

**Affordable Housing Advisory Committee**  
**Report to the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners**  
**September 24, 2008**

Per state statute, the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee has undertaken the task of reviewing recommendations for increasing access to affordable housing within the County. This has evolved during the course of three sub-committee meetings held August 13 and 27 and September 10 of 2008. These meetings were all open to the public for comment.

In the course of the three meetings, AHAC deliberated the 11 programs required for consideration by Florida Statute 420.9076. In addition, the Committee undertook the evaluation of other policies and programs to further advance the creation of affordable housing within the county. The recommendations are reported below.

**I. State-Mandated Programs:**

**Expedited Permitting**

AHAC Recommendation: A simple, understandable, and consistent process should be established. This process should allow the Housing Manager to sign the Expedited Permitting Requests rather than the County Administrator to shorten the time required to receive the expedited permitting request. Information about this program, as well as an application, should be posted on the County web site.

**Modification of Impact Fee Requirements**

AHAC Recommendation: There should be no special modification or waiving of impact fees for affordable housing developments. However, it would be beneficial to have a dedicated source of funding to help affordable housing providers pay the impact fees. Possible funding sources include:

- fees charged to developers of both residential and commercial properties (other than affordable housing providers);
- interest from the impact fee trust fund;
- another source of state funds;
- a one cent per square foot fee on development.

**Flexibility in Densities**

AHAC Recommendation: The County should create a density bank for unused density within the county that can be used in specially designated sending zones where the development of higher density, more affordable housing would be desirable. Inclusionary Zoning should be mandatory for large residential developments within the County. However, it should also be incentivised.

**Reservation of Infrastructure Capacity**

AHAC Recommendation: Not considered necessary at this point in time.

**Affordable Accessory Dwelling Units**

AHAC Recommendation: The County should encourage the development of accessory dwelling units.

### **Transfer of Development Rights**

AHAC Recommendation: See recommendation for flexible densities.

### **Reduction of Parking and Setback Requirements**

AHAC Recommendation: This is not currently an issue in the county.

### **Flexible Lot Configuration**

AHAC Recommendation: The County should allow for flexibility on setbacks to allow for the construction of affordable housing on “non-conforming” and irregularly shaped lots.

### **Modification of Sidewalk and Streetwalk Requirements**

AHAC Recommendation: Consider reducing sidewalk and streetwalk requirements for the inclusion of affordable housing in a large-scale development.

### **Consideration of Any Proposal that May Impact Housing Costs**

AHAC Recommendation: AHAC does need to have review of actions by the County that will impact the cost of housing. This needs to be part of the review process and procedures should be put in place to ensure this is accomplished.

### **Printed Inventory of Public Lands Suitable for Affordable Housing**

AHAC Recommendation: The County should make a list of public lands available to AHAC to make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners regarding which properties are suitable for affordable housing development. This list will then be made available to the general public, preferably via the County’s web site.

### **Development Near Transportation Hubs, Major Employment Centers, and Mixed-Use Development**

AHAC Recommendation: Incentives need to be created to encourage development within specific neighborhoods near existing services to encourage neighborhood redevelopment.

## **II. Other Public Policies Suggestions:**

1. Require a 30-year compliance period for any property receiving county funds.
2. Recommend a reduction in impact fees based on green or hurricane-resistant design.
3. An annual housing needs assessment should be done and provided to AHAC and BCC annually.
4. Need to increase communication between Growth Management and Housing offices.
5. Have the county donate one or two parcels of land per year for the development of affordable housing, possibly with the caveat that these donations will be made within a certain area or to a certain non-profit agency.
6. Create a program within the county government that would allow county employees to make a VOLUNTARY contribution to this fund directly from their paychecks of \$5 or another small amount. The fund could then be used specifically to assist county employees with

rental and/or mortgage assistance as well as property taxes on a first come/first served basis. Other large employers in the community could be encouraged to create a similar program.

### **III. New SHIP Programs to Consider:**

1. Under the SHIP program for rental strategies, provide grants to rental properties (possibly those in foreclosure). This money would be used for property renovations and upgrades as well as debt alleviation. In return, the property owner would agree to restrict rents at the property consistent with state and federal guidelines for affordability for households earning 50 percent or less of Area Median Income. The restriction will remain in place for 15 years per state guidelines.
2. Give preference to developers who use local contractors and laborers for construction of the development.
3. Provide an incentive to developers who construct green buildings. An incentive could be in a reduction in impact fees if the property installs energy and water-efficient fixtures that would limit the property's impact on local services.
4. Provide up to \$150,000 (rather than the standard \$75,000 per development) for proposed rental communities that agree to keep rents 10% below the maximum allowable rent level under the LIHTC program.
5. Provide a portion of money from the SHIP funds to an approved provider to supplement current funds available through the Homeless Coalition and Charlotte County Human Services for security and utility deposits.
6. Create more rent-to-own programs to ease households into homeownership.