

C. HOUSING ELEMENT

Goal C.1

Support the provision and maintenance of an adequate inventory of decent, safe and sanitary housing in a variety of types, sizes, and locations throughout the County at affordable costs to meet the needs of the current and future residents of the County.

Objective C.1.1

Creation and Preservation of Affordable Workforce and Special Needs Housing

The County shall continue its housing implementation policies such as density bonuses, infill housing, and an expedited development review process for affordable workforce housing developments that provides for the development of sufficient housing in numbers, cost and type to support existing and projected population throughout the planning period 2010-2025.

Policies

- C.1.1.1 St. Johns County shall continue to improve the supply of affordable workforce housing for very-low, low and moderate income households and special-needs households, and to implement neighborhood improvement initiatives. The activities initiated by the County include the following:
- (a) Applying for Community Development Block Grant funding under the Small Cities CDBG Program for housing rehabilitation, infrastructure, or public facilities;
 - (b) Applying for and administering rent supplement programs and other grants for very-low, low and moderate income households;
 - (c) Continuing the existing community redevelopment programs and initiating new redevelopment efforts where appropriate;
 - (d) Developing new and maintaining existing cooperative joint-venture relationships with the private sector, public agencies and non-profit organizations;
 - (e) Providing support to the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee;
 - (f) Administering the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program and other housing programs that supply affordable workforce housing.

- C.1.1.2 Provide information, communication and technical assistance to the private sector through various media efforts, newspapers, and community and non-profit newsletters.
- C.1.1.3 The County shall continue its programs assisting participants involved in housing production by conducting workshop(s) with private and non-profit entities to seek partners for neighborhood improvement initiatives and density bonuses available for the provision of very-low, low and moderate and special-needs households as stipulated in the land development regulations.
- C.1.1.4 The County shall maintain its existing incentives for affordable workforce housing in the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code and investigate new incentives as necessary.
- C.1.1.5 The County shall review and revise, as necessary, its land development regulations and update criteria for the location of housing for the elderly and disabled (physically or mentally handicapped) and institutional housing within a community and neighborhood setting. Such location shall consider accessibility, convenience and infrastructure availability. Additionally, the County shall continue to investigate programs and grant funding for the elderly and for disabled persons.
- C.1.1.6 By 2013, the County shall update its Affordable Housing Needs Study and Migrant Workers Housing Report.
- C.1.1.7 The County shall consider amending its Land Development Code to allow migrant farm worker housing as an accessory use in the Rural/Silviculture (R/S) and Agricultural-Intensive (A-I) Future Land Use designations. The allowed density of the accessory migrant housing shall be based upon the number of acres being farmed.
- C.1.1.8 The County shall coordinate and work closely with the County Agricultural Extension Agent, farm owners, and non-profit organizations to provide housing for migrant farm workers. The County may form partnerships with agricultural business owners to provide for the housing needs of migrant farm workers and provide information regarding:
- (a) the availability of land with sufficient density and infrastructure to support farm worker housing developments; and
 - (b) available funding for the development of farm worker housing projects.
- C.1.1.9 The County shall investigate incentives for agricultural business owners who provide adequate housing for farm workers.
- C.1.1.10 The County shall encourage non-profit agencies and other support groups to plan

and coordinate efforts for affordable rental housing and other non-housing support services for farm workers and their families through workshop programs, which will provide the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and development of coordinating relationships.

- C.1.1.11 The County shall coordinate with the Northeast Florida Regional Council to assist in addressing the regional issue of migrant farm worker housing.
- C.1.1.12 The County shall continue to permit mobile homes and manufactured homes, in accordance with its land development regulations, as an alternative low cost housing option.
- C.1.1.13 The County shall continue to seek funds to provide financing opportunities for very-low, low and moderate income housing. The County shall continue its coordination with the banking and mortgage institutions to provide financing for construction and rehabilitation projects and to financially support non-profit housing developers to produce more rehabilitated units for very-low, low and moderate income residents.
- C.1.1.14 The County shall support economic solutions to affordable housing, such as establishing job training and job creation programs to assist very-low, low, and moderate income households. The County shall also investigate programs and grant funding for the development of such programs.
- C.1.1.15 The County may support transitional housing in acceptable locations with job opportunities, transportation alternatives, diverse housing types, commercial and medical opportunities for housing special need populations. The County shall also investigate programs and grant funding to support the development of transitional housing.
- C.1.1.16 The County shall support efforts of local social service non-profit organizations to develop programs which address homelessness within the County. The County shall continue to investigate federal and state funding sources.
- C.1.1.17 The County shall support the use of Planning Districts to focus housing resources to those districts with an immediate need for housing services. Emphasis shall be placed on those Planning Districts accommodating housing for special needs groups, including farm workers, the homeless, the elderly, and very-low and low income households.
- C.1.1.18 The County shall investigate mitigation strategies for affordable housing not limited to the following concepts and provisions:
 - (a) The construction of affordable housing units on sites located inside and/or outside the boundaries of DRIs, PUDs, and other types of proposed development;
 - (b) Payment to an affordable housing trust fund; or

(c) Other methods approved by the Board of County Commissioners and the Department of Community Affairs.

- C.1.1.19 The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the County shall seek funding, to the extent feasible, for improvements within the boundaries of designated Community Redevelopment Areas.
- C.1.1.20 The County shall review its Land Development Code to determine if group housing, special care, transitional and similar temporary housing should be allowed in residential zoning districts without special use approval.
- C.1.1.21 In designated CRAs, urban infill areas and redevelopment areas, the County shall work with adjacent municipalities for the provision of central water and sewer and other applicable public facilities to accomplish the redevelopment efforts.
- C.1.1.22 In designated CRAs, urban infill areas and redevelopment areas, water and sewer facilities shall be provided by the applicable service provider, if capacity and transmission systems are within one-half (½) mile of the site.
- C.1.1.23 The County shall require the additional unit allowed by mathematically rounding up density be developed as affordable workforce housing, within the Vilano Beach Town Center CRA.
- C.1.1.24 The County shall investigate the use of inclusionary zoning and similar regulations for the provision of affordable workforce housing.

Objective C.1.2
Elimination of Substandard Housing

The County shall maintain its existing programs, investigate new programs and identify funding sources which will work toward the elimination of substandard housing and improve the aesthetic qualities of existing housing and encourage improvements that reduce energy and water consumption.

Policies

- C.1.2.1 Continue the active enforcement of the Building Code, as may be amended which requires the application of minimum health, safety, and welfare standards to all new construction; reconstruction; historic preservation/renovation; housing rehabilitation/adaptive reuse, and/or the removal of unsafe, unsanitary substandard structures.
- C.1.2.2 In designated CRAs and urban infill areas, the County may provide increased code enforcement, to the extent financial feasible, to protect the safety of the residents, neighborhood character and the financial incentives invested in the CRA.
- C.1.2.3 Seek federal, state and local funding for the demolition or rehabilitation of substandard housing. Investigate programs such as the Small Cities CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Program to address the rehabilitation of substandard housing units within the County and alternative housing initiatives such as lot recycling to address the demolition of substandard units.
- C.1.2.4 The County shall utilize the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee and the Housing Finance Authority to provide input on housing and neighborhood improvement initiatives.
- C.1.2.5 The County shall continue to implement programs which promote conservation and rehabilitation of housing for very-low, low and moderate income households by:
- (a) Pursuing Federal, State and private resources to support neighborhood conservation and improvement;
 - (b) Stimulating increased investment in the production and maintenance of rental property for very-low, low and moderate income households by providing information and by offering, when available, County resources which will leverage financing for developers (such as deferring payment of utility connections and using SHIP funds and other funds for impact fees).
 - (c) Working cooperatively with neighborhood groups to develop strategies to promote comprehensive neighborhood revitalization.

Objective C.1.3

Adequate Areas for Very-Low, Low and Moderate Income Households, Mobile Homes, Manufactured Homes, Group Homes and Foster Care Facilities

The County, through its Future Land Use Map and its review of the County Land Development Code shall ensure that County zoning districts include areas for the location of housing for very-low, low and moderate income households, single family homes, mobile homes, manufactured homes, group homes and foster care facilities adequate to meet the needs for these housing types during the planning period.

Policies

- C.1.3.1 The County shall assure freedom of choice in housing for its residents by designating a variety of residential densities on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
- C.1.3.2 The County shall support land use patterns that provide housing opportunities at varying densities in appropriate locations.
- C.1.3.3 The County shall maximize the use of FLUM designations to encourage urban infill that will assist in providing a variety of housing types to meet a range of housing needs to support the use of existing infrastructure and curtail sprawl.
- C.1.3.4 The County shall promote and support projects that provide a mix of housing to serve a range of income levels and integrating market rate housing with affordable workforce housing.
- C.1.3.5 The County shall continue to designate on its Future Land Use Map sufficient land area with adequate density to accommodate the projected 2025 population.
- C.1.3.6 The County shall continue to update its Land Development Code to ensure that a variety of lot sizes, densities and housing types are provided throughout the County, including single-family, multi-family, accessory dwelling units, manufactured and mobile homes.
- C.1.3.7 The County shall continue to enforce the Land Development Code to assure compatibility of land uses within established or planned residential areas.
- C.1.3.8 Residential development shall be coordinated with existing and planned community services and infrastructure. Through the Development Review process, the County shall encourage innovative land uses through the Land Development Code, such as clustered development, traditional neighborhood development compact development, energy efficient design, low impact design, and other sustainable development practices, strategies and techniques.
- C.1.3.9 Community facilities and infrastructure, whether provided by public or private

sources, shall be extended to developing areas concurrent with need and consistent with the Future Land Use Map and the adopted Level of Service standards.

- C.1.3.10 The County shall continue to utilize the Development Review process, Development of Regional Impact (DRI) review process, the Future Land Use Map amendment process and the rezoning and special use processes to assure that new proposed land uses are compatible with existing residential uses.
- C.1.3.11 The County shall review and revise, as necessary, the Planned Development (PUD and PRD) process to assure that it accommodates the development of very-low, low and moderate income housing.
- C.1.3.12 The County shall continue to support efforts by the State and Federal governments to assist seniors to Age in Place by promoting independent living initiatives and encourage the use of Universal Design standards.
- C.1.3.13 The County shall encourage developers and builders to use universal design to promote aging in place.
- C.1.3.14 The County shall coordinate with the Council on Aging and other applicable elderly social service agencies to disseminate information countywide on programs that benefit the elderly. Communication sources may include but are not limited to, the County website and information kiosks.
- C.1.3.15 The County shall encourage the use of Federal and State programs to provide incentive programs for elderly housing.
- C.1.3.16 The County shall provide for the creation and preservation of workforce affordable housing for all current and anticipated future residents ; including special needs, rural residents and farm workers by allowing affordable housing in all residential areas, rehabilitating existing units using SHIP funds, and other state or federal funding, such as, DEP, CDBG or EPA for infrastructure improvements and neighborhood revitalization and undertaking other measures to minimize the need for additional local services and avoid a concentration of affordable housing units in specific areas.
- C.1.3.17 The County shall continue to make available incentives for the construction and rehabilitation for housing of very-low, low and moderate income households including special needs groups.
- C.1.3.18 The County shall continue to support cooperative and partnership activities among local governments, the private sector, and non-profit organizations, to provide housing assistance to meet the needs of very-low, low, and moderate income households.
- C.1.3.19 The County shall coordinate with federal, state and other funding agencies very-

low and provide technical assistance and support to private applicants applying for these funds.

- C.1.3.20 The County shall maintain and enforce its adopted local fair housing ordinance to ensure equal housing opportunity in accordance with Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 and the Florida Fair Housing Act, Chapter 760.020, F.S.
- C.1.3.21 The County shall encourage increased homeownership by providing down payment assistance to eligible very- low, low and moderate income households through the County SHIP program as well as other state and federal programs.
- C.1.3.22 The County shall require all applicants for down payment assistance to attend a home buyer’s educational workshop as a prerequisite to obtain assistance through the County Homeownership Program.
- C.1.3.23 The County shall work toward distributing very-low, low and moderate housing throughout the county to provide for a wide variety of neighborhood settings and to avoid undue concentration in any one neighborhood. The County shall also, encourage developers and non-profit organizations of housing for very-low and low income households to disperse such housing countywide.
- C.1.3.24 The County shall identify on the Future Land Use Map a variety of residential districts with sufficient densities for the location of very-low, low and moderate income housing in proximity to water and sewer facilities, job opportunities, transportation alternatives, diverse housing types, commercial and medical opportunities. The County shall review local and regional transportation networks when siting housing for these target groups.
- C.1.3.25 The St. Johns County Housing and Community Services Department shall present a report periodically to the Board of County Commissioners on the status of the County’s programs to provide housing for very-low, low and moderate income households and special-needs households, along with recommended programs to facilitate such housing throughout the county.
- C.1.3.26 The County shall continue to permit mobile homes and manufactured homes, in accordance with its land development regulations, as an alternative low cost housing option.
- C.1.3.27 The County shall continue to use non-discriminatory standards and criteria in addressing the location of group homes and foster care facilities in a variety of suitable residential zoning districts.
- C.1.3.28 The County shall provide demographic and technical information to private and non-profit organizations willing to develop group and foster care facilities for county residents.
- C.1.3.29 The County shall require group homes and foster care facilities to obtain appropriate permits and licenses from the State Department of Children and

Families in addition to those required by the Public Health Department. Also, group homes must meet the requirements of Chapter 419, F.S.

- C.1.3.30 The County shall coordinate the development of group homes, foster care facilities and residential care facilities with existing and planned community services and infrastructure.

**Objective C.1.4
Historical Housing**

The County shall continue to implement its existing Land Development Code regulations which further the identification and protection of historically significant structures and districts.

Policies

- C.1.4.1 The County shall actively coordinate with the State Department, Division of Historical Resources, to further the identification and classification of historical/archaeological sites in the County. State Historic Preservation funding and other grants shall be actively pursued to assist in this effort.
- C.1.4.2 The County shall use its Historic Resource Review Board to review and document sites proposed for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.
- C.1.4.3 The County shall promote the preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historically significant housing through technical assistance and the implementation of the Land Development Code, including the existing discretionary standards in the Building Code for historical buildings.
- C.1.4.4 The County shall provide technical assistance to property owners of historically significant housing in applying for and utilizing state and federal assistance programs. As requested, the County shall provide information to the St. Augustine Preservation Board or other historic preservation organizations to promote the preservation and reuse of historic structures.
- C.1.4.5 In areas where historical and cultural resources are identified, neighborhood improvement initiatives shall be scheduled in a manner that minimizes disruption and relocation of such resources.

**Objective C.1.5
Existing Housing**

The County shall review all existing codes and ordinances and adopt appropriate regulations which address conservation, rehabilitation or demolition of housing.

Policies

- C.1.5.1 Review and where necessary, amend the County building, housing and health codes and standards relating to the care and maintenance of residential and neighborhood environments and facilities.
- C.1.5.2 Employ neighborhood improvement initiatives based upon comprehensive evaluation of future land uses for areas displaying a predominance of substandard housing units, conflicting land use patterns and lacking adequate infrastructure facilities. These initiatives should include the establishment of appropriate procedures for abatement through rehabilitation or demolition.
- C.1.5.3 The County shall work with community based organizations to inform and encourage households to rehabilitate their homes by utilizing the various state, federal and county programs available.

**Objective C.1.6
Relocation Housing**

The County shall provide for uniform and equitable treatment for persons and businesses displaced by state and local government programs consistent with Section 421.55, F.S.

Policies

C.1.6.1 As part of neighborhood improvement initiatives, priority shall be given to providing opportunities for those living in an improved area to move back into the area at reasonable costs.

Objective C.1.7
Housing Implementation Programs

The County shall improve and maintain the quality and integrity of its residential communities. Strategies to achieve this include: encouraging the development of residential neighborhoods which are sustainable, which provide for networks of interconnected streets for both pedestrian and vehicular use, which address aesthetics, architecture, and urban design, and which discourage sprawl; coordinating with local law enforcement agencies to promote programs designed to improve the safety and security of neighborhoods; and encouraging the utilization of environmental design strategies to reduce the potential of crime in neighborhoods.

Policies

- C.1.7.1 Through the continued implementation of the Plan goals, objectives and policies, along with the Land Development Code, the County shall meet the housing needs of current and future residents.

- C.1.7.2 The County shall, through its public information functions, make available educational materials which promote energy and water saving techniques in the construction, siting, landscaping, cooling, and heating of residential structures to homeowners and the construction industry.

- C.1.7.3 The County shall initiate interlocal agreements with adjacent local governments, as deemed necessary or appropriate, to address the affordable housing needs if the County determines that;
 - (a) Meeting the demand for affordable housing is not economically feasible due to unusually high property values; or

 - (b) Meeting the demand for affordable housing is not environmentally feasible due to the physical constraints of the coastal high hazard areas.

**Objective C.1.8
Energy Efficiency Housing**

The County shall implement cost effective measures to reduce energy and water consumption and promote energy conservation, carbon reduction, green building and economic development through its Housing initiatives.

Policies

- C.1.8.1 The County shall promote energy saving techniques through the public information program established by Policy C.1.7.2. The County shall continue to enforce the Florida Energy Efficiency Code through the development permit review and approval process.
- C.1.8.2 The County shall promote energy conservation by supporting compact neighborhood design with alternative transportation systems and through programs established in Objective A.1.11 and related policies, Objective B.1.5 and related policies and Policy B.1.6.2.
- C.1.8.3 St Johns County shall encourage all housing structures be constructed with cost-effective efficiency construction standards. Whenever feasible, housing should attempt to meet or exceed standards set forth by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system, or other national or state recognized high-performance conservation building rating system as approved by the Florida Department of Management Services.
- C.1.8.4 By 2011 and in connection with Policy E.2.10.8, the County shall amend its Land Development Code to require all housing to be energy efficient in its design; use of energy and water efficient appliances and to be appropriately weatherized.
- C.1.8.5 Upon its completion, St. Johns County will investigate the Florida Residential Retrofit program to determine applicability in the retrofitting of older homes in St. Johns County in order for these homes to become more energy efficient. The County may investigate a long term market-based program that offers a whole-house approach for reducing energy use.
- C.1.8.6 The County shall promote water conservation by encouraging the use of water efficient devices and Florida Friendly Landscapes as recommended by the University of Florida/IFAS program, consistent with E.2.1.6.