

HOUSING ELEMENT

of the

PINELLAS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Prepared By:

The Pinellas County Planning Department

as staff to the

LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY

for

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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Preface

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Pinellas County adopted its first Comprehensive Plan for managing growth in the County. In 1985, the Florida Legislature strengthened the growth management provisions of Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, and Pinellas County began to develop its new Plan, with a greater emphasis on integrated planning and consistency with other State and Regional planning efforts. In 1989, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners was one of the first governments to meet the new growth management requirements with the adoption of its new Comprehensive Plan. This Plan placed new emphasis on financial feasibility, and the assurance that public services and facilities would be available concurrent with the impacts of development. Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, also includes specific requirements for regularly evaluating the continued effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan, and requires that local governments update their Plans to address significant issues identified through this evaluation and appraisal process. The first major update to the Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 1998. In 2008, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the next significant update to the Plan, following a multi-year evaluation process, which included extensive public and agency involvement to ensure that the Plan remained relevant, providing appropriate direction to decision-making and sound guidance for future planning.

Today, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners has a mature Comprehensive Plan and growth management program, based on over 30 years of comprehensive planning experience. The emphasis and theme of the Plan is the need to plan appropriately today in order to achieve a sustainable future, and a quality community where people will *Plan to Stay*.

The individual Elements and related components of the Plan provide an integrated long range planning program designed to address both existing and future needs. Where multi-jurisdictional responsibilities exist, the Elements may address the entire County; other Elements address just the unincorporated County. Following are the Elements and related components of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan:

Planning to Stay, Future Land Use and Quality Communities; Transportation; Natural Resource Conservation and Management; Coastal Management; Housing; Intergovernmental Coordination; Recreation, Open Space and Culture; Potable Water, Wastewater and Reuse; Solid Waste and Resource Recovery; Surface Water Management; Capital Improvements; Public School Facilities, Economic, The Concurrency Management System; and The Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures.

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State of Florida Map and Pinellas County Location

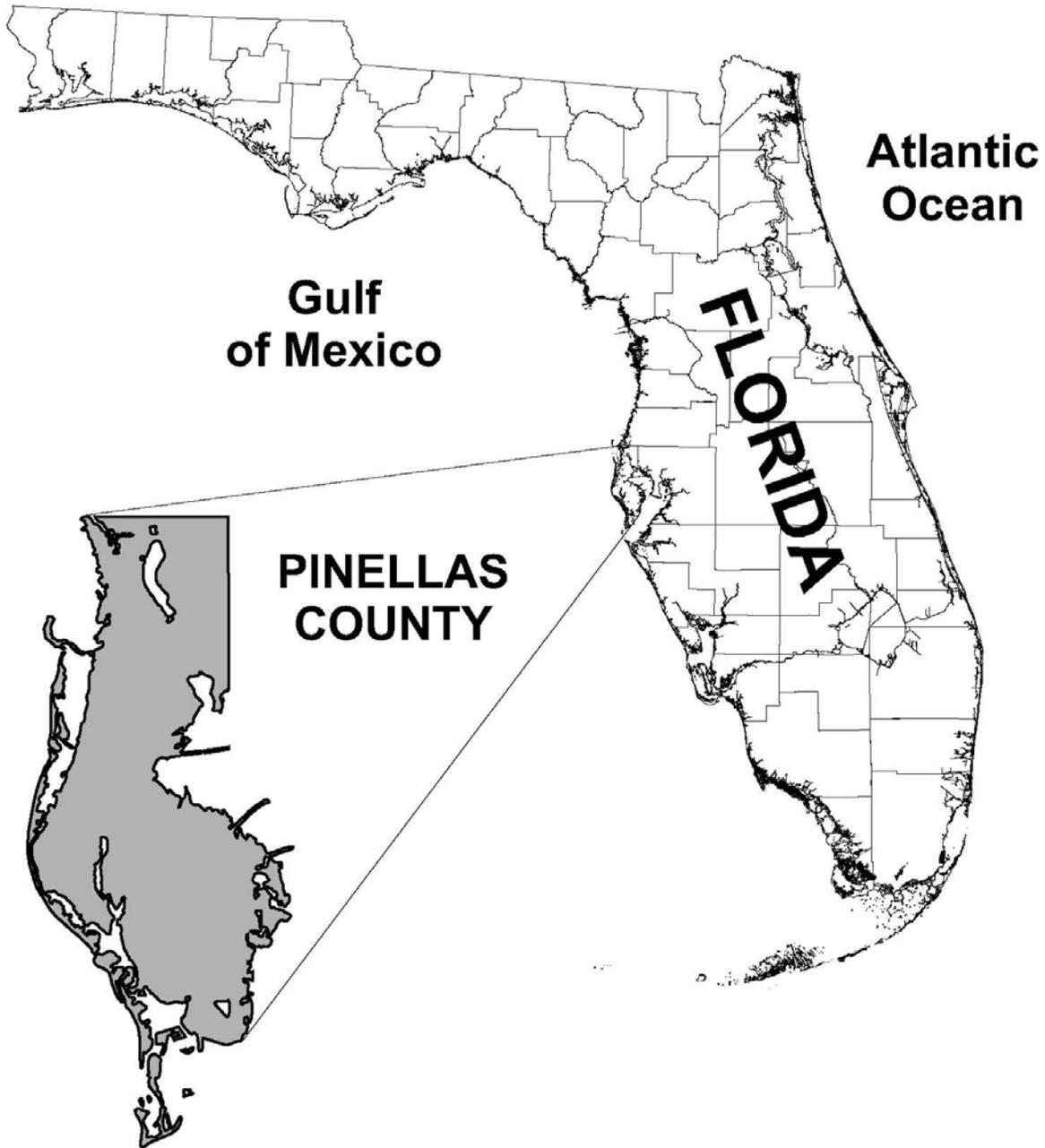


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* This item is an adopted component of the Comprehensive Plan

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Introduction

Geographically, Pinellas County is the second smallest County in Florida and also the most densely populated. The warm climate, coastal location, and abundance of recreational activities have historically attracted people from across the country and from all over the world. In order to accommodate this population, much of the County has already been developed, and the remaining available land has become increasingly expensive. These factors affect housing conditions, and the Housing Element assesses and analyses such existing and projected housing conditions and needs in unincorporated Pinellas County, including some comparisons with other Counties in the region, the State of Florida and the United States.

Never before have so many factors converged simultaneously to impact the affordability of housing: insurance rates have risen dramatically as a result of more active hurricane seasons, the cost of building materials increased, gas prices increased, and property taxes have increased as a result of the increased value of houses being sold. Meanwhile, the amount of undeveloped land has decreased, further helping to increase the cost of housing. As a result, affordable housing is an important issue facing Pinellas County. The Element defines and analyses existing and projected affordable housing issues in Chapter 2 followed by detailed descriptions in Chapter 3 of housing assistance and affordable housing programs and incentives being planned for or currently being utilized by Pinellas County.

The Housing Element also explores the idea of more sustainable approaches (i.e. smaller housing, energy efficient housing, etc.) to help meet housing needs and affordability by seeking to reduce some of the costs associated with housing. Finally, this Element also looks at how Pinellas County is trying to address the issue of homelessness.