

Alachua County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee  
2008 Affordable Housing Incentives  
**Recommendations Summary**

This summary of the Alachua County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee's (AHAC) 2008 Affordable Housing Incentives and Recommendations Report outlines the AHAC's recommendations for encouraging and facilitating affordable housing in Alachua County. The AHAC is required by Florida Statutes to recommend a wide range of affordable housing incentives but must, at a minimum, address specified areas for review. These specified areas for review and additional issues raised by the Alachua County AHAC are numbered below. AHAC recommendations are then outlined; it is the AHAC's determination that not all specified areas for review or additional issues necessitate recommendations at this time. Recommendations are summarized in the attached table.

**Specified Areas for Review (Florida Statutes 420.9076)**

1. Expedited processing of development orders or permit approvals for affordable housing.
2. Establishment of a process for local government to consider, before adoption, policies, plans, procedures, regulations, ordinances, or plans that increase the cost of housing.
3. Modification of impact fee requirements, including reduction, waiver, or alternative methods of fee payment for affordable housing.
4. Flexibility in densities for affordable housing.
5. Reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low, low, and moderate income persons.
6. Allowance for affordable accessory dwelling units in residential districts.
7. Reduction in parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.
8. Allowance for flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line housing configurations.
9. Modification of street requirements for affordable housing.
10. Development of an inventory list of locally-owned public lands appropriate for use as affordable housing.
11. Support for development and growth near transportation hubs, major employers, and mixed-use centers.

**Additional Affordable Housing Issues Raised by the AHAC**

12. Transfer of Development Rights.
13. Energy-Efficient Affordable housing.
14. Communication and advertising for the County's affordable housing programs, particularly impact fee rebates;
15. The possibility of raising the SHIP Down-Payment Assistance qualifying upper income limit to 140% for essential services personnel;
16. The concern that for households assisted through the SHIP Down-Payment Assistance program, any necessary rehabilitation reduces the amount available for downpayment.
17. Consideration of landscaping requirements as increasing the cost of housing.
18. Proportionate Fair Share and associated costs to housing;
19. Inclusionary zoning/housing.
20. Evaluate tax-delinquent properties and parcels for which the County holds tax certificates for possible acquisition and/or use for affordable housing.

## Recommendations Concerning Specified Areas for Review

### 1. Expedited processing of Development Orders or permit approvals for affordable housing projects.

**Status:** Alachua County expedites the processing of development orders and permits for affordable housing projects to a greater degree than other projects; most permit applications are processed within ten days.

**AHAC recommendation:** That the expediting process be refined by amending language in the County's current Local Housing Assistance Plan Incentive Strategies to read: "Permits for affordable housing projects shall be available by a week from the Monday following the Friday of the week during which they were submitted."

**Staff recommendation:** Direct staff to draft suitable language to implement the intent of AHAC's proposal.

### 2. Establishment of a process for a local government to consider, before adoption, policies, procedures, ordinances, or plan provisions that increase the cost of housing.

**Status:** Alachua County currently includes a statement in each advertisement for a comp plan amendment requesting the public to provide comments on any impact the proposed amendment would have on the cost of housing.

**AHAC recommendation:** That evaluation of potential regulations be accomplished with a line item on each Planning Commission agenda and with the involvement of stakeholders in the consideration of cost impact.

**Staff recommendation:** Direct staff to establish a process to consider, before adoption, policies, procedures, ordinances, or plan provisions that increase the cost of housing, by requiring a staff analysis in staff reports for any recommended amendments to Land Development Regulations or to the Comprehensive Plan, and by continuing to invite the public to submit comments to the Board re: impact on housing affordability.

### 3. Modification of impact fee requirements.

**Status:** Alachua County has an Impact Fee Assistance Program that provides funding for the cost of impact fees for income-eligible homebuyers purchasing or repairing a home in unincorporated Alachua County.<sup>1</sup> For the 2009 fiscal year, Alachua County has budgeted \$25,000 in General Revenue funding to offset the cost of impact fees for affordable housing units.

**AHAC recommendation:** That the County monitor utilization of the Impact Fee Assistance Program and consider increasing the amount budgeted for the Program from the reduced amount of \$25,000 to the original amount of \$100,000 should demand for Program assistance justify an increase in funding.

**Staff recommendation:** Direct staff to monitor expenditures in the Impact Fee Assistance Program on an annual basis and recommend that the annual budget be amended, up to \$100,000 should demand for program assistance justify an increase in funding.

### 4. Flexibility in densities for affordable housing: No recommended changes at this time.

### 5. Reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low, low, and moderate income persons: No recommended changes at this time.

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<sup>1</sup> To be income-eligible, a household must earn less than 100% of Area Median Income (\$56,625 for a family of four).

**6. Allowance for affordable accessory dwelling units in residential zoning districts.**

**Status:** Accessory dwelling units are allowed by right on homesteaded lots in all residential zoning districts.

**AHAC recommendation:** That the construction of new affordable housing not be penalized: with density requirements when accessory dwelling units are proposed for that housing.

**Staff recommendation:** Expand the current Comprehensive Plan provision to allow accessory dwelling units with new construction without the requirement of homestead exemption.

**7. Reduction in parking and setback requirements for affordable housing:** No recommended changes at this time.

**8. Allowance for flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line housing configurations:**

No recommended changes at this time.

**9. Modification of street requirements for affordable housing.**

**Status:** Modification of street requirements is generally not allowed but is currently under review.

**AHAC recommendation:** That the County explore a reduction in street width requirements.

**Staff recommendation:** Direct staff to complete the process of reviewing Unified Land Development Code street requirements for street widths for all new development.

**10. Development of an inventory list of locally-owned public lands appropriate for use as affordable housing.**

**Status:** Alachua County, in accordance with Florida Statutes, requires that every three years a review of County-owned lands be completed to determine if any are appropriate for use as affordable housing and recently conducted its evaluation at the March 25, 2008 Board meeting..

**AHAC recommendation:** That the County reevaluate locally-owned public lands with criteria such as the possible rezoning of suitable parcels and the potential for redevelopment of under-utilized property.

**Staff recommendation:** Direct staff to review the inventory of County-owned lands to determine whether rezoning of any parcels would result in any suitable parcels for affordable housing.

**11. Support for development and growth near transportation hubs, major employers, and mixed-use centers:** No recommended changes at this time.

**Additional Recommendations Concerning Issues Raised by the AHAC**

**12. Transfer of Development Rights:** No recommended changes at this time.

**13. Energy-efficient affordable housing**

**Status:** Alachua County does not reduce permitting fees as an incentive for builders to provide green-certified and/or energy-efficient affordable housing.

**AHAC recommendation:** That, beginning in fiscal year 2009, the County offer a 25% reduction in permit fees for Florida Green Building Coalition-certified affordable housing; that the County encourage all utilities serving Alachua County residents to provide rebates for Energy Star appliances and/or Florida Green Building Coalition-certified affordable housing construction.

**Staff recommendation:** Pending outcome of December 2, 2008 meeting during which the Board will review an Energy Conservation Strategies Commission recommendation for a 50% reduction in permitting and inspection fees for energy-efficient homes, direct staff to explore funding sources to offset the AHAC's recommended 25% reduction in permit fees before implementing the AHAC recommendation.

**14. Improved communication and advertising for Alachua County's affordable housing and impact fee relief programs.**

**Status:** Alachua County's housing and Impact Fee Assistance programs are advertised on the Housing Program's website and are explained in brochures available at the Housing Programs office.

**AHAC recommendation:** That advertisements promoting the County's affordable housing and impact fee relief programs be placed in the Builder's Association of North Central Florida and Gainesville-Alachua County Association of Realtor's newsletters; that brochures explaining the County's affordable housing programs be placed with the Alachua County Housing Authority; and that brochures explaining the County's Impact Fee Assistance Program and Incentives for Building Affordable Housing (when finalized) be placed with the Department of Growth Management's Building Division.

**Staff recommendation:** Direct staff to develop enhanced advertising for the County's affordable housing and impact fee relief programs.

**15. Raise the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program qualifying upper income limit to 140% of Area Median Income (AMI) for essential services personnel.<sup>2</sup>**

**Status:** Alachua County's Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) provides downpayment assistance to households earning up to 120% of AMI; the LHAP does not currently allow an upper income limit of 140% for any type of assistance.

**AHAC recommendation:** That because this must be resolved at the state level, Alachua County should ask its Legislative Affairs Director to consider discussion on the matter for action during the upcoming legislative session.

**Staff recommendation:** No recommended changes at this time. Current income limits are adequate to meet the needs of current applicants; raising the upper income limit would result in providing assistance to fewer very low- and low-income households.

**16. Concern that necessary rehabilitation reduces amount available for downpayment assistance:** No recommended changes at this time.

**17. Consideration of landscaping requirements as increasing the cost of housing.**

**Status:** Changes to landscaping requirements are being reviewed by Growth Management's Development Services Division.

**AHAC recommendation:** That street right-of-way trees should not be required to be in place until the certificate of occupancy for an individual housing unit has been issued.

**Staff recommendation:** Pending outcome of December 2, 2008 meeting during which the Board will review land development regulations changes, direct staff to develop text to implement the recommendation into the land development regulations.

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<sup>2</sup>The LHAP defines essential service personnel as teachers and educators; school district, community college, and university employees; police; fire emergency services personnel; code enforcement personnel; health care personnel; and skilled building trades personnel.

**18. Proportionate Fair Share and associated costs to housing.**

**Status:** Alachua County has a Proportionate Fair Share Program through which the impact of development on transportation facilities can be mitigated.

**AHAC recommendation:** That the County analyze proportionate fair share and its costs to affordable housing and that the County should consider reducing proportionate fair share costs for affordable housing either by some reduction in proportionate share fees or through mobility fees.

**Staff recommendation:** Analyzing proportionate fair share costs to affordable housing would require additional staff time and/or resources. Direct staff to analyze proportionate fair share costs to affordable housing.

**19. Inclusionary zoning/housing:** No recommended changes at this time.

**20. Evaluate tax-delinquent properties and parcels for which the County issues tax certificates for possible acquisition and/or use for affordable housing.**

**Status:** The Tax Collector's Office maintains a Lands Available and tax-delinquent properties lists; investors, developers, and builders acquire properties on these lists. Some of these properties may be evaluated for possible acquisition and/or use for affordable housing.

**AHAC recommendation:** That the County evaluate the Tax Collector's Lands Available and tax delinquent properties lists for vacant lots and abandoned property; that the County explore the possibility of acquiring property through a process similar to the City of Gainesville's rebuilding of condemned property for use as affordable housing.

**Staff recommendation:** Direct staff to research the process of acquisition by Alachua County of tax delinquent properties for affordable housing. Direct staff to research the process of acquiring property through a process similar to the City of Gainesville's rebuilding of condemned property for use as affordable housing.

## Area for Review/Issue Recommendations

Area for Review/Issue	AHAC Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Expedited processing of development order or permit approvals for affordable housing projects (#1 in Summary).	That the expediting process be refined by amending language in the County's current Local Housing Assistance Plan.	Direct staff to draft suitable language to implement the intent of AHAC's proposal (Action required).
Establishment of a process for local government to consider, before adoption, policies, procedures, regulations, ordinances or plans that increase the cost of housing (#2).	Evaluation of potential regulations be accomplished with a line item on each Planning Commission agenda and with involvement of stakeholders in the consideration of cost impact.	Direct staff to establish a process to consider, before adoption, policies, procedures, regulations, ordinances or plans that increase the cost of housing by requiring staff analysis; to continue to invite public comments concerning housing affordability (Action required).
Modification of impact fee requirements, including reduction, waiver, or alternative methods of fee payment (#3).	That the County monitor utilization of the Impact Fee Assistance Program and consider increasing the amount budgeted for the Program from the reduced amount of \$25,000 to the original amount of \$100,000 should demand for Program assistance justify an increase in funding.	Direct staff to monitor expenditures in the Impact Fee Assistance program and amend the annual budget for the program to \$100,000 should program assistance justify the increase.
Allowance for affordable accessory dwelling units in residential districts (#6).	That the construction of new affordable housing not be penalized with density requirements when accessory dwelling units are proposed for that housing.	Expand the current Comprehensive Plan provision to allow accessory dwelling units with new construction without the requirement of homestead exemption.
Modification of street requirements (#9).	That the County explore a reduction in street width requirements.	Direct staff to complete the process of reviewing land development regulations street requirements for street widths for all new development.
Development of an inventory list of locally-owned public lands appropriate for use as affordable housing (#10).	That the County reevaluate locally-owned public lands (County-owned lands) with criteria such as the possible rezoning of suitable parcels and the potential for redevelopment of under-utilized property.	Direct staff to review the inventory of locally-owned public lands (County-owned lands) to determine whether rezoning of any parcels would result in any suitable parcels for affordable housing.
Energy-efficient affordable housing (#13).	That, beginning in fiscal year 2009, the County offer a 25% reduction in permit fees for Florida Green Building Coalition-certified affordable housing; that the County encourage all utilities serving Alachua County residents to provide rebates for Energy Star appliances and/or FGBC-certified affordable housing construction.	Pending outcome of December 2, 2008 meeting during which the Board will review an Energy Conservation Strategies Commission recommendation for a 50% reduction in permitting and inspection fees for energy-efficient homes, direct staff to explore funding sources to offset the AHAC's recommended 25% reduction in permit fees before implementing the AHAC recommendation.

<p>Communication and advertising for the County's affordable housing programs (#14).</p>	<p>That advertisements promoting the County's affordable housing and impact fee relief programs be placed in the BANCf and GACAR newsletters; brochures explaining the County's affordable housing programs be placed with the ACHA; brochures explaining the County's impact fee relief program and incentives for building affordable housing (when finalized) be placed with the Building Division.</p>	<p>Direct staff to develop enhanced advertising for the County's affordable housing and impact fee relief programs.</p>
<p>Possibility of raising SHIP Down-Payment Assistance to 140% of Area Median Income for Essential Services Personnel (#15).</p>	<p>That because this must be resolved at the state level, Alachua County should ask its Legislative Affairs Director to consider discussion on the matter for action during the upcoming legislative session.</p>	<p>No recommended changes at this time; current income limits are adequate to meet current applicants' needs; raising the upper income limit would result in providing assistance to fewer very low- and low-income households.</p>
<p>Consideration of landscaping requirements as increasing the cost of housing (#17).</p>	<p>That street right-of-way trees not be required to be in place until the certificate of occupancy for an individual housing unit has been issued.</p>	<p>Pending outcome of Dec. 2, 2008 meeting when the Board will review land development regulations changes, direct staff to develop text to implement the recommendation into the land development regulations.</p>
<p>Proportionate Fair Share and associated costs to housing (#18).</p>	<p>That the County analyze proportionate fair share and its costs to affordable housing and that the County should consider reducing proportionate fair share costs for affordable housing either by some reduction in proportionate share fees or a through mobility fees.</p>	<p>Analyzing proportionate fair share costs to affordable housing would require additional staff time and/or resources. Direct staff to analyze proportionate fair share costs to affordable housing.</p>
<p>Evaluate tax-delinquent properties and parcels and their potential for possible acquisition and use for affordable housing (#20).</p>	<p>That the County evaluate the Tax Collector's Lands Available and tax delinquent properties lists for vacant lots and abandoned property; that the County explore the possibility of acquiring property through a process similar to the City of Gainesville's rebuilding of condemned property for use as affordable housing.</p>	<p>Direct staff to research the process of acquisition by the County of tax delinquent properties for affordable housing. Direct staff to research the process of acquiring property through rebuilding condemned property.</p>