

City of Clearwater

Local Housing Incentives Strategy

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

Economic Development and Housing Department



2008



City of Clearwater
Economic Development and Housing Department

Local Housing Incentives Strategy

Prepared by
Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

With the Assistance of:



December 2008

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I. Background

1.1 The City of Clearwater

The City of Clearwater is approximately 21 square miles in size and is located in Pinellas County on the west coast of Florida along the Gulf of Mexico and Tampa Bay. Clearwater is the county seat of Pinellas County and shares boundaries with the municipalities of Largo, Dunedin, Safety Harbor, Belleair Beach and the Town of Belleair. Along with the cities of St. Petersburg and Tampa, Clearwater is one of the most urbanized areas within the Tampa Bay Region.

According to estimates of the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) for 2007, the City of Clearwater has a population of 110,831. Population projections indicate that the City may have 121,352 permanent residents by 2020.

1.2 The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

The City of Clearwater actively participates in the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP) and receives funds to supplement part of the City’s affordable housing programs.

As a beneficiary of the SHIP Program, the City of Clearwater needs to fulfill the requirements of Florida Statute 420.9076, effective on July 1st, 2008. The Statute requires all municipalities to:

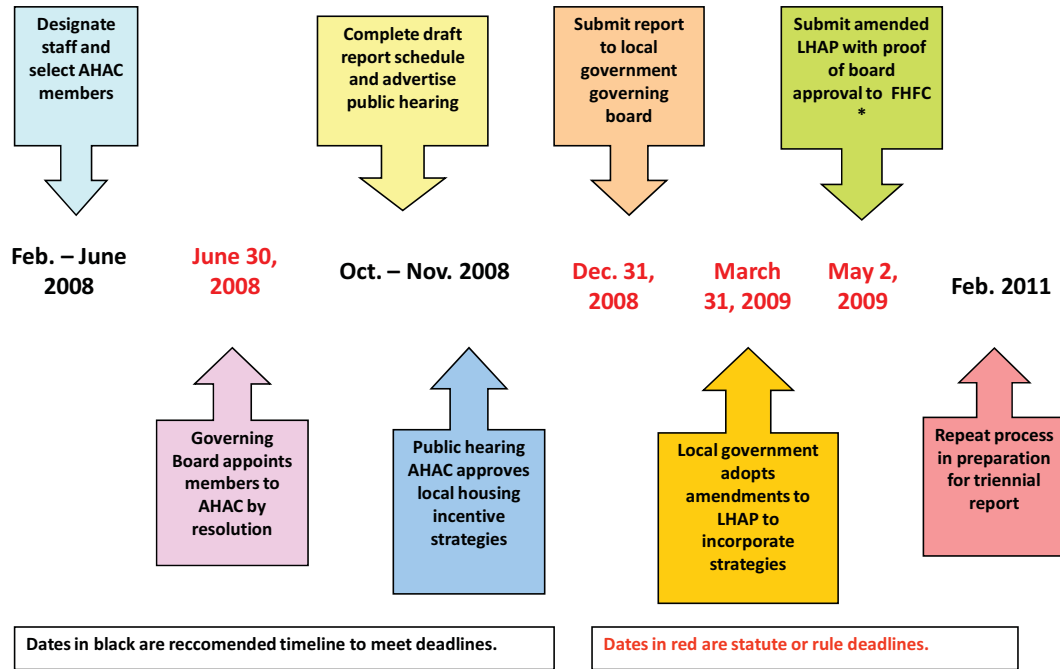
- a) Establish an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC)
- b) Prepare a Local Housing Incentives Strategy (LHIS) to facilitate the provision of affordable/workforce housing
- c) Amend the Local Housing Assistance Plan to include the recommendations of the LHIS.

Chart 1 outlines the schedule established by the Florida Statute to meet these requirements (See Chart 1):

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Chart 1

Local Housing Incentive Strategies & Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) Timeline



Source: Florida Housing Coalition- Webinar-SHIP- Affordable Housing Advisory Committees, 2008

On June 19th, 2008, the City of Clearwater formed an eleven member AHAC representing those actively engaged in the provision of affordable housing. See Appendix A for the Ordinance 08-15 and the composition of the AHAC.

The main duties of the Committee include recommending incentives for the provision of affordable housing based on a review of the City’s established policies and procedures, ordinances, and land development regulations.

1.3 Process to develop the Local Housing Incentive Strategy (LHIS)

The City's Economic Development and Housing Department retained Wade Trim to facilitate the process for the preparation of the Local Housing Incentive Strategy (LHIS) to fulfill the requirements of Florida Statute 420.9076.

In order to prepare the LHIS, staff and AHAC members actively participated in the following activities:

- Review of requirements of Florida Statute 420.9076
- Discussion regarding main issues/barriers affecting the production of affordable housing
- Discussion with for-profit and non-profit developers to identify main barriers to the provision of affordable housing
- Evaluation with staff and AHAC of the current regulations (comprehensive plan, code, and ordinances) that provide developer incentives for the provision of affordable housing
- Development of the Local Housing Incentive Strategy

1.4 Affordable Housing in Clearwater

Housing Affordability

Affordability refers to the capacity that all income levels have to access a “decent and adequate” housing unit within the housing market, either for rental or ownership. A measurement of attainable housing is based on an individual not expending more than 30% of their yearly total income on housing expenses. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines “Cost Burdened” as when a household expends more than the 30% threshold on housing costs. However, for some State programs the burden could be up to 35% depending on the individual capacity. A household that pays more than 50% of its yearly total income for housing costs is considered by HUD to be “Severely Cost Burdened.”

According to the Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing, in 2005, 32% of the City’s households pay more than 30% of their income for housing. By comparison, 29% of households statewide are cost-burdened. A total of 14% of the City’s households pay more than 50% of income for housing.

The City’s Comprehensive Plan defines affordable housing in Policy C.1.2.5:

“C.1.2.5 –Define Affordable Housing as any residential dwelling unit leased or owned by a household with a household income of one hundred twenty percent (120%) or less of the adjusted area median family income for Pinellas County, Florida, as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The rental rates for leased Workforce Affordable Housing Units shall not exceed the rates published by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation for annual “Maximum Rents by Number of Bedroom Unit” for the Tampa–St. Petersburg–Clearwater Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). For non-rental units, the sales price may not exceed ninety percent (90%) of the average area price for the Tampa–St. Petersburg–Clearwater MSA, as established by the annual revenue procedure which provides issuers of qualified mortgage bonds, as defined in Section 143(a) of the internal Revenue Code, and issuers of mortgage credit certificates, as defined in Section 25(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, with the nationwide average purchase price for the residences located in the United States.”

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Barriers and Incentives

According to HUD, a regulatory barrier is "a public regulatory requirement, payment, or process that significantly impedes the development or availability of affordable housing without providing a commensurate health and/or safety benefit."¹ Understanding barriers is the first step to transform them into incentives for the supply of affordable housing. The AHAC took a comprehensive overview of affordable housing barriers to understand potential relationships of what, from the City's perspective, could be done to incentivize the supply of affordable housing. Chart 2, generally describes the barriers discussed.

Chart 2
Affordable Housing Barriers



This comprehensive approach helped the AHAC to look beyond the analysis required of Florida Statute 420.9076 and to prioritize recommendations. In that sense, the recommendations of the AHAC targeted areas and barriers within the domain of the City of Clearwater's basic responsibilities: provide policy direction through the City's comprehensive plan; provide incentives through the Community Development Code and facilitate information and the permitting process.

¹ Stowell, C ; Shelburne, M. (2004). Responding to HUD's Affordable Communities Initiative: Will It Make a Difference? The Practitioner Planner. American Planning Association. Winter 2004

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Issues in Supplying Affordable Housing

Built-out communities, such as Clearwater, have pressures for the provision of affordable housing due to increased land values; the availability of vacant developable land; skyrocketing construction costs due to demand for building material supplies; and labor outpacing supply. In addition, other costs of home acquisition (i.e. property taxes and insurance) create a financial burden

The AHAC identified the most significant issues for the provision of affordable housing for the City.

The following summarizes the discussion:

- **Lack of land available to develop attainable housing projects.** The decrease of vacant land results in competition for land needed to meet the public facility and infrastructure needs of the community but also for land needed to provide attainable housing. Given the restricted supply of vacant lands, the City and other attainable housing providers are competing with the private sector for these lands which make acquisition difficult and expensive.
- **Limited funding to invest in production and rehabilitation of attainable housing.** Traditional “safety nets,” such as Federal and State funding programs, have decreased since the year 2000. Currently, the Housing Division manages approximately \$ 2.4 million per year provided through Federal and State programs such as HOME, SHIP and CDBG.
- **Unclear definition of the permitting process for affordable housing projects.** The City has in place an expedited reviewing process for affordable housing development; however the process has been described as “lengthy” by some developers, thus increasing the costs of the housing units.
- **Land Development Code and Incentives.** The City’s land development code is very flexible to favor the construction of affordable housing; however, there are still some areas that need better definition and others where parameters need to be established.
- **Public Perception of Affordable Housing Developments.** There is a public perception that affordable housing projects have a negative impact on neighborhoods. If they are not well designed and reflect the neighborhood character, they can contribute to decreasing neighborhood home values and safety.

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- **Limited information on City's Affordable Housing Incentives and Programs.** The City has in place numerous programs and incentives to contribute to the supply of affordable housing; however the information is dispersed and needs to be better organized for the citizens, nonprofit and the private sector.
- **Maintaining the condition of the City's aging housing stock.** Over half of the City's total housing stock is over twenty years old. It is particularly important for the City to help maintaining the health and safety of the existing housing stock as a source of affordable housing.

II. Local Housing Incentives Strategy

In 2007, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 1375 requiring cities and counties receiving SHIP funds to appoint an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC). In 2008, the City of Clearwater formed an eleven member AHAC representing those actively engaged in the provision of affordable housing. The duties of the committee include recommending incentives for the provision of affordable housing based on a review of the City's established policies and procedures, ordinances, and land development regulations.

The AHAC met to develop the City of Clearwater's vision, principles, strategies, and actions for the Local Housing Strategy. The Local Housing Incentives Strategy summarizes the input of the AHAC.

2.1 The Value of Affordable Housing

The AHAC held a discussion regarding the value that affordable housing brings to the City's development. The following themes were identified:

A) Support a dynamic and competitive economy.

There is an intrinsic relationship between a *dynamic economy* and affordable housing. The existence of affordable housing units is a variable that supports business location thus job creation. The City, which is nearly built-out, has the opportunity to capitalize on its existing urban fabric through urban renewal and infill development. Such investment in the City would have positive impacts on the local economy and increase Clearwater's ability to compete with other cities.

B) Improve social well-being and build sense of community.

Housing is a fundamental human need. Consideration of *social well-being*, including long-term housing stability, is imperative for the future of the City. There is a need for improved job opportunities, as well as for a simple, understandable process for achieving housing, especially for those in low to moderate-income households. Education and motivation for home ownership are also important aspects of the City's future.

C) Ensure that the City’s workforce can live within the City.

There is a growing need for affordable “workforce” housing within the community, specifically for police, fire, and other service employees. There is also a need to draw the workforce back into the City to reduce commute distances, to reduce crime, and to restore a sense of pride in the community.

2.2 Principles for Clearwater’s Affordable Housing

Based on AHAC discussions, the provision of affordable housing in the City of Clearwater should embrace the following principles:

1) Affordable over the long –term

Affordable housing is readily available, and reasonably–priced; mortgage rates for affordable housing are structured to allow people to keep their homes over the long–term. Rental rates for affordable housing are fair and reasonable; and the cost of maintaining a home (e.g. fees, maintenance, etc.) is practical.

2) Diverse and provides for a mix of income levels

Affordable housing is comprised of diverse housing types and supports a mix of income levels, incorporating rental and ownership opportunities.

3) Sustainable, well–designed and barrier–free

Affordable housing uses innovative and sustainable materials and technologies. Its design is aesthetically pleasing and blends into the architectural fabric of the community. Structures are safe, functional and aesthetic. Floor plans are designed for “living” and construction materials, including fixtures, are energy efficient. In addition, housing is handicapped accessible.

4) In character with the surrounding neighborhood

Affordable housing is sited in a manner that enhances the existing character of neighborhoods and provides safe open spaces. Public spaces are visible but well–landscaped so as to blend into the context of the neighborhood. Fences or other barriers are architectural and transparent.

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5) Strategically-located, and pedestrian-oriented with access to mass transit and open spaces.

Affordable housing is located near employment centers and civic facilities. Residents enjoy pedestrian-oriented facilities with access to mass transit and open spaces.

2.3 Vision

In order to develop a vision for affordable housing as part of the Local Housing Incentives Strategy, the AHAC summarized the value of providing affordable housing for the City as well as the principles. The following statement summarizes the Vision of Affordable Housing for the City:

The City of Clearwater will encourage the development of a diverse supply of housing that is safe, affordable, sustainable, and well-designed that blends into the character of the City's neighborhoods, which supports a diverse, inclusive community.



2.4 Incentives Plan Recommendations²

The following provides synopses of the City's current practices regarding affordable housing, including policies, procedures, ordinances, and regulations, and outlines the AHAC's recommendations regarding incentives for the provision of affordable housing.

These recommendations were developed after several meetings with AHAC, the city's staff and interested stakeholders from September to November 19th, 2008. The following provides a relationship of these meetings:

- 08/21/2008 Meeting with staff of the Economic Development and Housing Department, Planning Department and Wade Trim, Inc.
- 09/09/2008 Meeting with the AHAC, the staff of the Economic Development and Housing Department and Wade Trim, Inc.
- 10/06/2008 Focus group with the staff of the Economic Development and Housing Department, affordable housing developers and Wade Trim, Inc.
- 10/14/2008 Meeting with the AHAC, the staff of the Economic Development and Housing Department and Wade Trim, Inc.
- 10/28/2008 Meeting with the AHAC, the staff of the Economic Development and Housing Department and Wade Trim, Inc.
- 11/13/2008 Meeting with staff of the Economic Development and Housing Department and Planning Department.
- 11/19/2008 Meeting with the AHAC, the staff of the Economic Development and Housing Department and Wade Trim, Inc.

On November 19, 2008, the AHAC met to review the products of the process and to finalize its recommendations regarding affordable housing incentives. The following represents the AHAC's final recommendations, inclusive of all changes made during the November 19, 2008 AHAC meeting.

² All references made to the Comprehensive Plan (EAR Based Amendments) are drawn from the draft dated 12-18-2008.

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Incentive No. 1

The processing of approvals of development orders or permits, as defined in s. 163.3164(7) and (8), for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects.

Review Synopsis:

As a procedure, the Planning Department already expedites the review process for any site plan, land use plan amendment, rezoning, or annexation application for an affordable housing project within the City of Clearwater. The interested party should complete the form, “Notice of Affordable Housing Project” (see Appendix A), to formalize the request. The form is available through the Economic Development and Housing Department. Some affordable housing projects (rehabilitation or new construction) are approved administratively; otherwise the project goes to the immediate next session of the Community Development Board.

Despite the existence of the form, there are still some procedural and administrative issues that need to be improved to achieve timely development review for affordable housing.

Recommendations:

1.1 Continue to use the “Notice of Affordable Housing Project” form to fast-track affordable housing projects.

1.2 Create the role of “Affordable Housing Facilitator or Ombudsman.” The facilitator should be the first point of contact in the City when submitting affordable housing projects. The facilitator should:

- Create and oversee, in coordination with the City’s Planning Department, an affordable housing “One Stop Streamline Permitting Process.”
- Act as a liaison between the developer and all departments involved in the review and permitting process.
- Organize and participate in the pre-application meetings.
- Provide necessary information and forms to the developer to avoid delays during the application and review process.

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- Create, in coordination with the Planning Department, a project requirement checklist for each type of affordable housing project (i.e., site and building review).
- Create, in coordination with the Planning Department, a project process checklist for each type of affordable housing (i.e., site and building review).
- Create, in coordination with the Planning Department, a feasible timeline review for affordable housing projects considering variables such as the type, size and impact in the community.
- Release to the applicant and all City departments involved at once, written statements for additional requirements and project determinations.
- Determine a definitive time period for completion of reviews.
- Track the review process through specific forms and communications.
- Report to the developer the status of the application.

1.3 Improve customer service toward potential project applicants by:

- Maintaining a positive attitude
- Offering a quick response time via email or phone calls
- Making available project requirements and forms
- Utilizing new technology to enhance administrative efficiencies

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City's current practices and hereby approves Recommendations 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3.

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| Incentive No. 2 |
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| <i>The modification of impact-fee requirements, including reduction or waiver of fees and alternative methods of fee payment for affordable housing.</i> |

Review Synopsis:

The AHAC and the City’s Comprehensive Plan Amendments recognize how impact fees and permitting fees increase the costs of affordable housing. However, it is also true that affordable housing developments also create demand for public infrastructure as do other types of housing development. Transportation impact fees cannot be legally waived for affordable housing projects as described by the “Florida Impact Fee Act,” F.S. 163.31801. Current transportation impact fees collected by Pinellas County are \$2,066 for single family and \$1,420 for multifamily units.

In addition to the current impact fees, the City charges fees to issue a variety of review, permits and certifications for affordable housing projects (plan examination, plan amendments, certificates of occupancy, etc.). The current fee structure as established in Appendix A (schedule of fees, rates and charges) of the Community Development Code is based upon the value of the housing unit, recognizing the impact on affordable housing developments.

The City does not have any ordinances or regulations in place to reduce, or refund existing impact fees or other fees for affordable housing developments.

Recommendation:

2.1 Prepare a study to determine the financial, legal, and administrative feasibility of reducing, refunding or re-defining (by unit size the costs) impact fees and other fees related to the development of affordable housing. Consideration should be given to provide cost relief as housing units follow “green building parameters.”

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City’s current practices and hereby approves Recommendation 2.1 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

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| Incentive No. 3 |
| <i>The allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing.</i> |

Review Synopsis:

The City encourages flexible densities for affordable housing developments in both the Future Land Use Element and the Housing Element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

The following policy in the Future Land Use Element allows for flexible densities:

“Policy A.2.2.7 – The City will provide density bonuses for affordable housing developments that demonstrate that a minimum of 15% of the total units are reserved as affordable housing units. Such bonuses shall not exceed 50% of the density permitted by the Future Land Use Map and shall not include properties located in the Coastal Storm Area. The density bonus shall be established by ordinance in the Community Development Code”.

The same policy applies to Housing Element as policy C.1.9.1:

“Policy C.1.9.1 – The City will provide density bonuses for affordable housing developments that demonstrate that a minimum of 15% of the total units are reserved as affordable housing units. Such bonuses shall not exceed 50% of the density permitted by the Future Land Use Map and shall not include properties located in the Coastal Storm Area. The density bonus shall be established by ordinance in the Community Development Code.”

The City grants flexible densities to developers through the City’s Community Development Code, which establishes flexibility criteria for specific uses requiring additional development review. Such uses fall into two categories: flexible standard development and flexible development.

Flexible standard development applications typically require Level One approval, which involves review by City staff only, including the City’s Development Review Coordinator and Development Review Committee. Flexible development applications typically require Level Two approval, which involves review by the Community Development Board. Some applications, however, warrant additional review. These

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applications require Level Three approval, which involve greater complexity and require action by the City Council.

Currently, projects typically associated with affordable housing, such as Comprehensive Infill Redevelopment Projects, fall under flexible development and are Level Two uses. For example, Section 2-701.1 of the Community Development Code sets the maximum development potential for the Commercial (“C”) zoning district, however this maximum may be reconsidered if the use falls under Section 2-704 flexible development. Section 2-704 defines the criteria for flexibility for the Commercial zoning district, which includes Section 2-704, Flexibility Criteria C.5.d, “...the proposed use provides for the provision of affordable housing.”

Recommendation:

3.1 Continue to provide allowance of density flexibility for affordable housing developments.

3.2 Establish specific parameters to grant density flexibility for affordable housing projects as allowed in the Community Development Code within the different zoning districts.

3.3 Evaluate whether or not density allowance for the project could be defined prior to formal submission of the civil/site engineering requirements. In this case density will be awarded with the condition to the final submission of civil/site engineering requirements.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City’s current practices and hereby approves Recommendations 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

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Incentive No. 4

The reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons.

Review Synopsis:

The City does not require reservation of infrastructure capacity specifically for housing for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons.

The City is already built-out and has excess capacity for all its public facilities thus there is no need to reserve any “infrastructure capacity.” Furthermore, the Planning Department closely monitors that all concurrency requirements are met so that enough infrastructure capacity is in place at the time of any type of new development. The Capital Improvements Element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan specifies:

“Policy I.1.3.2 – The City shall determine, prior to the issuance of development orders, whether sufficient capacity of essential public facilities to meet the minimum standards for levels of service for the existing population and a proposed development will be available concurrent with the impacts of the proposed development. The applicable water supplier shall be consulted prior to the issuance of a building permit to ensure potable water will be available prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.”

Recommendation:

We do not recommend that the City of Clearwater include the reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons as an incentive for the provision of affordable housing.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City’s current practices and does not recommend the reservation of infrastructure capacity an incentive for the provision of affordable housing.

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Incentive No. 5

The allowance of affordable accessory residential units in residential zoning districts.

Review Synopsis:

The City allows for the provision of accessory dwelling units in nonresidential zoning districts, including the City's Commercial ("C"), Tourist ("T"), Downtown ("D"), Office ("O"), Institutional ("I"), and IRT districts, as described in the Community Development Code.

In addition, the Comprehensive Plan in the Housing Element states:

"Policy C.1.1.8 –The City may permit one accessory dwelling unit per lot wherever such units can be accommodated by adequate lot area, and provided that they meet strict compliance standards such as building restrictions, visual buffering, parking and other requirements to be developed for inclusion in the Community Development Code."

The City is considering further study of affordable accessory residential dwelling units.

Recommendation:

5.1 Continue to allow for accessory dwelling units in both nonresidential and residential zoning districts as described within the City's Comprehensive Plan and Community Development Code.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City's current practices and hereby approves Recommendation 5.1 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

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| Incentive No. 6 |
| <i>The reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.</i> |

Review Synopsis:

The City encourages the reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing in the Housing Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The following policy in the Housing Element supports the reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing:

“Policy C.1.9.2 – Allow flexibility with regard to setbacks and off-street parking to accommodate density bonuses associated with affordable housing developments provided the project design does not detract from the established or emerging character of the immediate vicinity.”

“Policy C.1.9.3 – Allow flexibility with regard to off-street parking for projects containing affordable housing units located within 1,000 feet of a transit stop.”

Moreover, the City currently allows flexible parking and setback requirements for affordable housing through the City's Community Development Code, which establishes flexibility criteria for specific uses requiring additional development review.

According to the Community Development Code, setback requirements shall be consistent with the minimum standard requirements of the applicable zoning district, unless otherwise permitted pursuant to flexibility criteria in that district, which vary depending on the use. For example, attached dwellings, residential infill projects, comprehensive infill redevelopment projects, or other uses that could provide affordable housing, may qualify as Level Two uses, allowing for flexible development standards, including setbacks.

Furthermore, the Community Development Code allows for the reduction of parking requirements for affordable housing wherever residential uses are permissible:

“Article 3, Section 3-919 – The minimum off-street parking requirement for affordable housing units, as defined by the City of Clearwater Economic

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Development and Housing Department, may be reduced to one parking space per unit in any zoning district where residential uses are permitted.”

Recommendation:

6.1 Continue to allow flexible setback requirements for affordable housing developments.

6.2 Continue to allow for the reduction of off-street parking requirements based upon the provision of affordable housing units as per Article 3, Section 3-919 of the Community Development Code.

6.3 Continue to tie reductions of off-street parking requirements to proximity and access to alternative modes of transportation, including transit, sidewalks, trails, or other options.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City’s current practices and hereby approves Recommendations 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

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Incentive No. 7

The allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line configurations for affordable housing.

Review Synopsis:

A legal lot of record, by definition, has fixed boundaries by a plat recorded in the Official Records of Pinellas County. It is therefore assumed that this incentive is intended to address flexible site plan configurations, rather than single flexible lot configurations.

As such, the City currently allows for site plan flexibility through the development review process, as supported by the City's Community Development Code, which establishes flexibility criteria for specific uses requiring additional development review.

Such criteria may allow for more flexible site plan configurations, but may also require an improved site plan to document how the flexibility will result in better design and/or appearance. For example, the flexibility criteria tied to residential infill projects within the High Density Residential ("HDR") District include:

"Article 2, Section 2-504 (F.6) The design of the proposed residential infill project creates a form and function which enhances the community character of the immediate vicinity of the parcel proposed for development and the City of Clearwater as a whole; (F.7) Flexibility in regard to lot width, required setbacks, height and off-street parking are justified by the benefits to community character and the immediate vicinity of the parcel proposed for development and the City of Clearwater as a whole..."

The allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line configurations for affordable housing, must be sensitive to the character and context of existing neighborhoods.

Recommendation:

7.1 Continue to allow flexible lot configurations for affordable housing developments while remaining sensitive to the character and context of existing neighborhoods.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City's current practices and hereby approves Recommendation 7.1 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

| Incentive No.8 |
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| <i>The modification of street requirements for affordable housing</i> |

Review Synopsis:

Currently, all streets must conform to the City’s street standards as defined in Article 3, Section 3–1904 of the City’s Community Development Code:

“Article 3, Section 3–1904 – (A) The functional classification, arrangement, character, extent, width and location of all streets shall conform to the thoroughfare element of the comprehensive plan and shall be considered in their relation to existing and planned streets, topographical and environmental conditions, public convenience and safety, and their appropriate relationship to the proposed use of the land to be served by such streets.”

The Community Development Code specifies minimum right-of-way and lane designations for each classification of roadway, including neighborhood roads. A minimum pavement width of 24 feet plus curb is required for all neighborhood roads, 26 feet plus curb for all local roads, and 37 feet for all collector roads. Such requirements are in place to benefit public health and safety.

The City’s Community Development Code requires that all streets be improved by a developer with paving, curbs or gutters, and sidewalks or on-street parking where necessary. These standards apply to all development, including affordable housing projects. Since the City of Clearwater is largely built-out, the City’s infrastructure system is already in place and it is not likely that affordable housing projects will need to provide local or collector roads. At most, such projects may require the provision of neighborhood roads internal to the site.

Recommendation:

Because such standards are in place to benefit public health and safety, we do not recommend that the City utilize the modification of street requirements as an incentive for affordable housing.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City's current practices and does not recommend the modification of street requirements as an incentive for the provision of affordable housing.

| Incentive No.9 |
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| <i>The establishment of a process by which a local government considers, before adoption, policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan provisions that increase the cost of housing.</i> |

Review Synopsis:

Currently, the City has a process in place by which it considers, before adoption, policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan provisions that increase the cost of housing.

The Economic Development and Housing Department usually receives most regulations and ordinances and participates in the review process. When reviewing, the department usually specifies whether any of the provisions may affect the cost of housing.

Recommendation:

9.1 The Economic Development and Housing Department should continue to review all regulations and ordinances that may affect the cost of housing.

9.2 Establish a formal process by which any new regulatory instrument created in the City (Ordinances, regulations, etc.) can be evaluated for its effect on housing affordability.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City's current practices and hereby approves Recommendations 9.1 and 9.2 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

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Incentive No.10

The preparation of a printed inventory of locally-owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.

Review Synopsis:

The City of Clearwater is already built-out. According to the City's Comprehensive Plan, vacant developable land in Clearwater has been reduced from approximately 1,034 acres in 1989, to approximately 600 acres in 1996, and then further reduced to 420 acres in 2005. Most of these parcels are less than one acre in size. Infill development, urban conservation, and urban renewal strategies will continue to dictate future development.

The City maintains an inventory of locally-owned public lands suitable for affordable housing. As of 2008, there are 29 parcels of publicly-owned land suitable for the development of affordable housing. Most of these lands are located in and surrounding the Downtown Area.

Due to the lack of affordable land to develop affordable housing, the City offers development flexibility through the Community Development Code to help developers interested in providing affordable housing through infill and redevelopment projects.

The City's Future Land Use Element proposes a number of activity centers throughout the City as part of the City's Design Structure. Policies A.5.4.4 and A.5.4.7 encourage redevelopment activities to support the provision of affordable housing:

"Policy A.5.4.4 – Missouri Avenue from Drew Street to Belleair Road. The creation of affordable housing and mixed-use development should be supported, and lot consolidation and streetscape improvements should be encouraged."

"Policy A.5.4.7 – South Fort Harrison Avenue from A Street to E Street. Amendments to the Future Land Use Plan and Zoning Atlas may be considered to promote affordable housing, mixed-use development, and to support the emerging character of the area and Morton Plant Hospital."

Recommendation:

- 10.1 The Economic Development and Housing Department should continue to maintain the inventory of publicly-owned land suitable for the development of affordable housing.*
- 10.2 The public land inventory owned by the City for affordable housing should be published on the City's webpage for prospective developers and non-profit agencies for developing affordable housing.*
- 10.3 Design a procedure to make publicly-owned land available to prospective developers and non-profit agencies for developing affordable housing.*

AHAC Action:

The committee (AHAC) has reviewed the City's current practices and hereby approves Recommendations 10.1, 10.2, and 10.3 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

LOCAL HOUSING INCENTIVES STRATEGY

| Incentive No.11 |
|--|
| <i>The support of development near transportation hubs, and major employment centers and mixed-use developments.</i> |

Review Synopsis:

The Future Land Use Element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan supports the location of residential uses within “mass transit and neighborhood-serving land uses” and near transit lines:

“Policy A.2.2.2 - Residential land uses shall be appropriately located on local and minor collector streets; if appropriately buffered; they may be located on major collector and arterial streets. Residential land uses shall be sited on well-drained soils, in proximity to parks, schools, mass transit and other neighborhood-serving land uses.”

“Policy A.6.8.7 – Create mixed-use, higher density and livable communities through design and layout, near existing transit lines as well as proposed TBARTA lines and stations. Also support walks ability concepts near projected TBARTA stations.”

In addition, the Housing Element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan states:

“Policy C.1.4.2 – Assisted housing should be located in close proximity to employment centers, mass transit services, parks, and commercial centers.”

Recommendation:

11.1 The City should maintain and enforce policies A.2.2.2; A.6.8.7; and C.1.4.2 of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City’s current practices and hereby approves Recommendation 11.1 to incentivise the provision of affordable housing.

2.2 Additional Recommendations

Adaptive Reuse

12.1 Continue to allow “adaptive reuse” involving the conversion of surplus and/or outmoded buildings including old school buildings, hospitals, train stations, warehouses, factories, etc. to mixed uses.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City’s current practices and hereby approves Recommendation 12.1 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

Comprehensive Plan

13.1 Establish a policy under Objective C.1.8 indicating the need to update the City’s Local Housing Incentives Strategy every three years as indicated by the Florida Statutes (420.9076).

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City’s current practices and hereby approves Recommendation 13.1 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

Land Development Code

14.1 Create a policy to encourage developers to address recommended design standards for affordable housing developments. Some of the criteria could include but are not limited to:

- Maintain the character of the neighborhood where the project will be located
- Provide the necessary architectural elements to maintain a hierarchy of scale and a unified form
- Provide recess or articulated unit entries to provide individual identities for each unit
- Avoid large and unbroken corridors
- Provide direct and visual access to open space for residents

LOCAL HOUSING INCENTIVES STRATEGY

- Consider play areas when developing family housing
- Provide nighttime illumination from a variety of sources
- Use landscape standards and buffers when needed to avoid nuisances and the separation of public and private areas
- Reduced parking ratios
- Centrally-located common facilities
- Use Crime Prevention Thru Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Use energy-efficient and environmental concepts for home building allowed in the building code
- Use handicap accessibility standards (i.e., universal design)

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City's current practices and hereby approves Recommendation 14.1 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

Communication and Marketing of Affordable Housing

15.1 Improve current communication channels and marketing materials to reach different stakeholders interested in affordable housing. Some of the suggested actions include but are not limited to:

- Prepare marketing materials for the general public in order to promote the different housing programs that the City's offers.
- Prepare marketing materials that help developers and the general public to understand the application criteria, permitting process, and the number of incentives available for rehabilitation and new construction of affordable housing units in the City.
- Make accessible to the public an inventory and a map of suitable residential vacant land available for development.
- Include a section on the City's webpage called, "Affordable Housing Central," specifically dedicated to the promotion of affordable housing.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City's current practices and hereby approves Recommendation 15.1 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

Financing

16.1 Diversify financial strategies to contribute to the new construction and maintenance of affordable housing. Some of the suggested actions include but are not limited to:

- Maximize the use of funds from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP).
- Encourage Employer-Assisted Housing Programs.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City's current practices and hereby approves Recommendation 16.1 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

Partnerships

17.1 Develop public and private partnerships for the provision of affordable housing

- Prepare, advertise, and maintain an inventory of affordable housing providers and any other related organization.
- Provide mentoring and technical training to current and new affordable housing providers.
- Encourage and support joint development opportunities between the private sector and non-profits to develop affordable housing.
- Engage lenders in an ongoing discussion with the City relative to underwriting and credit standards, technology solutions, as well as the development of financial products in an effort to maximize the financing options available to potential first-time homebuyers through conventional and other lenders.
- Coordinate with Pinellas County joint programs for the provision of affordable housing.

LOCAL HOUSING INCENTIVES STRATEGY

- Monitor the development of statewide legislative initiatives to gauge the local impact of their provisions.

AHAC Action:

The committee has reviewed the City's current practices and hereby approves Recommendation 17.1 to incentivize the provision of affordable housing.

III. Appendix