

DeSoto County, FL

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee



2024

Housing Incentive Strategies Report

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210 E. Oak Street
Arcadia, FL 34266

Dear County Commissioners:

The DeSoto County Social Services Department administers State and Federal funding for many programs. One of our programs is the State Housing Initiative Partnership program, which gives us a primary focus on affordable housing. While we still have challenges, solving the affordable housing crisis is a priority.

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) has nine members who have all contributed to the housing crisis and have volunteered their time for the critical effort of bringing affordable housing to DeSoto County, Florida. The members have approved this report.

It is with great pleasure that I present this 2024 Housing Incentive Strategies Report. The purpose of this report is to keep everyone informed on the County's ideas and initiatives that promote the development of affordable housing. This report provides the recommendations made by the AHAC and is believed to promote affordable housing development for DeSoto County.

Thank you for your continued support of the Social Services Department and the ongoing effort to provide a better quality of life for all residents of DeSoto County.

Sincerely,

Lauri Benson

Lauri Benson
DeSoto County Social Service Director

Introduction and Background

All State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) fund recipients that are allocated more than \$350,000 per year are required to form an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) as well as submit an approved affordable housing incentive strategies report. The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee for DeSoto County will meet quarterly to review current incentives promoting affordable housing and make recommendations if needed. After being approved by the AHAC and the DeSoto Board of County Commissioners, the report will be posted on the Social Services website and submitted to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee report includes recommendations on affordable housing incentive strategies. These recommendations, if any, will be used to create and update the Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP).

DeSoto County has committed to affordable housing incentive strategies for some time now. These incentives are in place to encourage affordable housing developments to provide a better quality of life for our most vulnerable citizens. The AHAC will continue to meet, review and recommend incentives for this critical topic.

The recommendations outlined in this report will include at a minimum the 11 incentives required by s. 420.9076(4).

DeSoto County Florida Social Services Department is the lead department responsible for the development of this Housing Incentives Strategy Report. Any interested parties should contact the office for additional information.

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Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Members

*AHAC MEMBER	AGENCY	HOUSING-RELATED FIELD
Bowser, Jennifer	Habitat for Humanity	Engaged in residential home building and repairs in connection with affordable housing
Brown, Melanie	Premier Nationwide Lending	Mortgage Professional
Doubleday, Donna	CareerSource Heartland	Representative of employers in the jurisdiction
Guice, Thelma	The House of God Keith Dominion	A citizen who resides within the jurisdiction
Vacant		Planning and Zoning
Provau, Mike	DeSoto Cares Homeless Services, Inc.	Advocate for low-income citizens
Ramirez, Oralia	RMZ Realty Inc	Real Estate
Schaefer, Judy	County Commissioner, District 3	Elected Official
Taylor, Derek	DT Building Solutions	Labor actively engaged in home building

**AHAC Members are listed alphabetically by last name.*

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee met on several occasions over the past year. A schedule of the meetings and their agendas are attached as **Exhibit A**.

AHAC members discussed many incentives to attract the development of affordable housing.

The Public Meeting for the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee to vote on The Housing Incentive Strategies Report was held on November 20, 2024, in the Board of County Commissioners meeting room. The report was submitted to the Board of County Commissioners at a public meeting on December 17, 2024.

Exhibit B. *Copy of required advertisement*

Incentive 1 - Expedited Permitting
The processing of approvals of development orders or permits, as defined for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects. This is a required incentive for review.
Current Process - The County has digital permitting and the projects are designated as affordable housing in the permit description box by the project. The projects are expedited and prioritized if designated affordable housing.
AHAC Proposed Recommendations – No recommendations for improvement.
County Staff Comments - No Comment.

Incentive 1a – Reduced Permit and Planning Fees
The process of reducing Permit and Planning Fees for affordable housing under 80% AMI to builders who are using over 90% Green Initiative.
Current Process – There is no process for this incentive.
AHAC Proposed Recommendation – This is a recommendation to attract more affordable housing development to DeSoto County.
County Staff Comments – No Comment

Incentive 2 - Impact Fees Waiver
The modification of impact-fee requirements, including reduction or waiver of fees and alternative methods of fee payment for affordable housing. This is a required incentive for review.
Current Process - At this time the County has suspended impact fees.
AHAC Proposed Recommendations - No recommendations for improvement.
County Staff Comments - No comments.

Incentive 3 - Flexibility in Density
The allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing. This is a required incentive for review.
Current Process - Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element lists affordable housing as an item to consider bonus density.
AHAC Proposed Recommendations - No recommendations for improvement.
County Staff Comments - No comments.

Incentive 4 - Accessory Dwelling Units
The allowance of affordable accessory residential units in residential zoning districts. This is a required incentive for review.
Current Process - At this time the County does not have an Accessory Dwelling Unit process specifically for affordable housing.
AHAC Proposed Recommendations – No recommendations for improvement.
County Staff Comments - No comment.

Incentive 5 - Reduction of Parking and Setback Requirements
The modification of parking and setback requirements. Relevant Statutes - S. 420.9076(4)(l) of the Florida Statutes directs the AHAC to assess: “The reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.” This is a required incentive for review.
Current Process – The County allows for 1.5 parking spaces for multifamily and 1 loading space per clubhouse of multifamily.
AHAC Proposed Recommendations - No recommendations for improvement.
County Staff Comments - No Comments.

Incentive 6 - Flexible lot configurations

The allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line configurations for affordable housing. This is a required incentive for review.

Current Process-The land development regulation; permits zero lot line development for affordable housing.

AHAC Proposed Recommendations - No recommendations for improvement.

County Staff Comments - No comments.

Incentive 7 - Modification of Street Requirements

The modification of street requirements is to lower development costs and ensure that more of the buildable land is available for affordable housing development. This is a required incentive for review.

Current Process - At this time the County does not provide modification of street requirements *specifically* for affordable housing.

AHAC Proposed Recommendations - No recommendations for improvement.

County Staff Comments - No comments.

Incentive 8 – Reservation of Infrastructure Capacity

The reservation of infrastructure capacity is based upon local requirements in large urban areas. Reservation is the act of setting aside a portion of the available infrastructure capacity necessary to accommodate valid intermediate or final development orders.

Current Process - Currently the County is limited in its capacity of waste water.

AHAC Proposed Recommendations - Once the County has a healthy waste water capacity, to consider affordable housing infrastructure reservations.

County Staff Comments - No comment.

Incentive 9 - Ongoing Regulatory Review Process

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. This is a required incentive for review.

Current Process - County staff continually monitors and reviews potential affordable housing impacts before passing policies, procedures, regulations, or ordinances that might contribute to increased costs for residential housing. The appointed Affordable Housing Advisory Committee per resolution shall also review the established policies and procedures, ordinances, and development regulations and plan provisions to identify and eliminate any unnecessary impediments to affordable housing and make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

AHAC Proposed Recommendations - No recommendations for improvement.

County Staff Comments - No comments.

Incentive 10 - Surplus Lands Inventory

The surplus lands inventory is a prepared printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing. S.420.9076(4)(i) of the Florida Statutes directs the AHAC to assess the strategy. This is a required incentive for review.

Current Process - Every three years the County identifies specific parcels of which it holds a fee simple title that is appropriate for use as affordable housing. The County may notice for sale or donation with the restriction that requires the development of the property as permanently affordable housing.

AHAC Proposed Recommendations - No recommendations for improvement.

County Staff Comments - No comments.

Incentive 11 - Transportation Hubs and Transit-Oriented Development

Flexible land use requirements that support development near transportation hubs and major employment centers can help low-to-moderate-income residents reduce their transportation costs. This incentive is a big incentive for urban communities. This is a required incentive for review.

Current Process - There is no current process specifically for affordable housing.

AHAC Proposed Recommendations -No recommendations for improvement.

County Staff Comments - No comment.