



## HOUSING ELEMENT INTRODUCTION

The Housing Element is required by State Law. It must contain standards to be followed for provision of housing for all current and anticipated residents, elimination of substandard conditions, and provision of adequate sites for future housing. This element analyzes the general makeup of the Seminole County housing market and identifies issues and concerns related to housing in the County. Goals, objectives, and policies are then presented that address these issues and concerns. This element also projects future housing and construction needs.

As required by Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, and because Seminole County receives State and Federal affordable housing funds, this element also examines the housing needs of the County's lower income residents and those with special needs. The need to address Workforce Housing is also discussed in this element.

This element is divided into three sections: (1) background information on the County's housing, (2) an analysis of the need for additional housing and any specific housing issues that need to be examined, and (3) goals, objectives and policies, where a specific plan for ensuring the County's need for housing is presented.

### OVERVIEW OF HOUSING MARKETS

Housing choice, especially for buyers, can be viewed as a compromise between shelter and investment. A house is the average American family's single biggest lifetime investment. Location also plays a role in housing choice and entails a distance compromise between work, home and lifestyle. The average commuting time across the nation is approximately 27.6 minutes according to 2019 Census estimates. The average travel time to work in Florida is 28.4 minutes, and Seminole County workers travel an average 27.9 minutes according to Census estimates and the 2019 Commuting Trends in Florida published in December 2020.

For parents with school children, the quality of the respective school district is often of critical concern. Real estate studies have repeatedly shown that high quality schools have a strong positive influence on residential property values. Other studies have presented evidence that nearby trails, greenways, and parks have a positive effect on property values. The availability of shopping and other services also add value to the community's housing stock. The reciprocity between employment and housing remains an area of much study and interest, however, all else remaining equal, households prefer to live closer to their jobs. For this reason, job creation and retention goals remain closely aligned with housing.

Many aspects of housing valuation can be affected by the actions of local government. As indicated, schools, commercial space, amenities, and jobs all influence the local housing market. If one key tenet of good government is growth in property values and good neighborhoods, then both government and its citizens have common cause in working together.

### THE SEMINOLE COUNTY HOUSING MARKET

Seminole County is located north of Orlando along the Interstate 4 corridor. Historically, the County has served as a suburb (i.e., "bedroom/commuting community") for Orlando. However, Seminole County's role as a bedroom community within the region has undergone substantial change. In 1990, two-thirds of the County's workforce left the County to go to work every morning, by 2005, this trend has almost reversed with approximately 63.2% of the workforce both living and working within the County.

The County's school district became one of the few districts to adopt impact fees. By 1995, its sustained focus on academics made the district one of the best in Florida. In a Newsweek national



ranking, all of Seminole County's high schools ranked in the top 3% nationwide. Good schools are now a major factor in corporate relocation, contributing to economic development.

The County's expressway and interstate highway system and the new Central Florida Commuter Rail System will efficiently connect Seminole County with the larger region. These connections generated continued growth into the center of the County. However, the County's eastern Rural Area will remain out of the County's urban services boundary as part of the County's rural conservation efforts and remain largely low density/rural into the future.

Collectively, the combination of location and wise community self-investment have now made Seminole County a corporate and residential regional location of choice in Central Florida. Over the long-run, rising property values and a relatively strong residential development market are still expected in Seminole County despite the statewide slowdown in housing activity in 2006-2008.

This element documents these changes, assesses the impacts these changes have on the County's housing market, and recommends actions the County will need to take to support the long-term appreciation of the County's housing stock. In addition, this element addresses the need for obtainable housing opportunities and a variety of choices in support of the principles of the Envision Seminole 2045 Plan.



## HOUSING ELEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

### GOAL

Ensure adequate affordable housing for all current and anticipated residents of Seminole County by maintaining a high quality residential housing stock and encouraging the use of renewable energy resources in residential development.

### OBJECTIVE HSG 1 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING DELIVERY

The County shall continue to support private sector housing production capacity sufficient to meet the housing needs (market demand) of existing and future residents.

#### Policy HSG 1.1 Streamlined Development Review

The County shall continue reducing financing costs for residential developers by maintaining its streamlined development approval process through organizational and technological enhancements.

#### Policy HSG 1.2 Expedited Affordable Housing Review

The County shall continue to provide an expedited priority for all projects meeting the definition for affordable or workforce housing development throughout the development review process.

#### Policy HSG 1.3 Federal/State/Local Program Impact

The County shall continue the existing State-mandated process of reviewing new federal, State and local housing regulations to determine their impacts on the cost of local housing production (and especially the impact on housing for very low and low income households).

#### Policy HSG 1.4 Parcel Location Assistance

The County shall assist developers (and especially affordable housing developers) in locating appropriate parcels for housing development through the existing "Future Land Use and Committed Land Use" publication and by updating the vacant land use, acquisition area, and infrastructure maps and inventories on a periodic basis. *Policy HSG 3.6 County Owned Property* addresses Chapter 125.379, Florida Statutes, requirements regarding disposition of county property for affordable housing.

#### Policy HSG 1.5 Affordable and Workforce Housing Developments

The County shall provide incentives for building a variety of affordable and workforce housing types at appropriate densities on lands allowing residential and mixed-use development in locations near public transit facilities and the SunRail stations.

#### Policy HSG 1.6 Infill Development

The County shall incentivize a range of housing types, including affordable and workforce housing, on infill and redevelopment parcel areas, especially in



proximity to public transportation and SunRail stations. Performance frameworks in the Land Development Code must ensure compatibility with surrounding areas.

## **OBJECTIVE HSG 2 HOUSING STOCK PRESERVATION**

The County shall encourage the improvement and continued viability of existing neighborhoods.

### **Policy HSG 2.1 Clearance Program**

The County shall continue to eliminate vacant dilapidated housing as soon as practical through the continuation of code enforcement activities using Federal resources including the demolition of dilapidated structures, when appropriate.

### **Policy HSG 2.2 Rehabilitation**

The County shall improve the existing housing stock on a countywide basis by continuing the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships and State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program funds.

### **Policy HSG 2.3 Homeowner Assistance**

The County shall continue to encourage individual homeowners to increase private reinvestment in housing by providing information on available programs, providing technical assistance, and by continuing the use of Community Development Block Grant funds for infrastructure improvements and community facilities in lower income neighborhoods.

### **Policy HSG 2.4 Development Performance Framework**

The County shall maintain compatibility between new developments and existing neighborhoods through the application of land use intensity and performance frameworks.

### **Policy HSG 2.5 Public Awareness Programs**

The County shall continue its public awareness program for the County's Municipal Services Benefits Unit Program.

## **OBJECTIVE HSG 3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The County shall continue efforts to provide adequate housing development for very low, low, and moderate income households, the elderly, and rural and farm worker households.

### **Policy HSG 3.1 Adequate Sites for Affordable Housing**

The County shall work with and meet with affordable housing providers (both for-profit and non-profit) on a regular basis to assist in the identification and location of adequate sites for affordable housing within the County's lower income areas.

### **Policy HSG 3.2 Housing Information Service**

The County shall continue to make available land use, housing, and housing agency services information to assist both very low and low income households (including unhoused persons and families) in finding adequate housing and/or shelter (including emergency shelter, if applicable), and to assist nonprofit developers in locating suitable development sites for both very low and low income housing.



### Policy HSG 3.3 Affordable and Workforce Housing Density Bonuses

The County will continue to evaluate potential Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code amendments regarding provisions designed to encourage a range of obtainable, affordable, and workforce housing opportunities and choices. In addition, the County shall continue to enforce the Land Development Code provisions relating to Alternative Density Options authorized by this Policy that encourage development of affordable housing opportunities. The Land Development Code shall implement this Policy by including provisions for:

- A Allowing development up to seven dwelling units per net buildable acre on sites with Low Density Residential Future Land Use designation, up to 12 dwelling units per net buildable acre on sites with Medium Density Residential, and up to 22 dwelling units per net buildable acre on sites with High Density Residential Future Land Use designation. Increases in density within the Mixed Development Future Land Use designation shall be considered consistent with **Policy FLU 4.2.2 Mixed Use Developments (MXD) Land Use Designation**. Increases in density shall be considered consistent with *Policy FLU 4.2.4* within the Urban Centers and Corridors Overlay;
- B Providing a density bonus on a sliding scale based on the percent of units priced for low and very low income households provided on the development site;
- C Allowing reduced lot sizes and reduced open space requirements for shared community recreational amenities, reduced setbacks or build-to lines, zero-lot line, as well as clustered developments for single-family projects;
- D Allowing reduced lot sizes and reduced open space requirements for shared community recreational amenities, reduced setbacks, zero-lot line, duplex, triplex, quadplex and low rise (two story) apartments, as well as clustered developments for multifamily projects;
- E Allowing reduced lot sizes and reduced open space requirements for shared community recreational amenities, reduced setbacks, low rise, midrise and highrise affordable and workforce developments within the High Density Residential and Mixed Development Future Land Use designations, and within the Urban Centers and Corridors Overlay;
- F Providing standards to ensure the integration of conventional market rate units and affordable and workforce units to prevent the undue concentration of lower income units within the development site;
- G Ensuring that units intended to be affordable are not distinguishable from the market rate units;
- H Requiring compatibility of the development with surrounding neighborhoods;
- I Requiring a binding agreement as part of the Development Agreement to ensure the percentage of units intended to meet the needs of the low and very low income buyers and renters are delivered and remain available to qualified households when units change occupancy; and Enabling child day care, community center, small scale (neighborhood scale) retail and/or personal service, tutoring and office uses as accessory uses to the development when intended to serve the needs of the occupants of the development within the Medium Density Residential Future Land Use designations; allowing these uses as permitted uses for developments within



the High Density Residential and Mixed Development Future Land Use designations, and within the Urban Centers and Corridors Overlay.

**Policy HSG 3.4 Senior Housing**

The County shall increase the supply of housing suitable for and affordable by elderly households by continuing to support State Housing Initiatives Partnership, HOME Investment Partnerships, Orange County Housing Finance Authority and Florida Housing Finance Corporation-financed projects. Affordable housing for the elderly shall be encouraged in the East Altamonte neighborhood to meet the needs of existing residents wishing to remain in that neighborhood.

**Policy HSG 3.5 Farm Worker Housing**

Based on market demand, the County shall, work to provide a sufficient number of decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable farm labor housing units for migrant farm workers as a conditional use in certain zoning classifications, subject to special criteria.

**Policy HSG 3.6 County Owned Property**

Beginning in 2007, and every three years thereafter, the County shall prepare an inventory list of all real property within its jurisdiction to which the county holds fee simple title that is appropriate for use as affordable housing. The properties identified as appropriate for use as affordable housing on the inventory list adopted by the County may be:

- J Offered for sale and the proceeds may be used to purchase land for the development of affordable housing; or
- K Used to increase the local government fund earmarked for affordable housing; or
- L May be sold with a restriction that requires the development of the property as permanent affordable housing; or
- M May be donated to a nonprofit housing organization for the construction of permanent affordable housing; or
- N The County may otherwise make the property available for use for the production and preservation of permanent affordable housing.

**OBJECTIVE HSG 4 WORKFORCE HOUSING**

The County shall provide incentives to increase, and shall maintain, the supply of workforce housing.

**Policy HSG 4.1 Employer Assisted Housing**

The County shall engage and partner with major employers in regard to providing housing assistance to eligible employees. Strategies available to the County include partnering with private organizations in recruitment efforts, extending education to organizations on available programs, and pursuit of public/private partnerships that leverage resources such as the State's Community Workforce Housing Innovation Pilot Program.

**Policy HSG 4.2 Optional Nonresidential Intensity Bonuses and Workforce Housing**

The Seminole County Land Development Code shall be amended to implement **Policy FLU 4.2.2 Mixed-Use Developments** of the Future Land Use Element



of the Seminole County Comprehensive Plan, which will permit a commercial intensity bonus (typically measured in units of Floor Area Ratio, or FAR) in the Mixed Development Future Land Use designation in exchange for providing workforce housing units as part of a mixed-use development. This intensity bonus is intended to provide an incentive to developers for providing workforce housing in locations where it is deemed both desirable and advantageous to Seminole County, and to enable the County to ensure a range of obtainable housing opportunities and choices in support of the Central Florida Regional Growth Vision.

#### **Policy HSG 4.3 Workforce Housing in Economic Development Target Areas**

New housing developments located within any of the economic development target areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan shall ensure that 15% of the project's housing (rental or owner occupied) will be obtainable by employees earning the average wage within the subject Economic Development Target Area. Exceptions shall be granted in cases where the applicant demonstrates that an adequate supply of workforce housing exists within close proximity, or insufficient market support exists for workforce housing within the subject target area.

#### **Policy HSG 4.4 Mixed Residential Development**

The County shall develop and adopt into the County's Land Development Code a Mixed Residential Zoning District that shall allow for a full-range of housing types (e.g., condominiums, town homes, single family) to be developed, by right, within the same project.

### **OBJECTIVE HSG 5 PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

The County shall continue to develop joint partnerships with the private sector through Federal and State housing subsidy programs and other local initiatives.

#### **Policy HSG 5.1 Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

The County shall continue to maintain its Federal/State-funded Affordable Housing Trust Funds to purchase and help subsidize the cost of land, impact fees, supporting infrastructure, and other supplement housing delivery costs as a means of encouraging for-profit and nonprofit developers to build and otherwise provide housing for very low and low income households.

#### **Policy HSG 5.2 Finance Authorities**

The County shall provide affordable housing financing assistance for both single family and multifamily units and developments by continuing to participate with the Orange County Housing Finance Authority, local housing authorities and the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, when appropriate.

#### **Policy HSG 5.3 Homeless Assistance**

The County will continue to use Emergency Shelter Grants Program funding and other appropriate funding earmarked for unhoused assistance to provide financial, food and shelter assistance to individuals and families, provide assistance for unhoused persons to make the transition to permanent homes and to prevent people from becoming unhoused. The County will continue to cooperate with the Regional Commission on Homelessness.

### **OBJECTIVE HSG 6 HISTORIC HOUSING**





The County shall promote the identification, evaluation, preservation and protection of historically significant properties, including nonresidential structures.

**Policy HSG 6.1 Master Site File Update**

The County shall periodically update the County's portion of the Florida Master Site File by continuing to assist the Department of State Division of Historical Resources efforts in this regard.

**Policy HSG 6.2 Historic Housing Identification**

The Housing Information Service shall continue to assist property owners in the identification of historically significant housing and in locating, applying for and using any State and federal assistance programs, including rehabilitation and adaptive reuse programs.

**OBJECTIVE HSG 7 MODULAR HOMES AND MANUFACTURED/MOBILE HOMES**

The County shall provide sufficient and appropriate sites for manufactured/mobile home housing and permit modular homes on residentially zoned property.

**Policy HSG 7.1 Zoning Classifications and Future Land Use Designations**

The County shall continue to allow modular homes as a permitted use in all single family residential zoning classifications. Manufactured/mobile homes shall continue to be allowed subject to applicable Land Development Code provisions, and shall be allowed as permitted uses in the zoning classifications associated with Rural-3, Rural-5 and Rural-10 Future Land Use designations.

**OBJECTIVE HSG 8 DISPLACEMENT/RELOCATION**

The County shall continue to provide a fair and lawful method to ensure uniform treatment for households and businesses displaced by County programs.

**Policy HSG 8.1 Policy Plan**

The County shall continue to maintain a federally mandated and locally enforced anti-displacement and relocation assistance policy plan that ensures that reasonably located standard and affordable replacement housing is offered to persons displaced through County action or County funding prior to their displacement.

**OBJECTIVE HSG 9 GROUP AND FOSTER HOMES**

The County shall provide sufficient sites and provisions for group homes and foster homes.

**Policy HSG 9.1 Group Homes**

The County shall continue to allow for the development of non-exempt group homes as a conditional use within all single family residential zoning districts.

**Policy HSG 9.2 Foster Homes**

The County shall encourage residential alternatives to institutionalization by maintaining State-mandated non-discriminatory standards and criteria regarding the location of foster homes licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families.





### **Policy HSG 9.3 Design Standards**

The County shall maintain State-mandated group home placement criteria to ensure the maximum compatibility between group homes and conventional residential development.

## **OBJECTIVE HSG 10 HOUSING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

The County, in conjunction with its partners, will take a proactive role in formulating an effective affordable housing program.

### **Policy HSG 10.1 Housing Program Implementation**

The County's Community Services Department shall continue to be the lead agency to formulate a coordinated affordable housing development and assistance program and administer the County's various housing and community development/redevelopment activities.

## **OBJECTIVE HSG 11 THE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES IN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The County, as required by the enactment of House Bill 697 in 2008, shall support the use of renewable energy resources in residential development.

### **Policy HSG 11.1 Renewable Energy Resources in Residential Development**

The County shall ensure that its Building Code complies with energy conservation requirements of Florida Statutes for residential construction. In addition, the County shall not enter into a deed restriction, covenant, declaration, or similar binding agreement, nor shall it approve a condominium development with similar agreements, that prohibits or has the effect of prohibiting solar collectors, clotheslines or other energy devices based on renewable resources. Condominiums may determine the specific location where solar collectors may be installed on a roof, as long as such determination does not impair the effective operation of the solar collector.

## **OBJECTIVE HSG 12 COMMUNITIES FOR DIVERSE POPULATIONS**

The County shall support the capability of residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities to remain in their neighborhoods by allowing a greater variety of housing unit types, where they can be safely and adequately served by public facilities and services, and where neighborhood character can be preserved.

### **Policy HSG 12.1 Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)**

Consistent with **Policy FLU 5.4.9 Accessory Dwelling Units**, the County shall amend its Land Development Code as necessary to permit ADUs within new and existing single family developments. Approval of ADUs shall be subject to conditions including, but not limited to, neighborhood compatibility, adequate lot size, and off-street parking.



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