

CHAPTER 5

HOUSING ELEMENT

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A. OVERVIEW

The original goal of the Housing Element, as stated in the 1990 Volusia County Comprehensive Plan, is to provide, in cooperation with the private sector, "a broad geographic choice of decent, safe and sanitary housing types at affordable prices for present and projected residents." As recognized in the original plan, the provision and maintenance of housing is traditionally a function of the private market with the exception of housing opportunities provided to citizens of very modest means. In the last few decades the role of local government in the housing arena has been to:

1. serve as a conduit for federal and state public housing assistance programs (a component of the "affordable housing" issue);
2. implement, monitor and enforce state and federal building codes promoting health, safety and energy conservation standards;
3. encourage conformity and homogeneity in the development of residential subdivisions (types, sizes, setbacks) and the segregation of housing from other types of land uses;
4. offer certain aesthetic controls in existing districts and neighborhoods that possess unique or unusual environmental, landscape and/or historical characteristics.

Three non-traditional functions of local government in the housing area are suggested by the goal statement above and the subsequent objectives listed in the Housing Element. These functions imply that local government should take an activist role in the following:

5. promote the construction of a diversity of housing choices (types, locations and prices);
6. provide land area to accommodate projected population growth;
7. encourage the private sector to provide housing for persons with special needs (group homes).

All of these functions can be found in regulations, actions and programs currently implemented by Volusia County government. Some of the non-traditional and traditional functions are at cross-purposes and some have been greeted with more enthusiasm than others. Changes at all levels of government during the past five years have significantly affected the outcome of housing programs. Several changes to the Housing Element have been implemented based on the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) completed in 2006 in an effort to focus energy and resources on effective programs and problem areas.

The planning period for this Element shall be from time of adoption of the Volusia County Comprehensive Plan by the Volusia County Council through the year 2025.

This document was jointly prepared by staff from the County's Growth and Resource Management Department and Community Assistance Division. Within the Growth and Resources Management Department, the "Comprehensive Planning Activity" is responsible for the preparation and the coordination required for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Within Community Services the "Planning and Monitoring Activity" and "Housing Activity" administer a variety of assistance programs including affordable housing allocations received from local, state and federal sources. The sources for data utilized in the preparation of this Element include the Shimberg Center for

Affordable Housing at the University of Florida, Gainesville; the 2000 United States Census; the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council; the Bureau of Economic & Business Research, University of Florida, Gainesville; and local chapters of the National Association of Home Builders. The data and analysis can be found in the Volusia County Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR), Volusia County Comprehensive Plan Housing Support Document, and the Volusia County Consolidated Plan, which support the Goals, Objectives, and Policies that follow.

B. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL: Housing

- 5.1 Through the year 2025, Volusia County shall devote the necessary and effective resources available, (including private sector incentives and public programs) to ensure sanitary, affordable, and safe housing for county residents in a quantity adequate to accommodate reasonable growth in county population.

OBJECTIVE: Housing Supply and Infrastructure

- 5.1.1 Through the year 2025, Volusia County shall ensure the provision of adequate infrastructure and appropriate residential land use categories, in unincorporated areas of the County, to accommodate projected growth in population and a range of housing types. This is to specifically include adequate sites and distribution of housing for very low, low, and moderate income households.

POLICIES:

- 5.1.1.1 Volusia County shall ensure that adequate support infrastructure is provided for new residential development as outlined in the level of service standards set forth in the transportation, potable water, solid waste, future land use and capital improvements elements.
- 5.1.1.2 Volusia County shall work with the private sector toward retrofitting or replacing inadequate infrastructure or install new infrastructure for existing residential development that is located in targeted environmentally sensitive areas.
- 5.1.1.3 Volusia County shall encourage residents using septic tanks and located in existing urban residential areas to connect with municipal or County operated sewage treatment plants.
- 5.1.1.4 Volusia County shall adopt strategies for traffic calming in residential settings.
- 5.1.1.5 Volusia County shall use a combination of information provided by the Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing and local and regional data to project growth in residential land use categories.
- 5.1.1.6 Volusia County shall monitor national, state, regional and local housing trends and programs affecting the local housing market.

- 5.1.1.7 The Future Land Use Map (see Figure 1-11, Appendix 1) shall designate lands for residential development consistent with this element and provide for the increase in population in unincorporated Volusia County by the year 2025. Population projections suggest that an estimated increase 13,933 additional dwelling units will be needed in unincorporated Volusia County to meet the rise in population.
- 5.1.1.8 The Housing Element shall be compatible and consistent with the Future Land Use Element and discourage residential development that results in urban sprawl.
- 5.1.1.9 The Volusia County Zoning Ordinance shall allow a diversity of lot sizes, floor areas, setbacks and other design features that allow for flexibility and choice in housing types and prices.
- 5.1.1.10 Volusia County shall not issue development orders for urban residential development in the Natural Resource Management Area.
- 5.1.1.11 Volusia County shall consider adopting community design standards that promote sustainability and enhance community identity.
- 5.1.1.12 Volusia County shall conduct a study to determine if an incentive-based impact fee program (decrease in fees for projects that further community values and sustainability objectives) benefits housing goals and objectives outlined in this element.
- 5.1.1.13 Continue to implement the expedited building permit process, which is offered to all building contractors for new construction and rehabilitation of bona fide affordable housing units in Volusia County.
- 5.1.1.14 The following principles and criteria shall be used to provide guidance in the location of housing:
- The County shall seek to minimize the effect of gentrification and economic displacement of existing residents for any redevelopment or neighborhood revitalization project in which it directly participates.
 - The County shall continue to maintain specific zoning categories in the Volusia County Zoning Ordinance that allow for the construction of mobile home parks and subdivisions.
 - The County shall continue to allow the construction of state-certified manufactured homes in residential zoning categories, as long as building code requirements, minimum zoning standards, and state requirements are met.
 - In an effort to maintain affordable housing opportunities, the County shall: a) continue to allow, as a special exception, the construction of accessory dwellings in residential zoning categories that allow 6,000 sq. ft. lot sizes or larger; b) continue to allow a minimum floor area of 750 square feet in a majority of residential zoning categories.

- The County shall continue to allow, as a special exception, the construction of farmworker living facilities on agricultural properties that are 5 acres and larger in size.

5.1.1.15 The County shall continue to maintain and update as required inventories and reports surveying the public facility needs of all areas with concentrations of low and moderate income households within unincorporated Volusia County. These reports shall consist of data describing inadequacies or deficiencies in existing public facilities serving existing residents and projects necessary to correct deficiencies. At least one such study shall be prepared for each fiscal year starting in Fiscal Year 1992-93.

5.1.1.16 Capital projects needed to correct public facility deficiencies shall be incorporated into the preparation of Community Development Block Grant applications.

5.1.1.17 The County, in cooperation with the private sector, shall monitor the effect of impact fees on the cost of housing for low and moderate income households.

OBJECTIVE: Housing Assistance

5.1.2 For those residents of modest economic means, Volusia County shall continue to provide housing assistance through programs outlined in the Consolidated Plan and the Local Housing Assistant Plan written and updated regularly by the Community Assistance Division with incentives to encourage private sector participation.

POLICIES:

5.1.2.1 Volusia County shall ensure that housing assistance is available to all qualified residents regardless of age, race, disability, gender, or family size, in accordance with Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended and the Florida Fair Housing Act Chapter 760 Florida Statutes. The implementation of this policy shall include adoption and enforcement of a Fair Housing Ordinance by the County of Volusia.

5.1.2.2 Volusia County shall continue to develop and implement incentive programs to encourage the private sector to participate in the provision of affordable housing.

5.1.2.3 The County shall make available housing programs that provide financial assistance specifically for those families earning less than the median income for Volusia County.

5.1.2.4 Volusia County shall actively promote and distribute information regarding the availability of housing assistance programs.

5.1.2.5 Volusia County shall continue to expend federal and other state/local housing program funds to provide financial assistance to residents of modest economic means.

5.1.2.6 Volusia shall support and increase coordination among the public and private sectors of the housing delivery system, by maintaining an in house network with those departments involved in housing assistance, as an effort to increase communication and coordination of department initiatives.

- 5.1.2.7 Volusia shall attempt to coordinate the intentions of each individual municipality of the County with County efforts, by establishing contact with city housing planners or the appropriate representative.
- 5.1.2.8 The Consolidated Plan shall function as the guide for housing programs to benefit families of very low, low and moderate income. This document shall be prepared and submitted by the Community Services Group of Volusia County upon required deadline.

OBJECTIVE: Housing Rehabilitation

- 5.1.3 Volusia County shall encourage reinvestment in existing housing stock and assist in the rehabilitation or removal of substandard dwellings.

POLICIES:

- 5.1.3.1 Volusia County, in conjunction with Municipal efforts, shall assist in the reduction of substandard dwelling units Countywide through housing assistance programs.
- 5.1.3.2 Volusia shall assure continued code compliance of existing housing stock in unincorporated Volusia County.
- 5.1.3.3 Volusia County will identify and prioritize areas with a concentration of substandard conditions for code enforcement.
- 5.1.3.4 Volusia County shall conduct all condemnation and demolition proceedings in a timely and efficient manner. Housing rehabilitation assistance is offered through Community Assistance to eligible very low, low and moderate income homeowners as a voluntary program. Condemnation proceedings would only be required in non-voluntary situations.
- 5.1.3.5 Volusia County shall continue to guide conservation, rehabilitation and demolition program techniques and strategies in accordance with the ongoing Consolidated Plan and other pertinent documents.
- 5.1.3.6 Volusia County shall continue to expend federal and other state/local program funds to rehabilitate substandard housing.
- 5.1.3.7 Volusia County shall continue its historic preservation program to identify, recognize, preserve and protect historically significant housing (additional information is provided in the Historic Preservation Element of this Plan).
- 5.1.3.8 Volusia County, through its housing rehabilitation program, shall strive to demolish substandard and derelict housing units; construct new housing units for persons/families of very low, low and moderate income; and rehabilitate additional substandard housing units.

OBJECTIVE: Sustainable Housing

- 5.1.4 Volusia County shall encourage new residential development that promotes energy efficiency and safety and upgrade of efficiency and continued use of existing housing units.

POLICIES:

- 5.1.4.1 Volusia County shall continue to utilize the Florida Building Code as the primary guide in establishing minimum standards for housing construction.
- 5.1.4.2 Volusia County shall continue to offer assistance to qualified homeowners for weatherization and energy efficiency.
- 5.1.4.3 Volusia County shall encourage the repair rather than replacement of functional dwelling units.
- 5.1.4.4 Volusia County shall monitor innovations in national, state and regional housing programs to devise a local sustainable housing strategy.

OBJECTIVE: Group Housing

- 5.1.5 Through the year 2025, Volusia County shall assist in providing, those citizens with special needs, group housing that is safe, sanitary, and affordable, by providing adequate sites for group homes and foster care facilities in a variety of land use categories; providing code enforcement; and including group homes in housing incentive and assistance programs.

POLICIES:

- 5.1.5.1 Volusia County shall identify special needs groups to include, but not limited to, the farmworkers, the physically and mentally disabled, the elderly, children, the homeless, and HIV/AIDS patients.
- 5.1.5.2 The County shall participate in the distribution of existing information on housing programs for special needs groups.
- 5.1.5.3 The County shall locate farmworker housing that is in substandard condition and shall seek means to improve such conditions through code enforcement and housing assistance programs.
- 5.1.5.4 Volusia County shall assist in the reduction of the total number of substandard rural/farm worker units, by engaging in construction, rehabilitation and demolition projects.
- 5.1.5.5 Volusia County shall establish guidelines for the location of group homes consistent with Chapter 419, F.S.

- 5.1.5.6 Volusia County shall define “group homes” and "group housing" utilizing the definition provided in Chapter 419, F.S. to ensure consistent usage in such documents as the Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code and Zoning Ordinance.
- 5.1.5.7 Volusia County shall continue to provide for the inclusion of group homes in urban and rural land use and zoning classifications in the Volusia County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.
- 5.1.5.8 Volusia County shall ensure that group homes and facilities are licensed by the Florida Department of Health and the Florida Department of Children and Families.
- 5.1.5.9 Volusia County shall continue to expend federal and other state/local housing program funds to assist in the provision of group homes for special needs groups and other shelter facilities.
- 5.1.5.10 Volusia County shall continue to seek partnerships with municipalities and the private sector, to provide facilities for special needs groups.

OBJECTIVE: Housing Incentives

- 5.1.6 Volusia County shall offer incentives to assist in the provision of affordable housing and preservation of significant historic housing.

POLICIES:

- 5.1.6.1 Volusia County shall establish a regular review process of the Land Development Code and Zoning Ordinance to evaluate potential impacts on affordable housing goals, and revise or remove deterrents if necessary.
- 5.1.6.2 Volusia County shall continue to use a density bonus program that encourages the private sector to provide affordable housing for very low, low, and moderate income persons. Said density bonus shall amount to at least a 10% increase for projects that provide very low and low income housing needs, provided that increased density is consistent with environmental and concurrency goals set forth in this plan.
- 5.1.6.3 Volusia County shall continue to expend federal and other state/local housing program funds to assist in the provision of affordable housing for families of very low, low and/or moderate incomes with housing needs.
- 5.1.6.4 The protection of historically significant housing shall be achieved through a variety of means, of which, the following have been embraced by Volusia County:
 - 1. Provide for local incentives that encourage rehabilitation and adaptive use of such structures;
 - 2. Development of regulations that discourage incompatible exterior alterations and the wanton demolition of historically significant housing;
 - 3. Assistance to property owners interested in participating in local, state and federal historic preservation programs.
- 5.1.6.5 Volusia County may donate appropriate land and buildings to organizations dedicated in providing housing for families of very low, low and moderate incomes.

- 5.1.6.6 Volusia County shall seek partnerships with other local governments and private non-profit organizations to provide affordable housing.
- 5.1.6.7. Volusia County shall conduct a study to determine if an incentive-based impact fee program (decrease in fees for projects that further community values and sustainability objectives) benefits goals and objectives outlined in this element.
- 5.1.6.8 Volusia County shall create an internal task force for affordable housing as recommended in the Land Design Innovations (LDI) report. This internal task force will consist of, but not be limited to Planning, Zoning, and Land Development, and will examine ways the County can assist developers in realizing the density bonus incentives offered in its Comprehensive Plan while maintaining acceptable design standards.

The County will also evaluate and study the affordable housing toolbox recommendations in the LDI report, entitled "Workforce Housing Report", dated April 2007. The County will specifically evaluate the City of Orlando's housing program to determine the feasibility of incorporating this program into the Volusia County Comprehensive Plan and associated land development regulations. The Orlando housing program has a separate land use process for affordable housing that balances land development requirements with the need for affordable housing.

OBJECTIVE: Relocation Housing

- 5.1.7 In the event that Volusia County directly participates in a project that displaces a family or occupants from their place of residence, the County shall provide just compensation in the form of financial remuneration or shall relocate the displaced family or occupants in a comparable housing unit. Housing relocation due to voluntary housing rehabilitation assistance, offered through Community Assistance Division to eligible very low, low and moderate income homeowners, is a voluntary program and does not require compensation.

POLICIES:

- 5.1.7.1 The County shall ensure that any relocation housing shall be dwellings that are decent, safe, and sanitary and within the financial means of the families or occupants displaced.

GOAL: Community Design and Redevelopment

- 5.2 Volusia County shall merge housing assistance objectives with community revitalization and redevelopment efforts to meet sustainability targets.

OBJECTIVE: Commercial District Redevelopment

- 5.2.1 Volusia County shall work with municipalities to redevelop existing commercial areas and districts in an effort to strengthen the local economy (facilitate job creation and incubate small business growth) and to improve the aesthetic and functional value of the built environment (reinvestment in existing infrastructure and ensuring future sustainable development).

POLICIES:

- 5.2.1.1 Volusia County shall encourage investment and pursue efforts to strengthen commercial districts and to improve land use transitions from commercial to residential areas.
- 5.2.1.2 Volusia County shall participate with municipalities in the beautification of existing commercial corridors.
- 5.2.1.3 In low income areas, Volusia County shall explore the beneficial impact of proactive zoning policy and code enforcement in creating a more flexible and opportunistic environment for small businesses and home occupations.
- 5.2.1.4 Volusia County shall encourage the redevelopment of commercial districts in municipalities to include assistance in the creation of Tax Increment Districts to fund Community Redevelopment Plans, as provided for in Chapter 163, Part III, F.S.
- 5.2.1.5 Volusia County shall establish a program for the reuse of vacant commercial buildings and centers. This shall include possible incentives for reuse and developing community standards for sustainable commercial development.

OBJECTIVE: Neighborhood Redevelopment

- 5.2.2 Volusia County shall provide public assistance to declining neighborhoods while engaging in partnerships with municipalities and/or the private sector where applicable.

POLICIES:

- 5.2.2.1 Volusia County shall continue to expend federal and other state and local program funds to revitalize declining neighborhoods.
- 5.2.2.2 Volusia County shall join with municipalities to target neighborhoods for redevelopment that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Targeted neighborhoods shall receive available services from the County for upgrading neighborhood conditions to a safe, respectable and desirable living environment. Such neighborhoods shall include, but are not limited to, the Spring Hill area in DeLand and the Mission City/Inwood area of New Smyrna Beach. Volusia County shall seek to implement two infrastructure projects in each of the two neighborhoods mentioned above to assist in neighborhood redevelopment. Said projects shall be targeted as priorities by the residents.
- 5.2.2.3 Volusia County shall involve residents of neighborhoods in decision making and problem solving procedures and nurture leadership within said neighborhoods, with the intentions of generating a sense of community pride, responsibility and improvement.
- 5.2.2.4 The County shall continue in the efforts of rehabilitating existing substandard units, removal of dilapidated units and construction of new units within targeted areas.