

AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE: May 20, 2025
DEPARTMENT: Community Development
REQUESTER: Mikki Rozdolski, Director
TITLE: Direct Staff to Amend Lee Plan Housing Element

I. MOTION REQUESTED

Direct staff to prepare amendments to the Lee Plan's Housing Element and other housing-related provisions in the Lee Plan and Land Development Code based on anticipated population and housing needs.

II. ITEM SUMMARY

Directs staff to prepare amendments to update the Lee Plan's Housing Element, other Lee Plan policies related to housing, and the Land Development Code to diversify the County's housing strategies, provide options to rebuild or redevelop vulnerable residential properties damaged or destroyed by a man-made or natural disaster, incentivize affordable housing within the county's Future Urban Areas, correct internal inconsistencies, and revise other non-substantive language. This action does not approve any amendments. The county will follow the statutory process for county-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendments to consider any proposed amendments related to this request, including applicable county advisory committees.

III. BACKGROUND AND IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

The last major update to the Lee Plan's Housing Element was completed prior to the recession in 2008. The County has drastically changed since then, and the element no longer reflects the county's needs. Numerous references and policies must be updated to remove outdated references, reflect Lee County's anticipated population growth, incorporate Live Local and other state initiatives, facilitate recovery from extreme weather events, and represent the current housing market. This update would amend the Housing Element and other housing related policies to better reflect the County's housing needs and conditions.

The update is consistent with Lee Plan Policy 135.1.3 which states that the County shall continue to review, update, and amend its policies, ordinances, codes, regulations, and permitting processes to better reflect community needs and preferences. The Housing Element update and the update of other related regulatory instruments will review the existing policies and update these documents to better reflect the County's needs and preferences.

In addition, the following Lee Plan provisions apply:

Goal 5 states that the county will accommodate the projected population in attractive and safe neighborhoods at various price ranges and housing types. This update would examine whether the County's current regulations and policies support this goal.

Objective 135.4 states that increasing the supply of affordable housing for very-low and low-income residents will be a priority. The update will examine housing needs broadly to ensure diverse housing options are available at all income levels. When the housing supply sufficiently meets the demand, affordability should increase.

Policy 135.4.13 states that the County will examine opportunities to increase affordable housing projects. The update may incorporate references to the State's Live Local legislation and examine other mechanisms to facilitate affordable housing development in the county's urban areas without losing commercial and industrial sites.

Goal 160 of the Economic Development Element states that the County will ensure the development of a wide variety of housing options to support a diverse workforce. The update will examine housing market trends to ensure there are adequate allowances for desirable housing types for working individuals and families.

Chapter 163.3177 of the Florida Statutes provides that local comprehensive plans must contain "a housing element consisting of principles, guidelines, standards, and strategies to be followed in" the provision of housing for all current and anticipated future residents of the jurisdiction; the elimination of substandard dwelling conditions; the structural and aesthetic improvement of existing housing; the provision of adequate sites for future housing, including affordable workforce housing, and other objectives related to the provision of housing.

The update will likely require companion amendments to the Land Development Code to support and implement proposed amendments.

Directing staff to prepare amendments to the Lee Plan and Land Development Code does not approve any amendments. All proposed amendments will follow the applicable processes determined by the County's Administrative Code, Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, and Florida Statutes. Hearings will be publicly noticed as required, and public input may be sought to ensure the proposed amendments reflect community values.

IV. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Current Year Dollar Amount: No funding required.

Included in the Current Budget?: N/A

Fund: N/A

Comments:

Is this a revenue or expense item? No.

Is this Discretionary or Mandatory? Discretionary

Will this item impact future budgets? No.

Program:

Project:

Account Strings:

Fund Type?

V. RECOMMENDATION

Approve

ATTACHMENTS:

None

REVIEWERS:

Erika Garcia, Community Development
Mikki Rozdolski, Community Development
Anne Henkel, Budget Services
Peter Winton, County Manager
Joseph Adams, County Attorney
Marc Mora, County Manager

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