

**Highlands County**  
**2009 EAR – Comprehensive Plan Amendments**  
**Housing Element**  
**Overview**

**Major Amendments**

Throughout	Specific housing unit target goals have been eliminated
Policy 4.3	Amends language to include consideration of density bonuses for affordable housing and now references accessory dwelling units
Policy 8.2	New policy added to address the loss of affordable housing units during the conversion of mobile home parks

**Minor Amendments**

Throughout	Some references to specific planning time horizons have been amended to reflect the on-going nature of the Objective or Policy
Throughout	Language detailing certain administrative process has been deleted
Goal	Amended to clarify that desirable housing in a healthy living environment is applicable to the entire county and not just a particular study area
Objective 1	Amended to clearly state that the objective is to increase the supply of housing for very low, low, and moderate income households
Policy 2.2	Language added to address state requirements to review regulatory changes for impacts on housing cost
Policy 3.2	Specific list of neighborhoods has been deleted
Policy 3.3	Includes new housing construction and recognizes the contribution of non-profit agencies to the development of affordable housing
Policy 3.5	Clarifies the County will follow the state definition of sub-standard housing
Objective 4	Amends language to focus on maintenance of a list of appropriate sites for rental housing
Policy 4.1	Amends language to include various transportation options as they may come available in the future

---

---

## HOUSING ELEMENT

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Objective 1: Housing Implementation Program
- Objective 2: Provide Affordable Housing
- Objective 3: Programs And Grants - Substandard Housing
- Objective 4: Identify Housing Subsidy Sites
- Objective 5: Manufactured Homes
- Objective 6: Group And Foster Care Housing
- Objective 7: Historic Housing
- Objective 8: Displacement By Government Actions
- Objective 9: Farm worker Housing
- Objective 10: Energy Efficiency

**GOAL**                      ~~Development of Desirable Housing In A Healthy Living Environment for All Residents of the Study Area~~

*Comment: The language has been amended to establish the Goal for the entire county, not just a smaller geographic subset.*

**Objective 1**                      ~~Housing Program Strategy~~ **Implementation Program**

Increase housing availability to very low, low, and moderate income households.

**Policy 1.1**                      The County's Housing Implementation Program Shall Consist of the Following

- A.     ~~Provision of t~~ Technical assistance as set forth in Housing Policies 2.1 and 2.2;
- B.     ~~Continued~~ Implementation of the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Programs and CDBG programs to ensure the meeting of Highlands County and Florida Statute goals and objectives for to provide housing for the provision of very low, low, and moderate income households housing;
- C.     Application for CDBG and other federal and state funding programs for the elimination of blight and the provision of very

low, low, and moderate income households housing as set forth in Housing Policies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3;

- D. Identification of potential sites for low and very low income housing as set forth in Housing Policies 4.1, 4.2, 4.4 and 5.1;
- E. Inclusion of density bonuses for housing for low and very low income households as set forth in Housing Policy 4.3;
- F. Allowance of accessory structures on residential lots, subject to zoning standards and conditions.

*Comment: The language has been amended to clearly state that the objective is to increase the supply of housing for very low, low, and moderate income households.*

**Policy 1.1** ~~1998 - 2010 Planning Period Program Objectives~~

- ~~A. Approval or construction of at least 1000 housing units for low or very low income households~~
- ~~B. Approval of funding for a CDBG or other federal or state funding program to address the housing and infrastructure deficiencies in areas identified as in need of redevelopment.~~

*Comment: The language has been combined into Objective 1 above. The specific housing unit goals have been eliminated from the Comprehensive Plan. The specific target goals could be included within specific housing plans such as the SHIP and CDBG Plans.*

**Objective 2** **Provide Affordable Housing**

The County Will Assist in Providing Opportunities for Affordable Housing in Sound Structural Condition for the Current and Residents, ~~22,300 New Permanent Residents, and the 5,010 New Seasonal Residents for a Total Of 27,310 New Seasonal and Permanent Residents Expected by 2010~~, Regardless of Age, Race, Sex, Persons With Disabilities or Family Size.

*Comment: The specific housing unit goals have been eliminated from the Comprehensive Plan. The specific target goals should be included in housing plans such as the SHIP and CDBG Plans.*

**Policy 2.1                    County Housing Assistance ~~And Production Target~~**

The County shall provide information and technical assistance, upon request to the private and non-profit sectors, including special interest groups such as self-help housing providers, to assist in the production of ~~the 7,816 new housing units expected to be needed in the County through the year 2010.~~ Such assistance may include help in the preparation of applications for grants or low interest loans from federal or state funding agencies; or, the consideration of applications for density bonuses for the provision of very low, low, and moderate income housing.

*Comment:    The specific housing unit goals have been eliminated from the Comprehensive Plan. The specific target goals should be included in specific housing plans such as the SHIP and CDBG Plans.*

**Policy 2.2                    Streamline Review Process**

The County will continually monitor and review its development approval process to identify and eliminate any unnecessary impediments to the provision of housing ~~within the community,~~ ensuring that workforce, affordable, and very low income housing applications are processed as quickly as possible.

As part of this review the County will include review of potential regulatory changes which may affect housing cost.

The County will implement the streamlined review and adoption process for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan consistent with state regulations.

*Comment:    Language is added to address new State requirements to review regulatory changes for impacts on housing production cost and references the County intention to use the streamlining provisions allowed by the State.*

**Policy 2.3**                    **Affordable Housing Strategies—Developed with Adequate Infrastructure and Services**

~~Affordable housing will be distributed equitably throughout the County using strategies which include, but not limited to, density bonus agreements and impact fee waivers or deferrals. In addition, Affordable housing shall will be located where adequate infrastructure and services are available.~~

*Comment: Language regarding density bonuses and fee waivers are located in other policies. The policy is now focused on the critical connection between affordable housing and infrastructure and services.*

**Policy 2.4**                    **Providing a Waiver or Deferral of Workforce and/or Affordable Housing Impact Fees**

~~Within the Planning Period, the The County shall consider providing for the total and/or partial waiver or deferral of certain impact fees generated by the construction of owner-occupied and/or rental housing for very low, low and moderate income households.~~

~~The annual amount allocated to Impact Fee waivers or deferrals shall be limited to the amount approved by the Board of County Commissioners. at its final public hearing regarding the adoption of the annual County budget. The County shall develop processes and procedures to administer the waiver or deferral of impact fees for affordable and workforce housing within the Planning Period~~

*Comment: The language has been simplified by eliminating the references to how this will be done. The detail of the process does not have to be stated in the Comprehensive Plan. This is a procedure of the County, which may change in the future.*

**Policy 2.5**                    **Housing Assistance Plan**

The County where eligible shall participate in the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program by maintaining and updating a local housing assistance plan created to make affordable residential units available to persons of very low income, low income, or moderate income and to persons who have special housing needs, including, but not limited to, homeless people, the elderly, and migrant farmworkers. The plans are intended to increase the availability of affordable residential units by

combining local resources and cost-saving measures into a local housing partnership and using private and public funds to reduce the cost of housing. (420.9075)(1)(a), F.S.

**Policy 2.6**                      **Infrastructure Capacity Reservation**

The County shall monitor and prioritize the reservation of capacity of infrastructure such that capacity for housing for very low, low, and moderate income persons is reserved with a high degree of priority as opportunities arise.

**Objective 3**                      **Programs And Grants to Eliminate ~~For Areas With~~ Substandard Housing**

~~The County Shall Apply For State, Federal, and Private Funding Under The DHUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, Other State And Federal Programs, And Rural Housing Services Programs To Eliminate Substandard Housing During The Planning Period.~~

*Comment: The language has been amended to give it a broader context beyond just the specific programs mentioned. Housing improvement funds can come from many sources and these will change over time.*

**Policy 3.1**                      **Reserved**

**Policy 3.2**                      **Joint Redevelopment Option**

~~The County and its cooperating cities will develop and continue to implement a joint strategic redevelopment program for the neighborhoods with the highest concentration of deteriorating housing, including grant applications that provides infrastructure, drainage, stormwater, and housing rehabilitation funding for the County's targeted redevelopment area(s); when mutually beneficial for both the Municipalities and County. The proposed redevelopment areas are in unincorporated East Sebring (Hillcrest Heights – Valencia, Hillview Area, Highland View, and Lincoln Heights Area), Lacey Hills, Highway Park Area, Jonesville and DeSoto City Area.~~

This includes the possible joint application for grant assistance to eliminate blighted conditions.

*Comment: The specific areas have been deleted as these will change over time, but the reference to the type of area remains to give direction. The areas are already identified in specific funding plans for SHIP and CDBG. The language has been made broader in using the term “blighted conditions” instead of the list of specific conditions. These are all characteristics of blight.*

### **Policy 3.3 County Grant Applications**

- A. The County will submit applications to State (State Housing Finance Corporation, State Department of Community Affairs) and Federal agencies (USDHUD, US Dept. of Commerce, etc) and private foundations and charities designed to provide infrastructure, drainage, storm water, and housing construction and rehabilitation funding for the County's targeted redevelopment area(s). ~~(policy 3.2).~~
- B. The County shall apply for CDBG funds and other available housing funds at every funding cycle when the grant is cost-effective and beneficial for the County and the County's residents.
- ~~C. The County shall work with available non-profit agencies such as Habitat for Humanity to develop affordable housing and improve living conditions. CDBG grant and other grant applications will be submitted to assist the Heartland Self Help Housing Inc.~~

*Comment: The language has been amended to clearly include housing construction and now recognizes the important contributions that non-profit agencies such as Habitat for Humanity make in the delivery of affordable housing.*

**Policy 3.4**                    **Implement the Standard ~~Adopt Minimum Standards For Existing Housing Code And Continue To Enforce The Fair Housing Ordinance~~**

- A. ~~By the year 2001, the~~ The County will continue to implement the Standard Housing Code. ~~adopt as part of its Code of Ordinances, a rehabilitation and/or demolition of substandard housing structures similar to those provisions already existing in the Building Code.~~
- B. ~~The County shall continue to enforce the existing Fair Housing Ordinance in unincorporated Highlands County.~~

*Comment:*    *The language has been amended to reflect that implementation of the Standard Housing Code is now an on-going activity of the County. The reference to the continued implementation of the Fair Housing Ordinance is now contained in new Policy 3.6 below.*

**Policy 3.5**                    **Substandard Housing ~~Defined~~ Criteria**

~~Substandard structures shall be determined on the basis of the External Appearance Classification Criteria contained in the Supporting Documentation to the Comprehensive Plan, revised to meet the Florida Statutes § 420 definition of substandard.~~

The County shall use identify substandard housing based on the definition of sub-standard housing as established in Florida Statutes, Chapter 420.

*Comment:*    *The language has been simplified to reflect the use of the state definition.*

**Policy 3.6**                    **The County shall continue to enforce the Fair Housing Ordinance in unincorporated Highlands County.**

*Comment:*    *Language relocated from Policy 3.4 above.*

**Objective 4**                    **Identify Housing Subsidy Sites**

The County Shall Continue To Update ~~Identify~~ And Maintain A List Of Sites, ~~Including Existing Housing That Could Be Used Under Housing Subsidy Programs For Existing Housing, Infill Housing And Suitable For The Location Of Low And Very Low Rental Income Housing.~~ Such Sites

~~Shall, In The Aggregate, Be Capable Of Accommodating At Least 125 Housing Units~~

*Comment: The language has been focused on maintaining a list of appropriate sites for rental housing.*

**Policy 4.1 Site Criteria For Low Income Housing and Elderly Housing**

Sites to be considered specifically suitable for low income families shall preferably be located near a neighborhood or community shopping facility; and, those specifically suitable for the elderly should be located in close proximity to the development centers in the County to ensure the convenient availability of shopping, health care and access to transportation options. ~~collectors or arterials to serve the needs of the elderly.~~

*Comment: The language has been made broader to include various transportation options as they may come available in the future. The important connection between land use and appropriate sized roadways is contained in the Future Land Use and the Transportation Elements.*

**Policy 4.2 Site Coordination ~~Annual Production Target For Very Low And Low Income~~**

The County will work with the interested parties to identify sites, and submit applications for funding for development of housing for the very low and low income populations.

*Comment: The title has been amended to better reflect the policy. The specific housing unit goals have been eliminated from the Comprehensive Plan. The specific target goals could be included within the detailed housing plans such as the SHIP and CDBG Plans.*

**Policy 4.3 Affordable Housing Incentives**

~~By the year 2002, the County shall adopt an ordinance to modify its zoning regulations to provide for inducements to development~~ On sites specifically identified by the County as suitable for low and very low income families, the County shall continue to implement zoning regulations which provide inducements to increase the supply of

affordable housing including density bonuses and the consideration of accessory dwelling units.

*Comment: The policy clearly includes the consideration of density bonuses for affordable housing as identified in the housing goal and references the consideration of accessory dwelling units as stated in State Statute.*

## **Objective 5                    Manufactured Home Target**

~~Since~~ The State And The County Recognize That Manufactured And Mobile Homes Constitute A Primary Source Of Housing For Low Income, And Particularly, Moderate Income Households, The County Shall Designate, In Its Land Use Plan ~~Element~~, Sufficient Land For The Placement Of Manufactured And Mobile Homes ~~To Accommodate The 2,945 New Manufactured And Mobile Homes Anticipated To Be Needed Over The Planning Period.~~

*Comment: The specific housing unit goals have been eliminated from the Comprehensive Plan. The specific target goals could be included within the detailed housing plans such as the SHIP and CDBG Plans.*

## **Policy 5.1                    Zones For Manufactured Housing And Mobile Homes**

The County shall continue to ensure that its land development regulations provide zoning of lands for manufactured and mobile homes sufficient to accommodate the anticipated need for such units during the Planning Period.

## **Policy 5.2                    Emergency Hurricane Shelters Required**

~~The County shall continue to enforce its requirement for new~~ New mobile home parks and R.V. parks shall provide emergency hurricane shelters for their residents.

*Comment: The language has been clarified to reflect the current requirement.*

**Objective 6                    Group And Foster Care Housing**

In Residential Zoning Districts, ~~t~~The County Shall Continue To Implement Zoning Regulations To Make Specific Provision For The Location Of Group Homes And Foster Care Facilities, Licensed Or Funded By The Florida Department Of Health And Rehabilitative Services,~~In The County's Residential Zoning Districts~~

**Policy 6.1                    ~~All~~ Residential Districts Eligible**

In order to encourage alternatives to institutionalization, all residential districts, except those for mobile homes, shall be considered adequate locations for group homes or foster care facilities.

**Policy 6.2                    Thresholds For Establishing Group and Foster Care Housing**

The County shall continue to allow group homes or foster care facilities for the physically or developmentally disabled and non-dangerously mentally ill, funded by the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, with six (6) or fewer residents, in the County's single-family residential zoning districts; and, to permit such facilities regardless of the number of residents, in multi-family zoning districts.

*Comment:    The title more accurately reflects the policy.*

**Policy 6.3                    Assist Group Homes**

The County will assist in the funding and development of group homes and foster care facilities through its SHIP program.

**Objective 7                    Preserve Historic Housing**

The County Shall Continue To Identify Historically Significant Housing Located In The County And Offer Incentives For Improvement Of Those Houses

*Comment:    The title more accurately reflects the policy.*

**Policy 7.1                    Historic Qualification Criteria**

The criteria for an historically significant house shall be its identification and inclusion in the National Register as an historic structure or land mark, in the Florida Master Site File, ~~Department of State Division of Historical Resources, in the listed in the March, 1995, Highlands County Historic Properties Survey of Highlands County, (HPC 11/12/98),~~ and structures that reach 50 years from the date of their construction.

**Policy 7.2                    Improvement Of Historic Housing**

~~The Highlands County will continue to adopt an ordinance by 2002 offering incentives and other means, as allowed on or before April, 2000, the by Florida Statutes and approved by the Board of County Commissioners, to improve those properties that are identified as historically significant. for those owners wishing to sustain their properties. (HPC 11/12/98)~~

*Comment:    The language has been amended to reflect the continued implementation of this program.*

**Objective 8                    Displacement By Government Actions**

In The Event That Actions Taken By The County To Implement Federally Aided Or Federally Funded Public Projects Result In The Displacement Of Persons From Their Housing, The County Shall Provide Relocation Assistance Prior To Undertaking Such Actions.

**Policy 8.1                    County Relocation Assistance**

When existing housing is eliminated by actions of the County to implement federally aided or federally funded public projects, relocation assistance shall be provided by the County as required by Section 421.55, Florida Statutes.

**Policy 8.2**                      **Mobile Home Park Conversions**

Assists very low, low, and moderate income residents displaced by the conversion of their mobile home park in finding appropriate affordable housing.

*Comment: New policy added as called for in the EAR to address the loss of affordable housing units during the conversion of mobile home parks to new uses.*

**Objective 9**                      **Farm worker Housing Target**

Encourage the development of ~~Provide 252 Affordable~~ Farm worker Housing Units to meet the needs of Agricultural businesses in the County; For New Farm worker Households Expected Through The Year 2010

*Comment: The specific housing unit goals have been eliminated from the Comprehensive Plan. The specific target goals could be included within the detailed housing plans such as the SHIP and CDBG Plans.*

**Policy 9.1**                      **Farm worker Project Density**

The County will continue to allow housing for farm workers and their families, at densities up to 10 units per acre, in areas designated for Agriculture ~~in~~ on the Future Land Use Map Element.

**Policy 9.2**                      **Migrant Farm Worker Housing**

The county will actively assist private industry and the County Housing Authority to increase the supply ~~in providing 100 units of legal migrant farm worker housing by the year 2010.~~

*Comment: The specific housing unit goals have been eliminated from the Comprehensive Plan. The specific target goals could be included within the detailed housing plans such as the SHIP and CDBG Plans.*

**Policy 9.3**                      **Assisted Farm Worker Housing**

Highlands County ~~shall coordinate and work with the Highlands County Housing Authority to apply for applicable funds to increase the supply of~~ shall, based upon recommended forms, submit applications to the appropriate sources that will provide an additional 52 units of assisted Farm Worker Housing.

*Comment:*    *The specific housing unit goals have been eliminated from the Comprehensive Plan. The specific target goals could be included within the detailed housing plans such as the SHIP and CDBG Plans.*

**Policy 9.4**                      The County will continue to provide incentives to encourage private industry to develop ~~provide 100 units of~~ new housing for farm workers ~~households expected through the year 2010.~~

*Comment:*    *The specific housing unit goals have been eliminated from the Comprehensive Plan. The specific target goals could be included within the detailed housing plans such as the SHIP and CDBG Plans.*