



Marion County

Board of County Commissioners

Workshop

Meeting Agenda

Monday, November 17, 2025

10:00 AM

**McPherson Governmental
Campus Auditorium**

Workshop to Discuss Workforce Housing Initiative

INTRODUCTION OF WORKSHOP BY CHAIRMAN KATHY BRYANT

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

1. [Work Force Housing Initiative](#)

BOARD DISCUSSION AND CLOSING COMMENTS



Marion County

Board of County Commissioners Workshop

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-21332

Agenda Date: 11/17/2025

Agenda No.: 1.

SUBJECT:

Work Force Housing Initiative

INITIATOR:

**Tracy Straub, P.E, Assistant County
Administrator**

DEPARTMENT:

Administration

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Upward Communities has partnered with several Texas School Districts and Franklin County, Florida, to deliver essential housing solutions for critical personnel, including first responders, healthcare workers, educators, and various vital service providers. This workshop is an opportunity for Upward Communities to share its comprehensive approach to evaluating local workforce needs and affordability obstacles. Their initiative is designed to overcome current gaps impacting recruitment and retention efforts within communities. By offering targeted housing solutions, Upward Communities offers a partnership aimed to strengthen Marion County's essential services and enhance long-term workforce resiliency, thereby supporting the stability and growth of the local community.

BUDGET/IMPACT:

None

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Information and discussion only.

UPWARD

COMMUNITIES

BUILDING COMMUNITIES FOR THE PEOPLE WHO BUILD OURS

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ABOUT US

SUMMARY

Complete Project Funding

Upward and its non-profit partner cover 100% of development and construction costs.

Long-Term Partnership with the County

We enter into a 100-year triple net lease with the county, ensuring long-term stability and alignment.

Purpose-Built Housing

Upward designs and builds high-quality 1–4 bedroom homes in walkable, amenity-rich communities.

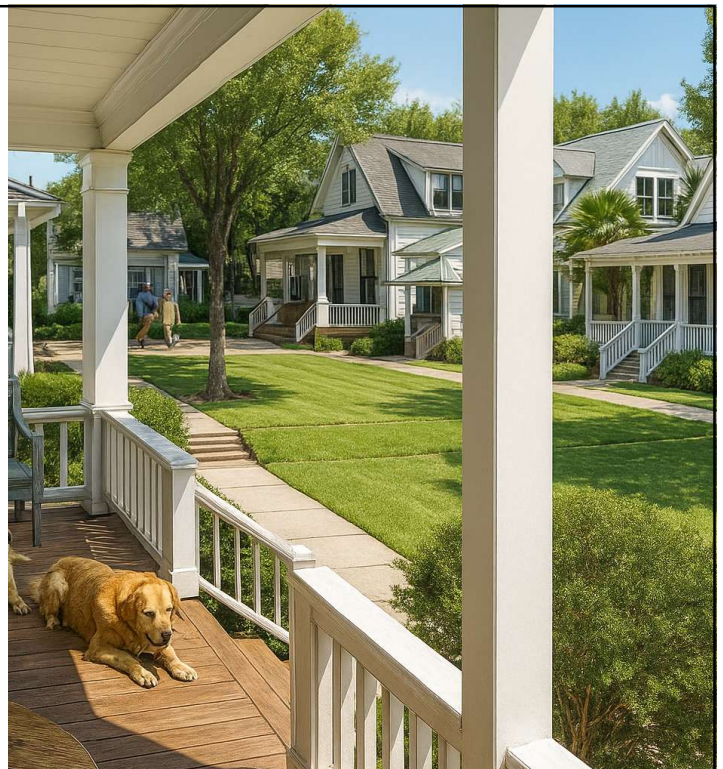
Exclusively for Staff

The County holds the exclusive right to allocate homes to various staff, helping with recruitment, retention and economic development.

Below-Market Rents with Predictable Increases

This structure allows rents are set below market and increase on a stable, pre-agreed schedule—ensuring affordability year after year.

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ABOUT US

ABOUT UPWARD

Upward Communities was established in 2023 to meet the growing demand for high-quality, attainable housing for essential workers. Upward delivers thoughtfully designed housing solutions tailored to County districts, county/city employees, and other critical workforce sectors.

Upward builds on the legacy of The Eden Companies, founded in 2004 by Jason Roberts. Together, Jason and Upward's leadership team bring more than 100 years of combined real estate experience across single-family, multifamily, retail, affordable, and workforce housing. From acquisition to construction to long-term management, Upward's team delivers a full end-to-end solution.

Our approach streamlines the development process — driving cost efficiency, faster delivery, and superior quality. By leveraging proven strategies and strong industry partnerships, Upward is transforming how essential housing is built, making it more accessible, sustainable, and community-focused.

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COMMUNITIES

OUR COMMUNITIES

Walkability and connection are key drivers in our planning. Instead of isolating homes, we've integrate greenways, pocket parks, and amenity paths that bring the neighborhood together — so it feels more like a real community than a typical build to rent apartment community.

Typical Community Highlights:

- 1 to 4 bedroom homes – detached single-family homes, duplexes, and townhomes
- Indoor & outdoor amenity spaces
 - Pool, fitness, dog park, children's playground and more
- Walkable, pedestrian-friendly streets
- Abundant green space and gathering areas
- Porches and private yards
- Pet friendly
- Hassle-free living with professional support
- Safe, quiet neighborhood feel

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COMMUNITY DESIGN INSPIRATION



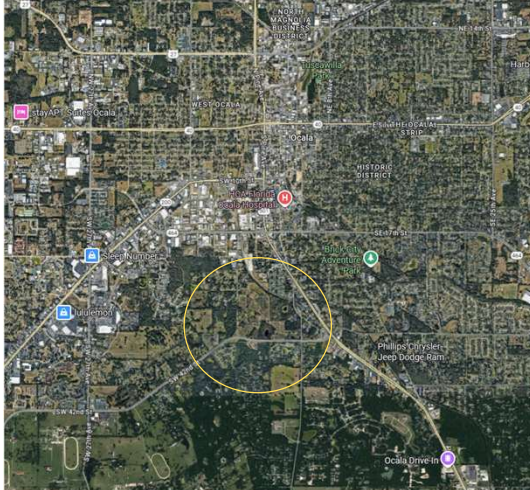
DESIGN INSPIRATION - UPWARD FOR HAYS CISD





LAND

LAND SELECTION



Upward has secured land in Southwest Ocala

WHY UPWARD

PUBLIC BENEFITS

Workforce Stability: Predictable, below-market rents strengthen recruitment and retention, helping maintain consistent, high-quality public services.

Financial Relief: Reduced housing costs allow staff to direct savings toward family needs, education, or future homeownership, promoting long-term financial security.

Community Integration: When essential employees live near where they work, they become more engaged in civic and community life, reinforcing local pride and participation.

Long-Term Asset: The County gains a revenue-neutral, fully managed workforce housing solution with the option to assume ownership at Year 55, creating a lasting public asset with no taxpayer burden.

Economic Impact: Stable housing for local employees supports neighborhood vitality, strengthens property values, and contributes to a stronger local economy.



WHY UPWARD

OUR STRUCTURE

CRITERIA	UPWARD	TYPICAL AFFORDABLE DEV
Tenant Control	County has full control over tenant selection while complying with fair housing laws, allowing employee prioritization to enhance satisfaction and retention.	No control over tenant selection due to the lottery system , which can prevent local staff from securing units.
Affordability	The Master Lease structure allows County to set rents at affordable rates across 100% of the units while maintaining breakeven operations.	Affordable units typically only make up a portion of a community (~10-30%).
Rent Flexibility	County has full authority to set rental rates for the homes.	Bound by strict rent controls and guidelines , restricting flexibility in pricing and adjustments.
Sense of Security for Renters	No recheck for income growth, allowing employees to stay in their homes even if they earn more, providing stability and satisfaction.	Annual rechecks risk displacing employees who exceed AMI thresholds, creating uncertainty.
Employee Recruitment & Retention	Provides a clear recruitment and retention advantage, with affordable housing tied directly to employment, ensuring job satisfaction.	Limited ability to guarantee housing for employees due to lottery systems and income restrictions.
Protection Against Rising Costs & Population	Locks in affordable housing for the future , protecting against rising rents and population growth in the community with set rent increases.	Affordable housing may not remain scalable as rising demand and land costs drive up prices. Annual rent increases vary unpredictably with economic trends.
Bureaucratic Process	No public grants, tax elections, etc required , streamlining the process, allowing quicker housing access for employees.	Typically require taxpayer funds, LIHTC, general obligation bonds, and/or public grants , adding complexity, political rifts, and delays.

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ECONOMICS

REVENUE NEUTRAL

Our communities are designed to be revenue neutral for the County's annual budget. Below is a sample community budget.

Item	Amount (\$)	
Gross Potential Rent	3,958,281	Rent collector
(+) Resident Expense Reimbursement	186,863	Charges paid
(+) Fees	160,596	
Gross Potential Revenue (GPR)	4,305,739	Total revenue gross
(-) Vacancy (3%)	(118,748)	Estimated
(-) Operating Expenses (OPEX)	(1,150,869)	Costs paid by tenant for repairs, maintenance
Net Operating Income (NOI)	\$3,036,122	Total income
(-) Operating Reserve / Contingency	(\$50,000)	Reserve funds

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MANAGEMENT

TURNKEY SOLUTION

Upon completion, your community's upkeep will be expertly managed. We recognize that your role as the employer is not to oversee the rental community; that's where we come in as your property manager. We take care of all aspects related to running a rental community — from lease or sale assistance to continuous management and maintenance. You can count on us for steadfast support at every stage of the process.

Example of services that property management will handle:

- Marketing and advertising rental units
- Tenant applications, lease agreements, renewals, and turnover management
- Rent collection, late pay management, and financial reporting
- Regular property inspections and preventive maintenance scheduling
- Coordination of repairs and upgrades with contractors
- Management of utilities, landscaping, and trash removal
- Oversight of community amenities such as pools, gyms, and shared spaces
- Implementation of lease terms and community rules
- Handling tenant communications, complaints, and disputes
- Insurance coordination
- Budget management and cost optimization
- Emergency response and on-call maintenance services
- Regular updates and reports to CISD

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PROJECT ECONOMICS

TARGET BASE RENTS

Upward collaborates with the County district to ensure that rental rates align with the needs of its employees.

Bed, Bath	Target Starting Re
1 Bedroom Duplex	\$895
2 Bedroom Duplex	\$995

*The figures presented represent target rents for year 2025. Actual rental amounts will be established later in the planning process, once additional details are known.

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LOCAL ECONOMICS

OCALA HOUSING MARKET



Median Sold Price



\$284,986

\$173/SqFt

+\$4,951 **+1.8%**

Based on all homes sold in the last 12 months

2 Bedrooms	\$214.3K	\$209.9K	-2.1%
3 Bedrooms	\$268.3K	\$269.8K	+0.6%
4 Bedrooms	\$319.9K	\$319.9K	0.0%



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LOCAL ECONOMICS

HOME OWNERSHIP COST

UNIT TYPE	PURCHASE PRICE	DOWN PAYMENT + CLOSING COSTS (3%)	MORTGAGE (7%)	MAINT	INSUR	PROPERTY TAXES	HOA	TOTAL COST PER MONTH	YEARLY SAVINGS FOR AVG PRICE RENTERS	YEARLY SAVINGS FOR STARTING PRICE RENTERS
3 BED HOME	\$275,000	\$35,750	\$1,646	\$225	\$250	\$229	TBD	\$2,350 + down payment	\$7,900 +	\$12,500 +
4 BED HOME	\$320,000	\$41,600	\$2,018	\$265	\$250	\$270	TBD	\$2,803 + down payment	\$9,700 +	\$16,500 +

*assumes 7% rate, 10% down
Property taxes based on current rate

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NEXT STEPS



**Discussions with
Stakeholders /
Workshops**



**Master Lease
Review**



**Bond Counsel &
Third-Party
Consultant Review**



**P3 Public Private
Partnership
Submission**



**Discovery with
Staff and Key
Stakeholders**



**Design &
Pre-development**

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UPWARD
COMMUNITIES

THANK YOU

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