

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONSOLIDATED PLAN

The Housing and Community Development Consolidated (H&CD) Plan incorporates planning and reporting for federal entitlement programs, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) programs. The objective is to make these programs more accessible to communities by making them easier to understand. The intent is that communities can make enhanced use of the benefits embedded in CDBG and HOME to address housing and community development needs. The goals of these two programs reflect the major commitments and priorities of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These HUD priorities include: 1) decent housing; 2) a suitable living environment; and 3) expanded economic opportunities. The purpose of the Consolidated Plan is to incorporate planning functions for these three broad activities, and to consolidate the local applications and reporting processes for federal entitlement programs.

The Clark County H&CD Plan is a strategic plan that outlines specific courses of action for revitalization. It provides the means to analyze the local context and linkages to the larger region. The strategies build on local assets coordinating responses to the needs of communities. This plan attempts to integrate the economic, physical, environmental, community and human development issues of the region. As a strategic plan, it also articulates goals, objectives, and performance indicators for measuring progress and establishing a framework for assessing new knowledge and experience, identifying how these various targets can add to a successful plan for local revitalization. This introductory chapter includes the following sections:

- Managing the Process
- Consultation Process/Coordination
- Citizen Participation
- Organization of the Consolidated Plan

Managing the Process

Clark County is the lead agency for both the CDBG and HOME programs, is legally responsible for administration of these programs in compliance with HUD regulations and requirements, and has responsibility for the final allocation of funds for program activities.

Each year since 1985, Clark County has received over one million dollars in CDBG funds. Congress created the CDBG Program with the enactment of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. The Department of Housing and Urban Development, through the CDBG Program, annually allocates these funds in a single or "block" grant to eligible cities and counties with the objective of improving communities. The funds are then distributed to municipalities, organizations and groups through a competitive proposal process. The Clark County CDBG entitlement area includes Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Washougal, Woodland, Yacolt, the unincorporated areas of

Clark County. The Urban County Policy Board, comprised of one County Commissioner and the Mayor from each incorporated city except Vancouver, recommends allocation of the funds for the county.

The HOME program was created under the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 and became available in 1992. HOME funds are administered by Clark County. The purpose of HOME funds is to expand the supply of affordable housing for low and very low-income families and individuals. Clark County HOME funds are generally used for the development of low- and moderate-income housing. Such development includes construction, rehabilitation, tenant-based rental assistance and operating funds for non-profits providing affordable housing. Funding decisions are made by the Urban County Policy Board. HOPWA funds provide supportive housing services for persons with AIDS. Clark County is not the lead applicant for HOPWA funds for the area, but receives funds through an Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA). For Clark County, the EMSA administrator is Portland, Oregon.

The Clark County CDBG and HOME staff is responsible for policy analysis, conducting the annual planning process, assisting community partners to develop project activities and managing and implementing approved program activities throughout the year.

Consultation Process/Coordination

The Clark County H&CD planning process draws from a wide range of data sources and integrates a variety of planning processes. The intent is not to duplicate existing efforts, but rather to build on them. The H&CD Plan incorporates existing plans and documents (identified below) and is meant to be consistent with the policies and programs presented in those plans. In addition, the planning process involves coordination with various public agencies and non-profit organizations as well as a broad base of citizen input, which is gathered from public meetings. The Clark County H&CD Plan incorporates information from several organizations and planning documents, including the following:

- **2005-2009 Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan:** The new H&CD Plan contains an updated needs assessment from the 2005-2009 H&CD Plan and incorporates many of the strategies and actions outlined in previous H&CD Plans.
- **Clark County 20-Year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan:** Clark County adopted its updated Comprehensive Growth Management Plan (20-Year Plan), in September 2008. The objectives of the H&CD Plan are intended to be consistent and work in conjunction with the activities outlined in the updated 20-Year Plan. The Housing Element of the 20-Year Plan describes needs and the direction the county will take to influence the type, location, and affordability of housing. Issues addressed include development standards, fair share housing, special needs housing, neighborhood character, and vitality. Other elements of the 20-Year Plan describe the investment in public infrastructure required to support existing and proposed land use including housing, transportation, and economic development components of growth.
- **Cities' Comprehensive Plans:** Each incorporated city in Clark County is responsible for preparing a comprehensive plan as part of the Growth Management planning process. Information relating to housing and community development needs from these plans was incorporated into the H&CD Plan.

- **Human Service Provider Plans:** Housing needs for the homeless and special needs populations were compiled from housing plans and assessments developed by agencies working with specific populations. These groups include: Council for the Homeless, Area Agency on Aging, Clark County Developmental Disabilities Program, Clark County Equal Opportunity Committee, Southwest Washington Health District, Community Choices 2010, Clark County Community Action Program, Clark County Regional Support Network, and Clark County Alcohol and Drug Program. Service providers were also invited to the citizen input/developer outreach meetings (see below).
- **Clark County 10-Year Homeless Plan:** The Clark County 10-Year Homeless Plan was developed by an array of Clark County stakeholders and initially adopted by the Clark County Commissioners on December 21, 2005. Input was received through community meetings, a survey of community members, focus groups and a survey of homeless individuals. The 10-Year Plan was updated in 2006 with additional strategies to address ending homelessness to more completely reflect the community's priority activities. In 2007, the Plan was revised to ensure consistency with the State's Plan, which was adopted in July 2006. As part of the planning process, action items were prioritized for biennial resource allocation.
- **Continuum of Care/McKinney Vento:** Clark County utilizes a continuum of care model for providing for the needs of people who are homeless. The model is governed by the Continuum of Service Providers (COSP), which is a consortium of non-profit homeless service providers, state and local government agencies, faith community representatives, school homeless liaisons, business and neighborhood associations, and homeless and formerly homeless people. The group meets monthly under the leadership of the Director of the Council for the Homeless, who chairs meetings and acts as staff to the group. The Director also coordinates the annual HUD McKinney Vento application, which provides funding (approximately \$1 million) to the community for homeless services.

Data from U.S. Census, American Community Survey, and the Office of Financial Management statistics provided a base of demographic information about Clark County's population, housing, and income. Information about housing market trends was compiled using data from realtors, builders, and a variety of local sources which track homeownership and rental costs, vacancy rates, and building activity, including the Washington Center for Real Estate Research. Information about economic trends was compiled from local plans, data from the Clark County Department of Assessment and GIS, the Employment Security Department, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Columbia River Economic Development Council. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provides specific 2000 Census housing information for Clark County and the cities in the county.

Citizen Participation

Citizens were offered a variety of opportunities to participate and comment on the development of this Plan, including the needs assessment and objectives, the proposed use of federal funds from HUD, and the implementation of the funded activities.

Two public meetings were held with citizens, service providers, public and private housing developers, and public housing residents. Outreach efforts included mailings to minority groups, neighborhood associations, and seniors. Newspaper advertisements and flyers were mailed to service organizations for

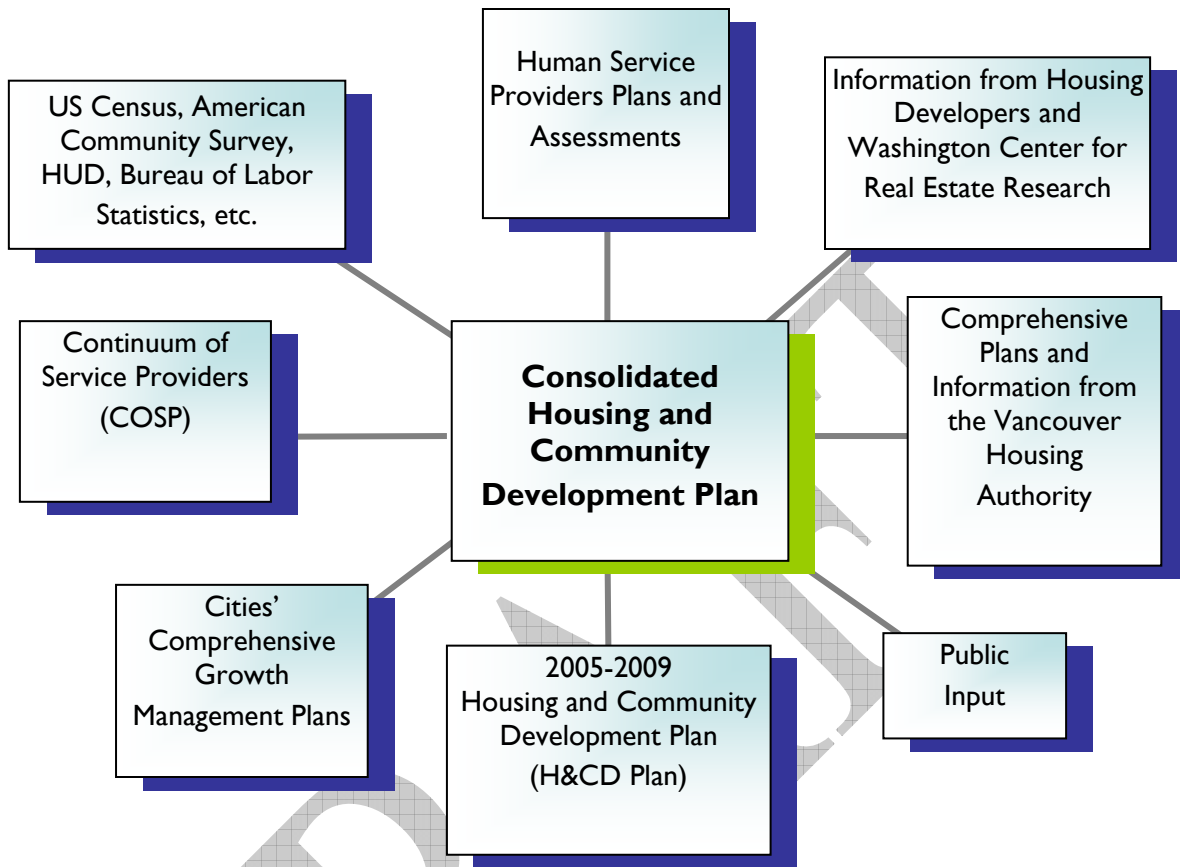
posting. Articles were placed in neighborhood, human service, and public housing newsletters to notify citizens about the public meetings and the availability of the draft for the 30-day comment period. A summary of public comments and ideas is included in Appendix I.

Approximately _____ people attended the first meeting on _____. After a brief introduction to the process, the participants worked in small groups to identify the affordable housing and community development needs.

A second meeting was held on _____, with _____ people in attendance. Again in small groups, the participants worked with a matrix showing the current services plotted against special needs populations currently served. The attendees helped identify housing and community development needs.

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FIGURE I-1
Development of the Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan



Organization of the Consolidated Plan

Chapter One identifies the purposes of the plan, funding sources, participants and methodology.

Chapter Two presents demographic information about Clark County, including population, labor and employment data; income, race, and education information; and social trends based on those data.

Chapter Three identifies housing and community development needs, presenting an assessment of the housing market, housing cost, needed housing units, affordable housing policies, and the non-housing community development needs identified by each city and the county.

Chapter Four provides an inventory of homeless services and identifies homeless housing and services needs, including the Point in Time Homeless Count, and identifies strategies and solutions to ending homelessness.

Chapter Five identifies populations with special needs, including persons with mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, development disabilities, and those living with HIV/AIDS. This chapter provides an inventory of current services and unmet needs and identifies strategies and solutions.

Chapter Six presents a summary of federal, state, and local housing resources available for housing and community development needs. It also presents the Five-Year Strategic Plan for addressing these needs, including broad-based objectives and proposed actions designed to achieve stated objectives.

Appendices provide additional details about federal funding programs; outreach efforts; ideas and priorities identified by citizens; resources used to develop the Plan; additional information about households in need of assistance; and information about H&CD Plan consistency verification procedures.

The Clark County Annual Action Plan, an outcome of this planning process, offers a specific blueprint of housing and community development activities the County will undertake using federal, state, and local resources in a separate document.

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