



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT STAFF REPORT AMENDMENT ROUND 25-B

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING, MAY 9, 2025

I. General Data

Project Name: Farmworker Housing

Element: Introduction and Administration (I&A), Future Land Use (FLUE) and Housing (HE) Elements

Project Manager: Bryce Van Horn, Senior Planner and Stephanie Gregory, Principal Planner

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends **approval** based on the findings and conclusions presented in this report.

II. Item Summary

Summary: This County proposed text amendment was initiated by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) at the August 22, 2024, meeting to allow for Board directed Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) revisions to proceed. This amendment proposes to revise several Elements in the Comprehensive Plan in order to allow for additional opportunities for farmworker housing in the Glades Tier. Specifically this includes:

- Add a definition for farmworker housing to the Introduction and Administration Element (I&A);
- Remove minimum acreage requirements in the Housing Element (HE) except the Agricultural Reserve future land use designation; and
- Establish criteria in the Future Land Use Element (FLUE) for the provision of farmworker housing that is not located on bona fide agricultural land.

Assessment: This amendment will revise the Comprehensive Plan in order to implement the BCC's May 25, 2023, direction to amend the ULDC to expand farmworker housing opportunities in the Glades region. This amendment is necessary to facilitate the provision of farmworker housing concurrent with the initiated ULDC amendments. There were no inconsistencies identified with the Goals, Objectives, and Policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

ULDC Implications: This change will allow associated ULDC revisions to revise farmworker housing land development regulations, including to allow farmworker housing as a Principal Use on properties that are not associated with farmland. Currently, the ULDC only allows farmworker housing as an accessory use to a bona fide agricultural use.

III. Hearing History

This report was revised following the publication of the March 14, 2025, Planning Commission staff report.

Local Planning Agency:

Board of County Commissioners Transmittal Public Hearing:

State Review Agencies:

Board of County Commissioners Adoption Public Hearing:

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IV. Intent

The intent of this proposed amendment is to add a definition for Farmworker Housing to the Introduction and Administration Element (I&A); remove minimum acreage requirements in the Housing Element (HE) except for the Agricultural Reserve (AGR) future land use designation; and to establish criteria in the Future Land Use Element (FLUE) for the provision of farmworker housing that is not located on bona fide agricultural land.

V. Background

BCC Direction History. On May 25, 2023, the BCC gave direction to revise the ULDC to expand farmworker housing opportunities in the County, specifically limited to the Glades region. A review by the Planning Division determined that text amendments to the County's Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Housing Element, are necessary for the ULDC amendments to move forward. As a result, the Planning Division brought an item to the BCC on August 22, 2024, (Exhibit 2) for the Board to consider initiating text amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to revise the minimum acreage for farmworker housing. The Board initiated the Comprehensive Plan text amendments at that hearing in order to facilitate the provision of farmworker housing concurrent with the initiated ULDC amendments.

VI. Data and Analysis

This section provides background information regarding the proposed amendment, and consistency of the proposed changes with the Comprehensive Plan and implications for the Unified Land Development Code.

A. Policy Background

Statutory Requirements. In 1985 with the Growth Management Act, Rule 9J-5.010 of the Florida Administrative Code (FAC), established that the Housing Element (HE) of a local government's Comprehensive Plan include a specific objective that provides for the "creation and/or preservation of affordable housing for... household(s) with special housing needs including rural and farmworker housing." Rule 9J-5 FAC, which included this requirement, was subsequently repealed by Chapter 2011-139 (HB 7207), Laws of Florida with the passage of the 2011 Community Planning Act. However, under the new Community Planning Act, Chapter 163.3177(6)(f), Florida Statutes, still required that the Housing Element include "principles, guidelines, standards and strategies" for the "provision of housing for all current and anticipated future residents of the jurisdiction."

Farmworker Housing History. Since 1989, the County's Comprehensive Plan has acknowledged the importance of creating and preserving housing for "special housing needs" populations, which includes the farmworker community. During the County's Comprehensive Plan 1996 Evaluation and Appraisal Review (EAR), the Planning Division identified an opportunity to combine all special needs housing policies under a single objective within the Housing Element and to conduct "a study of the farmworker population and estimates of housing needs." Subsequent text amendments were proposed by the County in 1998 to implement the EAR based findings. Following transmittal of the proposed text amendments to the State Land Planning Agency, designated at the time as the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the department issued an Objections, Recommendations and Comments (ORC) report. The report contained objections that the amendment was not "specific and measurable" and

recommended establishing “principles and criteria to guide the location of housing for special needs populations” and to “indicate the land use categories in which farm worker housing is allowed so as to ensure adequate sites for the location of farmworker housing.”

In response to the ORC report, staff revised the proposed policies to establish that farmworker housing is permitted within the Agricultural Reserve (AGR), Agricultural Production (AP) and Special Agriculture (SA) future land use designations. In addition, policies were revised to require farmworker housing to be located in “proximity to areas of agriculture employment and shall require a minimum of twenty-five (25) acres”. The origin of the 25 acre minimum was derived from an already established 25 acre requirement in the County’s ULDC that pre-dated the Comprehensive Plan text amendment. The ULDC allowed for “farm tenant quarters” at a “maximum of one (1) self-contained dwelling unit for each twenty-five (25) acres...” (Article 6, Section 6.4, ULDC, Supplement 3). Ultimately, the Board adopted the revised policies in the Housing Element to include the 25 acre minimum as well as the three future land use categories as proposed by staff. The policies are still in place today.

B. Proposed Text Amendment

The text amendment proposes to add a definition in the Introduction & Administration Element. The proposed changes in Exhibit 1 are shown as deleted text in ~~strikethrough~~ and added text in underline and are further described below.

- **Add a definition for Farmworker Housing.** The Comprehensive Plan, Introduction & Administration Element only currently defines Farm Worker Quarters and further defines the use as *“One or more residential structures located on the site of a bona fide agricultural use and occupied by year-round farm workers employed by the owner of the farm”*. This use is specifically referred to and relied on for implementation of Policies within the Agricultural Reserve Tier which is outside the Glades Tier, the Tier that this proposed amendment was directed to be focused within. Since Farm Worker Quarters has a specific definition related to residential structures on the site of bona fide agricultural use as well as other criteria, and the purpose of this amendment is to expand opportunities for farmworker housing, an additional definition is needed to establish Farmworker Housing as a new use while retaining Farm Worker Quarters as an existing accessory option. Code amendments will further establish but are not limited to, specific criteria for types of structures allowed, special siting criteria, density and intensity, compatibility, approval processes, and ongoing permit process to ensure offsite Farmworker Housing has a relationship to bona fide agricultural operations.

The text amendment proposes to revise two policies in the Housing Element. The proposed changes in Exhibit 1 are shown as deleted text in ~~strikethrough~~ and added text in underline and are further described below.

- **Expand allowable future land use designations for farmworker housing.** The Comprehensive Plan, specifically HE Policy 1.4-c, permits farmworker housing within the Agricultural Reserve (AGR), Agricultural Production (AP) and Special Agriculture (SA) future land use designations. This text amendment proposes to eliminate the restriction for farmworker housing to only those future land uses in order to expand opportunities for additional farmworker housing in appropriate future land use designations in the Glades Tier, which is further described in a new Future Land Use Element policy.

- **Elimination of the minimum 25 acre requirement except for AGR FLU designation.** The Comprehensive Plan, specifically HE Policy 1.4-d, states that farmworker housing shall require a minimum of 25 acres. The proposed text amendment to HE Policy 1.4-d will retain the minimum acreage requirement for the AGR FLU but eliminate the requirement for the AP and SA FLUs.
- **Relocate and Consolidate Text.** In addition to the proposed revisions described above, staff is proposing to relocate language related only to farmworker housing into a single policy, HE 1.4-d. All language related to general special needs housing from HE 1.4-d will be relocated to HE 1.4-c.

The text amendment proposes to add a policy in the Future Land Use Element. The proposed changes in Exhibit 1 are shown as deleted text in ~~strikethrough~~ and added text in underline and are further described below.

- **Establish criteria to allow farmworker housing that is not located on bona fide agricultural land within the Glades Tier.** A new policy is proposed under Objective 1.6, Glades Tier in conjunction with the proposed definition in the Introduction and Administration Element for Farmworker Housing. The new proposed policy intends to establish that farmworker housing is allowed in the Tier in conjunction with a bona fide agricultural operation subject to certain general criteria to be further defined in the ULDC. Specifically, the policy will further clarify that farmworker housing is allowed as an accessory use on bona fide agricultural land as further specified in the ULDC, and further allow farmworker housing as a principal use on land that is not bona fide agriculture. The proposed text includes an allowance in all future land uses designations with the exception of Conservation (CON), Transportation and Utilities (UT), and Park (PARK) designations.

The Glades Tier consists of approximately 833,354 acres, which includes approximately 24,000 acres within the Urban/Suburban portion of the tier located along Lake Okeechobee. Farmworker Housing is currently allowed in the Agricultural Production (AP), Agricultural Reserve (AGR), and Special Agriculture (SA) future land use designations. As shown in Table 1 below, there are 471,075 acres of AP FLU. There is no SA or AGR FLU in the Tier. This proposed amendment expands the future land use designations allowable for farmworker to all FLUs available in the Glades Tier (60%), with the exception of Conservation (340,453 acres), Park (413 acres) and Transportation and Utilities (274 acres).

Table 1 – Future Land Use Designations in the Glades Tier (includes U/S portion)

FLU CODE	FLU DESCRIPTION	ACRES
AP	AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION	471,075
C/2	COMMERCIAL, WITH AN UNDERLYING LR-2	19
C/5	COMMERCIAL, WITH AN UNDERLYING MR-5	23
C/8	COMMERCIAL, WITH AN UNDERLYING HR-8	14
C/UT	COMMERCIAL, WITH AN UNDERLYING UT	3
CH	COMMERCIAL HIGH	5
CH/12	COMMERCIAL HIGH, WITH AN UNDERLYING HR-12	15
CH/8	COMMERCIAL HIGH, WITH AN UNDERLYING HR-8	85
CH/IND	COMMERCIAL HIGH, WITH AN UNDERLYING IND	3
CON	CONSERVATION	340,453
CR/5	COMMERCIAL RECREATION, WITH AN UNDERLYING MR-5	26
EDC	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER	209
HR-12	HIGH RESIDENTIAL, 12 UNITS PER ACRE	396
HR-18	HIGH RESIDENTIAL, 18 UNITS PER ACRE	290
HR-8	HIGH RESIDENTIAL, 8 UNITS PER ACRE	10,042
IND	INDUSTRIAL	3,143
IND/12	INDUSTRIAL, WITH AN UNDERLYING HR-12	11
IND/8	INDUSTRIAL, WITH AN UNDERLYING HR-8	14
INST	INSTITUTIONAL	219
LR-1	LOW RESIDENTIAL, 1 UNIT PER ACRE	66
LR-3	LOW RESIDENTIAL, 3 UNITS PER ACRE	2,056
MR-5	MEDIUM RESIDENTIAL, 5 UNITS PER ACRE	1,917
RR-10	RURAL RESIDENTIAL, 1 UNIT PER 10 ACRES	2,583
PARK	PARK	413
UT	TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	274
	TOTAL	833,354

Source: PBC Planning, FLU Layer, 2025

C. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan – Housing Element

The following objective of the Comprehensive Plan’s Housing Element is applicable to this amendment:

1. OBJECTIVE 1.4 Provision of Special Needs Housing

The County shall provide for the creation and preservation of housing and programs to adequately address the needs of all households with “special needs”, including the homeless, the elderly or frail elderly, the physically disabled, persons with mental illness, alcohol or drug addiction, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, abused/neglected children, victims of domestic violence, veterans, youth aging out of foster care, and ex-offenders, and including rural and farmworker populations. The County shall ensure the provision of foster care, group homes and other special needs facilities in a range of land use categories. The efforts indicated in the following policies shall be directed toward the meeting the needs identified by the Palm Beach County Five-Year Consolidated Plan, 2015-2020, the “Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in Palm Beach County,” and the farmworker housing deficit needs identified by the Shimberg Center in Policy 1.4-a.

Staff Analysis: This text amendment will further this objective to provide for the creation, expansion, and preservation of housing opportunities for farmworker housing in the Glades Tier by allowing farmworker housing on additional sites in the Glades Tier by eliminating the minimum acreage requirement and allowing for the provision of farmworker housing that is not located on bona fide agricultural land.

The following policies under the above Objective of the Comprehensive Plan's Housing Element are applicable to this amendment:

2. **Policy 1.4-c:** *The County shall provide for foster care, group homes and other special needs facilities to be permitted in residential neighborhoods. Farmworker housing is currently permitted in the Agriculture Reserve (AGR), Agriculture Production (AP) and Special Agriculture (SA) land use categories.*

Staff Analysis: This Housing Element policy provides the location of housing for special needs populations by indicating areas appropriate for certain special needs facilities and the specific land use categories in which farmworker housing is permitted. The inclusion of specific future land uses in the policy was a response in 1998 to an Objections, Recommendations, and Comments report from the State land planning agency and was intended to ensure adequate sites for the location of farmworker housing. The BCC directed amendments to the ULDC on May 25, 2023, to expand opportunities for the development of farmworker housing within the Glades region and specifically offsite from bona fide farming operations. In order to facilitate the ULDC amendments, this policy must be revised to relocate and consolidate text related to certain special needs housing and expand opportunities for locating farmworker housing on other appropriate sites within the Glades region.

3. **Policy 1.4-d:** *The location of special needs and farmworker housing shall be guided by the following principals and criteria. Special needs housing shall be located in proximity to the appropriate support infrastructure, services and facilities including Palm Tran and existing transportation disadvantaged programs. Special needs housing shall be permitted in all appropriate residential, commercial and institutional land use categories, through the use of group homes, Congregate Living Facilities (CLF's), accessory apartments and rental housing associated with places of worship. Farmworker housing shall be located in proximity to areas of agriculture employment and shall require a minimum of twenty-five (25) acres. The Planning, Zoning, and Building Department and the Community Services Department, shall be responsible for establishing any additional principles and criteria as may be necessary.*

Staff Analysis: This Housing Element policy includes the provision that farmworker housing shall require a minimum of twenty-five (25) acres. The inclusion of the 25 acre provision in the policy was a response in 1998 to an Objections, Recommendations, and Comments report from the State land planning agency for proposed Housing Element amendment and was intended to ensure that the policy was "specific and measurable". The BCC directed amendments to the ULDC on May 25, 2023, to expand opportunities for development of farmworker housing within the Glades region offsite from bona fide agriculture. In order to facilitate the ULDC amendments, this policy must be revised to relocate and consolidate text related to certain special needs housing to expand opportunities for locating farmworker housing on other appropriate sites within the Glades region.

D. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan – Future Land Use Element

The following Objective of the Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Element is applicable to this amendment:

1. OBJECTIVE 1.6 Glades Tier

General: The Glades Tier is generally located west of the Conservation Areas and Twenty Mile Bend, and includes the Glades Communities. This area is designated primarily for specialized agricultural operations. Communities within the Glades Tier are engaged in their own efforts with regard to planning and development. This effort is mainly in the form of economic development programming. The geographical distance and the nature of the issues faced by the Glades communities differ from the challenges faced by the coastal communities to manage growth. These factors warrant a separate initiative to further develop the Glades Tier, in conjunction with the Glades municipalities, business community and area residents.

Objective: Palm Beach County shall work with the communities in the western areas to preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of the Glades and protect the economically viable agricultural base in this area. The Glades Tier shall include all lands west of the Water Conservation Areas, Twenty Mile Bend, and the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area. The area outside the Urban Service area predominantly supports large-scale agricultural operations, which shall be afforded rural levels of service.

Staff Analysis: The proposed new Policy under this Objective is intended to further protect the economically viable agricultural base in an area designated primarily for specialized agricultural operations.

D. ULDC Implications

This change will allow associated ULDC revisions to revise farmworker housing land development regulations, including to allow farmworker housing as a principal use on properties that are not on the site of lands that are bona fide agriculture but will operate in conjunction with and support bona fide agricultural operations in proximity. Currently, the ULDC only allows farmworker housing as an accessory use to a bona fide agricultural use.

VII. Public and Municipal Review

Intergovernmental Plan Amendment Review Committee (IPARC): Notification was sent to the County’s Intergovernmental Plan Amendment Review Committee (IPARC), a clearing-house for plan amendments on February 21, 2025. Correspondence received throughout the amendment process is provided in Exhibit 3.

Agricultural Enhancement Council (AEC): The item was presented to the AEC on April 12, 2025, with comments indicating support for expanding farmworker housing opportunities. Following revisions to the proposed text, staff will again present this item at the May 7, 2025 scheduled AEC meeting.

VIII. Staff Assessments and Conclusions

This amendment will modify Housing Element Policies in order to implement the BCC's May 25, 2023, direction to expand farmworker housing opportunities in the Glades region. This amendment will facilitate the provision of farmworker housing concurrent with the initiated ULDC amendments. There were no inconsistencies identified with the Goals, Objectives, and Policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff recommends **approval** of this amendment.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Proposed changes in strike out and underline format	E - 1
Exhibit 2 – BCC Memo-Farmworker Housing Comprehensive Plan Text Initiation	E – 3
Exhibit 3 – Business Impact Estimate	E – 4
Exhibit 4 – Correspondence	E – 5

Exhibit 1

Proposed Text

A. Introduction & Administration Element, Farmworker Housing

REVISIONS: To add a definition for Farmworker Housing. The revisions shown with the added text underlined, and the deleted text ~~stricken~~. Relocated text is shown in *italics*.

1. **NEW FARMWORKER HOUSING** - Farmworker Housing consists of one or more residential structures providing a living environment for and occupied by seasonal or migrant farmworkers who provide labor in conjunction with a bona fide agriculture operation. The term Farmworker Housing applies to “Migrant labor camp” and “Residential migrant housing” defined by 381.008, F.S. The term “migrant farmworker” is defined by 381.008, F.S.

B. Housing Element, Farmworker Housing

REVISIONS: To remove minimum acreage requirements except for the Agricultural Reserve future land use designation. The revisions shown with the added text underlined, and the deleted text ~~stricken~~. Relocated text is shown in *italics*.

1. **REVISE Policy 1.4-c:** The County shall provide for foster care, group homes and other special needs facilities to be permitted in residential neighborhoods. ~~*Farmworker housing is currently permitted in the Agriculture Reserve (AGR), Agriculture Production (AP) and Special Agriculture (SA) land use categories. The location of special needs and farmworker housing shall be guided by the following principals and criteria. Special needs housing shall be located in proximity to the appropriate support infrastructure, services and facilities including Palm Tran and existing transportation disadvantaged programs. Special needs housing shall be permitted in all appropriate residential, commercial and institutional land use categories through the use of group homes, Congregate Living Facilities (CLF's), accessory apartments and rental housing associated with places of worship. The Planning, Zoning, and Building Department and the Community Services Department, shall be responsible for establishing any additional principles and criteria as may be necessary.*~~
2. **REVISE Policy 1.4-d:** ~~*The location of special needs and farmworker housing shall be guided by the following principals and criteria. Special needs housing shall be located in proximity to the appropriate support infrastructure, services and facilities including Palm Tran and existing transportation disadvantaged programs. Special needs housing shall be permitted in all appropriate residential, commercial and institutional land use categories, through the use of group homes, Congregate Living Facilities (CLF's), accessory apartments and rental housing associated with places of worship.*~~ Farmworker housing shall be located in proximity to areas of agriculture employment and shall require a minimum of twenty-five (25) acres in the AGR future land use designation. ~~*The Planning, Zoning, and Building Department and the Community Services Department, shall be responsible for establishing any additional principles and criteria as may be necessary.*~~

C. Future Land Use Element, Farmworker Housing

REVISIONS: Establish criteria in the Future Land Use Element (FLUE) for the provision of farmworker housing that is not located on bona fide agricultural land. The revisions shown with the added text underlined, and the deleted text ~~stricken~~. Relocated text is shown in *italics*.

1. **NEW Policy 1.6-g:** Within the Glades Tier, including within the Urban/Suburban portion of the Glades Tier, Farmworker Housing is allowed in conjunction with bona fide agricultural operations as follows:
 1. Farmworker Housing is allowed as an accessory use on bona fide agricultural land and as further regulated in the ULDC.
 2. Farmworker Housing is allowed as a principal use on land that is not bona fide agriculture subject to the following:
 - a) The property owner shall be required to demonstrate that the use is consistent and meets all applicable ULDC, state, and federal regulations at the time of approval and thereafter periodically as further regulated in the ULDC;
 - b) The use of any structures for other housing purposes is prohibited unless the residential use of these structures meets the density and all requirements of the Comprehensive Plan, the ULDC, the PBC Housing Code, and Florida Building Code are met; and
 - c) Farmworker Housing is allowed in any future land use designation within the Tier with the exception of Conservation, Transportation and Utilities, and Parks.

Exhibit 2

BCC Initiation Memo



Department of Planning,
Zoning & Building
2300 North Jog Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33411-2741
(561) 233-5000

Planning Division 233-5300
Zoning Division 233-5200
Building Division 233-5100
Code Enforcement 233-5500
Contractors Certification 233-5525
Administration Office 233-5005
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**Palm Beach County
Board of County
Commissioners**

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Mack Bernard

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Verdenia C. Baker

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Maria Sachs, Mayor, and the members of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC)

FROM: Thuy Shutt, Planning Director 
Planning Division, PZB

DATE: August 1, 2024

RE: **Farmworker Housing Comprehensive Plan Text Initiation for August 22, 2024 BCC Zoning Hearing**

ITEM: The item for the Board is to consider initiating text amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to revise minimum acreage provisions for farmworker housing.

BACKGROUND: Following the Board's direction on May 23, 2023 to revise the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) to expand farmworker housing opportunities in the County, specifically for an expansion of the allowable farmworker housing types and multipliers, a review by the Planning Division determined that text amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are necessary for the ULDC amendments to go forward.

The Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Housing Element, has acknowledged since 1989 a need to create and preserve housing for communities with "special housing needs," including the farmworker population. Currently, policies in the Comprehensive Plan require a minimum of 25 acres for the development of farmworker housing. If initiated by the Board, the Planning Division will evaluate this provision and recommend modifications in coordination with the Zoning Division's ULDC revisions.

DISPOSITION: Staff recommends initiation of a Comprehensive Plan amendment to facilitate the provision of farmworker housing concurrent with the initiated ULDC item. If you have any questions please contact me at 561-233-5467.

cc: Verdenia C. Baker, County Administrator	Darren Leiser, Assistant County Attorney
Patrick W. Rutter, Deputy County Administrator	Scott Stone, Assistant County Attorney
Whitney Carroll, PZB Executive Director	Stephanie Gregory, Principal Planner
Cindy Hoskin, PZB Deputy Executive Director	Lisa Amara, Zoning Director
Jeff Gagnon, Deputy Planning Director	Wendy Hernandez, Deputy Zoning Director

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Exhibit 3

Business Impact Estimate

To be provided in BCC Transmittal Report

Exhibit 4

Correspondence
