Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

2025 Report of Recommendations

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Executive Summary

Section 420.9076, Florida Statutes, requires that each jurisdiction in Florida receiving State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) funds shall appoint an eight- to eleven-member Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC). Each member represents a different role in the affordable housing industry. The AHAC is mandated to review Comprehensive Plan Elements, County Ordinances, Land Development Regulations, and County Policies and Procedures to identify regulatory barriers to affordable housing and to recommend incentives to create more affordable housing. Section 420.9076, Florida Statutes, requires the Committee to produce a report to submit to the County Commission and to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) annually by December 31st or risk the forfeiture of annual allocations of SHIP funds.

The Committee met three (3) times in 2025 and met jointly with the City of Tallahassee (City) AHAC two (2) times. Committee members reviewed various County documents as required by law as well as the *2024 County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Report of Recommendations*. The Leon County AHAC, from its review, consideration, evaluation, and recommendations, drafts and submits this report, which details the scope of the Committee's work and the resulting recommendations, to the Board of County Commissioners, Florida Housing Finance Corporation, and the Florida Housing Coalition as required by Florida Statutes. The final report was also sent to the Directors of the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department, Development Services and Environmental Management Department, County Attorney's Office, Real Estate Management Division, and the City of Tallahassee Housing and Community Resilience Department for review.

Summary Table of Recommendations

All AHAC recommendations were discussed and voted upon by members. Table 1 provides a summary of 2025 AHAC Recommendations. As reflected in Table 1, the AHAC recommends the continued practice of statutorily required incentives. Over the past year, the AHAC has been working, the AHAC has been working to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the County's affordable housing programs and policies.

Table 1: Summary of 2024 Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Recommendations Table

Subject	Committee Recommendation
Section 420.9076 (4) (a) Expedited Permitting	**Recommendation**: Maintain the current practice.
Section 420.9076 (4) (b) No Impact Fees	**Recommendation**: Maintain the current practice.
Section 420.9076 (4) (c) Flexible Densities	**Recommendation**: None.
Section 420.9076 (4) (d) No Special Capacity Provisions	**Recommendation**: Maintain the current practice.
Section 420.9076 (4) (e) Allowance of Affordable Accessory Units	**Recommendation**: Maintain the current practice.
Section 420.9076 (4) (f) Reduction of Parking Requirements	**Recommendation**: Maintain the current practice.
Section 420.9076 (4) (g) Flexible Lot Configurations	**Recommendation**: Maintain the current practice.
Section 420.9076 (4) (h) No Modified Street Requirements	**Recommendation**: Maintain the current practice.

Section 420.9076 (4) (i) Collaborative Policy Evaluation	**<u>Recommendation</u>:** Maintain the current practice.
Section 420.9076 (4) (j) Inventory of Locally Owned Public Lands	**<u>Recommendation</u>:** Maintain the current practice.
Section 420.9076 (4) (k) Support of Development Near Transportation Hubs	**<u>Recommendation</u>:** Maintain the current practice.

<u>BACKGROUND</u>

In 1992, the Florida Legislature enacted the William E. Sadowski Affordable Housing Act, Chapter 92-317 of Florida Session Laws (the "Sadowski Act"), allocating to local governments a portion of documentary stamp taxes on deeds for the development and maintenance of affordable housing. In addition, the Sadowski Act created the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Act, codified at Florida Statutes, Sections 420.907-420.9079 (SHIP Statutes). The SHIP Statutes require participating local governments to establish an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) which is responsible for reviewing and evaluating all aspects of the County's housing activities that impact the production of affordable housing and is specifically directed to consider and evaluate the implementation of the incentives set forth at Section 420.9076(4).

In 1993, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) incorporated SHIP Act provisions by adopting Ordinance No. 93-2, which was codified in the Code of Laws of Leon County at Chapter 8, Article V, Sections 8-151 through 8-156, entitled Affordable Housing Assistance (Code of Laws). Since its establishment, the Board has adopted ordinances in 2007, 2016, and 2020 amending the Code of Laws, to align its provision with amendments to the SHIP.

Most recently, in 2020 the Florida Legislature adopted House Bill 1339, further amending Sections 420.907-420.9079, F.S. (SHIP Statute). The SHIP Statute, as amended, requires a County Commissioner to serve on the AHAC and requires the AHAC to provide an annual, rather than triennial, report to the Board. Also, a copy of the report must be submitted to the entity providing statewide training and technical assistance for the Affordable Housing Catalyst Program, currently the Florida Housing Coalition, in addition to providing the report to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) which administers the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program. As such, on September 29, 2020, the Board adopted Ordinance No. 20-34, amending the Code of Laws to incorporate the provisions of House Bill 1339.

Composition of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

The Office of Human Services and Community Partnerships' Division of Housing Services serves as Staff for the AHAC. SHIP Statute requires that there be at least eight (8) but not more than 11 committee members, including one locally elected official, with representation from at least six categories a through k listed below. In line with Leon County's culture of community engagement, the Board of County Commissioners created a new membership category (l) for AHAC appointment on September 17, 2024 specifically for an individual who currently benefits from a rental housing assistance program (such as the Housing Choice Voucher Program), has benefitted from an affordable homeownership program (such as local or state government income-based purchase assistance or home rehabilitation programs), or experienced an eviction within the last 10 years. The new seat on the AHAC was filled in February 2025.

Table 2 lists the appointed Committee members, along with their category affiliation and appointment date, who participated in the production of this report.

(a) A citizen who is actively engaged in the residential home building industry in connection with affordable housing.
(b) A citizen who is actively engaged in the banking or mortgage banking industry in connection with affordable housing.
(c) A citizen who is a representative of those areas of labor actively engaged in home building in connection with affordable housing.
(d) A citizen who is actively engaged as an advocate for low-income persons in connection with affordable housing.
(e) A citizen who is actively engaged as a for-profit provider of affordable housing.
(f) A citizen who is actively engaged as a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing.
(g) A citizen who is actively engaged as a real estate professional in connection with affordable housing.
(h) A citizen who actively serves on the local planning agency pursuant to s. 163.3174. If the local planning agency is comprised of the governing board of the county or municipality, the governing board may appoint a designee who is knowledgeable in the local planning process.
(i) A citizen who resides within the jurisdiction of the local governing body making the appointments.
(j) A citizen who represents employers within the jurisdiction.
(k) A citizen who represents essential services personnel, as defined in the local housing assistance plan.
(l) A citizen who currently benefits from a rental housing assistance program, has benefited from an affordable homeownership program, or has experienced an eviction within the 10 years preceding their appointment.

Table 2: Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Membership

Name	Category Represented	Begin Term
1. Nick Maddox	County Commissioner	01/01/2025
2. Lawrence Tobe	Resident Within the Jurisdiction Making Appointment	02/01/2025
3. Oral Payne	Engaged in Residential Homebuilding	04/01/2023
4. Bruce Strouble	Advocate for Low-Income Persons	03/21/2023
5. Micheal K. Parker	Resident Within the Jurisdiction Making Appointment	02/01/2025
6. Sean William Morgan	Home Building Industry	01/23/2024
7. Danielle Iman Andrews	Real Estate Professional	02/01/2025
8. Will Shepherd	Planning Commission Member	09/17/2024
9. Christie Droz Perkins	Real Estate Professional	02/01/2025
10. Tee Thompson	For-profit Provider of Affordable Housing	07/10/2024
11. Kenisha Y. James	Benefitted from an affordable homeownership program	02/11/2025

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Recommendations

As established in the SHIP Statute, the Committee is responsible for annually reviewing and evaluating local plans, policies, procedures, land development regulations, the Comprehensive Plan, and other aspects of the County housing activities that impact the production of affordable housing. Further, the AHAC has specifically considered and evaluated the strategies set out in Section 420.9076(4)(a)-(k), F.S. Based on the Committee's evaluation, it may recommend to local government that it modify, provide exceptions, and/or create new plans, policies, procedures, and other governing authority documents that would encourage production of affordable housing which must be approved at a public hearing by affirmative vote of a majority of the membership in accordance with the SHIP Statute.

The Committee conducted a public hearing, held three (3) public meetings, and met jointly with the City AHAC during two (2) additional public meetings in 2025 to produce this report and the recommendations herein. The Committee has specifically considered and evaluated the strategies set forth in Section 420.9076(4), F.S., to formulate the following recommendations and submits them to the Board for possible incorporation into its housing strategy:

(a) The processing of approvals of development orders or permits for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects, as provided in Section 163.3177(6)(f)3, F.S.

Current Practice: Expedited permitting of affordable housing projects is accomplished by administrative direction, close coordination, and teamwork, which include:

1) Using pre-permitting review to determine project status, identify and resolve potential legal problems that might preempt permitting, and otherwise expedite affordable housing.
2) Obtain assistance and cross-training from Building Inspection with the initial inspection of rehabilitation projects to ensure all code compliance issues are addressed in write-ups and permit applications. This expedites plan review and minimizes changes that delay permitting and project completion.
3) The Director of the Office of Human Services & Community Partnerships and staff are the designated liaisons with the Affordable Housing Program and assist with the resolution of difficult permitting issues.

AHAC Recommendation: Maintain the current practice.

(b) The modification of impact-fee requirements, including reduction or waiver of fees and alternative methods of fee payment for affordable housing.

Current Practice: Leon County does not impose impact fees. Impact fees were eliminated in 1995.

AHAC Recommendation: Maintain the current practice.

(c) The allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing.

Current Practice: Although the Land Development Code (LDC) does not specifically address density flexibility for affordable housing, it does provide incentives for affordable housing regarding the required review level. For example, projects with 50% or more affordable housing units can have their review threshold increased by 50% thereby potentially allowing a lower review level and reducing permitting costs. [Section 10-7.402(4) of the LDC]

AHAC Recommendation: None at this time. Currently, County and City staff continue to work with the Florida Housing Coalition (FHC) to refine its Inclusionary Housing policy recommendations based on feedback received during multiple public engagement events held throughout 2022 and 2023. These recommendations are expected to address density bonuses for affordable housing projects. Staff anticipates bringing back final recommendations on inclusionary housing in early 2025.

(d) The reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons.

Current Practice: The concurrency management system treats all projects the same and does not provide special provisions for affordable housing projects. (Article III of the LDC)

AHAC Recommendation: Maintain the current practice.

(e) The allowance of affordable accessory residential units in residential zoning districts.

Current Practice: The LDC allows accessory dwelling units in conjunction with the following principal structures: single-family detached dwellings; retail establishments; offices; and principal industrial structures. [Section 10-6.803(b)(2) of the LDC]

AHAC Recommendation: Maintain the current practice.

(f) The reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.

Current Practice: The LDC allows a permit applicant the ability to file a request of the Parking Standards Committee for reduction to the parking requirements based upon data supporting such a request (Article VII, Division 5, Subdivision III of the LDC – Parking and Loading Standards; Section 10-1.106 of the LDC)

AHAC Recommendation: Maintain the current practice.

(g) The allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line configurations for affordable housing.

Current Practice: Many zoning districts already provide for zero-lot-line development patterns. The Department of Development Support & Environmental Management staff provides flexibility in design in order to reduce impervious surface area consistent with Low Impact Design ordinance and to identify other efficiencies. (Sections 10-7.502 and 10-4.308 of the LDC)

AHAC Recommendation: Maintain the current practice.

(h) The modification of street requirements for affordable housing.

Current Practice: Street requirements for affordable housing are not different than for other types of housing development. Uniformity of roadways can help to minimize negative views of affordable housing. Emergency vehicles require the same mobility in affordable housing developments as in others.

AHAC Recommendation: Maintain the current practice.

(i) The establishment of a process by which a local government considers, before adoption, policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan provisions that increase the cost of housing.

Current Practice: County staff conducts collaborative evaluation (Department of Development Services & Environmental Management, Human Services and Community Partnerships & Public Works) of potential impactful policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plans.

AHAC Recommendation: Maintain the current practice.

(j) The preparation of a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.

Current Practice: County staff prepares, and makes available to the public, a printable inventory of County-owned lands suitable for affordable housing.

AHAC Recommendation: Maintain the current practice.

(k) The support of development near transportation hubs and major employment centers and mixed-use developments.

Current Practice: Applicable zoning districts such as the Mahan Corridor, the Lake Protection Node districts, and others are designed to promote this incentive by providing mixed use development patterns centered near major intersections. These zoning districts are intended to accomplish several goals including but not limited to: providing convenience goods to area residents within a short distance of home, maximizing infrastructure, minimizing automobile dependency, promoting transit, and facilitating compatibility with nearby neighborhoods. (Sections 10-6.654.1 and 10-6.660 of the LDC)

AHAC Recommendation: Maintain the current practice.

Additional Recommendations

From review and evaluation of County ordinances, regulations, comprehensive plan, policies, and procedures, the Committee makes the following, additional recommendations to the Board for consideration of incorporation into its housing program strategy:

Leon County Policy

Inclusionary Housing Policy

In 2021, the County AHAC recommended jointly with the City AHAC that the County and City adopt a uniform inclusionary housing policy. Subsequently, the County Commission and City Commission directed

County and City staff to partner with the Florida Housing Coalition to draft updated Inclusionary Housing Ordinances for the County and City that are identical and mandatory within the Urban Services Area, to be considered by the County Commission and City Commission, respectively. The County AHAC has continued to work with the City AHAC and staff on the finalization of recommendations for the development of an inclusionary housing ordinance and associated incentives. Final stages of development of an inclusionary housing ordinance for the County was delayed in 2024-2025 due to the prioritization of the County working with community organizations to formulate and establish a new gap financing program to invest additional County funds to enhance Leon County's ongoing efforts to address the highest affordable housing need in our community: rental units for very low- and extremely low-income households. Staff is expected to present final recommendations for an inclusionary housing ordinance to the Board of County Commissioners in 2026.

<u>Additional Gap Financing for Rental Developments</u>
The County's Rental Development Program allocates SHIP funds to provide gap financing (funding required to complete a project) to developers to build new affordable rental units for low, very low, and extremely low-income renters. As previously mentioned, the highest affordable housing need in the community is rental units for very low-income households earning 50% or less of the AMI ($46,150 for a household of four). Under this program, developers are required to set aside units for very low- and/or extremely low-income households. Per Florida Statutes, local governments are restricted to spend no more than 25% of their annual SHIP allocations on rental programs.

In addition to the $125,000 in SHIP funds dedicated to the County's Rental Development Program, during the FY 2026 budget process the Board of County Commissioners increased the County's annual investment in rental development projects with the approval of $250,000 in general revenue for gap financing of affordable housing projects for very low- and extremely low-income households. This additional investment of general revenue to support affordable housing will be recurring. Additionally, on May 8, 2025, the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency (IA) Board, which is comprised of the County and City Commissions, established and funded an affordable housing gap financing program in the amount of $250,000 annually through the Office of Economic Vitality (OEV). Therefore, the County will invest $500,000 annually in gap financing with the combination of SHIP, general revenue, and the County's share of OEV funds. Consistent with direction provided by the Board of County Commissioners, County staff has coordinated with Housing Finance Authority (HFA) of Leon County to publish a notice of funding availability (NOFA) for the FY 2026 Rental Development funds on October 20, 2025. The HFA of Leon County will be responsible for receiving and evaluating applications for rental development funding and making project recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

<u>SHIP Local Housing Assistance Plan</u>

Every local government participating in SHIP is required to have an active Florida Housing Finance Corporation-approved Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP). Generally, local governments submit LHAPs by May 2 once every three years, covering the three state fiscal years beginning July 1 of the year the plan is submitted. LHAPs are designed to detail how each local government will expend SHIP funds allocated to them for each of the three fiscal years.

Amendments to the Rental Development Program

AHAC Recommendation: Update the language in the County's SHIP Rental Development Strategy to be consistent with the program guidelines published in the HFA NOFA for multifamily gap financing.

Analysis:
As previously mentioned, the County has enhanced its Rental Development Program by investing $500,000 annually in gap financing with the combination of SHIP, general revenue, and the County's share of OEV funds. I order to ensure that the SHIP Rental Development strategy in the County's LHAP is consistent with the program guidelines published in the HFA's NOFA, the AHAC recommends amending the County's SHIP-LHAP to clarify the project selection criteria for rental development funding as follows:

Project Selection Criteria

- Project feasibility as determined by:
  - Applicant's development and construction experience;
  - Applicant's management experience;
  - Financial feasibility to complete and operate the project (including, but not limited to, cost estimates, cash flows, debt service, coverage ratios, the percentage of public monies requested compared to project cost; leveraging);
  - Reasonableness of total development cost per unit;
  - Readiness to proceed (with respect to entitlements including but not limited to zoning, approvals and permits);
  - Overall quality of the site
  - Demonstrated need for gap financing.
- Applicant's performance and/or compliance (including any prior defaults) of any prior loans or contracts with the Authority, County or the City of Tallahassee;
- Unit and Development amenities and Energy Efficiency (at a minimum, must meet HFA's minimum requirements for bond financing);
- Proximity to employment opportunities and public transportation;
- Developments that provide maximum impact on the quality of life of the residents;
- The extent to which there is temporary (for any rehabilitation projects) or permanent displacement of existing tenants (then in which event either shall be scored as a negative factor); and,
- The County established the following funding priority for Applicants applying for Gap Financing:
  - Applicants that provide a set-aside of rental units for very low-income and extremely low-income households greater than low-income for low-income Housing Tax Credits or applicable FHFC Program, as the case may be;
  - Applicants that agree to a land use restriction agreement that provides affordability in perpetuity.

Committee Adoption of the 2025 Report of Recommendations

The Committee officially adopted the report by affirmative vote of a majority of the membership at a public hearing on November 5, 2025. Notice of the public hearing to adopt the final report was published in the *Tallahassee Democrat* (Exhibit A) and posted on the County's website. The notice included how interested persons could obtain a copy of the final report.

Plan for Implementation

At the December 9, 2025, County Commission meeting, Commissioners will consider acceptance of the AHAC's report to comply with the state-mandated December 31, 2025, deadline. As required by SHIP Statutes, the County Commission must review and discuss the Committee's recommendations and vote to adopt the recommendations they plan to implement within 90 days of receipt. County Commissioners may adopt to implement any AHAC recommendations into policy or regulatory documents, including amending the appropriate LHAP to include new affordable housing incentive strategies.