

City of Gainesville
Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
2022 Incentives and Recommendations Report

I. Background

Chapter 420, Part VII, of the Florida Statutes requires that the City of Gainesville 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 receive 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 2022. Those limits are shown in the chart contained in Attachment 1.

Generally, when this report mentions “affordable housing,” it is referring to housing that is affordable to low-income households, that is households whose combined income is equal to or less than 80% of the Gainesville Area Median, adjusted for family size. More specifically, in this report, “affordable housing” means housing, where the total monthly cost of that housing (including taxes, insurance, utilities, and property owner association fees) is less than 30 percent of the household’s total monthly income.

Composition of AHAC

The AHAC may consist of eight to eleven citizens appointed by the City Commission. One of those citizens must be a City Commissioner, while the remaining seven to ten AHAC members must represent at least six of the following eleven categories:

- a citizen who is in the home building industry, including affordable housing;
- a citizen who is in the banking or mortgage banking industry related to affordable housing;
- a citizen who represents labor engaged in home building, including affordable housing;
- a citizen who advocates for affordable housing for low-income persons;
- a citizen who is a for-profit provider of affordable housing;
- a citizen who is a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing;
- a citizen who is a real estate professional related to affordable housing;
- a citizen who serves on the local planning agency;
- a citizen who resides in the City of Gainesville;
- a citizen who represents employers within the City of Gainesville; and
- a citizen who represents essential services personnel.

AHAC Mandate

For the City to remain eligible to receive SHIP Program funds, the AHAC shall annually review the City's comprehensive plan, land development regulations, ordinances, policies and procedures. Based on that review, the AHAC shall submit an Incentives and Recommendations Report (IRR) to the City Commission. That report shall recommend specific actions or initiatives to encourage or facilitate affordable housing, while protecting the ability of property to appreciate. The recommendations may include the modification or repeal of existing policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan provisions. Modifications may include exceptions for affordable housing. The recommendations may also include the adoption of new policies, procedures, regulations, ordinances, or plan provisions. Additionally, the AHAC report shall recommend and evaluate the implementation of local housing incentive strategies in the following areas:

- 1) Expedited processing of approvals of development orders or development permits issued by the City for affordable housing projects, including without limitation, building permits, zoning permits, subdivision approvals, rezonings, certifications, special exceptions, variances, or any other official action of local government having the effect of permitting the development of land for affordable housing.
- 2) Modification of impact fee requirements, including reduction or waiver of fees and alternative methods of fee payment for affordable housing.
- 3) Allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing.
- 4) Reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for low- and very-low-income persons.
- 5) Allowance of affordable accessory residential units in residential zoning districts.
- 6) Reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.
- 7) Allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero lot line configurations, for affordable housing.
- 8) Modification of street requirements for affordable housing.
- 9) Establishment of a process by which the City considers the impact on the cost of housing before adoption of policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations or plan provisions.
- 10) Preparation of a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.
- 11) Support of affordable housing development near transportation hubs and major employment centers and mixed-use developments.
- 12) Other affordable housing incentives identified by the advisory committee.

General Comments

To begin to address its housing needs, the community should recognize the following factors:

1. Many people discuss housing problems, including the need for more affordable housing, as if they are the same as equity or disparity problems. In fact, they are related, but not the same. Housing problems are a component of, not the whole of, the Gainesville/Alachua County Community's equity and disparity problems. Providing more affordable housing can help alleviate, but not eliminate, the problem of racial, economic, educational, health, geographic and other disparities. Experience and data, however, suggest that a comprehensive approach, addressing many factors, is needed to even begin dealing with these problems. Those factors include economic development, the educational system, the justice system, the health care system and other factors.
2. The community's housing problems go beyond just the high cost of housing and the lack of affordable housing. These problems include the lack of housing choice (including size, type, cost, and location), the condition of housing, and the loss of community history and character.
3. There is no quick fix. Any solution will take time. This includes changing community attitudes about housing, changing land use patterns, changing land development regulations, and actually permitting and constructing residential buildings. The City must consider realistic timeframes for changes.
4. Home ownership is a proven method to build wealth in individuals, and in a community. For that reason, homeownership should be encouraged and promoted. However, to truly meet the community's needs, other viable, affordable options (i.e., rental housing) must also be available.
5. Governments and non-profits cannot solve the community's housing problems. Even the combined resources of the Federal, State, County and City Governments are insufficient. In other words, the community needs to find a way to engage market forces and to encourage private sector investment in affordable housing.



6. The community has many options available to help address its housing problems. Although none of those options, by itself, will solve the problem. Each option can contribute to the solution. In other words, the community needs to use all the "tools" in its "toolbox" to address housing problems. Historically, however, the Gainesville/Alachua County community has used some, but not all of the available tools.
7. The community has utilized tools such as government funding programs, including LIHTC, SAIL, SHIP, CDBG and HOME; and governmental agencies such as the Gainesville and Alachua County Housing Authorities. Nonprofit organizations (often partially funded by government programs) such as

Habitat for Humanity and Neighborhood Housing Development Corporation, have also been an important tool used to provide affordable housing in the Gainesville/Alachua County community. In fact, if it chose to, the community could increase its reliance on these tools by increasing private donations or by approving additional local taxes, fees and/or bonding to increase funding for affordable housing.

8. Funding for government funded housing programs is inconsistent and insufficient to meet the demand for affordable housing. In Gainesville and Alachua County, local government administered programs include home repair, home replacement, down payment assistance, mortgage foreclosure intervention, rental assistance, eviction prevention, and counseling and training (for more information, visit the City's Housing and Community Development Division website at <https://www.gainesvillefl.gov/Government-Pages/Government/Departments/Housing-Community-Development> or the County's Housing Programs website at <https://alachuacounty.us/Depts/CSS/House/Pages/housing.aspx>). Some federal and state programs (e.g., Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and State Apartment Incentive Loan) occasionally subsidize the development of large affordable rental housing complexes, usually 60 to 100 units (for more information, visit the Florida Housing Finance Corporation's website at <https://www.floridahousing.org/home>). Smaller nonprofits build 10 to 20 single family homes per year. The two Public Housing Authorities provide approximately 900 units of public housing and nearly 2,800 housing vouchers each year.
9. Besides funding programs, the City and County can also use regulatory incentives and requirements (sometimes referred to as carrots and sticks) to encourage the private for-profit sector to build affordable housing. Those "carrots and sticks" include incentives and regulations like flexible zoning that allows density and height bonuses in exchange for providing affordable housing, and planned development requirements for the provision of affordable housing. In contrast to funding nonprofit organizations and government programs, the community has used this tool only on very rare occasions.

Essentially, the City has not yet determined what combination of incentives and regulations are necessary for the private sector to agree to include affordable housing in new developments. That is because the City has almost never offered any such incentives. Although the use of these incentives and regulations is often discussed in the City's Comprehensive Plan, implementing those incentives requires adopting land development regulations. Even in the few instances when incentives have been included in the land development regulations, these provisions are seldom used or re-evaluated (See the Density Bonus Manual).

To better evaluate the possibility of using regulatory incentives and requirements, the City retained a consultant to study and recommend an Inclusionary/Exclusionary Housing Policy. That report was presented to the City Commission on January 6, 2022.

10. In May 2019, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 7103 (HB7103). That bill amended existing statutes regarding Inclusionary Zoning (IZ). IZ is the requirement that a portion of each new residential development be affordable. Specifically, HB7103 mandated that in order for a City or County to require that a development contain affordable units, the City or County must use incentives to "fully offset all costs" to a developer associated with creating those affordable units. In other words, prior to HB7103, Cities and Counties had the option of requiring IZ without providing any incentives to developers. HB7103, added the requirement that Cities and Counties that mandate IZ, also provided incentives to developers. Those incentives may include (but are not limited to) density bonuses, reduced or waived fees, or other incentives.

11. Our community’s reliance on nonprofit organizations and government funding programs has resulted in few affordable housing options for most low-income residents. Those options include large rental apartment complexes (often located East of Main Street, where land values are lower), and older homes whose “life” has been extended through a home repair program. In contrast, a well-designed incentive program could result in a portion of many new developments, all around the City, housing low-income households. In other words, more location choices for low-income residents.
12. Many of the issues related to land development in general, and housing and affordable housing in particular, can be complicated and confusing. The same term often has different meanings to different people. City and County representatives have a responsibility to try to communicate in simple, clear language. The Community, in general, would benefit from a better understanding of the entire development process.

While methods such as providing additional funds or providing more support to nonprofits can be useful ways to create affordable housing, they are not within the scope of this report. This document focuses on regulatory incentives and regulations that impact the cost of housing and the availability of affordable housing. To that end, the AHAC aims to identify ways to encourage affordable housing that are cost effective, environmentally sound, socially equitable and supportive of broad community goals. Beyond this report, the AHAC will seek to continue further study and dialogue on this subject. We welcome the input, ideas and suggestions of our entire community in this endeavor.

II. Citizen Engagement

AHAC provided citizens and stakeholders several opportunities to contribute to the development of this report. Those opportunities began with five AHAC public meetings, at which AHAC discussed incentives and recommendations to address housing and housing related problems. AHAC began each of these meetings at 6:00 p.m. and ended them between 7:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. These meetings were conducted on the dates shown below.



- February 12, 2022 at the Thomas Center, Building B, 306 NE 6th Avenue
- April 12, 2022 at the Thomas Center, Building B, 306 NE 6th Avenue
- June 14, 2022 via Zoom
- July 12, 2022 at the Thomas Center, Building B, 306 NE 6th Avenue
- August 9, 2022 at the Thomas Center, Building B, 306 NE 6th Avenue

The City used several strategies to inform the public of these meetings. Perhaps most importantly, the City developed a direct email distribution list consisting of approximately 220 addresses to personally invite people to the August meeting. That email distribution list included neighborhood representatives, nonprofit organizations, the media, the development community, lenders, City staff, members of other advisory boards,

individuals who previously requested to be notified or had expressed interest in housing issues, and others. The August email included a link to a Draft of the City's 2022 IRR. In addition, the City posts notices of all AHAC meetings on the City's website and various newsletters and social media platforms.

Subsequently, on September 13, 2022, the AHAC held a public hearing to receive public input regarding the IRR. The AHAC's IRR was presented at the public hearing and, after receiving public comment, approved by the AHAC. In addition to the public notice methods used for the five previous public meetings, the public hearing was noticed as a public hearing in the Gainesville Sun and the Gainesville Guardian; and was included in a separate affordable housing focused email from the City's Communications and Engagement Department to approximately 3,000 addresses.

III. Incentives & Recommendations

Several incentives discussed below (specifically Incentives 3, 6, and 7) have at least some economic value to developers. These incentives deal with density, building height, setbacks, lot configuration and tree mitigation. Because these incentives have economic value, a reasonable person would conclude that at least some developers would be willing to provide something, such as affordable housing, in exchange for that value.

Given that government cannot subsidize enough affordable housing to meet the City's need, AHAC generally recommends the following for Incentives 3, 6, and 7:

If and when the City decides to use any of these three incentives, the City should significantly revise its Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations to link any use of the incentives to the provision of affordable housing. Essentially, this means requiring developers that choose to accept the incentive, to legally commit themselves to providing affordable housing, in exchange for receiving the benefit of the incentive. This can only be done after a great deal of public engagement to address the numerous questions such a revision would generate. At a minimum, those questions would include the following:

- How much affordable housing would the City require (i.e., how many units)?
- How affordable would the housing need to be?
- How long would the housing remain affordable?
- How, and by whom, would this requirement be monitored and enforced?
- What would be the cost of monitoring and enforcement, and who will pay it?
- What penalties would be implemented if the required affordable housing was not provided?
- How much, if any, would the provision of affordable housing increase the cost of other units?
- Would there be any places or circumstances where these incentives could not be available?
- Would there be a minimum development size threshold for these incentives to be available?
- How would the City evaluate the success of the incentives, and if necessary, change them?

In addition, while not endorsing the Study or its findings, AHAC recognizes that in the Exclusionary Zoning & Inclusionary Zoning (EZIZ) Study presented to the City Commission on January 6, 2022, the authors provide specific recommendations addressing the first three and the last two questions. Those recommendations are summarized on pages 62 and 84 of the Study. AHAC was not involved in the development of this study and does not endorse its recommendations.

1) The processing of approvals of development orders or permits, as defined in s.163.3164 for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects.

Discussion

The City's Housing and Community Development (HCD) Division staff certifies as "Affordable Housing Projects" residential projects that are either, funded by SHIP, CDBG, HOME, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program, or similar programs; or built by nonprofit affordable housing providers like Habitat for Humanity and Neighborhood Housing Development Corporation. When reviewing and inspecting HCD certified Affordable Housing Projects, the City's Building Department moves those projects to "the front of the line," thus expediting them to a greater degree than other projects.

AHAC Recommendation

The Building Department should continue its current program to expedite affordable housing projects. The Housing and Community Development Division should expand the types of projects that it will certify as "Affordable Housing Projects" to include For-Profit projects that include affordable housing. Additionally, the City should develop written guidelines that clearly describe which projects will be expedited. Those guidelines should include a minimum percentage of units that must be affordable in order for the project to be expedited. Finally, if the City implements Incentives 3, 6, or 7, projects that use those incentives should also be expedited.

2) Modification of impact fee requirements including reduction or waiver of fees and alternative methods of fee payment.

Discussion

The City does not require the payment of impact fees for new development.

AHAC Recommendation

Not applicable.

3) Allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing.

Discussion

By most measures (including age, wealth, income, and household size) Gainesville is a diverse community with diverse types of households and diverse housing needs. Therefore, to effectively serve its market, Gainesville needs a diverse housing stock, including (but not limited to) the following housing types:

- Detached single-family homes on large lots;
- Detached single-family homes on small lots;
- Mobile homes;
- Courtyard homes;
- Accessory dwelling units;
- Small complexes of attached homes (2-10 units);
- Townhomes; and
- Multiple-family complexes.

Although the City's current Land Development Regulations (LDRs) allow a wide variety of densities, those LDRs limit most of the City's residential land area to detached single-family homes (See

Attachment 2). The EZIZ Study noted that, “In Gainesville, 63% of residential parcels allow for the construction of only one housing unit.” As detailed in the study, that development pattern incentivizes building larger, more expensive homes and can result in units that meet the needs of, and are affordable to, higher income households, but is not compatible to the development of housing that is affordable to the community’s moderate- and low-income residents.

The existing and developing housing stock does not match the community’s housing needs, particularly for its lower income residents. Nevertheless, Gainesville’s experience with increasing density has been mixed. Generally, increasing density increases development potential and increases property values, both of which can spur development and redevelopment. While there are several benefits of development and redevelopment, they can increase the cost of both land and housing, and reduce the amount of affordable housing. This often results in the displacement of low-income renters and property owners. At the same time, increased density is often a windfall for developers and large property owners.

For these and other reasons, the City has retained a consultant to study how City regulations can be amended to incentivize new development that is affordable to those that need it most (i.e., the City’s lower income residents).

AHAC Recommendation

The City should consider revising its Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations in two important ways. These changes can and should be implemented simultaneously. The first way would be to consider increasing maximum residential densities and/or height limits, in at least some residential districts. The second way would be to link any density and/or height limit increase to the provision of affordable housing. In other words, the increase would not be by-right, it would be an incentive that would only be available to developments that legally commit themselves to providing affordable housing.

If the City implements this incentive, it should recognize a potential “loop-hole.” That loop-hole is that this incentive only works if the access to the additional density is through the provision of affordable housing, not by-right. If property owners can obtain the additional by-right density by changing their zoning or comprehensive plan land use designations, then they have no reason (or incentive) to provide affordable housing.

4) Reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for low- and very-low-income persons.

Discussion

The City plans ahead to ensure that there is adequate infrastructure capacity to accommodate all new development. Part of that planning includes extensive coordination with various Federal, State, Regional and County Agencies. At present, GRU maintains sufficient water and wastewater treatment capacity. Each development is required to demonstrate that it provides the minimum stormwater retention level of service through either on-site retention or a coordinated system.

For automobiles, nearly all roads in the City operate at or better than the adopted level of service. The Transportation Mobility Program Area allows for development, such as urban redevelopment and infill development, to occur along roads that operate below their adopted level of service. Although the City may permit the development, the exemption does not relieve the developer from various improvements stated in the Transportation Mobility Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

AHAC Recommendation

Continue to monitor current and projected infrastructure needs. Identify and utilize adequate funding sources to enhance network connectivity and integration of transportation modes to meet future housing needs and enhance mobility and accessibility.

5) Allowance of accessory residential units in residential zoning districts.

Discussion

The City's land development code defines an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) as "an independent self-contained dwelling unit with kitchen and bathroom facilities, on the same lot as an associated primary use or structure. An ADU may be within, attached to, or detached from a primary structure." ADUs, are essentially the same as accessory residential units.

On September 3, 2020, the City Commission adopted Ordinance #190988, which increased allowances for ADUs in several ways, including removing most of the restrictions on ADUs in single family zoning districts, and allowing up to two ADUs, with some restrictions, on a lot.

ADUs cannot be required to be affordable to low-income households. In fact, sometimes they are not affordable to low-income households. Nevertheless, they were historically an effective means to provide mixed-income housing widely dispersed throughout the City. In fact, some ADUs currently exist in several of the City's older single-family residential neighborhoods. A potential benefit of ADUs is that they can provide affordable housing at little government cost, in neighborhoods where it is otherwise costly or impractical to create new affordable housing. These include neighborhoods that are close to employment centers, healthcare services, financial services, recreational services, educational services, and transportation services. ADUs can also generate a revenue stream to existing homeowners, making their home ownership more affordable and funding better property maintenance (as long as the homeowner that built the ADU maintains ownership of the property).

Traditionally, many Gainesville residents have had major concerns about the impacts of ADUs on neighborhood quality of life. Those concerns are greatest in the neighborhoods close to the University of Florida, where many anticipate that the demand for ADUs is the highest. The conversion of owner occupied units to rental units has already had a large negative impact on many aspects of these neighborhoods. As a result, for many years, residents coordinated to create a vocal and well-organized opposition to any attempts to expand allowances for ADUs.

It may be too soon to measure the impact of Ordinance #190988. For the time period since that ordinance was adopted, the City has experienced neither a large increase in affordable residential units, nor a large increase in student rentals within traditionally single family neighborhoods. In the first 12 months since the ordinance went into effect, the City received only six applications for ADU permits.

Since then, however, ADU applications have increased to 37. That rate equals about three applications per month. At this point, however, the information does not include how many of those ADU applications have been approved and built, or how many have been diverted from the general community for students or Airbnb customers.

In addition, based on the experience of other cities, the HAP and other documents suggest that Gainesville could partner with other local organizations (such as banks, credit unions, housing authorities, and nonprofit organizations) to develop a revolving loan fund to help property owners build ADUs that meet certain conditions. Those conditions would include a requirement that the units must be rented to income qualified households, at affordable rates, for a certain amount of time.

AHAC Recommendation

The City should consider ways to partner with other local organizations (such as banks, credit unions, housing authorities, and nonprofit organizations) to develop a revolving loan fund to help property owners build ADUs that meet certain conditions. Those conditions would include a requirement that the units must be rented to income qualified households, at affordable rates, for a certain amount of time.

6) Reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.

Discussion

Future Land Use Element Policy 1.2.4 of the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code, allow for reduced parking requirements, where appropriate. In instances where analysis demonstrates that a proposed use will generate less parking than the minimum required by City ordinances, a City process allows for the reduction of required parking spaces.

The City's current parking regulations require fewer parking spaces for low- and moderate-income housing. City code currently requires one parking space per bedroom for market rate multiple-family housing.

In contrast, reducing setbacks currently requires a variance for individual lots or a Planned Development Approval for a subdivision. In both instances, the provision of affordable housing is not a criteria for approval. For subdivisions, this is an instance, like additional density, where the City controls an item of value to some developers. For that reason, the City could adopt an incentive, essentially stating that reduced setbacks are available only when a certain amount of affordable housing is provided.

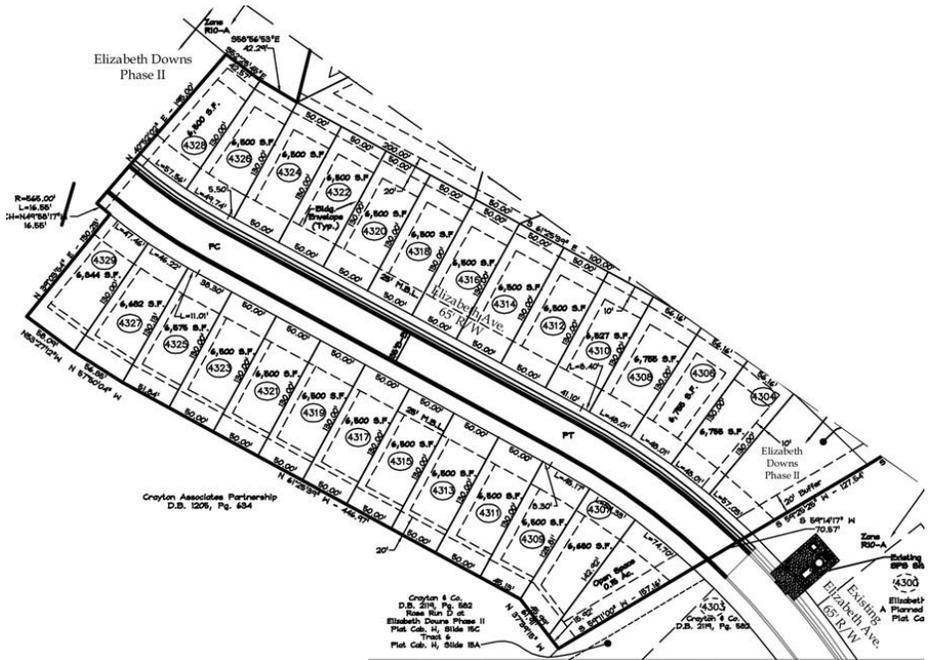
AHAC Recommendation

The City should continue reduced parking requirements for affordable housing. Additionally, the City should revise its land development code to make reduced setbacks for Planned Development Subdivisions available only if a certain amount of affordable housing is provided. Finally, the City should also consider allowing reduced setbacks for subdivisions that provide a certain amount of affordable housing (and perhaps meet certain other standards), without requiring those subdivisions to go through the entire Planned Development process.

7) **Allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero lot line configurations, for affordable housing.**

Discussion

Zero lot line developments have no required setbacks on one or more sides. Consequently, they allow the use of a greater percentage of the lot. As a result, the allowance of zero lot line developments in appropriate locations can lower overall housing costs by reducing land costs.



In general, City regulations that control the creation of subdivisions have little flexibility in terms of lot configurations unless an applicant incurs the additional expense of going through the Planned Development process. Applicants, however, may request that some subdivision requirements be modified for certain reasons. Those reasons are described in the code and currently include factors such as unusually steep topography. The code does not include the provision of affordable housing as a criterion for modifying subdivision requirements.

Again, this is one of the few instances where the City has some leverage to offer something of value in exchange for affordable housing. For that reason, the City could revise its land development code to make the provision of a certain amount of affordable housing one of the justifications for modification of subdivision requirements.

AHAC Recommendation

The City should revise its land development code to make the provision of a certain amount of affordable housing one of the justifications for modification of subdivision requirements.

8) **Modification of street requirements for affordable housing.**

Discussion

Many older City neighborhoods have thrived with narrower street widths, even including on-street parking and two-way traffic. Nevertheless, the width, design and materials of public roads and streets are regulated by the State and cannot be modified by the City.

There is, however, some flexibility within those regulations. Developers are encouraged to select alternative street specifications (including reductions in pavement widths) for all residential development, to reduce construction costs while benefiting the environment. Flexibility also exists for right of way widths, pavement widths, turn around dimensions, intersection curb radii, reduced curb and gutter requirements, etc. Modified street requirements, can reduce construction costs for all housing, including affordable housing.

AHAC Recommendation

The City should maintain its current street requirements which are consistent with State guidelines. Flexibility currently exists within the State's guidelines for addressing modified street requirements for affordable housing.

9) Establishment of a process by which the City considers before adoption policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations or plan provisions that increase in the cost of housing.

Discussion

The City has implemented an ongoing review of local policies, ordinances, regulations and comprehensive plan provisions that affect the cost of housing. Through this process, the City reviews new regulations to determine their potential impact on affordable housing. When appropriate and feasible, the City mitigates for negative impacts. As part of this process, the City reviews and evaluates zoning and other housing regulations to ensure that they do not limit housing opportunities for lower-income groups within the City. Petitions that regulate land use are required to include a fiscal impact statement regarding the impact of proposed development on affordable housing in the City.

AHAC Recommendation

The City should continue this review process.

10) Preparation of an inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.

Discussion

A Land Rights Coordinator (LRC) within the City's Department of Sustainable Development maintains an inventory of City-owned lands, including land that may be appropriate for residential uses. If those lands are not needed for another use, such as an infrastructure project, they are considered to be available for affordable housing. The LRC routinely shares that inventory with various City departments and with other governmental and nonprofit agencies that provide affordable housing.

In addition, as recommended in the City's Housing Action Plan, the Land Rights Coordinator and a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist in the City's Department of Sustainable Development have worked together to identify land owned by other public or private nonprofit agencies (e.g., the Alachua County School District, the University of Florida, or Santa Fe College) that is appropriate for residential uses and is within City limits.

AHAC Recommendation

The City should continue to maintain and update an inventory of locally owned public and private nonprofit lands suitable for affordable housing. In addition, the City should continue to share the inventory with other governmental and nonprofit agencies that provide affordable housing. As noted in the City's Housing Action Plan, in the future, the City should also analyze under-utilized private for-profit lands (e.g., some parking lots) to determine if they may be appropriate for residential uses.

11) Support of affordable housing development near transportation hubs, major employment centers and mixed-use developments.

Discussion

The following objective and policies of the Future Land Use Element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan encourage, support or require affordable housing near mixed use and employment centers:

- Objective 1.4
- Policy 1.4.1
- Policy 1.5.7
- Policy 4.1.3
- Policy 4.3.4g.6 (Plum Creek)
- Policy 4.3.6a.4 (Butler Development PUD)

Additionally, review of the City’s Future Land Use and Zoning Maps indicate that residential zoning often is located near bus routes, major roads, mixed use areas and employment centers.

AHAC Recommendation

Continue to support affordable housing development near transportation hubs, major employment centers and mixed-use developments.

IV. Additional Recommendations

1) Consider Employer Assisted Housing Programs

Discussion

The City’s Housing Action Plan suggests that the City of Gainesville can work with the University of Florida, UF Health, Santa Fe College, North Florida Regional Medical Center, Alachua County Schools, and other large employers to create an Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH) Program to support workforce housing for low- and moderate-income employees. An EAH Program could include a broad partnership with developers, lenders, and other 501(c)(3) housing organizations to help promote and administer the program. Employers could offer their employees a payroll savings matching grant that could go along with the City’s down-payment and closing cost assistance to help overcome the initial barrier to homeownership. They could also offer rental assistance or security deposit assistance to their employees. Other options for EAH programs include gap financing, land donation, or simply sponsoring homebuyer education and counseling services for employees.

The HAP uses Washington D.C. and Howard University as an example of a City and a large employer working together to develop a mutually beneficial project. The HAP specifically mentions Trellis House, a large mixed income housing multi-family housing project, located near campus

AHAC Recommendation

The City should consider reaching out to other large employers to discuss the pros and cons of EAH; and share information about how to build affordable housing and/or subsidize access to affordable housing for income-qualified employees.

2) Facilitate Homeowner Repair Program

Discussion

The AHAC received much public input, and has personally observed that many owner-occupied homes are not taking advantage of the City's Homeowner Repair Program. Residents and staff have cited several reasons for this (including lack of awareness of the program, lack of computers for online applications, fear of potential liens on the property, and others).

AHAC Recommendation

The City should consider different ways to reach this specific market. This could mean meeting people where they are, or "on their own turf." More specifically, the City should consider asking neighborhood institutions like churches, community centers, and neighborhood associations for help in reaching potential home repair recipients.

3) Enhanced Community Engagement and Education

AHAC Recommendation

The City should continue to study ways to increase meaningful community engagement as early as possible in the development process. This is especially relevant for initiatives that set the rules for development (e.g., the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Map, and LDRs). The goal is to use public engagement to develop plans and rules that reflect the community's vision. Too often, the current system results in frustration from both the existing residents and the development community, particularly the affordable housing development community (both non-profit and for-profit). To begin to address this problem, the AHAC recommends the following:

- The City should continue to require and improve "pre-application neighborhood workshops." These workshops are a requirement that a developer meet with the community surrounding and/or affected by the development. However, these workshops are not a substitute for the City's responsibility engage the community before setting zoning and land development regulations; and
- The City should create a planning and development outreach program. A core principle of this program should be to "meet people where they are." This means that, in contrast to the City holding a meeting, City staff should attend a neighborhood or advocacy group's regular meetings. This program should provide key concepts related to planning, zoning, and development. After completing the program, participants should have a basic understanding of zoning and LDRs. They should also know how to determine the zoning of any parcel in the City. Eventually, both City staff and participants should be able to describe the group's vision, and how that vision fits into the overall community vision. Furthermore, both staff and participants should recognize whether or not the existing zoning and LDRs fit with the overall community vision. If not, City staff and the community should discuss realistic, proactive options to change or mitigate the existing zoning and LDRs. All participants in this program (including City staff) should recognize the complexity of the subject and be willing to take the time required to gain the needed understanding.

4) Study Anti-Displacement and Anti-Gentrification Plans

Discussion

One of the AHAC's and the community's biggest concerns with new development incentives, including allowances for some multi-family housing types in single-family areas, is the potential for the displacement of existing moderate- and low-income households in order to build student apartments and more expensive homes. The City has already implemented some programs to help address this issue. These programs include the following:

- The My Neighborhood Program: The City provides financial assistance to encourage homeownership for former residents of certain neighborhoods.
- The Heirs' Property Assistance Program: The City coordinates with a nonprofit organization to provide free probate legal assistance to individuals with an heirs' property located within a special district.
- The Legal Assistance for Eviction Prevention Program: The City coordinates with a nonprofit organization to provide on-site counseling, education and training for renters, to enhance awareness of their legal responsibilities and rights.
- The Predatory Practices Education Program: The City coordinates with a nonprofit organization to provide a series of legal presentations, with each session focusing on a limited number of legal topics related to homeownership.
- The Land Donation Program: The City donates land to organizations that build affordable owner-occupied housing. The City uses deed restrictions to ensure that many of these homes will be permanently affordable.
- The Community Land Trust Program: The City is working with a nonprofit organization that acquires, develops, and manages land for permanently affordable owner-occupied housing.

AHAC Recommendation

To further address this issue, the AHAC recommends that the City consider taking the following actions:

- Continue to study and evaluate the programs described above.
- Research and study how other Cities and Counties deal with this problem.
- Identify and obtain Anti-Displacement and Anti-Gentrification Plans from other jurisdictions.
- Analyze neighborhood market and demographic data to determine to what degree displacement may be occurring in Gainesville's neighborhoods.
- Determine if, how, and to what degree, the City can require new development to document, and possibly mitigate, impacts on existing residents. Those impacts can include direct displacement, increasing rents, and increasing property values.

Ultimately, the City should consider developing an Anti-Displacement/Anti-Gentrification Plan that can be useful whenever and wherever development pressures threaten to displace existing residents.

IV. City Commission Consideration

The AHAC will submit this report to the City Commission on October 20, 2022.

V. Attachments

1. 2022 HUD Income Limits
2. Generalized Zoning Map

DRAFT

Attachment 1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
(HUD) INCOME LIMITS FOR GAINESVILLE MSA

2022

CITY OF GAINESVILLE

FAMILY SIZE (Persons)	EXTREMELY LOW (30% MFI*)	VERY LOW INCOME (50% MFI*)	LOW INCOME (80% MFI*)
1	\$17,200	\$28,700	\$45,850
2	\$19,650	\$32,800	\$52,400
3	\$23,030	\$36,900	\$58,950
4	\$27,750	\$40,950	\$65,500
5	\$32,470	\$44,250	\$70,750
6	\$37,190	\$47,550	\$76,000
7	\$41,910	\$50,800	\$81,250
8	\$46,630	\$54,100	\$86,500

*Fiscal Year 2022 Median Family Income (MFI) = \$85,600 CDBG/HOME

Effective: 04/18/2022

Attachment 2

