

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

The 2010-2014 Clark County Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan (H&CD Plan) is prepared by the Clark County CDBG and HOME Investment Partnership Programs, representing Clark County, the incorporated cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Washougal, and Woodland, the town of Yacolt, and the unincorporated areas of Clark County.

The 1990 National Affordable Housing Act requires that an H&CD Plan be prepared by each jurisdiction directly receiving assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Plan addresses the allocation of two federal entitlement programs: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership (HOME). The H&CD Plan consolidates the local applications and reporting processes for these federal entitlement programs. It is also a strategic plan that outlines specific courses of action.

The purpose of the H&CD Plan is to:

- Provide an assessment of housing and community development needs in Clark County;
- Develop strategies and goals to ensure affordable housing and decent living environments for persons who earn 80 percent or less of the area median income (AMI), including homeowners and renters, the elderly, the homeless, and persons with special housing needs;
- Develop strategies and goals to ensure support for programs and facilities that promote viable communities and address community development, infrastructure, and human service needs of urban and rural areas; and
- Report proposed use of HUD entitlement funds.

The Clark County H&CD Plan draws from a wide range of sources and integrates a variety of planning processes. This plan reflects involvement and input from citizens, service agencies, cities, county departments and housing providers. Intended to be more than just a reporting document, the plan builds on local assets and coordinates a response to the needs of the community. The plan attempts to detail local economic, physical, community and human development needs in a comprehensive manner. It also sets forth goals, objectives, and performance indicators for measuring progress and establishes a framework for assessing new knowledge and experience.

Community Profile: an Overview

The community profile summarizes demographic, income, and employment statistics and trends, providing a baseline for determining housing and community development needs.

Key Findings

- From 2000 to 2009, Clark County has been the state's second fastest growing county, behind Franklin County, with a growth rate of 24.9 percent, with 68 percent of the rate attributable to net migration;
- The 2009 population for Clark County was 431,200;
- The 2007 median age for Clark County was 34.2;
- In 2007, the median household income in Clark County was \$58,116;

- The unemployment rate in Clark County in March 2009 was 13.9 percent;
- In 2007, the Clark County poverty rate was 9.3 percent for individuals, 6.6 percent for families and 27.6 percent for females alone with children under 18 years of age; and
- In 2007, 55,027 people (14.2 percent of the population) in Clark County were disabled.

Housing and Community Development Needs: an Overview

The lack of affordable housing for persons earning less than 60 percent of area median income (AMI) has become a significant problem in recent years. The increase in the price of homes relative to median household income has resulted in housing and rental prices that are unattainable for many. In Clark County, many agencies provide services for people needing affordable housing and have come together as a community to develop the H&CD plan and other plans with the goal of providing affordable housing. Community development needs, identified in city/county capital improvements plans, are largely a result of rapid population growth (23 percent between 2000 and 2009) and its impact on the community.

Key Findings

- In 2009, Clark County had 168,118 housing units (71 percent single-family, 22.6 percent multi-family, and 6.4 percent mobile homes);
- In 2007, 72 percent of housing units were owner-occupied and 28 percent were renter-occupied;
- In 2007, 46 percent of all housing units were built after 1990 and only 8.6 percent were built before 1950;
- Median sale prices for existing homes rose from \$147,000 in 2000 to \$273,800 in 2007 and then dropped to 224,100 in first quarter of 2009;
- The fair market rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment in Clark County in 2008 was \$809 and the estimated annual income needed to afford a two bedroom apartment was \$32,360;
- In 2000, nine percent of Clark County households were very low-income (0-30 percent AMI), 10 percent were low-income (31-50 percent AMI), and 18 percent were moderate income (51-80 percent AMI);
- In 2007, 66 percent of disabled people aged 35 to 64 were unemployed; and
- In 2008, the Vancouver Housing Authority had a total of 514 units in its inventory of public housing stock, with an overall vacancy rate of 3.22 percent.

Homeless Needs: an Overview

An increasing number of homeless families have at least one wage earner, but are unable to locate or retain permanent affordable housing due to a low income that is not sufficient to pay the cost of housing, food, utilities, childcare, health care and transportation.

Key Findings

- In January 2009, the Council for the Homeless coordinated a one-day street count of Clark County homeless. This survey documented 1,159 homeless individuals, both sheltered and unsheltered, an increase of 97 individuals from 2008;
- The 2005 *Bridges to Housing Plan* identifies approximately 1,800 high-need homeless families living in the Portland-Vancouver area at any given time, with more than 3,900 children;

- In 2008, 1,743 beds in the County were dedicated for homeless programs, (based on the *McKinney-Vento Application*); and
- In 2008, there was an unmet need of 1,136 homeless housing beds (57 emergency shelter, 492 transitional housing, and 587 permanent supportive housing beds), based on the *McKinney-Vento Application*.

Non-Homeless Special Needs: an Overview

Certain populations require special housing and supportive services. The non-homeless special need chapter focuses on the needs of the following groups: persons affected by substance use disorders, mental illness, domestic violence, or developmental disabilities, those living with HIV/AIDS, and the frail/elderly.

Key Findings

- In 2007, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) found that more than one in ten adults (10.8 percent) are in need of chemical dependency treatment;
- In 2007, six methamphetamine laboratories were reported in Clark County, down from a high of 57 in both 2001 and 2002;
- A 2003 study conducted by DSHS found 17,489 severely mentally ill people in Clark County;
- In Fiscal Year 2008, the Clark County Regional Support Network served 6,757 persons in outpatient intensive services and crisis services;
- In 2007, DSHS found that 4,391 people were not receiving chemical dependency treatment, out of 5,955 who were eligible (72 percent treatment gap);
- In 2008, the Clark County population 65 and over was estimated to be 42,357, or 10 percent of the total population;
- As of May 2008, 12 percent of children in Vancouver School District were receiving special education services (about 2,719 students);
- In 2007, 3,602 children in Clark County were identified as victims in reports to Child Protective Services;
- In 2007, the Vancouver Police Department reported 1,182 cases and the Clark County Sheriff's Office reported 2,255 cases of domestic violence; and
- The 2008 4th Quarter Washington State HIV Surveillance Report stated that 413 people in Clark County were living with HIV, including 226 with an AIDS diagnosis.

Consolidated Five-Year Housing and Community Development Plan Strategic Goals

Objective One: Establish and Maintain a Suitable Living Environment and Economic Opportunities

- Strategy 1. Support acquisition of, and improvements to, facilities that provide services to low-income, elderly or special needs persons.
- Strategy 2. Revitalize and enhance low-income neighborhoods and communities by improving their physical, social character and elimination of slums and blight.
- Strategy 3. Support community economic vitality through activities that build a diverse economic base that enhances the opportunity for low income persons to become financially independent.

Objective Two: Ensure Decent Affordable Housing

- Strategy 1. Increase the supply of housing in urban growth areas that is affordable to renter households, earning 60 percent or less of AMI. Projects should serve households with a range of incomes, provide a variety of unit sizes, incorporate universal design and meet recognized sustainability standards.
- Strategy 2. Preserve existing affordable housing threatened with loss due to condition, location, expiring federal contracts, redevelopment efforts, lead-based paint, or other situations.
- Strategy 3. Promote homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income households, including persons with disabilities and first-time homebuyers.
- Strategy 4. Create additional housing opportunities for self-sufficiency for low-income elderly and persons with disabilities or special needs. Projects should incorporate universal design and meet recognized sustainability standards.
- Strategy 5. Plan for and support strategies and initiatives to promote fair housing and increase access to housing and housing programs.

Objective Three: Provide Services to End Homelessness (These strategies are the same as those in the 10-Year Homeless Plan)

- Strategy 1. **Prevention/diversion/discharge planning:** Programs aimed to keep at-risk people in their housing, approaches to divert people from jail into housing and treatment services, and policies/resources that assure people are discharged from correctional facilities, hospitals, residential treatment facilities, and foster care with affordable housing and necessary supporting services in place.
- Strategy 2. **Housing plus supportive services:** Expand the affordable housing available and provide the necessary supporting services to assist homeless youth, families, and single adults to reach self sufficiency. For most homeless populations, services will be transitional; more intense initially and tapering off over time. For the chronic homeless/disabled population, ongoing supporting services linked to affordable housing should be required.
- Strategy 3. **Short term emergency response:** Quickly identify people who are homeless, assess their needs, and move them into housing with appropriate supporting services. They include outreach, shelter, and rapid access to benefits, services, and affordable housing.
- Strategy 4. **System wide Improvement:** The Clark County Homeless Plan contains two strategies that are designed to improve the overall performance, efficiency, and accountability of the homeless system.

Past Performance

The County has progressed in implementing the strategies of the *2005-2009 Consolidated Plan*. During this period, improvements were made in the following areas: an increased supply of affordable housing available to lower income households; an increased supply of housing for low-income families; homeownership among Clark County residents was promoted; barriers to accessibility in the community's infrastructure were reduced; several existing affordable housing units were preserved; and a high level of on-going public services meeting the pressing needs of low-income families continued to be provided.

The County will report progress in addressing the priority needs of housing and non-housing community development areas identified in the *Consolidated Plan* and *Annual Action Plans*. A detailed breakdown report of prior year uses and performance is contained in the *Consolidated Annual Performance and*

Evaluation Report (CAPER), which is available at the Clark County Community Services Department or online at the County's webpage (<http://www.clark.wa.gov/cdbg/documents.html>).