City of Longview

1525 Broadway
Longview, WA 98632
www.ci.longview.wa.us

City Council

Mayor MaryAlice Wallis
Mayor Pro Tem Michael Wallin
Council Member Ruth Kendall
Council Member Chet Makinster
Council Member Steve Moon
Council Member Christine Schott
Council Member Hillary Strobel

Tuesday, July 13, 2021 **6:00 PM** **HYBRID/ZOOM - 2nd Floor, City Hall**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, in accordance with RCW Chapter 42.30, that the City Council of the City of Longview, Washington, will be holding a workshop on Tuesday, July 13th, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall, 1525 Broadway St, Longview. The meeting is also available to stream on Zoom.

Please click the link below to join the meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83993758335

Telephone options (you may need to try more than one number if you receive a busy signal):
Dial any of the following numbers:

1-253-215-8782
1-669-900-6833
1-346-248-7799
1-408-638-0968
1-646-876-9923
1-301-715-8592
1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 839 9375 8335

The City Hall is accessible for persons with disabilities. Special equipment to assist the hearing impaired is also available. Please contact the City Executive Offices at 360.442.5004 48 hours in advance if you require special accommodations to attend the meeting.

The City of Longview has been conducting virtual meetings, but as we transition back to more in-person meetings, Council would like to take the opportunity to ask our community what works for them. Please visit the link to take a quick survey regarding public meetings held in-person vs. hybrid (combining virtual and in-person attendance): https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3G3BVG3

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. WORKSHOP

21-000828 DRAFT CONSOLIDATED HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 5 YEAR UPDATE

As required by HUD the City will be proposing an update to the 5 year Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan this August. The plan describes out the needs, strategies and goals for using HUD funds in the community. For the workshop a draft Strategic Plan will be presented with new goals that reflect the current needs in the community.

4. ADJOURNMENT

*** Any invocation that may be offered at the Council meeting shall be the voluntary offering of a private citizen, to and for the benefit of the Council. The views or beliefs expressed by the invocation speaker have not been previously reviewed or approved by the Council, and the Council does not endorse the religious beliefs or views of this, or any other speaker.**

NEXT SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETINGS:
TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2021 - 7:00 P.M. (July 22nd regular meeting rescheduled)
TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2021 - 7:00 P.M. (August 12th regular meeting rescheduled)

NEXT COUNCIL WORKSHOPS:
TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2021 - 6:00 P.M. NDP WATER RATE AGREEMENT

Memorandum

July 6, 2021

TO: Longview City Council

FROM: Adam Trimble, Interim Planning Manager

SUBJECT: July 13, 2021 workshop on HUD 5 year consolidated plan update

As required by HUD the City will be proposing an update to the 5 year Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan this August. The plan describes out the needs, strategies and goals for using HUD funds in the community. For the workshop a draft Strategic Plan will be presented with new goals that reflect the current needs in the community.

The table below provides a comparison of the goals from 5 years ago vs the goals proposed for 2020-2024:

Goals 2015-2019	Proposed Goals 2020-2024
1. Stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods	1. Increase Affordable Housing Supply
2. Promote thriving commercial districts & options	2. Preserve and Improve Existing Housing Supply
3. Reduce the numbers and shorten homelessness	3. Provide Services to Improve Housing and Economic Outcomes
	4. Provide Public Facilities and Improvements

The updated plan responds to the housing shortage and housing affordability crisis with updated goals that focus on increasing and preserving the supply of affordable housing. The attached presentation and draft Strategic Plan provide details and examples for each goal and includes strategies for achieving the goals. At the workshop, staff will ask if there are any concerns about the proposed goals and strategies and what else the plan should include.

One example staff will present for consideration is a homebuyer assistance program. Our research found that an existing lending program of the Washington State Housing Finance Commission would require $54,000 per unit to assist a moderate income household purchase a house. Longview typically allocates $255,000 in home funds each year so there would be trade-offs to using this approach. For reference, new multi-family units can have between $153,314 to $276,482 per unit invested in them with HOME dollars depending on the number of bedrooms in the unit.

If you have any questions about the materials before the workshop please contact me at 360-442-5092 or adam.trimble@ci.longview.wa.us

2020-2024 Consolidated Plan

Draft Strategic Plan

Required by U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) grants

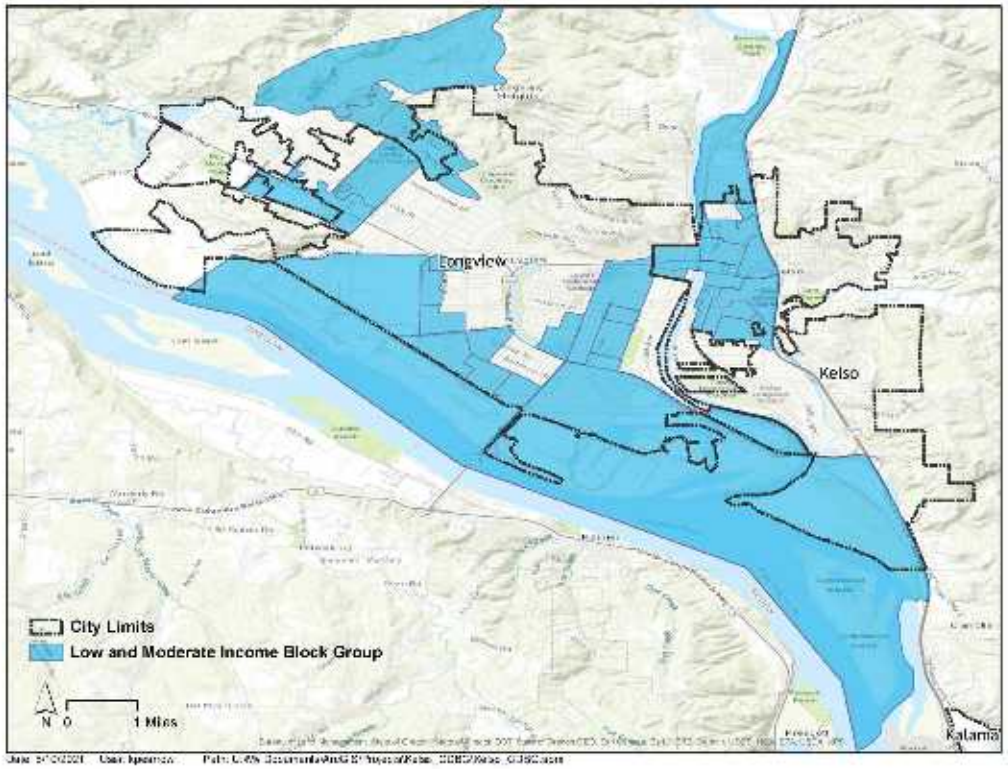
Anticipated Resources

	2020*	2021*	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
CDBG Allocation	333,767	327,954	330,000	330,000	330,000	**1,651,721**
HOME Allocation	360,974	366,284	364,000	364,000	364,000	**1,819,258**
HOME ARP Allocation		1,326,277				**1,326,277**
TOTALS	$694,741	$2,022,536	$694,000	$694,000	$694,000	**$4,799,277**

*The activities in 2020 and 2021 have been awarded.

Geographic Priorities

- Areas where revitalization efforts carryout out
  - Multiple activities
  - Concentrated and coordinated manner
- Current Plan:
  - Longview: Highlands, Downtown, Broadway, Olympic West, City-wide
  - Kelso: South, North, West, City-wide
- Draft Plan:
  - No geographic priorities proposed
  - Rationale:
    - Administrative burden without added benefit
    - City-wide needs (e.g. housing)
    - Can still focus investments
    - Can use HUD's Low- and Moderate-Income Block Group maps to focus



Priority Needs

- Housing Needs:
  - Additional housing supply
  - Existing housing stock preserved and improved
  - Additional economic opportunities for low-income households to pay for housing
- Homeless Housing Needs:
  - Additional permanent housing for those previously homeless
  - Improved outcomes to permanent housing from shelters or transitional housing
- Community Development Needs:
  - Existing housing stock preserved and improved
  - Improvements to low-income neighborhoods to reduce poverty concentration
- Special Needs:
  - Housing and health needs of the senior population
  - Services and facilities for at-risk youth

Goals

1. Increase Affordable Housing Supply
2. Preserve and Improve Existing Housing Supply
3. Provide Services to Improve Housing and Economic Outcomes
4. Provide Public Facilities and Improvements

Goal 1: Increase Affordable Housing Supply

- Priorities:
  - Housing for those without homes
  - Rental housing to extremely- to very-low-income households (<30% AMI to 60% AMI)
  - Home ownership for moderate-income and workforce households

- Strategies:
  - CDBG and HOME funds to increase supply (homeless and rental)
  - CDBG and HOME funds to assist with down-payment cost for homebuyers
  - Review city requirements to provide incentives for new construction

Goal 2: Preserve and Improve Existing Housing Supply

- Priorities:
  - Ensure housing is safe
  - Ensure housing is efficient
  - Ensure housing is accessible

- Strategies:
  - CDBG and HOME funds to rehabilitate existing housing
  - CDBG and HOME funds to prove accessible housing to those with disabilities

Goal 3: Provide Services to Improve Housing and Economic Outcomes

- Priorities:
  - Supportive services for chronically homeless or those with co-occurring disorders
  - Gaps in services to improve economic conditions for low-income persons

- Strategies:
  - CDBG and HOME funds to provide supportive housing services
  - CDBG funding to support services for drug and alcohol addiction
  - CDBG funding to improve economic conditions
  - CDBG funding to support youth and family activities

Goal 4: Provide Public Facilities and Improvements

- Priorities:
  - Sidewalks to ensure safe walking paths
  - Bus stops and shelters
  - Neighborhood parks
  - Water and sewer service

- Strategies:
  - CDBG and HOME funds for public facilities and improvements needed for new housing construction
  - CDBG funding for bus stops and shelters
  - CDBG funding for neighborhood improvements

Barriers to Affordable Housing

- HUD requires the city to identify strategies for removing or ameliorating negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing

- Barriers in Longview and Kelso include:
  - Zoning code limits on accessory dwelling units
  - Zoning code limits on infill housing
  - Off-street parking requirements for duplexes
  - City code that only targes downtown commerce and civic center for multifamily tax exemption program

- Strategies to address include:
  - Explore code options to allow additional housing choices with fewer barriers
  - Explore property tax incentive in residential target areas (see Chapter 84.14 RCW and Longview Municipal Code Ch. 16.60)

Homelessness Strategy

Incorporates Cowlitz County 5-year Homeless Housing Plan

- Goal 1: Increase access to affordable housing
- Goal 2: Quickly identify and engage people experiencing homelessness
- Goal 3: increase prevention and education opportunities
- Goal 4: Maintain a crisis response system in Cowlitz County
- Goal 5: Increase the use of data to drive strategies and decision making

HOME American Rescue Plan Funds

- $1,326,277 is allocated to Longview-Kelso HOME Consortium
- Funds expected to be released in Fall 2021
- This Plan anticipates those resources, meaning an amendment to Plan not required
- Anticipated uses of funds:
  - Sunset Village – HOSWWA project, which includes 22 units for homeless
  - Tenant Based Rental Assistance
  - Supportive Servies
  - Ocean Beach – HOSWWA project, which will include 16 units for homeless
  - Non-congregate shelter units – no projects currently identified

Next Steps

- City Council action approving Consolidated Plan and Action Plans
  - Kelso – July 20th
  - Longview – July 29th
- Longview submission of Plans and Certifications to HUD
  - No later than August 16th
- HOME American Rescue Plan Funds
  - Once awarded (Fall 2021), City can solicit for proposals
  - City awards projects
  - Amendment of 2021 Action Plan will be required

Questions or Feedback?

Longview-Kelso Strategic Plan

Prepared for the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan

Draft

June 28, 2021

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OVERVIEW

The City of Longview (City) receives Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The cities of Longview and Kelso have formed a consortium to receive HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) funding from HUD. A requirement for receipt of these funds is to prepare a Consolidated Plan covering a five-year period. The goal of the Consolidated Plan is to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing, suitable living environments, and expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

Funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sets forth expectations for allocation of these resources. The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) must primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons. HOME Investment Partnership funds are used to fund a wide range of activities including building, buying, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership or providing direct rental assistance to low-income households.

In the production of affordable housing and services to low- and moderate-income persons, HUD's Consolidated Plan has always been intended to look at partnerships across different levels of government, the private sector and non-profit organizations. The pattern of reduced CDBG and HOME funds necessitates identifying needs and existing resources available in other sectors now more than ever.

The Consolidated Plan includes four basic parts:

1) **Needs Assessment** – this part provides a clear picture of a jurisdiction's needs related to affordable housing, special needs housing, community development, and homelessness. From this assessment, the highest priority needs identified by the community will form the basis for the Strategic Plan that outlines the programs and projects to be funded with CDBG funds and other resources included in the plan.
2) **Market Analysis** – this part describes the significant characteristics of the housing market, including the supply, demand, condition and cost of housing. Included will be:
    - Estimates for lead-based paint hazards;
    - Identified public and assisted housing;
    - Inventoried facilities, housing and services for homeless persons;
    - Described housing stock available to serve persons with disabilities and other low- to moderate-income special needs; and
    - Identified barriers to affordable housing.
3) **Strategic Plan** – this part identifies the priority needs for the city and describes strategies that the City will undertake to serve the priority needs.
4) **Action Plan** – the City must complete an Annual Action Plan (AAP) that summarizes the activities and projects that will take place during the year to address the priority needs and goals identified in the Strategic Plan. The Consolidated Plan includes the Year 1 AAP; the City will subsequently adopt separate AAPs for Years 2-5.

This document covers the third part of the Consolidated Plan – the **Strategic Plan**. The Needs Assessment and Market Analysis clearly shows needs in many areas, such as:

1) Low-and moderate-income households who are severely housing cost burdened;
2) Low rental vacancy rates;
3) Aging housing stock and minimal new construction; and
4) Aging of the population.

ANTICIPATED RESOURCES

Longview and Kelso have seen their allocation of CDBG and HOME funds decline over the years. The impact of these reduced funds is even more pronounced when considering the impact of inflation in those sixteen years.

Figure 1: HUD Formula Allocations, 2005-2021 (Longview-Kelso)

SOURCE: HTTPS://WWW.HUD.GOV/PROGRAM_OFFICES/COMM_PLANNING/BUDGET

The Consolidated Plan needs to identify anticipated resources over the five-years of the strategic plan. The following table shows anticipated CDBG and HOME allocations over five years. In addition to the formula allocations, HUD has allocated nearly $5 billion in American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to help communities create affordable housing and services for people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. The Longview-Kelso HOME Consortium is allocated **$1,326,277**.

Table 1: Anticipated Resources, 2020-2024

	2020[1]	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
CDBG Allocation	333,767	327,954	330,000	330,000	330,000	1,651,721
HOME Allocation	360,974	366,284	364,000	364,000	364,000	1,819,258
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TOTALS	**$694,741**	**$2,022,536**	**$694,000**	**$694,000**	**$694,000**	**$4,799,277**

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

These anticipated resources can be used for the following eligible activities of the CDBG and HOME programs.

What can CDBG funds be used for?

- Acquisition of Real Property – often an interim step to address blight or physical decay
- Public Facilities and Improvements – cannot be used for the general conduct of government except to remove barriers that restrict mobility and accessibility

[1] The activities in 2020 have already been allocated.

- Clearance – could be used to demolish buildings and improvements and removal of environmental contaminants
- Public Service – must be a new service or a quantifiable increase in level of service, and limited to 15% of annual grant and program income
- Rehabilitation – can be used to rehabilitate property
- New Housing Construction – cannot be used for housing but for other eligible activities, such as public improvements (e.g. sidewalks, water, sewer)
- Code Enforcement – limited to areas that are deteriorating in a low- and moderate-income neighborhood
- Economic Development and Microenterprise Assistance – improvements or assistance tied to public benefit for low income persons
- Homeownership Assistance – fund to help assist in purchase of a home
- Planning and Administration – limited to 20% of annual grant and program income

What can HOME funds be used for?

- Tenant-based rental assistance – assisting with rent
- Homeownership Assistance – funds to help assist in the purchase of a home
- Rental Housing – funds to assist with creating new rental housing

HOME American Rescue Plan Funds

The Longview-Kelso HOME Consortium is allocated **$1,326,277** in HOME American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to help communities create affordable housing and services for people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. These funds are expected to be granted in the fall of 2021.

What can the American Rescue Plan, HOME funds be used for?[2]

- Eligible populations:
  - Homeless (McKinney definition)
  - At risk (McKinney definition)
  - Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual assault, or human trafficking
  - Other populations for whom supportive services or assistance would prevent the family's homelessness or serve those at risk of housing instability.
  - Veterans and families that include a veteran family member that meets one of the preceding criteria.
- Eligible activities:
  - Tenant Based Rental Assistance
  - Development of affordable housing pursuant to NAHA.
  - Supportive services to qualifying individuals or families not already receiving such services, including:
    - Activities listed in McKinney Vento Act (CoC services)
    - Housing counseling, and
    - Homeless prevention services
  - Acquisition and development of non-congregate shelter units to be used as:
    - Permanent affordable housing (HOME)
    - Permanent housing (McKinney Vento)
    - Emergency shelter (McKinney Vento)
    - Non-congregate shelter
- Waivers/statutory suspensions:
  - No match, commitment deadline, CHDO set-aside or max. per unit subsidy limit

[2] This information is preliminary, with final guidance anticipated in Fall 2021

- Up to 15% for admin. and planning set aside
- Up to 5% operating assistance to CHDOs and other nonprofits carrying out activities

- Up to an additional 5% for capacity building

The following projects are identified as contingencies for allocation of these HOME ARP funds when formally awarded:

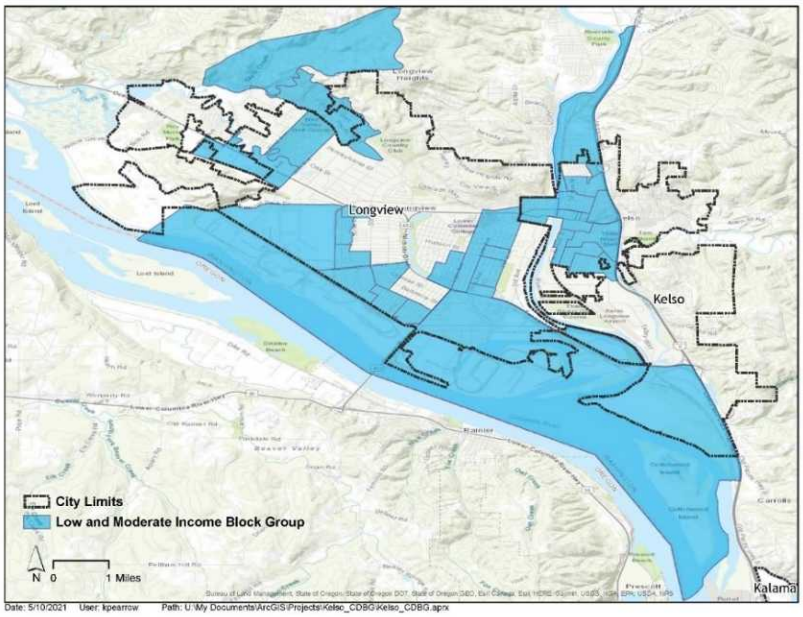
1. Sunrise Village. Housing Opportunities of Southwest Washington (HOSWWA) has identified that their new project, Sunrise Village, which would create 45 new units of which 22 units would provide housing for the previously homeless, has an anticipated funding gap that these funds could ensure timely delivery of these units. This project is identified in this plan as a Contingency project.
2. Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) – tenant based rental assistance would be allocated to local agencies or nonprofits.
3. Supportive Services – Continuum of Care services, housing counseling and homeless prevention services
4. Ocean Beach. HOSWWA's next project in the community will be on their Ocean Beach property. This project would include 80 units, 16 of which would provide housing for those previously homeless.
5. Non-congregate shelter units – acquisition and development of permanent housing, emergency shelter or non-congregate shelter

GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITIES

HUD encourages locally designated areas to be targeted where revitalization efforts are to be carried out through multiple activities in a concentrated and coordinated manner.

For this planning period, Longview and Kelso are not proposing any geographic priorities within the respective cities. The needs that are prioritized in this Strategic Plan are city-wide, such as increasing the supply of affordable housing. There will continue to be needs for improvements to public facilities in some low- and moderate-income neighborhoods – improvements such as parks, sidewalks and streetlights, or for preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing stock. These investments can be made without the need for geographic targets in a small community like Longview or Kelso, and where resources from HUD are limited.

Figure 2: Low- and Moderate-Income Block Groups



Longview and Kelso will continue to use HUD's Low-and Moderate-Income Block Groups as a way to focus neighborhood improvements without having to allocate specific investments geographically. Figure 2 identifies the current block groups where more than 50% of the households are considered low- or moderate-income.

PRIORITY NEEDS

The level of need in a community is always greater than the limited resources available to meet the need. Accordingly, the first step is to identify the priority needs for these HUD funds.

In the Needs Assessment and Market Analysis (May 20, 2021), information and data presented identified several needs within Longview and Kelso. The following are highlights:

HOUSING NEEDS

The housing market in Longview and Kelso is affecting affordability. Single family home values have more than doubled since 2013; rents for a 1-bedroom apartment have increased 43% since 2014 and now have a reported vacancy rate of 0.5%.

Approximately 41% of Longview and Kelso households pay more than 30% of their income for housing; nearly 18% are severely cost-burdened, paying more than 50% of their income towards housing. The households most impacted by the cost of housing are low-income renters.

While housing costs have increased, household income has not kept pace. Since 2014, incomes have increased less than 19%.

The housing stock in Longview and Kelso is aging and very little new units have been added. Approximately 77% of Longview and Kelso's housing stock was built before 1980, which is when lead-based paint was no longer allowed in homes. There are nearly 1,600 households in the two cities built before 1980 where children 6 or younger are present, which presents a potential health risk to those children living in those homes.

In summary, the priority housing needs include:

- Additional housing supply
- Existing housing stock preserved and improved
- Additional economic opportunities for low-income households to pay for housing

HOMELESS HOUSING NEEDS

The number of persons without homes has increased since 2014. The number of chronically homeless individuals has shown a steep increase in the last two years.

The Washington State Homeless System Performance shows that the amount of time being homeless more than doubled from 2017 to 2019 (44 days to 95 days). In most areas, Cowlitz County is showing that their performance over the past three years has improved. The primary performance measure that is missing the targets is improving the housing outcomes for those in transitional housing.

In summary, the priority homeless housing needs include:

- Additional supply of permanent housing for those persons previously homeless
- Improved outcomes to permanent housing from emergency shelters or transitional housing

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Approximately 77% of the housing stock in Longview and Kelso was built before 1980, indicating a substantial number of homes with potential lead-based paint hazards which can pose a serious health hazard, particularly to

children. This older housing stock is predominant in the neighborhoods with a high percentile of low-income households.

Longview and Kelso have several neighborhoods where more than 50% of the households are considered low- or moderate-income. These neighborhoods, identified in the 2014-2019 Consolidated Plan, include Highlands, Downtown, Broadway, Olympic West, South Kelso, North Kelso and West Kelso.

In summary, the priority community development needs include:

- Existing housing stock preserved and improved
- Improvements to low-income neighborhoods to reduce the concentration of poverty

Special Needs

One-third of the population in Longview and Kelso is 55 or older. Over 1,000 households, with people 62 and over residing in the home, are paying more than 50% of their income on housing costs. 60% of the population 75 years and over have a disability, and 38% of those 65 to 74 have a disability. The most frequent disability for the elderly population is hearing and ambulatory difficulty.

A 2016 behavioral health gap analysis for Cowlitz County had key recommendations which included:

- Develop a more fully integrated and coordinated care delivery system
- Enhance affordable housing and homelessness services
- Develop more diverse services for at-risk youth
- Enhance and expand jail and prison diversion, prevention, and reentry programs
- Develop innovative and effective methods to expand the behavioral health workforce in the county

Considering the anticipated resources of the CDBG and HOME allocations, and other funding available for mental health, the priorities for special needs include:

- The housing and health needs of the senior population
- Services and facilities for at-risk youth

Goals

The goals of the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan address the priority needs identified in the Needs Assessment and this section.

Goal 1: Increase Affordable Housing Supply

The greatest need is to increase the supply of affordable housing in Longview and Kelso. The need is across the entire spectrum of housing, from housing for the homeless to housing affordable to families earning median income.

The priorities for increasing the supply of affordable housing are based on the greatest need and risk:

- Housing for those without homes including chronically homeless, families, veterans, and those fleeing domestic violence
- Rental housing affordable to extremely to very-low income households (<30% AMI to 60% AMI)
- Home ownership for moderate-income and workforce households

Strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing should include:

- Providing CDBG and HOME funding to those agencies providing increased supply of housing for those that are homeless
- Providing CDBG and HOME funding to those agencies providing increased supply of rental housing for those earning 60% AMI or less
- Provide CDBG and HOME funding to assist with down-payment costs for homebuyers
- Review city requirements for ways to provide incentives for new housing construction, or to reduce impediments to new construction

Goal 2: Preserve and Improve Existing Housing Supply

The aging housing stock in Longview and Kelso can negatively impact the community and households. The priorities include:

- Ensuring that the housing is safe by addressing structural defects, roofing, electrical hazards, water or sewer services, or lead-based paint
- Ensuring that the housing is efficient by addressing weatherization, mechanical equipment and household appliances
- Ensuring that the housing is accessible to those with disabilities

Strategies to preserve and improve the existing housing supply include:

- Provide CDBG and HOME funding to those agencies that rehabilitate existing housing stock for low-income households
- Provide CDBG and HOME funding to help provide accessible housing to those with disabilities

Goal 3: Provide Services to Improve Housing and Economic Outcomes

There is a correlation between those that successfully exit homelessness and those who do not: supportive housing services, including drug and alcohol treatment and mental health services. On the other end of the service needs is providing assistance to improve the economic conditions of the household through education, job training and other supportive services. The priorities include:

- Ensuring that housing for chronically homeless or those with co-occurring disorders, are provided supportive services
- Addressing gaps in services provided in the community which improve the economic condition of low-income households

Strategies to provide services include:

- Provide CDBG and HOME funding to those agencies that provide supportive housing services
- Provide CDBG funding to support services for drug and alcohol addiction
- Provide CDBG funding to improve economic conditions of low-income persons through education, job training, access to broadband and other supportive services
- Provide CDBG funding to support youth and family activities

Goal 4: Provide Public Facilities and Improvements

This is a goal that is supportive of the other three goals. Increasing the supply of affordable housing, preserving existing housing supply and providing services to improve outcomes can be dependent on ensuring that adequate public facilities and improvements are provided. The priorities include:

- Sidewalks to ensure safe walking paths to schools, bus routes and services
- Bus stops and shelters
- Neighborhood parks
- Water and sewer service

Strategies to provide public facilities and improvements include:

- Provide CDBG and HOME funding for public facilities and improvements, such as sidewalks, streetlights, water and sewer connections, and parks, and which are needed for new housing construction for priority populations
- Provide CDBG funding for bus stops and shelters which primarily serve low-income persons
- Provide CDBG funding for neighborhood improvements to parks and other recreational amenities

Barriers to Affordable Housing

HUD requires the Consolidated Plan to identify strategies for removing or ameliorating negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing. Public policies could include tax policy, land use controls, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limits, and policies that affect the return on investment. HUD has established a regulatory barrier clearinghouse that provides examples of how communities can identify and remove barriers to affordable housing.

The barriers to affordable housing in Longview and Kelso include:

- Zoning code limits on accessory dwelling units
- Zoning code limits on infill housing
- Off-street parking requirements for duplexes (two spaces for each unit)
- City code that only targets the downtown commerce (D-C) and civic center (C-C) zoning districts

The strategies to address the barriers to affordable housing include:

- The city will continue to explore code options to allow additional housing choices with fewer barriers
- Longview could explore the property tax incentive in residential targeted areas as authorized under Chapter 84.14 RCW and Longview Municipal Code Ch. 16.60, and the amendments to Chapter 84.14 RCW approved by the 2021 Legislature (ESSSB 5287)

Homelessness Strategy

On any given day, more than 300 people in Cowlitz County are experiencing homelessness. The number of chronically homeless individuals has increased significantly in the last two years.

In Washington State, the Legislature has set forth a framework for homeless housing and assistance in Chapter 43.185C RCW. Under this framework, county government is the local government that is designated to develop a five-year homeless housing plan unless the legislative authority of a city elects to accept the responsibility within its jurisdiction. In Cowlitz County, no city has elected to assume responsibility, so the Homeless Housing Plan is led by Cowlitz County.

The Cowlitz County 5-year Homeless Housing Plan (December 2019 – December 2024). The following goals and strategies are from this plan.

Goal 1: Increase access to affordable housing

Strategy: Support plans and development to increase access to affordable housing units. Affordable housing can include, but is not limited to: workforce housing, low income tax credit housing, subsidized housing, and other definitions that create housing affordability.

Goal 2: Quickly identify and engage people experiencing homelessness

Strategy: Continue implementation of a Coordinated Entry system that provides a streamlined process to access, assess, and refer to specific housing programs in the community.

Goal 3: Increase prevention and education opportunities

Strategy: Support prevention and education projects.

Goal 4: Maintain a crisis response system in Cowlitz County

Strategy: Consistently evaluate current system capacity, reviewing characteristics of the homeless population and the resources/interventions available to meet the need.

Goal 5: Increase the use of data to drive strategies and decision making

Strategy: Coordinate with local and state partners to collect and review data.