Did you know?

Washington County staff goes to great lengths to facilitate citizen participation and consultation with the public to help identify the most crucial housing and community development needs in Washington County to be addressed in the 2015-2020 Consolidated Plan.

Annette Evans of Washington County Department of Housing Services leads a brainstorming breakout session at the “What’s Working Workshop”, November 2013.
This chapter describes the planning process used to develop the Consolidated Plan. Regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) set forth standards for both the content and the process involved in creating the Consolidated Plan (24 CFR Part 91). In terms of process, the regulations establish minimum standards for citizen participation and consultations.

In undertaking this plan, the Washington County Consortium members wanted to exceed these standards and, to the extent possible, ground the plan in the day-to-day realities faced by low income residents, service providers, County departments and participating cities. The Consortium wanted to generate synergy and momentum dovetailing with goals of other existing plans and initiatives.

To achieve these ends, the Consortium adopted the following concepts to guide the planning process:

• **The Consolidated Plan is a plan among plans.** Other agencies, public sector departments and non-profits also have plans with elements that affect the lives of low and moderate-income people of Washington County. An important part of this planning process involved consulting with these other agencies regarding their plans, and then building on this foundation to develop Consolidated Plan Strategies.

• **Engage the general public about the growing suburbanization of poverty in Washington County.** A free public screening of the award-winning HBO documentary American Winter was held at Hillsboro’s Venetian Theater as part of the Consolidated Plan citizen participation process. The film describes the experiences of eight families struggling to make ends meet in the Portland metropolitan area across one winter. Several of the families were Washington County residents, and one of the families agreed to come to the screening and tell their story to the rest of their community in an effort to provide the perspective of how quickly circumstances can change for some residents who find themselves in dire financial straits. Following the film, Washington County hosted a panel of low-income service providers to discuss the film and provide more information to the community about available resources and the ongoing needs of low-income residents in Washington County.

• **Innovative methods—beyond public hearings—are required to access the concerns and knowledge of low-income residents and the public in general.** The planning process included seven focus groups with low-income Washington County residents conducted by ten community members trained by faculty at Pacific University in an attempt to promote proactive leadership and community involvement. In addition, two community-wide surveys were conducted to obtain the views of a broad spectrum of Washington County residents (not just low and moderate income people). One survey was to specifically gauge housing and community development needs while the other was to better understand how citizens currently obtain information about housing and community development programs in order to more effectively increase public participation and involvement in these programs. These were in addition to two other surveys Washington County participated in to gauge residents’ awareness on transportation funding and needs and on their housing preferences with attitudinal factors.
Social media was used for outreach during this Consolidated Plan in letting community members know of upcoming events, including hosting a website on the Consolidated Plan at Washington County and the City of Beaverton and the City of Beaverton’s Facebook page. These websites provided a forum for residents to comment, participate and keep tabs on the planning process for the Consolidated Plan. Another innovative method used to reach out to community residents was to provide a method for citizens to quickly access the Survey Monkey website in order to take the community needs survey on housing and community development needs. A bookmark was distributed containing a Quick Response (QR) code that with a smart phone would link to the Survey Monkey website so that users could find the survey easily.

• **To infuse the plan with new ideas and perspectives, new people should be invited to help guide the planning process.** The Washington County Office of Community Development (OCD) invited thirteen individuals from a variety of backgrounds (such as land use planning, fair housing, community development financial institution, economic development, public transit, community corrections, social services, mental health and public housing) to participate in a ConPlan Work Group that met monthly to help steer the planning effort and review draft products.

• **Checking in with stakeholders at key points in the process keeps the plan grounded in the community.** Staff conducted community/stakeholder workshops at two key junctures in the planning process to gather ideas and review draft products. To encourage extensive stakeholder participation, these workshops were held in physically accessible locations during daytime hours.

• **The strong tradition of collaboration that characterizes Washington County’s social service, homelessness, housing and community development environment is the foundation on which this planning effort is built.** Because so many people gave generously of their time to help create this plan, it is not just the plan of the Washington County Consortium, but a community-wide plan.

**GROUPS INVOLVED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN**

More than 60 organizations participated in the workshops, surveys and other meetings associated with the development of the Consolidated Plan. A list of participating groups, culled from workshop sign-in-sheets and other sources, appears in Volume 2. The groups identified below provided a leadership role in the development of this plan.

**ConPlan Work Group**

OCD established the ConPlan Work Group to expand the array of expertise and perspectives informing the development of the Consolidated Plan. At their monthly two-hour meetings, ConPlan Work Group members advised staff on the process and the kinds of information that should be included in the plan, and they also reviewed draft documents and assisted with outreach. The group met from September 2013 through January 2015 (15 meetings total). All meetings were open to anyone who wished to attend, and agendas were distributed electronically to more than 68 interested community members and stakeholders prior to the meetings.

The ConPlan Work Group substantially influenced the breadth of the planning process as well as the content of the plan itself. A list of members appears in the opening pages of this document.
Mapping Subcommittee
The Mapping Subcommittee was formed to bring people together who had expertise in epidemiology, land use planning, real estate development, fair housing, public services, education, affordable housing, civil rights law, public works and mapping/geographic information systems to help guide what maps and mapping tools could be utilized for Washington County. This planning initiative helped guide staff to the various mapping tools that assess where low-income community residents might have access to an environment rich with opportunities to help one succeed in life. The maps and further discussion appear in Chapter 5 of this plan.

Coordinating Planning Group
The Coordinating Planning Group representing land use planners and staff from the larger jurisdictions in Washington County was formed and met twice throughout the Consolidated Planning process to review the 2010-2015 transjurisdictional housing strategies supporting affordable housing and determine what updates and revisions were needed in developing the basis for the 2015-2020 transjurisdictional housing strategies with regards to land use planning and policy that support further development of affordable housing. The strategies developed and approved by this Coordinating Planning Group appear in Chapter 6 of this plan.

Washington County Policy Advisory Board (PAB)
By an intergovernmental cooperation agreement, the Washington County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) established the PAB to represent the County Consortium and make recommendations to the BCC on all matters pertaining to the programs covered in the Consolidated Plan. The PAB includes representatives (typically elected officials) from the County and each of the eleven cities within the county.

Staff provided periodic updates (seven in total) to the PAB on the Consolidated Plan and sought guidance on critical issues. Per the Citizen Participation Plan, the two mandated public hearings were held before the PAB.

Washington County Board of County Commissioners
The Washington County Board of County Commissioners, the governing body of the lead jurisdiction in the Consortium, approves the plan and authorizes its submission to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Partner Agencies
Two agencies in particular contributed to the creation of the Consolidated Plan by taking on the development of major elements. The Washington County Department of Housing Services (DHS) helped write the sections pertaining to homelessness and public housing and made significant contributions to other sections of the plan. Community Action, the Anti-Poverty Agency, coordinated the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy and assisted with many other aspects of plan.

Staff
The Washington County Office of Community Development and the City of Beaverton’s CDBG Project Coordinator staffed the development of the Consolidated Plan.
CHAPTER 2

Contributing Coalitions
Two standing groups were instrumental in helping to disseminate information about the Consolidated Plan and upcoming workshops. The Housing and Supportive Services Network (HSSN) is a diverse group of housing and service providers engaged in homeless programs and homelessness prevention, including members of the faith-based community. The HSSN, facilitated by Washington County Department of Housing Services staff, is a principle venue through which the implementation of the Ten Year Homeless Plan is coordinated. The HSSN develops the Continuum of Care Plan and advises the Department of Housing Services on the annual application for McKinney-Vento funds as well as Emergency Solutions Grant funding administered by Washington County Office of Community Development.

The Coalition of Housing Advocates (CHA) is a coalition of affordable housing developers, planners, and related social service agencies. Its mission is to promote awareness of the need for affordable housing in Washington County. The group meets monthly and has approximately 25 regular attendees. In addition to disseminating information to members about upcoming Consolidated Plan events, the CHA also assisted in reviewing and evaluating the Housing Needs Assessment and Market Analysis at one of its meetings.

Many of the groups that participated in workshops for the Consolidated Plan were also members of the CHA or HSSN.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
The activities below represent the principal opportunities for stakeholder, beneficiary and public involvement in the planning process. The substantive information that resulted from undertaking these activities appears as workshop summaries and other reports in Volume 2 of this plan.

Workshop 1: Kickoff Meeting
October 16, 2013
The Kickoff Meeting focused on the larger environment and major trends likely to affect affordable housing and community development in 2015-2020. With the data indicating that Washington County saw an increase in the number of residents living below the poverty line despite recent job growth, staff believed that it was particularly important to scan the broader environment and consider how it might affect life for low- and moderate-income people in Washington County. After an opening session on “Scanning the Environment” by Ethan Seltzer, Professor at Portland State University’s School of Urban Studies and Planning, approximately 55 participants shared their ideas and concerns in break-out sessions.

Workshop 2A: What’s Working Workshop: Housing
November 12, 2013
Approximately 22 affordable housing developers and providers discussed opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses of the current system of providing affordable housing.

Workshop 2B: What’s Working Workshop: Community Development
November 18, 2013
Approximately 35 providers of public services, public facilities and infrastructure development provided their ideas about how to improve the community development project delivery system.

Stakeholder Survey on Community Development Needs
November 2013 – May 2014
Fifty-five different agencies, departments, or organizations participated in an online survey about community development needs in the areas of public services, public infrastructure, public facilities and economic development.
Community Survey on Public Engagement on Housing and Community Development Programs
February 2014
From community residents came 1,260 completed surveys on the most effective tools they utilize to learn about affordable housing and community development needs, including local TV, print media, online publications, e-mail listservs and social media. The survey also asked respondents what topics might interest them in attending a public meeting or public hearing.

American Winter Screening
February 2014
Over 75 community residents attended a free public screening of the award-winning HBO documentary American Winter that describes the struggles of eight area families encountering homelessness, foreclosure, utility shut-off, and other challenges faced over one winter during the recent recession in the region. After the screening, one of the families featured in the documentary was invited to speak about their experience working on the film, followed by a discussion panel of four area service agencies who answered questions and provided information about area resources for community members in need.

Community Needs Survey
February – July 2014
Community residents completed 786 questionnaires about affordable housing and community development needs. The survey was available in paper form and online, and it was translated into Spanish. This survey was advertised to Washington County residents in The Oregonian, through the County and City’s websites, through social media on Facebook on the City of Beaverton’s Facebook page, and handed out as a bookmark containing a QR code so that residents with smart phones could scan the code that and follow a direct link to the survey on the Survey Monkey webpage.

Housing Preference Survey
March – September 2014
From community residents came 1,975 completed surveys about preferences and attitudes regarding housing types, renting vs. owning and other trade-offs, commuting, and amenities with regards to housing. Washington County and the City of Hillsboro were participating agencies with Metro, the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland, NW Natural, the City of Portland, Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors, Portland State University and Clackamas County.

Focus Groups with Washington County Residents with Low Incomes
April – June 2014
Ten community leaders at three area nonprofit agencies conducted seven focus groups in four Washington County cities with approximately 35 low-income Washington County residents attending, a majority representing communities of color. The three nonprofit agencies that responded to a countywide Request for Proposals from the City of Beaverton and the Washington County Office of Community Development in March 2014 were Centro Cultural, Adelante Mujeres and the Beaverton Hispanic Center. The majority of the focus groups were held in Spanish and materials for the focus groups were all available in both English and Spanish. The ten community leaders received over six hours of training over two days in April from a Pacific University professor from the School of Social Work on leading focus groups and eliciting responses of housing and community development programs from members of their community. The purpose of the focus groups was to gain insight about the kinds of challenges these residents face on a daily basis so that the Consolidated Plan strategies would reflect a better understanding of the complexities of real life experienced by vulnerable individuals. Each focus group
also reviewed the types of services and programs available in the City of Beaverton and Washington County to assist low-income residents in an effort to determine which programs are most needed by these residents. These programs and services included an array of affordable housing programs, public services, economic development programs, public facilities and public infrastructure. Most focus groups lasted ninety minutes or longer. Participants were typically low-income Latino residents of Cornelius, Hillsboro or Forest Grove with an average household size of more than 4 members. Most rented an apartment and a majority reported that someone in their family had either a reduction in job income or a job loss within the past five years.

**Formal Comment Period on Consolidated Plan**

March 10, 2015 – April 9, 2015

The complete draft plan was available online and at public libraries. Oral (at public hearing) and written comments were accepted. Comments and responses appear in Volume 2.

**Public Hearings 1 & 2: Draft Consolidated Plan**

April 1, 2015, 10:00 AM, Beaverton City Hall (Beaverton Building)

April 9, 2015, 7:00 PM, Washington County Public Services Building, Hillsboro

A log of all comments received and the County’s responses to them is included in Volume 2, Appendix B. Copies of meeting notices and minutes are also included.

**Formal Adoption of Plan by Board of County Commissioners**

May 5, 2015

**Monthly Work Group Meetings and Electronic Notices**

December 2013 – January 2015

The ConPlan Work Group monthly meetings were open to all who wished to attend. Anyone could sign up to receive an electronic copy of the meeting agenda.

**Draft Plan Chapters Available Online**

June 2014 – May 2015

As they became available, draft sections of the Consolidated Plan were posted on the County website. The website contained information about how to submit comments (in addition to those submitted during the formal comment period).

The planning process was conducted in conformance with the standards set forth in Washington County Consortium’s Citizen Participation Plan, which contains policies and procedures that provide for participation by residents of Washington County and the City of Beaverton in the development of the Consolidated Plan. The Citizen Participation Plan addresses the requirements for citizen participation and public notice established by HUD. Volume 2 contains both a copy of the Citizen Participation Plan and a table that documents how Washington County addressed requirements pertaining to comment periods, meeting notices, availability of plan for review, and efforts to encourage participation by minorities, non-English speakers, and persons with disabilities.
CONSULTATIONS: A PLAN AMONG PLANS

To understand the larger context in which the Consolidated Plan lies, the ConPlan Work Group asked that representatives from seventeen agencies and departments come to a meeting and describe the goals of their plans and how the Consolidated Plan could support their efforts. The following organizations made presentations to the Work Group over the course of several meetings:

- Homelessness and Public Housing/ Section 8: Washington County Department of Housing Services
- Offenders: Washington County Community Corrections
- Substance Abuse and Addictions: Jubilee Transition Homes
- Older Adults: Washington County Disability, Aging and Veterans Services and AARP Oregon
- HIV/AIDS: Cascade AIDS Project
- Children and Families: Boys and Girls Aid Society
- Mental Health: Washington County Health and Human Services Mental Health Services Division
- Public Health: Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Clinic
- Workforce Development: WorkSystems
- Developmental Disabilities: Families for Independent Living
- Economic Development: Westside Economic Alliance
- Affordable Housing Development: Community Partners for Affordable Housing
- Integration of Health and Housing: Enterprise Community Partners
- Anti-Poverty: Community Action
- Regional Planning Agencies: TriMet
- Tenants and Renter Households: Community Alliance of Tenants
- Fair Housing: Fair Housing Council of Oregon

The table in Volume 2 summarizes the focus of these plans and their goals, priorities and policies, particularly as they relate to the needs of low- and moderate-income people. The issues surfaced by these plans were kept in mind as the Consolidated Plan Strategies were developed, and staff tried to build on existing initiatives that had momentum behind them. A final column was added after the draft Strategies were prepared that indicated if and how needs raised in these diverse plans were addressed by the Consolidated Plan Strategies. This table was then circulated to the contacts at the various agencies to invite comment prior to finalizing the draft Strategies. No substantive changes were requested.

In addition to this process involving the ConPlan Work Group, staff also consulted directly with Oregon Housing and Community Services, Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) and Washington County Department of Housing Services regarding the draft strategies and made adjustments based on this feedback. In particular, meeting with Oregon Housing and Community Services helped better align the County’s housing production targets with Oregon’s funding priorities and anticipated revenue flow. Staff met with Tri-Met regarding transit needs, and Tri-Met staff participated in the Consolidated Plan Work Group. The Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Epidemiology and the Office of Environmental Public Health were consulted about lead-based paint hazards and poisonings during the preparation of the Housing Needs Assessment.

Finally, the two workshops also represented a form of consultation with stakeholders. Breaking into small groups at these workshops staffed by OCD and the City of Beaverton ensured that all parties had an opportunity to bring up their ideas and concerns to those preparing the plan. The results of these workshops significantly informed the development of the Consolidated Plan.
PLANNING PROCESS
The flow chart below shows how the information that resulted from public participation activities and consultations, in combination with quantitative research, formed the database upon which the Strategic Plan was built.