

Methodology for Jacksonville Case Study

Prepared by the University of Florida DCP Research Team
Affordable Housing Suitability Model¹
in collaboration with the Jacksonville
Department of Housing and Neighborhoods

In July 2006, HB 1363 took effect. This sweeping state legislation recognizes that:

- Providing affordable housing is vitally important to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of this state,
- Escalating property values and development costs have contributed to the inadequate supply of housing for low- and moderate-income residents, and
- A shortage of sites available for housing for persons and families with low and moderate incomes exists.

To address these issues, all municipalities must prepare an inventory of lands that they own and identify surplus state lands “appropriate for use as affordable housing.” It is up to the local government to establish the characteristics that will identify those sites suitable for affordable housing. These inventoried properties may then be sold with the proceeds applied to affordable housing initiatives or otherwise made available for affordable housing development, or if already improved, redevelopment. The deadline for submitting the list, approved by the local governing body, to the state is June 30, 2007.

From an initial list of properties owned by the city/county or the school board totaling 3,710 parcels, decisions regarding suitability were based on the following criteria for selection.

- Records that did not match the mapped parcel database were excluded.
- All properties with buildings were excluded since these sites were considered to be already developed.
- Due to the potential for delays in receiving land use approvals, properties of 10 acres or more and properties that did not have a suitable land use classification and zoning (that would allow residential development) were removed from the list. This selection process assures that these properties are more immediately available for consideration.
- Lands zoned as Planned Unit Developments (PUD) were also excluded because these properties serve an existing project and so are not available for development.
- Those properties with existing public uses such as Alltel Stadium, parks, fire stations, libraries, and public hospitals were also eliminated because they are currently in active use and not available for housing development.
- Because of the need to remain undeveloped for reasons of access, rights-of-way and easements are also removed from consideration as eligible properties.

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- Parcels in Special Flood Hazard Areas (FEMA), on submerged lands or wetlands, on zoned conservation lands, on landfills and dumps, or located on sites with environmental hazards, such as ash sites, are not considered developable, so they are not included on this list.
- Parcels located more than 300 feet from water mains and sewer connections were excluded from the list. A maximum of 300 feet is considered a reasonable limit that is appropriate for development. In addition, parcels without direct access to roads were excluded from the list.
- Cecil Field is already under development and thus is excluded from the listing of available parcels.

Using the above criteria, 670 of the original 3,710 parcels were identified as potentially suitable for affordable housing development. Land area of the selected parcels totals 254 acres, a sum that represents roughly 0.08 percent of the area of Duval County, excluding conservation land, marsh, and water.

During the selection process additional criteria were employed to identify public lands that may be included or excluded from the list at a later date.

- Schools on the public land inventory list were assumed to be vacant properties. Since these properties have buildings they were automatically excluded from selection. Eleven parcels with schools were identified and may be included on the list in the event that these developed sites are given high priority for development.
- Parcels on brownfield sites were identified during the selection process but not excluded from the list. Though some sites may have existing conditions that make development difficult, other sites may not have conditions barring development.

The methodology also includes site characteristics that may be used to rank the relative suitability of selected parcels for affordable housing development. These characteristics include:

- Parcels in Neighborhood Action Plan areas, viewed as infill sites with infrastructure, amenities, and zoning in place
- Local school performance based on FCAT score
- Location of sites in or outside of areas designated for potential public housing development (census tracts with little or no public rental housing) based on the Consent Decree filed on October 18, 2000 by the US Department of Justice.
- 2000 census data for the tract in which the parcel is located, such as median household income, poverty rates, number of housing units, vacancy rates, tenure, and cost burden

- 2006 crime rates for the tract in which the parcel is located based on Jacksonville Sheriff's Office data, broken down as follows: residential burglary, aggravated battery, homicide, robbery, crime against property, all crime (except sex offenses), crime against persons (except sex offenses)
- Proximity to services based on data from Jacksonville GIS, Jacksonville Housing and Neighborhoods, and the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL). Data including bus stops, hospitals, police and fire stations, elementary schools, daycare facilities, health care facilities, community centers, cultural centers, shopping areas, gas stations, and parks and open space. Proximity to assisted multi-family housing was also included as a variable. All proximity measures are based on the shortest distance between the centroid of the publicly owned selected parcel to the centroid of the nearest service or feature with the uses described above.