



5 Year Strategic Plan

This document includes Narrative Responses to specific questions that grantees of the Community Development Block Grant must respond to in order to be compliant with the Consolidated Planning Regulations.

City of Mount Vernon, Washington

2009-2013

Strategic Plan

November, 2008

GENERAL

The Consolidated Plan is a collaborative process whereby a community establishes a unified vision for community development actions. It offers local jurisdictions the opportunity to shape the various housing and community development programs into effective, coordinated neighborhood and community development strategies. It also creates the opportunity for strategic planning and citizen participation to take place in a comprehensive context, and to reduce duplication of effort at the local level.

The strategic plan is a specific course of action for revitalization. It is the means to analyze the full local context and the linkages to the larger region. It builds on local assets and coordinates a response to the needs of the community. It integrates economic, physical, environmental, community, and human development goals in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion so that families and communities can work together and thrive. A strategic plan also sets forth program goals, specific objectives, annual goals, and benchmarks for measuring progress. In so doing, it helps local governments and citizens keep track of results and learn what works.

An advantage of the CDBG is the local control allowed over the use of federal funds. This enables a city to localize programs and activities. Activities funded by CDBG include affordable and accessible housing, housing rehabilitation projects, childcare centers, health care, senior citizen programs, street and sidewalk reconstruction, water and sewer line construction, business loans, and community centers. Each program funded must meet one of the three following objectives: (1) benefit low- and moderate-income persons, (2) prevent or eliminate slums or blight, or (3) meet urgent community needs. HUD requires that 70 percent of CDBG funds be used for activities that primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons.

The statutes for formula grant programs set forth three basic goals against which the Consolidated Plan and the jurisdiction's performance under the plan will be evaluated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The City's plan must state how it will pursue these goals for all community development and housing programs. These statutory program goals are:

Decent Housing, which includes:

- assisting homeless persons obtain affordable housing;
- assisting persons at risk of becoming homeless;
- retaining affordable housing stock;
- increasing the availability of affordable permanent housing in standard condition to low-income and moderate-income families, particularly to members of disadvantaged minorities without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability;
- increasing the supply of supportive housing which includes structural features and services to enable persons with special needs (including persons with HIV/AIDS) to live in dignity and independence; and
- providing affordable housing that is accessible to job opportunities.

A Suitable Living Environment, which includes:

- improving the safety and livability of neighborhoods;
- increasing access to quality public and private facilities and services;
- reducing the isolation of income groups within areas through spatial de-concentration of housing opportunities for lower income persons and the revitalization of deteriorating neighborhoods;
- restoring and preserving properties of special historic, architectural, or aesthetic value; and
- conserving energy resources.

Expanded Economic Opportunities, which includes:

- creating and retaining jobs;
- establishing, stabilizing and expanding small businesses (including micro-businesses);
- providing public services concerned with employment;
- providing jobs to low-income persons living in areas affected by those programs and activities;
- increasing availability of mortgage financing for low-income persons at reasonable rates using non-discriminatory lending practices;
- improving access to capital and credit for development activities that promote the long-term economic and social viability of the community; and
- empowering low-income persons to reduce generational poverty in federally assisted housing and public housing.

Elements of the Consolidated Plan

Although HUD does not prescribe a specific format, the Consolidated Plan must contain certain elements and tables. The 2004-2008 Consolidated Plan consists of five sections, including appendices for related documents and required certifications.

CONSULTATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

This section describes the types of citizen participation and consultation used in the development of the Consolidated Plan. It contains a description of public and private agencies, including human service agencies, with which the City consulted and coordinated during the development process.

It also contains the Citizen Participation Plan. Existing and ongoing participation by citizens, non-profit organizations, and other interested parties, as well as low-income residents, is the key to an effective citizen participation process.

NEEDS

The Needs section contains the statistical and analytical information that provides an overall picture of the housing and community development needs of the city. In addition to drawing relevant information from submissions, reports and studies, the City consulted with public and private agencies—including human service agencies—regarding their housing and community development needs.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan presents the strategies that bring needs and resources together in a coordinated housing and community development plan. In this section, the City identifies the priority housing and non-housing community development needs. It also identifies resources that are expected to be received to carry out its plan and the actions, projects, and programs it intends to initiate and/or complete over the course of the plan term.

2009 ACTION PLAN

This section identifies the specific activities the City will undertake to address priority needs and local objectives during the 2009 program year (January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009). The 2009 Action Plan describes the eligible programs, projects, and activities to be undertaken with available funds during the 2009 program year, and their relationship to the priority needs. The Action Plan is submitted annually.

Executive Summary

The Strategic Plan brings needs and resources together in a coordinated strategy to meet housing, community development, and non-urgent needs. Developed at the commencement of each five-year Consolidated Plan term, the strategic plan serves as a guide for developing the annual Action Plans.

The Strategic Plan is designed to achieve the following CDBG and National Objectives:

CDBG Objectives

- Provide decent housing
- Create suitable living environments
- Expand economic opportunities

National Objectives

- Benefit low-income* persons
 - Aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight
 - Meet a need having a particular urgency
- *For the purposes of the Strategic Plan Section, the term "low-income" will include those households with income at or below 80% of the median income.*

PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASUREMENT

U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development expects Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grantees to use performance measurement systems to address productivity and program impact. Beginning in 2006, HUD implemented a refined performance measurement system. The five components of the performance measuring system are Goals, Inputs, Activities, Outputs and Outcomes.

Developing "outcome" measurements is complex because CDBG funds can be used for a variety of activities with differing funding priorities from year to year. The amount of CDBG funds received by the City is very small relative to the large amount of housing, human service and economic development activities in the City.

Three broad Objectives, consistent with the needs and strategies of the Consolidated Plan, are established for activities funded with CDBG that focus on low- and moderate-income households:

- Create suitable living environments
- Provide decent, affordable housing
- Create economic opportunities

For each of the three broad Objectives, there are three possible common Outcomes which describe change, i.e., "what type of change or result is sought?"

- *Availability/Accessibility.* Activities funded with CDBG that make services, infrastructure, housing, or shelter available or accessible to low- and moderate-income people, including persons with disabilities. In this category, accessibility does not refer only to physical barriers, but also to making the

affordable basics of daily living available and accessible to low- and moderate-income people.

- *Affordability.* Activities funded with CDBG that provide affordability in a variety of ways in the lives of low- and moderate-income people. It can include the creation or maintenance of affordable housing, basic infrastructure hookups, or services such as transportation or day care.
- *Sustainability.* Promoting Livable or Viable Communities. Projects funded with CDBG where the activity or activities are aimed at improving communities or neighborhoods, helping to make them livable or viable by providing benefit to persons of low- and moderate-income or by removing or eliminating slum or blighted areas, through multiple activities or services that sustain communities or neighborhoods.

Progress toward outcomes is measured with output Indicators. Examples of output indicators (measurements) include the number of:

- households assisted
- community wide assistance activities
- persons served (in shelters or public services)
- rental housing units produced
- housing units rehabilitated
- years of affordability
- homeowners assisted or homeownership units created
- jobs created or retained
- dollars of investment leveraged.

Objectives are combined with Outcomes to produce an Outcome Statement. Outcomes are the “benefits” relating to a change in conditions, status, attitudes, knowledge or behavior that result from the funded programs. The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) and the ongoing reporting to the federal Integrated Data and Information System (IDIS) are the means for reporting. Because many activities are multi-year (i.e. construction projects), the outcomes will be measured over five-year periods with progress noted each year. The “Outcomes” portion of the measuring system will be reported each year in the CAPER.

The Consolidated Plan is a planning document that provides an assessment of the City’s community development needs, proposes strategies to address those needs, and annually identifies specific activities to implement strategies. The concept of building a strong community focuses on suitable living environments, decent affordable housing, and economic opportunities for all. This Consolidated Plan is effective from 2009 through 2013. Integral to the Consolidated Plan are the annual Action Plans which describe the resources and actions to be undertaken each year, consistent with strategies identified in the five-year Consolidated Plan, to address the identified community needs.

The activities that are described in the annual Action Plans are designed to meet CDBG objectives which include the provision of decent housing, creating suitable living environments and expanding economic opportunities. In 2007, HUD established performance measurement system that requires all funded activities address one of the objective categories (decent housing, suitable living environment and economic opportunities) and one of the following outcomes: Availability/ Accessibility, Affordability, Sustainability. Each CDBG funded project described in the companion Action Plans lists a general objective category and a general outcome category.

ANTICIPATED RESOURCES

The City expects to receive Community Development Block Grant funds from HUD. These funds will be used to leverage other federal, state and local resources to meet housing and community development needs. The amounts of CDBG funds expected to be available are listed in the accompanying annual Action Plans. The City expects annual CDBG funding of approximately \$300,000 per year based on past years; however, that amount may change during any future program year.

CONSULTATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

To prepare the Consolidated Plan, the City consults with appropriate public and private agencies and conducts public hearings to obtain citizen input. This assures that the document is comprehensive. **This draft Consolidated Plan is made available for review and comment by the public between September 17, 2008 and October 17, 2008.** A summary of citizen comments is in the General section of this document under Citizen Participation. The companion annual Action Plans are also prepared consistent with the Consultation and Citizen Participation section of the Consolidated Plan and include public meetings with 30 day public comment periods. For more details on the public process and citizen input, see the Citizen Participation Section.

NEEDS

The data in the Needs Section of the Consolidated Plan serves as the basis for the five-year housing and community development goals, and also supports the City's priorities for allocating resources, establishing objectives, and developing strategies to achieve desired results.

Housing priority needs are for:

- Homeless persons and families
- Low-income families and individuals
- Low-income families and individuals at risk of homelessness

Housing is considered affordable when households spend no more than a third of their pre-tax income on housing costs. A survey of Skagit County low-income households in 2005 revealed that 76% of low-income homeowners and 66% of low-income renters have mortgage or rent costs that exceed these affordability standards, even without considering other housing costs such as insurance, taxes, and maintenances.¹ Currently low-income housing options are insufficient to meet

¹ 2005 Skagit County Low-Income Needs Assessment p.23.

the demand, with 2,173 families and individuals on the combined housing authority wait lists in 2007, as reported in the Skagit County Continuum of Care. The scarcity of affordable housing options is such that these households might have to wait up to five years for an opening. In the mean time, many households remain homeless as they are unable to save up enough money to pay the large upfront sums often demanded by landlords for first and last months' rent and a deposit. Added challenges are faced by certain subpopulations, including the chronically homeless, persons with mental health and/or substance abuse issues, veterans, persons with HIV/AIDS, domestic violence victims, youth (including parenting youth), and seniors.

Community Development priority needs (non-housing) are to:

- Provide basic human service support

The 2005 Skagit County Low-Income Needs Assessment found a high level of need and limited availability for a variety of basic human services. These service gaps include: health care, housing assistance, energy assistance, adult basic education and other basic human services.

- Protect low- to moderate income concentration areas from flooding of the Skagit River

The downtown neighborhood of Mount Vernon, home to the highest concentration of low- to moderate-income (LMI) persons, is under constant threat of flooding from the Skagit River. In order to protect this neighborhood and its residents, the implementation of a floodwall is proposed by the City of Mount Vernon 2004-2008 Consolidated Plan.

MISSION

The mission of Mount Vernon's Strategic Plan is to propose measurable goals and objectives for actions that will address housing and community development issues as per the HUD requirements for the use of the CDBG funding. These goals include projects that protect low-income neighborhoods from flood hazards, serve homeless and low-income populations, address fair housing issues, and foster economic development and neighborhood revitalization.

Housing priority needs are for:

- Homeless persons and families
- Low-income families and individuals
- Low-income families and individuals at risk of homelessness

To address these priority needs, the City's five-year goals seek to:

- Assist in the creation and rehabilitation of housing projects that serve the homeless,
- Work to eliminate housing discrimination,
- Educate the public of protected classes, fair housing laws and the resources available to them

Community Development priority needs (non-housing) are to:

- Provide basic human service support
- Protect low- to moderate income concentration areas from flooding of the Skagit River
- Revitalize low- to moderate-income concentration areas

To address these priority needs, the City's five-year goals seek to:

- Implement the City's flood protection projects,
- Enhance the delivery of effective support services to priority low-income and homeless populations by providing funding and technical assistance to human service agencies

PAST PERFORMANCE

The first year of the 2009-2013 Consolidated Plan will be 2009. The City will report progress in addressing the priority needs of housing and non-housing community development needs identified in the Consolidated Plan in the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) which is available at City of Mount Vernon Mayor's Office, 910 Cleveland Avenue, Mount Vernon, WA 98273 or by calling (360) 336-6211.

Strategic Plan

Due every three, four, or five years (length of period is at the grantee's discretion) no less than 45 days prior to the start of the grantee's program year start date. HUD does not accept plans between August 15 and November 15.

Mission:

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Housing priority needs are for:

- Homeless persons and families
- Very low-income families and individuals
- Low-income families and individuals at risk of homelessness

To address these priority needs, the City's five-year goals seek to:

- Assist in the creation and rehabilitation of housing projects that serve the homeless,
- Work to eliminate housing discrimination,
- Educate the public of protected classes, fair housing laws and the resources available to them

Community Development priority needs (non-housing) are to:

- Provide basic human service support
- Protect low- to moderate income concentration areas from flooding of the Skagit River
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General Questions

1. Describe the geographic areas of the jurisdiction (including areas of low income families and/or racial/minority concentration) in which assistance will be directed.

Note: The following description of Mount Vernon's setting is adapted from the City's 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

History and setting

The City of Mount Vernon is the largest city in Skagit County in both population and land area. Mount Vernon is the county seat with nearly a quarter of the county's total population. It is the 38th largest city in the State. Mount Vernon straddles the Skagit River and Interstate 5 placing it in an easily accessible location for both people and businesses. The City was incorporated in 1890 with a population of nearly 1,000. Mount Vernon is the home of the County's courthouse, jail and administrative buildings as well as the City's administrative offices, the Skagit Valley Hospital, and the Skagit Valley Community College. The City's location, its service oriented downtown, and the existing population and density mean that it is the logical place for a myriad of social service providers. As the major urban center in the County, it provides a variety of urban amenities such as shopping opportunities, public services, and a mixture of housing types that are attractive to current and future residents. The City's growth trends, its mix of single family and multifamily housing stock and its household characteristics reflect the City's size and role in the County, as described below.

Low-income Population Concentration

The City's highest concentration of the low- to moderate-income (LMI) households is located within Census Tract 9525 (see map on next page). This is primarily a residential area that also includes the downtown business district. It is an area that is also threatened by frequent flooding of the Skagit River.

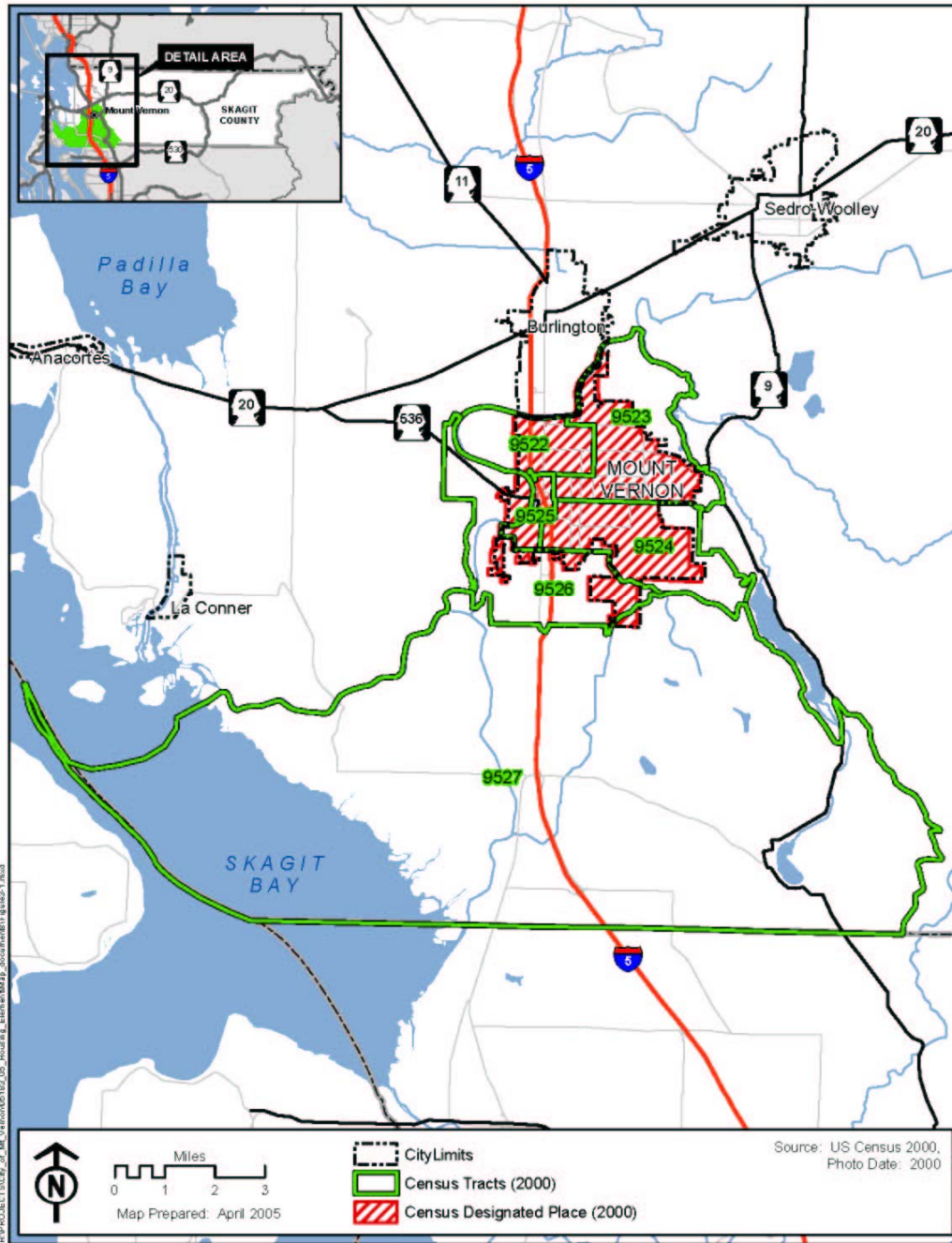


Figure 1 Mount Vernon census tracts

Race

The 2000 Census data indicated that Skagit County as well as Mount Vernon is comprised predominately of white households and individuals. While the City does not have a large minority population, it does have a higher percentage of non-white households than the County, with the exception of Native American and Alaskan households. More than half of the Asian/Pacific Islander and African American households in the County are located in the City. The two tables below provide 2000 Census data on the racial make up of households and individuals in the County and City.

Table 1. Race of Householder

| | | White | Black | Asian/ Pacific Islander | Native Amer. /Alaskan | Other |
|------------------|---------|--------|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Skagit County | Number | 35,467 | 126 | 477 | 578 | 1,585 |
| | Percent | 91.3% | 0.3% | 1.2% | 1.5% | 4.1% |
| Mount Vernon | Number | 7,781 | 66 | 212 | 89 | 923 |
| | Percent | 83.9% | 0.7% | 2.3% | 1% | 10% |

Source: US Census 2000

Table 2. Race by Location

| | White | Black | Asian | Pacific Islander | Native Amer. /Alaskan | Other |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Skagit County | 86.5% | 0.7% | 2.7% | 2.0% | 0.3% | 7.8% |
| Mount Vernon | 75.7% | 1.1% | 1.6% | 3.2% | 0.3% | 18.1% |
| Census Tract | | | | | | |
| 9522 | 81.0% | 1.3% | 1.9% | 3.8% | 0.4% | 11.5% |
| 9523 | 68.9% | 1.0% | 1.4% | 4.0% | 0.4% | 24.4% |
| 9524 | 82.2% | 0.9% | 1.5% | 2.2% | 0.1% | 13.0% |
| 9525 | 79.2% | 1.5% | 2.2% | 2.5% | 0.3% | 14.4% |
| 9526 | 88.8% | 0.6% | 1.7% | 1.5% | 0.2% | 7.2% |
| 9527 | 90.9% | 0.5% | 1.3% | 1.8% | 0.4% | 5.0% |

*Alone or in combination with one or more other races.

Source: US Census 2000

The following table looks at the distribution of persons of Hispanic or Latino origin within the City. Census Tract 9523 has the highest percentage with the 3,849 persons of Hispanic or Latino origins, which is almost half of the total Hispanic households in the whole City.

Table 3. Persons of Hispanic Origin (Any Race)

| | Number | Percent |
|---------------|--------|---------|
| Skagit County | 11,536 | 11.2% |
| Mount Vernon | 6,589 | 25.1% |
| Census Tract | | |
| 9522 | 544 | 15.8% |
| 9523 | 3,849 | 35.1% |
| 9524 | 1,529 | 17.3% |
| 9525 | 558 | 18.3% |
| 9526 | 281 | 8.6% |
| 9527 | 202 | 6.1% |

Source: US Census 2000

Census data indicates that Hispanic households have more than doubled in the City and County between 1990 and 2000. Hispanic households account for 14.9% of all households in the City, a significantly higher percentage than in the County. About 56% of all Hispanic households in the County are residing in Mount Vernon. The table below provides the concentration of Hispanic heads of households in the County compared to the City. (**Error! Reference source not found.**)

Table 4. Households of Hispanic Origin (Any Race)

| | | 1990 | 2000 |
|---------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Skagit County | Number | 1,030 | 2,458 |
| | Percent | 3.4 | 6.3 |
| Mount Vernon | Number | 455 | 1,380 |
| | Percent | 6.6 | 14.9 |

Source: US Census 1990, 2000

Household Income

Median household income is lower in Mount Vernon compared to countywide figures. In 1999, the median household income in Skagit County was \$42,381, compared to County median household incomes for families of \$48,347 and a non-family median income of \$26,565. Mount Vernon’s median household income has increased by 40.6% since 1989. In 1999, the City’s median household income was \$37,999, which is 12% lower than the median household income in Skagit County of \$42,381 (US Census 2000). Table 5 shows a breakdown of household incomes in the City and County from the 2000 Census.

Table 5. Household Income (1999)

| | 0- \$14,999 | \$15,000- \$19,999 | \$20,000- \$29,999 | \$30,000- \$34,999 | \$35,000- \$44,999 | \$45,000- \$74,999 | \$75,000 or more | 1999 Median Income |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Skagit County | 13.4% | 6.2% | 13.1% | 7.2% | 20.2% | 27.0% | 20.0% | \$42,381 |
| Mount Vernon | 15.9% | 7.0% | 15.0% | 8.5% | 23.4% | 26.5% | 15.3% | \$37,999 |
| Census Tract | | | | | | | | |
| 9522 | 18.9% | 7.9% | 13.0% | 7.9% | 20.9% | 29.9% | 10.6% | \$36,921 |
| 9523 | 15.4% | 6.8% | 16.4% | 7.4% | 23.8% | 25.0% | 18.1% | \$39,299 |
| 9524 | 10.7% | 6.4% | 13.9% | 10.2% | 24.2% | 28.7% | 17.0% | \$42,459 |
| 9525 | 23.2% | 10.3% | 13.8% | 7.6% | 21.5% | 20.4% | 13.0% | \$32,383 |
| 9526 | 11.6% | 5.0% | 11.8% | 4.4% | 16.3% | 27.8% | 26.0% | \$47,500 |
| 9527 | 10.1% | 2.1% | 6.8% | 4.9% | 11.7% | 27.5% | 35.0% | \$60,223 |

Source: US Census 2000

Examining the household incomes in Mount Vernon and Skagit County as a whole provides a means of measuring whether housing in the City is affordable to its residents.

Approximately 43% of the total households in the City are classified as Low, Very Low, or Extremely Low Income households, of which 28% are renter households and 15% are owner households. This data is used to determine distribution of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds one of the oldest programs in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to many different types of grantees through a variety of programs. The following table (Table 6) shows the number of households, both owners and renters, in the City who fall within the Extremely Low, Very Low and Low Income categories defined by HUD.

Table 6. Mount Vernon Low Income Households

| Household Income Level | % Median Income | # Renters | # Owners | Total Households | % of all Households* |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------|------------------|----------------------|
| Extremely Low Income | 0% - 30% | 884 | 237 | 1,121 | 12% |
| Very Low Income | 31% - 50% | 769 | 406 | 1,175 | 13% |
| Low Income | 51% - 80% | 982 | 725 | 1,707 | 18% |
| Total-Low Income | 0% - 80% | 2,635 | 1,368 | 4,003 | 43% |

*CHAS uses 9,290 as the total number of households in Mount Vernon
 Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, a special tabulation of Census 2000 data. Accessed online March 25, 2005, <http://socds.huduser.org/chas/index.html?>

Family Income

According to Census 2000 data, there are 6,203 families² in Mount Vernon. As shown in Table 7, in 1999 the City's median family income in 1999 was \$44,772, compared to the County's median family income of \$48,347, a difference of 8%. Median family household income did not increase at the same rate as the City's median household income; between 1989 and 1999 median family household income increased by 33.3%, compared to a 40.6% increase in medina household income. The median non-family household income was \$23,087.

² The U.S. Census defines a family as a householder with one or more other persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. The definition of family excludes one-person households.

Table 7. 1999 Family Income

| Family Income Level | Skagit County 1999 | % of County Total | Mt. Vernon 1999 | % of City Total |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Total Number of Families | 27,410 | 100% | 6,203 | 100% |
| Less than \$10;000 | 1,247 | 5% | 309 | 5% |
| \$10;000 to \$14;999 | 1,134 | 4% | 324 | 5% |
| \$15;000 to \$19;999 | 1,301 | 5% | 316 | 5% |
| \$20;000 to \$24;999 | 1,530 | 6% | 408 | 7% |
| \$25;000 to \$29;999 | 1,651 | 6% | 437 | 7% |
| \$30;000 to \$34;999 | 2,045 | 7% | 589 | 9% |
| \$35;000 to \$39;999 | 1,690 | 6% | 305 | 5% |
| \$40;000 to \$44;999 | 1,865 | 7% | 430 | 7% |
| \$45;000 to \$49;999 | 1,759 | 6% | 403 | 6% |
| \$50;000 to \$59;999 | 2,913 | 11% | 685 | 11% |
| \$60;000 to \$74;999 | 3745 | 14% | 837 | 13% |
| \$75;000 to \$99;999 | 3478 | 13% | 678 | 11% |
| \$100;000 to \$124;999 | 1338 | 5% | 196 | 3% |
| \$125;000 to \$149;999 | 637 | 2% | 104 | 2% |
| \$150;000 to \$199;999 | 462 | 2% | 104 | 2% |
| \$200;000 or more | 615 | 2% | 78 | 1% |
| 1999 Median family income | \$48,347 | - | \$44,772 | - |

Source: Census 2000.

HUD is required by law to set income limits that determine the eligibility of applicants for HUD's assisted housing programs. The major active assisted housing programs are the Public Housing program, the Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments program, and Section 202 housing for the elderly and Section 811 housing for persons with disabilities. HUD defines low income housing needs based on families. On a yearly basis, HUD provides income limits for Skagit County based on the size of a family. These income limits are provided in Table 8 for a family of four in Skagit County. These numbers tend to be higher

than the 2000 Census data, as these income limits are updated yearly by HUD and the Census data is approximately 5 years old.

Table 8. 2008 HUD Income Categories (by family)

| Household Income Level | % of Median Income | Income Limit FY 2005* |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Extremely Low Income | 0% - 30% | \$17,850 |
| Very Low Income | 31% - 50% | \$29,750 |
| Low Income | 51% - 80% | \$47,600 |

*For a family of four in Skagit County
Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

The Housing Authority of Skagit County (HASC) administers the Section 8 Voucher Program, a subsidized rental housing program. Section 8 Certificates are typically issued to families with income below 50% of the County median. According to Table 8, a family earning 50% of the County median would qualify for housing assistance if the family income was \$28,350 or less.

Families Living in Poverty

Families that have the most difficulty affording housing are those earning less than the poverty level. In 2000, the poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$17,463. According to 2000 Census data, Mount Vernon had 671 families or 4,054 individuals (15.5% the total population) at or below poverty level. This includes 292 female-headed families (5% of all family households in the City) and 211(1% of the total population) individuals 65 years or older are at or below poverty level in the City.

2. Describe the basis for allocating investments geographically within the jurisdiction (91.215(a)(1)) and the basis for assigning the priority given to each category of priority needs (91.215(a)(2)). Where appropriate, the jurisdiction should estimate the percentage of funds the jurisdiction plans to dedicate to target areas.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has established definitions that relate income to the median income of the county in which a CDBG entitlement jurisdiction is located. Households are divided into at least three income categories based on the total annual household income, the percentage of the county-wide median income that this income represents, and household size. For example, the upper income limit for these categories for households of four persons is shown in Table 9. Households of four persons with total annual income of \$16,600 or less are considered “extremely low-income” because that income level is only 30% of the countywide median income for all four-person households.

Table 9. Low- and Moderate-Income Limits (LMI) for a Family of Four in Mount Vernon, 2003

| Income Group | Percent of Median Income | Income in FY 2003 |
|---------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Extremely low | 0 to 30% MFI | Up to \$16,600 |
| Very low | 31 to 50% MFI | \$16,600 to \$27,650 |
| Low | 51 to 80% MFI | \$27,650 to \$44,250 |

In the year 2000, the City of Mount Vernon was home to 4,003 households in the Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI) level, or 38% of the total population.

Table 10. Mount Vernon Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI) Households, 2000

| Household Income | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|
| Extremely Low-Income (0 to 30% Median Family Income) | 1,121 | 11% |
| Very Low-Income (31 to 50% Median Family Income) | 1,175 | 11% |
| Low-Income (51 to 80% Median Family Income) | 1,707 | 16% |
| Total LMI Households | 4,003 | 38% |

Source: CHAS Data Book, 2000

The overall proportion of low- moderate income persons in Mount Vernon is 45% (Table 11). The area of the city with the highest concentration of low-income persons is census tract 9525, an area that includes downtown Mount Vernon.

Table 11 Low-income persons by 2000 Census Tract

| | Number | Percent |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Mount Vernon | 11,701 | 45.8% |
| Census tract | | |
| 9522 | 1,513 | 44.9% |
| 9523 | 5,083 | 48.8% |
| 9524 | 3,313 | 41.0% |
| 9525 | 1,482 | 52.7% |
| 9526 | 310 | 35.8% |

Source: CHAS Data Book, 2000

Based on the priority needs identified above and on the concentration of LMI persons described in Table 11, CDBG resources will be allocated on both a citywide basis (e.g. for human services) and targeted to those areas where 51% or more of the residents have incomes at or below 80% of the area median.

3. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs (91.215(a)(3)).

A major obstacle to meeting underserved needs is the lack of sufficient public (local, state, and federal) and private resources to make certain projects and programs viable. For the years 2009 – 2013, it is estimated that the CDBG entitlement grant to the City will be approximately \$300,000 per year. Additional resources the City and its local housing, social and health service providers can access to help meet underserved needs include the following (this is just a partial list):

- Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs/Supportive Housing Program
 - Emergency Shelter Grant
 - EPA Brownfield Demonstration Grant
 - FHLB Affordable Housing Program
 - Funding provided under SHB 2060/2163/1359
 - Historic Preservation Tax Credits
 - HOPWA
 - HUD Brownfield Economic Development Initiative Grant
 - HUD Grants for Public Housing
 - Low-Income Housing Tax Credits
 - Moderate Rehabilitation SRO
 - New Markets Tax Credits Program
 - Public Housing CIAP
 - Public Housing Comprehensive Grant
 - Public Housing Comprehensive Grant
 - Public Housing MROP
 - Rental Certificates
 - Rental Vouchers
 - Safe Havens
- Section 202 Elderly
- Section 811 Handicapped
- Skagit Community Foundation
- Tax Exempt Bonds
- Taxable Bonds
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Habitat Restoration Grant
- United Way
- Washington Community Development Fund
- Washington Community Reinvestment Association
- Washington State Building Communities Grant Program
- Washington State Homeless Grant Assistance Program
- Washington State Dept. of Ecology, Remedial Action Matching Grant
- Washington State Housing Assistance Program
- Washington State Housing Finance Commission Programs
- Washington State Housing Trust Fund Programs

Managing the Process (91.200 (b))

1. **Lead Agency.** Identify the lead agency or entity for overseeing the development of the plan and the major public and private agencies responsible for administering programs covered by the consolidated plan.

The City of Mount Vernon's Special Projects Administrator is the lead entity responsible for preparing the Consolidated Plan and for administering the programs and projects covered by the plan. Other agencies that have administered projects covered by the plan include Skagit County Community Action Agency and Skagit County.

2. **Identify the significant aspects of the process by which the plan was developed, and the agencies, groups, organizations, and others who participated in the process.**

The planning process involved the use of consultants and other City Departments to generate the statistical information used to establish community needs, service gaps and barriers. The City also consulted with public and private agencies and citizens to develop the priorities for CDBG funding. These included agencies that provide assisted housing, social and health, fair housing services, and homeless interventions.

3. **Describe the jurisdiction's consultations with housing, social service agencies, and other entities, including those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, and homeless persons.**

Consultation with Organizations

Before submitting the Consolidated Plan, the City coordinates with its own staff, as well as other public and private agencies, including the Seattle HUD Office, the Housing Authority of Skagit County, Skagit County Community Action Agency and others. This required consultation ensures that the Consolidated Plan is comprehensive and that it complies with relevant laws.

Human Services

The City consults with human service providers regarding the housing needs of children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, homeless persons, and other special populations.

Local housing and supportive services

The City interviews local housing and supportive service providers to identify current and projected housing needs and compile an inventory of current facilities and services.

Skagit County Community Action Agency

As a primary provider of services to low-income persons and persons with special needs, Skagit County Community Action Agency (SCCAA) staff members are consulted regarding human service needs and current services available to residents and homeless persons in Mount Vernon. SCCAA's 2005 Low-Income Needs Assessment survey and report provides useful information during Consolidated Plan development.

Lead Agency

The City of Mount Vernon is the lead agency responsible for preparing the Consolidated Plan.

Citizen Participation (91.200 (b))

1. Provide a summary of the citizen participation process.

As a recipient of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, the City of Mount Vernon provides opportunities for all citizens who may be affected by CDBG funded activities to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan.

Citizen participation in CDBG activities may include needs assessments, strategic planning, project selection, implementation and evaluation. The Citizen Participation Plan describes the City's responsibility to provide opportunities for active citizen involvement. The City especially encourages the involvement of low-, very low-, and extremely low-income residents regarding the use of housing and community development funds.

Citizen Participation Processes

Documents published

The City publishes documents related to the Consolidated Plan so that affected citizens have sufficient opportunity to review them and to provide comments. Documents published include the proposed draft and final versions of the Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments proposed after the final plan is adopted, and annual performance reports.

The proposed draft Consolidated Plan, including the Citizen Participation Plan will be available to the public for examination and comment beginning in October, 2008, and ending in November, 2008.

Free copies of the plan will be made available during this period at the City of Mount Vernon Development Services Department, 910 Cleveland Avenue, Mount Vernon, WA 98273, or by calling (360) 336-6211. Persons with hearing impairments may call (360) 336-6214. The draft Consolidated Plan will also be posted on the City's web site, and copies will be available at the Mount Vernon City Library reference desk. The library is located at 315 Snoqualmie, Mount Vernon, WA 98273.

Upon request, the Citizen Participation Plan will be formatted to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.

The City considers the views of all citizens, public agencies, and other interested groups in preparing the final Consolidated Plan. A summary of the comments or views received in writing or orally at the public hearings will be listed as an appendix in the final Plan. All comments or views not accepted, and the reasons for non-acceptance, will be summarized and included in the final document.

Public Housing Authority

The City will encourage the participation by residents of public and assisted housing developments during the development of the Consolidated Plan. The City will provide copies of this draft Citizen Participation Plan and Consolidated Plan to the Housing Authority of Skagit County (HASC) so the HASC can make it available to public housing residents for review and comment.

Anti-Displacement and Relocation Plan

The City will adopt a plan to minimize any displacement or relocation that occurs as a result of activities proposed in the Consolidated Plan.

Notifications

The City provides adequate and timely notification to citizens so they can attend local meetings and public forums. Notifications of public hearings are published in the Skagit Valley Herald 14 days prior to the meetings. Citizens are informed of the availability of the draft and final Consolidated Plan and performance reports through notices posted at the public library and at City Hall. Human service providers that request to be included on CDBG mailing lists are also mailed notices about the availability of the draft and final Consolidated Plan.

Access to documents

The City makes copies of the draft and final Consolidated Plan available to the public at the following locations:

1. City of Mount Vernon Development Services Department, 910 Cleveland Avenue, Mount Vernon, WA 98273
2. City of Mount Vernon's Consolidated Plan web site:
<http://www.mount-vernon.wa.us/ConsolidatedPlan/default.htm>
3. Mount Vernon City Library, 315 Snoqualmie, Mount Vernon..
4. Housing Authority of Skagit County.

Public Hearings

The City holds public hearings to obtain citizen views and to respond to proposals and questions at all stages of the community development program and Consolidated Plan process. Public hearings are held in locations that meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards. Special accommodations are provided upon request.

Public hearings are held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries. When significant numbers of non-English speaking residents are expected to participate in the public hearing, the City provides for appropriate translation services. All public hearings are advertised in the Skagit Valley Herald 14 days prior to the hearing. Public hearings mark the opening and closing of the public comment period and are held at the Municipal Building Council Chambers. Citizens may present oral comments at the time of the hearing. The City considers the views of all citizens, public agencies, and other interested groups in preparing the final Consolidated Plan. Oral and written comments received during the public comment period and at the public hearing are summarized as an appendix for the final document. All comments or views not accepted or not incorporated, and the reasons therefore, are also summarized.

At all the public hearings, citizens are invited to comment on all aspects of the plan and process, including the Citizen Participation Plan, and any projects proposed for funding.

Public hearing schedule for this plan:

First public hearing *August 27, 2008*

Second public Hearing *November 5, 2008*

Access to Information

Upon request, the City provides the public with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the Consolidated Plan. Citizens and citizen groups have access to City records for at least five years through the standard public disclosure process.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is provided to groups and individuals so they may participate fully in developing proposals under the Consolidated Plan. This assistance may be provided by City staff or other individuals acceptable to the City and citizen groups. Technical assistance will also be provided to project area residents to assist them in organizing and operating organizations to carry out and monitor CDBG-funded activities.

Amendments

Citizens shall be notified and have the opportunity to review all substantial amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan or Consolidated Plan prior to their submission to HUD. Following a 14-day advance notice published in the legal section of the Skagit Valley Herald, substantial amendments shall be available to the public for examination and comment at the City of Mount Vernon Development Services Department, 910 Cleveland Avenue, Mount Vernon, WA 98273, for a 30-day period prior to their adoption.

Substantial changes to the Consolidated Plan are defined as:

- changes in the citizen participation process
- changes in allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds
- change in use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another; or
- initiation of an activity, using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan (including program income), not previously described in the Action Plan

Performance Reports

Citizens shall be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on all performance reports related to activities covered by the Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) is available for examination and comment for 15 days prior to its submission to HUD. Citizens are notified of the availability of performance reports through notices published in the legal section of the Skagit Valley Herald. All written and oral comments received during that 15-day comment period shall be considered in preparing the final performance report. A summary of these comments or views is attached to the performance report.

Complaints

A complaint pertaining to the Consolidated Plan, any plan amendments and/or the performance report may be submitted for response by the City. The City will provide a written response within a period of 15 working days of receipt of any written complaint. City staff will also respond within 15 days, to the extent feasible, to any verbal response. Grievances may be submitted to Eric Stendal, Special Projects Administrator, 910 Cleveland Ave, Mount Vernon, WA 98273.

In the event that local attempts to resolve the disagreement fail, actions of the City that are in violation of the HUD regulations can be appealed directly to the Seattle Area Office of HUD at 909 First Avenue, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98104. Copies of the regulations and the

name, address, and phone number of the current HUD Area Representative will be made available on request. Comments on the Consolidated Plan process and regarding the City's past performance on CDBG programs are also invited. Citizens are encouraged to submit comments on the Consolidated Plan and process to:

Special Projects Administrator
Consolidated Plan Comments
City of Mount Vernon
910 Cleveland Avenue
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 336-6211

Persons with hearing impairments may call (360) 336-6214

2. Provide a summary of citizen comments or views on the plan.

None received on the Strategic Plan. See 2009 Action Plan for comments about 2009 CDBG Program Year funding-related comments.

3. Provide a summary of efforts made to broaden public participation in the development of the consolidated plan, including outreach to minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities.

Participation in developing the Consolidated Plan allows citizens to gain a broader understanding of community needs, and helps them understand how they can take action to improve their neighborhoods. The intent is to involve citizens affected by the process, both as taxpayers and as those who may potentially benefit or be adversely affected by proposed uses of CDBG funds.

The City especially encourages input from persons with disabilities and from moderate-, low-, very low-, and extremely low-income residents, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in places where CDBG funds are proposed. Input from residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods regarding the use of housing and community development funds is also encouraged. Minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities are encouraged to participate and comment.

The proposed draft and final Consolidated Plan – which includes the Citizen Participation Plan and any substantial amendments proposed after the adoption of the final plan – and the Consolidated Plan Annual Performance Report (CAPER) are published by the City so that affected citizens have sufficient opportunity to comment.

4. Provide a written explanation of comments not accepted and the reasons why these comments were not accepted.

NA

Institutional Structure (91.215 (i))

1. Explain the institutional structure through which the jurisdiction will carry out its consolidated plan, including private industry, non-profit organizations, and public institutions.

The network of institutions through which the City of Mount Vernon carries out its Consolidated Plan activities is broad-based. The various organizations making up this institutional structure are highly competent, motivated, and effective. The staff coordinates with the non-profit community for the delivery of services to public housing and low-income residents. Technical assistance and a teamwork approach facilitate the joint delivery of community development services to low- and moderate-income households within the city limits.

2. Assess the strengths and gaps in the delivery system.

The City has assessed the strengths and weaknesses in the delivery of housing services and programs:

Strengths:

- Cooperation and working relationships among institutions
- Knowledge of the development process
- Access to federal funding
- Knowledge of low-income needs
- Organized human service delivery

Weaknesses:

- Limited resources available to agencies to increase affordable housing and housing-related services
- Limited resources to address needs for affordable dental and medical care, living-wage jobs and energy assistance
- Competition for limited funds among human services agencies

Monitoring (91.230)

1. Describe the standards and procedures the jurisdiction will use to monitor its housing and community development projects and ensure long-term compliance with program requirements and comprehensive planning requirements.

The City's CDBG program is audited by HUD and the State under the Single Audit Act on an as need basis based on risk assessments. This audit verifies that the City meets all statutory requirements and that information reported is correct and complete.

The City's Special Projects Administrator is responsible for monitoring CDBG program sub-recipients. The City staff monitors sub-recipients as needed to ensure all regulatory requirements are met and that the information reported is complete and accurate.

Sub-recipients are also monitored semi-annually from written reports submitted by the sub-recipient to the City. Monitoring of the CDBG program is consistent with program regulations. Monitoring consists of both desk and on-site reviews.

Priority Needs Analysis and Strategies (91.215 (a))

1. Describe the basis for assigning the priority given to each category of priority needs.

Housing priority needs are for:

- Homeless persons and families
- Low-income families and individuals
- Low-income families and individuals at risk of homelessness

Housing is considered affordable when households spend no more than a third of their pre-tax income on housing costs. A survey of Skagit County low-income households in 2005 revealed that 76% of low-income homeowners and 66% of low-income renters have mortgage or rent costs that exceed these affordability standards, even without considering other housing costs such as insurance, taxes, and maintenances.³ Currently low-income housing options are insufficient to meet the demand, with 2,173 families and individuals on the combined housing authority wait lists in 2007, as reported in the Skagit County Continuum of Care. The scarcity of affordable housing options is such that these households might have to wait up to five years for an opening. In the mean time, many households remain homeless as they are unable to save up enough money to pay the large upfront sums often demanded by landlords for first and last months' rent and a deposit. Added challenges are faced by certain subpopulations, including the chronically homeless, persons with mental health and/or substance abuse issues, veterans, persons with HIV/AIDS, domestic violence victims, youth (including parenting youth), and seniors.

Community Development priority needs (non-housing) are to:

- Provide basic human service support

The 2005 Skagit County Low-Income Needs Assessment found a high level of need and limited availability for a variety of basic human services. These service gaps include: health care, housing assistance, energy assistance, adult basic education and other basic human services.

- Protect low- to moderate income concentration areas from flooding of the Skagit River

The downtown neighborhood of Mount Vernon, home to the highest concentration of low- to moderate-income (LMI) persons, is under constant threat of flooding from the Skagit River. In order to protect this neighborhood and its residents, the implementation of a floodwall is proposed by the City of Mount Vernon 2009-20013 Consolidated Plan.

³ 2005 Skagit County Low-Income Needs Assessment p.23.

Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

With such a large portion of Mount Vernon households being low- or moderate-income, a major obstacle to meeting the underserved needs is to have sufficient local, state or federal resources. In some cases, having a portion of the funds available from resources through the City may not make a project or program feasible if insufficient private or other public funds are not available to the project or program.

Lead-based Paint (91.215 (g))

1. Estimate the number of housing units that contain lead-based paint hazards, as defined in section 1004 of the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992, and are occupied by extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income families.

Lead-based paint and other lead hazards are most dangerous to young children and pregnant women. The Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 seeks to identify and mitigate sources of lead in the home. A high level of lead in the blood is toxic, particularly to children age six and younger. Lead has been linked to damage in the central nervous system, mental retardation, convulsions and sometimes death. Low levels of lead can result in lowered intelligence, reading and learning disabilities, decreased attention span, hyperactivity, and aggressive behavior.

A common source of lead in the home is lead-based paint. Deteriorating paint, friction in sliding windows, lead on impact services, as well as unsafe renovation practices, can all result in the accumulation of lead-contaminated dust in the house and lead in the soil. The presence of deteriorating paint, lead-contaminated dust, or lead contaminated soil can result in significant lead-based paint hazards. According to a 1999 national survey of homes, 27% of all homes in the United States had significant lead-based paint (LBP) hazards. The national survey found that location in the country was a factor in the probability of hazards. Significant LBP hazards are more prevalent in the northeast than in the west.

Age of housing is also important and is commonly used to estimate the risk of significant hazards in the home. Lead was banned from residential paint in 1978. The 1999 national survey found that 67% of housing built before 1940 had significant LBP hazards. This decline to 51% of houses built between 1940 and 1959, 10% of houses built between 1960 and 1977, and just one percent after that.

About 11% of all pre-1980 Mount Vernon housing units were built before 1940, meaning they are at high risk of LBP hazards (Table 12). A higher proportion of owner-occupied units tend be older; therefore, a higher proportion of those units are at risk of LBP hazards..

Table 12. Age of Housing as an Indicator of Presence of Lead-Based Paint by Housing Tenure in Mount Vernon

| Income Group | Year Built | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| | Before 1940 | | 1940-1959 | | 1960-1979 | | Total Before 1980 | |
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| All Housing Units | 1,099 | 11% | 1,700 | 16% | 3071 | 29% | 5,870 | 56% |
| Owner-Occupied | 713 | 7% | 1,106 | 10% | 1,810 | 17% | 3,629 | 34% |
| Renter-Occupied | 386 | 4% | 594 | 6% | 1,261 | 12% | 2,241 | 21% |

Source: 2000 Census

Applying the CHAS housing needs table data on proportions of owners and renters that fall into three family income ranges shows that, among renter all households, 65% are LMI;

therefore, 65% of the 2,241 pre-1980 rental units, or 1,459 units may be occupied by LMI households that are at risk of lead paint exposure. Among all owner households, 25% or LMI, therefore, 25% of the 3,629 owner-occupied units, or 917 owner-occupied units, may be occupied by LMI households that are at risk of lead paint exposure.

2. Outline actions proposed or being taken to evaluate and reduce lead-based paint hazards and describe how lead based paint hazards will be integrated into housing policies and programs, and how the plan for the reduction of lead-based hazards is related to the extent of lead poisoning and hazards.

The City plans to partner with other community organizations to reduce lead paint hazards, especially those associated with low-income and homeless housing rehabilitation activities.

Goal 1: Over five years, distribute materials on lead-based paint hazards and abatement to 50 low-income tenants and to 10 construction contractors and to 5 operators of low-income housing units.

Strategy 1: Educate tenants, construction contractors, and housing operators about lead-based paint hazards and abatement.

Objectives:

- Contact the State annually to obtain a current list of certified risk assessors, inspectors and accredited testing laboratories.
- Over five years, distribute materials on lead-based paint hazards to 100 low-income tenants.
- Over five years, distribute materials on lead-based paint hazards to 20 construction contractors.
- Over five years, distribute materials on lead-based paint hazards to 10 operators of low-income housing units.

HOUSING

Housing Needs (91.205)

1. Describe the estimated housing needs projected for the next five year period for the following categories of persons: extremely low-income, low-income, moderate-income, and middle-income families, renters and owners, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, including persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, single persons, large families, public housing residents, victims of domestic violence, families on the public housing and section 8 tenant-based waiting list, and discuss specific housing problems, including: cost-burden, severe cost- burden, substandard housing, and overcrowding (especially large families).

Housing Costs

The US Census compiles data on gross rent and monthly owner housing cost as a percentage of household income, which is one means by which housing affordability in Mount Vernon can be examined.

Ownership Costs

According to 2000 Census data, Mount Vernon's median home price was \$142,000, which was 11% lower than the County's median home price of \$158,100. The 2000 Census data showed 46% of all homes in the City valued between \$100,000 and \$149,000 in price. Washington State University's Center for Real Estate Research indicated that in 2003 the median home price was \$175,000 in Skagit County. The following table shows the value of homes as estimated by their owners for the 2000 Census.

Table 13. Residential Value by Owners, 2000

| | \$0 to \$50K | \$50K to \$99K | \$100K to \$149K | \$150K to \$199K | \$200K to \$299K | \$300K and up | Median |
|---------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Skagit County | 1.5% | 9.9% | 33.5% | 26.5% | 18.3% | 4.5% | \$158,100 |
| Mount Vernon | 0.3% | 10.8% | 46.0% | 28.1% | 12.0% | 0.4% | \$142,000 |
| Census Tract | | | | | | | |
| 9522 | 0.0% | 6.0% | 61.7% | 23.1% | 7.0% | 2.2% | \$132,900 |
| 9523 | 0.4% | 5.6% | 34.3% | 37.0% | 18.8% | 0.6% | \$166,200 |
| 9524 | 0.0% | 9.7% | 45.7% | 24.2% | 15.5% | 0.4% | \$143,300 |
| 9525 | 1.2% | 32.9% | 47.9% | 14.4% | 3.6% | 0.0% | \$115,400 |
| 9526 | 1.0% | 10.6% | 37.9% | 23.1% | 19.3% | 1.6% | \$150,800 |
| 9527 | 0.7% | 5.9% | 14.7% | 19.3% | 38.0% | 8.3% | \$218,300 |

Source: US Census 2000

According to Census 2000 data, roughly 73% of Mount Vernon homeowners pay 30% or less of their income on housing costs, while approximately 27% of all homeowners pay 30% or more of their income towards housing costs.

Rental Housing Costs

The average rental rates in 2003 for apartments in Skagit County are provided in the following table (Table 14).

Table 14. Average Rental Rates, 2003

| Average Rent | 1 br/ 1 ba | 2 br/ 1 ba | 3 br/ 2 ba |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| \$788 | \$674 | \$841 | \$940 |

Source: 2005 Skagit County Continuum of Care

According to 2000 Census data, there were 3,961 renter occupied units in the City, which makes up 42.7% of all housing units. The City’s median contract rent⁴ in 2000 was \$587 compared to the City’s median gross rent⁵ of \$655. Table 15 below provides a breakdown of

⁴ The Census defines contract rent (also referred to as “asked rent”) as the monthly rent agreed to or contracted for, regardless of any furnishings, utilities, fees, meals, or services that may be included. For vacant units, it is the monthly rent asked for the rental unit.

⁵ The Census defines gross rent as the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) if these are paid by

the number of units available in different rental categories in the City by individual census tract. This table provides a look at rental cost throughout the City. Census tract 9527 has the lowest median contract rent at \$475, with 54% of the units in that census tract having rents under \$500 dollars. In contrast Census Tract 9524 has the highest median contract rent of \$674 with only 12% of the units having rents under \$500; over 15% of the units in this census tract are \$1,000 or greater.

Table 15. Contract Rents

| | \$0- \$499 | \$500- \$699 | \$700- \$999 | \$1,000- \$1,499 | \$1,500 or more | Median |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Mount Vernon | 30.7% | 46.0% | 18.1% | 1.5% | 3.7% | \$587 |
| Census Tract | | | | | | |
| 9522 | 37.6% | 39.2% | 23.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | \$573 |
| 9523 | 34.7% | 49.4% | 12.6% | 0.5% | 2.7% | \$566 |
| 9524 | 11.9% | 45.8% | 27.1% | 4.7% | 10.5% | \$674 |
| 9525 | 43.2% | 41.0% | 14.6% | 1.1% | 0.0% | \$526 |
| 9526 | 31.2% | 53.2% | 15.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | \$544 |
| 9527 | 53.8% | 42.9% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | \$475 |

Source: US Census 2000

The following table (Table 16) provides an indication of the percentage of income being spent on housing by households who rent. A general rule of thumb when discussing housing affordability is that households should not spend over 30% of their income toward housing, which is reflected by gross rent. According to Census data, just over half of rental households pay 30% or less on their monthly housing costs and 47.8% pay more than 30%. All of the census tracts in the City have rental households spending over 30% of their income on housing expenses: Census Tract 9522 has 36.6%, Census Tract 9523 has 47.1%, Census Tract 9524 has 54.2%, Census Tract 9525 has 49.2%, Census Tract 9526 has 42.9%, and Census Tract 9527 has 23.8%

the renter (or paid for the renter by someone else). Gross rent is intended to eliminate differentials that result from varying practices with respect to the inclusion of utilities and fuels as part of the rental payment.

Table 16. Gross Rent as a percentage of Income

| % of Household Income | Mt. Vernon | | Census Tract 9522 | | Census Tract 9523 | | Census Tract 9524 | | Census Tract 9525 | | Census Tract 9526 | | Census Tract 9527 | |
|-----------------------|------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| | Units | % | Units | % | Units | % | Units | % | Units | % | Units | % | Units | % |
| >10 % | 80 | 2.0 | 13 | 1.9 | 13 | 0.8 | 28 | 2.9 | 19 | 3.3 | 15 | 6.5 | 31 | 23.1 |
| 10 to 14% | 269 | 6.8 | 62 | 9.1 | 92 | 5.6 | 60 | 6.3 | 37 | 6.3 | 65 | 28.1 | 8 | 6.0 |
| 15 to 19% | 504 | 12.7 | 120 | 17.7 | 189 | 11.4 | 104 | 10.8 | 86 | 14.8 | 19 | 8.2 | 21 | 15.7 |
| 20 to 24% | 587 | 14.8 | 148 | 21.8 | 265 | 16.0 | 101 | 10.5 | 73 | 12.5 | 7 | 3.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 25 to 29% | 490 | 12.4 | 77 | 11.4 | 256 | 15.5 | 120 | 12.5 | 37 | 6.3 | 26 | 11.3 | 27 | 20.1 |
| 30 to 34% | 505 | 12.7 | 101 | 14.9 | 195 | 11.8 | 156 | 16.3 | 34 | 5.8 | 27 | 11.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 35 to 39% | 193 | 4.9 | 33 | 4.9 | 66 | 4.0 | 77 | 8.0 | 27 | 4.6 | 6 | 2.6 | 14 | 10.4 |
| 40 to 49% | 325 | 8.2 | 53 | 7.8 | 171 | 10.3 | 43 | 4.5 | 39 | 6.7 | 24 | 10.4 | 4 | 3.0 |
| 50% or more | 871 | 22.0 | 61 | 9.0 | 348 | 21.0 | 244 | 25.4 | 187 | 32.1 | 42 | 18.2 | 14 | 10.4 |

Source: US Census 2000

Affordability Analysis

The above sections describe the household and family income levels and housing costs in Mount Vernon and the County as a whole. This section will compare the housing costs in Mount Vernon relative to the household income of its residents.

Housing affordability is the relationship between household incomes and housing prices/rents, and interest rates. Housing affordability measures the burden of expenditures for housing relative to income. Families who pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.

There are a number of methods that housing affordability can be measured. According to Census 2000 data, roughly, 73% of Mount Vernon homeowners pay 30% or less of their income on housing costs and approximately 52% of rental households pay 30% or less on their monthly housing costs, leaving 27% of owners and 48% of renters that spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

If housing affordability is measured by families and their size as opposed to households, HUD's income limits can be applied to determine housing affordability. As shown in Table 17, a family of four earning 80% of Skagit County's median income (\$45,350 as of 2005) cannot afford to purchase a home in Mount Vernon without paying greater than 30% of their income on housing costs. A family of four must earn approximately \$51,917 a year to afford Mount Vernon's median priced home and keep their housing costs at 30% of annual family income, or approximately \$17,440 in mortgage and taxes per year. If this annual income is compared to Census 2000 data and adjusted for inflation, a family income of \$51,917 equates to roughly 43% of Mount Vernon's population. Appendix B contains a more detailed breakdown of the figures in Table 17.

Family income below 80% of the median income would not be able to afford the median priced home, but would afford rents in Mount Vernon. Families earning 80% of the median income can afford rental housing up to \$1,135 per month and still maintain their housing costs at less than or equal to 30% of their total income. Families earning 50% of the median income can afford rental housing up to \$710 and keep their housing costs at less than or equal to 30% of their total income. (Table 14)

Table 17. Mount Vernon Housing Sales and Affordability

| Housing/Mortgage Characteristics | |
|--|-------------|
| Median Sales Price for Single Family Home Sales (February 2005) ¹ | \$199,000 |
| Estimated annual taxes based on 2004 average tax rate for City of Mount Vernon (\$13.38735/1000 assessed value) ² | \$ 2,664.08 |
| Annual Mortgage Costs for 95% of Median Sales Price: 7% interest ⁴ | \$14,775.6 |
| Total Annual Mortgage and Taxes, Median Priced Home in Mount Vernon, February 2005 | \$17,439.68 |
| Year 2005, income level at 80% of median Skagit county income, family of 4 ⁵ | \$45,350 |
| Annual income necessary to afford the median single family sales price in February 2005 (≤30% of income on housing), excluding taxes | \$49,253 |
| Annual income necessary to afford median sales price in Mount Vernon (≤30% of income on housing), including taxes | \$51,917 |

1 Based on data available on closed sales in Mount Vernon, February, 2005 new and used residential sales, First American Title Company of Skagit County. 2 The tax rate in Mount Vernon varies by location. The tax rate per \$1,000 assessed value ranges from \$12.0903-\$14.6844. 3 Skagit County Assessor. 4 Assumes mortgage payment factors (principal and interest only), 30-year fixed mortgage at 7% interest rate and 5% down payment. 5 Source-HUD 2005 Income Limits for Skagit County.

Affordable Housing and Fair Share Housing Allocation

GMA and Skagit County’s Countywide Planning Policies encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population. Skagit County does not currently have a method for calculating the fair share allocation of affordable housing units for each jurisdiction. This analysis considers two alternative methodologies (utilized by King County, Pierce County and Snohomish County) to estimate Mount Vernon’s fair share of affordable housing. These calculations are based on Census 2000 data for household incomes.

Pierce County/Snohomish County Method

This fair share methodology identifies those households in need which earn less than 95% of the County’s median income and pay more than 30% of their income on gross rent or homeowner costs. The 2000 median income in the County is \$42,381; 95% of that median is \$40,262. Households earning more than 95% of the median income are assumed to have their housing needs addressed through the private market. This methodology identifies the City’s fair share of existing housing needs and the City’s fair share of the future projected housing needs and includes adjustment factors for the City’s share of existing and future

lower income jobs, the City’s existing low and moderate income housing stock, the City’s projected low and moderate income households, and the City’s projected future housing needs. Based on this approach, it is anticipated that Mount Vernon’s total fair share allocation of housing (existing and projected) is 3,705 units by 2025. Table 18 summarizes the key findings of the fair share housing calculations utilizing this methodology. Appendix B includes the full worksheet and calculations used.

Table 18. Fair Share Housing Allocation Calculations- Pierce/ Snohomish Counties Methods

| Category | Units / Households |
|--|---------------------------|
| Total unadjusted existing housing need (number of households earning 95% of median income and paying greater than 30% of income to housing)¹, 2000 | 2,812 |
| Adjusted Fair Share of Existing Housing Need, 2000 | 2,593 |
| Adjusted Fair Share of Future Housing Need, 2025 | 1,112 |
| Total Housing Need 2000-2025 | 3,705 |

¹ Adjustments for fair share housing calculations integrate factors for the number of low-income jobs and the number of low and moderate-income housing stock in Mount Vernon.

Source: Jones & Stokes, 2005.

King County Method

The King County methodology looks at the housing needs of those households below 50% of the median County income and 50-80% of the median County income. The King County methodology specifies each jurisdiction shall plan for a number of housing units affordable to households with incomes between 50 and 80 percent of the County median income that is equal to 17% of its projected net household growth. In addition each jurisdiction in the County must plan for a number of housing units affordable to households with incomes below 50 percent of median income that is either 20% or 24% of its projected net household growth. The calculation includes an Affordable Housing Job/Housing Index, which was developed as a way to adjust housing targets based on each jurisdictions’ existing concentration of low-cost housing and low-wage employment.

Using a similar approach for Skagit County and Mount Vernon and applying information available through the Census, this method first identified the number of households with housing needs. The number of households at 50% of the County median income (\$21,191) and households at 50-80% of the County median income in the year 2000 (\$33,905) who pay greater than 30% of their income on housing (rental and ownership) were compared to the number of households Countywide. Currently, 16% of Mount Vernon’s households (1,492 households) are at 50% of the median income and pay greater than 30% of their income on housing costs. Roughly 10% of Mount Vernon’s households, or 943 households are at 50-80% of the median income and pay 30% or more on their housing costs. Under

this approach, Mount Vernon’s existing households with housing need is approximately 26% of total households (or 2,435 households). This compares to the countywide ratios of 11% (50% of median income) and 7.5% (50-80% of median income) or roughly 19% of County households (7,355 households) within those income levels that pay greater than 30 % of their income on housing costs. If these same ratios are applied to the future projected population, approximately 1,238 new units affordable to 50% of the median income and 774 new units affordable to 50-80% of the median income would be necessary to satisfy future projected housing needs in Mount Vernon, for a total of 4,002 affordable housing units to satisfy existing and projected housing needs. However, this approach assumes that Mount Vernon should be targeting the same ratio of households with housing needs for projected population growth as existing demand and does not consider what proportion this is of Skagit County’s existing and projected households with housing needs.

Table 19. Fair Share Housing Allocation Calculations- King County Method

| Category | Units / Households |
|--|---------------------------|
| Total Households | 9,276 |
| Households at 50% of County median income paying greater than 30% on housing | 1,492 |
| Households at 50-80% of County median income paying greater than 30% on housing | 943 |
| Total Unadjusted Existing Housing Need | 2,435 |
| Total Adjusted Existing Housing Need¹ | 2,261 |
| Future Projected Households | 7,248 ² |
| Projected Housing Need Unadjusted | 1,885 |
| Projected Housing Need Adjusted | 1,741 |
| Total Housing Need | 4,002 |

1 Adjustment factor for low-wage jobs index multiplied by the low-cost housing index. 2 Based on a projected population increase of 19,568 persons at 2.7 persons per household.

Source: Jones & Stokes, 2005.

Summary of Existing Conditions and Key Issues

Following are key points of the existing housing conditions in Mount Vernon:

- Single-family housing is the predominant housing type in Mount Vernon. The mix of housing types is approximately two-thirds single-family homes and one-third multi-

family. Much of the recent growth that has occurred since 2000 includes multi-family housing. Mobile homes account for approximately 7.5% of the total housing units in the City.

- The housing stock in Mount Vernon is relatively new with 46% of the housing units constructed after 1979.
- The overall condition of existing housing is good.
- Approximately 27% of all homeowners in the City pay 30% or more of their income towards housing costs. Forty-eight percent of all rental households pay 30% or more of their income toward housing costs. Accordingly, there continues to be a need for affordable housing for very low, low, and moderate-income households.
- The population of the City of Mount Vernon is expected to grow to 47,900 permanent residents by the year 2025. To accommodate permanent and seasonal residents and with a healthy vacancy rate, an estimated 7,116 to 7,248 new housing units will be needed. (This estimated minimum number of new housing units needed is arrived at by taking the expected increase of 19,568 individuals between 2000 and 2025 and dividing by 2.75 or 2.7, the average persons per household.)
- In 2000, 57% of housing units were owner occupied and 43% were renter occupied. This is a lower incidence of owner occupancy than in the County.
- Vacancy rates in 2000 were 2.1% for homeowner occupied units and 4.4% for rental units. The low vacancy rate for owner occupied units is likely an indication of a lack of housing units available for purchase.
- Household size has increased; the average household size in Mount Vernon was 2.5 persons in 1990 and 2.75 persons in 2000.
- In 2000, 21% of the City's housing units were overcrowded, indicating a lack of affordable housing or a lack of available housing stock with enough bedrooms for large families and households.
- Mount Vernon is a predominantly white community; however; it is more diverse than the rest of the County. The 2000 Census showed that one in four people in Mount Vernon is Hispanic, while one in nine countywide is considered Hispanic.
- Mount Vernon is a relatively young community with a median age in 2000 of 31.1. Only 11.7% of the households are householders 65 years and over.
- There is a high number of homeless located in Mount Vernon compared to the County as a whole.

Housing Affordability

The Cost of housing is generally considered to be affordable when it cost of housing and utilities equals no more than 30% of household income. Escalating housing and utilities costs have forced many households to pay considerably more for housing than is affordable or even feasible. While housing costs are increasing, income is not increasing at the same rate. Fair Market Rent (FMR) indicates the amount of money a property would lease for on the open market at any given time, in other words, the “going rate” for such a property. By comparing the average family income with the FMR, we are able to estimate the number of renters for whom this type of property would exceed the 30% affordability cut-off. Data extrapolation reveals hourly wage needed for housing to be affordable, as well as the number of work hours needed to afford FMR on a minimum wage.

Table 20. Housing Affordability

| | WA State | | Skagit County | |
|--|------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 2008 Area Median Income | \$68,994 | | \$59,500 | |
| 2008 Estimated Median Renter Income | \$37,634 | | \$35,284 | |
| 2008 Supplemental Security Income (SSI) monthly payment | \$637 | | \$637 | |
| FMR for FY 2008 | | | | |
| 0 bedroom | \$591 | | \$551/mo (\$6,612/yr) | |
| 1 bedroom | \$677 | | \$682/mo (\$8,184/yr) | |
| 2 bedroom | \$829 | | \$846/mo (\$10,152/yr) | |
| 3 bedroom | \$1,174 | | \$1,157/mo (\$13,884/yr) | |
| 4 bedroom | \$1,383 | | \$1,444/mo (\$17,328/yr) | |
| Estimated % of renters <i>UNABLE</i> to afford 2 bedroom FMR | 43% | | 47% | |
| Hourly wage needed to afford 2 bedroom FMR @ 40 hrs/wk | \$15.95 | | \$16.27 | |
| Work hrs/wk needed to afford FMR at: | | | | |
| Minimum wage | \$8.07/hr | (1 bd) 65 (2 bd) 79 | \$8.07/hr | (1 bd) 65 (2 bd) 80 |
| Mean wage | \$13.92/hr | (1 bd) 37 (2 bd) 46 | \$10.81/hr | (1 bd) 49 (2 bd) 60 |

Source: Out of Reach 2007-2008, the National Low Income Housing Coalition and HUD.
<http://www.nlihc.org/oor/oor2008/data.cfm?getstate=on&getcounty=on&county=2948&state=WA>

Table 21 demonstrates how difficult it is for the lowest income households (those living in poverty) to budget for daily expenses. This was taken from an analysis of national costs and expenditures prepared by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.⁶ The budget starts with an annual income of \$18,810 per year – a national figure for a household of four living in poverty in 2004. As the table shows, families living in poverty have insufficient income to meet their daily living expenses.

Table 21. Budgeting for Poverty in the United States, 2004

| Item | Source | Amount |
|--|--|--|
| Annual Income (for a family of 4 living in poverty) | US Census, <i>Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement</i> , 2004. | \$18,810 |
| Rent | DOL, Bureau of Labor Statistics, <i>Consumer Expenditures Survey</i> , February 2004 | -5,274 \$13,536 |
| Utilities | | -2,350 \$11,186 |
| Transportation | | -4,852 \$6,334 |
| Food (assumes food stamps for the majority) | | -4,815 \$1,519 |
| Health Care (assumes health insurance through employer) | | -793 \$726 |
| Child Care (assumes subsidy of ¾ of real cost) | | US Dept. of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, <i>Expenditures on Children by Families</i> , April 2004 |

Source: Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Poverty USA, 2004.

The expenditures notes above assume a substantial subsidy in the form of food stamps and child care as well as employer-paid health insurance. The list leaves out toiletries, school supplies, shoes, clothes, holiday gifts, education, life insurance, furnishings, recreation, cleaning supplies, entertainment, birthdays, and other expenses.

Affordability and Persons with Disabilities

Among people at the lowest levels of household income are persons with disabilities who have only federal SSI income for support. In 2008, the SSI program provides just \$637 per month to disabled individuals. The FMR for a one-bedroom unit in Mount Vernon in 2008 is \$682, exceeding SSI income by \$45 per month. An efficiency apartment with a 2008 FMR of \$551 would consume 86% of an SSI recipient’s monthly income.

⁶ www.usccb.org/cchd, 2005.

A significant proportion of the city's population is living with disabilities. The 2006 American Community Survey estimates 12.9% of Mount Vernon-Anacortes metropolitan area non-institutionalized population 21 to 64 years old are disabled.

Need for Housing Assistance

Renter Households with Problems

The following table shows renter households in Mount Vernon by size, income, and the percent of households in each category with housing problems. Housing problems are defined as a cost burden (paying over 30%) of income for rent and utilities), overcrowding, and/or lack of complete kitchen and plumbing facilities. RVs and other impermanent quarters were excluded. Also shown is the percent of households paying 50% or more of family income for housing costs in 2000.

Seventy-one percent of all renter households at or below 80% of the Median Family Income (MFI) in Mount Vernon had housing problems, most because they were paying more than 30% of their income toward rent and utilities. The extent of households with housing problems increased as family income decreased to less than 50% MFI – 85% of renter households with income levels below 50% MFI had housing problems. Seventy-seven percent of households in the lowest income level were paying more than 30% of their income for housing, and 60% were spending more than half of their income for rent and utilities.

Most severely burdened were large households (five or more related individuals), who were also most likely to be overcrowded. While a factor for all households, the problem of overcrowding naturally increased with household size. Overcrowding persisted with larger households even when the cost burden was alleviated. For example, less than 10% of the large renter households with incomes between 50% and 80% of the MFI had a cost burden greater than 30%, and yet 64% are shown with housing problems, which is mostly attributed to overcrowding. Large related households in the lowest income group, however, were the most likely to have a cost burden beyond the affordability standards, with 100% of these households paying greater than 30% of their income toward housing.

Elderly renters were most burdened at 31% to 50% MFI, and at 50% to 80% MFI. Overall about 50% of elderly renter households with incomes less than or equal to 80% MFI are paying 50% or more of their income for housing costs, compared to only 31% when looking at all types of households. Housing costs that outpace incomes, especially fixed-incomes for the elderly, will result in an increased burden, which could jeopardize access to needed services and requirements of daily living.

Table 22. Housing Problems for All Renter Household Categories

| Mount Vernon LMI Renter Households and Percent with Housing Problems | | % of Households | Number of Households |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Household Income <=30% MFI | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 856 |
| | Any housing problems | 79% | 675 |
| | Cost Burden > 30% | 77% | 661 |
| | Cost Burden >50% | 60% | 511 |
| Household Income >30% to <=50% MFI | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 759 |
| | With Any Housing Problems | 91% | 691 |
| | Cost Burden > 30% | 79% | 603 |
| | Cost Burden >50% | 30% | 224 |
| Household Income >50 to <=80% MFI | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 964 |
| | With Any Housing Problems | 49% | 472 |
| | Cost Burden > 30% | 35% | 339 |
| | Cost Burden >50% | 8% | 75 |
| Household Income <=50% MFI (cummulative) | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 1615 |
| | With Any Housing Problems | 85% | 1366 |
| | Cost Burden > 30% | 78% | 1264 |
| | Cost Burden >50% | 46% | 735 |
| Household Income <=80% MFI (cummulative) | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 2579 |
| | With Any Housing Problems | 71% | 1838 |
| | Cost Burden > 30% | 62% | 1603 |
| | Cost Burden >50% | 31% | 810 |

There is a shifting from home ownership to rental status as people age. Many seniors who rent are forced to spend a disproportionate share of their income for housing-related services (on-top of considerable medical expenses). Among seniors who rent their housing in facilities which do not provide any meals, the average proportion of income devoted to rent is above 30% in the state.⁷ The Joint Center for Housing at Harvard University projects a 53% increase in the number of senior households by 2020 compared to 2000 in the United States. The 2000 US Census found 11.2% of Washington residents who were 65 years and older.

In the next 20 years a new wave of construction of nursing homes will be necessary. An increase in the number of "frail elderly" is expected due to the combination of an aging baby boom and increasing longevity due to improved medical technology.⁸ A person born in 1905 had the life expectancy of 48.7 years, whereas a person born in 2003 has a life expectancy of 77.5 years.⁹ As the life expectancy continues to rise, a number of senior services will be increasingly burdened.

⁷ Washington Center for Real Estate Research, Washington State University, *Housing Washington's Seniors*, Fall 2006.

⁸ Washington Center for Real Estate Research, Washington State University, *Housing Washington's Seniors*, Fall 2006.

⁹ Centers for Disease Control, 2003.

Table 23. Housing Problems by Renter Household Category

| Mount Vernon LMI Renter Households and Percent with Housing Problems | | | % of Households | Number of Households |
|--|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Household Income <=30% MFI | Elderly | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 192 |
| | | Any housing problems | 79.7 | 153 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 79.7 | 153 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 66.7 | 128 |
| | Small Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 226 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 85.4 | 193 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 85.4 | 193 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 79.2 | 179 |
| | Large Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 122 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 100 | 122 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 100 | 122 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 73 | 89 |
| | All other households | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 316 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 65.5 | 207 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 61.1 | 193 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 36.4 | 115 |
| Household Income >30 to <=50% MFI | Elderly | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 159 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 78.6 | 125 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 78.6 | 125 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 54.7 | 87 |
| | Small Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 245 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 95.9 | 235 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 80 | 196 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 24.1 | 59 |
| | Large Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 193 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 100 | 193 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 76.7 | 148 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 4.1 | 8 |
| | All other households | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 162 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 85.2 | 138 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 82.7 | 134 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 43.2 | 70 |
| Household Income >50 to <=80% MFI | Elderly | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 212 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 60.8 | 129 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 60.8 | 129 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 30.7 | 65 |
| | Small Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 408 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 46.1 | 188 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 32.6 | 133 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 0 | 0 |
| | Large Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 125 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 64 | 80 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 9.6 | 12 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 0 | 0 |
| | All other households | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 219 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 34.2 | 75 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 29.7 | 65 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 4.6 | 10 |

Owner Households with Problems

Fewer low-income owner households in 2000 had housing problems as defined by HUD in the CHAS tables, than did renter households (61% overall compared to 71% renter households). As with renter households, the percent of owner households with problems increased consistently as median family income decreased. The lowest-income households were most burdened by cost, with 85% of this income group having a cost burden greater than 30%. Large and small family households were especially burdened. For example, 100% of small related households in the lowest income group are paying more than 50% of their income for housing costs.

Table 24. Housing Problems for All Owner Household Categories

| Mount Vernon LMI Owner Households and Percent with Housing Problems | | % of Households | Number of Households |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Household Income <=30% MFI | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 234 |
| | Any housing problems | 85% | 198 |
| | Cost Burden > 30% | 85% | 198 |
| | Cost Burden >50% | 71% | 165 |
| Household Income >30% to <=50% MFI | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 383 |
| | With Any Housing Problems | 58% | 224 |
| | Cost Burden > 30% | 56% | 214 |
| | Cost Burden >50% | 25% | 94 |
| Household Income >50 to <=80% MFI | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 726 |
| | With Any Housing Problems | 54% | 391 |
| | Cost Burden > 30% | 51% | 368 |
| | Cost Burden >50% | 10% | 76 |
| Household Income <=50% MFI (cummulative) | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 617 |
| | With Any Housing Problems | 68% | 422 |
| | Cost Burden > 30% | 67% | 412 |
| | Cost Burden >50% | 42% | 259 |
| Household Income <=80% MFI (cummulative) | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 1343 |
| | With Any Housing Problems | 61% | 813 |
| | Cost Burden > 30% | 58% | 780 |
| | Cost Burden >50% | 25% | 335 |

Table 25. Housing Problems by Owner Household Category

| Mount Vernon LMI Owner Households and Percent with Housing Problems | | | % of Households | Number of Households |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Household Income <=30% MFI | Elderly | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 139 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 77 | 107 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 77 | 107 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 53.2 | 74 |
| | Small Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 57 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 100 | 57 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 100 | 57 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 100 | 57 |
| | Large Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 24 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 83.3 | 20 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 83.3 | 20 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 83.3 | 20 |
| | All other households | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 14 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 100 | 14 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 100 | 14 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 100 | 14 |
| Household Income >30 to <=50% MFI | Elderly | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 200 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 49.5 | 99 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 49.5 | 99 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 21 | 42 |
| | Small Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 66 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 84.8 | 56 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 84.8 | 56 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 33.3 | 22 |
| | Large Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 67 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 73.1 | 49 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 58.2 | 39 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 14.9 | 10 |
| | All other households | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 50 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 40 | 20 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 40 | 20 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 40 | 20 |
| Household Income >50 to <=80% MFI | Elderly | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 342 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 28.4 | 97 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 28.4 | 97 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 5.6 | 19 |
| | Small Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 200 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 83.5 | 167 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 74 | 148 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 17 | 34 |
| | Large Related | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 90 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 88.9 | 80 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 84.4 | 76 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 4.4 | 4 |
| | All other households | NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS | 100% | 94 |
| | | With Any Housing Problems | 50 | 47 |
| | | Cost Burden > 30% | 50 | 47 |
| | | Cost Burden >50% | 20.2 | 19 |

Overcrowding

Of the 9,686 total housing units in Mount Vernon, the 2000 Census data indicated that approximately 10.8% of the units are considered overcrowded (more than one person per room). Census Tract 9523 appears to have the highest percent of overcrowding at 15.4%. Table 3-7 below shows the average persons per room for housing units in the City and by individual Census Tract (Table 26).

Table 26. Overcrowding in Housing units

| | | Persons per Room | | | Total % of units with more than one person per room |
|--------------|---------|------------------|---------|--------|---|
| | | 1.1-1.5% | 1.51-2% | 2.01%+ | |
| Mount Vernon | Number | 424 | 282 | 302 | |
| | Percent | 4.6% | 3.0% | 3.2% | 10.8% |
| Census Tract | | | | | |
| 9522 | Number | 39 | 37 | 23 | |
| | Percent | 2.9% | 2.7% | 1.7% | 7.3% |
| 9523 | Number | 216 | 161 | 186 | |
| | Percent | 5.9% | 4.4% | 5.1% | 15.4% |
| 9524 | Number | 93 | 73 | 60 | |
| | Percent | 2.9% | 2.3% | 1.9% | 7.1% |
| 9525 | Number | 44 | 11 | 33 | |
| | Percent | 3.8% | 1.0% | 2.9% | 7.7% |
| 9526 | Number | 55 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Percent | 4.4% | 0 | 0 | 4.4% |
| 9527 | Number | 43 | 30 | 7 | |
| | Percent | 3.7% | 2.6% | 0.6% | 6.9% |

Source: US Census 2000

2. To the extent that any racial or ethnic group has a disproportionately greater need for any income category in comparison to the needs of that category as a whole, the jurisdiction must complete an assessment of that specific need. For this purpose, disproportionately greater need exists when the percentage of persons in a category of need who are members of a particular racial or ethnic group is at least ten

percentage points higher than the percentage of persons in the category as a whole.

Disproportionate Housing Problems by Race/Ethnicity – Renter Households

Racial and ethnic minorities do experience greater housing needs in Mount Vernon. They are often more cost-burdened or more likely to experience other housing problems, including over-crowding or substandard conditions. As Table 27 below displays, African American, Native American, and Hispanic renters in the lowest income group (less than or equal to 30% of the median family income) have far more housing problems than their Caucasian counterparts. The large portion of low-income Hispanic renter households with housing problems is of particular concern, considering the large size of this population compared to other minority groups. Of the 463 Hispanic households at or below 50% of the median income, 95% - about 440 households - have experienced a housing problem.

Table 27. Problems by Race/Ethnicity – Renter Households

| Race/Ethnicity (number of HH ≤50% MFI) | % With Any Housing Problems | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Household income ≤30% MFI | Household income >30 to ≤50% MFI | Household income ≤50% MFI |
| Caucasian Non-Hispanic (1,031) | 78 | 88 | 83 |
| African American Non-Hispanic (20) | 100 | N/A | 100 |
| Asian American Non-Hispanic (83) | 40 | 100 | 47 |
| Native American Non-Hispanic (15) | 100 | N/A | 100 |
| Hispanic (463) | 95 | 95 | 95 |

Source: CHAS tables.

Disproportionate Housing Problems by Race/Ethnicity – Owner Households

As with renter households, Table 28 below shows a greater percentage of racial and ethnic minority households are likely to experience housing problems. With a pattern strikingly similar to renter households, housing problems are disproportionately distributed among racial and ethnic groups. African American, Native American, and Hispanic owner households experience more than their fair share of housing problems. By controlling for income, these statistics highlight race and ethnicity differences in housing experiences which are augmented by the fact that minority populations are already more likely to be in the lower-income categories.

Table 28. Problems by Race/Ethnicity – Owner Households

| % With Any Housing Problems | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Race/Ethnicity (number of HH ≤50% MFI) | Household income ≤30% MFI | Household income >30 to ≤50% MFI | Household income ≤50% MFI |
| Caucasian Non-Hispanic (1,556) | 80 | 74 | 77 |
| African American Non-Hispanic (20) | 100 | N/A | 100 |
| Asian American Non-Hispanic (103) | 47 | 100 | 57 |
| Native American Non-Hispanic (15) | 100 | N/A | 100 |
| Hispanic (536) | 95 | 94 | 94 |

Priority Housing Needs (91.215 (b))

1. Identify the priority housing needs and activities in accordance with the categories specified in the Housing Needs Table (formerly Table 2A). These categories correspond with special tabulations of U.S. census data provided by HUD for the preparation of the Consolidated Plan.
2. Provide an analysis of how the characteristics of the housing market and the severity of housing problems and needs of each category of residents provided the basis for determining the relative priority of each priority housing need category.
Note: Family and income types may be grouped in the case of closely related categories of residents where the analysis would apply to more than one family or income type.
3. Describe the basis for assigning the priority given to each category of priority needs.
4. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

As Table 22 and Table 23 above indicate, renter households with incomes at or below 30% of area median are the largest group of those who are the mostly likely to be cost burdened at greater than 50% of their household income, making them the highest priority income group for housing assistance. More than three out of four of all renter households with income less than 50% MFI have housing cost burdens greater than 30% of their income (77% of households with income less than 30% MFI and 79% of households with income between 30% and 50% MFI). This second income group is therefore the second priority need group.

All owner household categories have smaller numbers of those most likely to be impacted by cost burden or with housing problems than the renter households, though many of them are still significantly burdened (see Table 24 and Table 25). Of owner households, the largest number of households most likely to be impacted by cost burden or housing problems is the group with incomes at or below 30% of AMI. This high priority group is also the most likely to experience cost burden greater than 50% of household income, with 71% of these households reporting such a burden. The owner households with incomes between 31% to 50% AMI and with incomes between 50% and 80% of AMI are the second and third priority groups. Though owner households in these income groups are less likely to experience cost burden over 50% of their income, they are still more than 50% likely to experience cost burdens greater than 30% of their income.

There are two basic obstacles to meeting underserved needs: 1) cost of housing relative to community wage levels makes it hard to supply safe, decent and affordable housing to lower income groups, and 2) the subsidies required to provide affordable housing for all those in need is far above the amount of researchers that are available.

Housing Market Analysis (91.210)

*Please also refer to the Housing Market Analysis Table in the Needs.xls workbook

1. Based on information available to the jurisdiction, describe the significant characteristics of the housing market in terms of supply, demand, condition, and the cost of housing; the housing stock available to serve persons with disabilities; and to serve persons with HIV/AIDS and their families. Data on the housing market should include, to the extent information is available, an estimate of the number of vacant or abandoned buildings and whether units in these buildings are suitable for rehabilitation.

Population and Housing Trends

Population & Housing Growth

Since 1980, both the City of Mount Vernon and Skagit County have experienced significant growth; however, the City’s population is increasing at a faster pace than the number of housing units. Between 1990 and 2000, Mount Vernon’s population grew by 48.6%, compared to the 35.7% increase seen between 1980-1990. The growth in the City’s housing units has also increased though at a lower rate since 1980: 30.5% in the 1980s and 35.1% in the 1990s. Table 29 below shows the change in population and housing in the City as well as in Skagit County.

Table 29. Population and Housing Growth, 1980-2000

| | Population | | | Housing Units | | |
|--------------------------|------------|--------|---------|---------------|--------|--------|
| | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
| Skagit County | 64,138 | 79,555 | 102,979 | 27,775 | 33,580 | 42,681 |
| Change between 1990-2000 | | 29.4% | | | 27.1% | |
| Mount Vernon | 13,009 | 17,647 | 26,232 | 5,494 | 7,167 | 9,686 |
| Change between 1990-2000 | | 48.6% | | | 35.1% | |

Source: US Census 2000

Population Forecast

As reported in the Skagit County Population and Employment Allocation Final Report 2025 (by Berryman & Henigar Inc. in association with Michael J. McCormick; December 2003), the County and cities within the county worked together to reach an agreement on the 2025 population forecast and population allocations for Skagit County as a whole and for the various jurisdictions within the County. These numbers were adopted by the Growth Management Act Steering Committee (GMASC) for use in updating Countywide Planning Policy 1.1 (Table 30). There was a 101.6% increase in population between 1980 and 2000. The City’s population target shows a continued increase in population between 2000 and 2025 but at an 82.6% increase.

Table 30. Growth Targets

| | 2000 Population* | 2025 Population** | 2000-2025 % Change |
|---------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mount Vernon | (city) 26,232 (city and UGA) 28,332 | 47,900 | (city) 82.6% |
| Skagit County | 102,979 | 149,080 | 45% |

*US Census

** Skagit County Population & Employment Allocation Final Report, December 2003.

Housing Characteristics

Inventory of Housing Types

Housing Units

According to 2000 Census data, the City has approximately 9,686 housing units. It is estimated that 59.7% of the housing units in Mount Vernon are single-family one-unit attached or detached housing. Roughly, 7.5% of the housing stock in 2000 was classified as Mobile Homes. Just over 32% of the housing units in the City are multifamily structures: including 11.3% with 2-4 unit and 21.4% with 5 or more units. There are a higher percentage of multifamily units in the City compared to the County as a whole. There are six Census tracts within the boundaries of the City; however, most of these tracts are only partially within the City limits. The table below shows the composition of the housing in Mount Vernon as compared to Skagit County and by individual Census Tracts.

Table 31. Units in Structure, As Percentage of Total

| | Single Family | 2-4 Units | 5+ Units | Mobile Home | Other* |
|---------------|---------------|-----------|----------|-------------|--------|
| Skagit County | 72.0% | 6.1% | 9.5% | 11.8% | 0.6% |
| Mount Vernon | 59.7% | 11.3% | 21.4% | 7.5% | 0.1% |
| Census Tracts | | | | | |
| 9522 | 58.2% | 12.1% | 25.6% | 4.1% | 0.6% |
| 9523 | 52.2% | 10.0% | 28.5% | 9.4% | 0.0% |
| 9524 | 70.1% | 8.8% | 10.9% | 10.2% | 0.0% |
| 9525 | 58.9% | 19.3% | 21.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 9526 | 83.0% | 1.7% | 1.7% | 13.6% | 0.5% |
| 9527 | 83.6% | 0.7% | 2.2% | 12.9% | 0.0% |

* Boat; RV; van; etc

Source: US Census 2000

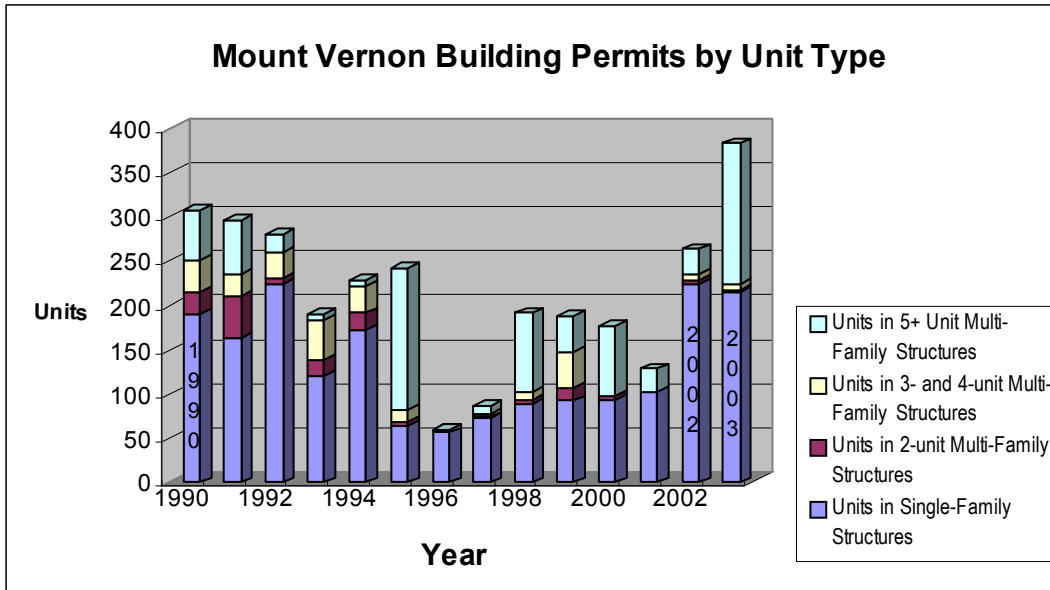
The predominant housing type in Mount Vernon as well as the County is single-family. 2000 Census data indicated that almost 60% of all housing units in the City are single family compared to 72% in the County. The table above also illustrates the greater diversity of housing types in the City than in the County. The 1990 Census data, indicated that during the 1980's the percentage of single family housing units in comparison to other housing unit types has remained relatively the same; however, this is a decrease from the 1980 census data which showed that 67.4% of all housing units were single family structures in the City and 77.2% in the County.

Age of Housing

According to 2000 Census data, 33.5% of the housing units in Mount Vernon were constructed by 1970, and 20.6% of the housing units were constructed between 1970 and 1979. The remaining 46% of the housing units were constructed after 1979. Between 2000 and 2003, building permits for approximately 950 housing units were issued¹⁰.

¹⁰ The City's residential building permit records showed a total of 1,039 permits between January 2000 and December 2003.

Figure 2, Building Permits issued annually by Unit Type



Source: Census Bureau's Building Permits Survey: Accessed on March 25, 2005
<http://socds.huduser.org/permits/index.html?>
 Manufacturing and Construction Division, U.S. Census Bureau

The figure above (Figure 3-3) shows the trend in building permits issued in Mount Vernon since 1990 for the number of single-family units in and the number of units in multifamily structures.

Ownership

The majority of housing units in the City are owner occupied at 57.2%.

Table 32 shows the rate of homeownership compared to rentals in the City. This trend is consistent throughout the City, with the exception of Census Tract 9525 where under half (49.1%) of the units are owned. Similarly, in Census Tract 9522 there are an equal number of rental units compared to owned units.

Table 32. Owned vs. Rented Dwelling Units

| | % Owned Units | % Rental Units |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Skagit County | 69.7% | 30.3% |
| Mount Vernon | 57.3% | 42.7% |
| Census Tracts | | |
| 9522 | 50.0% | 50.0% |
| 9523 | 54.0% | 46.0% |
| 9524 | 69.5% | 30.5% |
| 9525 | 49.1% | 50.9% |
| 9526 | 80.6% | 19.4% |
| 9527 | 82.8% | 17.2% |

Source: US Census, 2000.

The following table (Table 33) shows how ownership rates have changed since the 1980s in the City and County. Ownership declined in the 1980s, but since then it has remained relatively consistent in the County and City. In general, the ratio of owner versus rental households has remained relatively consistent over the twenty-year period between 1980 and 2000.

Table 33. Rates of Ownership

| | | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Skagit County | % Owner Households | 71.4 | 69.9 | 69.7 |
| | % Rental Households | 28.6 | 30.1 | 30.3 |
| Mount Vernon | % Owner Households | 60.1 | 56.9 | 57.3 |
| | % Rental Households | 39.9 | 43.1 | 42.7 |

Source: US Census, 2000. 1990, 1980

Vacancy Rates

The overall vacancy rate in 2000, for all housing units in the City was 4.2% with 95.8% of all housing units occupied, (9,276 occupied units). The City’s rental vacancy rate (4.3%) is slightly higher than the County’s (3.8%). The City’s homeowner vacancy rate is 2.1%, higher than the County’s 0.9% owner vacancy rate. Vacancy rates below 4% tend to

indicate economic distress in the market, a recession, and/or a lack of available housing units for the local population. The current census data indicates that there appears not to be enough affordable single-family units available for sale in Mount Vernon.

Housing Conditions

Condition of Housing

In terms of selected housing characteristics, the 2000 Census data indicates that 0.8% (71 units) lack complete plumbing facilities, 1.2% (112 units) lack complete kitchen facilities and 1.5% (143 units) have no telephone service. According to 2000 Census 1.5% of the units are heated by wood, and 0.8% indicate they used no fuel implying those units may have no heat and 0.5% of the housing units use fuel oil, kerosene, etc.

Occupancy

According to the 2000 Census, the average occupancy rates for all units in the City are higher than in the County. The average household size increased between 1990 and 2000; in 1990 owner occupied units in the City had an average of 2.67 persons and renter occupied units had an average of 2.27 people. Census Tract 9523 has the highest occupancy overall at 2.97 persons per unit. Table 34 below shows occupancy for the County and City as well as the Census Tracts within the City.

Table 34. Occupancy - Persons per Unit: Owned vs. Rented

| Average household size | Owner Occupied | Renter Occupied | Overall |
|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Skagit County | 2.61 | 2.60 | 2.60 |
| Mount Vernon | 2.74 | 2.75 | 2.75 |
| Census Tracts | | | |
| 9522 | 2.68 | 2.33 | 2.5 |
| 9523 | 3.1 | 2.81 | 2.97 |
| 9524 | 2.67 | 2.71 | 2.68 |
| 9525 | 2.47 | 2.43 | 2.45 |
| 9526 | 2.52 | 3.11 | 2.63 |
| 9527 | 2.86 | 2.74 | 2.84 |

Source: US Census 2000

Households

Household Characteristics & Trends

2000 Census data indicates there are 9,276 households¹¹ and 6,210 families¹² within the City of Mount Vernon. The City’s total population is 26,232, which results in an average household size of 2.75 persons per household (US Census 2000). This is an increase in the average household size since the 1990 Census, which indicated the average was 2.5 persons per household. In 2000, families comprise 66.9% of the total households in Mount Vernon, and families had an average size of 3.32 persons per family. Table 35 provides a break down of household characteristics for the City and its individual census tracts.

Table 35. Household Composition, as a Percentage of Total Households

| | Family Households | Married Couple | Male Head | Female Head | Non-Family Households | Living Alone |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Mount Vernon | 66.9% | 51.3% | 4.2% | 11.4% | 33.1% | 26.1% |
| Census Tract | | | | | | |
| 9522 | 62.7% | 47.0% | 3.1% | 12.7% | 37.3% | 30.1% |
| 9523 | 70.1% | 54.4% | 4.7% | 11.0% | 29.9% | 23.4% |
| 9524 | 69.8% | 55.1% | 3.8% | 10.9% | 30.2% | 24.1% |
| 9525 | 55.5% | 39.5% | 5.4% | 10.6% | 44.5% | 34.5% |
| 9526 | 72.1% | 61.3% | 3.0% | 7.8% | 27.9% | 22.1% |
| 9527 | 77.4% | 66.1% | 3.7% | 7.6% | 22.6% | 16.5% |

Source US Census 2000

Female-Headed Households

In 2000, the total number of female-headed households in Mount Vernon is 1,055 or 11.4% of the total households (US Census 2000). The percent of female-headed households has remained consistent since the 1990 Census. Female-headed households with children tend to have lower incomes than married couples or single male-headed households and oftentimes have higher demand for affordable housing units.

¹¹ The Census defines a household to include all of the persons who occupy a housing unit. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements.

¹² The Census defines a family household as two or more related people living together.

Population Over 65

In general, the population in the City is relatively young, with a median age of 31.1 in 2000. In 2000, 11.7% of the total households in Mount Vernon were persons 65 years or older and living alone. Census Tract 9522 has the highest concentration of elderly (65 years or older) living alone at 12.7%; however, Census Tract 9524 has the highest percent of elderly population at 17.5%, which may be attributed to the proximity of the hospital and nursing homes. The percents of the population age 65 years or older is listed in Table 36.

Table 36. Population 65 and Over, 2000

| | Over 65 (% of Total Pop.) | Over 65 & Living Alone (% of Households) |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Mt. Vernon | 12.5 | 10.9 |
| Census Tract | | |
| 9522 | 12.6 | 12.7 |
| 9523 | 9.7 | 9.4 |
| 9524 | 17.5 | 11.7 |
| 9525 | 9.8 | 10.7 |
| 9526 | 14 | 8.7 |
| 9527 | 10.6 | 6.3 |

Source: US Census 2000

Farm workers

Farm workers represent a special housing needs group in Mount Vernon. Farm labor continues to be an important component of the local and regional economy. However, farm workers continue to have a difficult time obtaining adequate and affordable housing due to low-income levels, language barriers, seasonal nature of their work and larger family size. According to the 2000 Census, 832 persons were employed in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing occupations. However, the census data is likely to underestimate the true number of farm workers in Mount Vernon due to the Census being conducted in the winter months, therefore not accounting for the seasonality of the labor force, and resulting in an undercount of migrant laborers.

2. Describe the number and targeting (income level and type of household served) of units currently assisted by local, state, or federally funded programs, and an assessment of whether any such units are expected to be lost from the assisted housing inventory for any reason, (i.e. expiration of Section 8 contracts).

The 2005 Skagit County Continuum of Care report dated January 2004 indicated there was a minimum 2-½ year waiting list for rental housing with HASC, which is an increase of 22% since 2003. Of the households on the waiting list, 1,232 are families with children and 322 are individuals. As of June 2004, the Skagit County Community Action Agency Transitional Housing Program had 58 families on a two-year wait list. Table 37 provides a list of subsidized and other low-income/low-rent housing identified in Mount Vernon.

Table 37. Assisted and Affordable Housing

| Project | Housing Type | Units |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|
| Alpine Ridge | Elderly; disabled | 60 |
| Fircrest Apts. | Elderly; disabled | 36 |
| Mt. Vernon Manor | Elderly | 55 |
| Mt. Vernon Manor II | Elderly | 30 |
| Ridgeview Terrace | Elderly; disabled | 80 |
| La Paloma | Farm workers; Family | 40 |
| Laventure Village | Family | 30 |
| Olympic Apts. | Family | 32 |
| Skagit Village | Family | 36 |
| Casa de San Jose Pl. | Farm workers; Family | 50 |
| La Casa del Padre Miguel Apt. | Farm workers | 10 |
| Kulshan Apts. | Family | 38 |
| Salem Village Apts. | Elderly | 46 |
| Summerglenn Apts. | Family | 153 |
| Arbor Park Apts. | Elderly; disabled | 184 |
| Vintage at Mount Vernon | Elderly; disabled | 155 |
| Mount Baker Meadows (publicly-owned) | Farm workers | 20 |

Source: City of Mount Vernon 2004-2006 Consolidated Plan & Housing Authority of Skagit County Feb 2005

3. Indicate how the characteristics of the housing market will influence the use of funds made available for rental assistance, production of new units, rehabilitation of old units, or acquisition of existing units. Please note, the goal of affordable housing is not met by beds in nursing homes.

Mount Vernon's housing needs are much greater than the resources available. Available public resource, such as CDBG funding must be distributed in a way that leverages additional public and private resources. Housing activities to prevent and end homelessness, and housing rehabilitation of existing units dedicated to very low-income households will be primary uses of CDBG funds, especially when such activities use CDBG to leverage additional resources.

Specific Housing Objectives (91.215 (b))

1. Describe the priorities and specific objectives the jurisdiction hopes to achieve over a specified time period.

The City of Mount Vernon will support and encourage housing and supportive housing services for the following priorities.

Priority 1. Homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

Priority 2. Fair housing.

Priority 3. Very low-income households

The following goals, strategies, and objectives are based on the above priorities and are consistent with the statutory goals outlined in the introduction statement in this section.

Housing for the Homeless

Goal 1: Assist in the creation of one housing project that serves the homeless.

Strategy 1: Where appropriate, provide direct funding for projects that serve priority homeless populations.

Objectives:

- Use local grant dollars to subsidize approved emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing projects that serve priority homeless populations.
- Identify the number of homeless families and individuals and the primary causes of homelessness in Mount Vernon and Skagit County.
- Assess the ability of current programs to address the needs of homelessness.
- Identify community resources needed to address homelessness.
- Formulate long range plans to secure resources to address homelessness in Mount Vernon and Skagit County.

Housing for low-income households

Goal 1: Preserve existing housing dedicated to very low-income households.

Strategy 1: Enable very low-income residents, especially those in CDBG target areas, to live in safe and decent housing by maintaining the physical structures.

Objectives:

- Provide financial assistance to nonprofit owners of low-income rental housing to finance the rehabilitation of properties, especially those in CDBG target areas.

Fair Housing

The City is committed to furthering fair housing practices by addressing the impediments outlined in the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in the City of Mount Vernon. This publication was completed in May 2008 and describes fair housing laws, demographics of the area, the process to file a fair housing complaint, impediments to fair housing choice, an assessment of past fair housing activities and an identification of impediments and recommended actions.

Goal 1: Support activities to eliminate housing discrimination which primarily affects Latino and Native American households, persons with disabilities and families with children.

Strategy 1: Expand fair housing education and outreach efforts to households and housing and service providers, with special emphasis on improving awareness of protected classes.

Objectives:

- Consult with the Fair Housing Center of Washington to develop ways to implement the following objectives.
- Target fair housing educational programs to Native American and Hispanic households and provide bilingual fair housing information.
- Promote use of the fair housing logo and publisher's statement in the local print media.
- Add fair housing information and links to fair housing laws/programs on the City of Mount Vernon Website.
- Partner with organizations such as Skagit County Community Action Agency and Housing Authority of Skagit County to disseminate bilingual educational materials about predatory lending practices to homebuyers, especially through first-time homebuyer programs.

2. Describe how Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources that are reasonably expected to be available will be used to address identified needs for the period covered by the strategic plan.

The City of Mount Vernon and other organizations (e.g. Skagit County Community Action and the Housing Authority of Skagit County) pursue resources to fund housing and homeless service projects. The City of Mount Vernon is supportive of applications to the following financial assistance programs and others that are not listed below.

- Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs/Supportive Housing Program
- Emergency Shelter Grant
- EPA Brownfield Demonstration Grant
- FHLB Affordable Housing Program
- Funding provided under SHB 2060/2163/1359
- Historic Preservation Tax Credits
- HOPWA
- HUD Brownfield Economic Development Initiative Grant
- HUD Grants for Public Housing
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credits
- Moderate Rehabilitation SRO
- New Markets Tax Credits Program
- Public Housing CIAP
- Public Housing Comprehensive Grant
- Public Housing Comprehensive Grant
- Public Housing MROP
- Rental Certificates
- Rental Vouchers
- Safe Havens
- Section 202 Elderly
- Section 811 Handicapped
- Skagit Community Foundation
- Tax Exempt Bonds
- Taxable Bonds
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Habitat Restoration Grant
- United Way
- Washington Community Development Fund
- Washington Community Reinvestment Association
- Washington State Building Communities Grant Program
- Washington State Homeless Grant Assistance Program
- Washington State Dept. of Ecology, Remedial Action Matching Grant
- Washington State Housing Assistance Program
- Washington State Housing Finance Commission Programs
- Washington State Housing Trust Fund Programs

Funds expected to be available to support new housing and homeless service projects include the City's CDBG grant, Skagit County's recently awarded Homeless Grant Assistance Program (HGAP) grant, and McKinney-Vento funding for homeless assistance. The City's CDBG funds will be used to fund fair housing activities.

Barriers to Affordable Housing (91.210 (e) and 91.215 (f))

1. Explain whether the cost of housing or the incentives to develop, maintain, or improve affordable housing are affected by public policies, particularly those of the local jurisdiction. Such policies include tax policy affecting land and other property, land use controls, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limits, and policies that affect the return on residential investment.

Mount Vernon is monitoring available land, zoning, and land use to accommodate projected population increases and housing requirements of all income groups. Development costs, fees, and rising housing prices are all barriers to affordable housing. Housing in Mount Vernon is influenced by a variety of public policies and actions that can either have short-term impacts or long-term implications for affordable housing.

The *Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan* is the primary policy guiding housing development in Mount Vernon. It establishes types of housing, densities, and special conditions for housing. The Housing Element of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan includes:

- An inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs.
- Goal and policy language reflecting the City's commitment to encourage production of housing that meets the needs of residents at all income levels.
- An analysis of available land, including land for government assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, group homes, and foster care facilities.

2. Describe the strategy to remove or ameliorate negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing, except that, if a State requires a unit of general local government to submit a regulatory barrier assessment that is substantially equivalent to the information required under this part, as determined by HUD, the unit of general local government may submit that assessment to HUD and it shall be considered to have complied with this requirement.

Strategies to Address Affordable Housing Barriers

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements for a jurisdiction's comprehensive plan are addressed in the plan's "Housing Element." In particular, the city plans to "encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock."¹³

The Housing Element of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan reports on a buildable lands capacity analysis, outlining potential for added dwellings in the next 20 years. The Housing Element finds the development capacity sufficient to accommodate estimated population growth and maintain housing availability.

The Housing Element draws attention to the shortage of affordable housing relative to the population in need (households paying more than 30% of their income and earning less than 89% of the County median income.) The estimated current need for affordable housing is between 2,261 and 2,593, with an additional future need of 1,112 to 1,741, leaving a 881

¹³ City of Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan, Housing Element, Chapter 3. 2006:38.

to 1,510 unit gap between needed housing and the 231 units of affordable, multifamily housing. This gap could be addressed by approximately 930-1,010 of the future potential dwellings zoned for smaller lot single family, duplex, townhome, and multifamily units. The possibility of additional multifamily units in the commercial zones could close any remaining gaps between affordable housing need and availability.

HOMELESS

Homeless Needs (91.205 (b) and 91.215 (c))

*Please also refer to the Homeless Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook

Homeless Needs— The jurisdiction must provide a concise summary of the nature and extent of homelessness in the jurisdiction, (including rural homelessness and chronic homelessness where applicable), addressing separately the need for facilities and services for homeless persons and homeless families with children, both sheltered and unsheltered, and homeless subpopulations, in accordance with Table 1A. The summary must include the characteristics and needs of low-income individuals and children, (especially extremely low-income) who are currently housed but are at imminent risk of either residing in shelters or becoming unsheltered. In addition, to the extent information is available, the plan must include a description of the nature and extent of homelessness by racial and ethnic group. A quantitative analysis is not required. If a jurisdiction provides estimates of the at-risk population(s), it should also include a description of the operational definition of the at-risk group and the methodology used to generate the estimates.

Homeless

The two publications, The Skagit County 2007 Continuum of Care report and A Way Back Home: A Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Skagit County 2005-2015, are the primary sources of information on the nature and extent of homelessness in Mount Vernon.

The Ten-Year Plan defines chronic homeless persons as “homeless individuals or families who have been on the streets or in and out of shelters for more than a year.” Due to high rates of mental illness, substance abuse, and other functional challenges, short-term assistance is not enough to stabilize most chronic homeless persons. Instead, long-term housing and service supports, often in addition to SSI financial support, are needed to stop the cycle of homelessness for this target population. Though the chronic homeless are a minority of the overall homeless population (an estimated 10-20%) their high need and low-functionality ensure that they are heavy users of the homeless assistance system and the health and social services system.

In addition to high prevalence of substance abuse, mental illness, and co-occurring disorders, the Skagit County Chronic Homeless Planning Committee identified several personal and social characteristics common to chronic homeless persons:

- Have a distrust/fear of the “system”
- Lack social/communications skills
- Lack conventional support groups
- Have significant medical and nutritional problems
- Often have criminal justice records

Table 38. Skagit County - Homeless Population (Sheltered and Unsheltered)

| Household Type | Number of Individuals |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Individuals | 1142 |
| Households | 584 |
| Mount Vernon area* | 219 |

Source: One Night Count of the Homeless, January 2008

*Only 466 of 893 total persons reported area of residence; therefore 219 persons represents 47% of Skagit County homeless persons in the Mount Vernon area.

Table 39. Skagit County - Homeless Sub-Population (Sheltered and Unsheltered)

| Disabilities | Number of Individuals |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Physical/Medical (perm.) | 92 |
| Physical (temp.) | 68 |
| Mental health | 128 |
| Developmental | 40 |
| Visual | 27 |
| HIV/AIDS | 2 |
| Alcohol/drug abuse | 113 |
| Dually diagnosed | 59 |
| Untreated dental | 81 |
| Literacy | 78 |
| Other | 12 |

Source: One Night Count of the Homeless, January 2008

Table 40. Skagit County - Gender, Veteran Status, and Homeless Migrants

| Gender | Number of Individuals |
|---------|-----------------------|
| Males | 592 |
| Females | 550 |

Source: One Night Count of the Homeless, January 2008

Table 41, Skagit County - Homeless Age (Sheltered and Unsheltered)

| Age Group | Number of Individuals |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| 0-5 | 290 |
| 6-12 | 133 |
| 13-17 | 109 |
| 18-20 | 66 |
| 21-25 | 150 |
| 26-35 | 148 |
| 36-45 | 128 |
| 46-55 | 80 |
| 56-64 | 19 |
| 65+ | 21 |

Source: One Night Count of the Homeless, January 2008

Priority Homeless Needs

1. Using the results of the Continuum of Care planning process, identify the jurisdiction's homeless and homeless prevention priorities specified in Table 1A, the Homeless and Special Needs Populations Chart. The description of the jurisdiction's choice of priority needs and allocation priorities must be based on reliable data meeting HUD standards and should reflect the required consultation with homeless assistance providers, homeless persons, and other concerned citizens regarding the needs of homeless families with children and individuals. The jurisdiction must provide an analysis of how the needs of each category of residents provided the basis for determining the relative priority of each priority homeless need category. A separate brief narrative should be directed to addressing gaps in services and housing for the sheltered and unsheltered chronic homeless.

Skagit County's annual point-in-time counts provide the information on homelessness in Skagit County, including the City of Mount Vernon. As described earlier, the needs of the chronically homeless are particularly acute and unless these persons are assisted with stable housing and supportive services, they will continue to cycle repeatedly through expensive public services.

2. A community should give a high priority to chronically homeless persons, where the jurisdiction identifies sheltered and unsheltered chronic homeless persons in its Homeless Needs Table - Homeless Populations and Subpopulations.

Helping the chronically homeless is a high priority as expressed in the Skagit County Continuum of Care plan and under the County's new HGAP pilot project to provide permanent stable housing to the chronically homeless.

Homeless Inventory (91.210 (c))

The jurisdiction shall provide a concise summary of the existing facilities and services (including a brief inventory) that assist homeless persons and families with children and subpopulations identified in Table 1A. These include outreach and assessment, emergency shelters and services, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, access to permanent housing, and activities to prevent low-income individuals and families with children (especially extremely low-income) from becoming homeless. The jurisdiction can use the optional Continuum of Care Housing Activity Chart and Service Activity Chart to meet this requirement.

The following programs assist individuals and families in securing or maintaining permanent housing in order to avoid homelessness.

Table 42. Homeless Prevention Programs

| Homeless Prevention Program | Program description |
|---|--|
| Compass Health, Skagit | discharge planning assistance for Medicaid clients |
| DSHS Additional Requirements Emergent Needs | assistance for TANF clients with costs associated with securing temporary or permanent housing and preventing homelessness |
| Salvation Army | mortgage and rental assistance for families facing eviction |
| Skagit County Community Action Agency | assistance for families with children moving from shelter into permanent housing; assistance to indigent wartime veterans and their dependents |
| Youthnet | support for youth in foster care: Independent Living Skills, rent stipend, direct support |

Source: 2007 Skagit County Continuum of Care

Emergency shelters provide short-term shelter for up to 60 days, for individuals or families who do not have a decent and safe shelter, and who do not have sufficient funds to purchase or rent a place to stay. Many shelters also provide food, clothing, and support staff that help connect clients with needed social services including transitional housing.

Table 43. Emergency Shelters

| Emergency Shelters | Population | Capacity |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Friendship House | separate men’s and women’s house | men’s house: 24 beds women’s house: 24 beds |
| YMCA Oasis Youth Shelter | youth ages 13-17 | 44 residents (point in time) |
| SCCAA Homeless Program | homeless persons | motel vouchers when shelters full |
| SCCAA Homeless Shelter | families | 4 apartment units |
| Skagit Domestic Violence & Sexual | victims of domestic violence | 178 residents (point in time) |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|---------|
| Assault Services | | |
| Compass Health, Skagit | homeless individuals with a primary mental health issue | 30 beds |

Source: 2007 Skagit County Continuum of Care

Transitional housing programs fill in the gaps between emergency shelter and permanent housing, sheltering individuals and families for up to 24 months. These programs also provide the support services that lead to independent living skills necessary for long-term housing solutions.

Table 44. Transitional Housing Programs

| Transitional Housing Programs | Population | Capacity |
|---|---|---------------|
| Skagit County Community Action Agency | homeless families with children | 45 families |
| NW Washington Homeless Veteran’s Coordinating Council | homeless veterans | 14 beds |
| Northwest Youth Services (NWYS) | homeless youth age 16-21 | 24 beds |
| Kulshan View Apartments | Families with children, elderly, disabled | 42 apartments |

Source: 2007 Skagit County Continuum of Care

Some disabled persons will never be able to maintain stable housing independently. For these individuals, long-term community-based housing and supportive services are the best solution to housing instability and homelessness, providing as much independence as possible while maintaining a decent standard of living.

Table 45. Permanent Supportive Housing Programs

| Permanent Supportive Housing Programs | Program Description | Capacity |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------|
| Compass Health Skagit | out-patient mental health | 15 beds |
| La Follette Place Compass Health | out-patient mental health | 5 beds |
| Oxford Houses | housing for recovering victims of drug abuse | 5 beds |

Source: 2007 Skagit County Continuum of Care

Homeless Strategic Plan (91.215 (c))

1. Homelessness— Describe the jurisdiction's strategy for developing a system to address homelessness and the priority needs of homeless persons and families (including the subpopulations identified in the needs section). The jurisdiction's strategy must consider the housing and supportive services needed in each stage of the process which includes preventing homelessness, outreach/assessment, emergency shelters and services, transitional housing, and helping homeless persons (especially any persons that are chronically homeless) make the transition to permanent housing and independent living. The jurisdiction must also describe its strategy for helping extremely low- and low-income individuals and families who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Skagit County has adopted the Skagit County 2007 Continuum of Care Plan as County policy. This plan outlines the continuum of programs and services required to move a family or individual from homelessness to independent living and self-sufficiency.

The Continuum of Care Plan guides the City's use of resources to reduce the number of homeless households. The Continuum of Care does this by designating priority levels to homeless projects and programs and by assessing whether proposed projects duplicate existing services.

The first priority of the Continuum of Care is to maintain existing resources that serve the needs of the homeless within the community. The plan identifies new projects and services that fill critical gaps in prevention services, outreach, emergency and transitional housing, support services, and long-term affordable housing. The overall goal of the community is to maintain and enhance the current system by creating more options and strengthening the current network in order to more efficiently provide services to those clients moving through the system.

2. Chronic homelessness—Describe the jurisdiction’s strategy for eliminating chronic homelessness by 2012. This should include the strategy for helping homeless persons make the transition to permanent housing and independent living. This strategy should, to the maximum extent feasible, be coordinated with the strategy presented Exhibit 1 of the Continuum of Care (CoC) application and any other strategy or plan to eliminate chronic homelessness. Also describe, in a narrative, relationships and efforts to coordinate the Conplan, CoC, and any other strategy or plan to address chronic homelessness.

“A Way Back Home: A Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Skagit County” outlines eight key strategies to achieving its vision of the future:

A broadened and coordinated system of stabilizing services and facilities for persons in Skagit County who are chronically in a state of homelessness, so that they may live safely and return to meaningful lives.

–A Way Back Home, p.7

Strategy 1: Improve outreach and engagement services through the development of a Crisis Triage Center that would provide emergency intervention and stabilization of persons in crisis through client-based outreach, engagement, referral and program enrollment.

Strategy 2: Maximize the integration of services by creating coordinated, case-focused teams of service providers (“A-Teams”), directed at actively resolving the key issues facing the homeless as they move through the continuum. (Creation of linkages and coordination within the continuum of care system modeled after the a-team concept.)

Strategy 3: Move the chronic homeless as quickly as feasible into an increasing supply of permanent supportive housing.

Strategy 4: Expand transitional housing and emergency shelter resources for the chronically homeless that includes on-going case management...

Strategy 5: Develop public awareness and commitment to create a healthy community; involve the government and the businesses community in expanding political and financial resources.

Strategy 6: Advocate for an intensive case management/medical/dental component in all new beds developed in the continuum.

Strategy 7: Develop a continuum of beds and services for persons suffering from substance abuse (including a “damp” facility, pre-treatment beds, post-treatment beds, along with critical substance abuse treatment services.

Strategy 8: Create a continuum of housing and supportive services for individuals being released from correctional institutions.

3. Homelessness Prevention—Describe the jurisdiction’s strategy to help prevent homelessness for individuals and families with children who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless.
4. Institutional Structure—Briefly describe the institutional structure, including private industry, non-profit organizations, and public institutions, through which the jurisdiction will carry out its homelessness strategy.

The Continuum of Care addresses long-range strategies and action plans and identifies lead agencies that will carry out these plans.

1. Maintain and enhance existing homeless facilities and services in Skagit County.

Strategy 1: Identify, advertise and utilize a clearing-house referral system, through the North Sound Information and Referral Line and other community points of contact, such as Skagit County Community Agency, Friendship House and others.

Strategy 2: Increase community collaboration among homeless service providers through Skagit County Coalition to End Homelessness, increased day to day contacts among service providers, and partnerships and paired funding opportunities.

2. Increase the number of emergency shelter and transitional housing beds available within the continuum.

Strategy 1: Skagit County Community Action Agency’s planned expansion of its Emergency Family Shelter.

3. Create Permanent Supportive Housing and Transitional Housing for special need and underserved populations.

Strategy 1: Maintain a program of transitional housing with wrap around services for young adults 18-21.

Strategy 2: Maintain a permanent supportive residential program for 16-17 year olds.

Lead Agency: Northwest Youth Services

4. Develop an integrated system that provides homeless services which includes:

- Clearing house for housing options Housing Placement Assistance
- Client-based Case Management throughout Continuum
- Advocacy
- Education for Landlords & Tenants
- Long-term skill building
- Chemical Dependency Recovery Support
- Targeted Services for the Chronically Homeless

- Housing Options for those exiting Institutions (Felons, Mentally Ill)

Strategy 1: Establish a program to provide housing information and case management services to homeless people.

Lead Agency: Skagit County Community Action Agency

5. Increase Permanent Affordable Housing options in the Community.

Strategy 1: Continue to market a unified voice for permanent, affordable housing for homeless.

Lead Agency: Skagit County Coalition to End Homelessness

Strategy 2: Maintain and utilize one-time move-in financial assistance program for income eligible homeless persons.

Lead Agency: SCCAA

Strategy 3: Promotion of low-income affordable housing development in Skagit County to facilitate the movement into homeownership, thus freeing up affordable housing.

Lead Agency: Skagit Coalition to End Homelessness

6. Develop consistent and coordinated services encouraging participation among all agencies involved.

Strategy 1: Skagit County Coalition to End Homelessness serves as a forum to address issues common to agencies that provide housing and/or supportive services for housing.

Lead Agency: Skagit Coalition to End Homelessness

5. Discharge Coordination Policy—Every jurisdiction receiving McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), Supportive Housing, Shelter Plus Care, or Section 8 SRO Program funds must develop and implement a Discharge Coordination Policy, to the maximum extent practicable. Such a policy should include “policies and protocols for the discharge of persons from publicly funded institutions or systems of care (such as health care facilities, foster care or other youth facilities, or correction programs and institutions) in order to prevent such discharge from immediately resulting in homelessness for such persons.” The jurisdiction should describe its planned activities to implement a cohesive, community-wide Discharge Coordination Policy, and how the community will move toward such a policy.

Discharge coordination in Skagit County and Mount Vernon is currently being developed under the County’s new HGAP grant-funded pilot project which is developing a housing-first approach to serving homeless households and individuals, including those being discharged from publicly funded institutions.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development (91.215 (e))

*Please also refer to the Community Development Table in the Needs.xls workbook

1. Identify the jurisdiction's priority non-housing community development needs eligible for assistance by CDBG eligibility category specified in the Community Development Needs Table (formerly Table 2B), – i.e., public facilities, public improvements, public services and economic development.
 - Provide basic human service support (Public Service)
 - Protect low- to moderate income concentration areas from flooding of the Skagit River (Public Facilities)
2. Describe the basis for assigning the priority given to each category of priority needs.

The 2005 Skagit County Low-Income Needs Assessment found a high level of need and limited availability for a variety of basic human services. These service gaps include: health care, housing assistance, energy assistance, adult basic education and other basic human services.

The downtown neighborhood of Mount Vernon, home to the highest concentration of low- to moderate-income (LMI) persons, is under constant threat of flooding from the Skagit River. In order to protect this neighborhood and its residents, the implementation of a floodwall is proposed by the City of Mount Vernon 2004-2008 Consolidated Plan.

3. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

With such a large portion of Mount Vernon households being low- or moderate-income, a major obstacle to meeting the underserved needs is to have sufficient local, state or federal resources. In some cases, having a portion of the funds available from resources through the City may not make a project or program feasible if insufficient private or other public funds are not available to the project or program.

4. Identify specific long-term and short-term community development objectives (including economic development activities that create jobs), developed in accordance with the statutory goals described in section 24 CFR 91.1 and the primary objective of the CDBG program to provide decent housing and a suitable living environment and expand economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

NOTE: Each specific objective developed to address a priority need, must be identified by number and contain proposed accomplishments, the time period (i.e., one, two, three, or more years), and annual program year numeric goals the jurisdiction hopes to achieve in quantitative terms, or in other measurable terms as identified and defined by the jurisdiction.

Long and short term objectives for non-housing community development need include the following:

The City of Mount Vernon will support and encourage the following non-housing community development activities:

1. Basic human services support
 - a. Human services (e.g. housing, basic needs, health-related services, adult basic education, etc.)
 - b. Continuum of care plan (services in support of the homeless)
2. Neighborhood revitalization
 - a. Public facilities to protect LMI neighborhoods from flooding

Goals and Strategies

The following goals, strategies, and objectives are based on the above activities and are consistent with the statutory goals outlined in the introduction to this plan.

Human Services

Basic human needs such as healthcare, clothing, housing, childcare and job training are not always available to low-income families and individuals. Basic needs and services for the homeless or those at risk of homelessness are designated as the area's highest priority needs. The following strategies will help meet those needs.

Goal 1: Enhance the delivery of effective, supportive services to priority low-income and homeless populations by providing funding and technical assistance to human service agencies.

Strategy 1: Maximize CDBG funding from human service agencies serving low-income populations

Objectives:

- Support human service agencies and their programs by using the maximum allowable CDBG funds for human services.

Neighborhood Revitalization

The constant threat of flooding to Mount Vernon's downtown and low-income neighborhoods is the primary focus of the City's CDBG neighborhood revitalization strategy.

Goal 1: Mitigate the flood hazard in low-income neighborhoods.

Strategy 1: Use CDBG funds to help implement the City's Downtown flood protection plan.

Objectives:

- Allocate funds to planning, acquisition and public facility projects as necessary to implement the flood mitigation plan
- Acquire properties as necessary for the development of flood mitigation infrastructure (e.g. flood wall)
- Develop flood mitigation infrastructure

Antipoverty Strategy (91.215 (h))

1. Describe the jurisdiction's goals, programs, and policies for reducing the number of poverty level families (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually). In consultation with other appropriate public and private agencies, (i.e. TANF agency) state how the jurisdiction's goals, programs, and policies for producing and preserving affordable housing set forth in the housing component of the consolidated plan will be coordinated with other programs and services for which the jurisdiction is responsible.

Many CDBG programs strive to increase self-sufficiency of low-income families and reduce the number of households with incomes below the poverty line. Through the Human Service Allocations process, the City further strives to reduce poverty levels by providing financial assistance to human service agencies that provide support services to those in poverty. With this assistance, the cost of offering basic services such as housing, food, clothing, and child care can be reduced.

2. Identify the extent to which this strategy will reduce (or assist in reducing) the number of poverty level families, taking into consideration factors over which the jurisdiction has control.

As has been cited before, the needs far out pace the resources. However, the public and non-profit funders and non-profit service provider community are well aware of this imbalance and are actively collaborating to coordinate funding of services to leverage the amounts of funds for efficiency and to end duplication of services.

NON-HOMELESS SPECIAL NEEDS

Specific Special Needs Objectives (91.215)

1. Describe the priorities and specific objectives the jurisdiction hopes to achieve over a specified time period.

The City of Mount Vernon will support and encourage supportive services and affordable housing for those with special needs listed below:

- Homeless, including chronically homeless and homeless families
- Persons at risk of homelessness

The City hopes to achieve the following goals between 2009 and 2013 in addressing the special housing needs of these populations.

Goal 1: Enhance the delivery of effective, supportive services to priority low-income and homeless populations by providing funding and technical assistance to human service agencies.

Strategy 1: Maximize CDBG funding from human service agencies serving low-income populations

Objectives:

- Support human service agencies and their programs by using the maximum allowable CDBG funds for human services.

2. Describe how Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources that are reasonably expected to be available will be used to address identified needs for the period covered by the strategic plan.

It is expected that the City of Mount Vernon and a variety of human service and housing agencies will pursue a diverse list of private, local, state and federal resources to fund their delivery of services for those with special needs. The resources that can reasonably be expected to be available to assist persons with special needs include federal, state grants, and local public and private sector resources, such as United Way. It is anticipated that these resources will be used to support the housing and case management services of those in need. The federal grants will be used primarily for homeless with other non-federal state and local funds being used for non-homeless special needs persons.

Non-homeless Special Needs (91.205 (d) and 91.210 (d)) Analysis

*Please also refer to the Non-homeless Special Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Estimate, to the extent practicable, the number of persons in various subpopulations that are not homeless but may require housing or supportive services, including the elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families), persons with alcohol or other drug addiction, victims of domestic violence, and any other categories the jurisdiction may specify and describe their supportive housing needs. The jurisdiction can use the Non-Homeless Special Needs Table (formerly Table 1B) of their Consolidated Plan to help identify these needs.

*Note: HOPWA recipients must identify the size and characteristics of the population with HIV/AIDS and their families that will be served in the metropolitan area.

Non-Homeless Special Needs

While the Skagit County's *Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness* and the *Continuum of Care Plan* indicate that a significant number of persons with special needs were homeless, there are many more that are currently in stable housing but are vulnerable, and require critical services to maintain a level of independence. The Census indicates that there were 9,462 persons over 16 years of age that had disabilities in 2000. Many of these may require housing and other forms of assistance as circumstances change and care givers age beyond their ability to continue services.

2. Identify the priority housing and supportive service needs of persons who are not homeless but may or may not require supportive housing, i.e., elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families), persons with alcohol or other drug addiction by using the Non-homeless Special Needs Table.
3. Describe the basis for assigning the priority given to each category of priority needs.

Persons with chronic mental illness, the elderly/frail elderly and those with alcohol and drug addictions are the most in need of supportive services. It is also clear from the narrative that those persons with alcohol and drug addiction are most likely to inflict a high cost to other family members and to the community. Likewise, those with severe mental illness also place a high cost to other family members and the community. It is for these reasons that priority funding for supportive services will be directed to assist those with drug and alcohol addictions and to services for chronically mentally ill. Because the number of elderly and frail elderly is expected to increase as baby boomers age, programs and resources to assist this increasing population will be sought.

4. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

The need for funding for housing and case management services to serve those with special needs is larger than the local resources that are available. There is also a need to enhance the coordination between agencies that provide services to these populations, in order to identify and eliminate both service gaps and service redundancies.

5. To the extent information is available, describe the facilities and services that assist persons who are not homeless but require supportive housing, and programs for ensuring that persons returning from mental and physical health institutions receive appropriate supportive housing.

A series of tables in the Homeless Section under Homeless Inventory (91.210 (c)) in this document lists homeless prevention, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and permanent affordable housing programs to address the housing needs of these vulnerable populations.

6. If the jurisdiction plans to use HOME or other tenant based rental assistance to assist one or more of these subpopulations, it must justify the need for such assistance in the plan.

The jurisdiction does not receive HOME funds.