

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Regional HOME Consortium

Purpose of the Consolidated Plan

Beginning in fiscal year 1995, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) required local communities and states to prepare a Consolidated Plan in order to receive federal housing and community development funding from four programs: the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the HOME Investments Partnership Program (HOME); the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG); and Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA).

The Purpose of the Consolidated Plan is:

1. To identify a community's or state's housing and community development needs, priorities, goals and strategies; and
2. To stipulate how funds will be allocated to housing and community development activities.

Consolidated Plan. This report is the FY2007–2009 Three-year Consolidated Plan for the Boulder County/Broomfield County Regional HOME Consortium. It covers the HOME dollars expected to be received by the Consortium, an estimated \$1.4 million per year. In addition, it covers the CDBG funding to be received by the two entitlement cities, Boulder and Longmont. These dollars will be used to address the housing and community development needs of low- and moderate-income residents in the Consortium area.

This Consolidated Plan represents the comprehensive efforts of the Consortium cities and counties in addressing the housing and community development needs for the entire Consortium. To that end, the strategic plan and objectives outlined in this Consolidated Plan also represent the goals and objectives of the City of Boulder and the City of Longmont for their respective CDBG programs. However, as required by HUD, the tables attached to this Plan that outline the specific projects to be carried out represent only the HOME dollars from the Consortium. The individual Action Plans for the City of Boulder and the City of Longmont contain a listing of projects that will be used by these communities' respective CDBG allocations.

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Choice. In addition to the Consolidated Plan, HUD requires that cities and states receiving CDBG funding take actions to affirmatively further fair housing choice. Cities and states report on such activities by completing an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) every three to five years. In general, the AI is a review of impediments to fair housing choice in the public and private sector.

An AI for the Consortium was completed separately from the HOME Consolidated Plan.

Geographic Area of Focus

This Consolidated Plan encompasses the geographic area of Boulder County and Broomfield County and the incorporated and unincorporated areas within these two counties.

Research Process

The research process for the Consolidated Plan was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. It involved collection and analysis of demographic, economic, housing and home loan data; an assessment of subsidized housing conditions; and a detailed analysis of the affordable housing market. In addition, focus groups were conducted with stakeholders involved in housing and community development and providing services to special-needs populations.

Public process. Citizens contributed to the development of the Consolidated Plan through stakeholder focus groups and interviews and a 30-day draft public comment period. In August 2006, four focus groups and follow-up interviews were conducted with individuals from organizations representing public housing authorities (PHAs) and serving special populations and local elected officials. A total of 32 individuals representing 24 organizations and city and county departments participated in the focus groups. In addition, the City of Longmont held three public hearings on June 26, September 26 and October 24 to gain input on the city's housing and community development needs.

Summary Findings

Housing market conditions. Summary findings from the Housing Market Analysis conducted for this Consolidated Plan include the following:

- The Boulder/Broomfield Counties HOME Consortium is home to about 330,000 people and 128,000 households. Residents in the Consortium have higher incomes than other counties in the Denver Metro area—but they also face higher housing costs.
- As of March 2006, the median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the Boulder/Broomfield County area was \$780. This was the second-highest rent level of any county in the seven-county Denver Metro area. About half of the Consortium's renter population can afford to pay the median rent without being cost burdened.
- Although affordable rental units are fairly easy to come by for many renters in the Consortium, renters with the lowest incomes have a very limited supply of units from which to choose. In addition, the vouchers available to assist these renters with rent payments are inadequate to help the many renters who need assistance. Indeed, in 2005, about 7,500 renter households—20 percent of all renter households—earned less than \$15,000. There are approximately 2,500 affordable units and rental assistance vouchers available to households in this income range, leaving a shortage of 5,000 rental units.
- In addition, renters who earn less than \$50,000 per year have a very difficult time finding an affordable home to purchase in the Consortium area. Sixty-five percent of

renters earned less than \$50,000 per year, but only 8 percent of the for-sale market (around 1,000 units) was affordable to them in 2005. The median price of an attached unit for sale in Boulder County was \$200,000 in 2005; the median price of a detached unit was \$362,450. In Broomfield County, the median price of an attached unit was \$206,054; the median price of a detached unit was \$282,250.

- Homeowners who make less than \$50,000 per year would have a tough time selling their home and finding an affordable replacement home within the Consortium boundaries, unless they had substantial equity in their existing home.
- As many as 1,500 of the Consortium's lowest-income households could be living in units built before 1960 and, as such, have some risk of lead-based paint exposure. On the upper end, as many as 14,100 low- to moderate-income households could be at risk of exposure if all of the Consortium's oldest units are occupied by low- to moderate-income households.

Housing needs. Participants in the focus groups conducted as part of the Consolidated Plan examined the greatest housing needs in the Consortium area and identified potential solutions to meet these needs.

In general, the populations identified as having the most critical affordable housing needs included low-income households, seniors, people with disabilities and families. Focus group attendees agreed that these groups are the most typical types of households that have difficulties securing affordable housing, whether for rent or to own.

Special-needs populations. Organizations serving populations with special needs each considered the population they serve to have critical affordable housing needs. All of the participating organizations had closed waiting lists for the affordable units the organizations manage. For people with physical disabilities there is a lack of affordable *accessible* housing for rent or ownership. For people with HIV/AIDS there are an insufficient number of affordable units with wraparound services such as counseling. For people with mental disabilities, there are an insufficient number of affordable units with attendant supportive services. Participants also believe that a number of people with disabilities of any type are "housed" in nursing homes because they have no place else to go.

Homeless and at-risk. Organizations serving the currently homeless, households at risk of homelessness and formerly homeless entering transitional housing consider the populations they serve to have acute affordable housing needs. Longer term, participants identified a need for increasing permanently affordable units. In the short term, there is a need for increasing single room occupancy (SRO) and other transitional housing units.

Solutions to meeting needs. Rather than proscribing a singular initiative for HOME dollars, the majority of focus group participants spoke generally about undertaking a blend of activities that would have the greatest impact on the greatest number of people for the longest period of time.

Top needs. Combining the top findings from the qualitative and quantitative assessments conducted for this Consolidated Plan produces the following overall top housing needs in the Consortium:

- A need for more affordable rental units or tenant-based rental assistance for renter households earning less than \$15,000 per year. These units should be prioritized for persons with special needs, single parents and families.
- Affordable, accessible housing, including assisted living for persons with disabilities and elderly persons.
- Affordable housing with supportive services for persons with mental illnesses and developmental disabilities.
- Transitional housing to serve persons transitioning out of homelessness.
- Affordable homes to purchase for renters earning less than \$50,000.

Strategic Plan and Action Items

Based on the research conducted for the FY2007–2009 Consolidated Plan, the Boulder County/Broomfield County Regional HOME Consortium has developed the following plan for addressing current and future housing and community development needs:

Draft Three-year Strategic Goals

This section of the Consolidated Plan outlines the Consortium’s goals and objectives for the next three years. It includes specific strategies designed to help make progress toward those goals and objectives.

The goals reflect the purposes of the various federal housing and community development funds covered by this Consolidated Plan, including:

- Development and maintenance of safe, decent, affordable housing;
- Developing and maintaining a suitable living environment; and
- Creating economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income households.

The Plan establishes desired outcomes, with measurable outcome indicators. The desired outcomes are impacted by many factors, including the local and regional economy, and the stability of federal funds including CDBG, HOME and the Section 8 program. The goals are beyond the capacity of the Consortium to accomplish alone. In addition, each community may focus on these goals in a different order than shown depending on their individual priorities.

The three-year strategic goals for FY2007 through FY2009 are:

1. Increase and maintain the supply of affordable housing units for low- to moderate-income homebuyers.
2. Increase affordability of rental housing for the Consortium's lowest-income renters.
3. Preserve existing affordable housing stock.
4. Work to reduce homelessness in the Consortium.
5. Maintain and/or improve a suitable living environment and expand economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons.
6. Eliminate impediments to housing choice while providing education, training and information on fair housing.
7. Develop and foster collaborative partnerships within the Consortium area.
8. Identify financial resources to help achieve goals.