

# Draft

## Chapter 4 - Housing

### Introduction

The City of Battle Ground seeks to preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods, while accommodating anticipated growth. The Housing Element provides the tools to accomplish this goal. The City of Battle Ground plans to provide opportunities for new residential neighborhoods to be developed that are consistent with the City's small town feel, and residential infill development that is compatible with existing neighborhoods.

This Element was prepared in conjunction with the Land Use Element. Together, they provide an overview of the City's policies on how housing stock may be expanded and improved to meet the housing needs over the next 20 years. The emphasis of this chapter is on preserving existing residential neighborhoods, accommodating future households through new development and infill development, and making adequate provisions for low-income families by supplying sufficient land and allowing for diversity in housing types. The Land Use Element should be consulted to learn more about how housing densities will be permitted in existing and new neighborhoods.

### Regulatory Context

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that a housing element be included in the comprehensive plan. Advanced planning for housing ensures that adequate and affordable housing is available to the community, and helps to plan for needed infrastructure improvements such as parks, schools, roads, water systems, etc. The GMA established the following housing goal:

- 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.

The contents of this chapter are guided by the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070), which specifies that the Housing Element of the 20-Year Plan shall at a minimum, contain:

- An inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs;
- A statement of goals, policies, and objectives for the preservation, improvement and development of housing;
- An identification of sufficient land for housing, including government-assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing and group homes and foster care facilities;
- Adequate provisions for existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.
- An inventory of public properties no longer needed for use and which may be available for affordable housing. (The only property on the City's inventory is on NW 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, just north of the Albertsons.)
- Provisions for accessory dwelling units. Such provisions are subject to regulations, conditions, and limitations as determined by City Council (RCW 43.63A.215).

### County-Wide Housing Policies

The Growth Management Act further required inter-jurisdictional coordination and development of

county-wide policies as it relates to affordable housing and its distribution regionally. Listed below are the countywide housing goals that Battle Ground incorporates into its Plan:

- Provide for diversity in the type, density, location, and affordability of housing throughout the county and its cities. Encourage and support equal access to housing for rental and homeowners and protect public health and safety;
- Plan for increasing housing needs of low- income and special needs households;
- Provide assistance for maintenance and rehabilitation of housing for Clark County residents;
- Promote an active role in affordable housing using a combination of regulatory, partnership and finance techniques;
- Establish a secure funding mechanism to support development of affordable housing;
- Coordinate and concentrate public expenditures to make positive and visible impacts on targeted neighborhoods; and,
- Support diversity in the mix of housing types in the community, while improving home ownership tenure.

## **Housing Element Goals and Objectives**

### **Housing Goal 1:**

*The City will encourage a range of housing types and prices to meet the needs of all citizens of Battle Ground.*

### **Objectives**

HO1.1 The City will provide the opportunity to develop an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs and preferences of Battle Ground's households now and in the future.

HO1.2 The City will support the creation of a variety of housing types that are attractive and affordable to potential homebuyers at all income levels.

HO1.3 The City will work to balance density goals and housing type targets with other City goals and objectives.

HO1.4 The City will encourage housing that supports sustainable development patterns, resource efficient design and construction, and the use of renewable energy resources (EO1.1).

HO1.5 The City will work to ensure neighborhood stability through a variety of homeownership and rental housing options and the preservation of existing housing (LUO6.1).

HO1.6 The City will treat residential structures occupied by persons with handicaps the same as similar residential structures occupied by a family or other unrelated individuals.

HO1.7 The City will treat residential structures occupied by group care for children that meets the definition of "familial status" the same as similar residential structures occupied by a family or other unrelated individuals.

## **Population Growth and Housing Demand**

As of 2015, the City of Battle Ground is the third largest incorporated community in Clark County, with a population of 19,250. Historically, Battle Ground added most of its population during 1990 to 2010,

growing from a town of 3,758 residents in 1990, to 17,571 in 2010 (Table: Population Trends). Growth rates during the nineties were very high at around 15%. The 2000's, growth was still high but tapered to 8%, and proportionally larger city also accounts for decreasing growth rates. The slowest growth occurred during 2010 to 2015 at 2%, however building permit activity has increased in 2014 and 2015, but not at the same rate as the 1990 to 2010 era (Table: Population Change).

**Table 4-1: Population Trends (1990-2015)**

	1990	2000	2010	2015
<b>Battle Ground</b>	3,758	9,332	17,571	20,871
<b>Clark County</b>	238,053	345,238	425,363	448,845
<b>Washington</b>	4,866,669	5,894,121	6,724,540	7,061,410

Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management

**Table 4-2: Population Change (1990-2015)**

	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-15
<b>Battle Ground</b>	148%	88%	10%
<b>Clark County</b>	45%	23%	6%
<b>Washington</b>	21%	14%	5%

Source: Calculations from OFM data  
 Note: Battle Ground's annual growth from 1990-2000 was 14.8 percent.  
 From 2010-15 it is 2%.

The primary goal of the Housing element is to meet the current and future need for housing, while preserving and enhancing the livability of Battle Ground's existing neighborhoods. Battle Ground's population is expected to add 17,572 new citizens by 2035 with a total population of 38,443. This will require the construction of approximately 6,708 additional dwelling units.

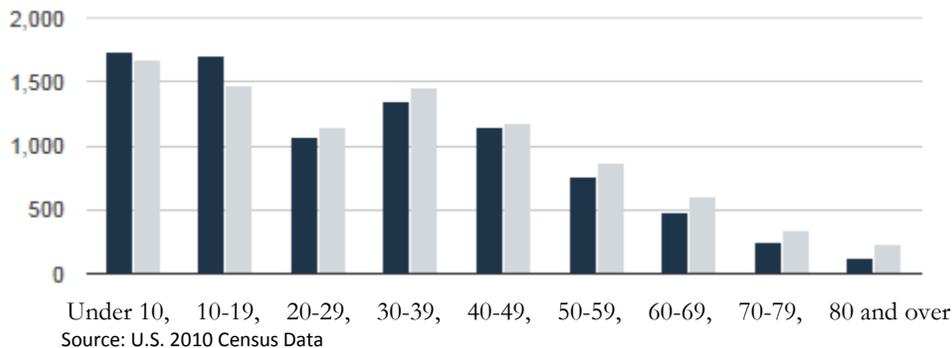
RCW 36.70A.215 requires that "suitable land to accommodate the countywide population projection established for the county pursuant to RCW 43.62.035 and the subsequent population allocations within the county and between the county and its cities and the requirements of RCW 36.70A.110." As noted, Battle Ground must plan for approximately 5,169 additional dwelling units, which translate into a need of 1,231 acres, according to the Clark County Vacant Buildable lands report. The City's existing vacant residential lots, opportunity for infill development, and the land with the existing Urban Growth Boundary can accommodate this demand (Table: Future Demand for New Housing).

**Age Characteristics of Residents**

The City of Battle Ground's policies support meeting the diverse housing needs of its residents. Understanding the age characteristics of the City's population is an important step towards accomplishing this. Middle-aged adults and young children comprise the greatest share of Battle Ground's population at 61%. The median age is 28.3 (male) and 31.5 (female). Battle Ground has a large population of kids as represented in the "under 10" and "10-19" columns in the Table: Population/Age Distribution. There is a decrease in population for those in their 20's, but this rebounds for those in their 30's. The population segments then decrease with an aging population. The average household size in the City is 3.1 persons, whereas statewide it is 2.5. Being primarily a young, family-based community, Battle Ground should plan for continued and new family-sized households (3+ bedrooms) as well homes

that are affordable.

**Table 4-4: Population/Age Distribution by Gender**



A relatively small, but still significant share of Battle Ground’s population is comprised of senior citizens. Those 65 and over comprise 8.3 percent of all citizens. This population segment is increasing at a faster rate locally and nationally. In the future, Battle Ground will need to meet the challenges of an aging population such as affording higher rent, rising property taxes and maintenance costs. Houses will also need to be designed to be more accessible and accommodating for those with a disability. Elderly citizens, defined as people over age 85, may require assisted living, in home care, and greater access to medical services.

According to the Clark County Comprehensive Plan, as well as Battle Ground trends between 2000 and 2010, the majority of the elderly population prefers to live independently in family units or alone. Senior living in group quarters has remained the same from 2000 to 2010, while those living alone have increased by 68% and those living in families have increased by 88%. This population could be well served by smaller, affordable and accessible rental and ownership housing units. Accessory Dwelling Units, whether attached or detached, from the primary dwelling unit will continue to be a needed housing type within Battle Ground. To incentivize ADU’s, the City may consider greater zoning flexibility or fee reductions. Battle Ground is committed to allowing the development of group, family, or individual housing that meets the special needs of senior citizen and elderly populations.

**Table 4-5: Senior Citizens’ Housing Arrangements in Battle Ground, 2000 to 2010**

Housing Arrangement	2000	2010
In family households	470	1,006
Living alone	237	399
In group quarters	92	96
<b>Total</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>1,501</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, 2010.

### Physically Challenged Population

In Battle Ground, nearly 9% of citizens have some form of disability. Disabilities increase with age, and for those over 65, the rate increases to 38%. Housing, along with other public infrastructure, must be designed to accommodate those with physical challenges. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that all new structures designed for public accommodation to be readily accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities. It also requires that when alterations or improvements are made to

existing structures, up to 20% of the cost of the improvements shall be allocated to increase the accessibility of the structure or space. The City implements the ADA provisions through its development and building codes.

### Housing Affordability

The City of Battle Ground’s affordable housing strategy is to provide an adequate supply of land that is available for development of a diverse array of housing types, and by allowing group housing for low-income populations, subject to regulations adopted by City Council. Analyzing housing affordability provides an important indicator of whether this strategy is succeeding.

In 2015, the average “sold” price in Battle Ground is \$260,000 and the average home price per square foot is \$145. In Washington State, the average home price is \$219,000 and average sale price is \$283,284. (Source: Reatlor.com). From 2009-2013, the average price of a home was \$213,800. In 1999, the average home was \$156,400 and in 1990, \$60,300 (Source: U.S Census Data).

Battle Ground’s median household income was \$57,134 in 2010 (Table: Median Household Income). The City’s inflation-adjusted median household income grew at a faster rate than Clark County and Vancouver during 2000 to 2010, but grew at a slower rate than Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Washougal, and Yacolt. Battle Ground’s median household income is comparable to that of greater Clark County.

**Table 4-6: Median Household Income**

	1990	2000	2010	2000-2010
Battle Ground	\$31,958	\$45,070	\$57,134	27%
Camas	\$37,649	\$60,187	\$77,334	28%
La Center	\$32,609	\$55,333	\$71,522	29%
Ridgefield	\$35,563	\$46,012	\$76,295	66%
Vancouver	\$28,395	\$41,618	\$48,875	17%
Washougal	\$33,548	\$38,719	\$61,121	58%
Yacolt	\$23,971	\$39,444	\$53,452	36%
Clark County	\$41,897	\$48,376	\$58,262	20%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to federal guidelines, housing is affordable only when it is 30 percent or less of a household’s gross income (including taxes and insurance). In Battle Ground, as well as greater Clark County, low-income households face a growing challenge in trying to find affordable housing due to rising costs of housing. For homeowners, 42% pay over 30% percent of their income on housing, and for renters it is 49% (Table: Battle Ground Income and Housing Cost).

**Table 4-7: Battle Ground Income and Housing Cost**

	<b>Battle Ground</b>	<i>Vancouver</i>	<i>Clark County</i>	<i>Washington State</i>	<i>Multnomah County</i>
Percent owned	67%	50%	66%	64%	55%
Median Assessed Value (owner occupied units)	227,900	215,500	\$243,300	\$272,900	\$276,900
Share of owner- households paying 30% or more of income for housing	42%	41%	40%	40%	41%
Gross rent, Median	\$998	\$881	\$919	\$951	\$884
Share of renters paying 30% or more of income for housing	49%	51%	52%	50%	54%
Median household income	\$57,520	\$49,271	\$58,764	\$59,374	\$51,582
Individuals in poverty	12%	16%	12%	13%	17%

Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Rental rates have also increase throughout Clark County. Battle Ground has experienced the greatest percentage of increase in rental costs during the past decade (38.5%); as a result of the increase, renter households must earn \$41,000 or more annually to afford the median rent.

**Table 4-8: Median Gross Rent by Community, Clark County, 2000 and 2009**

<i>City</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>Percent Increase</i>	<i>Annual Income needed to Afford</i>
Vancouver	\$671	\$820	22%	\$32,800
Clark County	684	846	24	33,840
<b>Battle Ground</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>41,160</b>
Camas	657	859	31	34,360
La Center	723	793	10	31,720
Ridgefield	725	842	16	33,680
Washougal	609	821	35	32,840
Woodland	544	711	31	28,440
Yacolt	750	680	-9	27,200

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009 5-year estimate, 2000 Census. Found in "Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice," Prepared by BBC Research & Consulting Clark County, Washington, 2012.

Clark County's Department of Community Services is responsible for the administration of both the CDBG and HOME Program in unincorporated Clark County. They also administer the programs for Battle Ground, as well as Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Washougal, Woodland, the town of Yacolt.

### **Funding Sources**

Providing housing affordable to low- to-moderate income households and special needs populations typically requires direct subsidies and involvement by public or non-profit sectors. Major agencies and programs in the county include the following:

#### ***Vancouver Housing Authority (VHA)***

VHA has served as the designated public housing provider in the county since 1942 and in 2010, provided rental housing and housing assistance to approximately 12,500 residents countywide. VHA owns or manages approximately 1,000 units, provides voucher assistance for private rental of 2,300 units and provides 1,900 units of workforce housing for families. VHA also owns or manages 300 special needs units for assisted living, shelters or persons with mental illness.

#### ***Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program***

Since 1985, Clark County has received over one million dollars annually in CDBG funds. Local CDBG program activities related to housing include neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing assistance and assistance to homeless residents. Clark County's Department of Community Services is responsible for the administration of both the CDBG and HOME Program in unincorporated Clark County. They also administer the programs for Battle Ground, as well as Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Washougal, Woodland, the town of Yacolt.

#### ***HOME Investment Partnership (HOME)***

Clark County annually allocates federal funds to create affordable low-income housing under the HOME program. Projects include assistance with home buying or renting, housing rehabilitation loans or direct development of affordable rental housing. Housing Rehabilitation Program Vancouver also operates an owner-occupied housing rehabilitation program providing up to \$25,000 to moderate income homeowners and an emergency repair grants of up to \$5000 for low income mobile home owners.

#### ***Non-profit Organizations***

Local non-profit organizations involved in low income or special needs housing provision or assistance include: Affordable Community Environments; Columbia Non-Profit Housing; Community Housing Resource Center; Council for the Homeless; Evergreen Habitat for Humanity; Janus Youth; Second Step Housing; and Share.

#### ***Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan 2010-2014***

To guide local housing provision and set priorities for local expenditure of federal CDBG and HOME funds, Clark County periodically produces a Consolidated Housing Plan. The plan provides an analysis of community needs and establishes priority objectives and long-range strategies to guide the allocation of housing and community development resources. It is updated annually through an "Action Plan" with information on projects and funding for the upcoming year and supported by an annual performance report.

#### ***Ten Year Homeless Plan, 2012***

Pursuant to state requirements to develop plans to end homelessness, in 2012 Clark County, City of Vancouver and area non-profit organizations adopted a 10-year homeless plan. The plan requires completing annual one-day counts of homeless persons. As of January 2011 there were 650 sheltered

homeless persons in Clark County, 187 unsheltered persons and 834 persons living temporarily with family or friends.

### **Conclusion**

Sufficient land has been allocated throughout the Battle Ground UGB to accommodate the anticipated population growth, and a full range of housing types as required by the GMA. The Land Use and Housing Elements permit the following housing types within the city of Battle Ground:

- single-family (various sizes and densities);
- duplex;
- small multiplex;
- multifamily;
- manufactured homes;
- low income housing;
- mixed use residential;
- mixed use residential/commercial; and,
- group homes.

Battle Ground housing is primarily family-oriented, and it is likely that the housing market will continue to reflect this characteristic in the future. There is likely to be an increase of seniors and elderly, or those with disabilities, who require different housing options. The City will continue to work with the county and federal agencies in helping to meet the needs of populations with special housing needs.

Ownership housing is slightly unaffordable for median income households, and is expected to become less affordable in the future. Rental housing has more problematic given the sharp increase in rent and family incomes that are not increase as much. Lower income households are not expected to experience difficulty affording rental housing in the future, but will find ownership opportunities more constrained. As a result of these needs, there will continue to be a high demand for affordable housing. Being a family based, community, Battle Ground will also need to provide homes with three or more bedrooms. The City will continue to coordinate with the County on providing for affordable housing opportunities.

The condition of the city's housing stock is good, which is expected to continue due to increasing investment in the residential market and adequate code enforcement. The City will continue to ensure that the housing stock reflects the highest standards of health, safety, and comfort for its residents.

The City strives to meet Clark County's objective for a housing split that includes approximately 75 percent single-family housing types and 25 percent multifamily housing types. In the future, the City will have an adequate amount of land that is designated for each of these types that will be available for annexation. Therefore, it can be expected that the City will be able to achieve this objective.