

Joint Pacific County Housing Authority Strategic Plan

History of Joint Pacific County Housing Authority (JPCHA)

Founding and Purpose

The Pacific County Board of Commissioners formed the Pacific County Housing Authority in 1975. The purpose of this organization was to administer the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program in Pacific County. This entity became inactive in 1994. In 2004, the County and its four cities formed the Joint Pacific County Housing Authority to re-emphasize the need for affordable housing throughout Pacific County.

The Authority has been resurrected as an emerging entity that wants to pursue targeted use of the agency's voucher program and other assisted housing. The Authority wants to add affordable housing inventory in the county and increase affordable housing opportunities. The programs are currently managed by Longview Housing Authority. Currently the programs include:

- Affordable Housing- Eagles- 16 units
- Housing Choice Voucher Program- 60 units
- Family Self-Sufficiency Program- Longview Housing Authority
- Section 8 Homeownership Program- Longview Housing Authority
- Homeownership Rehabilitation Program- Longview Housing Authority

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Joint Pacific County Housing Authority and its Mission

The Board of the Joint Pacific County Housing Authority (**JPCHA**) includes four Commissioners who are appointed by the mayors of the four cities in Pacific County and two commissioners who are appointed by the County. The federal provisions require that one position be a resident of the program. Currently the resident commissioner position does not exist on the Board. The staff of Longview Housing Authority that oversees the operation includes (Chris Pegg) the Executive Director of the Longview Housing Authority (LHA) and is supported by 28 additional employees.

The Housing Authority staff handles operations and management of all JPCHA properties. LHA's property management operations complement the mission of the JPCHA and assists the clients of JPCHA by providing additional housing options that would not be available for a smaller housing authority.

As a Washington State Housing Authority, JPCHA is a tax-exempt entity.

Housing and Development in Pacific County and Surrounding Jurisdictions

Needs

The Pacific County and the surrounding region have a myriad of needs:

- Redevelopment/Development of Housing
 - Lack of Affordable Housing for Low-Income Families
 - Aging Housing Stock
 - Vacant Rental and Owner –Occupied Housing
 - Mixed Income Housing
 - Special Needs Housing for Disabled Families
 - Homeless Assistance
 - Farm Worker Housing/USDA
- Methods to Increase Homeownership for Moderate Income Families
- Continued Downtown Development/Redevelopment
- Commercial Development
- Long-term Employment Opportunities
- Seasonal Employment and income instability
- Job Training
- Low-cost Financing Alternatives

These needs are illustrated in the following statistics for the Joint Pacific County area from the “Consolidated Housing Plan for Longview-Kelso June 2000”, the “Statewide Housing Market Study/ Housing Needs Analysis” and from the 2000 U.S. Census.

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The cities of Longview, Kelso, Pacific County and Wahkiakum County have a vacancy rate that is higher than the state wide average of 7%. The vacancy rate in Pacific County is skewed by the high number of seasonal and migrant housing units available.

The Statewide Housing Analysis identifies the need for the development of more than 4,000 affordable units to meet current demand for housing. This need is spread across the cities and the three counties. The greatest need was identified for Cowlitz County (approximately 3,800 units). The level of need for new units in Cowlitz and Pacific Counties is estimated to be at 40% of the number of low income households in the counties. (See Housing Needs Assessment).

This means that the available subsidized and affordable units are meeting only 60% of the current demand for units. This opens up a market for JPCHA services that is currently not being met.

The “Consolidated Housing Plan for Longview-Kelso June 2000” identified the need for rehabilitation of more than 500 substandard and vacant units. The need to revitalize this stock is key in the downtown areas of Pacific County where the need to increase residency has been identified as a priority by the city and the business community.

Demand for housing for the elderly, disabled, farm workers, and other special needs populations is growing in the area. Currently there are no permanent emergency shelter housing buildings in the area. This issue is addressed through temporary vouchers that are used at the local hotels. There is also a waiting list for elderly housing in the area, with the average waiting period of one year.

The Housing Authority may be in a position to develop elderly only units and given the level of demand as stated in the Consolidated Plan and borne out by the Housing Authority’s waiting lists for Housing Choice Voucher Assistance and subsidized units, can justify increasing its inventory of special needs units.