

Sarasota Housing ACTION Plan

Quick Reference



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**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**
of Sarasota County

Sarasota Housing Action Plan

I. Deploy all possible funding sources for affordable housing needs.

Strategy	Action
Create and sustain local affordable housing trust funds.	<p>Local funding sources to target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Revenue • Proceeds from the sale of publicly owned property • In-lieu payments through a density bonus or other incentive program • Community Redevelopment Agency funding • Linkage Fee • Private donations and contributions
Unlock and support all possible public funding mechanisms.	<p>Public entities and funding sources to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community redevelopment agencies (CRAs) • Housing finance agencies (HFAs) • Public housing authorities (PHAs) • Special districts • Infrastructure surtax • Bonding power
Ensure subsidy programs meet high priority needs.	Households at or below 80% of Area Median Income are in greatest need of affordable housing funding in Sarasota County. Local funding programs should be targeted at this greatest need and be tailored to assist a wide range of housing types, high-priority locations near jobs and services, and both homeownership and rental housing.
Explore local fee relief and property tax incentives.	Housing advocates can ensure that fee waiver programs serve homes that house persons of lower incomes, advocate for adoption of the local option property tax exemption allowed under Florida law, and explore programs that pay property taxes for income-eligible households or developments.
Garner support from local financial institutions, philanthropy, major employers, and other capital.	The public sector alone cannot financially support the level of affordable housing development and preservation needed to meet the needs of Sarasota County residents. Private investment and strategic public-private partnerships are necessary to attack the community's needs. This can come in the form of a local loan pools, local affordable housing funds, and use of philanthropic dollars on affordable housing development.

2. Review and reform zoning and use regulations to unlock developable land.

Strategy	Action
Allow more homes in efficient and resilient areas.	Local land use and zoning policies should be designed to increase the number, types, and size of homes allowed to be built, facilitating more housing choices near the amenities and destinations that community members need every day.
Support a broad range of home types by right.	Land use polices can support a wider range of sizes of detached homes, more accessory homes and small-scale apartments/clustered homes tucked into existing neighborhoods, and more large-scale apartments along major corridors with transit, in downtowns, and in other areas of larger scale buildings.
Design programs to include guaranteed affordable homes in new developments.	When the public sector provides additional density or otherwise allows more homes to be built in a given area, that is a tremendous opportunity to secure guaranteed affordable homes in return. Guaranteeing affordable housing ensures availability at a range of price points for households at a wide range of income levels.
Promote repurposing of properties for homes.	Local governments can facilitate the repurposing of properties, such as through adaptive reuse, through zoning and land use policies. The County and cities can amend their regulations to allow a mix of uses, including stand-alone residential apartments, in areas zoned for commercial, employment, government, and multi-family office development, along with retention of affordable housing requirements. These changes expand options for how these properties can be used, if providing homes is a workable option for these property owners.
Facilitate factory-built home options.	The County and municipalities can amend zoning regulations to allow manufactured housing meeting federal standards, allowances which are currently limited. Factory built homes provide a notably more affordable option to site-built homes due to their streamlined design, construction, and permitting process relative to site-built homes, while continuing to offer a safe, resilient living space.

3. Dedicate public and private land towards affordable housing goals.

Strategy	Action
Capitalize on all publicly owned resources that are appropriate for affordable housing.	Using publicly owned land is one of the most valuable tools to build long-term affordable housing. Housing advocates can ensure that public entities both 1) identify publicly owned parcels that are appropriate for use as affordable housing; 2) dispose of those parcels in ways that will generate the most community impact.
Prioritize community resiliency.	Given the area's vulnerability to extreme weather events, local governments and landowning organizations should be mindful of community resiliency when determining where to invest in affordable housing. There are environmental and resiliency elements that can be used to evaluate where development should be built to higher standards altogether avoided to reduce risk in both the short and long-term.
Fund land acquisition for affordable housing with public and private capital.	Dedicated public and private local revenue resources can support land acquisition strategies for affordable housing. City and county governments, philanthropy, financial institutions, major employers, and the business community at-large can help support the purchase of land for the community's housing goals. Key public funding sources include general revenue, proceeds from the sale of publicly owned property, and the infrastructure surtax.
Support community land trusts (CLTs) and other permanent affordability models.	Community land trusts (CLT) should be created and supported to build and sustain a permanent stock of affordable housing. Other tools, such as shared equity models and 99-year ground leasing, are also vital to preserve investments to create affordable housing in perpetuity.

4. Form and sustain strategic partnerships that generate results.

Strategy	Action
Engage major employers, philanthropy, school boards, universities, religious institutions, and other community groups.	Strategic partnerships to promote local housing goals can take different forms and involve different players who may each bring valuable resources to the table. These stakeholder groups may not typically be too involved or 'in the know' when it comes to the nuances of housing needs, programs, or policies, but they share a common interest in their communities having safe, affordable housing options. These groups possess resources that go beyond public subsidies, such as political and financial capital, and can make any strategic partnership more impactful.
Support capacity building efforts for nonprofit developers.	It is important to actively support affordable housing development by non-profit organizations. Supporting the growth of local non-profit housing developers is a foundational investment for having community-focused building efforts to meet future housing needs. Intentionally growing a wider network of capable non-profit housing developers will allow more mission-driven affordable housing development to happen throughout Sarasota County, which is needed as communities across the County are facing shortages of affordable housing, especially for households at or below 80 percent AMI. Non-profit housing providers will often have a strong knowledge of what forms of housing support are needed in certain communities and can be experienced in providing services for high needs populations.
Sustain affordable housing development cohorts.	Establishing affordable housing cohorts can expand regional education among similar organizations on shared housing-related issues while also developing goodwill and relationships. Cohorts allow for more frequent opportunities for idea-sharing and data-sharing that can lead to a domino effect when it comes to identifying problems and exploring solutions. Cohorts can also be highly specific in their focus, allowing for nuanced and in-depth problem solving.
Form and continue interlocal partnerships.	Interlocal collaboration on affordable housing policies can include data-sharing on housing needs, built homes, and regional goals; idea-sharing for housing program administration; the establishment of an affordable housing cohort for local governments; and interlocal partnership to utilize 3rd party organizations to assist with certain housing activities.



5. Support the people in the community this Action Plan aims to serve.

Strategy	Action
Engage with the community, specifically those with the greatest needs for affordable housing.	Community engagement is vital for prioritizing and allocating resources for affordable housing. Through community engagement, community members close to the cause can raise awareness, have their voices heard, inquire about public policy, private investments into housing, and provide suggestions for future projects that may result in affordable housing needs being met. A wide-reaching community engagement strategy can also decrease the likelihood of NIMBY (“Not in my Backyard”) opposition to affordable housing projects in the future as too often, the only proponents of an affordable housing development are the developers themselves.
Support legal aid, homeless service providers, and community-based nonprofits on the front lines.	The affordable housing shortage is not a new phenomenon to the low-income population of Sarasota County. Neither is it new to the community-based organizations that have worked on the front lines to solve the area’s housing problems for decades. When discussing affordable housing needs and solutions, it is vital to include and support the organizations that have experience working with people experiencing housing instability.
Enact additional local fair housing protections, support fair housing enforcement, and bolster tenant protections where allowed.	In tandem with the production and preservation of affordable housing units, anti-discrimination laws must be enforced and additional local fair housing protections should be enacted to ensure that all persons have fair access to the home of their choice. The County could build all the housing it needs to meet its goals, but if fair housing protections are not enforced and people are allowed to be discriminated against based on a protected class, affordable housing efforts will fail to reach their potential.
Provide or expand homeowner education and financial literacy.	Building homes for ownership is one thing; having buyer-ready residents in a community is another. Local efforts can provide continued support to organizations that assist low-income residents with homeowner education and financial literacy. Services can also be provided to lower-income renters to educate them on landlord-tenant protections, ways to build wealth outside of homeownership, and job training.
Track affordable housing results.	Tracking the successes of local affordable housing solutions is vitally important to their continued support by the public and private sector; seeing how the area’s housing policies are directly impacting the lives of Sarasota County residents is a great way to create ongoing momentum for long-term solutions. Tracking results is also necessary to understand the overall impacts of housing policies to understand their pros, cons, and tweaks that may need to be made to achieve their goals.