

1.5.D - Brief Assessment of Successes & Shortcomings – 1997 Housing Element

A. Stated Objective

Collier County has been striving toward the stated goal of its Housing Element, “To create an adequate supply of decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing for all residents of Collier County.” In fact, most of the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the Housing Element in the Growth Management Plan have been met or completed.

Unit production has outpaced the County’s objective of creating 500 new affordable housing units each year. Recent years have actually seen this objective tripled and quadrupled.

However, the 500-unit per year target was established many years ago, before the County had reliable need assessment data on which to base the goal. Also at issue is when to count a dwelling unit as produced or completed (i.e. zoning approval; Site Development Plan approval; Building permit issuance; Certificate of Occupancy; etc.). The County presently has a varied system of indicators including zoning approval for Planned Unit Developments and building permit issuances for individual unit sites. This system has the potential to double count a unit, as it may be several years between the actual zoning approval and the issuance of building permit.

The County’s goal of 500 new units each year does not differentiate between owner occupied and rental units. However, the number for each type may vary greatly.

Using the most accurate and up to date housing data available from the State through the University of Florida Shimberg Center, it is evident that the 500 units per year target is out of line with actual demand.

The most recent Needs Assessment from the Shimberg Center (2002) confirms that Collier County is 28,430 units short of providing affordable housing to all of the current County residents in need of such housing. This means that 28,430 current residents are cost burdened and spending more than thirty percent of their gross monthly income on housing expenses. This deficit is divided with roughly one-third rental and two-thirds owner-occupied housing. Furthermore, this figure only represents those households currently residing in Collier County; it does not take into account the individuals who may work in the county but are unable to afford housing and forced to commute from neighboring counties.

The construction industry in Collier County remains very strong. In the year 2001, the county issued building permits for 8,500 residential units. In the same year, the mean sales price of a single family home soared to \$337,614, one of the highest in the state. Utilizing current lending guidelines, a household would need to earn over \$100,000 per year to afford the average home in Collier County.

The county's current Land Development Code and other planning regulations are clearly producing, if not favoring, the development of housing that is unaffordable to the average working citizen.

The 500-unit per year objective is not sufficient to meet current demand. The Workforce Housing Advisory Taskforce recommended certain modifications and changes in both the County's Growth Management Plan and Land Development Code to encourage and entice the private sector to produce more affordable housing dwelling units each year.

Among these changes is the concept of affordable housing densities "by right." Extremely high land costs, coupled with the relatively limited supply of available and buildable land in Collier County, make efficient utilization, optimization and availability of density a top priority. The Workforce Housing Advisory Taskforce suggested that the provision of affordable housing should be a permitted use by right in every zoning designation throughout the county. According to the Taskforce, affordable housing should be elevated to the level of an "essential public service" and therefore not need any further approvals or designations in order to be built anywhere in the county. As part of the EAR-based amendments, the Taskforce recommendations will be reviewed and evaluated.

The County's current density bonus program, while highly successful at producing affordable multi-family rental units in the 50 to 60% of median income range with developments built at gross densities of 10 to 14 units per acre, falls short when applied to owner-occupied, single-family developments for households in the 60% to 80% range of area median income.

The County is also addressing another potential deficiency of the affordable housing density bonus program: The administrative and planning process. An applicant often encounters a time consuming and onerous procedure in an effort to acquire all of the necessary recommendations and approvals for the affordable housing density bonus. The County will evaluate the current administrative process and, if necessary, streamline the system and make it more attractive to developers seeking an affordable housing density bonus when generating housing opportunities in the county.

These two factors, along with the affordable housing density bonus program being restricted to the Urban Area and Rural Fringe Mixed-Use District Receiving Lands (as designated on the Future Land Use Map), will be examined in an effort to promote affordable housing throughout the county.

Assisting in the efforts to modify the County's affordable housing program will be key partners in both the public and private sectors including: the newly formed Collier County Housing Development Corporation, the Collier County Economic Development Council and the Collier County Affordable Housing Commission.

These potential actions are major steps in closing the affordability gap in Collier County and bringing the goal of the Housing Element, "To create an adequate supply of decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing for all residents of Collier County," to reality.

Objective Analysis

The Housing Element consists of one Goal:

TO CREATE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF DECENT, SAFE, SANITARY AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF COLLIER COUNTY.

The EAR-based amendments will reflect no changes to this Goal.

OBJECTIVE 1:

The number of new affordable housing units shall increase by 500 units each year in an effort to continue to meet the housing needs of all current and future very-low, low and moderate income residents of the County, including those households with special needs such as rural and farmworker housing in rural Collier County.

Objective Achievement Analysis:

The primary purpose of this Objective is to ensure the creation of affordable housing units. An EAR-based amendment will address this objective in order to utilize updated data and may incorporate some of the recommendations of the Workforce Housing Advisory Taskforce.

Policy Relevance:

Objective 1 contains four joint City/County policies. The County recognizes that minor changes will be made to coincide with the updated EAR-based amendment to the Objective.

OBJECTIVE 2:

By 2000, create a non-profit housing development corporation, formed with a cross section of representatives from business, government, housing advocates, and the community at large, which will assist the City and County in achieving a new goal of 500 dwelling units per year for very-low, low and moderate income residents of Collier County.

Objective Achievement Analysis:

The County recommends revising Objective 2 to reflect that the County has recently established the Collier County Housing Development Corporation, and where appropriate to consider the recommendations of the Workforce Housing Advisory Taskforce.

Policy Relevance:

This Objective contains seven joint City/County policies that will also be modified consistent with any recommended changes to the Objective.

OBJECTIVE 3:

By 2000, increase the number of housing programs and amount of funding available to promote the preservation and protection of existing, stable residential neighborhoods. This will be accomplished through the utilization of State Housing Incentives Partnership (SHIP) and CDBG programs including strategies such as Down Payment/Closing Cost Assistance, Rehabilitation and Emergency Repair, Demolition with New Construction, and Impact Fee Waivers or Deferrals.

Objective Achievement Analysis:

This Objective should be modified to remove the date reference and to modify the wording consistent with the County's current affordable housing programs.

Policy Relevance:

This objective contains three joint City/County policies and one County policy. The lone County policy references CDBG funding that is not relevant to the City of Naples. The County will amend Policy 3.3 to eliminate the reference to the 5% leveraging of dollars as aforementioned in Section A, above.

OBJECTIVE 4:

By 2000, the County and City will conduct a comprehensive housing survey to identify substandard dwelling units. Through continued enforcement of each jurisdiction housing codes, and the provision of housing programs, the number of substandard units associated with a lack of plumbing and/or kitchen facilities throughout the County shall be reduced by 5% per year through rehabilitation or demolition.

Objective Achievement Analysis:

A comprehensive housing survey is underway in the County. As a result, this Objective should be revised through an EAR-based amendment. The ongoing survey will address the substandard housing units and the County will continue to rehabilitate and demolish those units deemed substandard.

Policy Relevance:

This Objective contains five joint City/County policies and two County policies. The joint policies will be amended consistent with modifications to the Objective. County Policies 4.6 and 4.7 will be modified and moved to another location within the Element through an EAR-based amendment in an effort to provide updated information regarding the Immokalee area. Also, Policy 4.6 will be modified to include all forms of housing.

OBJECTIVE 5:

Collier County and the City of Naples will annually monitor all identified historically significant structures to determine that these structures are being conserved, maintained, and/or rehabilitated.

Objective Achievement Analysis:

This Objective will remain as worded.

Policy Relevance:

The two joint City/County policies are likely to remain. Policy 5.2, however, has been achieved and is also an ongoing activity for the County. This policy will be changed accordingly.

OBJECTIVE 6:

By 1999, the County and City will ensure that local land development regulations are in compliance with State and Federal regulations regarding group homes and foster care facilities locations.

Objective Achievement Analysis:

The County achieved this Objective and continues to monitor all related state and federal regulations. This Objective will be modified to remove the date reference and to refer to monitoring as an ongoing activity.

Policy Relevance:

The four joint City/County policies will remain as currently worded.

OBJECTIVE 7:

Although mobile home parks currently exist within Collier County, as a result of the coastal community's susceptibility to flooding and storm surges, any new mobile home parks will be restricted to areas outside of the Urban Coastal Fringe.

Objective Achievement Analysis:

The County currently prohibits new mobile home parks within the Urban Coastal Fringe. This Objective will be preserved.

Policy Relevance:

The sole County policy will be preserved.

OBJECTIVE 8:

The number of new and rehabilitated units shall increase by 50 units per year to address those households with special needs such as rural and farmworker housing in rural Collier County.

Objective Achievement Analysis:

The County is committed to the creation and preservation of farmworker housing for rural parts of the County. This Objective is likely to be preserved.

Policy Relevance:

This Objective contains six County policies that should remain unchanged.