

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

Annual Report 2024

AHAC Mission Statement:

Relaunched in fall 2017, the Chatham County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee will make recommendations to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners for procedures and policies around affordable housing. The Committee will be instrumental in implementing the Chatham County Affordable Housing Strategy Toolbox, as well as administering the Housing Trust Fund application review and award process.

AHAC Accomplishments:

- Engagement with Housing Developers
 - AHAC collaborated with Chatham County's Housing and Community Development Officer, Jamie Andrews, to have a consistent outreach strategy with Housing Developers. Part of this strategy is the content delivered to developers, and part of it is figuring out where to incorporate outreach in the existing development and planning workflow.
- Deepened Partnerships Across the Housing Spectrum
 - AHAC hosted multiple groups, including past Housing Trust Fund recipients, planning board members, and service providers to build a more comprehensive understanding of the housing work being done across Chatham County and what gaps existed.
- UDO Guidelines
 - AHAC representatives attended the UDO planning board subcommittee and produced a series of suggestions that encouraged the affordability of units. Some suggestions include expanding the number of zones that are eligible for denser housing types such as townhomes, duplexes, manufactured housing, and Accessory Dwelling Units, support for affordability incentives such as increased density, and support for access to green space and amenities.
- Impact Fee Suggestions
 - AHAC collaborated on and endorsed a series of changes to the county's impact fee reimbursement policy to incentivize affordable housing. Some of the highlights include expanding the types of projects eligible for impact fee reimbursement and increasing the required affordability period.
- Understanding Scope: Mobile Homes
 - Because mobile homes are a major source of naturally occurring affordable housing and are particularly threatened by upcoming development, AHAC established a working group to understand and engage with the mobile home community in Chatham.
 - This working group collaborated with the County planning office to find information on the number of mobile home hookups in the county and what condition those hookups are in.
- Creating outreach plan

- The working group created a survey to distribute to mobile home park residents and engaged with community stakeholders to produce a plan to distribute this survey. The suggested Strategic Housing Effort fund would assist in the logistics of executing this plan.

Background Data Highlights:

- In the past three years of available data, there has been far more net migration to Chatham than added housing supply. On average, the gap has been 839 homes per year. This gap forecasts the trajectory of housing affordability in Chatham.
- Both homeowners and renters in Chatham have seen an increase in cost burden due to housing. 19 percent of all homeowners are cost burdened, and 49 percent of renters are cost burdened. Among specifically income levels of 80 percent of area median income or below, 80 percent of renters are cost burdened and 68 percent of homeowners are cost burdened.

Plans for 2025:

- More comprehensive action planning process for 2025
 - Identify member priorities and key themes
 - Develop goals and actionable strategies
 - Convene time-limited and action-oriented working groups
- Strengthen Trust Fund oversight and encourage more interest
- Build relationships within the county housing community and external housing advocates and allies
- Ensure alignment with Strategic Plan and long-term goals