

I. Introduction

WHAT IS A CONSOLIDATED PLAN?

The 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan describes community needs and determines local priorities for using public resources to assist low and moderate-income residents of Washington County and the Cities of Beaverton and Hillsboro (the Washington County Consortium). It sets forth a five-year strategic plan consisting of actions and production targets to address community needs. The success of the plan depends on the voluntary participation of numerous agencies and local governments in the collaborative implementation of the strategies. The Washington County Office of Community Development is responsible for plan coordination and reporting.

This plan has been developed in accordance with guidelines prescribed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) intended to result in “a unified vision for community development actions.” Federal statutes set forth three goals that frame the overall intent of Consolidated Plans:

- Provide decent housing
- Support the development of a suitable living environment
- Expand economic opportunities

While this plan addresses all three goals to some degree, the focus continues to remain on the first two, as it has been in prior Consolidated Plans.

WHY IS THE PLAN NEEDED?

HUD requires jurisdictions receiving federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) or Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) funds to develop a community-wide plan every three to five years as a condition of continuing to access these funds. The prior Consolidated Plan for the Washington County Consortium covered the time period of July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2010. This plan covers the time period of July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2015. This plan is augmented by annual Action Plans, which specify the use of funds in the coming year, and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPER), which measure progress toward meeting goals in the prior year and cumulatively.

In Washington County, three jurisdictions receive formula allocations of the federal programs described above. Washington County is a CDBG Entitlement Community. It receives a direct allocation of CDBG funds annually which can be used throughout Washington County, except for in City of Beaverton. Although the City of Hillsboro is entitled to receive a direct allocation of CDBG funds, the City opted to remain part of the County CDBG program as a joint recipient. Under an Intergovernmental Agreement with the County, the County administers the City’s funds and manages its projects.

The City of Beaverton receives its own allocation of CDBG funds annually and runs its program separately from the CDBG program for Washington County. Beaverton CDBG funds must be used to benefit Beaverton residents exclusively.

The Washington County Office of Community Development acts as the lead agency for the Washington County HOME Consortium. HOME funds can be used throughout the county. However, the City of Beaverton selects housing projects to be funded from its share of the Consortium’s overall HOME funding.

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The Washington County Office of Community Development coordinates the development of the Consolidated Plan, Action Plans and CAPERs. Both the City of Beaverton and the City of Hillsboro contributed funding and staff time to the development of this plan.

Other incorporated cities that have not yet reached the required population thresholds to be direct recipients of HUD funds still participate in and benefit from the programs through the Policy Advisory Board (PAB). Through the PAB, these jurisdictions participate in making policy and programmatic decisions as well as selecting projects to receive funding.

IS THE PLAN BINDING?

The Consolidated Plan is not binding. However, it sets targets and goals and identifies strategies to achieve them. It is an enabling document that provides participating jurisdictions and other stakeholders with information and an action-oriented framework to address critical housing, homelessness and community development needs. Through the CAPER, the County reports annually to stakeholders, community residents and HUD on the progress it has made toward achieving these goals and the causes for deviations from the plan. There is no penalty from HUD if the goals are not met as stated. The plan can be amended during the five-year period, in accordance with the provisions of the Citizen Participation Plan.

II. Executive Summary

Planning is less about predicting the future than it is about reaching agreement about how a community will respond to the conditions that the future brings. A good plan makes intentions explicit. Given the recent upheavals in the housing and financial markets and the resulting economic recession, it is difficult, if not impossible, to anticipate exactly how conditions will change over the next five years and further into the future. Thus, this plan is a statement of how the Washington County Consortium, in collaboration with its many partners, intends to respond to the rapidly changing community development, housing and economic environment in 2010-2015.

The following principles guided the development of this plan:

- **The Consolidated Plan is a plan among plans.** Thus, the planning process began with a review of plans and meetings with representatives from other agencies. The most direct link with another plan is with the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. Instead of creating a separate plan for addressing homelessness, the Consolidated Plan focuses on how resources can be used to help implement the Ten Year Plan. Linkages with other plans—from criminal justice to health to community long range plans—are presented in a matrix in Volume II.
- **Innovative methods—beyond public hearings—are required to access the concerns and knowledge of low-income residents and the public in general.** Thus, the planning process included one-on-one in-depth interviews with low-income residents, including residents of public housing. It also included a broad-reaching electronic and paper community survey.
- **To infuse the plan with new ideas and perspectives, it is necessary to invite new people to help guide the planning process.** The ConPlan Work Group was formed with this principle in mind. This group brought knowledge and experience to bear on the planning process from a wide array of disciplines, including land use planning, public housing, advocacy, development finance, fair housing, social services, law, the court system, business and public health.

- **Checking in with stakeholders at key points in the process is essential to keeping the plan grounded in the community.** Thus, the planning process included four sets of workshops and numerous consultations.
- **The strong tradition of collaboration that characterizes Washington County’s social service, homelessness, housing and community development environment must be the foundation upon which this planning effort is built.** The strategies presented in Chapter 6 reflect this collaborative approach.

WHAT’S INNOVATIVE ABOUT THIS PLAN?

Each new five-year planning cycle offers the opportunity to build on and extend the work included in the prior plan. In many respects, the 2010-15 Consolidated Plan is similar to its predecessor. New elements in the 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan include the following:

- New data sources and methods, including in-depth interviews with low income residents and a broad-based community-wide survey. Use of an online survey of stakeholders to collect information about community development needs.
- Use of geographic information system (GIS) technology to identify places with good access to resources that can help low-income families succeed.
- Elevated importance of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. In recognition of the fact that low income families and individuals interface with many different systems to survive, this plan has elevated the importance of the anti-poverty strategy as a way to approach multi-agency problem solving around the complex needs of this population.
- Revamped format for strategic plan. The strategic plan ties together actions and production targets to achieve specific goals. The strategic plan has been developed in such a way that there should be a clear continuity among the five-year Consolidated Plan, each annual Action Plan, and each Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report.
- A higher level of integration with the work of other agencies and departments. The working relationships formed during the planning process with local planning departments, the public health department, Community Action and the community justice system will ensure that the implementation of this plan will result in a coordinated approach to addressing the challenges of low-income residents in Washington County.

ENHANCED CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS

As indicated in the principles above, a more aggressive citizen participation process was central to the development of this plan. This process is described in detail in Chapter 2, Planning and Public Involvement. Highlights include:

- The formation of a ConPlan Work Group comprised of individuals representing diverse interests, including people who have not been involved in this planning process in the past. The ConPlan Work Group advised the Washington County Office of Community Development on the process and content of the plan.
- Conducting four sets of community workshops at strategic points in the planning process to meet with key stakeholders (local jurisdictions, agencies, non-profits and other partners) to discuss major trends likely to affect low income residents and their sense of community needs and priorities, and to review sections of the draft plan.

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- Conducting in-depth interviews with 40 low-income residents, including residents of public and other subsidized housing, to obtain their views about the challenges and barriers they face in their day-to-day lives. These interviews were augmented by a focus group of Head Start parents conducted in Spanish. This research informed the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- Coordination of a county-wide community needs survey by the City of Beaverton. The City received 687 responses in electronic and paper format combined. This information helped inform the development of the Community Development strategies.
- Presentations by key agencies on relevant plans at ConPlan Work Group meetings. Presentations were made by the Washington County Department of Housing Services; Washington County Community Corrections; Washington County Department of Disability, Aging & Veterans Services; City of Portland Department of Housing and Community Development (HIV/AIDS Plan); Washington County Commission on Children and Families; Behavioral Health Division of Washington County Health and Human Services; Public Health Division of Washington County Health and Human Services; Washington County Long Range Planning Division, and Metro. These presentations and the follow-up that ensued formed the core of Washington County's consultation process.
- In total, 108 people representing 61 agencies, businesses and organizations participated in the Consolidated Plan workshops and meetings. Collectively, they invested at least 1,125 hours in creating this plan.

Prior to finalizing the Consolidated Plan strategies, the County conducted a workshop to review and discuss in detail the draft Strategic Plan. Approximately 35 people attended and provided substantial feedback. Meeting facilitators recorded each comment or suggestion. Volume II includes a list of these comments and a staff response to each. The most far-reaching changes made to the plan as a result of this feedback was to rethink (both lower and retime) the production goals for rental housing in light of current market conditions, and to further clarify the linkages between the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness and the Consolidated Plan. The County is grateful to stakeholders for their comments, which helped make this plan better reflect the challenges that they face in addressing the needs of low income households.

During the comment period for the draft plan (March 17 - April 15, 2010), two public hearings were held and additional comments were accepted by mail or e-mail. Fourteen people (in addition to staff and members of the Policy Advisory Board) participated in hearings or sent written comments. Minor changes and edits were made in response to those comments, which are summarized in Volume II.

KEY FINDINGS

Below are some key findings from Chapters 3 and 4, which profile the county's housing and community development needs.

- Affordable housing supply: There are 6,807 subsidized housing units in Washington County as of 2007. In addition, the Housing Authority of Washington County administers approximately 2,500 Section 8 vouchers that provide rent payments to make existing rental housing affordable.

- Most extremely low-income residents use most of their income for housing costs: Seven out of ten extremely low-income renter households (incomes at or below 30% Median Family Income (MFI), or \$21,000 per year for a family of four in 2009) are likely to pay half or more of their income for housing costs in 2010. This leaves them very little other money to pay for life's other essentials.
- In addition, most very low-income residents need to use too much of their income for housing costs, by current standards: Nearly 85% of households with incomes between 31% and 50% MFI income are likely to pay more than 30% of their income for housing costs in 2010.
- Unmet demand for affordable housing: As of 2010, there is an unmet need for 11,100 to 19,000 housing units affordable to renters with incomes at or below 50% median family income (\$35,000 per year for a family of four as of April 2009).
- Housing with intensive services for persons with special needs is in especially short supply: The highest need is for housing for the homeless, elderly and frail elderly, persons with severe mental illness, developmentally disabled persons, persons dually diagnosed with addictions and mental illness, farm workers and released offenders. While categorizing housing types by the needs of potential residents is a convenient convention used for planning purposes, this plan recognizes that this approach fails to capitalize on the complex combination of abilities and disabilities that individuals possess.
- Community Development: The community has mobilized around addressing the needs of the homeless, and this plan reflects that priority. Specifically, the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, the ongoing efforts of the Housing and Supportive Services Network, and the availability of federal Stimulus dollars have resulted in a systems change in the delivery of services. The heightened awareness of the needs of the homeless and the subsequent mobilization to address them resulted in priority designation for funding for services and facilities that support the 10 year plan.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The heart of the Consolidated Plan is the Strategic Plan (Chapter 6), which describes how federal funds and other resources will be deployed and what other actions will be taken to address community development and affordable housing needs over the next five years. The Strategic Plan addresses three areas of concern: housing and homelessness, community development, and anti-poverty. Strategies consist of two components: actions to help advance the strategy and production targets (such as the number of persons assisted).

The five-year housing strategies address the following areas: homelessness, affordable rental housing, special needs housing, affordable homeownership, opportunity-rich housing, fair housing, planning and organizational support. The five-year community development plan addresses needs in the areas of public facilities, public infrastructure, public services and economic opportunity. The anti-poverty strategy includes actions in the arenas of public policy development, service and support system improvements and building civic capital formation

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The Housing and Homeless Strategies call for using HOME funds to leverage the production of 400 new and the preservation of 300 existing affordable housing units. All new HOME-assisted units will be affordable to households with incomes at or below 50% MFI. Included in these totals are units that serve persons with developmental and mental health disabilities, farm workers, the elderly, and homeless or at-risk-of-homelessness individuals and households. The top priority is to use available resources to make progress in implementing the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. This involves using innovative blends of resources to fund the development of the most difficult kinds of housing to create. The Housing and Homeless Strategies also call for the continuation of existing home repair, weatherization and accessibility programs, and the production of new owner-occupied housing for households with incomes at or below 60% MFI.

In recognition of the fact that land use, transportation and affordable housing planning need to be linked if communities are to successfully address all three elements of a sustainability agenda (environmental, economic and equity goals), this section includes a set of strategies dealing with planning. Affordable housing is a critical part of the community's investment in public infrastructure designed to promote greater social sustainability. The County also commits to developing a new Fair Housing Plan, to examining the feasibility of creating a land acquisition fund, and to promoting the development of new affordable housing in opportunity-rich areas.

The Community Development Strategies reflect the evolution of a closer working relationship between the City of Beaverton and Washington County's separate programs. In Washington County, a change in the local allocation formula will ensure that the maximum amount of funding allowed by federal statute is made available annually for public services, the funding category that typically receives the most applications. Services and facilities that implement strategies in the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness are the highest priority for funding. In recognition of the importance of services to the success of families in subsidized housing, the County will set aside a portion of the public services funding for resident services provided by the area's most qualified (Tier I) Community Housing Development Organizations.

The Anti-Poverty Strategies focus on the formation of new working relationships among the different organizations that provide core supports that enable low-income families to remain stable or progress: housing, income, food, health and employment. They are built on an understanding derived from the interviews with low-income residents that a perverse reward system that discourages people from taking risks to improve their situation is imbedded in this array of supports. The Anti-Poverty Strategy calls for the formation of a new Anti-Poverty Work Group to analyze and, to the extent feasible at the local level, address this issue and also work on other public policy, service delivery and civic capital concerns.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

This plan consists of the following volumes and chapters:

Volume 1: Consolidated Plan

- Chapter 1: Community Profile. This chapter includes basic demographic information about the county and is intended to be useful to non-profits and others applying for funding from sources outside the county.
- Chapter 2: Planning and Public Involvement. This chapter identifies the key groups involved with the development of the plan, presents a chronology of public meetings and activities, and describes the consultations that occurred during the planning process.

- Chapter 3: Housing Market Analysis and Needs Assessment. This is the most complex and data-rich chapter of the plan. For that reason, it begins with an overview and summary of needs. In particular, Table 3-3, found on pages 21-22, presents a concise summary of housing needs. The section entitled General Housing Market Information identifies the kind of housing that exists or is likely to be built by the private sector during the next five years and compares that information to the needs and characteristics of county residents. The next section, General Housing Assistance Needs, examines in detail the need for housing affordable to households with incomes 0 to 30% of Median Family Income (MFI), 31 to 50% MFI and 51 to 80% MFI that is not likely to be provided by the private market unaided. The fourth section examines the housing needs of specific subpopulations, some of whom require specialized housing (e.g., housing for persons with mental illness, licensed long-term care). The chapter concludes with information about the housing needs of homeless families and individuals, drawn largely from the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness.
- Chapter 4: Community Development Plan. This chapter summarizes the assessment of non-housing community development needs. It also presents an overview of the Washington County and City of Beaverton Community Development Block Grant programs.
- Chapter 5: Opportunity Maps. This is a new element of Washington County's Consolidated Plan. Using maps, this chapter identifies places that provide good opportunities for low income residents to connect with resources that can enhance their life chances, such as places with good schools and a healthy environment and connections to transportation, jobs, everyday goods and services.
- Chapter 6: Strategic Plan. In addition to presenting the three families of strategies described above, this chapter also identifies priority needs and the rationales for their selection. It concludes with a section pertaining to plan implementation.

Volume 2: Appendices

- Volume 2 includes workshop summaries, data, and specific tables and other information required by HUD. Volume 2 supplements the information provided in Volume 1, and the sections of Volume 2 correspond to the chapters in Volume 1.

Volume 3: Action Plan

- The Action Plan is the implementation plan for Year 1 of the new Consolidated Plan. The Action Plan acts as the Consortium's application for Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnerships, and Emergency Shelter Grant funding.

PAST PERFORMANCE

The Consolidated Plan regulations [24 CFR Part 91.200 (c)] require the executive summary to include "an evaluation of past performance." At the time of this writing, we have not analyzed the final year in the current five year Consolidated Plan. But we have provided to HUD an evaluation of past performance through year 4. That evaluation is summarized herein.

The County specified 18 goals around housing and community development activities, ten of which were not supported by actual production targets. Of the eight supported by production targets, four were specific to housing including home ownership, low-income rental, special needs housing and rehab and weatherization. Four were specific to community development (facilities, infrastructure, public services, and homeless services).

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Of the four housing goals, three exceeded projections. The goal for which the County did not meet projections was in the area of special needs housing. The Knoll project, which will create 48 units of housing for elderly, would have contributed significantly to the accomplishments in this area but delays in finding a suitable site complicated the development timelines. In addition, market conditions over the last two years severely affected housing development. For the 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan, the County has considered historical trends, the pipeline of planned projects, and market conditions to develop what we feel are more realistic production targets for the next five years.

Of the four community development goals, one—develop or improve a variety of public facilities to benefit income-qualified special needs populations—did not meet projections. Original projections in the areas of neighborhood, childcare, health and parking facilities were not realized. No applications were received in these categories, and much of this is due to the difficulty in achieving eligibility (for neighborhood and parking facilities) and finding other leveraged grant funds to build what have become increasingly expensive projects.

During the 2010-2015 Consolidated Planning process, a concerted effort was made to tie strategies to specific production targets and to other actions that help to support the overall strategies. Areas in the current plan that we felt did not have the support of tangible action steps (for example, planning and regulatory barriers) were given more structure in the new plan. In other words, lessons learned in 2005-2010 helped shape the actions for the next five-year timeframe.

A matrix of the specified 2005-2010 overarching goals as well as a detailed summary of progress to date can be found in Volume 2.