

The following are the extracted recommendations from the [Affordable Housing Advisory Council](#) of Sarasota County (AHAC). With our Senior Vice President of Community Leadership serving on the council, Gulf Coast played a critical role in building these strategic recommendations to encourage and facilitate affordable housing in our region.

**1. Expedite processing of development permits for affordable housing projects.**

The Committee recommends that any applicant with a project meeting one of the following conditions be given expedited review and approval:

- a) Individuals or organizations that are receiving assistance through the Office of Housing and Community Development;
- b) Builders and developers who are applying for Federal and/or State Affordable Housing Programs;
- c) Non-Profit Organizations that are building affordable housing with a sales price that does not exceed the maximum sales price for the Housing Partnership Program;
- d) Non-Profit Organizations that are building rental housing and agree to lease the property at or below 120% of area median income for a period of at least 30 years;
- e) Applicants applying for a rezone or special exception for a project where a minimum of fifteen (15) percent of the total units within the development are affordable to households earning less than 120% of area median income;

**2. Reduce or waive impact-fee payments for affordable housing projects.**

The Committee makes the following recommendations:

- a) To continue allowing low income families to receive a low interest loan from the county to enable them to pay the water and sewer capacity (impact) fees to connect to public water and sewer lines. This is available in the unincorporated county and the 4 municipalities. Note: This program is for areas where utility lines have been extended, not for new construction.
- b) To continue to allow affordable housing projects funded through OHCD to include the cost of impact fees in the development costs and pay those fees using federal and / or state funds.

**3. Allowance flexible densities for affordable housing projects.**

The Committee makes the following recommendations:

- a) Continue to implement provisions that allow for increased density for affordable housing to be granted administratively or by right, rather than making the developer go through a public hearing process; and
- b) The County should study this topic further during the next year to see if there are additional incentives related to increased densities that could be implemented.
- c) Conditioning density and other structural bonuses such as height, lot coverage, FAR, and parking on use for long-term affordable housing is a tool that should be utilized by the County to incentivize workforce housing development.

**4. Reserve infrastructure (i.e. roads or utilities) capacity for affordable housing projects.**

The Committee did not make any recommendations on this topic

**5. Allow affordable accessory dwelling residential units (ADU).**

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- a) To update the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan to include policies that encourages the production of diversity in housing types and prices;
- b) The County's policy on accessory residential units should be reviewed to see if there are ways to create additional affordable housing opportunities; and
- c) The County should review its zoning code to determine if changes could be made to increase additional affordable housing opportunities.
- d) Develop a mechanism to track the number of building permits issued for accessory dwelling units on an annual basis.

**6. Reduce parking and setback requirements for affordable housing projects.**

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- a) To continue to allow alternative parking plans to reduce required parking to be approved by the Zoning Administrator;
- b) The County's policies on parking and setback requirements should be reviewed to see if there are ways to create additional affordable housing opportunities.
- c) The County should offer structural bonuses such as density, height, lot coverage, FAR, and parking close to employment centers.

**7. Allow flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot line for affordable housing projects.**

The Committee made the following recommendation:

- a) The County's policies on flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot configurations, should be reviewed to see if there are ways to create additional affordable housing opportunities, including configurations consistent with missing middle housing types.

**8. Allow for the modification of street requirements for affordable housing projects.**

The Committee did not make any recommendations regarding this topic.

**9. Establish a process where a local government considers, before adoption, policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan, provisions that increase the cost of housing.**

The Committee determined that there was a process in place for the County Commission to consider the impact of any ordinance on the cost of housing. However, there was no similar policy in place to require the local government to consider, before adoption, the impact on the cost of housing prior to adopting policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations or plan provisions.

The Committee made the following recommendation:

- a. That Sarasota County continue to expand its current processes to ensure that the County Commission considers, before adoption, policies, procedures, regulations or plan provisions that may increase the cost of housing.

**10. Prepare a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.**

Sarasota County prepares a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.

The Committee made the following recommendation:

- a) In the future, that Sarasota County prepare and submit the printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing six months prior to the approval of the next Housing Incentive Plan to enable the committee to have the opportunity to review the properties on the list.
- b) Recommend the list of properties considered by AHAC for affordable housing, first considering on-site development of affordable housing, and if not feasible, the property should then be sold and the proceeds go to an affordable housing trust fund, with a minimum of 50% of the properties on the list to be used in a landbank or held for onsite development of affordable housing.

#### **11. Support development located near transportation hubs, major employment centers and mixed-use development.**

The Committee made the following recommendations related to this topic.

- a) That the development near transportation hubs, major employment centers and mixed-use development should be identified and supported with transit opportunities as part of the Code.
- b) Adaptive reuse of former commercial shopping centers should also be considered.

#### **12. Other Affordable Housing Recommendations**

a) Use a certain percentage, as determined by the Board of County Commissioners, of property tax growth attributed to new development units to provide a dedicated, sustainable revenue source for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

b) Have staff oversee the following studies to help shape policy and perception related to affordable housing regarding:

1. Compatibility – review height, design, density, setbacks, etc. Consider visual impact survey.

c) During land use hearings, consider the impact of development decisions on affordable housing supply.

d) Establish Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning:

- Consistent with State law
- Properties requesting a density increase
- Development projects greater than 15 units
- At least 15% of the units being requested must be designated as affordable.

