

Housing Element

GOALS – OBJECTIVES – POLICIES

Based on the analysis of housing issues in this element, the following goal, objectives, and policies are adopted into the Fort Myers Beach Comprehensive Plan:

GOAL 12: To keep a wide variety of housing types available to people at all stages of their lives.

OBJECTIVE 12-A GENERAL HOUSING STRATEGIES-

Maintain or increase 1997 federal/state funding levels for affordable housing needs; and maintain an adequate supply of land to meet forecasted housing needs; and maintain current levels of on-island housing suitable for employees working within the town.

POLICY 12-A-1 The town shall pursue the following affordable housing strategies:

1. Provide liaison and technical assistance in linking eligible activities to partnerships and governmental funding sources;
2. Encourage a variety of housing types and cost ranges through flexible provisions in the Land Development Code (see Policy 12-C-1);
3. Focus planning efforts on specific areas that are in transition, such as the near-town neighborhoods between Times Square and Bay Oaks, and reinforces the quality of existing stable neighborhoods;
4. Implement an incentive-driven regulatory system and the town's new policy regarding accessory apartments (see Policy 4-C-7);
5. Promote revitalization of existing housing including historic structures (see specific programs in the Historic Preservation Element); and
6. Assist service workers to find suitable housing on the island.

- POLICY 12-A-2 This plan's Future Land Use Map shall continually designate sufficient residential and mixed – use land for varying housing densities and housing types to accommodate the town's forecasted housing needs through build- out.
- POLICY 12-A-3 The town shall help provide access to affordable housing services for it's Residents with special attention to the needs of its low-income and "special need" population.
- A. The town shall seek an agreement with Lee County to retain the town's standing as an eligible area for expenditures under the county's federal and state entitlement programs, provided assurances are made that town residents received a reasonable share of these expenditures over time. Unless determined to be feasible or undesirable, the town shall enter into a cooperative agreement with Lee County before October 1998.
 - B. The town shall promote the use of public-private partnerships wherever feasible to accomplish the implementation of it housing objectives. Such partnerships could include a Downtown Redevelopment Agency, non-profit housing providers, and private developers and builders.
 - C. Encourage local lenders to provide affordable homeownership opportunities (including needed renovations) through programs such as mortgage assistance, reduced closing costs and lower interest rates.
- POLICY 12-A-4 The town shall strive to eliminate substandard housing conditions and improve the structural and aesthetic qualities of existing housing. The town shall identify unsafe and substandard structures and take appropriate actions to address such conditions by adopting the Standard Housing Code by 1999 and enforcing it to regulate conditions in rental housing. Emphasis shall be on renovation rather demolition whenever possible.

POLICY 12-A-5 If ever necessary, the town shall provide equitable housing for citizens who must be relocated through government action supported by federal funds consistent with Chapter 421.55 *F.S.*

POLICY 12-A-6 The town shall update this element using a state-approved methodology after census data for the year 2000 is available and no later than the town's next scheduled evaluation and appraisal report.

OBJECTIVE 12-B NEIGHBORHOOD- SPECIFIC

HOUSING STRATEGIES- This plan's vision for revitalized and stable neighborhoods shall guide neighborhood- specific strategies to upgrade the housing stock and maintain a wide range of housing types and costs.

POLICY 12-B-1 DOWNTOWN (TIMES SQUARE)-

Promote new construction and rehabilitation of existing structures for Compact moderate-priced housing on Crescent Street consisting of multi-family units of various sizes, targeted for year-round occupancy for persons who wish to live or work downtown, through:

1. The regulatory framework and incentives provided through the redevelopment overlay zone;
2. Activities of a Downtown Redevelopment Agency (if established, see Community Design Element Policy 3-D-1) such as land assembly, provision of infrastructure (drainage, sidewalks, streetscapes, undergrounding of utilities etc.) and low-interest revolving loans.
3. Other measures to encourage residential uses over retail throughout the downtown area.

POLICY 12-B-2 HEART OF THE ISLAND- CIVIC CENTER

Promote the revitalization of the School Street 9see Community Design

Policy 3-A-4) as a walkable palm-lined street of restored and infill cottages for residential use, live-work spaces such as studios or galleries, and small scale specialty retail uses consistent with the historic theme with the retail on the ground floor and residential above.

1. Prepare regulations that would allow a compatible mix of uses and would ease setback and parking requirements to accommodate the unique needs of renovations of existing and move-on cottages
 2. Provide architectural and design guidelines which illustrate cost-effective Rehabilitation techniques consistent with the historic theme.
- In partnership with the Estero Island Historic Society, seek grant funds to reduce costs of move-on and rehabilitation of historic cottages.

POLICY 12-B-3 RED COCONUT/GULFVIEW COLONY AREA

Support the continued use of the Red Coconut/Gulfview Colony are (see Community Design Policy 3-A-5) as a pleasant home for visitors and long-term residents, and provide a pre-approved option for redevelopment as a traditional neighborhood with a variety of housing types.

POLICY 12-B-4 NEAR-TOWN NEIGHBORHOODS-

Revitalize the older near-town residential areas using traditional Neighborhood techniques for renovations and infill (see Community Design policy 3-B-1), using methods such as:

1. Modify current regulations that have proven to be barriers to redevelopment.
2. Encourage the cottage design tradition of front porches and decks to help frame public spaces and define private areas, promoting neighborhood safety.
3. Permit quiet home offices (and possibly other mix uses as determined appropriate).

4. Protect residential areas from intrusive by poorly regulated short-term rentals.
5. Provide access to federal and state housing programs available to income qualifying owners through Lee County's programs.

OBJECTIVE 12-C REVISE THE CURRENT REGULATORY SYSTEM-

Complete a thorough revision of the town's land development regulations by the end of 1999 to provide clear and consistent rules for development and redevelopment.

POLICY 12-C-1 The town's zoning and development regulations shall allow a variety of lot sizes, densities, and housing types.

POLICY 12-C-2 Implement the town's new policy on accessory apartments in residential neighborhoods and include standards by which to measure compliance.

POLICY 12-C-3 Adopt the Standard Existing Buildings Code by 1999(see Historic Preservation Policy 13-B-6).

POLICY 12-C-4 The land development regulations shall include measures to implement Chapter 419 F.S. about the proper siting of group homes and foster care facilities.

POLICY 12-C-5 Consider (and implement as feasible) various methods to reduce the cost of constructing or rehabilitating housing, such as:

1. Adjusting impact fee schedules so that small units or housing designed for island employees would pay less than larger housing units;
2. Supporting DCA's new "residential construction mitigation program" to help lower-income residents retrofit their homes to increase their safety and protect their investment before a disaster occurs using low-interest loans or grants;

3. Considering a bonus system to allow densities above what is normally allowed if reserved for housing in a price range affordable by low- or moderate income residents; or
4. Relaxing the rules that require many sound buildings to be elevated above expected flood levels before they can be structurally improved.

OBJECTIVE 12-D HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT HOUSING-
Retain at least 90% of the town's historically significant housing for residential uses (or appropriate adaptive re-uses.).

POLICY 12-D-1 The town shall maintain the inventory of historic structures contained in the Historic Preservation Element.

POLICY 12-D-2 The town in cooperation with the Estero Island Historic Society, will assist owners of historically significant housing in locating funds to restore or rehabilitate their homes. Assistance may be provided to move buildings if there is no other option to save the home.

POLICY 12-D-3 The town shall consider other incentives to encourage renovation of historic structures, as detailed in the Historic Preservation Element. Such incentives could include property tax relief, transfer of development rights, and below-market interest rate loans.