

Polk County Incentive Strategies Report

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

Report to the Polk County Board of County Commissioners

SHIP Affordable Housing Incentive Strategies

SUBMITTED TO: Rick Wilson, Chairman

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

SUBMITTED TO: Rob Dearduff,

FLORIDA HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION

DATE SUBMITTED: _____

PREPARED BY: Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC)

BACKGROUND

As a recipient of State Housing Initiative Partnership funds, Polk County established an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee on Dec. 17, 2003, as required by the Florida Statutes, Sec. 420.9076. The AHAC is responsible for reviewing and evaluating local plans, policies, procedures, land development regulations, the Comprehensive Plan, and other aspects of Polk County's housing activities that impact the production of affordable housing. Further, the AHAC is specifically directed by the SHIP Statute to consider and evaluate the implementation of the incentives set out at Florida Statutes, Sec. 420.9076 (4)(a)-(k). Based on the AHAC evaluation, it may recommend to local government that it make modifications of, exceptions to, or creation of new plans, policies, procedures, and other governing vehicles which would encourage production of affordable housing.

As approved by the Polk County Board of County Commissioners, the recommendations are used to amend the Local Housing Assistance Plan, the local Comprehensive Plan, land development regulations, and other policies affecting affordable housing.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The Polk County Board of County Commissioners appointed or re-appointed members to the Committee for staggered three-year terms. Florida Statutes, Sec. 420.9076(2) lists the categories from which committee members must be selected. Each AHAC must have a locally elected official from the county participating in the SHIP program. The locally elected official must be a County Commissioner. The elected official will count as a member of the AHAC for purposes of meeting the number of members requirements. There must be at least eight committee members, but not more than eleven, with representation from at least six of the following categories:

- (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 people 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 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.

The appointed AHAC Committee members are included here, along with their category affiliation.

Name	Category Represented	Date Appointed
1. Becky Troutman	Elected Official	12/3/2024 – 12/3/2027
2. Vermishia Pitts	A. A citizen who is actively engaged in the residential home building industry in connection with affordable housing.	05/06/2025 – 05/06/28
3. Mark Piburn	B. A citizen who is actively engaged in the banking or mortgage banking industry in connection with affordable housing.	01/06/2024 - 12/31/2026
4. Mark A. Ferreira	C. A Citizen who is a representative of those areas of labor actively engaged in home building in connection with affordable housing.	05/062025 – 05/06/2028
5. Nicole Redmond	D. A citizen who is actively engaged as an advocate for low-income people in connection with affordable housing.	01/01/2024 – 12/31/2026
6. Steve Williams	E. A citizen who is actively engaged as a for-profit provider of affordable housing.	01/01/2023– 12/31/2025
7. Bridget Engleman	F. A citizen who is actively engaged as a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing.	01/01/2023 – 12/3120/25
8. Hattie Wilson	G. A citizen who is actively engaged as a real estate professional in connection with affordable housing.	01/01/2023 – 12/3120/25
9. OPEN	H. A citizen who actively serves on the local planning agency pursuant to s. 163.3174	
10. JaQuis McCullough	I. A citizen who resides within the jurisdiction of the local	01/01/2024 - 12/31/2026

	governing body making the appointments	
11. Tom Wodrich	I. A citizen who resides within the jurisdiction of the local governing body making the appointments	01/01/2024 - 12/31/2026

AFFORDABLE HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

The AHAC has reviewed local government plans, policies, and procedures; ordinances; regulations; statutes; and the comprehensive plan, among other documents applicable to affordable housing, for evaluation of their impacts on affordable housing. Further, the AHAC has specifically considered and evaluated the strategies set out at Florida Statutes, Sec. 420.9076 (4)(a)(k). Based on this review and evaluation, the AHAC has formulated recommendations to the County Commission that it incorporated into its housing strategy certain changes designed to encourage and facilitate the production of affordable housing.

The AHAC, from its review, consideration, evaluation, and recommendations, drafts and submits this report to the County Commission, to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, and the Florida Housing Coalition, as the entity providing statewide training and technical assistance for the Affordable Housing Catalyst Program, which details the scope of its work and the resulting recommendations.

From the review and evaluation of the local government documents listed here, the AHAC makes these recommendations to the Polk County Board of County Commissioners that it incorporate into its housing strategy. The AHAC has reviewed, considered, and evaluated the following the strategies provided in the SHIP Statute at Florida Statutes, Sec. 420.9076 (4):

- (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.
- (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.
- (l) Demolition Lien Waiver -

A) EXPEDITED PERMITTING

Meeting Synopsis:

Pursuant to Section 420.9076, Florida Statutes, Polk County offers an expedited permitting process for qualified affordable housing projects. This expedited permitting process moves these projects ahead in

the permitting queue to fast track the process. An application is provided on the Polk County website in the building permit area for affordable housing projects. Once a building permit has been submitted for the qualified project, the completed application is then submitted by email for the expedited process to the building division. Polk County began expedited permitting for affordable housing in 1998. The County has long offered same day single family permits for walk-in customers, which is also a valuable resource for expediting affordable housing projects. In 2018, the County began using an online development review and permitting system, known as the Accela Citizen Portal. While the County still offers same day single family permitting, now customers can apply electronically. Applicants submitting through Accela can indicate in the project description they are constructing an affordable housing project. The review and approval of such projects are conducted within one (1) business day. Multi-family building permit applications are only accepted online, and the review is initiated within three (3) business days. Because of the SB 102 known as the Live Local Act, HND coordinated with the Building Division to insert instructions to obtain Expedited Permitting for affordable housing developments on the Building's Division's website.

Existing Strategy: **Yes**

AHAC Recommendation: Recommended Strategy

Schedule for Implementation: **In place and functioning as intended**

B) IMPACT FEE WAIVERS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Meeting Synopsis:

Polk County has waived impact fees since 2007 totaling \$8.7 million. To date Polk County continues to waive all impact fees for single family and multi-family housing construction for households making less than 80% of area median income for the area. The County also mitigates workforce housing impact fees for single family and multifamily construction at 100% except for educational impact fees for households making up to 120% of area median income for the Lakeland-Winter Haven MSA.

Existing Strategy: **Yes**

AHAC Recommendation: Recommended Strategy

Schedule for Implementation: **Existing Strategy in Place and functioning as intended**

C) FLEXIBLE DENSITIES

Meeting Synopsis:

POLICY 2.104-A6: GENERAL INCENTIVES

- Polk County shall encourage and promote compact, mixed-use by allowing:
 - a. increased densities and intensities within the Transit Corridors and Centers Overlay District subject to Policy 2.104-A7; and
 - b. increased densities for affordable or workforce housing subject to Policy 2.104-A7.

Existing Strategy: **Yes**

AHAC Recommendation: Recommended Strategy

Schedule for Implementation: **Existing Strategy in Place and functioning as intended**

D) RESERVATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY

Meeting Synopsis:

At this time, this incentive is not specifically offered by Polk County as part of the development process. The Committee recommends revisiting reservation of transportation concurrency for affordable housing developments. The Polk County Comprehensive Plan outlines Infrastructure capacity in the following chapters:

CHAPTER 3 PUBLIC FACILITIES POLICIES DIVISION 3.100 INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENT SECTION 3.101 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Sanitary Sewer, Solid Waste, Drainage, Potable Water, and Natural Groundwater Aquifer Recharge Element (Infrastructure Element) is to serve as a guide to Polk County in providing for necessary public facilities and services. The infrastructure Element must be correlated with future land use projections.

Existing Strategy: NO

AHAC Recommendation: Committee recommends revisiting reservation of transportation concurrency

Schedule for Implementation: Program Year 2025?

E) AFFORDABLE ACCESSORY RESIDENTIAL UNITS

Meeting Synopsis:

Section 206 Accessory Uses

Accessory uses are permitted in conjunction with the primary use in all land use districts. Accessory uses are those land uses that are incidental and subordinate to the primary use of the property (see table 2.1 for a list of primary land uses allowed per district). Specific requirements pertaining to the determination of what is incidental and subordinate for certain types of accessory uses are listed in the section and sections to follow in this chapter. All accessory uses contained herein, and any other not included shall comply with Section 209.

A. Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) may be permitted as accessory uses to single-family detached homes and mobile homes in all residential districts and lots of record for residential purposes subject to the applicable district regulations and the following requirements:

1. No more than one accessory dwelling unit may be permitted on any single-family residential lot or parcel.
2. An accessory dwelling unit shall be located in the side or rear yard of the principal dwelling unit.
3. Accessory dwelling units may utilize setbacks pertaining to accessory structures unless attached to the principal structure.
4. Mobile homes shall not be permitted to be used as accessory dwelling units. However, where mobile homes are the primary residence. An accessory dwelling unit built to the standards of the Florida Building Code may be permitted provided it is 50% or less in heated floor space than the mobile home.
5. Accessory dwelling units shall be permitted subject to a Level I Review.
6. Accessory dwelling units shall not be approved for short-term rental or vacation rental.
7. ADUs may be rented, leased, or serve as housing for living assistants, guests, or family members. ADU's may not be subdivided from the parent property or placed under separate ownership from the primary dwelling.
8. ADUs in conformance with this section do not count as additional dwelling units in the calculation of density.
9. When an ADU is attached to the principal structure, uses the same electrical service and plumbing as the primary dwelling unit, access is through a subordinate entrance on the rear or side of the principal structure, and the primary dwelling unit and ADU combined do not exceed five bedrooms. It is considered one single-family home, and the parcel is eligible for an additional detached ADU.

Existing Strategy: Yes

AHAC Recommendation: Recommended Strategy

Schedule for Implementation: **Existing Strategy in Place and functioning as intended**

F) PARKING AND SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

Meeting Synopsis:

Polk County does not have a specific program for parking reduction for just affordable housing developments.

The Land Development Code Section 710 outlines Alternative Parking Strategies (APS). Section 710 Alternative Parking Strategies (APS)

A. Parking Study

A parking study shall be required for the following:

1. Uses for which a parking requirement is not listed in Table 7.10.
2. When proposing an exemption from or reduction in the minimum parking requirements through an APS.
3. When requesting a parking space deferral.

The Land Development Code also provides a provision for waivers for parking and other requirements as outlined in Chapter 9 Section 932.

Existing Strategy: Yes

AHAC Recommendation: Existing Strategy

Schedule for Implementation: **Existing Strategy in Place and functioning as intended**

G) FLEXIBLE LOT CONFIGURATIONS

Meeting Synopsis:

Polk County does not have a flexible lot configuration for affordable housing developments, but the zero-lot-line provision is outlined in the Land Development Code below:

POLICY 2.204-A6: Polk County shall develop, within its Land Development Code, an administrative site plan review process for residential developments which incorporate innovative approaches to site design (clustering Section 753, and zero-lot-line Section 755, etc.) as a technique to reduce housing costs.

Existing Strategy: Yes

AHAC Recommendation: Recommended Strategy

Schedule for Implementation: **Existing Strategy in Place and functioning as intended**

H) MODIFICATION OF STREET REQUIREMENTS

Meeting Synopsis:

The County does not have a program that modifies the street requirements for affordable housing developments. The Polk County Land Development Code Section 824 – Roadway Design outlines the requirements for sidewalks, public and private roads.

Existing Strategy: Yes

AHAC Recommendation: Recommended design requirements per Land Development Code

Schedule for Implementation: **Existing**

I) PROCESS OF ONGOING REVIEW

Meeting Synopsis:

Over the last year Land Development Staff reviewed Land Development Code text for criteria for conditional uses for individual mobile homes to allow mobile homes by right in subdivision plats

recorded prior to 1971. This administrative change will save individuals clients \$966 per case by streamlining the approval process.

AHAC Recommendation: Recommended Strategy

Schedule for Implementation: **Existing Strategy ongoing**

J) PUBLIC LAND INVENTORY

Meeting Synopsis:

Escheated property is available for affordable housing development.

Existing Strategy: Currently in place and is utilized to assist in the development of affordable housing units

AHAC Recommendation: Recommended Strategy

Schedule for Implementation: **Adopted and functioning as intended**

K) SUPPORT OF DEVELOPMENT NEAR TRANSPORTATION HUBS

Meeting Synopsis:

POLICY 2.104-A6: GENERAL INCENTIVES – Polk County shall encourage and promote compact, mixed-use by allowing a. increased densities and intensities within the Transit Corridors and Centers Overlay District subject to Policy 2.104-A7; and POLK COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT Adopted: 18 NOV 92 Page B-19 (Revised August 2016)

b. increased densities for affordable or workforce housing subject to Policy 2.104- A7.

POLICY 2.104-A7: DENSITIES AND INTENSITIES –To promote energy efficient land use patterns and compact mixed-use development, the TSDA and the Transit Corridors and Centers Overlay (TCC Overlay) within the TSDA shall include higher densities and intensities of development. The maximum densities and intensities listed in Table 2.104.1 exceed those listed in Policy 2.109-A1 and Policy 2.119- A1 and the policies that include the description for each of the referenced land use category as provided for within this Element. The Mixed-Use category within Tables 2.104.1 and 2.104.2 is for those non-residential land use categories that permit residential as provided for in this Element or the Appendices for the Selected Area Plans (SAP). The Transit Corridors and Centers Overlay includes three separate components that expand the residential density of selected Future Land Use Districts. These three components as depicted in Figure 1. include:

- a. Transit Corridor – an area within ¼ mile of fixed route transit service.
- b. Transit Center – an area within a one-mile radius of the point of access for transit services; and
- c. Transit Center Core – an area within ¼ mile of the point of access for transit services.

Maximum densities are established within the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA) and the respective components of the Transit Corridors and Centers Overlay as listed in Table 2.104.1. The maximum densities are not guaranteed within the respective land use categories and shall only be permitted subject to the requirements established in Policy 2.104-A5 Development Criteria and Policy 2.124-A3 Design Principles. Table 2.104.1 also includes recommended minimum densities to support future investments in public transportation. These recommended minimum densities may be required under the Land Development Code to coincide with planned public or private sector transit investments. Residential projects with less than the recommended minimum density will be encouraged to include a site design that allows for project phasing in order to preserve the maximum development potential of the subject parcel

Existing Strategy: Yes

AHAC Recommendation: Recommended Strategy

Schedule for Implementation: **Adopted currently in place**

L) Demolition Lien Waiver

Meeting Synopsis:

The committee recommended amending the ordinance to include multifamily duplex or tri-plex apartments. Staff met with the County Departments to review the internal process for this incentive. The amendment to the current structural Maintenance Ordinance was implemented and a process to release the claim of lien for the costs incurred by the County for a demolition of unsafe structures was finalized. These lots are located throughout Polk County and the affordable housing Demolition Lien Waiver is targeted to very low (50% of the area median income), low (80% of the area median income) and moderate-income persons (120% of the area median income) persons. Affordable Housing shall mean a Dwelling Unit which is offered for sale or rent to Low-Income Persons or Very-Low-Income Persons and which monthly rent or monthly mortgage payments, including taxes and insurance, do not exceed thirty (30) per cent of that amount which represents the percentage of the median adjusted gross income for Low-Income Persons and Very-Low-Income Persons.

Existing Strategy: **Currently in place and is utilized to assist in the development of affordable housing units**

AHAC Recommendation: Recommended Strategy

Schedule for Implementation: **Adopted**