

# HOUSING

**City of St. Augustine Comprehensive Plan  
EAR-Based Amendments**

## Housing Element

### H Goal

Achieve a sound and satisfying living environment according to the various housing tastes and income levels for all city residents through improved structural and aesthetic conditions and by reducing the cost of housing.

### H Objective 1

**The City will ensure that an adequate and affordable supply of housing is provided for existing and future household populations. The measurable target for this objective is the percentage of households in the various income levels spending less than 30% of household income on housing costs. This target figure will be analyzed using data from the United States Census 2010 when it becomes available.**

#### H Policy 1.1

Collect and maintain housing, demographic, and socioeconomic data.

#### H Policy 1.2

Continue to implement a land use and building condition survey, or similar mechanism for tracking building conditions. The land use and building condition survey shall inventory both the existing use of the property and the condition of any structures located on the property, for all property in the City. These surveys are primarily windshield and walking surveys, and are supplemented with more detailed inspections as necessary. Data compilation and analysis will be completed within one (1) year of the completion of each survey.

The following categories shall be used for evaluating existing land uses: single family (detached single family dwelling or mobile home); multiple family (any structure containing more than one (1) dwelling unit); commercial; industrial; mixed use (any combination of the above); public buildings and grounds; recreation; vacant developable (uplands, in a platted subdivision); and vacant not developable (wetlands or marsh).

The following criteria shall be used to establish the condition of structures.

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| Condition 1 | Structure meets all the requirements of the Standard Building Code. No structural defects; all building systems (central heat, complete plumbing, complete kitchen, electricity) in place and in good condition; the overall appearance of the structure is excellent. |
| Condition 2 | Structure meets all the requirements of the Standard Building Code. Minor structural deterioration of foundation, walls, roof, ceilings or floors such that  |

minor or cosmetic repairs or painting are necessary; all building systems (central heat, complete plumbing, complete kitchen, electricity) in place, but showing minor deterioration; the overall appearance of the structure is good.

Condition 3            Structure does not meet all the requirements of the Standard Building Code, but is considered habitable. Structural deterioration of foundation, walls, roof, ceilings or floors such that major repairs are needed; building systems (central heat, complete plumbing, complete kitchen, electricity) either missing or non-functional; the overall appearance of the structure is deteriorating.

Condition 4            Structure does not meet all the requirements of the Standard Building Code, and is considered uninhabitable. Severe structural deterioration of foundation, walls, roof, ceilings or floors; building systems (central heat, complete plumbing, complete kitchen, electricity) either missing or non-functional; the overall appearance of the structure is dilapidated.

**H Policy 1.3**

Continue to maintain and update records of permits issued for new construction, alterations and demolitions which affect the number of housing units so that an accurate record of the number of housing units is available.

**H Policy 1.4**

Within two (2) years of the completion of each land use and building condition survey, conduct a survey of residents in areas where substandard housing conditions exist to determine the area's unique housing problems and redevelopment opportunities. Upon completion of the data compilation delineate potential rehabilitation areas and time frames for the elimination of substandard housing conditions within these areas and coordinate with St. Johns County and non-profit housing developers to ensure that residents of substandard housing are aware of programs that are available to assist them.

Investigate the services of the First Coast Jobs and Education Regional Board and other job programs to consider declining neighborhoods as training sites in construction and related trades.

Investigate the relationship between social conditions, crime and blight and identify programs which may be utilized to reduce the impact on neighborhood deterioration.

Encourage the participation of law enforcement and neighborhood watch organizations in the promotion of programs encouraging safer neighborhoods.

**H Policy 1.5**

The City shall continue to provide special inspections for homeowners and developers upon request. These special inspections are intended to help determine the condition of a structure after a fire or in the event that the owner is considering rehabilitation of the structure.

**H Policy 1.6**

The City shall continue to educate the public on the permitting process and the various City ordinances and codes with the ongoing creation of brochures and pamphlets.

The City shall also continue to streamline the permitting process and improve coordination among the participants involved in housing production through the following actions:

1. Continue the existing plan review process which provides a single point of contact for a developer from the time a development application is submitted, through plan review, to the point when the development permit is issued. Providing this single point of contact in the Planning and Building Division allows a developer to resolve all development related issues in one place in City Hall, thus saving time.
2. Continue to develop new publications and revise existing publications as needed to educate the public on the steps in the permitting process, land development regulations contained in the City Code, and key people in the permitting process. This is intended to result in developers submitting more complete applications for permits, resulting in easier and faster review by City staff. Expediting the permitting process in this way is intended to enable the developer to submit everything needed for a permit the first time, reducing delays and development costs caused by incomplete applications and plans.
3. Continue to encourage pre-application meetings with property owners, architects and developers so that the City's development regulations are clear from the first stages of a project.

4. Continue to inform developers who indicate an interest in very low income or low income housing of existing local and State subsidy programs.
5. Continue to expedite plan review of permits submitted for single family dwellings to comply with the requirements of Chapter 553.79 Florida Statutes.

**H Policy 1.7**

The City will continue to maintain an inventory of federal, state and private programs that offer assistance to displaced individuals and families whose housing has been destroyed or damaged by a disaster. This policy is specifically not intended to address the issue of relocation housing.

**H Policy 1.8**

The City shall maintain a liaison to the St. John's County Housing Finance Authority to address housing problems within the City.

The City shall encourage the work of the St. Johns Housing Partnership, Inc. The Housing partnership is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing.

The City shall encourage the work of the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP). The SHIP program provides instruction on housing selection and financing as well as offering no interest loans to qualified first time home buyers. The SHIP program was approved by the City through interlocal agreement with St. Johns County in 1993.

The City will continue to provide building construction guidance and permitting assistance to the Habitat for Humanity site in the Lincolnville neighborhood of the City.

The City will provide water and sewer services to the West Augustine area, and area of very low, low and moderate income residents of St. Johns County.

Although the City is able to ensure that affordable housing is available for the present population of the City, in case affordable housing needs cannot be met in the future, the City shall enter into an interlocal agreement with St. Johns County to ensure that affordable housing needs are met.

## **H Objective 2**

**The City will take action to eliminate substandard housing conditions and improve the structural and aesthetic conditions of existing housing. The measurable target for this objective is the number of category 3 and 4 dwelling units citywide as measured by periodically conducted land use and building condition surveys**

### **H Policy 2.1**

In an effort to conserve the City's existing housing stock as well as to increase the amount of affordable housing available to low and moderate income residents, the City will implement the following programs:

For areas in National Register Districts, educate developers regarding the City's Historic Preservation Property Tax Exemption program as well as investigate grants for historic preservation from the State of Florida and the Federal government.

Provide information regarding federal, state, county and/or private conventional lenders regarding subsidy programs in order to encourage affordable housing, including the availability of Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) as well as the availability of state funds for the creation of Community Development Corporations (CDCs).

Develop partnerships linking public and private resources and expertise to address the needs for affordable housing.

### **H Policy 2.2**

Maintain a Code Enforcement Officer on staff to investigate violations and enforce the City Code.

## **H Objective 3**

**The City will provide adequate sites for very low income, low income and moderate income housing, mobile homes, manufactured homes and group homes and foster care facilities licensed and funded by the State Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS) located in areas intended for such residential development by the Future Land Use Plan. The measurable target for this objective is continuing to implement the Future Land Use Plan which allows these uses as permitted in all of the City's planning sectors.**

### **H Policy 3.1**

The Future Land Use Plan in the Future Land Use Element provides for sufficient land at sufficient densities to meet housing needs through the year 2030. The "Vacant Lands Analysis" section in the Future Land Use

Element further documents the availability of sufficient land to meet anticipated housing needs.

**H Policy 3.2**

The Future Land Use Plan, which is implemented by Chapter 28 of the City Code, specifically establishes land uses consistent with the topography, soil conditions and the availability of services to support development, and encourages mixed use districts. Dwellings (including single family dwellings, modular homes, mobile homes, multiple family dwellings, community residential homes, foster care facilities, rooming houses, boarding houses, adult congregate living facilities, nursing homes and similar uses) are permitted or permissible by exception as established by the Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Plan, implemented by the City Code:

1. does not discriminate against subsidized housing or housing for people with special needs;
2. encourages infill development in areas where adequate infrastructure already exists as a method of lowering housing costs;
3. provides a wide range of densities (2 units per acre up to 16 units per acre);
4. provides a wide range of minimum lot sizes, including provision for development on existing nonconforming platted lots in the older subdivisions;
5. allows residential uses in both established residential neighborhoods and mixed use districts; and
6. allows commercial uses within each sector to serve the residential districts in each sector, where the proximity of commercial service areas encourages pedestrian activity and also serves the needs of special groups that do not readily have access to transportation facilities.

**H Policy 3.3**

The City will continue to make provision for innovative techniques such as Planned Unit Developments (PUD), zero lot line development and cluster housing through the rezoning process established in Chapter 28 of the City Code, and by allowing condominium types of ownership for both residential and commercial development.

**H Policy 3.4**

The City shall consider offering or selling properties or buildings which are acquired through enforcement of the building abatement program to organizations providing very low income, low income or moderate income housing such as Habitat for Humanity.

**H Policy 3.5**

The City will continue to allow mobile homes as a permissible use by exception in the zoning district associated with the Open Land use classification.

**H Policy 3.6**

To ensure the elimination of substandard housing, the City shall continue to enforce the building abatement program. The building abatement program requires property owners to comply with the minimum building code requirements or demolish the structure. Complaints regarding structures suspected of not meeting the minimum requirements of the Standard Building Code can be initiated by the Code Enforcement Inspector or a member of the public, or can be identified during the land use and building condition survey. Upon receipt of such a complaint, the Building Official inspects the structure to determine if it meets the requirements of the standard Building Code. If the inspection indicates that the structure does not meet the requirements of the Standard Building Code, the case is presented to the Board of Adjustments and Appeals to determine if the structure in question is a public nuisance. The Board is empowered to order the property owner to correct the deficiencies discovered during the inspection or demolish the structure. Failure to comply with the order of the Board results in a fine against the property owner, which if not paid, becomes a lien against the property. In the case of a property owner disregarding the order of the Board, the city may make the necessary repairs or demolish the structure, and then file a lien on the property for costs incurred. Only vacant residential structures are subject to demolition. Occupied residential structures not improved by the property owner so that the structure meets the minimum requirements of the Standard Building Code are referred to the St. Johns County Health Department. The intent of this program is to induce property owners to provide habitable housing and comply with the code rather than have the city become a property owner. However, the city reserves this right to ensure compliance.

**H Objective 4**

**The City does not foresee taking any actions that would displace people from their dwelling, since the building abatement program described in H Policy 5.1 only targets vacant residential structures. However, in the event that actions by the City do displace people from their dwelling, the City will**



**provide necessary relocation housing. The measurable target for this objective is the provision of replacement housing as required.**

#### **H Policy 4.1**

If and when housing is eliminated by any action of the City, relocation assistance will be provided by the City as required by law (Section 421.55, Florida Statutes).

#### **H Objective 5**

**The City shall implement cost effective measures to reduce energy and water consumption and promote energy conservation, carbon reduction, green building and economic development through its Housing initiatives.**

##### **H Policy 5.1**

The City shall continue to enforce the Florida Energy Efficiency Code through the development permit review and approval process.

##### **H Policy 5.2**

The City shall promote energy conservation by supporting compact neighborhood design with alternative transportation systems.

##### **H Policy 5.3**

The City of St. Augustine shall encourage all housing structures be constructed with cost effective efficiency construction standards. Whenever feasible, housing should attempt to meet or exceed standards set forth by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system, or other national or state recognized high-performance conservation building rating system as approved by the Florida Department of Management Services.

##### **H Policy 5.4**

By 2012, the City shall amend its Land Development Code to require that all new housing be energy efficient in its design, use energy and water efficient appliances, and be appropriately weatherized.

##### **H Policy 5.5**

Upon its completion, the City of St. Augustine will investigate the Florida Residential Retrofit program to determine applicability in the retrofitting of older homes in the City in order for these homes to become more energy efficient. The City may investigate a long term market-based program that offers a whole-house approach for reducing energy use.

##### **H Policy 5.6**

The City shall promote water conservation by encouraging the use of water-conserving plumbing fixtures, appliances, and irrigation systems,

and Florida Friendly Landscapes as recommended by the University of Florida/IFAS program.