

HOUSING ELEMENT

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: To facilitate the provision of safe, sanitary, healthy and affordable, quality housing for all present and future City residents, while preserving and enhancing the community's physical and social fabric, and cultural diversity, and while protecting the interests of special needs groups, and very low and low, and moderate-income households.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: Provision of Safe, Affordable, Quality Housing

The City shall facilitate the provision of safe, sanitary, healthy and affordable, quality housing, to accommodate all present and future residents at all income and age levels, including those with special needs, through a variety of housing types, preferably within mixed-income neighborhoods.

Policy 1.1.a: The City shall encourage development of a variety of housing types including conventional single family homes, accessory dwelling units, multi-family units, group homes, assisted living facilities, foster care facilities, mobile homes and manufactured housing, and shall ensure that appropriate land use designations and zoning districts exist to accommodate each type.

Policy 1.1.b: The City shall consider incentives to promote affordable housing, which may include: offering density bonuses and streamlined permitting at a reduced cost, to encourage private sector participation in the development of affordable housing.

Policy 1.1.c: The City may work in conjunction with the Alachua County Housing Authority to provide affordable public housing to City residents.

Policy 1.1.d: The City shall encourage the rehabilitation of older housing stock into affordable housing.

- Policy 1.1.e: The City shall stimulate the development of affordable housing by converting vacant and underutilized city-owned property to surplus property, when feasible, and making appropriate surplus inventory available for the development of affordable housing.
- Policy 1.1.f: The City shall identify and improve housing and neighborhoods of historical significance by promoting innovative approaches such as adaptive reuse, wherever possible.
- Policy 1.1.g: The City shall provide information to the public about affordable housing, on its website, in brochures or through public presentations.
- Policy 1.1.h: The City shall explore partnership opportunities with the Alachua-Bradford One-Stop, Santa Fe College, the University of Florida and the Florida Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation Services, to address labor related housing affordability issues.
- Policy 1.1.i: The City shall establish land use designations and zoning districts that accommodate mixed-use development consisting of residential with commercial and/or retail.
- Policy 1.1.j: The City shall consider providing incentives for mixed-use development that includes housing for extremely low, very low and low-income residents. The City recognizes that mixed-use development reduces transportation costs by placing necessary shopping within close proximity to housing.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Needs of the Homeless Population

The City shall recognize and address the needs of its present and future homeless populations.

- Policy 1.2 a: The City should consider establishing formal procedures, if warranted, for assisting homeless persons seeking shelter and food.
- Policy 1.2.b: The City should participate with the City of Gainesville, Alachua County, local food banks and soup kitchens, and regional homeless shelters to provide emergency care to homeless persons, if warranted.



Policy 1.2.c: The City may work with the Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry to conduct “point-in-time” surveys to assess the size and needs of the homeless population.

Policy 1.2. d: The City may coordinate with federal, state and local social service providers to establish protocol for meeting the special needs of homeless persons, such as medical and mental health care.

Policy 1.2.e: The City may address existing codes which could impact the essential needs of the homeless population, when warranted.

Policy 1.2.f : The City may provide educational materials to the public regarding homelessness.

OBJECTIVE 1.3: Special Needs Households

The City shall coordinate with other government agencies, and private and non-profit entities to ensure the availability of adequate, affordable housing for special needs households, within residential areas or areas of residential character, including group homes or foster care facilities as licensed or funded by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Policy 1.3.a The City shall permit homes of more than six residents which meet the definition of a community residential home as provided in Chapter 419, Florida Statutes

(a) The City shall approve the siting of a community residential home, unless the City determines that the siting of the home at the site selected:

- (1) does not meet applicable licensing criteria established and determined by the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, including requirements that the home be located to assure the safe care and supervision of all clients in the home;
- (2) would result in such a concentration of community residential homes in the area in proximity to the site selected, or would result in a combination of such homes with other residences in the community, such that the nature and character of the area would be substantially altered.

(A home that would be located within a radius of 1,200 feet of another existing community residential home shall be considered to be an over-concentration of such homes that substantially alters the nature and character of the area. A home that would be located within a radius of 500 feet of a low- or moderate-density residential land use category shall be considered to substantially alter the nature and character of the area.).

Policy 1.3.b: The City shall ensure that appropriate land use designations and zoning districts exist to facilitate the provision of adequate sites for the location of foster care facilities and group homes for elderly, non-violent mentally disabled, and physically and/or developmentally disabled residents.

Policy 1.3.c: The City shall ensure that services and facilities are available to accommodate the needs of special needs populations. The City shall encourage the placement of public and special needs housing in close proximity to conveniences such as grocery and drug stores, and major travel routes.

Policy 1.3.d: The City, through its building permit process, shall ensure the compliance of housing projects with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Policy 1.3.e: The City shall coordinate with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to investigate the need for rural and farm worker housing in Alachua. If the need is indicated, the City will subsequently institute regulations to provide for such housing.

OBJECTIVE 1.4: Meeting Very-Low, Low and Moderate-Income Housing Needs

The City may partner with external government agencies and the private and non-profit sectors to meet the need for affordable housing for the City's very low, low and moderate-income households.

- Policy 1.4.a: The City shall, through public and private partnerships, facilitate that the provision of quality, affordable rental and owner-occupied housing is available to meet the needs of very low, low and moderate-income renters.
- Policy 1.4.b: The City shall apply for or assist private and non-profit entities in applying for State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) funding, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Section 8 funding, State Apartment Incentive Loans (SAIL), Home Investment Partnership (HOME) grants. Funding priorities include down payment assistance, single and multiple family affordable housing development, and energy efficiency.
- Policy 1.4.c: The City shall consider the adoption of affordable housing incentive strategies as specified in Section 420.9076, Florida Statutes, and may appoint a committee to be known as the “Affordable Housing Advisory Committee”.
- Policy 1.4.d: The City shall ensure that appropriate departments coordinate affordable housing measures and internal funding and planning activities for the provision of affordable housing.
- Policy 1.4.e: The City shall work with the Florida Housing Coalition, 1000 Friends of Florida, the local legislative delegation, the Florida Housing Finance Corporation and local government bodies to protect dedicated affordable housing revenues as provided by the Sadowski Act and funded through the State and Local Government Housing Trust Funds.
- Policy 1.4.f: The City shall facilitate the provision of adequate sites to meet the housing needs of extremely low, very low, low and moderate-income households.
- Policy 1.4.g: The City shall offer density bonuses to developers who include on-site housing for extremely low, very low, low and moderate income households, within mixed income developments that include housing priced above the moderate-income range, or contribute to a fund for offsite development of affordable housing.



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Policy 1.4.h: The City shall encourage the development of affordable housing for very low, low and moderate-income households by creating regulations that provides flexible standards for setbacks, lot size regulations, densities, and auxiliary housing units.

Policy 1.4.i: The City shall permit the construction of government subsidized housing only within areas which are served by public facilities which meet or exceed the adopted level of service standards established in the other elements of this Comprehensive Plan.

GOAL 2:

To provide safe, sanitary, affordable housing that maximizes resource efficiency while reducing the environmental and sociological impacts of relocation, construction, restoration, rehabilitation and building removal.

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Resource Efficiency

The City shall maximize resource efficiency in the built environment, by establishing a green building program.

Policy 2.1.a: The City shall consider establishing a green building incentive program based on the best available science. The City may work with Alachua County, the University of Florida, Gainesville Regional Utilities, the Florida Green Building Coalition, the Florida Solar Energy Center, the US Green Building Council, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to determine the best available science. Green building certification shall consider environmental protection, resource conservation and human health considerations over the lifecycle of the development. Dependent on a project's certification, the incentive program may allow for fee relief, expedited permitting and development review, relaxed lot size and setback requirements.

Policy 2.1.b: The City shall actively seek rebates to offer to residential consumers of alternative and efficient energy design, construction and operation technologies and methods.

Policy 2.1.c: The City shall promote the incorporation of US EPA Energy Star Building and Appliances programs into construction and rehabilitation practices. The City may make literature regarding US EPA Energy Star Building and Appliances programs available to developers, contractors and the general citizenry. The City shall promote US EPA Green Building, Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines for Recycled Content Materials, and Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste Management Program.

Policy 2.1.d: The City should educate the public about the economic and environmental benefits of resource efficient design, construction and deconstruction.

Policy 2.1.e: The City may consider providing low cost energy audits to consumers.

OBJECTIVE 2.2: Materials Conservation

The City shall conserve the embodied energy of the current housing stock by employing innovative preservation, restoration, renovation, deconstruction, and when otherwise unavoidable, demolition techniques.

Policy 2.2.a: The City shall establish materials conservation criteria for methods of altering the current housing stock.

Policy 2.2.b: The City shall promote materials conservation, including materials reuse, construction and demolition materials recycling, and use of recycled content materials, as a method for providing quality affordable housing in partnership with the private and non-profit sectors.

Policy 2.2.c: The City should consider implementing code enforcement procedures for demolition to include a review process to determine whether a proposed project meets the threshold.

Policy 2.2.d: The City should consider establishing threshold criteria for deconstruction, in lieu of demolition, and institute a process to determine whether a proposed project meets the threshold.

Policy 2.2.e: The City shall establish and make available best management practices for the otherwise unavoidable elimination of housing stock.



OBJECTIVE 2.3: Elimination of Substandard Housing

The City shall provide for the elimination of substandard housing through code enforcement based on established guidelines for conservation, rehabilitation and deconstruction.

Policy 2.3.a: The City shall consider adopting regulations to include evaluation criteria for determining the best approach for eliminating substandard housing. For example, housing with only slight defects, deemed “standard”, would be conserved; housing with major deficiencies that could be repaired economically, would be considered “substandard” and would be rehabilitated; and housing with gross deficiencies that would not be economically sensible to repair would be considered “substandard irreparable”, and would be removed from the housing stock, with a preference for deconstruction in lieu of demolition.

Policy 2.3.b: The City shall monitor the inventory of substandard housing as warranted.

Policy 2.3.c: The City’s Code Enforcement staff shall conduct annual housing stock inspections in areas where code violations are most prevalent, and in the City’s most blighted neighborhoods.

Policy 2.3.d: The City shall cooperate with the Alachua County Housing Authority to eliminate substandard housing within the City.

Policy 2.3.e: The City shall continue to pursue federal, state and local funding, including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, for elimination of substandard housing. The City may choose to operate a low interest revolving loan fund for rehabilitation of housing meeting criteria provided in Policy 2.3.a.

Policy 2.3.f: The City shall consider implementing a neighborhood planning program that will establish protocol for stabilizing, improving and sustaining at risk neighborhoods. The program may address issues such as safety, mobility and access, beautification, historic preservation, traffic, culture and character. The City shall actively pursue funding and other assistance from sources such as the US Department of Justice (DOJ) Weed and Seed Program, to aid in achieving neighborhood planning goals.



OBJECTIVE 2.4: Relocation Housing

The City shall minimize displacement impacts caused by public action, particularly on very low and low-income residents.

Policy 2.4.a: The City shall ensure that affordable, temporary substitute housing, or funding for such housing, is available to low and very-low income residents displaced by public rehabilitation, and condemnation action based solely on the elimination of substandard housing.

Policy 2.4.b: The City shall assist in the relocation of displaced residents by directing affected persons to affordable relocation housing, and pursuing all funding possibilities to cover the temporary and permanent relocation costs of low and very-low income residents. The City may choose to establish a loan fund to subsidize displacement housing costs for low and very low-income persons.

Policy 2.4.c: The City shall protect against the disruption of the neighborhood fabric and community character when providing permanent relocation housing. Every effort shall be made to house displaced residents within the neighborhood they had been living in.

Policy 2.4.d: The City shall work with the private and non-profit sectors to provide relocation housing. The City may offer streamlined permitting at a reduced cost to encourage the provision of acceptable relocation housing.

OBJECTIVE 2.5 Historically Significant Housing

The City shall encourage the preservation, restoration or rehabilitation for adaptive reuse of historically significant housing as appropriate.

Policy 2.5.a: The City shall conduct studies as necessary to determine the historical significance of its housing stock.

Policy 2.5.b: The City shall conduct a periodic inventory of its historically significant housing.



Policy 2.5.c: The City shall establish a review process including design criteria for the alteration, restoration or deconstruction of historically significant housing. Review criteria will take into consideration the impact of proposed alterations on the property itself, the surrounding properties, and the historic fabric of the community.

Policy 2.5.d: The City shall assist residents and developers in locating grant funding for historically significant properties. When feasible, the City may apply for or assist others in applying for grants.

