC Chapter 407. Article XVI provides for Cottage Neighborhoods intended in part to promote diverse and high quality infill development within the Urban Cluster and a variety of housing types and sizes in the community that meet the needs of households with a diversity of incomes. Cottage neighborhoods may be on lots as small as one acre, with a minimum of four homes and a maximum of 15 homes allowed around any common green, and may be incorporated within larger residential subdivisions. These

neighborhoods provide for more efficient use of land through density bonuses of two times the maximum units per acre of the zoning district designation. Homes in Cottage Neighborhoods may be located on individually platted lots or on a common ownership lot, and may be within single unit, duplex, or triplex buildings. Setbacks are applied from the overall property boundaries rather than from individual lots.

AHAC Recommendation: Keep the existing strategy.

H. THE MODIFICATION OF STREET REQUIREMENTS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

The modification of street requirements potentially provides more parking options while reducing development, housing, and parking costs.

Existing Strategy:

The modification of street requirements for affordable housing allows the option of common parking lots rather than private roads, drives, or alleys accessing individual homes, potentially reducing development and housing costs.

AHAC Recommendation: Keep the existing strategy.

I. ONGOING REVIEW PROCESS:

The establishment of a process by which a local government considers, before adoption, policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan provisions that increase the cost of housing.

Existing Strategy:

An ongoing process for review of local policies, ordinances, regulations and plan provisions that increase the cost of housing prior to their adoption.

Provide a description of the procedures used to implement this strategy:

The County provides for review of local policies, ordinances, regulations, and comprehensive plan provisions which significantly increase the cost of housing.

Published notices of public hearings for comprehensive plan amendments, proposed new land development regulations, and rezoning help to invite public comment on the impact on the cost of housing.

Staff analysis is required for any comprehensive plan amendments or land development regulation text amendments, prior to adoption, to evaluate the impact(s) on the cost of housing, and to incorporate the findings in the staff report. This is implemented by Sec. 402.05(a) 17, ULDC.

AHAC Recommendation: Keep the existing strategy.

J. ESCHEATED PROPERTIES:

The preparation of a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.

Existing Strategy:

Florida Statutes, Sec. 125.379, requires each county to prepare an inventory list every 3 years of all county-owned lands within its jurisdiction that is appropriate for use as affordable housing. The list is then reviewed and adopted by resolution at a public hearing. Housing Element Policy 1.1.8 in the Comprehensive Plan states that Alachua County will review surplus land in its possession for suitability for sale or donation to organizations which propose to develop affordable housing projects. An updated inventory list will be prepared and submitted in 2019.

AHAC Recommendation: Keep the existing strategy.

K. TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH:

The support of development near transportation hubs and major employment centers and mixed-use developments.

Existing Strategy:

The Alachua County Comprehensive Plan provides for mixed-use, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly communities in higher densities and intensities that are transit supportive and reduce the need to rely on a motor vehicle for mobility. These are provided for in Activity Centers designated by the Comprehensive Plan, and in Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) and Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs) in areas designated for urban residential development. To increase the variety of housing opportunities within walking distance of existing or future commercial and employment areas, residential uses in Activity Centers are allowable as part of mixed use development in non-residential Future Land Use designations. A range of housing options are allowed in these developments, to provide opportunities for residents of various income levels to reside within the same community. Comprehensive Plan provides for mixed-use, pedestrian- to provide opportunities for residents of various income levels to reside within the same community.

AHAC Recommendation: Keep the existing strategy.

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Alachua County has established the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee, as required by section 420.9076(2), Florida Statutes;

Alachua County is mandated under Chapter 420, Part VII, of the Florida Statutes to establish an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC); and Section 14 of the City Code actually establishes the Committee. The primary purpose of the AHAC is to recommend specific initiatives and incentives to encourage or facilitate affordable housing within the City. The State mandates similar committees for each City and County that receives state funds under the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program.

Within this report, the terms “Low-Income, Very-Low-Income and Extremely-Low-Income” occur several times. While the affordability level of units built with any of the various incentives discussed, must be determined by the Gainesville community, in this report, the terms are defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Income Limits for 2021. Those limits are shown in the chart contained in Attachment 1.

In general terms, when this report mentions affordable housing, it is referring to housing that is affordable to low-income persons. By “affordable housing,” this report means housing, where the total monthly cost of that housing (including taxes, insurance, and utilities) is less than 30 percent of the household’s total monthly income.

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Previous Comments:

PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. GENERAL

- Promote Cottage Neighborhoods.
- **Housing demand is increasing, which makes all costs increase - bad time for affordable housing. [Integrated into C. Flexible density](#)**

B. OUTREACH TO SMALLER DEVELOPERS

- Create a Not-For-Profit Developer University to teach them about budgets, underwriting, etc.
- Provide resources for smaller developers.
- List of trustworthy contractors and/or tradespeople.
- List of trustworthy landlords or resources to find landlords.
- “The County could develop a list of workers, painters, drywall installers, renovators, etc. to help in refurbishing the houses. Example: I have had to figure out painters, drywall guys, AND tree TRIMMERS THAT I can afford. Perhaps the county could provide such workers who are working on workforce housing.”

C. VACANT/ESCHEATED PROPERTIES

- Offer a "Finder's Fee" of maybe \$150 for any house that is vacant, abandoned, etc. that a person makes known to the county which ultimately can be converted into workforce housing. It is hard to know who to approach to offer to buy vacant property. I could see that the house was abandoned, but had no person to contact to express interest in buying it. Perhaps the county could help in that.
- “Establish someone in the county who aggressively follows up such leads and investigates empty houses for possible sale/repair/rental. I found the two houses I bought by driving around and seeing houses that were empty. Also, I have a friend who is a realtor who tells me when a house comes on the MLS, especially when the house is in the east side of town and is priced in a way that I might purchase and rehab.”
- Financial support of investors willing to rehab houses for workforce housing should be an ongoing support of the County. The amount of money could be relatively small to aid in housing rehab.

D. COSTS/DEVELOPMENT

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- Cost to develop in Alachua County is too expensive.
- “There are no incentives to build nice, expensive, homes in less nice neighborhoods or parts of the county.
- Larger homes equal larger profit and less restrictions.
- “The government has helped subsidize subdivisions.”
- Urban service boundary imposes on building more units.
- Tree replacement/replanting requirements too expensive to work for affordable housing.
- Mitigations required are too strict.

I. SUGGESTIONS:

- Create more transportation hubs, healthcare centers, and services in rural areas, which will allow development in those areas.
- Ensure affordable housing has slightly lower building standards - quality but not top of the line (Formica countertop, non-stainless steel appliances, etc.).
- Cheaper lots for affordable housing purposes (Community Land Trust- referenced to provide lots.)

E. COSTS/FEES

- There are still impact fees for affordable housing. No Change recommendation.
- Request to waive impact and developer fees for affordable housing, or at least severely discount.

All Impact Fees removed on housing projects

Remove all government fees on housing - to include developer fees

I. SUGGESTIONS:

- Fee relaxation for developers with multiple scenarios presented:
- Waive impact fees of nine (9) houses if the tenth (10th) is affordable.
- Waive impact fees of four (4) houses if the fifth (5th) is affordable.
- Drastically discount if unable to waive.
- Offset the fees for development (electric, sewer, water hookups).

F. INCENTIVES:

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- Consider regulatory and financial incentives (e.g., building permit fee reduction) for the redevelopment and rehabilitation of housing units affordable to very low and extremely low-income households.
- Request the City and County offer short-term and long-term affordable housing goals that developers can utilize to help focus on affordable housing.
- Lower interest offers for affordable housing projects.
- Tax abatement for renters and developers requested.

G. ENERGY EFFICIENCY & AMENITIES REQUIREMENTS

- Affordable housing projects require more expensive, higher energy efficiency standards than other housing projects.
- Affordable housing projects require more amenities than other housing projects.

I. SUGGESTIONS:

- Consider a pilot matching grant program for landlords to improve energy and water efficiency for rental units that are affordable for very low and extremely low-income households.

Public meetings

Meeting June 10th 2021

March 31st 2021

Mailings

203 Letters sent to Real-estate agents Alachua County

224 letter sent to licensed contractors Alachua County

Exhibit 1- Sample Letter.

The Florida Housing Finance Corporation is requiring all entities receiving State Housing Initiative Partnership Program (S.H.I.P.) funding must produce an Incentives and Recommendations Report (IRR) annually. You can review a copy of the 2019 IRR at the following web site. <https://alachuacounty.us/Depts/CSS/House/Pages/housing.aspx>.

The County would like your input on how to make housing more affordable from the County Level. In short what regulation does the County impose if modified or eliminated would allow the building of more affordable housing. Or made what new regulation might be instituted to accomplish the same goal.

Some suggestion we have received:

- o Tree replacement/replanting requirements too expensive to work for affordable housing.
- o Mitigations required are too strict.
- o Request to waive impact and developer fees for affordable housing, or at least severely discount.

We welcome your opinions on Affordable Housing barriers and want you to be a part of helping us to determine what our strategies will be for the 2020 Incentives and Recommendations Report.

Please respond to housing@alachuacounty.us or mail to Housing, 218 SE 24th Street, Gainesville, Florida 32641.

The attachment, (page 2) are existing strategies. Thank you for your time and your input.

Regards,

Stephen Weeks, Liaison
Alachua County Affordable Housing Advisory

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The processing of approvals of development orders or permits for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects, as provided in s. 163.3177(6)(f)3

B. MODIFICATION OF IMPACT FEES:

The modification of impact-fee requirements, including reduction or waiver of fees and alternative methods of fee payment for affordable housing.

C. FLEXIBLE DENSITIES:

The allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing.

D. RESERVATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY:

The reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons.

E. ALLOWANCE FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS:

The allowance of affordable accessory residential units in residential zoning districts

F. REDUCTION OF PARKING AND SETBACK REQUIREMENTS:

The reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.

H. THE MODIFICATION OF STREET REQUIREMENTS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

The modification of street requirements potentially provides more parking options while reducing development, housing, and parking costs.

I. ONGOING REVIEW PROCESS:

The establishment of a process by which a local government considers, before adoption, policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan provisions that increase the cost of housing.

J. ESCHEATED PROPERTIES:

The preparation of a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.

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The support of development near transportation hubs and major employment centers and mixed-use developments