

SECTION 7.0 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Section 7.01 Purpose

St. Johns County recognizes the lack of affordable housing, both for purchase and for rent. Affordable housing can promote economic development by providing housing for households in the service industries, as well as for professionals such as teachers. To facilitate the construction of projects which qualify as an Affordable Housing Development (AHD), an expedited Development Permit review will be conducted.

Section 7.02 Eligibility

A. Rental Developments (Multi- or Single-Family)

1. Set-aside units

- a. The proposed development must follow set-asides required of any state or federal financing program such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credits, SAIL, or HOME; or,
- b. If the development is privately financed, each developer/builder seeking an AHD certification must set aside a minimum of 50% of the project units for tenants earning 60% or less of the Jacksonville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) median income.
- c. These rents may not exceed those limits adjusted for bedroom size published annually by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC). Income and rent charts are available directly from the FHFC or the County Housing & Community Services Office.

2. If SHIP (State Housing Initiatives Partnership) or other County funds are utilized, rents shall be maintained at affordable rates for a minimum period of 15 years on designated set-aside units.

- a. Copies of annual income reporting required by State or Federal funding agencies shall be mailed concurrently to the St. Johns County SHIP Program.
- b. If funding is private, the developer must provide, at own expense, annual income reporting on tenant income and rent rates.

B. Single-Family Houses and Condominiums Offered for Purchase

1. At least 30% of the units in a fee simple single-family development (attached or detached units) shall be “affordable” and set aside for those households whose income is at 80% or less of the median annual income adjusted for family size within the Jacksonville Metropolitan Statistical Area’s (MSA) median income (See A.1. above.)

“Affordable” in this situation means that monthly mortgage payments including taxes and insurance do not exceed 30% of those household incomes named above. Homeowner assessment fees and condominium association fees (except for fees such as water and trash collection) are part of the 30% consideration.

2. The sales prices of the designated affordable houses shall not exceed the maximum adopted by the St. Johns SHIP Home Buyer Program as revised.

Section 7.03 Options/Incentives

A. Rental Developments (Multi- or Single-Family)

1. If available and appropriate, the SHIP Program and/or the Board of County Commissioners may offer deferred or partial payment, or a loan, to pay impact or other related fees as a local government contribution.
2. Utility connection fees may be partially deferred by the appropriate utility server. Arrangements must be made directly with the utility server involved.
3. Other contributions such as impact fee reductions for developments targeted to the elderly may be available.
4. If available, the developer/builder may request that density bonuses be granted to the project.

B. Single-Family Houses and Condominiums Offered for Purchase

1. Developers utilizing their own pre-approved model plans or other pre-approved plans from the County Building Department or the SHIP Program (if applicable) are exempt from individual plan review and Plan Checking Fees normally required by the Building Department. All other requirements must be met.
2. If available and appropriate, the SHIP Program, the Board of County Commissioners, or the utility server may offer deferred or partial payment of impact or other related fees on the designated affordable units, density bonuses, and/or deferred utility connection fees.
3. Other contributions for certain targeted populations or areas, for example, the elderly or rural areas, may be available

Section 7.04 Application Submittal

The Application for AHD Designation must be completed and submitted to St. Johns County Housing & Community Services Division, Attention: Housing & Community Services Manager, 200 San Sebastian View, Suite 2300, St. Augustine, FL 32084; fax number is (904) 827-6899; telephone number (904) 827-6890; e-mail housing@sjcfl.us.

If the development is determined to be an AHD for expediting the review process, the developer/builder will be provided with a signed sheet stating the AHD status. This sheet must be attached to the formal application as appropriate (for example, application for construction plan approval).

Prior to acceptance of an Application for Construction Plan Approval, etc., all required review fees must be paid. Submittal shall include all information, signatures and forms appropriate to the Application type as outlined in this Manual.

Upon receipt of a complete submittal, the Application will be processed as outlined in this Manual except the review time noted in DRM Section 13.11 will be reduced by half. In order to take advantage of the reduced review times, the application submittal must include documentation from Housing/Community Services qualifying the project.

The review times as stated above do not apply to public hearing notices.