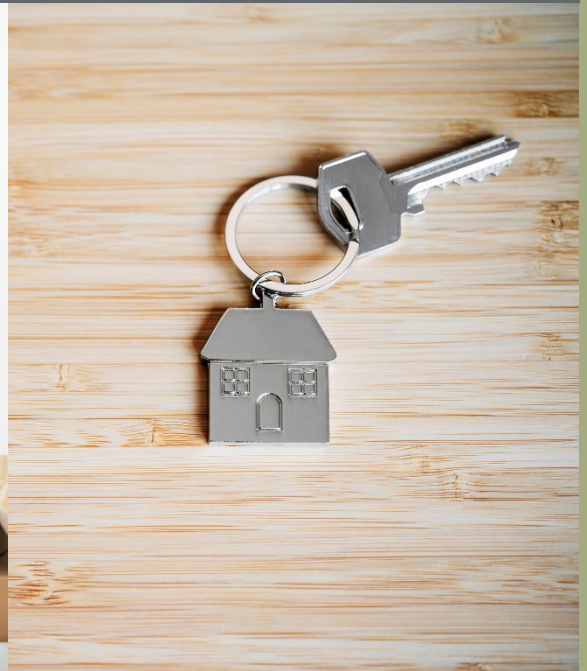




2024

Local Housing Incentive Strategies Update



Prepared by:
Affordable Housing
Advisory Committee
City of Clearwater
FINAL – 12/3/2024

**Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
Report to City Council
SHIP Local Housing Incentive Strategies**

**FINAL
December 3, 2024**

PREPARED BY:

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with Assistance from Wade Trim, Inc.

TO BE SUBMITTED TO:

Florida Housing Finance Corporation

Table of Contents

I.	BACKGROUND	3
1.1	The City of Clearwater.....	3
1.2	The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee	3
1.2.1	Committee Composition	4
1.3	Process to Develop the Local Housing Incentive Strategies.....	6
II.	LOCAL HOUSING INCENTIVE STRATEGIES	7
2.1	Affordable Housing Incentives	7
2.1.1	Expedited Review Process.....	8
2.1.2	Modification of Fees	11
2.1.3	Flexible Densities	14
2.1.4	Infrastructure Capacity	16
2.1.5	Accessory Dwelling Units	17
2.1.6	Parking Reductions.....	20
2.1.7	Flexible Lot Configurations.....	21
2.1.8	Modification of Street Requirements	23
2.1.9	Pre-Adoption Policy Consideration	24
2.1.10	Inventory of Public Lands.....	25
2.1.11	Proximity to Transportation, Employment & Mixed-Use Development	28
2.2	Additional Incentives	30
2.2.1	Adaptive Reuse	30
2.2.2	Land Development Code.....	31
2.2.3	Communication and Marketing of Affordable Housing.....	32
2.2.4	Financing	34
2.2.5	Partnerships	35
	APPENDIX A: City of Clearwater Resolutions	
	APPENDIX B: Affordable Housing in Clearwater	
	APPENDIX C: Values, Principles and Vision	
	APPENDIX D: Advisory Committee Meeting Summaries	
	APPENDIX E: AHAC Recommendations	

I. BACKGROUND

1.1 The City of Clearwater

The City of Clearwater is approximately 26 square miles in size (land area) and located in Pinellas County on the west coast of Florida along the Gulf of Mexico and Tampa Bay. Clearwater is the county seat of Pinellas County and shares boundaries with the municipalities of Largo, Dunedin, Safety Harbor, Belleair Beach and the Town of Belleair. Along with the cities of St. Petersburg and Tampa, Clearwater is one of the most urbanized areas within the Tampa Bay Region.

According to the most recent decennial U.S. Census, the City of Clearwater had a population of 117,292 in 2020. Estimates from the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) for 2023 indicate that the City's current population is approximately 118,904. Based on that share (12.20%) of Pinellas County's projected population, the City may have a population of 124,139 by 2040 based on a medium growth scenario.

1.2 The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

As a recipient of State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) funds the City established an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) in August 2024 as required by Florida Statute (F.S.), Section 420.9076. Section 420.9076, F.S., as most recently amended, requires all municipalities receiving SHIP funds to:

- a) Establish an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC);
- b) Prepare Local Housing Incentive Strategies (LHIS) to facilitate the provision of affordable/workforce housing; and
- c) Amend the Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) to include the recommendations of the LHIS.

The AHAC is responsible for reviewing ordinances, land development regulations, Comprehensive Plan policies, and other aspects of the City's policies and procedures that affect the cost of housing. In addition, the AHAC is responsible for making recommendations to encourage affordable housing.

The AHAC was previously required to submit a LHIS report triennially (i.e., every three years). Effective October 1, 2020, the LHIS report must be submitted annually. The report includes recommendations by the AHAC as well as comments on the implementation of incentives for at least the following eleven (11) distinct areas:

- The processing of approvals of development orders or permits for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects, as provided in s. 163.3177(6)(f)3, F.S.
- All allowable fee waivers provided for the development or construction of affordable housing.
- The allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing.
- The reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons.
- Affordable accessory residential units.
- The reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.

- The allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line configurations for affordable housing.
- The modification of street requirements for affordable housing.
- 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.
- The preparation of a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.
- The support of development near transportation hubs and major employment centers and mixed-use developments.

1.2.1 Committee Composition

The City of Clearwater's first eleven-member AHAC was established on June 19, 2008, representing those actively engaged in the provision of affordable housing. The composition of the first AHAC is outlined in Resolution #08-15 (see **Appendix A**). This first AHAC prepared the City's original LHS, which was approved in December 2008.

Although Florida Statutes required the LHS to be reviewed by the AHAC triennially, the City was not required to review the LHS in 2011 because it did not meet the SHIP funding threshold at that time. In 2014, however, the SHIP funding threshold for LHS review was met. On August 18, 2014, the City formed a second eleven-member AHAC, which reviewed and updated the LHS in December 2014. The composition of the second AHAC is outlined in Resolution #14-26 (see **Appendix A**).

The City formed a third eleven-member AHAC on October 5, 2017, which reviewed and updated the LHS by December 2017. Although the Florida Statute no longer required a resolution of City Council to appoint the AHAC, the third AHAC was appointed by City Council action as Resolution #17-34 (see **Appendix A**).

On September 17, 2020, the City formed a fourth eleven-member AHAC to review and update the LHS by December 2020. The fourth AHAC was appointed by City Council action as Resolution #20-50 (see **Appendix A**).

On September 2, 2021, the City formed a fifth eleven-member AHAC to review and update the LHS by December 2021. The fifth AHAC was appointed by City Council action as Resolution #21-30 (see **Appendix A**).

On September 1, 2022, the City formed a sixth eleven-member AHAC to review and update the LHS by December 2022. The sixth AHAC was appointed by City Council action as Resolution #22-19 (see **Appendix A**).

On September 7, 2023, the City formed a seventh eleven-member AHAC to review and update the LHS by December 2023. The seventh AHAC was appointed by City Council action as Resolution #23-12 (see **Appendix A**).

On August 15, 2024, the City formed an eighth eleven-member AHAC to review and update the LHS by December 2024. The eighth AHAC was appointed by City Council action as Resolution #24-11 (see **Appendix A**).

Section 420.907, F.S. lists the categories from which AHAC members must be selected. There must be at least eight (8) but not more than 11 committee members with representation from at least six (6) of the following categories:

- Citizen actively engaged in the residential home building industry in connection with affordable housing.
- Citizen actively engaged in the banking or mortgage banking industry in connection with affordable housing.
- Citizen representative of those areas of labor actively engaged in home building in connection with affordable housing.
- Citizen actively engaged as an advocate for low-income persons in connection with affordable housing.
- Citizen actively engaged as a for-profit provider of affordable housing.
- Citizen actively engaged as a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing.
- Citizen actively engaged as a real estate professional in connection with affordable housing.
- Citizen actively serving on the local planning agency pursuant to Section 163.3174, F.S.
- Citizen residing within the jurisdiction of the local governing body making the appointments.
- Citizen who represents employers within the jurisdictions.
- Citizen who represents essential services personnel, as defined in the Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP).

Additionally, effective October 1, 2020, at least one committee member must be a locally elected official from the participating jurisdiction (i.e., a City Councilmember).

The appointed 2024 AHAC members are included in **Table 1**, along with their category affiliation.

Table 1: Committee Composition

Name	Category Represented	Date Appointed
1. David Harder	Labor Engaged in Affordable Housing	August 15, 2024
2. Robyn Fiel	Banking & Mortgage Industry	August 15, 2024
3. Christine Bond	Advocate for Low-Income Persons	August 15, 2024
4. Lindsay Dicus-Harrison	Real Estate Professional	August 15, 2024
5. Linda Byars	Citizen Residing in Clearwater	August 15, 2024
6. Camille Hebling	Represents Employers in Clearwater	August 15, 2024
7. Charessa Doty	Not-For-Profit Provider of Affordable Housing	August 15, 2024

8. Rick Vail	Residential Home Building Industry	August 15, 2024
9. Michael Boutzoukas,	Serves on the Local Planning Agency	August 15, 2024
10. Cheri DeBlaere	Represents Essential Services Personnel	August 15, 2024
11. Mike Mannino	Locally Elected Official (City Councilmember)	August 15, 2024

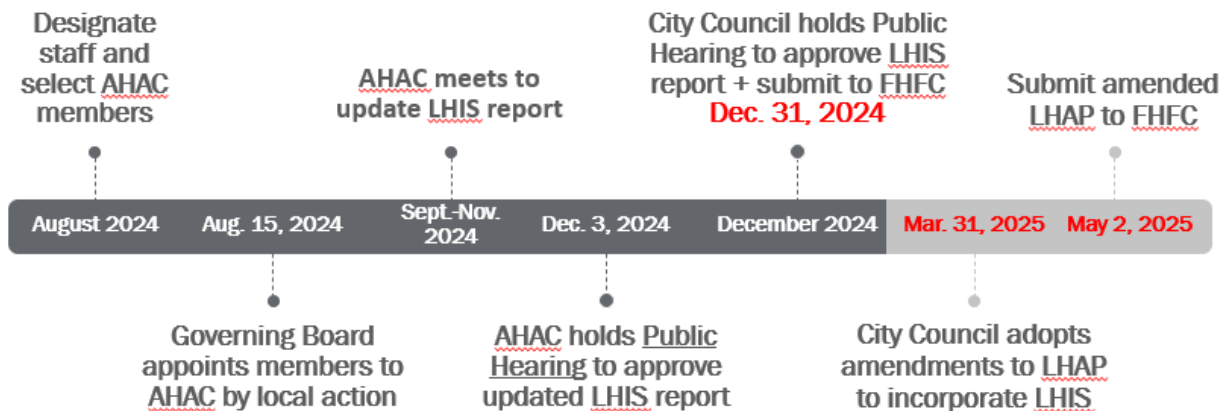
1.3 Process to Develop the Local Housing Incentive Strategies

To update the LHS, City staff and AHAC members actively participated in the following activities to fulfill the requirements of Section 420.9076, F.S.

- Review of requirements of Section 420.9076, F.S.
- Discussion regarding main issues/barriers affecting the production of affordable housing (see **Appendix B**)
- Discussion with for-profit and non-profit developers to identify main barriers to the provision of affordable housing (see **Appendix B**)
- Evaluation with City staff and AHAC of the current regulations (comprehensive plan, code, and ordinances) that provide developer incentives for the provision of affordable housing
- Update of the LHS report

Chart 1 outlines the schedule established in Florida Statutes to prepare the LHS:

Chart 1: Schedule to Meet Requirements



Dates in black are recommended timeline to meet deadlines

Dates in red are statute or rule deadlines

Source: Originally based on Florida Housing Coalition webinar titled, "SHIP Incentive Strategies and the AHAC" (2019). Schedule updated to reflect City of Clearwater events and dates in 2024.

II. LOCAL HOUSING INCENTIVE STRATEGIES

The City of Clearwater’s eighth eleven-member AHAC was formed in August 2024 to review and update the values, principles, vision, and recommendations for the LHIS. The resulting values, principles and vision are found in **Appendix C** and the resulting recommendations are found in **Appendix E**.

2.1 Affordable Housing Incentives

The following provides synopses of the City’s current affordable housing practices, including policies,¹ procedures, ordinances, and regulations. The following also outlines the AHAC’s evaluation of the recommendations to incentivize affordable housing that were previously approved in 2023. As part of the evaluation, the AHAC may continue, modify, or remove some recommendations and may add new recommendations as relevant. Recommendations for incentives are organized by the strategic incentives cited in Florida Statutes respective to the SHIP program funding. Section 420.9076, F.S., cites 11 areas of affordable housing incentives for examination by the AHAC. The AHAC evaluated the City’s implementation of various incentives in these 11 areas and recommended other areas not cited in the statute.

This evaluation of recommendations occurred during meetings with the AHAC and City staff from September through December 2024. The following provides the schedule of these meetings:

9/10/2024	Meeting with the AHAC and staff of the Economic Development & Housing Department
10/28/2024	Meeting with the AHAC and staff of the Economic Development & Housing Department
11/12/2024	Meeting with the AHAC and staff of the Economic Development & Housing Department
12/3/2024	Public Hearing with the AHAC, staff of the Economic Development & Housing Department, and interested members of the public
12/19/2024	City Council meeting to accept the updated LHIS report

Summaries of the AHAC meetings held on September 10, 2024, October 28, 2024, and November 12, 2024, can be found in **Appendix D**. The LHIS report is a result of the meetings held with the AHAC and the input of City staff to determine the feasibility of the AHAC recommendations. On December 3, 2024, the AHAC reviewed the LHIS report and finalized its recommendations regarding affordable housing incentives. The final recommendations, approved by the AHAC at a public hearing, are captured in **Appendix E**. The LHIS report will be heard by City Council on December 19, 2024, and the recommendations will be used to amend the Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) and the City’s *Comprehensive Plan*.

¹ All references made to the City of Clearwater’s “Comprehensive Plan” are drawn from the official document titled, “Clearwater 2045” as adopted by City Council in January 2024 and inclusive of any amendments as of the date of this report.

2.1.1 Expedited Review Process

Strategic Incentive No. 1 (Florida Statute)

The processing of approvals of development orders or permits for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects, as provided in s. 163.3177(6)(f)3, F.S.

Meeting Synopsis:

No discussion related to expediting review processes occurred during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024.

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, the “Request for Expedited Permit Processing for Affordable Housing Activity” form was discussed, along with the duration of single-family permit reviews (four days initially and three days subsequently). Clarification was provided regarding the timing of multi-family versus single-family permit reviews, and the applicability of the City’s expedited permitting process.

The AHAC also inquired about applicability to other types of housing (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, etc.), whether the expedited review process was working, whether the process applies to only new construction, and how affordable housing projects are funded. City staff and the Consultant responded affirmatively to the committee’s questions and conveyed that multiple funding sources are used (i.e., private, public, grant, etc.) for such projects.

The AHAC then discussed providing a list of potential mentors experienced in affordable housing, which was Recommendation 1.3 of the 2023 LHS report. The AHAC asked whether that recommendation had been implemented. City staff responded that the Economic Development & Housing Department provides technical assistance to developers seeking to provide affordable housing. However, a list of established developers to provide mentoring has not been provided. **The AHAC expressed continued interest and need for the mentor list.**

The AHAC also inquired about how response times are measured, for example by customer service survey or similar tool. City staff responded that the general rule is response within 24 hours or one (1) business day.

The AHAC discussed the development of a brochure, which City staff confirmed was developed and is available on the City’s website. The new tri-fold brochure “Affordable Housing Permitting Process at a Glance” can be viewed on the Development Approval and Permitting Process webpage, and at the links below:

<https://www.myclearwater.com/Business-Development/Information-for-Developers-of-Affordable-Housing/Affordable-Housing-Development/Development-Approval-and-Permitting-Process>

https://www.myclearwater.com/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/planning-amp-development/documents/new-forms/affordable_housing_permitting_brochure-6.pdf

The AHAC also confirmed that the “Request for Expedited Permit Processing for Affordable Housing Activity” form exists and is available to developers.

The AHAC discussed building example plans, and whether any templates have been submitted for pre-screening. The AHAC discussed whether building example plans (referenced under Recommendation 1.5) were truly an incentive, since none have been submitted. Committee member Rick Vail, of Habitat for Humanity, stated that they are in the process of creating master plans that encompass the typical homes they construct to decrease the amount of time in permitting. Such plans could be on file and pre-reviewed to expedite permitting. After discussion, the AHAC decided to continue Recommendation 1.5 to allow more time to determine whether such recommendation will be effective as an incentive.

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, the AHAC requested information about how many “Request for Expedited Permit Processing for Affordable Housing Activity” forms had been submitted through the expedited permitting process. At the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, City staff responded that eight (8) permits were expedited. However, City staff stated the count does not show the full story because not all affordable housing developers specifically request expedited permitting or identify affordable housing in their application narrative. As a result, City staff will work with the Planning & Development Department and the City Clerk’s office regarding how to better track affordable housing permits.

The AHAC inquired about the eight (8) expedited permits and asked if the applicant must identify their application as expedited, or whether City staff (in house) identifies the permit as expedited. City staff responded that the Planning & Development Department and/or the Economic Development & Housing Department upon first contact will provide the applicant with a letter that confirms the application is for affordable housing and qualifies for expediting permitting and associated incentives.

The AHAC also discussed how applicants work together with the Economic Development & Housing Department to submit that letter with their initial permit application, which is part of the timeline for submittal. The AHAC noted that there are likely more than eight (8) affordable housing projects in the City of Clearwater. The AHAC and City staff then discussed adding a checkbox to the permit application to make it easier to identify affordable housing projects as they come in, and to move them into the expedited permitting process.

The AHAC inquired as to whether the eight (8) expedited permits were single-family or multifamily, and whether multifamily units were counted individually or as a project. City staff responded that they were counted as a project. The AHAC asked whether the current permit application has a checkbox for affordable housing. City staff responded that the current permit application does not have such checkbox. **After discussion, the AHAC recommended adding a checkbox to the permit**

application to designate the project as affordable housing, so that such developments could be flagged early on.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 1.1, 1.2, or 1.5 during the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024. However, minor changes to AHAC Recommendations 1.3 and 1.4 were proposed by the committee, which were confirmed during the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024. Those changes focused on extending dates to allow more time for staff to implement the recommendations.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 1.1 and 1.5 during the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024. However, minor changes to Recommendation 1.2 were proposed to facilitate the identification of affordable housing projects via a checkbox on the permit application.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The City of Clearwater Economic Development & Housing Department continues to provide a form titled, “Request for Expedited Permit Processing for Affordable Housing Activity” that, when completed and submitted by the developer, expedites permitting for affordable housing projects. The form can be issued for a site-specific project or for a one-year period, depending on a developer’s business strategy. This form does not expedite the review process for site plans, land use plan amendments, rezoning, or annexations, as these submittals are subject to board-dependent meeting schedules (e.g., Community Development Board, City Council).

Currently, and depending on the type of project, the Assistant Director of the Economic Development & Housing Department and the Permit Manager and/or Planning Manager act as liaisons between the developer and the City.

The Assistant Director of the Economic Development & Housing Department determines whether a project qualifies as affordable housing and, if eligible, provides the developer with the “Request for Expedited Permit Processing for Affordable Housing Activity” form and applicable checklists.

The Economic Development & Housing Department and Planning & Development Department support customer service for potential affordable housing projects by providing information and responding to developer inquiries by the end of business day (EOB) or within 24 hours. The Planning & Development Department utilizes technology to enhance administrative efficiencies. All permitting is facilitated by a one-stop “ePermit Hub” portal that supports electronic plan submittal, review, and inspections, or through Accela. Information, forms, and checklists are available online and at the counter for all types of projects (not necessarily affordable housing). Target dates and permit status are posted via the ePermit Hub portal and review time has been generally reduced to 14 days.

The Housing Division updated its webpages to improve communication, and another update is in process. The Planning & Development Department also provides information on its webpages.

The City already maintains a “Building Plan Review Committee (BPRC) & Pre-Application Meetings” webpage that summarizes the BPRC’s role in the City’s development review processes; however, this

webpage is not specific to policies or processes that incentivize affordable housing in the City of Clearwater. The link to this webpage is provided below:

<https://www.myclearwater.com/My-Government/0-City-Departments/Planning-Development/Construction-Services/Building-Plan-Review-Committee-BPRC-Pre-Application-Meetings>

While the City regularly encourages developers to submit template plans to expedite review, none have submitted template plans to date.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 1.1 and 1.5 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes, and modified Recommendations 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 as shown below in strikethrough/underline:

- 1.2 *The Assistant Director of Economic Development & Housing and Permit Manager will continue to be the primary and secondary points of contact when submitting multi-family affordable housing projects. Through close coordination, these two staff positions will:*
- ...
- *Create a process and definitive project requirement checklist for affordable housing projects for each level of review and stage of permitting, **starting with an “affordable housing project” checkbox on application form(s) as applicable.***
- ...
- 1.3 *Continue to improve customer service toward potential project applicants by:*
- ...
- *Providing a list of potential mentors experienced in affordable housing by end of first quarter ~~2024~~ **2025** and updated annually thereafter*
- ...
- 1.4 *Develop by end of ~~first quarter~~ **year** 2024 and annually update thereafter a brochure and other informational handouts to be published in a prominent location on the City’s Affordable Housing webpage that explain the City’s development approval and permitting process to developers, incl. but not limited to:*
- ...

Implementation:

Recommendations 1.1 and 1.5 are already implemented to varying degrees by City staff. Recommendations 1.2., 1.3, and 1.4 will require further coordination between City departments and staff to fully implement. City staff will work with the Planning & Development Department to add an “affordable housing checkbox” to the City’s permit application(s) as applicable (Recommendation 1.2). Although City staff currently helps developers through the application process, no formal list of developer mentors (i.e., non-staff peers) has been compiled. By first quarter of 2025, City staff will

focus on developing a list of mentors (Recommendation 1.3). Because the affordable housing brochure was recently completed, the AHAC modified the completion timeline to the end of year 2024, rather than the first quarter (Recommendation 1.4).

2.1.2 Modification of Fees

Strategic Incentive No. 2 (Florida Statute)

All allowable fee waivers provided for the development or construction of affordable housing.

Meeting Synopsis:

No discussion regarding the modification of fees occurred during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024.

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, the AHAC discussed Recommendation 2.4 and requested additional information regarding the degree to which the Economic Development & Housing Department can assist with payment of fees using funds designated for affordable housing.

In follow-up to questions raised during the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, City staff provided information regarding impact fee incentives in the City of Clearwater. During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, City staff stated that funding for impact fees totaled \$7,521, with a budgeted allocation of \$260,000 toward impact fee assistance.

No further discussion regarding the modification of fees occurred during the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 during the AHAC meetings.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

While impact fees do increase the costs of affordable housing; it is also true that affordable housing creates the same demand for public infrastructure as other types of development. Therefore, the City of Clearwater charges specific fees to conduct development reviews and issue permits for affordable housing projects. The current City of Clearwater fee structure is adopted as Appendix A (Schedule of Fees, Rates and Charges) of the *Community Development Code*. Development review fees are based on the level of review, and permitting fees are based on construction valuation. City of Clearwater impact fees are assessed per unit. Depending on market conditions, these fees could potentially deter the development of affordable housing.

In Florida, impact fees may be waived by exception for affordable housing projects consistent with the Florida Impact Fee Act, Section 163.31801(11), F.S., which does not require the local government to use any revenues to offset the revenue loss. This exception or waiver is applicable to housing that is affordable as defined by Section 420.9071, F.S. (i.e., 30% of 120%).

In 2016, Pinellas County restructured its transportation impact fees to fund not only standard road widening but also multi-modal improvements such as mass transit, bicycle, or pedestrian features. Such alternative modes of transportation are beneficial to persons without reliable access to an automobile and complement the provision of affordable housing. Consequently, the 2017 AHAC recommended coordination with Pinellas County regarding data-based rate flexibility within the multi-modal impact to support the provision of affordable housing.

The City of Clearwater is identified as Multi-Modal Impact Fee District #6/6A within Pinellas County.

A Multimodal Impact Fee is charged to offset the cost of improvements needed as development occurs and population increases resulting in an increased burden on traffic infrastructure. Revenue from the fee is shared between Pinellas County and the City of Clearwater. The fee can be reduced or offset through a traffic study, reduction for low-income housing, and pre-existing development traffic counts.

Fee Waiver or Exemption – Government projects (e.g., library, rec center, etc.) are exempt. This exemption applies to both the City and County portion of impact fee revenue.

Reduction for low-income housing:

- *A single-family home 1,500 square feet (SF) or less for a qualifying low-income household (LIHH) is charged \$653 compared to \$1,003 for the same size home for a household not qualifying as LIHH. The fee for non-qualifying LIHH increases as follows: \$1,242 for 1,501 SF to 2,499 SF; and \$1,529 for a home 2,500 SF and larger. Square footage is determined by heated area.*
- *Multi-family projects for qualifying LIHH are charged \$557/unit while projects not qualifying as LIHH are charged \$972/unit.*

Fees are cited in Pinellas County's *Land Development Code*, Chapter 150, Article II. Alternatively, applicants can submit independent analysis to support further reduction of impact fees based on trip generation or economic studies.

In 2021, the AHAC recommended that the new Parks & Recreation impact fee structure either reduce or waive impact fees for affordable housing. These fees were adopted by City Council on July 20, 2023, and were revised to include a waiver for affordable housing. The Planning & Development Department also recently completed changes to its fee structure to reduce plan review and permit fees by 75% for affordable housing. Moreover, the Economic Development & Housing Department has a policy for City-funded affordable housing projects whereby, if the developer does not realize a 12% profit on total development costs, the City will write-down the loan to provide for a 12% profit.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

Implementation:

Recommendation 2.1 is already implemented by Pinellas County but requires ongoing coordination between jurisdictions to certify affordable housing projects. This coordination will be implemented by the Engineering Department and will be monitored by City staff of the Economic Development & Housing Department and Planning & Development Department. In response to Recommendations 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4, City staff will continue to monitor how its internal departments and other local governments are addressing plan review and permit fees and impact fees to ensure Clearwater's incentives are competitive throughout the region.

2.1.3 Flexible Densities

Strategic Incentive No. 3 (Florida Statute)

The allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing.

Meeting Synopsis:

Flexible densities were discussed during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024. The AHAC discussed looking at density in the City of Clearwater as an incentive and working within the City's zoning code, the *Community Development Code*, to incentivize reasonable higher density so that more units can be put on the market. The AHAC also discussed the North Greenwood neighborhood and how a more current zoning strategy for certain neighborhoods is needed to match residents' needs with housing opportunities. For example, developing vertically and allowing multi-unit buildings on current lots. The AHAC discussed coordination with the Planning & Development Department regarding a zoning strategy.

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, while discussing Recommendations 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3, the AHAC inquired about implementation related to the Live Local Act, which was to include a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) resource on the City's website. City staff confirmed that the Live Local Act FAQ resource is available and posted on the City's website at the following location:

<https://www.myclearwater.com/Business-Development/Information-for-Developers-of-Affordable-Housing/Live-Local-Act>

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the Consultant confirmed the committee's support for better zoning strategies, including incentivizing reasonable higher density and vertical development to allow multi-unit buildings on current lots. The Consultant and City staff also confirmed that the Live Local Act Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) resource was available and posted on the City's website.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 3.1, 3.2, or 3.3 during the AHAC meetings.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The City of Clearwater supports flexibility in densities for affordable housing through its *Comprehensive Plan* policies and through its *Community Development Code*.

The City's current *Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan* was adopted in January 2024. Current *Comprehensive Plan* policies in support of flexible densities are adopted in the Quality Places Chapter as follows:

Policy QP 6.1.5 – Continue to provide density bonuses for affordable housing developments consistent with the CDC [Community Development Code]. Such bonuses shall not be provided to properties within in the CSA [Coastal Storm Area] unless preempted by state legislation. (Quality Places Chapter)

Policy QP 6.1.8 – Develop standards to implement state legislation allowing affordable housing to be built on any parcel of land zoned for commercial or industrial use. (Quality Places Chapter)

Consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* and previous AHAC recommendations, the *Community Development Code* contains affordable housing incentives under Section 3-920 that include a density bonus. Within Section 3-920, there is a requirement for a pre-application conference to determine a project's eligibility for the density bonus. Subsection "A. Affordable Housing Density Dwelling Units" contains specific criteria and simplified formulas for calculating the additional density available to affordable housing projects. The *Community Development Code* outlines the procedures for review and approval, percentages of affordable units, standards such as compatibility and green design, and required covenants to maintain affordability. In the past the Planning & Development Department added language to the City's affordable housing incentives to provide more clarity regarding the density bonus provision. Density allowances are typically confirmed with City staff during pre-application Building Plan Review Committee (BPRC) meetings.

In addition to the Density Bonus, the *Community Development Code* establishes flexibility criteria for specific uses requiring additional development review. Such uses fall into two categories: Flexible Standard Development and Flexible Development.

Flexible Standard Development – Typically requires Level One approval, which involves review by City staff only, including the Development Review Coordinator and Development Review Committee.

Flexible Development – Typically requires Level Two approval, which involves review by the Community Development Board. Some applications may warrant additional review, in which case Level Three approval is required. Level Three approval involves greater complexity and requires action by the City Council.

In some cases, affordable housing projects also fall under the flexible development criteria for the specific zoning district in which the project is located, which typically require Level Two approval. For example, Section 2-704 defines infill flexibility criteria for the Commercial zoning district, which

includes Flexibility Criteria F.5.d, “...the proposed use provides for the provision of affordable housing.”

Additionally, the City of Clearwater maintains a “Public Amenities Incentive Pool” (Section C-301) and application process whereby applicants can request additional density in return for projects located in Character Districts designated by the Downtown Redevelopment Plan that also provide for eligible public amenities identified within that plan. On April 20, 2023, Ordinance Number 9664-23 was passed to update Section C-301 to include language regarding the tiered Public Amenities Incentive Pool which encourages even greater density for multi-family rentals. On December 19, 2023, Ordinance Number 9729-23, amended Section C-301 to clarify that the residential density bonus could not be stacked.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 3.1., 3.2, and 3.3 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

Implementation:

Recommendations 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 are already implemented by the *Comprehensive Plan* or *Community Development Code* and will be continued. The *Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan* update process was completed, and the LHIS report has been revised to cite new policies as recently adopted. The City is beginning to tackle policy changes related to the Live Local Act. In the meantime, a Live Local Act FAQ resource was prepared by City staff and is now posted to the City’s website.

2.1.4 Infrastructure Capacity

Strategic Incentive No. 4 (Florida Statute)

The reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons.

Meeting Synopsis:

The City’s infrastructure capacity was not identified as an affordable housing barrier. The City of Clearwater is nearly built-out and has sufficient infrastructure capacity for infill development. Therefore, there is no need to reserve infrastructure capacity.

The AHAC continued the previous recommendation of “no recommendation” from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The City of Clearwater does not require reservation of infrastructure capacity specific to housing for very-low-income, low-income, and moderate-income persons. The City is nearly built-out and has excess capacity for its public facilities. Consistent with the City’s current *Clearwater 2045*

Comprehensive Plan, the Planning & Development Department closely monitors all concurrency requirements so that adequate infrastructure is in place prior to development:

Policy PI 10.2.1 – Determine, prior to the issuance of development orders, whether sufficient capacity of essential public facilities to meet the minimum standards for levels of service for the existing population and a proposed development will be available concurrent with the impacts of the proposed development. (Plan Implementation Chapter)

Since concurrency is no longer required by the State, the City does not require certificates of concurrency.

AHAC Recommendations:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC made no change to the recommendation of “no recommendation” as previously approved regarding infrastructure capacity.

Implementation:

Not applicable (no recommendation)

2.1.5 Accessory Dwelling Units

Strategic Incentive No. 5 (Florida Statute)

Affordable accessory residential units.

Meeting Synopsis:

During the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, the AHAC discussed incentives for construction or rehabilitation of accessory dwelling units, such as rebates up to a certain dollar amount to assist the supply of affordable housing, with a lease agreement that meets HUD’s affordability requirements.

The AHAC also discussed investor-driven residential real estate as a barrier to affordable housing. It was noted that large investors take affordable housing off the market, drive-up costs, and compete with residents and affordable housing developers to buy properties. For example, build-to-rent properties (e.g., single-family) are driving up rental costs, and short-term rentals are reducing the long-term rental supply. Due to Pinellas County’s limited land and housing inventory, these investors take up a larger share of the residential market when compared to other counties in the region.

Relatedly, the AHAC also discussed how cost burden is also impacting senior citizens that rely on social security and fixed incomes. For example, when they receive these limited funds, they will often use those funds to stay in hotels temporarily (often sharing a room) and then end up back on the street. Although senior citizens have some income, due to their age and age-related disabilities, they are perceived as unemployable and there are no alternative affordable housing options available to them.

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, regarding Recommendation 5.2, the Consultant presented information about the recent City of Clearwater Ordinance 9758-24, which implemented the City's *Comprehensive Plan* Policy QP 6.1.7 and Policy QP 6.1.10 by providing corresponding standards in the *Community Development Code* for accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Also, regarding Recommendation 5.2, the AHAC discussed ADU occupancy/tenure requirements, and confirmed that long-term rental of ADUs is still allowed since short-term rental of ADUs is not allowed by policy. It was noted that Recommendation 5.3, regarding flexibility for alternative unit types, is in progress and has not yet been implemented.

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the AHAC confirmed that accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are an important incentive strategy for the City, especially considering the lack of available land in Clearwater. However, there is a need for education regarding ADUs, and that education aspect cannot be overstated. The committee noted that young first-time homebuyers, fixed-income elderly, and persons with disabilities are the most challenged to find housing in the City. ADUs can be a tool to fill those housing gaps, but education is critical. The committee noted that components of ADUs can be restrictive (e.g., homestead exemptions, etc.), and that coordination with the Pinellas County Property Appraiser is also critical. Another barrier to ADUs may be limitations on who can develop an ADU (i.e., who can apply for an ADU building permit). The City's code requires that the property upon which the ADU is constructed be "owner-occupied".

The AHAC inquired about Down Payment Assistance (DPA). City staff discussed burdensome monitoring requirements surrounding ADUs developed with state or federal funding, in terms of ensuring long-term affordability. The AHAC also discussed using CRA funding to support ADUs, and City staff discussed Down Payment Assistance (DPA) and affordable housing in general as a key component of CRAs. The AHAC inquired about what monitoring entails, and the definition of affordable housing in that context (i.e., 120% AMI for SHIP). The AHAC also discussed rehabilitation loans regarding ADUs.

The AHAC suggested perhaps utilizing some of the funds for impact fee reduction to also reduce the cost of ADU development. The AHAC also discussed programmatic concerns, density, and the context of small projects due to limited land availability in Clearwater. After discussion, the AHAC recommended adding educational and financial incentives (e.g., rebates, fee reductions, etc.) for ADUs to reduce barriers to development of such units.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 during the AHAC meetings. However, a new recommendation (Recommendation 5.4) was proposed on November 12, 2024, to add educational and financial incentives for ADUs.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The City allows for the provision of accessory dwelling units in nonresidential zoning districts, including the City's Commercial ("C"), Tourist ("T"), Downtown ("D"), Office ("O"), Institutional ("I"), and Industrial Research and Technology ("IRT") districts, as described in the *Community Development Code*. On June 6, 2024, the City adopted Ordinance Number 9758-24, which now allows accessory

dwelling units in certain residential zoning districts including Low Density Residential (“LDR”), Low Medium Density Residential (“LMDR”), and Medium Density Residential (“MDR”).

Regarding the allowance of accessory residential units in residential zoning districts, the Quality Places Chapter of the City’s current *Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan* provides policies regarding accessory dwelling units and “missing middle” housing types:

Policy QP 6.1.6 – Establish missing middle and senior housing density bonuses and standards in the CDC [Community Development Code] consistent with provisions of the Countywide Rules. (Quality Places Chapter)

Policy QP 6.1.7 – Support amendments to the CDC [Community Development Code] to enable greater housing diversity and affordability, such as accessory dwelling units and other missing middle housing types. (Quality Places Chapter)

Policy QP 6.1.10 – Allow accessory dwelling units in all residential zoning districts and exempt them from density provisions to provide additional and diverse housing options integrated into existing neighborhoods. Such accessory dwelling units shall not be used for short-term rental purposes. (Quality Places Chapter)

Although adopted by policy, these actions have not been fully implemented as standards in the *Community Development Code*. Although, the City recently amended the *Community Development Code* (Ordinance Number 9758-24) to establish standards for accessory dwelling units in certain zoning districts, the City has not yet established regulations for missing middle housing types or a senior housing density bonus. The City is currently working on specific *Community Development Code* amendments for the North Greenwood Neighborhood to address Policy QP 6.1.6. The implementation of these policies will continue to be reviewed through 2025, which will afford City staff the opportunity to consider other alternative housing type standards, including co-housing, based on regional examples and best practices.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes, and added new Recommendation 5.4 as shown below in strikethrough/underline:

5.4 Consider educational and financial incentives that reduce barriers to the rehabilitation and construction of accessory dwelling units, such as information about the permitting process specific to accessory dwelling units, rebates, or other fee reductions.

Implementation:

The LHIS report is revised to cite new *Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan* policies as recently adopted. Recommendation 5.1 and 5.2 are implemented through the *Community Development Code* and those recommendations will be continued. Recommendation 5.3, regarding flexibility for

alternative unit types, is not yet implemented and requires amendment to the *Community Development Code*. New Recommendation 5.4 will require implementation by City staff and/or City Council depending on the type of educational and financial incentives devised.

2.1.6 *Parking Reductions*

Strategic Incentive No. 6 (Florida Statute)

The reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.

Meeting Synopsis:

No discussion regarding parking or setback reductions occurred during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, or the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2 during the AHAC meetings.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The Quality Places Chapter of the City's current *Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan* supports the reduction of parking and setback requirements for development flexibility through the following policy:

Policy QP 2.2.1 – Review the US 19 Zoning District and Development Standards to ensure provisions encourage transit-supportive and walkable forms of development while allowing sufficient levels of flexibility to address unique development opportunities and constraints. (Quality Places Chapter)

However, this policy is directed to the US 19 Zoning District and Development Standards. In general, the City's *Community Development Code* establishes parking flexibility criteria for specific uses requiring additional development review. For example, attached dwellings, residential infill projects, comprehensive infill redevelopment projects, or other uses that could provide affordable housing, may qualify as Level Two uses and allow for flexible development standards, including reduced parking and setbacks.

More specifically, the *Community Development Code* allows for the reduction of parking requirements for affordable housing if the project is located near a transit stop:

Article 3, Division 9, Section 3-920.B. Affordable housing parking reductions – Any reduction in required off-street parking shall only apply to those dwelling units which are certified by the City's Economic Development and Housing Department as affordable housing. All other dwelling units not certified as affordable housing shall meet the minimum off-street parking requirements set

out for the use in the applicable zoning district. Certified affordable housing projects may be eligible for a reduction in the required off-street parking consistent with the following:

- a. The parking requirement may be reduced to between one and one-half (1.5) and one (1) space per unit for projects located within 1,000 feet of a transit stop if the affordable housing units are designated for senior citizens or disabled persons.*
- b. For all other affordable housing projects, the parking requirement may be reduced to between one and one half (1.5) and one and one quarter (1.25) space per unit for projects located within 1,500 feet of a transit stop with 30-minute or more frequent service during peak hours and 60-minute or more frequent service during off-peak hours.*
- c. The distance a site is from a transit stop shall be measured from the nearest point of exit from the parcel based upon the shortest route of ordinary pedestrian travel.*

Additional flexibility for affordable housing may be provided through the Live Local Act.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

Implementation:

The LHS report is revised to cite new *Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan* policies as recently adopted. Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2 are already implemented by the *Comprehensive Plan* or *Community Development Code* and will be continued. City staff will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies in the *Comprehensive Plan* and standards in the *Community Development Code* related to reduced requirements for affordable housing.

2.1.7 Flexible Lot Configurations

Strategic Incentive No. 7 (Florida Statute)

The allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line configurations for affordable housing.

Meeting Synopsis:

No discussion regarding flexible lot configurations occurred during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, or the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024.

The AHAC made no change to Recommendation 7.1 during the AHAC meetings.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

A legal lot of record, by definition, has fixed boundaries by a plat recorded in the Official Records of Pinellas County. It is therefore assumed that this incentive is intended to address flexible site plan configurations, rather than single flexible lot configurations. The City currently allows for site plan flexibility through the development review process, as supported by the City's *Community Development Code* and Article 2. Zoning Districts therein, which establishes flexibility criteria for specific uses. Such criteria may allow for more flexible site plan configurations but may also require an improved site plan to document how the flexibility will result in better design and/or appearance.

The allowance of flexible site plan configurations, including zero-lot line configurations for affordable housing, must be sensitive to the character and context of existing neighborhoods. To this end, the City's incentives for affordable housing include compatibility criteria in conjunction with the density bonus as follows:

Article 3, Division 9, Section 3-920.A.3.c.i. Compatibility Criteria –

...

- b. Proportionality and scale of the proposed development shall be consistent with the community character of the immediate vicinity of the parcel proposed for development.*
- c. The overall aesthetics of the proposed development shall be compatible with or an improvement to the community character as determined by the community development coordinator.*
- d. The scale and coverage of the proposed development shall be compatible with adjacent properties. If the overall bulk is larger than the surrounding buildings, the bulk may be reduced with the help of design elements such as step backs and setbacks...*

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 7.1 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

Implementation:

Recommendation 7.1 is already implemented by the *Community Development Code* and will be continued.

2.1.8 Modification of Street Requirements

Strategic Incentive No. 8 (Florida Statute)

The modification of street requirements for affordable housing.

Meeting Synopsis:

Street requirements were not identified as an affordable housing barrier during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. Therefore, modification of the City’s existing street requirements was not recommended.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The City’s general standards for streets are defined in Article 3, Division 19, Section 3-1904 of the *Community Development Code*:

Article 3, Division 19, Section 3-1904. Streets – Generally –

- A. The functional classification, arrangement, character, extent, width and location of all streets shall conform to the thoroughfare element of the comprehensive plan and shall be considered in their relation to existing and planned streets, topographical and environmental conditions, public convenience and safety, and their appropriate relationship to the proposed use of the land to be served by such streets.*

Section 3-1904 also specifies minimum right-of-way and lane designations for each classification of roadway, including neighborhood roads. A minimum pavement width of 24 feet plus curb is required for all neighborhood roads, 26 feet plus curb for all local roads, and 38 feet for all collector roads. These requirements are in place to maintain public health and safety.

Moreover, the City’s *Community Development Code* requires that all streets be improved by a developer with paving, curbs or gutters, and sidewalks or on-street parking where necessary. These standards apply to all development, including affordable housing projects. Since the City of Clearwater is nearly built out, the City’s infrastructure system is already in place, and it is not likely that affordable housing projects will need to provide local or collector roads. At most, such projects may require the provision of neighborhood roads internal to the site.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC made no change to the recommendation of “no recommendation” as previously approved regarding modification of street requirements.

Implementation:

Not applicable (no recommendation)

2.1.9 Pre-Adoption Policy Consideration

Strategic Incentive No.9 (Florida Statute)

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.

Meeting Synopsis:

No specific issues with the City's current pre-adoption policy consideration process were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. The current process is working.

However, during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, the committee did discuss recent State legislation that may affect housing affordability in the City. For example, the milestone assessments in response to the Surfside condominium collapse may triple or quadruple the housing costs for older residents who have lived in their condominium a long time. These residents may not be able to continue to afford to live in their condominiums due to such repair assessments. For older buildings, the assessments for repair costs will make them unaffordable to many. This may also negatively affect the inventory of affordable housing, as the condominiums must sell at higher prices to offset the assessment costs. The ability to mortgage those units may be affected by the reserve requirements/regulatory standards that lenders will be considering. Incentivizing new condominium development in the City of Clearwater was discussed to offset the issue of condominium assessments affecting older buildings and their residents.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 9.1 and 9.2 during the AHAC meetings.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The Economic Development & Housing Department typically reviews City policies, procedures, and regulations that may affect the cost of housing as part of its annual reporting for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program and the Federal Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) programs.

Moreover, the Economic Development & Housing Department typically receives new City *Comprehensive Plan* and *Community Development Code* provisions and ordinances for comment and participates in the City's review process prior to adoption. This review process is maintained as a regular agenda item during Senior Executive Team bi-monthly meetings. The department also participates in community engagement sessions when discussing potential updates to the *Community Development Code*.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 9.1 and 9.2 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

Implementation:

Recommendations 9.1 and 9.2 are already implemented through either state and federal reporting requirements or regular City staff meetings, which will be continued.

2.1.10 Inventory of Public Lands

Strategic Incentive No. 10 (Florida Statute)

The preparation of a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.

Meeting Synopsis:

No discussion regarding the inventory of public lands occurred during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024.

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, while discussing Recommendation 10.1, the AHAC asked how much public land is available. The Consultant responded that there are currently 31 properties on the list. City staff stated there are likely 30 properties currently (i.e., one less than the 31 counted when the list was prepared). Implementation of Recommendations 10.1, 10.2, 10.4, and 10.5 is ongoing to meet requirements under Florida Statutes.

The AHAC discussed Recommendation 10.4, regarding repeat code violations. City staff provided information about the process, coordination with code enforcement and the list of violations, and outreach to homeowners (e.g., postcard). City staff stated that no specific projects have resulted from that outreach. The AHAC discussed whether to continue Recommendation 10.4, given that no projects have resulted. The AHAC inquired about whether there is a list of properties that have been condemned and actions taken, and how long they stay on the list. City staff explained that the City can assess fees and eventually foreclose on the properties. City staff also explained that the degree of violations varies, as well as occupancy. The AHAC discussed how the current incentive (Recommendation 10.4) makes sense, but perhaps education about the incentive is lacking. City staff stated that the outreach included direct contact information and links to the City's updated website for more specific information. The AHAC inquired about whether there is a specific agreement with code enforcement for information sharing with the Economic Development & Housing Department. City staff will research the question and respond.

The AHAC discussed Recommendation 10.5 and the policy/procedure for distribution of city owned lots. The AHAC inquired about the scoring matrix for lot disposition. City staff stated that there are approximately 20 criteria considered, and that the developer fills out an application for lot disposition. Lots from the City's inventory of public lands, titled "Affordable Housing Inventory List" may be requested by a developer through a competitive process. Currently, the lots on the list are multi-family or mixed-use sites, mostly in North Greenwood. Lots on the list are approved or affordable

housing and can be purchased or donated. If donated, they must be developed for affordable housing. Lots on the list were acquired by the City over time for various reasons.

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the AHAC again discussed prior Recommendation 10.4, regarding repeat code violations. City staff confirmed that there is not a specific agreement with Code Enforcement for information sharing. However, the Economic Development & Housing Department did coordinate with Code Enforcement to obtain a list of all properties with fines and then sent letters to those homeowners offering assistance through the City's rehabilitation program.

The AHAC inquired about properties with substantial fines and whether that would preclude such homeowners from obtaining a rehabilitation loan. City staff explained that liens or judgements would disqualify them. The AHAC inquired as to whether the City has a Code Enforcement Board. City staff responded that the Code Enforcement Board meets monthly to review properties with active code violations. The homeowner receives a quarterly statement about such code violations, and any resulting liens for repeated noncompliance are recorded with the City. City staff clarified that if a homeowner is actively working to resolve the code violation, it is unlikely that case would go to the Code Enforcement Board. In such cases, a rehabilitation loan could help the homeowner avoid further code enforcement action. The AHAC again emphasized the education aspect of such a recommendation. The AHAC also noted that there is a dashboard on the City's website to track code enforcement issues throughout the City. Moreover, the AHAC emphasized the success of ongoing partnerships between City departments and developers to redevelop blighted properties. After discussion, the AHAC decided not to modify Recommendation 10.4, but to continue the recommendation as written.

Regarding the City's inventory of public lands, the AHAC inquired about how those properties were acquired by the City. City staff responded that the properties were acquired in a variety of ways, such as tax liens or intentional purchases for affordable housing. The barriers to those properties selling are lack of interest, possibly due to their location, configuration, or zoning.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, and 10.5 during the AHAC meetings.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The City of Clearwater is nearly built out. Most of the vacant parcels remaining are less than one acre in size. Due to the lack of land to develop affordable housing, the City offers flexibility through the *Community Development Code* to help developers utilize existing sites for infill and redevelopment projects. To facilitate affordable housing projects, the City keeps an inventory of publicly owned land suitable for affordable housing titled, "Affordable Housing Inventory List," which is published on the City's website:

<https://www.myclearwater.com/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/economic-development/documents/action-plan/2023-affordable-housing-inventory-list-2023-08-14.pdf>

The Affordable Housing Inventory List is maintained by current *Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan* policies:

Policy QP 6.1.11 – Continue to identify surplus city-owned lands with potential to support affordable housing development and publish a list of properties on the city's website. (Quality Places Chapter)

Policy QP 6.1.12 – Identify other publicly or semi-publicly owned lands suitable for workforce and affordable housing and partner with property owners for potential development. (Quality Places Chapter)

The Affordable Housing Inventory List is State mandated by Section 166.0451, F.S. and is triennially updated. Updates occurred in 2009 by City Resolution #09-41 (November 5, 2009), in 2013 by City Resolution #13-10 (June 6, 2013), in 2016 by City Resolution #16-14 (June 16, 2016), in 2019 by City Resolution #19-10 (June 20, 2019), and in 2022 by City Resolution #22-13 (June 16, 2022). As of September 7, 2023, City Resolution #23-13, there were 31 parcels suitable for the development of affordable housing:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. 314 S. Madison Ave. | 17. 406 Vine Ave. |
| 2. 828 Nathans Ln. | 18. 1321 N. MLK Jr. Ave. |
| 3. 830 Nathans Ln. | 19. 1317 N. MLK Jr. Ave. |
| 4. 832 Nathans Ln. | 20. 1106 Tangerine St. |
| 5. 834 Nathans Ln. | 21. 1313 N. MLK Jr. Ave. |
| 6. 835 Nathans Ln. | 22. 1011 Engman St. |
| 7. 836 Nathans Ln. | 23. 1017 Engman St. |
| 8. 837 Nathans Ln. | 24. 1050 N. MLK Jr. Ave. |
| 9. 838 Nathans Ln. | 25. 1010 N. MLK Jr. Ave. |
| 10. 839 Nathans Ln. | 26. 0 Pennsylvania Ave. |
| 11. 840 Nathans Ln. | 27. 1002 Grant St. |
| 12. 1351 Cleveland St. | 28. 1004 Grant St. |
| 13. 1359 Cleveland St. | 29. 1006 Grant St. |
| 14. 14 S. Evergreen Ave. | 30. 1007 Marshall St. |
| 15. 1356 Park St. | 31. 1423 Taft Ave. |
| 16. 900 Palmetto St. | |

Under the Live Local Act, Chapter 2023-17, Laws of Florida, as amended in 2024, by October 1, 2023, and every three years thereafter, the City must create an inventory of all lands it owns that are “appropriate for use as affordable housing” and publish that inventory on the City’s website. Accordingly, the City updated the Affordable Housing Inventory List by City Resolution #23-13

(September 7, 2023) to publish before the October 1, 2023, deadline. Starting in 2023, the inventory will also include lots that are not zoned residential but may be appropriate for affordable housing consistent with the Live Local Act.

Since 2017, the Planning & Development Department has implemented a foreclosure program targeting properties with substantial code violations. As a result, several properties have been donated for affordable housing development (see Recommendation 10.4).

The City's Economic Development & Housing Department improved its procedure to make publicly owned land available to prospective developers and non-profit agencies to construct affordable housing. Previously lot disposition occurred on a first-come, first-served basis. In 2021, the City drafted a lot disposition policy to establish how the City notifies capable developers of available lots and distributes those lots through a public vetting process. The lot disposition policy establishes a clear and transparent process for donating appropriate City-owned lots to developers for the creation of affordable housing. The new lot disposition policy utilizes a small committee to choose lots to be made available, seek proposals from developers for the lots, then review/score the proposals to see who has the best ideas for the donated land. Nonprofit developers are included as well as minority and small developers. The City will advertise opportunities on the Economic Development & Housing Department website and reach out directly to those known to be interested. In 2021, the AHAC added Recommendation 10.5 regarding the lot disposition policy.

The City has sold land for affordable housing. Most recently, two properties were donated for affordable housing projects, one for single-family home construction (1 unit) and one for multi-family affordable/workforce housing units (24 units). The latter project is set to close before the end of 2024.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, and 10.5 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

Implementation:

Recommendations 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, and 10.5 will continue to be implemented by City staff of the Economic Development & Housing Department. Recommendation 10.4 will continue to be implemented by City staff of the Planning & Development Department through ongoing coordination with the Economic Development & Housing Department.

2.1.11 Proximity to Transportation, Employment & Mixed-Use Development

Strategic Incentive No. 11 (Florida Statute)

The support of development near transportation hubs and major employment centers and mixed-use developments.

Meeting Synopsis:

No specific issues with the City's current policies regarding proximity to transportation, employment, and mixed-use development were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. The City's current policies remain acceptable to the committee.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendation 11.1 during the AHAC meetings.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

Generally, the City promotes areas suitable for affordable housing through the Quality Places Chapter of the current *Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan*. The Quality Places Chapter contains a number of policies related to activity centers and transit hubs. Such policies include:

Policy QP 1.2.6 – Consider future land use and zoning amendments that promote affordable and mixed-income housing and mixed-use development along South Fort Harrison Avenue from A Street to E Street to support the emerging character of Morton Plant Hospital. (Quality Places Chapter)

Policy QP 1.2.7 – Encourage lot consolidation, streetscape improvements, and the creation of affordable housing and mixed-use development along Missouri Avenue from Drew Street to Belleair Road. (Quality Places Chapter)

Policy QP 2.1.3 – Advocate for mixed-use development that includes a combination of compatible land uses having functional interrelationships and design and build human-scale active, attractive designs that encourage walking, cycling, and the use of transit. (Quality Places Chapter)

Policy QP 2.2.1 – Review the US 19 Zoning District and Development Standards to ensure provisions encourage transit-supportive and walkable forms of development while allowing sufficient levels of flexibility to address unique development opportunities and constraints. (Quality Places Chapter)

Policy QP 5.2.5 – Direct amendments of higher density and intensity future land use categories to Multimodal Corridors or Future Transit Corridors as delineated by the Land Use Strategy Map in the Countywide Rules. (Quality Places Chapter)

Policy QP 6.1.13 - Support the creation of affordable housing and mixed-use development along Investment Corridors found in the most recently approved Advantage Pinellas, Long Range Transportation Plan. (Quality Places Chapter)

Policy M 2.1.6 – Improve access, safety, and walkability through the provision of improved pedestrian and bicycle connections and enhanced transit accommodations. (Mobility Chapter)

Policy M 2.3.6 – Ensure development plans provide safe and accessible connections to transit stops. (Mobility Chapter)

Policy M 2.3.8 - Promote more intense, walkable, and transit-supportive forms of development along corridors identified as Multimodal Corridors and Future Transit Corridors on the Countywide Plan Map. (Mobility Chapter)

Additionally, the City's *Community Development Code* allows flexibility in parking for affordable housing projects if located near a transit stop (see *Community Development Code* Article 3, Division 9, Section 3-920.B. for the City's "affordable housing parking reductions" based on proximity to a transit stop).

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 11.1 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

Implementation:

The LHIS report is revised to cite new *Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan* policies as recently adopted. Recommendation 11.1 is implemented under the *Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan* and the City's existing *Community Development Code*.

2.2 Additional Incentives

The following provides synopses of the City's current practices regarding affordable housing and the AHAC's recommended incentives for the provision of affordable housing not cited in Section 420.9076, F.S. These recommendations were previously approved in 2023 but have been evaluated and where necessary revised in 2024 to address current affordable housing barriers.

2.2.1 Adaptive Reuse

Meeting Synopsis:

No specific issues with the City's current policies related to adaptive reuse were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. The City's current policies remain acceptable to the committee.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendation 12.1 during the AHAC meetings.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The City continues to allow for adaptive reuse if allowed within the zoning district where the affordable housing project is located.

Of note, under the recent Live Local Act, Chapter 2023-17, Laws of Florida, as amended in 2024, cities may approve affordable housing projects, including mixed-use projects, on land zoned for commercial or industrial if at least 10% of units are affordable. Moreover, cities must allow multi-family and mixed-use in any area zoned commercial, industrial, or mixed-use if 40% of units are affordable for a least 30 years.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 12.1 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

Implementation:

Recommendation 12.1 is already implemented by the *Community Development Code* and will be continued with emphasis on intentional and proactive promotion of adaptive reuse.

2.2.2 Land Development Code

Meeting Synopsis:

No specific issues with the City's *Community Development Code* were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendation 13.1 during the AHAC meetings.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

Design standards for affordable housing projects are generally addressed by *Community Development Code* Article 3, Division 9, Section 3-920.A.3.c.i-iii. [Compatibility Criteria, Design Criteria, Green Building Criteria]; however, the "other" criteria referenced in the 2017 AHAC Recommendation 13.1 are not addressed by Section 3-920.A.3.c.i-iii.

The 2014 AHAC identified the *Community Development Code's* treatment of nonconforming development as a barrier, citing the cost of bringing older properties "up-to-code" as prohibitive to affordable housing. As a result of the 2014 AHAC recommendation to allow certain exceptions to the 50 percent limitation on nonconforming structures, Article 6 of the *Community Development Code* was modified and adopted as Section 6-102.F.1-6. in June 2015. Because Recommendation 13.2 was successfully implemented, Recommendation 13.2 was not continued by the 2017 AHAC. Only Recommendation 13.1 (design standards) was continued.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 13.1 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

Implementation:

Recommendation 13.1 is partially implemented by the *Community Development Code*. City staff will continue to consider "other criteria" for potential amendments to Sec. 3-920.A.3.c.i-iii. of the *Community Development Code* in support of affordable housing.

2.2.3 Communication and Marketing of Affordable Housing

Meeting Synopsis:

During the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, the AHAC discussed the importance of education regarding the City's programs, such as down payment assistance, housing rehabilitation, etc. to make homes safer and more insurable. The importance of roof replacement was discussed. Such marketing could include television, housing fairs, marketing brochures, posters in libraries, flyers, etc. The committee also emphasized educating the city as a whole, not just the City's CRAs and target areas (e.g., North Greenwood, etc.).

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, the AHAC recommended including partnerships with lenders, realtors, title companies, inspectors, etc. as they relate to purchase of real estate with down payment and closing cost assistance under Recommendation 14.1. Such recommendation should include meetings that provide for questions and answers regarding the programs that are available through the City. The AHAC also conveyed that contractors should have the opportunity to bid projects through a City-approved list to facilitate assistance. The Consultant suggested that the recommendation be added under Recommendation 16.1, rather than Recommendation 14.1, due to the topic addressed by Recommendation 16.1 (Partnerships).

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the AHAC noted that an important communication strategy is the City's water bill mailings, which sometimes include information about the City's programs. The AHAC complimented City staff on the success of those mailings as a communication strategy.

The AHAC also discussed whether the term, "workforce" versus "affordable" housing should be used. That discussion was expanded to the use of the term, "attainable" housing. After discussion, the AHAC recommended adding the term, "attainable" housing to the terminology used when marketing and communicating about affordable housing with the community.

In response to the AHAC's discussion regarding "workforce" and "attainable" housing, minor changes to Recommendation 14.1 were proposed.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The Economic Development & Housing Department continues to develop materials to better market its services to prospective developers of affordable housing. The Economic Development & Housing Department works with the Public Communications Department to create awareness of affordable housing programs through marketing materials, presentations, and press releases. The Department also partners with the Neighborhoods Division to promote programs and create awareness.

Most recently, the Department's communication and marketing outreach has included the following activities:

1. City staff has attended the annual HOPE Expo to promote the City's housing programs.

2. The Department promoted the City's Purchase Assistance and Home Preservation Program (i.e., Housing Rehabilitation as recently rebranded) on the City's social media, e-newsletter, MyClearwater Magazine and Sunshine lines.
3. Press releases have been issued about Home Preservation and Purchase Assistance.
4. The Department developed a new Affordable Housing Approval and Permitting Process handout.
5. The Department updated the Home Rehab and Purchase Assistance Rack Cards with new funding amounts as of July 1, 2024.
6. The Department assisted in the coordination of the Clearwater Gardens Ribbon Cutting, including a press release and follow-up media resulting in additional press coverage.
7. The Department is currently running a six-month geofencing campaign with Tampa Bay Newspapers to promote the City's Purchase Assistance Program. The City also contracted for three advertorials to promote the City's housing programs.
8. The Economic Development Marketing Manager was recently assigned to the Economic Development & Housing Department to provide marketing assistance.

The City's "Affordable Housing and Community Development" webpage is a one-stop resource for affordable housing developers and persons seeking housing assistance:

<https://www.myclearwater.com/My-Government/City-Departments/Affordable-Housing-and-Community-Development>

The webpage publishes plans and reports produced by the Housing Division, as well as information on the City's homeless prevention initiatives.

Additionally, the Department worked with the IT and Budget departments to create a dashboard on the City's webpage for benchmarking housing data. This information was also presented to City Council in May 2023. The "Affordable and Workforce Housing Dashboard" can be viewed at the link below:

<https://www.myclearwater.com/My-Government/Transparency/Affordable-and-Workforce-Housing-Dashboard>

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC modified Recommendation 14.1 from the 2023 LHIS report as shown below in strikethrough/underline:

- 14.1 *Continue to improve current communication channels and marketing materials to reach different stakeholders interested in affordable housing. Some of the suggested actions include but are not limited to:*
- *Conduct an educational campaign, in conjunction with regular City communications, to rebrand affordable housing as workforce or attainable housing that supports the diverse needs of residents through a variety of unit/product types compatible with the City's neighborhoods.*

...

Recommendations for specific partnerships and an approved contractor list were added under Recommendation 16.1 (Partnerships).

Implementation:

City staff of the Economic Development & Housing Department will continue to develop an educational campaign to rebrand affordable housing and form a partnership with Amplify Clearwater to promote the City's Affordable Housing webpage and content thereon. In coordination with the Public Communications Department, City staff will improve marketing of affordable housing incentives, including communication of affordable housing successes and outcomes with developers and other City boards and committees.

2.2.4 Financing

Meeting Synopsis:

During the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, the AHAC discussed financial barriers to affordable housing, particularly for rental housing. The high cost of rent and utilities is leaving no option for living within the City of Clearwater. When faced with eviction, there is no affordable housing available within the City. Low wages combined with the lack of affordable housing, are forcing students and workforce households far outside of the City. This, in turn, creates transportation-related issues with limited availability and access via bus/transit systems to school and employment. Renters struggle to find functional transportation options between school or work in the City and distant affordable housing. Although there are good jobs in the City, there is no available affordable housing for the workforce. This effectively results in "brain drain" when students offered employment upon graduation cannot afford to live in the City once they graduate.

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, City staff discussed whether there is chance that City Council will change the City's policies regarding reducing/paying code violation liens on lots suitable for affordable housing. The Consultant responded that the AHAC may make recommendations to City Council through the LHIS report, where recommendations are presented to the City Council for consideration. The AHAC discussed whether to remove or modify Recommendation 15.2 if there is no appetite for the incentive, but ultimately decided to continue Recommendation 15.2 for another year.

The AHAC also discussed Recommendation 15.3 and whether City staff has sufficient funds and deems current staffing levels adequate. City staff responded affirmatively.

On November 12, 2024, the AHAC discussed that affordable options for living in the City were limited but do exist.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 15.1, 15.2, and 15.3 during the AHAC meetings.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The Economic Development & Housing Department continues to leverage funds with other non-profit housing providers (e.g., Habitat for Humanity, Foundations, Affordable Housing Developers, Development Corporations, CHDOs, etc.) to finance the development of affordable housing, and continuously seeks relationships with new qualified organizations. City staff also seeks new public-private partnerships to help offset public investment and reduce private developer costs, as well as partnerships with other local governments (e.g., Pinellas County) to co-fund impactful projects.

In 2023, the City utilized/encumbered \$3.3 million in American Rescue Plan Act – Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARPA-LFRF) for affordable and workforce housing. This funding expands opportunities for down payment assistance, rehabilitation, and new construction. The City also implemented \$5,000 in emergency grants to support maintenance of affordable units. The City worked with North Greenwood CRA to award other ARPA-LFRF-funded programs to support small maintenance and repair programs for seniors in the North Greenwood community.

The City also continues to engage an independent financing expert to conduct subsidy analyses for multi-family affordable and workforce housing projects.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 15.1, 15.2, and 15.3 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

Implementation:

Recommendation 15.1 will continue to be implemented by City staff of the Economic Development & Housing Department. Recommendation 15.2 will require a change to City Council policy and further coordination with the implementation of related Recommendation 10.4 regarding properties having repeat code violations. Recommendation 15.3 will be regularly evaluated as the City prepares each fiscal year budget.

2.2.5 Partnerships

Meeting Synopsis:

During the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, the AHAC discussed third-party barriers to affordable housing that require partnerships outside of local government. High interest rates are affecting homeownership. This barrier is compounded by high (excessive) closing costs, inspection and processing fees, and insurance premiums. There is a need to reduce these costs for homebuyers. A potential incentive could be an interest rate buydown or other down payment assistance strategy.

Although housing costs (rent, mortgage, insurance, etc.) continue to increase, salaries and wages have not kept pace at the same rate. The AHAC discussed the possibility of a real estate tax reduction on rental properties to reduce the cost of rent, insurance, and maintenance. A reevaluation of how taxes are assessed could be considered.

The affordability gap between the buyer's mortgage ability and down payment assistance is not reaching the sales price of homes. This was identified as a major barrier to affordability. The AHAC discussed supplementing programs, for example taking the equity in a home and using a third-mortgage due on sale to cover the gap. The committee acknowledged certain issues with that approach, including non-conforming mortgages and industry acceptance. The barrier of what families can afford based on their income compared to what homes cost is the most critical problem to solve. The AHAC noted that everyone is waiting on the Federal government announce interest rates, which could change the dynamic but not likely. How residents' buying power is maximized is critical to moving families into homeownership. It was discussed that addressing the affordability gap should be a priority of the AHAC.

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, the AHAC recommended including partnerships with lenders, realtors, title companies, inspectors, etc. as they relate to purchase of real estate with down payment and closing cost assistance. Such recommendation should include meetings that provide for questions and answers regarding the programs that are available through the City. The AHAC also conveyed that contractors should have the opportunity to bid projects through a City-approved list to facilitate assistance.

The AHAC also discussed the need for consistency between entitlement communities in the region and their qualification processes for assistance (i.e., improved regional coordination regarding program guidelines). These currently differ from city to city, and county to county, within the region. The AHAC also recognized that the City did increase the down payment assistance loan amount to help homebuyers. The timing of housing quality standard inspections is better than it was, but still not ideal. City staff responded that the City has been collaborating during monthly meetings to align the down payment assistance and other programs to the degree that such programs can be aligned. The AHAC noted that although the City has a great program, another municipality has changed their guidelines to the detriment of homebuyers. City staff stated that inspections are ordered right away; however, any instances of delayed inspections should be brought to City staff's attention. City staff also stated that they previously had a program where they facilitated monthly meetings regarding available assistance. The AHAC suggested City staff coordinate with the Pinellas Housing Finance Authority and their quarterly outreach efforts.

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the AHAC briefly discussed realtor organizations in Pinellas County, and regional coordination. The AHAC then continued the discussion of the potential for an approved realtor/lender/vendor list, which would require entities to participate in a training program to qualify for the list. City staff expressed concern about the limitations of such a list. The AHAC described examples of other communities that have such a list, which involves training and periodic renewals. City staff conveyed that state and federal programs have specific regulations

to be considered. The AHAC expressed interest in adding language to promote training to reduce mistakes that may affect the closing process. City staff stated that partners are provided guidance (e.g., manual) during the process, but agreed that new lenders could be better educated.

On November 12, 2024, the AHAC confirmed the proposed changes to Recommendation 16.1 to capture the committee's discussion from October 28, 2024. However, further changes to Recommendation 16.1 were also proposed on November 12, 2024, to convey the need for additional compliance training/education (e.g., guidelines) for third-party partners when state or federal funding is involved.

Evaluation of Existing Strategy:

The Economic Development & Housing Department strives to keep an updated list of affordable housing units and maintains a list of housing partners on the City's website at:

<https://www.myclearwater.com/government/city-departments/affordable-housing/resources-for-residents>

The Department also partners with other affordable housing providers to offer mentoring and technical training, and to address topics such as foreclosure, Fair Housing, and other relevant issues. The Department continues to improve its partnerships with local lenders, continues to work closely with Pinellas County to seek mutual opportunities for the development of affordable housing and co-fund impactful projects, and monitors statewide initiatives through the City's lobbyist. The Department is continuously seeking new, qualified organizations and provide guidance through the development process to those unfamiliar with Clearwater processes.

AHAC Recommendation:

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC modified Recommendation 16.1 as shown below in strikethrough/underline:

16.1 Develop public and private partnerships for the provision of affordable housing:

- *Prepare, advertise, and maintain an inventory of affordable housing providers/developers and any other related organization.*
- *Encourage partnerships between current and new affordable housing developers for mentoring and technical training.*
- *Establish partnerships with major employers to coordinate the supply of workforce housing.*
- *Encourage and support joint development opportunities between the private sector and non-profits to develop affordable housing.*
- *Engage lenders in training and ongoing discussion with the City relative to underwriting and credit standards, technology solutions, as well as the development of financial products in an effort to maximize the financing options available to potential first-time homebuyers through conventional and other lenders.*

- *Coordinate with Pinellas County joint programs for the provision of affordable housing, including the Pinellas County Countywide Housing Strategy, **and Advantage Pinellas Housing Compact, and Pinellas Housing Finance Authority.***
- **Coordinate with other entitlement grantees in the region to improve consistency, as feasible, between qualification criteria for housing assistance programs.**
- *Monitor, and encourage citizens to lobby for, the development of statewide legislative initiatives to gauge the local impact of their provisions.*
- **Partner with lenders, realtors, title companies, inspectors, and contractors through regular outreach to increase knowledge of the City's housing assistance programs, provide guidelines and training to improve compliance, and facilitate opportunities for qualified contractors to bid projects.**
- *Coordinate with the private sector and non-profits to provide homebuyer education, home warranties, and other strategies that reduce the ongoing maintenance risk of homeownership.*
- *Increase down payment assistance loan amounts to be viable for the homebuyer while remaining financially feasible for the continued operation of the City's program.*
- *Improve the timing of Housing Quality Standards inspections to facilitate closings on homes with down payment assistance loans, if feasible under funding source requirements.*
- *Partner with the private sector and non-profits to address third-party barriers to affordable housing and to identify appropriate incentives to reduce labor and material costs for developers and long-term maintenance, operational, and insurance costs for homeowners.*

Implementation:

Recommendation 16.1 is already implemented by City staff of the Economic Development & Housing Department through ongoing public and private partnerships, which will be continued. Efforts to facilitate home purchase, reduce the maintenance risk of homeownership, and to address third-party barriers to affordable housing will require further coordination with these partners. City staff will coordinate with and closely monitor local, regional, and statewide affordable housing initiatives.

APPENDIX A: City of Clearwater Resolutions

- A.1 Resolution #08-15, AHAC Members**
- A.2 Resolution #14-26, AHAC Members**
- A.3 Resolution #17-34, AHAC Members**
- A.4 Resolution #20-50, AHAC Members**
- A.5 Resolution #22-19, AHAC Members**
- A.6 Resolution #23-12, AHAC Members**
- A.7 Resolution #24-11, AHAC Members**
- A.8 Resolution #09-41, Affordable Housing Inventory List**
- A.9 Resolution #13-10, Affordable Housing Inventory List**
- A.10 Resolution #16-14, Affordable Housing Inventory List**
- A.11 Resolution #19-10, Affordable Housing Inventory List**
- A.12 Resolution #22-13, Affordable Housing Inventory List**
- A.13 Resolution #23-13, Affordable Housing Inventory List**

APPENDIX B: Affordable Housing in Clearwater

B.1 Housing Affordability

Affordability refers to the capacity that all income levels have to access a “decent and adequate” housing unit within the housing market, either for rental or ownership. One measurement of affordable housing is the percentage of annual income that a household pays toward housing-related costs. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines “Cost Burdened” as when a household spends more than 30% of their income on housing costs. However, for some State programs the burden could be up to 35% depending on a specific household’s capacity. A household that pays more than 50% of its annual income toward housing costs is considered by HUD to be “Severely Cost Burdened.”

According to estimates sourced from the Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing and Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse, in 2022, 39% of the City’s households pay more than 30% of their income for housing. By comparison, 34% of households statewide are cost burdened. Approximately 18% of the City’s households pay more than 50% of income for housing, compared to 16% of households statewide.

The City of Clearwater defines affordable housing in Section 8-102. – Definitions of the *Community Development Code*:

“Any residential dwelling unit leased or owned by a household with a household income of 120 percent or less of the adjusted area median family income for Pinellas County, Florida, as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The rental rates for leased workforce affordable housing units, as defined in Charter Section 2.01(d)(5)(i), shall not exceed the rates published by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation for annual “Maximum Rents by Number of Bedroom Unit” for the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). For non-rental units, the sales price may not exceed 90 percent of the average area price for the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater MSA, as established by the annual revenue procedure which provides issuers of qualified mortgage bonds, as defined in Section 143(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, and issuers of mortgage credit certificates, as defined in Section 25(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, with the nationwide average purchase price for the residences located in the United States.”

B.2 Barriers and Incentives

According to HUD, a regulatory barrier is “a public regulatory requirement, payment, or process that significantly impedes the development or availability of affordable housing without providing a commensurate health and/or safety benefit.”² Understanding barriers is the first step to transform them into incentives for the supply of affordable housing. The AHAC conducted a comprehensive overview of

² Stowell, C; Shelburne, M. (2004). Responding to HUD’s Affordable Communities Initiative: Will It Make a Difference? The Practitioner Planner, American Planning Association, Winter 2004.

affordable housing barriers to understand potential relationships of what, from the City’s perspective, could be done to incentivize the supply of affordable housing.

This comprehensive approach helped the AHAC to look beyond the analysis required by Section 420.9076, F.S. and to prioritize recommendations. In that sense, the recommendations of the AHAC targeted areas and barriers within the domain of the City of Clearwater’s basic responsibilities: provide policy direction through the City’s *Comprehensive Plan*; provide incentives through the *Community Development Code*; and facilitate information and the permitting process.

Chart 1 summarizes potential barriers to affordable housing.

Chart 1: Affordable Housing Barriers



B.3 Issues in Supplying Affordable Housing

Built-out communities, such as Clearwater, have pressures for the provision of affordable housing due to increasing land values; limited availability of vacant developable land; skyrocketing construction costs due to inflation and demand for building material supplies; and labor market imbalances. In addition, other third-party costs of home acquisition (i.e., property taxes and insurance) create a financial burden for citizens.

Beginning in 2008 and most recently in 2024, the AHAC met to identify the most significant issues for the provision of affordable housing in the City. The following summarizes the significant issues that the AHAC identified as most relevant in 2024:

- ***Renter Cost Burden, High Cost of Rent/Utilities, and Transportation-Related Issues (Barrier).*** In 2024, the AHAC discussed financial barriers to affordable housing, particularly for rental housing. The high cost of rent and utilities is leaving no option for living within the City of Clearwater. When faced with eviction, there is no affordable housing available within the City. Low wages combined with the lack of affordable housing, are forcing students and workforce households far outside of the City. This, in turn, creates transportation-related issues with limited availability and access via bus/transit systems to school and employment. Renters struggle to find functional transportation options between school or work in the City and distant affordable housing. Although there are good jobs in the City, there is no available affordable housing for the workforce. This effectively results in “brain drain” when students offered employment upon graduation cannot afford to live in the City once they graduate.
- ***Rising Interest Rates and Insurance Costs for Homeownership (Barrier).*** In the 2024, the AHAC discussed how high interest rates are affecting homeownership. This barrier is compounded by high (excessive) closing costs, inspection and processing fees, and insurance premiums. There is a need to reduce these costs for homebuyers. A potential incentive could be an interest rate buydown or other down payment assistance strategy.

Although housing costs (rent, mortgage, insurance, etc.) continue to increase, salaries and wages have not kept pace at the same rate. The AHAC discussed the possibility of a real estate tax reduction on rental properties to reduce the cost of rent, insurance, and maintenance. A reevaluation of how taxes are assessed could be considered.

The affordability gap between the buyer’s mortgage ability and down payment assistance is not reaching the sales price of homes. This was identified as a major barrier to affordability. The AHAC discussed supplementing programs, for example taking the equity in a home and using a third-mortgage due on sale to cover the gap. The committee acknowledged certain issues with that approach, including non-conforming mortgages and industry acceptance. The barrier of what families can afford based on their income compared to what homes cost is the most critical problem to solve. The AHAC noted that everyone is waiting on the Federal government announce interest rates, which could change the dynamic but not likely. How residents’ buying power is

maximized is critical to moving families into homeownership. It was discussed that addressing the affordability gap should be a priority of the AHAC.

- ***Lack of Affordable Housing for Senior Citizens (Barrier).*** Cost burden is also impacting senior citizens that rely on social security and fixed incomes. For example, when they receive these limited funds, they will often use those funds to stay in hotels temporarily (often sharing a room) and then end up back on the street. Although senior citizens have some income, due to their age and age-related disabilities, they are unemployable and there are no alternative affordable housing options available to them.
- ***Investor Real Estate Competition (Barrier).*** In 2024, the AHAC discussed investor-driven residential real estate as a barrier to affordable housing. It was noted that large investors take affordable housing off the market, drive-up costs, and compete with residents and affordable housing developers to buy properties. For example, build-to-rent properties (e.g., single-family) are driving up rental costs. Due to Pinellas County's limited land and housing inventory, these investors take up a larger share of the residential market when compared to other counties in the region.
- ***Condominium Assessments (Barrier).*** The milestone assessments in response to the Surfside condominium collapse may triple or quadruple the housing costs for older residents who have lived in their condominium a long time. These residents may not be able to continue to afford to live in their condominiums due to such repair assessments. For older buildings, the assessments for repair costs will make them unaffordable to many. This may also negatively affect the inventory of affordable housing, as the condominiums must sell at higher prices to offset the assessment costs. The ability to mortgage those units may be affected by the reserve requirements/regulatory standards that lenders will be considering. Incentivizing new condominium development in the City of Clearwater was discussed to offset the issue of condominium assessments affecting older buildings and their residents.
- ***Accessory Dwelling Units/Rental Rebate Program (Incentive).*** In 2024, the AHAC discussed incentives for construction or rehabilitation of accessory dwelling units, such as rebates up to a certain dollar amount to assist the supply of affordable housing, with a lease agreement that meets HUD's affordability requirements.
- ***Density (Incentive).*** In 2024, the AHAC discussed looking at density in the City of Clearwater as an incentive. The committee discussed working within the City's zoning code [*Community Development Code*] to incentivize reasonable higher density so that more units can be put on the market. The committee discussed the North Greenwood neighborhood and how a more current zoning strategy for certain neighborhoods is needed to match residents' needs with housing opportunities. For example, developing vertically and allowing multi-unit buildings on current lots.

Appendix

The committee discussed coordination with the Planning & Development Department regarding a zoning strategy.

- ***Education/Marketing (Incentive).*** In 2024, the AHAC discussed the importance of education regarding the City's programs, such as down payment assistance, housing rehabilitation, etc. to make homes safer and more insurable. The importance of roof replacement was discussed. Such marketing could include television, housing fairs, marketing brochures, posters in libraries, flyers, etc. The committee also emphasized educating the city as a whole, not just the City's CRAs and target areas (e.g., North Greenwood, etc.).

APPENDIX C: Values, Principles and Vision

C.1 The Value of Affordable Housing

In 2024, the AHAC discussed and confirmed the value that affordable housing brings to the City's development. The AHAC found that affordable housing in the City of Clearwater:

A) Supports a dynamic and competitive economy.

There is an intrinsic relationship between a dynamic economy and affordable housing. The existence of affordable housing units is a variable that supports business location thus job creation. The City, which is nearly built out, has the opportunity to capitalize on its existing urban fabric through urban renewal and infill development. Such investment in the City would have positive impacts on the local economy and increase Clearwater's ability to compete with other cities.

B) Improves social well-being and builds sense of community.

Consideration of social well-being, including long-term housing stability, is imperative for the future of the City. There is a need for improved job opportunities, as well as for a simple, understandable process for achieving housing, especially for those in low to moderate-income households. Education and motivation for home ownership are also important aspects of the City's future.

C) Aspires to have housing that fits the City's workforce.

There is a growing need for affordable "workforce" housing within the community, specifically for police, fire, and other service employees. There is also a need to draw the workforce back into the City to reduce commute distances, to reduce crime, and to restore a sense of pride in the community.

D) Everyone deserves a safe affordable home.

The City recognizes that housing is a fundamental human need.

C.2 Principles for Clearwater's Affordable Housing

In 2024, the AHAC discussed and confirmed the principles that provision of affordable housing in the City of Clearwater should embrace. The AHAC found that affordable housing in the City of Clearwater should be:

1) Affordable over the long-term.

Affordable housing is readily available and reasonably priced. Mortgage rates for affordable housing are structured to allow people to keep their homes over the long-term and to age in place. Rental rates for affordable housing are fair and reasonable. The cost of maintaining a home (e.g., fees, maintenance, etc.) is practical.

2) Diverse supply that provides for a mix of income levels and the diverse needs of residents.

Affordable housing is comprised of diverse unit types that support a mix of income levels and the diverse needs of residents, incorporating rental and ownership opportunities.

- 3) *Designed to be sustainable, energy and cost efficient, and to minimize physical barriers to accessibility.*

Affordable housing uses innovative and sustainable materials and technologies. Floor plans are designed for “living” and construction materials, including fixtures, are energy and cost efficient. Structures are safe, functional, and accessible.

- 4) *In aesthetic character with the surrounding neighborhood.*

Affordable housing blends into the architectural fabric and aesthetic character of the community. Public open spaces are designed for safety and visibility but well-landscaped. Fences or other barriers are architectural and transparent.

- 5) *Strategically located and pedestrian-oriented with access to mass transit, open spaces, educational institutions, and employment or workforce training opportunities.*

Affordable housing is located near civic centers, educational institutions, and employment opportunities. Residents enjoy pedestrian-oriented facilities with access to mass transit and open spaces.

- 6) *Incentivized to promote incorporation of affordable housing into all housing developments.*

Affordable housing is incentivized to promote the construction of mixed-income housing developments that incorporate units affordable to diverse income levels in the same project.

C.3 Vision

In order to develop a vision for affordable housing as part of the Local Housing Incentive Strategies, the AHAC summarized the value of providing affordable housing for the City as well as the principles. The following statement summarizes the AHAC’s vision of affordable housing for the City:

The City of Clearwater will incentivize the development of a diverse supply of housing that is safe, accessible, affordable, sustainable, and energy and cost efficient, that blends into the aesthetic character of all the City’s neighborhoods proximate to public amenities and employment opportunities, which supports an inclusive community and the diverse needs of residents.

APPENDIX D: Advisory Committee Meeting Summaries

D.1 AHAC Meeting #1, September 10, 2024

2024 Update of Local Housing Incentive Strategies

AHAC Meeting #1 | September 10, 2024 | 9:00 a.m.

Clearwater Main Library (100 N. Osceola Ave., Clearwater, FL 33755)

MEETING SUMMARY

The City of Clearwater requested that Wade Trim facilitate an update of the City's Local Housing Incentive Strategies (LHIS) report, which was last updated in 2023. An 11-member Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) representing various affordable housing interests was appointed by the City Council on August 15, 2024 (Resolution #24-11), to evaluate and update the 2023 LHIS report. The first meeting of the AHAC was held on September 10, 2024, at the Clearwater Main Library (100 N. Osceola Ave., Clearwater, FL 33755). Eight (8) AHAC members, City staff, and the City's consultant attended the meeting:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| • Robyn Fiel (Chair) | Representative of the banking or mortgage industry in connection with affordable housing |
| • Linda Byars | A citizen who resides within the City of Clearwater |
| • Christine Bond | An advocate for low-income persons in connection with affordable housing |
| • Charessa Doty | Representative of a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing |
| • David Harder | Representative of those areas of labor engaged in home building in connection with affordable housing |
| • Michael Boutzoukas | Serves on the City of Clearwater's local planning agency (Community Development Board) |
| • Cheri DeBlare | Representative of essential services personnel |
| • Mike Mannino | A locally elected official (City Councilmember) |
| • Dylan Mayeux | City of Clearwater, Economic Develop. & Housing, Real Estate Coordinator II |
| • Terry Malcolm-Smith | City of Clearwater, Economic Develop. & Housing, Program Admin. |
| • Gina Clayton | City of Clearwater, Planning & Development, Director |
| • Amanda Warner | Wade Trim, Planner (City's Consultant) |
| • Connor Baird | Wade Trim, Planner (City's Consultant) |

One (1) AHAC member attended as an observer: Rick Vail (Representative of the residential home building industry). Two (2) AHAC members were not in attendance: Camille Hebling (Representative of employers within the City of Clearwater) and Lindsay Dicus-Harrison (Representative of those who are actively engaged as a real estate professional in connection with affordable housing).

The purpose of the first AHAC meeting was to educate the new committee about the City's existing LHIS report, review its values, principles and vision, as well as identify current barriers and potential incentives related to the facilitation of affordable housing in the City of Clearwater. The first AHAC meeting was publicly advertised on the City's website, held in-person with opportunity for public comment, and recorded for later viewing on the City's website.

Welcome and Introductions

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, called the meeting to order and introduced the Consultant (Amanda Warner, Wade Trim). Each committee member then introduced themselves. The Consultant explained the purpose of the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting, to include a presentation and facilitated committee discussion.

Summary of Presentation to AHAC

The Consultant presented an overview of the LHS update process, including the history and duties of the AHAC, meeting requirements, schedule of events toward approval/submittal, definitions of affordable housing, implications of the State's Live Local Act, and components of the LHS report. The overview was presented in Microsoft PowerPoint format. The overall schedule of events presented to the AHAC included:

- Early August – City designates staff and selects AHAC members
- August 15, 2024 – City Council appoints members to AHAC
- September 10, October 8, and November 12, 2024 – AHAC meets to update LHS report
- December 3, 2024 – AHAC holds public hearing to approve updated LHS report
- December 5 or 19, 2024 – City Council holds public hearing to approve updated LHS report for submittal to Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC)
- December 31, 2024 – Deadline to submit LHS report to FHFC
- March 31, 2025 – City Council to adopt amendments to LHAP to incorporate LHS
- May 2, 2025 – Submit amended LHAP with proof of City Council approval to FHFC

The Consultant presented the value statements of the 2023 LHS report and invited feedback from the AHAC members on whether the values still resonate with current affordable housing issues in the City of Clearwater. The AHAC confirmed that all values in the 2023 LHS report are still relevant to affordable housing in the City of Clearwater. These values will be continued in the 2024 LHS report.

The Consultant presented the principles of the 2023 LHS report and invited feedback from the AHAC members on whether the principles still resonate with current affordable housing issues in the City of Clearwater. The AHAC made no changes to the principles. These principles will be continued in the 2024 LHS report.

The Consultant presented the vision statement of the 2023 LHS report and invited feedback from the AHAC members on whether the vision still resonates with current affordable housing issues in the City of Clearwater. The AHAC made no changes to the vision statement. This vision statement will be continued in the 2024 LHS report.

Committee Discussion

During the meeting, AHAC members were asked to discuss any perceived barriers to affordable housing that presently exist, as well as potential incentives to reduce these barriers. Members were asked to consider barriers and incentives with regard to City programs/procedures, the City's *Comprehensive Plan*, and the City's *Community Development Code*. The following provides a summary of the committee's discussion of current issues affecting the provision of affordable housing in the City of Clearwater.

Renter Cost Burden, High Cost of Rent/Utilities, and Transportation-Related Issues (Barrier)

The AHAC discussed financial barriers to affordable housing, particularly for rental housing. The high cost of rent and utilities is leaving no option for living within the City of Clearwater. When faced with eviction, there is no affordable housing available within the City. Low wages combined with the lack of affordable housing, are forcing students and workforce households far outside of the City. This, in turn, creates transportation-related issues with limited availability and access via bus/transit systems to school and employment. Renters struggle to find functional transportation options between school or work in the City and distant affordable housing. Although there are good jobs in the City, there is no available affordable housing for the workforce. This effectively results in "brain drain" when students offered employment upon graduation cannot afford to live in the City once they graduate.

Rising Interest Rates and Insurance Costs for Homeownership (Barrier)

High interest rates are affecting homeownership. This barrier is compounded by high (excessive) closing costs, inspection and processing fees, and insurance premiums. There is a need to reduce these costs for homebuyers. A potential incentive could be an interest rate buydown or other down payment assistance strategy.

Appendix

Although housing costs (rent, mortgage, insurance, etc.) continue to increase, salaries and wages have not kept pace at the same rate. The AHAC discussed the possibility of a real estate tax reduction on rental properties to reduce the cost of rent, insurance, and maintenance. A reevaluation of how taxes are assessed could be considered.

The affordability gap between the buyer's mortgage ability and down payment assistance is not reaching the sales price of homes. This was identified as a major barrier to affordability. The AHAC discussed supplementing programs, for example taking the equity in a home and using a third-mortgage due on sale to cover the gap. The committee acknowledged certain issues with that approach, including non-conforming mortgages and industry acceptance. The barrier of what families can afford based on their income compared to what homes cost is the most critical problem to solve. The AHAC noted that everyone is waiting on the Federal government announce interest rates, which could change the dynamic but not likely. How residents' buying power is maximized is critical to moving families into homeownership. It was discussed that addressing the affordability gap should be a priority of the AHAC.

Lack of Affordable Housing for Senior Citizens (Barrier)

Cost burden is also impacting senior citizens that rely on social security and fixed incomes. For example, when they receive these limited funds, they will often use those funds to stay in hotels temporarily (often sharing a room) and then end up back on the street. Although senior citizens have some income, due to their age and age-related disabilities, they are unemployable and there are no alternative affordable housing options available to them.

Investor Real Estate Competition (Barrier)

The AHAC discussed investor-driven residential real estate as a barrier to affordable housing. It was noted that large investors take affordable housing off the market, drive-up costs, and compete with residents and affordable housing developers to buy properties. For example, build-to-rent properties (e.g., single-family) are driving up rental costs. Due to Pinellas County's limited land and housing inventory, these investors take up a larger share of the residential market when compared to other counties in the region.

Condominium Assessments (Barrier)

The milestone assessments in response to the Surfside condominium collapse may triple or quadruple the housing costs for older residents who have lived in their condominium a long time. These residents may not be able to continue to afford to live in their condominiums due to such repair assessments. For older buildings, the assessments for repair costs will make them unaffordable to many. This may also negatively affect the inventory of affordable housing, as the condominiums must sell at higher prices to offset the assessment costs. The ability to mortgage those units may be affected by the reserve requirements/regulatory standards that lenders will be considering. Incentivizing new condominium development in the City of Clearwater was discussed to offset the issue of condominium assessments affecting older buildings and their residents.

Accessory Dwelling Units/Rental Rebate Program (Incentive)

The committee discussed incentives for construction or rehabilitation of accessory dwelling units, such as rebates up to a certain dollar amount to assist the supply of affordable housing, with a lease agreement that meets HUD's affordability requirements.

Density (Incentive)

The AHAC discussed looking at density in the City of Clearwater as an incentive. The committee discussed working within the City's zoning code [*Community Development Code*] to incentivize reasonable higher density so that more units can be put on the market. The committee discussed the North Greenwood neighborhood and how a more current zoning strategy for certain neighborhoods is needed to match residents' needs with housing opportunities. For example, developing vertically and allowing multi-unit buildings on current lots. The committee discussed coordination with the Planning & Development Department regarding a zoning strategy.

Education/Marketing (Incentive)

The AHAC discussed the importance of education regarding the City's programs, such as down payment assistance, housing rehabilitation, etc. to make homes safer and more insurable. The importance of roof replacement was discussed. Such marketing could include television, housing fairs, marketing brochures, posters in libraries, flyers,

Appendix

etc. The committee also emphasized educating the city as a whole, not just the City's CRAs and target areas (e.g., North Greenwood, etc.).

Public Comment

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, invited public comment and asked if anyone was there to speak publicly.

Kathleen Beckman, Clearwater resident, member of Clearwater Alliance for Housing, and Chair of the Continuum of Care, requested to speak publicly during the AHAC meeting. Ms. Beckman thanked the committee and suggested the AHAC review the City's Housing Study as presented to the City Council earlier in the year. She also suggested that City staff develop a "one-pager" summary of that study. As committee members do their "homework", she suggested the AHAC ask for data regarding what strategies are successful and what strategies are not working. She asked committee members to understand the City's measurable goals, and how the strategies should be tailored to those goals. Ms. Beckman mentioned Community Land Trusts, issues of developer flexibility and incentivization, and coordination with other regional AHACs. She also encouraged committee members to join the Continuum of Care to advocate for affordable housing.

Next Steps

After the committee discussion and before public comment, the Consultant referenced the 2023 LHS report that was previously completed by the City. The Consultant requested that AHAC members review the 2023 LHS report as to whether past recommendations should be continued, modified, or removed as part of the 2024 update.

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, adjourned the first AHAC meeting.

The second AHAC meeting will be held on October 8, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., in the Clearwater Main Library. During the second AHAC meeting, City staff and the Consultant will respond to questions generated during the first AHAC meeting or through review of the City's current practices, and then facilitate AHAC discussion of critical recommendations for inclusion in the 2024 LHS report. If any AHAC members will be absent on October 8, 2024, questions or comments should be submitted directly to Dylan Mayeux in advance.

...

The AHAC is a public advisory board and is subject to Florida's "Sunshine Law" therefore committee members may not discuss AHAC matters with other committee members outside of a properly noticed and recorded public meeting. AHAC members are encouraged to contact City staff directly to discuss AHAC matters.

Note: The AHAC meeting originally scheduled to be held on October 8, 2024, was postponed until October 28, 2024, due to Hurricane Milton.

D.2 AHAC Meeting #2, October 28, 2024

2024 Update of Local Housing Incentive Strategies

AHAC Meeting #2 | October 28, 2024 | 9:00 a.m.

Clearwater Main Library (100 N. Osceola Ave., Clearwater, FL 33755)

MEETING SUMMARY

The City of Clearwater requested that Wade Trim facilitate an update of the City's Local Housing Incentive Strategies (LHIS) report, which was last updated in 2023. An 11-member Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) representing various affordable housing interests was appointed by the City Council on August 15, 2024 (Resolution #24-11), to evaluate and update the 2023 LHIS report. The first meeting with the AHAC was held on September 10, 2024.

The second meeting with the AHAC was originally scheduled to be held on October 8, 2024, but was postponed until October 28, 2024, due to Hurricane Milton. The second meeting with the AHAC was held on October 28, 2024, at Clearwater Main Library (100 N. Osceola Ave., Clearwater, FL 33755). Six (6) AHAC members, City staff, and the City's consultant attended the meeting:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| • Robyn Fiel (Chair) | Representative of the banking or mortgage industry in connection with affordable housing |
| • Rick Vail | Representative of the residential home building industry |
| • Christine Bond | An advocate for low-income persons in connection with affordable housing |
| • Charessa Doty | Representative of a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing |
| • Linda Byars | A citizen who resides within the City of Clearwater |
| • Cheri DeBlaere | Representative of essential services personnel |
| • Dylan Mayeux | City of Clearwater, Economic Develop. & Housing, Real Estate Coordinator II |
| • Terry Malcolm-Smith | City of Clearwater, Economic Develop. & Housing, Housing Coordinator |
| • Dania Perez | City of Clearwater, Economic Develop. & Housing, Programs Coordinator I |
| • Amanda Warner | Wade Trim, Planner (City's Consultant) |
| • Connor Baird | Wade Trim, Planner (City's Consultant) |

Five (5) AHAC members were not in attendance: David Harder (Representative of those areas of labor engaged in home building in connection with affordable housing), Lindsay Dicus-Harrison (Representative of those who are actively engaged as a real estate professional in connection with affordable housing), Michael Boutzoukas (Serves on the City of Clearwater's local planning agency – Community Development Board), Camille Hebling (Representative of employers within the City of Clearwater), and Mike Mannino (A locally elected official – City Councilmember). One member of City staff was not in attendance: Gina Clayton (City of Clearwater, Planning & Development, Director).

The purpose of the second AHAC meeting was to review the LHIS process and schedule; confirm the affordable housing values, principles, and vision statement; continue to review and discuss the contemporary barriers identified by the AHAC during the first meeting on September 10, 2024; receive direction on whether to maintain, modify, or remove any recommendations from the 2023 LHIS report to address those contemporary barriers; and to identify any new incentive recommendations in response to the AHAC's evaluation of the City's current practices regarding affordable housing.

Welcome and Introductions

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, called the meeting to order and asked the committee members to introduce themselves and state the fields they represent.

Approval of AHAC Meeting Minutes from September 10, 2024

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from September 10, 2024. A motion and second was made, and the meeting minutes were approved by the committee.

Summary of Presentation to AHAC

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, introduced the Consultant. Wade Trim Planner, Amanda Warner (Consultant), then explained the purpose of the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting, to include a presentation in Microsoft PowerPoint format and facilitated AHAC discussion.

The Consultant reviewed the LHS update process and schedule of events toward approval/submittal. The schedule of events included:

- Early August – City designates staff and selects AHAC members
- August 15, 2024 – City Council appoints members to AHAC
- September 10, October 28, and November 12, 2024 – AHAC meets to update LHS report
- December 3, 2024 – AHAC holds public hearing to approve updated LHS report
- December 19, 2024 – City Council holds public hearing to approve updated LHS report for submittal to Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC)
- December 31, 2024 – Deadline to submit LHS report to FHFC
- March 31, 2025 – City Council to adopt amendments to LHAP to incorporate LHS
- May 2, 2025 – Submit amended LHAP with proof of City Council approval to FHFC

During the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, the AHAC made no changes to the affordable housing values, principles, and vision statement previously included in the 2023 LHS report prepared by the former committee. During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, the AHAC confirmed that the existing affordable housing values, principles, and vision statement should be continued in the 2024 LHS report.

The Consultant reiterated the 11 incentive areas under Section 420.9076, F.S., and the additional five AHAC-initiated incentive areas from the previous 2023 LHS Report. The Consultant then presented the contemporary barriers to affordable housing identified by the committee during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, and the status of each existing recommendation based on City staff input regarding current City practices. The existing recommendations within the 2023 LHS report were discussed with the committee. If an AHAC-identified barrier to affordable housing and corresponding incentive was already addressed by an existing recommendation within the 2023 LHS report, those recommendations were noted (i.e., starred) within the presentation.

Committee Discussion

During the second meeting, the Consultant facilitated AHAC discussion of recommendations for inclusion in the 2024 LHS report. The discussion focused on strategies to address the barriers and incentives identified by the AHAC during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024. Strategies are needed to address barriers such as renter cost burden, the high cost of rent/utilities, and transportation-related issues; rising interest rates and insurance costs for homeownership; lack of affordable housing for senior citizens; investor real estate competition; and condominium assessments. Strategies are also needed to support incentives such as accessory dwelling units or rental rebate programs; density; and education/marketing. The following provides a summary of the committee's discussion of recommendations to incentivize the provision of affordable housing in the City of Clearwater.

1) Expedited Review

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, the "Request for Expedited Permit Processing for Affordable Housing Activity" form was discussed, along with the duration of single-family permit reviews (four days initially and three days subsequently). Clarification was provided regarding the timing of multi-family versus single-family permit reviews, and the applicability of the City's expedited permitting process.

The AHAC requested information about how many forms have been submitted through the expedited permitting process. City staff responded that they would research and provide that information to the AHAC.

Appendix

The AHAC also inquired about applicability to other types of housing (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, etc.), whether the expedited review process was working, whether the process applies to only new construction, and how affordable housing projects are funded. City staff and the Consultant responded affirmatively to the committee's questions and conveyed that multiple funding sources are used (i.e., private, public, grant, etc.) for such projects.

The AHAC then discussed providing a list of potential mentors experienced in affordable housing, which was Recommendation 1.3 of the 2023 LHS report. The AHAC asked whether that recommendation had been implemented. City staff responded that the Economic Development & Housing Department provides technical assistance to developers seeking to provide affordable housing. However, a list of established developers to provide mentoring has not been provided. **The AHAC expressed continued interest and need for the mentor list.**

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC modified Recommendation 1.3 as shown in strikethrough/underline:

1.3 *Continue to improve customer service toward potential project applicants by:*

...

- *Providing a list of potential mentors experienced in affordable housing by end of first quarter ~~2024~~ 2025 and updated annually thereafter*

...

The AHAC also inquired about how response times are measured, for example by customer service survey or similar tool. City staff responded that the general rule is response within 24 hours or one (1) business day.

The AHAC discussed the development of a brochure, which City staff confirmed was developed and is available on the City's website. The new tri-fold brochure "Affordable Housing Permitting Process at a Glance" can be viewed on the Development Approval and Permitting Process webpage, and at the links below:

<https://www.myclearwater.com/Business-Development/Information-for-Developers-of-Affordable-Housing/Affordable-Housing-Development/Development-Approval-and-Permitting-Process>

https://www.myclearwater.com/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/planning-amp-development/documents/new-forms/affordable_housing_permitting_brochure-6.pdf

In response to the successful development of the brochure, the AHAC modified Recommendation 1.4 as shown in strikethrough/underline:

1.4 *Develop by end of ~~first quarter~~ year 2024 and annually update thereafter a brochure and other informational handouts to be published in a prominent location on the City's Affordable Housing webpage that explain the City's development approval and permitting process to developers, incl. but not limited to:*

...

The AHAC also confirmed that the "Request for Expedited Permit Processing for Affordable Housing Activity" form exists and is available to developers.

The AHAC discussed building example plans, and whether any templates have been submitted for pre-screening. The AHAC discussed whether building example plans (referenced under Recommendation 1.5) were truly an incentive, since none have been submitted. Committee member Rick Vail, of Habitat for Humanity, stated that they are in the process of creating master plans that encompass the typical homes they construct to decrease the amount of time in permitting. Such plans could be on file and pre-reviewed to expedite permitting. After

discussion, the AHAC decided to continue Recommendation 1.5 to allow more time to determine whether such recommendation will be effective as an incentive.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 1.1, 1.2, or 1.5 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 1.1, 1.2, and 1.5 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes, and modified Recommendations 1.3 and 1.4 as shown above in strikethrough/underline.

Regarding Recommendation 1.1, the AHAC requested additional information regarding how many forms have been submitted, and affordable housing projects expedited, through the expedited permitting process covered by that recommendation.

2) **Modification of Fees**

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, the AHAC discussed Recommendation 2.4 and requested additional information regarding the degree to which the Economic Development & Housing Department can assist with payment of fees using funds designated for affordable housing.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, or 2.4 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

Regarding Recommendation 2.4, the AHAC requested additional information regarding how much the Economic Development & Housing Department was able to assist with the payment of plan review and permit fees, and impact fees, using funds designated for affordable housing.

3) **Flexible Densities**

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, while discussing Recommendations 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3, the AHAC inquired about implementation related to the Live Local Act, which was to include a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) resource on the City's website. City staff confirmed that the Live Local Act FAQ resource is available and posted on the City's website at the following location:

<https://www.myclearwater.com/Business-Development/Information-for-Developers-of-Affordable-Housing/Live-Local-Act>

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 3.1, 3.2, or 3.3 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 3.1., 3.2, and 3.3 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

4) **Infrastructure Capacity**

The City's infrastructure capacity was not identified as an affordable housing barrier. The City of Clearwater is nearly built-out and has sufficient infrastructure capacity for infill development. Therefore, there is no need to reserve infrastructure capacity.

The AHAC continued the previous recommendation of "no recommendation" from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC made no change to the recommendation of “no recommendation” as previously approved in regard to infrastructure capacity.

5) **Accessory Dwelling Units**

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, regarding Recommendation 5.2, the Consultant presented information about the recent City of Clearwater Ordinance 9758-24, which implemented the City's *Comprehensive Plan* Policy QP 6.1.7 and Policy QP 6.1.10 by providing corresponding standards in the *Community Development Code* for accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Also, regarding Recommendation 5.2, the AHAC discussed ADU occupancy/tenure requirements, and confirmed that long-term rental of ADUs is still allowed since short-term rental of ADUs is not allowed by policy. It was noted that Recommendation 5.3, regarding flexibility for alternative unit types, is in progress and has not yet been implemented.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

Regarding Recommendation 5.2, the AHAC requested additional information about how many ADUs are currently in the City of Clearwater.

6) **Parking Reductions**

No discussion regarding parking or setback reductions occurred during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, or during the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

7) **Flexible Lot Configurations**

No discussion regarding flexible lot configurations occurred during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, or during the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024.

The AHAC made no change to Recommendation 7.1 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 7.1 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

8) **Modification of Street Requirements**

Street requirements were not identified as an affordable housing barrier during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. Therefore, modification of the City's existing street requirements was not recommended.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC made no change to the recommendation of “no recommendation” as previously approved in regard to modification of street requirements.

9) **Pre-Adoption Policy Consideration**

No specific issues with the City's current pre-adoption policy consideration process were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. The current process is working.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 9.1 and 9.2 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 9.1 and 9.2 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

10) Inventory of Public Lands

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, while discussing Recommendation 10.1, the AHAC asked how much public land is available. The Consultant responded that there are currently 31 properties on the list. City staff stated there are likely 30 properties currently (i.e., one less than the 31 counted when the list was prepared). Implementation of Recommendations 10.1, 10.2, 10.4, and 10.5 is ongoing to meet requirements under Florida Statutes.

The AHAC discussed Recommendation 10.4, with regard to repeat code violations. City staff provided information about the process, coordination with code enforcement and the list of violations, and outreach to homeowners (e.g., postcard). City staff stated that no specific projects have resulted from that outreach. The AHAC discussed whether or not to continue Recommendation 10.4, given that no projects have resulted. The AHAC inquired about whether there is a list of properties that have been condemned and actions taken, and how long they stay on the list. City staff explained that the City can assess fees and eventually foreclose on the properties. City staff also explained that the degree of violations varies, as well as occupancy. The AHAC discussed how the current incentive (Recommendation 10.4) makes sense, but perhaps education about the incentive is lacking. City staff stated that the outreach included direct contact information and links to the City's updated website for more specific information. The AHAC inquired about whether there is a specific agreement with code enforcement for information sharing with the Economic Development & Housing Department. City staff will research the question and respond.

The AHAC discussed Recommendation 10.5 and the policy/procedure for distribution of city owned lots. The AHAC inquired about the scoring matrix for lot disposition. City staff stated that there are approximately 20 criteria considered, and that the developer fills out an application for lot disposition. Lots from the City's inventory of public lands, titled "Affordable Housing Inventory List" may be requested by a developer through a competitive process. Currently, the lots on the list are multi-family or mixed-use sites, mostly in North Greenwood. Lots on the list are approved or affordable housing and can be purchased or donated. If donated, they must be developed for affordable housing. Lots on the list were acquired by the City over time for various reasons.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, and 10.5 during the second AHAC meeting. **However, the AHAC may further discuss Recommendation 10.4 at the next meeting.**

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, and 10.5 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

Regarding Recommendation 10.4, the AHAC asked City staff whether there is a specific agreement with code enforcement for information sharing with the Economic Development & Housing Department. Regarding Recommendation 10.5, the AHAC requested the scoring matrix for the lot disposition policy/procedure.

11) Proximity to Transportation, Employment, and Mixed-Use Development

No specific issues with the City's current policies regarding proximity to transportation, employment, and mixed-use development were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. The City's current policies remain acceptable to the committee.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendation 11.1 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 11.1 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

12) Additional – Adaptive Reuse

No specific issues with the City's current policies related to adaptive reuse were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. The City's current policies remain acceptable to the committee.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendation 12.1 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 12.1 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

13) Additional – Land Development Code

No specific issues with the City's *Community Development Code* were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendation 13.1 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 13.1 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

14) Additional – Communication/Marketing

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, the AHAC recommended including partnerships with lenders, realtors, title companies, inspectors, etc. as they relate to purchase of real estate with down payment and closing cost assistance under Recommendation 14.1. Such recommendation should include meetings that provide for questions and answers regarding the programs that are available through the City. The AHAC also conveyed that contractors should have the opportunity to bid projects through a City-approved list to facilitate assistance. The Consultant suggested that the recommendation be added under Recommendation 16.1, rather than Recommendation 14.1, due to the topic addressed by Recommendation 16.1 (Partnerships).

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendation 14.1 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 14.1 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes. **However, the AHAC directed the Consultant to add the recommendation for specific partnerships and an approved contractor list under Recommendation 16.1 (see below).**

15) Additional – Financing

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, City staff discussed whether there is chance that City Council will change the City's policies regarding reducing/paying code violation liens on lots suitable for affordable housing. The Consultant responded that the AHAC may make recommendations to City Council through the LHIS report, where recommendations are presented to the City Council for consideration. The AHAC discussed whether to remove or modify Recommendation 15.2 if there is no appetite for the incentive, but ultimately decided to continue Recommendation 15.2 for another year.

The AHAC also discussed Recommendation 15.3 and whether City staff has sufficient funds and deems current staffing levels adequate. City staff responded affirmatively.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 15.1, 15.2, and 15.3 during the second AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 15.1, 15.2, and 15.3 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

16) Additional – Partnerships

During the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, the AHAC recommended including partnerships with lenders, realtors, title companies, inspectors, etc. as they relate to purchase of real estate with down payment and closing cost assistance. Such recommendation should include meetings that provide for questions and answers regarding the programs that are available through the City. The AHAC also conveyed that contractors should have the opportunity to bid projects through a City-approved list to facilitate assistance.

The AHAC also discussed the need for consistency between entitlement communities in the region and their qualification processes for assistance (i.e., improved regional coordination regarding program guidelines). These currently differ from city to city, and county to county, within the region. The AHAC also recognized that the City did increase the down payment assistance loan amount to help homebuyers. The timing of housing quality standard inspections is better than it was, but still not ideal. City staff responded that the City has been collaborating during monthly meetings to align the down payment assistance and other programs to the degree that such programs can be aligned. The AHAC noted that although the City has a great program, another municipality has changed their guidelines to the detriment of homebuyers. City staff stated that inspections are ordered right away; however, any instances of delayed inspections should be brought to City staff's attention. City staff also stated that they previously had a program where they facilitated monthly meetings regarding available assistance. The AHAC suggested City staff coordinate with the Pinellas Housing Finance Authority and their quarterly outreach efforts.

In response to the AHAC's discussion regarding partnerships, the Consultant will draft modifications to Recommendation 16.1 for the committee's consideration.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC will consider modifications to Recommendation 16.1 at the next AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024.

Topics Not Previously Addressed

Upon completion of the review of current City practices and previous recommendations from the 2023 LHS report, the AHAC discussed other topics not previously covered. The AHAC expressed concern about the recent hurricanes (Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton) and disaster relief funding. The committee was concerned about the impact of the hurricanes on affordable housing, specifically the pausing of assistance or transfer of assistance funds to disaster relief. The committee also discussed whether a needs assessment had been completed.

City staff provided information about the City's disaster relief program, and noted that the down payment assistance program, housing rehabilitation, and residential development program had been paused temporarily. City staff is coordinating with Pinellas County, St. Petersburg, and Largo regarding their disaster relief programs. The City of Clearwater's program will roll out the week of October 28, 2024, and will aid with repairs necessary to avoid further damage, reimbursement for emergency supplies, payment of insurance deductibles up to \$10,000, rental assistance, temporary offsite storage, inspections for safety/scope work, and other eligible activities under the SHIP program. City staff is awaiting complete data from the hurricanes to determine corresponding funding levels.

The AHAC inquired about persons that may have been under contract to purchase a property through the City's down payment assistance program, and whether those applications were paused. City staff clarified that only unencumbered funds were paused. If the homebuyer has a contract and commitment letter, those funds would be considered encumbered. However, the status would be verified by City staff on a case-by-case basis. City staff stated

Appendix

that guideline waiver requests were submitted to the state and federal government. The state waivers have been approved, and the City is waiting on the federal waivers to be approved.

The AHAC inquired about the disaster relief program and the application process. City staff is accepting applications, and information will be available on the City's website, with a paper application to start and then an online application in the future. In response to questions from the AHAC, City staff stated they are awaiting data regarding damage assessments and how many homes were impacted. Although the City received a waiver from the state regarding value, assistance will still be restricted to 120% AMI.

Public Comment

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, invited public comment and asked if anyone was there to speak publicly. No persons requested to speak publicly and there were no verbal or written public comments received at the second AHAC meeting.

Next Steps

The Consultant will respond to AHAC direction to continue or modify recommendations as discussed during the second AHAC meeting held on October 28, 2024. The Consultant will present the updated 2024 LHS report at the third AHAC meeting. The third AHAC meeting will be held on November 12, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., at the Clearwater Main Library (100 N. Osceola Ave., Clearwater, FL 33755). If any AHAC members will be absent on November 12, 2024, questions or comments should be submitted in advance directly to Dylan Mayeux in the City's Economic Development & Housing Department.

Dylan Mayeux expressed appreciation for the committee members that were able to attend the rescheduled meeting on short notice.

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, adjourned the second AHAC meeting.

...

The committee is hereby reminded that the AHAC is a public advisory board and is subject to Florida's "Sunshine Law" therefore committee members may not discuss AHAC matters with other committee members outside of a properly noticed and recorded public meeting. AHAC members are encouraged to contact City staff directly to discuss AHAC matters.

D.3 AHAC Meeting #3, November 12, 2024

2024 Update of Local Housing Incentive Strategies

AHAC Meeting #3 | November 12, 2024 | 9:00 a.m.

Clearwater Main Library (100 N. Osceola Ave., Clearwater, FL 33755)

MEETING SUMMARY

The City of Clearwater requested that Wade Trim facilitate an update of the City's Local Housing Incentive Strategies (LHIS) report, which was last updated in 2023. An 11-member Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) representing various affordable housing interests was appointed by the City Council on August 15, 2024 (Resolution #24-11), to evaluate and update the 2023 LHIS report. The first meeting with the AHAC was held on September 10, 2024. The second meeting with the AHAC was originally scheduled to be held on October 8, 2024, but was postponed until October 28, 2024, due to Hurricane Milton.

The third meeting with the AHAC was held on November 12, 2024, at Clearwater Main Library (100 N. Osceola Ave., Clearwater, FL 33755). Nine (9) AHAC members, City staff, and the City's consultant attended the meeting:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| • Robyn Fiel (Chair) | Representative of the banking or mortgage industry in connection with affordable housing |
| • Rick Vail | Representative of the residential home building industry |
| • David Harder | Representative of those areas of labor engaged in home building in connection with affordable housing |
| • Christine Bond | An advocate for low-income persons in connection with affordable housing |
| • Charessa Doty | Representative of a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing |
| • Lindsay Dicus-Harrison | Representative of those who are actively engaged as a real estate professional in connection with affordable housing |
| • Linda Byars | A citizen who resides within the City of Clearwater |
| • Cheri DeBlaere | Representative of essential services personnel |
| • Mike Mannino | A locally elected official – City Councilmember |
| • Jesus Niño | City of Clearwater, CRA, Executive Director |
| • Dylan Mayeux | City of Clearwater, Economic Develop. & Housing, Real Estate Coordinator II |
| • Terry Malcolm-Smith | City of Clearwater, Economic Develop. & Housing, Housing Coordinator |
| • Dania Perez | City of Clearwater, Economic Develop. & Housing, Programs Coordinator I |
| • Gina Clayton | City of Clearwater, Planning & Development, Director |
| • Amanda Warner | Wade Trim, Planner (City's Consultant) |
| • Connor Baird | Wade Trim, Planner (City's Consultant) |

Two (2) AHAC members were not in attendance: Michael Boutzoukas (Serves on the City of Clearwater's local planning agency – Community Development Board) and Camille Hebling (Representative of employers within the City of Clearwater).

The purpose of the third AHAC meeting was to review the LHIS process and schedule; again confirm the affordable housing values, principles, and vision statement; continue to review and discuss the contemporary barriers identified by the AHAC during the first meeting on September 10, 2024; affirm the AHAC direction received on October 28, 2024, as to whether to maintain, modify, or remove recommendations from the 2023 LHIS report to address those contemporary barriers; and to identify any new incentive recommendations in response to the AHAC's evaluation of the City's current practices regarding affordable housing.

Welcome and Introductions

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, called the meeting to order and asked the committee members to introduce themselves and state the fields they represent.

Approval of AHAC Meeting Minutes from October 28, 2024

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 28, 2024. A motion and second was made, and the meeting minutes were approved by the committee.

Summary of Presentation to AHAC

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, introduced the Consultant. Wade Trim Planner, Amanda Warner (Consultant), then explained the purpose of the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting, to include a presentation in Microsoft PowerPoint format and facilitated AHAC discussion.

The Consultant reviewed the LHS update process and schedule of events toward approval/submittal. The schedule of events included:

- Early August – City designates staff and selects AHAC members
- August 15, 2024 – City Council appoints members to AHAC
- September 10, October 28, and November 12, 2024 – AHAC meets to update LHS report
- December 3, 2024 – AHAC holds public hearing to approve updated LHS report
- December 19, 2024 – City Council holds public hearing to approve updated LHS report for submittal to Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC)
- December 31, 2024 – Deadline to submit LHS report to FHFC
- March 31, 2025 – City Council to adopt amendments to LHAP to incorporate LHS
- May 2, 2025 – Submit amended LHAP with proof of City Council approval to FHFC

During the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, the AHAC made no changes to the affordable housing values, principles, and vision statement previously included in the 2023 LHS report prepared by the former committee. During the second and third AHAC meetings on October 28, 2024, and November 12, 2024, the AHAC confirmed that the existing affordable housing values, principles, and vision statement should be continued in the 2024 LHS report with no changes.

The Consultant reiterated the 11 incentive areas under Section 420.9076, F.S., and the additional five AHAC-initiated incentive areas from the previous 2023 LHS Report. The Consultant then presented the contemporary barriers to affordable housing identified by the committee during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, and the status of each existing recommendation based on City staff input regarding current City practices. If an AHAC-identified barrier to affordable housing and corresponding incentive was already addressed by an existing recommendation within the 2023 LHS report, those recommendations were noted (i.e., starred) within the presentation. The Consultant then provided a summary of the AHAC's discussion from October 28, 2024, regarding each incentive area, and the committee's direction as to whether to maintain, modify, or remove existing recommendations. AHAC direction from October 28, 2024, was further discussed with the committee on November 12, 2024.

Committee Discussion

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the Consultant facilitated AHAC discussion of recommendations for inclusion in the 2024 LHS report. The discussion focused on strategies to address the barriers and incentives identified by the AHAC during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, and the committee direction received during the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024.

In summary from the previous two AHAC meetings, strategies are needed to address barriers such as renter cost burden, the high cost of rent/utilities, and transportation-related issues; rising interest rates and insurance costs for homeownership; lack of affordable housing for senior citizens; investor real estate competition; and condominium assessments. Strategies are also needed to support incentives such as accessory dwelling units or rental rebate programs; density; and education/marketing.

The following provides a summary of the committee's discussion, as occurred on November 12, 2024, regarding recommendations to incentivize the provision of affordable housing in the City of Clearwater.

1) **Expedited Review**

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the Consultant presented a summary of the AHAC discussion from the first and second meetings on September 10, 2024, and October 28, 2024, and requested confirmation regarding the committee's direction.

On November 12, 2024, the AHAC confirmed modification of Recommendation 1.3 as shown in strikethrough/underline:

- 1.3 *Continue to improve customer service toward potential project applicants by:*
 ...
 • *Providing a list of potential mentors experienced in affordable housing by end of first quarter ~~2024~~ 2025 and updated annually thereafter*
 ...

The AHAC also confirmed modification of Recommendation 1.4 as shown in strikethrough/underline:

- 1.4 *Develop by end of ~~first quarter~~ year 2024 and annually update thereafter a brochure and other informational handouts to be published in a prominent location on the City's Affordable Housing webpage that explain the City's development approval and permitting process to developers, incl. but not limited to:*
 ...

City staff then provided information about how many permits were expedited using the "Request for Expedited Permit Processing for Affordable Housing Activity" form, which totaled eight (8) expedited permits. However, City staff stated the count does not show the full story because not all affordable housing developers specifically request expedited permitting or identify affordable housing in their application narrative. City staff will work with the Planning & Development Department and the City Clerk's office regarding how to better track affordable housing permits.

The AHAC inquired about the eight (8) expedited permits and asked if the applicant must identify their application as expedited, or whether City staff (in house) identifies the permit as expedited. City staff responded that the Planning & Development Department and/or the Economic Development & Housing Department upon first contact will provide the applicant with a letter that confirms the application is for affordable housing and qualifies for expediting permitting and associated incentives.

The AHAC also discussed how applicants work together with the Economic Development & Housing Department to submit that letter with their initial permit application, which is part of the timeline for submittal. The AHAC noted that there are likely more than eight (8) affordable housing projects in the City of Clearwater. The AHAC and City staff then discussed adding a checkbox to the permit application to make it easier to identify affordable housing projects as they come in, and to move them into the expedited permitting process.

The AHAC inquired as to whether the eight (8) expedited permits were single-family or multifamily, and whether multifamily units were counted individually or as a project. City staff responded that they were counted as a project. The AHAC asked whether the current permit application has a checkbox for affordable housing. City staff responded that the current permit application does not have such checkbox. After discussion, the AHAC recommended adding a checkbox to the permit application to designate the project as affordable housing, so that such developments could be flagged early on.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 1.1 and 1.5 during the third AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC confirmed the continuation of Recommendations 1.1 and 1.5 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes, and the modification of Recommendations 1.3 and 1.4 as shown above in strikethrough/underline.

In response to the AHAC's discussion regarding expedited review and adding an affordable housing checkbox to the City's permit application, the Consultant will draft modifications to Recommendation 1.2 for the committee's consideration.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC will consider modifications to Recommendation 1.2 at the next AHAC meeting on December 3, 2024.

2) **Modification of Fees**

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the Consultant presented a summary of the AHAC discussion from the first and second meetings on September 10, 2024, and October 28, 2024, and requested confirmation regarding the committee's direction.

In follow-up to questions raised during the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, City staff provided information regarding impact fee incentives in the City of Clearwater. During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, City staff stated that funding for impact fees totaled \$7,521, with a budgeted allocation of \$260,000 toward impact fee assistance.

No further discussion regarding the modification of fees occurred during the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, or 2.4 during the third AHAC meeting. Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

3) **Flexible Densities**

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the Consultant presented a summary of the AHAC discussion from the first and second meetings on September 10, 2024, and October 28, 2024, including support for better zoning strategies, including incentivizing reasonable higher density and vertical development to allow multi-unit buildings on current lots. The Consultant and City staff also confirmed that the Live Local Act Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) resource was available and posted on the City's website. The Consultant then requested confirmation regarding the committee's direction.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 3.1, 3.2, or 3.3 during the third AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 3.1., 3.2, and 3.3 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

4) **Infrastructure Capacity**

The City's infrastructure capacity was not identified as an affordable housing barrier. The City of Clearwater is nearly built-out and has sufficient infrastructure capacity for infill development. Therefore, there is no need to reserve infrastructure capacity.

The AHAC continued the previous recommendation of "no recommendation" from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC made no change to the recommendation of “no recommendation” as previously approved in regard to infrastructure capacity.

5) Accessory Dwelling Units

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the Consultant presented a summary of the AHAC discussion from the first and second meetings on September 10, 2024, and October 28, 2024, and requested confirmation regarding the committee’s direction.

The AHAC confirmed that accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are an important incentive strategy for the City, especially considering the lack of available land in Clearwater. However, there is a need for education regarding ADUs, and that education aspect cannot be overstated. The committee noted that young first-time homebuyers, fixed-income elderly, and persons with disabilities are the most challenged to find housing in the City. ADUs can be a tool to fill those housing gaps, but education is critical. The committee noted that components of ADUs can be restrictive (e.g., homestead exemptions, etc.), and that coordination with the Pinellas County Property Appraiser is also critical. Another barrier to ADUs may be limitations on who can develop an ADU (i.e., who can apply for an ADU building permit). The City’s code requires that the property upon which the ADU is constructed be “owner-occupied”.

The AHAC inquired about Down Payment Assistance (DPA). City staff discussed burdensome monitoring requirements surrounding ADUs developed with state or federal funding, in terms of ensuring long-term affordability. The AHAC also discussed using CRA funding to support ADUs, and City staff discussed Down Payment Assistance (DPA) and affordable housing in general as a key component of CRAs. The AHAC inquired about what monitoring entails, and the definition of affordable housing in that context (i.e., 120% AMI for SHIP). The AHAC also discussed rehabilitation loans regarding ADUs.

The AHAC suggested perhaps utilizing some of the funds for impact fee reduction to also reduce the cost of ADU development. The AHAC also discussed programmatic concerns, density, and the context of small projects due to limited land availability in Clearwater. After discussion, the AHAC recommended adding educational and financial incentives (e.g., rebates, fee reductions, etc.) for ADUs to reduce barriers to development of such units.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 during the third AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

In response to the AHAC’s discussion about adding educational and financial incentives (e.g., rebates, fee reductions, etc.) for ADUs, the Consultant will draft new Recommendation 5.4 for the committee’s consideration.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC will consider new Recommendation 5.4 at the next AHAC meeting on December 3, 2024.

6) Parking Reductions

No discussion regarding parking or setback reductions occurred during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, or the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2 during the third AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

7) **Flexible Lot Configurations**

No discussion regarding flexible lot configurations occurred during the first AHAC meeting on September 10, 2024, the second AHAC meeting on October 28, 2024, or the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024.

The AHAC made no change to Recommendation 7.1 during the third AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 7.1 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

8) **Modification of Street Requirements**

Street requirements were not identified as an affordable housing barrier during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. Therefore, modification of the City's existing street requirements was not recommended.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC made no change to the recommendation of "no recommendation" as previously approved in regard to modification of street requirements.

9) **Pre-Adoption Policy Consideration**

No specific issues with the City's current pre-adoption policy consideration process were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. The current process is working.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 9.1 and 9.2 during the third AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 9.1 and 9.2 from the 2023 LHS report with no changes.

10) **Inventory of Public Lands**

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the Consultant presented a summary of the AHAC discussion from the first and second meetings on September 10, 2024, and October 28, 2024, and requested confirmation regarding the committee's direction.

City staff stated that there is not a specific agreement with Code Enforcement for information sharing. However, City staff did coordinate with Code Enforcement to obtain a list of all properties with fines and then sent letters to those homeowners offering assistance through the City's rehabilitation program.

The AHAC discussed prior Recommendation 10.4, regarding repeat code violations. The AHAC inquired about properties with substantial fines and whether that would preclude such homeowners from obtaining a rehabilitation loan. City staff explained that liens or judgements would disqualify them. The AHAC inquired as to whether the City has a Code Enforcement Board. City staff responded that the Code Enforcement Board meets monthly to review properties with active code violations. The homeowner receives a quarterly statement about such code violations, and any resulting liens for repeated noncompliance are recorded with the City. City staff clarified that if a homeowner is actively working to resolve the code violation, it is unlikely that case would go to the Code Enforcement Board. In such cases, a rehabilitation loan could help the homeowner avoid further code enforcement action. The AHAC again emphasized the education aspect of such a recommendation. The AHAC also noted that there is a dashboard on the City's website to track code enforcement issues throughout the City. Moreover, the AHAC emphasized the success of ongoing

Appendix

partnerships between City departments and developers to redevelop blighted properties. After discussion, the AHAC decided not to modify Recommendation 10.4, but to continue the recommendation as written.

Regarding the City's inventory of public lands, the AHAC inquired about how those properties were acquired by the City. City staff responded that the properties were acquired in a variety of ways, such as tax liens or intentional purchases for affordable housing. The barriers to those properties selling are lack of interest, possibly due to their location, configuration, or zoning.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, and 10.5 during the third AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendations 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, and 10.5 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

11) **Proximity to Transportation, Employment, and Mixed-Use Development**

No specific issues with the City's current policies regarding proximity to transportation, employment, and mixed-use development were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. The City's current policies remain acceptable to the committee.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendation 11.1 during the third AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 11.1 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

12) **Additional – Adaptive Reuse**

No specific issues with the City's current policies related to adaptive reuse were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff. The City's current policies remain acceptable to the committee.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendation 12.1 during the third AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 12.1 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

13) **Additional – Land Development Code**

No specific issues with the City's *Community Development Code* were identified during meetings with the AHAC and City staff.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendation 13.1 during the third AHAC meeting.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 13.1 from the 2023 LHIS report with no changes.

14) **Additional – Communication/Marketing**

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the Consultant presented a summary of the AHAC discussion from the first and second meetings on September 10, 2024, and October 28, 2024, and requested confirmation regarding the committee's direction.

On November 12, 2024, the AHAC noted that an important communication strategy is the City's water bill mailings, which sometimes include information about the City's programs. The AHAC complimented City staff on the success of those mailings as a communication strategy.

Appendix

The AHAC also discussed whether the term, “workforce” versus “affordable” housing should be used. That discussion was expanded to the use of the term, “attainable” housing. After discussion, the AHAC recommended adding the term, “attainable” housing to the terminology used when marketing and communicating about affordable housing with the community.

In response to the AHAC’s discussion regarding “workforce” and “attainable” housing, the Consultant will draft modifications to Recommendation 14.1 for the committee’s consideration.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC will consider modifications to Recommendation 14.1 at the next AHAC meeting on December 3, 2024.

15) **Additional – Financing**

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the Consultant presented a summary of the AHAC discussion from the first and second meetings on September 10, 2024, and October 28, 2024, and requested confirmation regarding the committee’s direction.

On November 12, 2024, the AHAC discussed that affordable options for living in the City were limited but do exist.

The AHAC made no changes to Recommendations 15.1, 15.2, and 15.3 during the third AHAC meeting. Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC continued Recommendation 15.1, 15.2, and 15.3 from the 2023 LHM report with no changes.

16) **Additional – Partnerships**

During the third AHAC meeting on November 12, 2024, the Consultant presented a summary of the AHAC discussion from the first and second meetings on September 10, 2024, and October 28, 2024, and requested confirmation regarding the committee’s direction.

On November 12, 2024, the AHAC confirmed modification of Recommendation 16.1 as shown in strikethrough/underline:

16.1 *Develop public and private partnerships for the provision of affordable housing:*

...

- *Coordinate with Pinellas County joint programs for the provision of affordable housing, including the Pinellas County Countywide Housing Strategy, ~~and~~ Advantage Pinellas Housing Compact, ~~and~~ Pinellas Housing Finance Authority.*
- *Coordinate with other entitlement grantees in the region to improve consistency, as feasible, between qualification criteria for housing assistance programs.*

...

- *Partner with lenders, realtors, title companies, inspectors, and contractors through regular outreach meetings to improve knowledge of the City’s housing assistance programs and facilitate opportunities for qualified contractors to bid projects.*

...

The AHAC briefly discussed realtor organizations in Pinellas County, and regional coordination. The AHAC then continued the discussion of the potential for an approved realtor/lender/vendor list, which would require entities to participate in a training program to qualify for the list. City staff expressed concern about the limitations of such a list. The AHAC described examples of other communities that have such a list,

Appendix

which involves training and periodic renewals. City staff conveyed that state and federal programs have specific regulations to be considered. The AHAC expressed interest in adding language to promote training to reduce mistakes that may affect the closing process. City staff stated that partners are provided guidance (e.g., manual) during the process, but agreed that new lenders could be better educated.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC confirmed the modification of Recommendations 16.1 and as shown above in strikethrough/underline.

In response to the AHAC's discussion regarding an approved realtor/lender/vendor list and the need for further training/education (e.g., guidelines) about the process when using state or federal funding, the Consultant will draft further modifications to Recommendation 16.1 for the committee's consideration.

Upon review of current City practices, the AHAC will consider further modifications to Recommendation 16.1 at the next AHAC meeting on December 3, 2024.

Topics Not Previously Addressed

Upon completion of the review of current City practices and previous recommendations from the 2023 LHS report, the AHAC had the opportunity to discuss other topics not previously covered. One committee member commented about parking reductions and flexible standards, in the context of overcrowding of units and related parking nuisances, and how the City enforces parking violations

Public Comment

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, invited public comment and asked if anyone was there to speak publicly. One (1) person requested to speak publicly and provided verbal comments regarding the terminology used to describe affordable housing, and specific language in the AHAC recommendations. The person's comments included concerns about government overreach, utility fee increases, city management, and police reform.

There were no written public comments received at the third AHAC meeting.

Next Steps

The Consultant will respond to AHAC direction to continue or modify recommendations as discussed during the third AHAC meeting held on November 12, 2024. The Consultant will present the updated 2024 LHS report at the fourth AHAC meeting, which will be held as a public hearing. The fourth AHAC meeting will be held on December 3, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., at the Clearwater Main Library (100 N. Osceola Ave., Clearwater, FL 33755). If any AHAC members will be absent on December 3, 2024, questions or comments should be submitted in advance directly to Dylan Mayeaux in the City's Economic Development & Housing Department.

AHAC Chair, Robyn Fiel, asked if Dylan Mayeaux had anything to add prior to adjournment. Mr. Mayeaux did not have anything further to add. Ms. Fiel then adjourned the third AHAC meeting.

...

The committee is hereby reminded that the AHAC is a public advisory board and is subject to Florida's "Sunshine Law" therefore committee members may not discuss AHAC matters with other committee members outside of a properly noticed and recorded public meeting. AHAC members are encouraged to contact City staff directly to discuss AHAC matters.

APPENDIX E: AHAC Recommendations

The following presents the AHAC's updated recommendations as described in Section II of the LHS report. The AHAC reviewed the City's current practices and held a public hearing on December 3, 2024, at which the AHAC approved the following recommendations to incentivize the provision of affordable housing. The AHAC's recommendations will be presented to City Council on December 19, 2024.

E.1 Expedited Review Process

Recommendation 1.1 Continue to use the "Request for Expedited Permit Processing for Affordable Housing Activity" form to fast-track affordable housing projects. Single-family projects submitted with this form will receive priority during the permit review process by completing reviews of single-family permit reviews within four days of the initial submittal and within three days of all subsequent submittals.

Recommendation 1.2 The Assistant Director of Economic Development & Housing and Permit Manager will continue to be the primary and secondary points of contact when submitting multi-family affordable housing projects. Through close coordination, these two staff positions will:

- *Create and oversee an affordable housing "One Stop Streamline Permitting Process."*
- *Act as a liaison between the developer and all departments involved in the review and permitting process.*
- *Organize and participate in the pre-application meetings.*
- *Provide necessary information and forms to the developer to avoid delays during the application and review process.*
- *Create a process and definitive project requirement checklist for affordable housing projects for each level of review and stage of permitting, starting with an "affordable housing project" checkbox on application form(s) as applicable.*
- *Create a definitive but feasible review timeline for affordable housing projects considering variables such as the type, size and impact in the community depending on the level of review and stage of permitting.*
- *Release to the applicant and all City departments involved at once, written statements for additional requirements and project determinations.*
- *Track the review process through the City's online ePermit system.*
- *Report to the developer the status of the application.*

Recommendation 1.3 Continue to improve customer service toward potential project applicants by:

- *Maintaining a positive attitude*
- *Offering a quick response time via email or phone calls*
- *Making available project requirements and forms*

- *Providing a list of potential mentors experienced in affordable housing development by end of first quarter 2025 and updated annually thereafter*
- *Utilizing new technology to enhance administrative efficiencies and to educate developers about the City's affordable housing incentives and permitting process by means of link sharing, web forms, videos/webinars, virtual meetings/forums, and other tools*

Recommendation 1.4 Develop by end of year 2024 and annually update thereafter a brochure and other informational handouts to be published in a prominent location on the City's Affordable Housing webpage that explain the City's development approval and permitting process to developers, including but not limited to:

- *Relationship between City and County policies and the regulation of land use, density, and intensity*
- *City-sponsored incentives for affordable housing such as the "Request for Expedited Permit Processing for Affordable Housing Activity" form, Affordable Housing Density Bonus, Parking Reductions, and Nonconforming Exemption for Affordable Housing*

Recommendation 1.5 Encourage affordable housing developers of single-family homes to submit frequently used building example plans for pre-screening by the Building Official to further expedite the staff permit review process.

E.2 Modification of Fees

Recommendation 2.1 Coordinate with Pinellas County regarding data-based rate flexibility within the multi-modal impact fee to support the provision of affordable housing.

Recommendation 2.2 Annually assess the financial, legal, and administrative feasibility of reducing, refunding, or redefining (by unit size) the costs of impact fees and/or permitting fees related to the development of affordable housing with the goal of being on par with other municipalities in Pinellas County.

Recommendation 2.3 The Planning & Development Department will continue to implement the fee Schedule of Fees Rates and Charges ordinance to provide for a reduction in the Plan Review and Permit Fees for single-family homes.

Recommendation 2.4 The Economic Development & Housing Department will continue to assist with the payment of Plan Review and Permit Fees and impact fees utilizing state and federal funds designated for affordable housing.

E.3 Flexible Densities

- Recommendation 3.1 Continue to provide allowance of density flexibility for affordable housing developments by City policy and to monitor State legislation regarding density flexibility, including but not limited to the Live Local Act.*
- Recommendation 3.2 Maintain specific parameters to grant density flexibility for affordable housing projects as allowed in the Community Development Code within the different zoning districts.*
- Recommendation 3.3 Continue to define the density allowance for an affordable housing project as part of a pre-application meeting prior to formal submission of the civil/site engineering requirements.*

E.4 Infrastructure Capacity

We do not recommend that the City of Clearwater include the reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons as an incentive for the provision of affordable housing.

E.5 Accessory Dwelling Units

- Recommendation 5.1 Continue to allow for accessory dwelling units in nonresidential zoning districts as described within the City's Community Development Code.*
- Recommendation 5.2 Implement City Council Comprehensive Plan Policy QP 6.1.7 and Policy QP 6.1.10 to allow accessory dwelling units by providing corresponding standards in the CDC. Such standards may include:*
- Maximum unit size, parking standards, setback, and height requirements to facilitate review and to ensure neighborhood compatibility, which may be presented using a pattern book or similar means to expedite approval.*
 - Occupancy/tenure requirements so that the principal dwelling unit remains owner-occupied, the accessory dwelling unit is not used for short-term rental, and the number of occupants is limited to that which is reasonable for the unit size.*
- Recommendation 5.3 Provide flexibility for other alternative unit types such as co-housing to incentivize unconventional solutions to address affordable housing needs and support aging-in-place within existing neighborhoods.*
- Recommendation 5.4 Consider educational and financial incentives that reduce barriers to the rehabilitation and construction of accessory dwelling units, such as information*

about the permitting process specific to accessory dwelling units, rebates, or other fee reductions.

E.6 Parking Reductions

Recommendation 6.1 Continue to allow flexible setback requirements for affordable housing developments.

Recommendation 6.2 Continue to tie reductions of off-street parking requirements to proximity and access to alternative modes of transportation, including transit, sidewalks, trails, or other options.

E.7 Flexible Lot Configurations

Recommendation 7.1 Continue to allow flexible lot configurations for affordable housing developments while remaining sensitive to the character and context of existing neighborhoods.

E.8 Modification of Street Requirements

Because such standards are in place to benefit public health and safety, we do not recommend that the City utilize the modification of street requirements as an incentive for affordable housing.

E.9 Pre-Adoption Policy Consideration

Recommendation 9.1 As part of its annual reporting, the Economic Development & Housing Department will continue to review all regulations and ordinances that may affect the cost of housing.

Recommendation 9.2 Continue the review process maintained by the Senior Executive Team through which any new regulatory instrument created in the City (Ordinances, regulations, etc.) or by related State legislation can be evaluated for its effect on housing affordability.

E.10 Inventory of Public Lands

Recommendation 10.1 The Economic Development & Housing Department will continue to maintain the inventory of publicly-owned land suitable for the development of affordable housing.

Recommendation 10.2 Continue to publish the public land inventory owned by the City for affordable housing, and a link to Pinellas County's inventory, on the City's webpage for prospective developers and non-profit agencies for developing affordable housing.

Recommendation 10.3 Continue to make publicly-owned land available to prospective developers and non-profit agencies for developing affordable housing.

Recommendation 10.4 The Economic Development & Housing Department will coordinate with the Planning & Development Department to identify properties having repeat code violations that may be suitable for rehabilitation, acquisition, or demolition for affordable housing.

Recommendation 10.5 Continue to monitor the policy/procedure for distribution of city owned lots. Consider including energy efficient items and related emerging technologies into the scoring matrix to support environmentally friendly development in partnership with the Greenprint 2.0 timeline.

E.11 Proximity to Transportation, Employment & Mixed-Use Development

Recommendation 11.1 The City will maintain and implement policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan that incentivize affordable housing development proximate to transportation hubs, major employment centers, and mixed-use developments.

E.12 Adaptive Reuse

Recommendation 12.1 Continue to allow and promote "adaptive reuse" involving the conversion of surplus and/or outmoded buildings including old churches, school buildings, hospitals, train stations, warehouses, factories, hotels, office buildings, malls, etc. to mixed uses where permitted by zoning district or by the Live Local Act.

E.13 Land Development Code

Recommendation 13.1 Continue to incentivize developers to address recommended design standards for affordable housing developments consistent with Sec. 3-920.A.3.c.i-iii. of the City of Clearwater Community Development Code. Other criteria could include but are not limited to:

- *Provide direct and visual access to open space for residents.*
- *Consider play areas when developing family housing.*
- *Provide nighttime outdoor illumination for safety.*
- *Use landscape standards and buffers to screen nuisances and to separate public and private areas.*
- *Centrally-locate common facilities.*
- *Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) when practical and financially feasible.*
- *Include electric vehicle charging infrastructure.*

E.14 Communication and Marketing of Affordable Housing

Recommendation 14.1 Continue to improve current communication channels and marketing materials to reach different stakeholders interested in affordable housing. Some of the suggested actions include but are not limited to:

- *Conduct an educational campaign, in conjunction with regular City communications, to rebrand affordable housing as workforce or attainable housing that supports the diverse needs of residents through a variety of unit/product types compatible with the City's neighborhoods.*
- *Partner with Amplify Clearwater and others to broadly promote the benefits of, and opportunities for, affordable housing development in the City and to communicate successes.*
- *Prepare, update, and keep current marketing materials for the general public in order to promote the different housing programs that the City offers, including homebuyer education and down payment assistance to support homeownership.*
- *Prepare, update, and keep current marketing materials that help developers and the general public to understand the application criteria, permitting process, and the number of incentives available for rehabilitation and new construction of affordable housing units in the City.*
- *Make accessible to the public an inventory and a map of suitable residential vacant land available for development.*
- *Include a section on the City's webpage called, "Affordable Housing & Community Development," specifically dedicated to the promotion of affordable housing.*
- *Share outcomes and analytics with appropriate City boards and committees.*

E.15 Financing

Recommendation 15.1 Diversify financial strategies to contribute to the new construction and maintenance of affordable housing and financial assistance to obtain affordable housing.

Recommendation 15.2 Evaluate the feasibility of reducing/paying code violation liens on lots suitable for affordable housing development.

Recommendation 15.3 Ensure City staffing levels are adequate to achieve the AHAC recommendations of the LHS Report.

E.16 Partnerships

Recommendation 16.1 Develop public and private partnerships for the provision of affordable housing:

- *Prepare, advertise, and maintain an inventory of affordable housing providers/developers and any other related organization.*
- *Encourage partnerships between current and new affordable housing developers for mentoring and technical training.*
- *Establish partnerships with major employers to coordinate the supply of workforce housing.*
- *Encourage and support joint development opportunities between the private sector and non–profits to develop affordable housing.*
- *Engage lenders in training and ongoing discussion with the City relative to underwriting and credit standards, technology solutions, as well as the development of financial products in an effort to maximize the financing options available to potential first-time homebuyers through conventional and other lenders.*
- *Coordinate with Pinellas County joint programs for the provision of affordable housing, including the Pinellas County Countywide Housing Strategy, Advantage Pinellas Housing Compact, and Pinellas Housing Finance Authority.*
- *Coordinate with other entitlement grantees in the region to improve consistency, as feasible, between qualification criteria for housing assistance programs.*
- *Monitor, and encourage citizens to lobby for, the development of statewide legislative initiatives to gauge the local impact of their provisions.*
- *Partner with lenders, realtors, title companies, inspectors, and contractors through regular outreach to increase knowledge of the City’s housing assistance programs, provide guidelines and training to improve compliance, and facilitate opportunities for qualified contractors to bid projects.*
- *Coordinate with the private sector and non-profits to provide homebuyer education, home warranties, and other strategies that reduce the ongoing maintenance risk of homeownership.*
- *Increase down payment assistance loan amounts to be viable for the homebuyer while remaining financially feasible for the continued operation of the City’s program.*
- *Improve the timing of Housing Quality Standards inspections to facilitate closings on homes with down payment assistance loans, if feasible under funding source requirements.*

Appendix

- *Partner with the private sector and non-profits to address third-party barriers to affordable housing and to identify appropriate incentives to reduce labor and material costs for developers and long-term maintenance, operational, and insurance costs for homeowners.*