

# **The Housing Plan**



# INTENT AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Housing Chapter is to provide direction for the provision of safe and sanitary housing for the residents of the City of Sarasota through the year 2030. The foundation for this Chapter are **Sarasota's Strategic Plan** and Florida statutory requirements.

## **Sarasota's Strategic Plan Goals**

In 2004, the City Commission adopted "Sarasota's Approach to Strategic Planning", which provides the foundation for the Strategic Plan and six Strategic Goals that have particular relevance to the Housing Chapter:

*"An attractive, environmentally-friendly community that is safe and livable and provides an array of cultural and aesthetic enjoyments."*

Safe housing is part of the housing goal and a basic need of every resident of the City. Obtaining housing data that provide indicators of housing safety and pursuing programs to prevent and cure problems is critical.

*"Viable, safe and diverse neighborhoods and businesses that work together."*

Housing units are the basic building blocks for neighborhoods just as neighborhoods are the building blocks for the City. Housing characteristics - type, value, tenure, age and condition - all play a role in shaping the character and desirability of the City's neighborhoods.

*"A workplace that attracts and retains an outstanding workforce."*

Housing structures and their site development are the largest part of Sarasota's built environment. Their design, cost, and maintenance play a major role in the City be able to attract and maintain an outstanding workforce.

It is the intent of the Housing Plan to pursue actions that further **Sarasota's Strategic Plan**.

## **Florida Statutory Requirements**

The Housing Chapter, in addition to providing direction for the City of Sarasota to create safe and sanitary housing, is also intended to meet the requirements of Chapter 9J-5 of Florida Administrative Code. Chapter 9J-5 of the Florida Code sets forth the minimum requirements for comprehensive plans. Specifically, 9J-5.010 establishes criteria for the Housing Chapter, which includes the creation of housing goals, objectives and policies; specific housing data; and analysis of future housing needs.

The Housing Chapter presents data provided in the “Affordable Housing Needs Assessment”, which is required to be used in all housing elements, pursuant to Section 163.3177(6)(f), of the Florida Statutes. The statute requires the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to conduct an affordable housing needs assessment for all local jurisdictions. The assessment is a data and analysis package, prepared to aid local governments in developing the housing elements of their comprehensive plans. Currently, the Schimberg Center for Affordable Housing is under contract through the DCA to develop the “Affordable Housing Needs Assessment”. The majority of source data for the assessment comes from the 2000 U.S. Census and is updated with current information from building permit activity and property appraiser data. Additionally, local governments are encouraged to add recent data they may have from other local sources.

This chapter also addresses the issues and recommendations contained in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR), which was adopted by the City Commission on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Section 163.3191 of the Florida Statutes, requires elements of the *Sarasota City Plan* to be amended based upon the recommendations contained within the EAR.

## **Organization of the Housing Plan**

The Housing Plan consists of a goal followed by objectives and action strategies pursuant to the goal.

The Housing Plan is organized around objectives addressing the following topics:

- Objective 1. New Construction;
- Objective 2. Maintaining the Existing Housing Stock;
- Objective 3. Maintaining and Attracting Moderate and Middle Income Families;
- Objective 4. Housing for Populations of Special Needs;
- Objective 5. Coordination with other Local Governments and the Private Sector; and,
- Objective 6. Neighborhood Quality.

The Housing Plan is one of the eleven plans which collectively represent the Sarasota City Plan. This Plan can neither stand alone nor be interpreted independent of the others.

## **Implementation of the Sarasota City Plan**

Implementation of the Sarasota City Plan will require actions by both the public and private sectors. In this regard many of the plan components speak to “the City” pursuing certain actions to:

promote, provide, consider, identify, enhance, create, maintain, conserve, support, reduce discourage, coordinate, and employ.

While these actions may be initiated by City government itself, City government will also be expecting applicants seeking development approvals to pursue these same type of actions as part of their applications.

# GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STRATEGIES

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## Goal

It shall be the goal of the City of Sarasota to provide opportunities for safe, sanitary, and affordable housing to meet the needs of all City residents while recognizing the private sector as the primary provider of housing.

## Objective 1 - New Construction

The City shall continue to enhance a City government/private sector association that encourages the private sector to provide new housing that:

- meets the needs of City residents;
- is innovative;
- is compatible with the City's neighborhoods;<sup>1</sup> and
- offers diverse housing types and affordability levels to meet the present and future needs of Sarasota City residents.

## Action Strategies

- 1.1 **Range of Housing Densities:** The City will provide for a range of housing densities allowing for a diversity of housing types, including manufactured homes, modular homes, group homes and foster care facilities, in the Future Land Use Chapter and the Land Development Regulations.
- 1.2 **Rezoning from Residential to Non-Residential or Rezoning to Increased Intensity:** The City will consider the impacts on maintaining and enhancing the quality of existing residential neighborhoods in reviewing requests for rezoning from residential to non-residential zone districts or in reviewing requests for rezoning to zone districts that increase density and intensity of land use.
- 1.3 **Information on Land Development Regulations:** The City will continue using its technical assistance public information program to ensure the timely dissemination and explanation of land development regulations, particularly when such regulations are amended.

- 1.4 **In-fill Development in Residential Neighborhoods:** The City will encourage in-fill development in existing residential neighborhoods to be architecturally compatible including the consideration of neighborhood scale and exterior materials.
- 1.5 **In-fill Development in Historic Districts:** The City will encourage new in-fill housing in locally or Nationally designated historic districts to be architecturally compatible.
- 1.6 **Energy Efficient and Environmentally Sensitive Housing:** The City will encourage the construction of energy efficient housing by exploring innovative regulations that promote energy conserving and environmentally sensitive technologies and LEED Neighborhood Development design.
- 1.7 **Collaboration:** The City will continue to encourage and work cooperatively with other municipalities, State and federal agencies, for-profit and non-profit developers, and other interested parties in the housing delivery process to create a range of affordable housing in the City.
- 1.8 **Fee Deferral Program:** The City will continue its Fee Deferral Program to reduce development review costs for organizations that construct or remodel affordable housing affordable to families earning 80% or less of the AMI.

## **Objective 2 - Maintaining the Existing Housing Stock**

The City will continue to encourage the private sector to conserve, maintain and enhance the existing housing stock, including historic structures and sites. Maintaining the existing housing stock is a priority, not only for historic preservation purposes and maintaining an attractive looking City, but also for creating affordable housing in the City, as it is a cost effective alternative to new construction of housing units.

### **Action Strategies**

- 2.1 **Code Compliance:** All housing should comply with standards in the City Housing and Building Codes. The City will continue a one year minimum cycle of code compliance, with emphasis on targeted areas, to help correct and prevent deterioration in the City's housing stock. The City will also target long-term, chronic code violations.
- 2.2 **Mechanisms for Maintenance of the Housing Stock:** In recognition of approximately half of the City's housing stock approaching, or past, forty years of age (the age when housing units generally begin to experience major structural

problems), the City will formally investigate and determine mechanisms for ensuring continued maintenance of the existing housing stock. These investigations and mechanisms will include targeting of long-term, chronic code violations, and may also include new programs such as a re-occupancy permitting program.

- 2.3 **Housing Maintenance Incentives:** The City will encourage homeowners to increase private reinvestment in housing by providing information, technical assistance, and incentives.
- 2.4 **Federal and State Funding of Rehabilitation:** The City will continue to take advantage of Federal and State funding for housing rehabilitation of substandard structures.
- 2.5 **Historic Preservation:** The City will encourage the preservation of the City's historically significant structures.
- 2.6 **Nuisance Abatement Board:** The City will continue to use the Nuisance Abatement Board to resolve problems related to drugs, prostitution and gangs.
- 2.7 **Demolitions:** Recognizing the fact that the cost of moving and rehabilitating existing structures is often more cost effective than new construction, the City will act as a liaison between developers and other organizations to facilitate the relocation of structurally sound units, that would otherwise be torn down, to City owned property, or given to non-profit or for profit organizations to be used for attainable housing.

### **Objective 3 - Maintaining and Attracting Moderate and Middle Income Families**

Recognizing that in 2005 approximately sixty percent of households within the City had annual household incomes below 120 percent of Area Median Income (AMI), the City will pursue actions that maintain and attract moderate and middle income families (families with incomes between 80 and 120% of the AMI).

#### **Action Strategies:**

- 3.1 **High Quality Education:** The City will cooperate with the School Board of Sarasota County to help achieve its objective of providing a high quality education for children of city residents.
- 3.2 **Housing Condition:** The City will explore new initiatives to maintain and upgrade the existing housing stock that focus on maintaining and attracting moderate and middle income families.

- 3.3 **Housing Mix:** The City will work with Sarasota County, to ensure that both entities accommodate a fair share distribution of housing for very low, low, moderate and middle income families.
- 3.4 **Livable Neighborhoods:** The City will implement objectives and action strategies outlined in the Neighborhood Plan. A primary purpose of these objectives and action strategies will be to maintain and attract moderate and middle income families.
- 3.5 **Economic Development Chapter:** The City shall prepare and adopt an Economic Development Chapter and incorporate it into this *Sarasota City Plan* by 2014. A primary objective of this plan will be to maintain and attract employers that pay livable wages (see glossary for information on livable wages).
- 3.6 **City Employees within the City:** The City will encourage city employees to live within the City.
- 3.7 **Definition of Attainable Housing Units:** The City shall define attainable housing units as meeting the following conditions: affordable to households earning from sixty (60.0) percent to one-hundred-twenty (120.0) percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) in the Sarasota-Bradenton MSA; and size (sq. ft.) and appearance (fixtures and finishes) of attainable housing units shall be functionally equivalent to market rate units. The attainable housing income range shall be updated annually by the City based on U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) data and existing mortgage financing conditions. This definition shall be used in conjunction with the City's attainable housing policies.
- 3.8 **Other Attainable Housing Mechanisms:** The City shall consider other attainable housing mechanisms, including but not limited to the following: increased densities for affordable housing projects; use of linkage fees; real estate tax deferral/abatement; in-lieu fees; development on public land (i.e., free land); use of Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds; City funding for parking and/or infrastructure; development permit and fee reductions; expedited approval process; and co-development using county housing trust funds/management.
- 3.9 **Support Community Housing Trust of Sarasota County:** The City shall provide funding and/or other resources to support the Community Housing Trust of Sarasota County. The Trust is expected to assist the City with attainable household income qualification, monitoring attainable housing units, and related activities.
- 3.10 **Comprehensive Attainable Housing Strategy:** The City shall prepare a comprehensive, city-wide attainable housing strategy, which includes the

following elements: existing and future attainable housing supply and demand by neighborhood; regulatory review; public outreach; and recommended policies and funding.

- 3.11 **Tax Increment Funds:** The City shall continue to set aside one-third of all tax increment revenues from the Tax Increment Fund (TIF) for very low income, low income and attainable housing within the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) through the end of the Downtown District in 2016 and North Sarasota District in 2047.
- 3.12 **Integration of Attainable Housing:** The City shall encourage the integration of attainable housing units with market rate units; not only within neighborhoods, but within residential structures as well. Enclaves of units consisting primarily of lower income households should be avoided.
- 3.13 **Compatibility of Attainable Housing:** The City shall encourage the construction of attainable housing units. The exterior appearance of which shall be compatible in style and quality with market rate units in the area.

## **Objective 4 - Housing for Populations of Special Needs**

The City will continue to take maximum advantage of Federal and State incentive and funding programs in order to create maximum housing opportunities for the City's very low and low income households and other households of special needs.

### **Action Strategies**

- 4.1 **Implementation of Federal and State Housing Programs:** The Office of Housing and Community Development shall continue to implement Community Development Block Grant programs, the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program, the federal HOME program, and the Florida SHIP program.
- 4.2 **Home Ownership:** The Office of Housing and Community Development will continue to administer the Down Payment Assistance Program for the purpose of assisting eligible first time homeowners and encouraging home ownership.
- 4.3 **Housing Program Reports:** The Office of Housing and Community Development will be responsible for:
  - revising the Sarasota Consortium Consolidated Plan as required by HUD;
  - submitting Consolidated Plan performance reports as required by HUD;

- preparing reports for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program as required by HUD;
  - preparing reports for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program as required by the State.
- 4.4 **Provision for Housing Types:** The Land Development Regulations will provide for the location of single-family and multi-family housing (including very low, low and moderate income), manufactured homes, modular homes, group homes, and foster care facilities, including assisted living facilities, community residential homes and necessary support facilities as licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families.
- 4.5 **Location of Very Low, Low and Moderate Income Housing:** The Office of Housing and Community Development will include the following criteria as a guide for locating very low, low, and moderate income housing:
- Impacts on neighborhood revitalization;
  - Dispersing the concentration of very low and low income housing to a wider area;
  - Proximity to services used by housing residents;
  - Proximity to employment centers;
  - Proximity to transportation; and
  - Economic feasibility.
- 4.6 **Group Homes and Foster Care Facilities:** The City will provide principles and criteria consistent with Chapter 419, Florida Statutes, for the location of group homes and foster care facilities licensed by the State that foster non-discrimination and community residential alternatives to institutions
- 4.7 **Non-Profit Developers:** The City will encourage non-profit developers to participate in the provision of affordable housing for very low, low and moderate income households through the programs of the Office of Housing and Community Development.
- 4.8 **Homeless:** The City will continue to encourage non-profit organizations in their efforts to meet the housing needs of the homeless. The Office of Housing and Community Development will work with non-profit agencies that provide homeless services to assess possible alternatives for the location of these services.
- 4.9 **Relocation Assistance for Federal Programs and Projects:** The City shall follow the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards for relocation assistance for tenants displaced by Federal programs and projects.

- 4.10 **Cost Burdened Renters:** Since 42% of renter households are cost-burdened, as opposed to only 21% of owner households, the City should provide more emphasis on preserving and creating affordable rental opportunities in the City.

## **Objective 5 - Coordinate with other Local Governments and Private Sector**

The City shall continue to coordinate housing programs with other local governments and the private sector.

### **Action Strategies**

- 5.1 **Cooperation with the Private Sector:** The City will continue to develop and implement housing programs in cooperation with the private sector for families at or below 120% AMI.
- 5.2 **Streamlined Development Process:** The City will continue to streamline the development review process for housing wherever it is feasible to do so without compromising the quality of development and the opportunity for public participation.
- 5.3 **Dispersing Low Income Housing:** The City will explore transferring responsibility for administering the Section 8 vouchers and certificates from the Housing Authority of the City of Sarasota to the Office of Housing and Community Development for the purpose of dispersing the concentration of low-income housing to a wider area of Sarasota County. Explore with Sarasota County the possibility of meeting low and moderate income housing needs by dispersing housing to meet these needs to a wider area of Sarasota County.
- 5.4 **Priority Review for Affordable Housing:** In order to expedite the review of affordable housing projects and avoid delays, the City will conduct a priority review for all housing projects that are designated as affordable by the Office of Housing and Community Development.
- 5.5 **Privatization of Public Housing:** The City encourages the privatization of public housing units owned and managed by the Housing Authority of the City of Sarasota when such privatization is feasible.
- 5.6 **Attainable Housing:** The City will coordinate with Sarasota County's Community Housing efforts and identify opportunities to leverage expertise and program administration. This may occur in partnership with the Community Housing Trust of Sarasota or other resources or entities.

- 5.7 **Housing Relative to Transportation:** Recognizing the correlation between housing and transportation costs; the City will coordinate with Sarasota County Area Transportation (SCAT) in order to determine appropriate areas where affordable housing could be located along existing or planned transit routes. The City will also continue to explore the creation of Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) as a means to lower over all household costs of City residents.

## **Objective 6 - Neighborhood Quality**

The City shall increase the desirability of residing in the City by improving the quality of City Neighborhoods.

*Also, see the Neighborhood Chapter*

### **Action Strategies**

- 6.1 **Neighborhood Initiative:** The City shall continue, with the City's neighborhood organizations and citizens, a comprehensive program for the revitalization of the City's neighborhoods.
- 6.2 **Neighborhood Compatibility:** The City will encourage new in-fill development in City neighborhoods to be functionally and visually compatible with their surrounding neighborhoods. Compatibility, as used here, is the same as defined in the Future Land Use Chapter.
- 6.3 **Compatibility of Rental Housing:** The City will pursue measures to improve the quality of neighborhoods by addressing and correcting conditions of rental housing that negatively impact neighborhood quality. Rental housing conditions that negatively impact neighborhood quality include: inadequate maintenance; incompatible design; and activities that detract from neighborhood safety, peace and tranquility. This may include the creation of a re-occupancy permitting process.

