

AREA

2016-17 LONGVIEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

About Longview’s Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive plans are intended to translate community values and goals into a framework for government decisions about how a city grows, how land is used, and all the other things typically found in a community such as housing, streets, utilities, parks and other public facilities, and public services – as well as how public dollars are spent. Plans look out ahead to how today’s Longview residents want the city to look and function over the next 20 years. In concert with Longview’s strategic plan, the comprehensive plan serves as a roadmap for achieving that vision.

Only a small part of Washington’s growth management law applies to Longview and other cities within Cowlitz County, giving us more flexibility to respond to local priorities. The City’s plan was last updated ten years ago, in 2006. At midway through the life of the plan, it’s time to assess what’s going well, and what we should change.

These conversations will help shape a plan that will best direct Longview’s public policies, regulations, and public investments. Public hearings will follow once the new plan is drafted. Thank you for taking part!

About the Highlands Area

The Highlands neighborhood contains close to 1,800 housing units, about 1,000 of which are rentals. The area has a mixture of single-family homes (77 percent), with small-scale multifamily (duplex/triplex/ small apartments) and larger multifamily (Alder Terrace) making up the remainder. Some homes are better maintained than others. Census data estimates that of over 4,800 people living in the area, close to 16 percent are unemployed and over 40 percent live in poverty.

Income

\$11,399

Per capita income

about half the amount in Longview: \$22,223

about half the amount in Cowlitz County: \$24,260

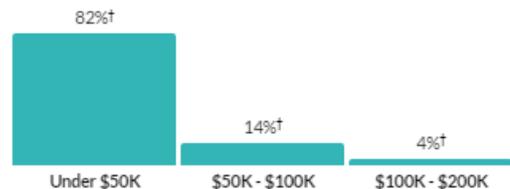
\$22,092

Median household income

about three-fifths of the amount in Longview: \$38,498

about half the amount in Cowlitz County: \$47,452

Household income



Poverty

41.5%

Persons below poverty line

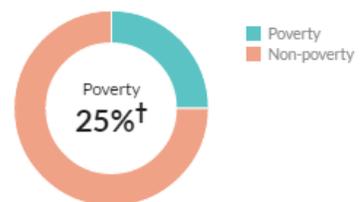
nearly double the rate in Longview: 22.7%

more than double the rate in Cowlitz County: 17.5%

Children (Under 18)



Seniors (65 and over)



For discussion purposes, the Highlands emphasis area includes a narrow commercial strip along Oregon Way between Beech and the 15th/Oregon Way intersection. In addition, there are a couple of neighborhood commercial nodes across Beech just outside the area, including a Longview Police satellite office; and a handful of home-based businesses within the neighborhood. The nearest large grocery stores, Safeway and Fred Meyer, are not within easy walking distance of the neighborhood, although it's possible to reach them via one of the two transit routes serving the area. The neighborhood's most significant assets are the 6+-acre Archie Anderson Park and the neighborhood-owned and -operated community center and garden.

Part of the Highlands neighborhood is zoned R-1, allowing fairly low density, but much of it is zoned R-4, one of the highest-density residential zones in the city. The R-4 zone allows for up to 25 dwelling units per acre, or 35 for congregate care and other such facilities. Very little new development or redevelopment has happened in recent years, though; more than three quarters of the housing was built before 1970. Other parts of the city saw an upswing in new homes built during the 1970s. New development potential would involve buying out and tearing down small, older homes and replacing them with more dense development.



What are we looking at?

Following on the Highlands Revitalization Plan, the work of the Highlands Neighborhood Association, and collaboration with Longview Police Department, residents have made strides in improving neighborhood conditions. As might be expected, crime focuses on the overwhelmingly residential character – home burglaries, thefts, car prowls, stolen cars, etc. While the area has shown a high crime rate in the past, the type and amount of crime in the past year has been close to or below average compared to nearby Longview neighborhoods. Assaults (including domestic violence) show a bit higher rate. The notable difference is in the amount of vandalism, which is higher in the area, but this could also be influenced by an active neighborhood group that encourages reporting.

One of the City Council’s priorities has been to promote the development of townhouses and attached housing in the area, which will increase the housing density. Meanwhile, the Police Department is concerned that introducing more people will worsen the crime outlook.

Value

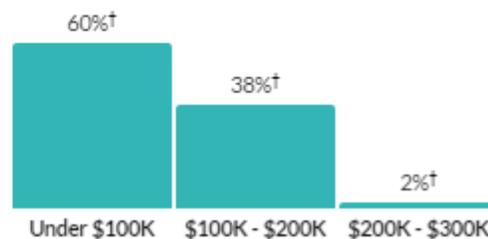
\$82,500

Median value of owner-occupied housing units

about half the amount in Longview: \$162,400

about half the amount in Cowlitz County: \$175,300

Value of owner-occupied housing units



Sometimes there’s the concern that redeveloping housing in an older, poorer neighborhood will displace people by raising property values and rents. One part of the current comprehensive plan update is evaluating the optimal density and housing mix for the Highlands area.

In terms of the commercial area, the existing commercial uses along Oregon Way don’t particularly serve the neighborhood versus pass-by traffic. North of Baltimore, the commercial zone contains older homes. The volume of traffic on Oregon Way doesn’t contribute to a positive living environment, so commercial uses seem most practical in this area. However, the lots are only about 120 feet deep, which limits what could be built there. At the same time, extending the zoning further out from Oregon Way would encroach on the residential area that’s behind it. Realistically, it would be tough to fit new development on these lots and still meet other requirements like parking, landscaping, etc.

What do you think?

- Should housing density stay the same, be increased, or be rolled back for the Highlands area?
- If new housing is built within the area, how can it remain affordable to those living currently there?
- How can the neighborhood build on the momentum it has gained?
- What should happen with the commercial zone running northward from the neighborhood?

Later thoughts? E-mail steve.langdon@ci.longview.wa.us