



HOUSING ELEMENT—DRAFT

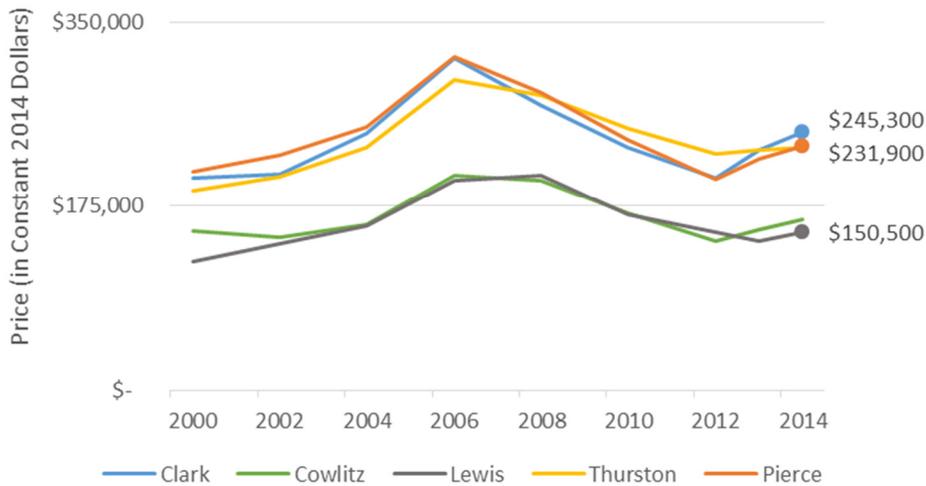
HOUSING

The median price of homes increased over \$28,000 in Lewis County from 2000 to 2014 (when adjusted for inflation), though a span of significant declines in housing values were seen during the period. Median housing values peaked at \$205,069 in 2008 and ended 2014 with a median price of \$150,500.

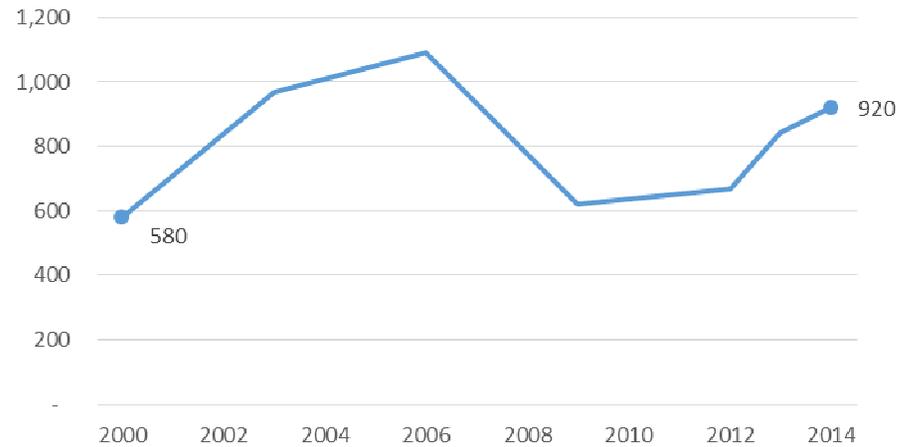
Existing home sales also declined significantly as a result of the Great Recession, though sales did pick up in 2013 and 2014 (similar to the levels of existing home sales seen pre-2007).

New housing starts remained low. In 2014, building permits were issued for 164 new units, a total which continued to be lower than the next lowest years over the past quarter century (1990—174 units and 2000—184 units). Permits nevertheless were up from the years since 2011.

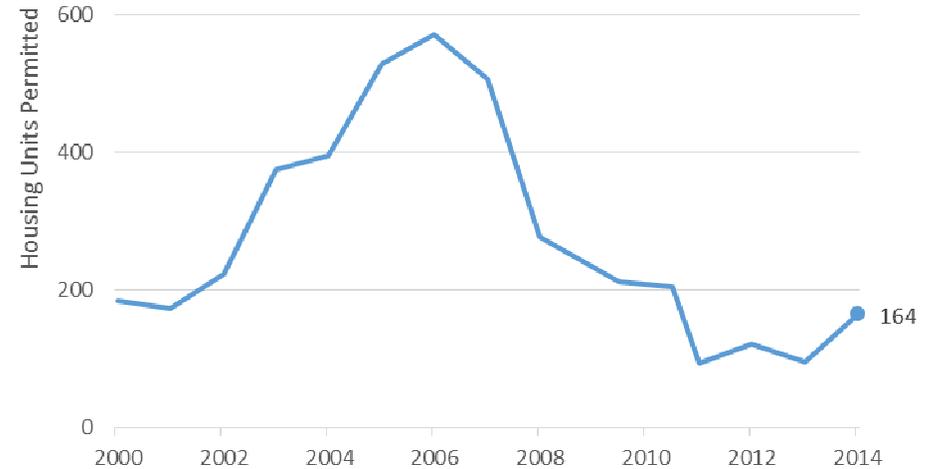
Median Home Price (2000 to 2014)



Existing Home Sales (2000 to 2014)



New Housing Starts¹ (2000 to 2014)



¹ Please note: This total is an estimate from the US Department of Commerce based on a survey of permits issued. A direct count of all permits issued may yield a different total.

HOUSING STOCK

The housing stock in Lewis County tends to be older than adjacent counties along the I-5 corridor. The US Census American Community Survey estimated that roughly 24 percent of the housing stock in Lewis County was built before 1949, compared to the next highest nearby county (21 percent in Cowlitz County and 15 percent in Pierce County).

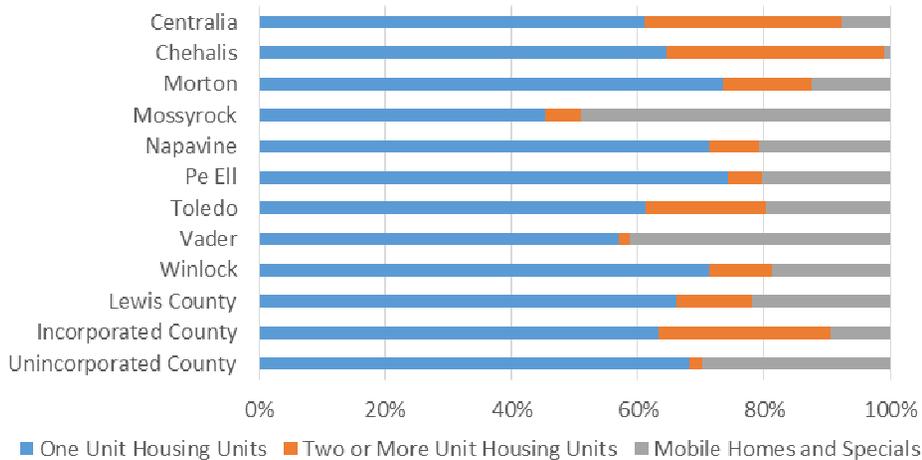
Of the housing stock, the majority of homes were single-family dwellings in 2015 (roughly 68 percent of dwellings countywide according to Office of Financial Management estimates). Mobile homes also constituted a large portion of the housing stock (22 percent).

Multifamily housing (duplexes, apartments, etc.) was limited in distribution throughout the County, with the bulk located in Centralia and Chehalis. Communities such as Toledo and Morton also had sizable portions of multiple unit buildings.

Less than 2 percent of the total housing units in unincorporated portions of Lewis County were in multifamily buildings.

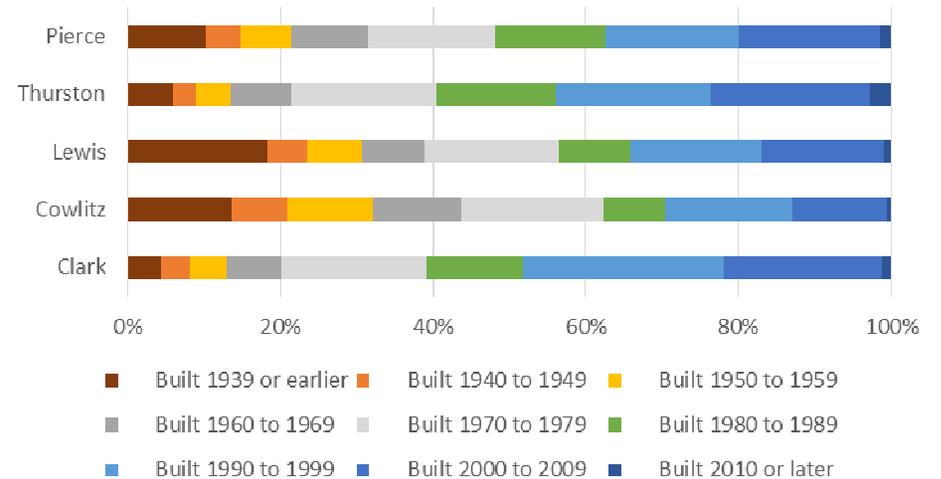
Housing Type by Jurisdiction

2015 Estimate



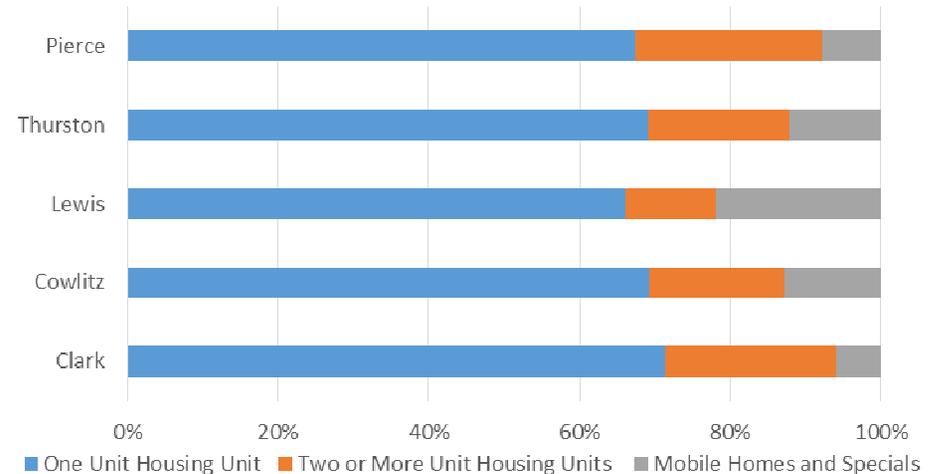
Age of Housing Stock

2010 to 2014 American Community Survey Estimate



Housing Type by Jurisdiction

2015 Estimate

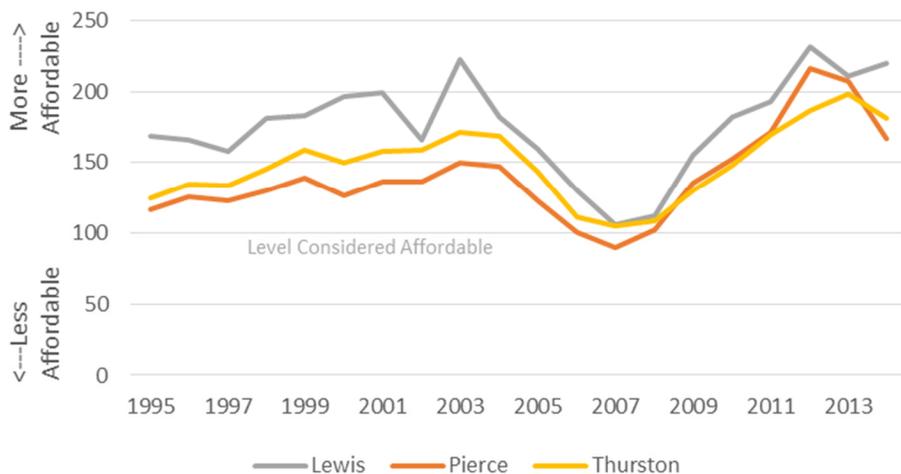


HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Homes in Lewis County tend to be more affordable than more urban portions of the state, particularly the counties within the Puget Sound area. The Washington Center for Real Estate Research (WCRER) Housing Affordability Index measures the affordability of home ownership based on the ability of a middle income family to carry the mortgage payments on a median price home. When the index is 100, there is a balance between the family’s ability to pay and the cost. Higher indexes indicate that housing is more affordable.

In the middle 2000s, the ability of Lewis County middle income families to pay for housing declined, although the index for Lewis County was better than in most neighboring counties (especially those along I-5). Housing affordability has increased since that time.

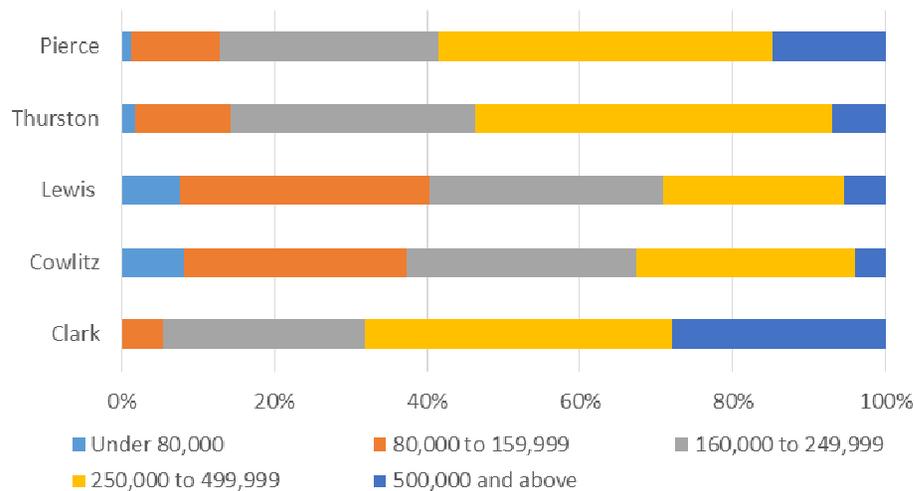
Housing Affordability Index (1995 to 2014)



According to the WCRER (as of the end of 2014), Lewis County contains a variety of homes that are priced at levels that may be affordable to segments of the population that may not be able to purchase a similar priced home in adjacent counties. Roughly 8 percent of the homes on the market in Lewis County cost less than \$80,000, and 40 percent of the total homes cost less than \$160,000. Cowlitz County had a similar proportion of affordable options.

Thurston, Pierce and Clark Counties had a substantially smaller portion of homes that fell within the lower price ranges. Approximately 14 percent of homes in Thurston and 13 percent of homes in Pierce County cost less than \$160,000. In Clark County, 5 percent of homes cost less than \$160,000.

Percentage of Homes on Market in Price Range End of Fourth Quarter 2014



HOUSING EXPENDITURES

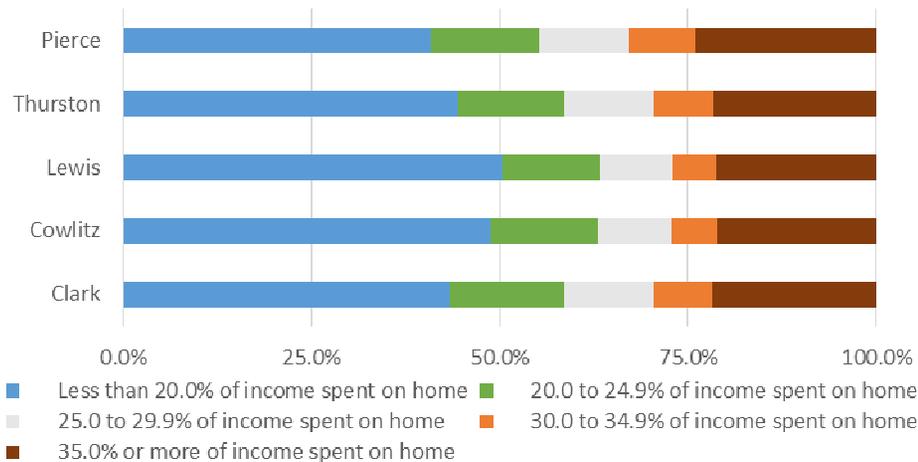
Despite the relative affordability of housing in Lewis County, several homeowners and renters in Lewis County experience cost burdens associated with their housing. A household is considered cost-burdened when:

Housing Costs	Exceed 30 Percent of Income
Housing and Transportation Costs	Exceed 45 Percent of Income

People whose housing costs exceed these thresholds are likely to struggle to pay for other basic needs. Cost-burdened households or individuals may drop health care coverage, or skip meals to save on costs and help to pay for their housing.

Approximately 27 percent of homeowners in Lewis County experienced cost burdens associated with their housing (according to the 2010 to 2014 American Community Survey). This level was just below neighboring counties along the I-5 corridor.¹

Proportion of Homeowners with Share of Income Spent on Housing 2010 to 2014 ACS Estimate

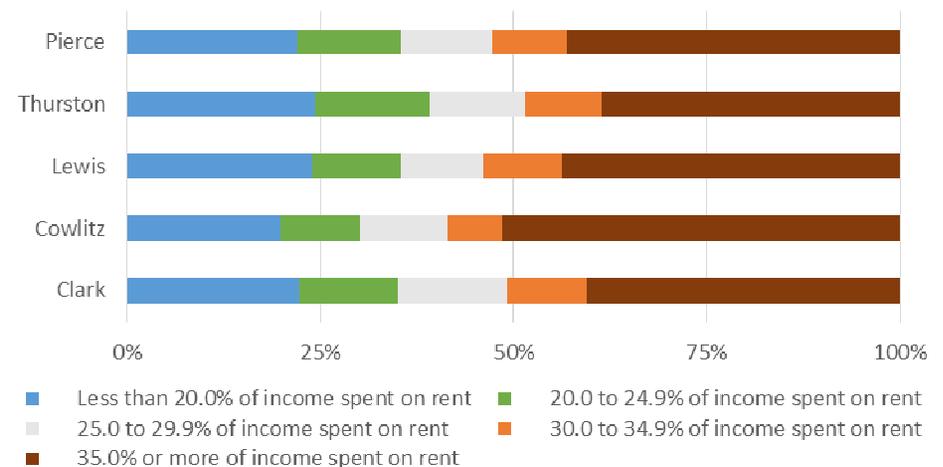


In comparison, roughly 54 percent of rental households had home costs that totaled more than 30 percent of their income.

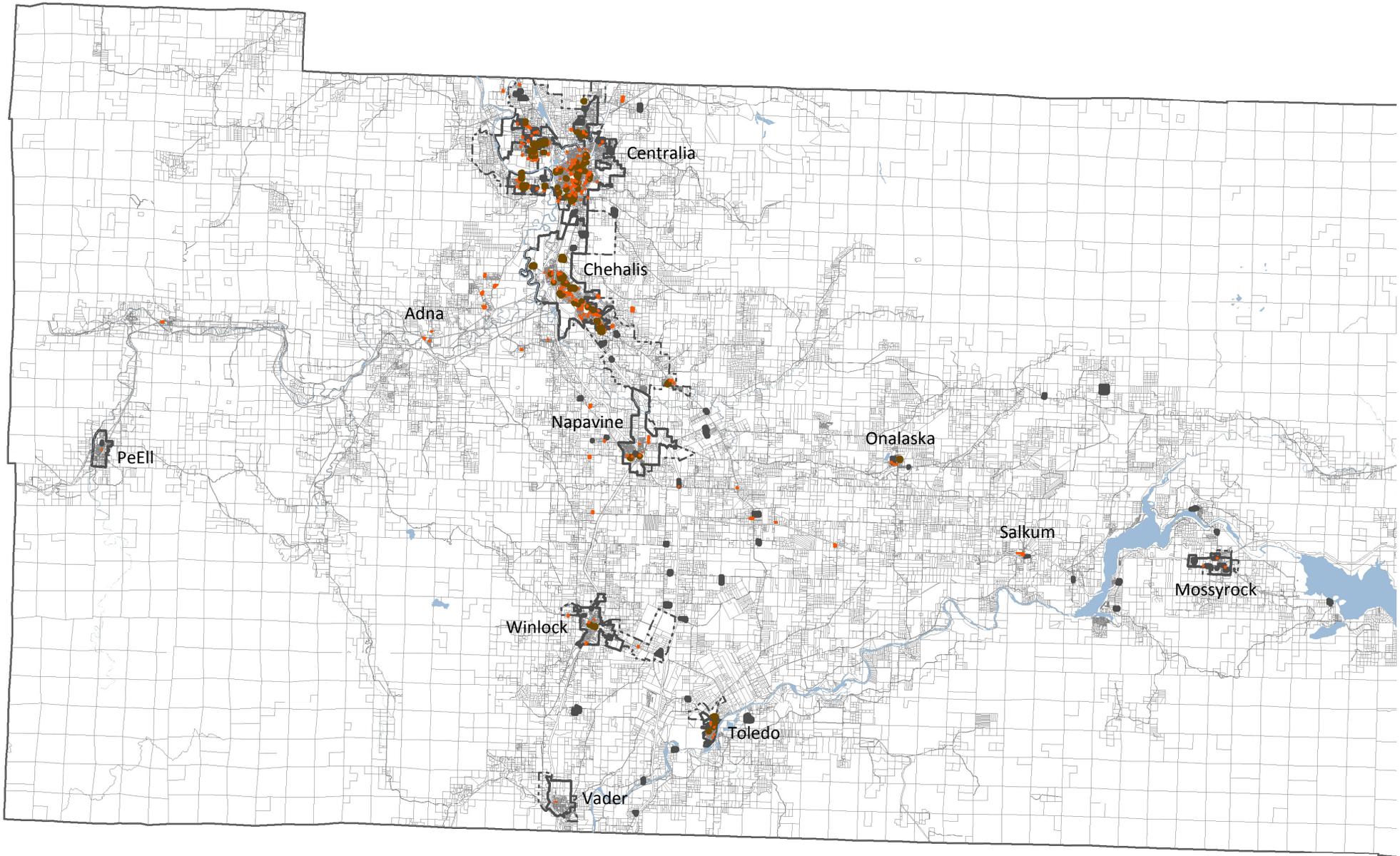
This cost burden was especially pronounced among residents that spent more than 35 percent of their income on rent (43.7 percent of renters in Lewis County). Of neighboring counties, only Cowlitz County was estimated to have a higher proportion of renters that spent more than 35 percent of their income on rent (51.4 percent).

Approximately 24 percent of renters in Lewis County had rents that cost less than 20 percent of their income.

Percentage of Renters with Share of Income Spent on Rent 2010 to 2014 ACS Estimate



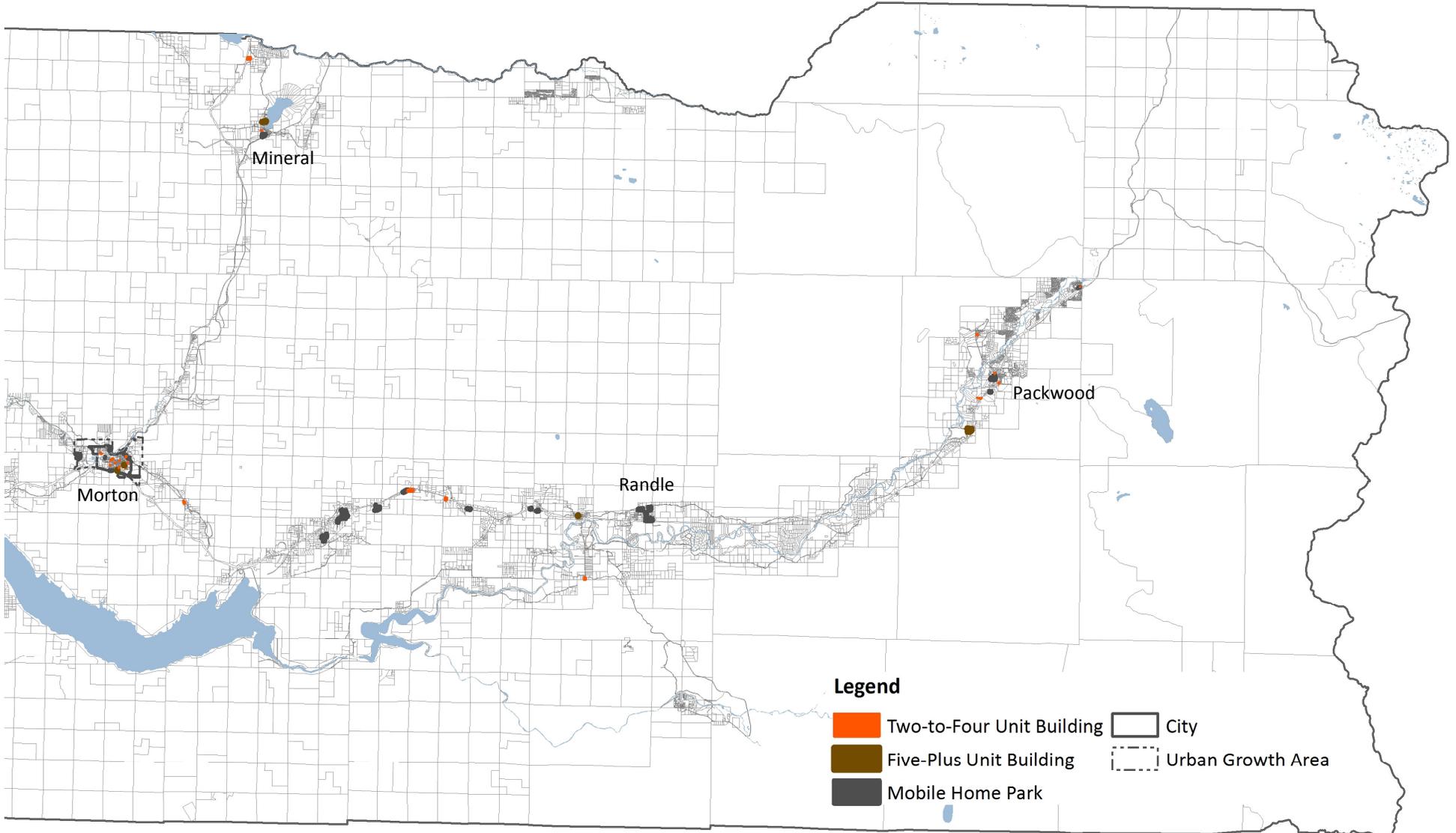
¹Transportation costs were not calculated as part of the 2010 to 2014 American Community Survey. When these levels are calculated, costs associated with housing that require long-distance commutes appear less affordable when compared with a consideration of housing cost alone.



Please note: This map is not intended to be used to determine the exact location of various housing types. Instead, the map is meant to show the relative distribution of different forms of housing in Lewis County.

LEWIS COUNTY

Distribution of Different Types of Housing



HOUSING GOALS AND POLICIES

Please note: these goals and policies have been reordered from the current policies in the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The goals have largely been rewritten and the policies have been re-sorted to better capture common themes. The current policy number has been retained for each policy shown.

GOAL 1: Promote ~~safe and decent housing alternatives with a variety of~~ safe and decent housing types, neighborhood settings, price ranges, amenities, and natural settings that meet the changing population needs ~~and are in close proximity to transportation, employment, shopping, and daily activities.~~ (EXISTING GOAL 5)

~~POLICY 1.4~~

~~Encourage innovative techniques such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and cluster housing development over low density sprawling development in the rural areas.~~

POLICY 5.1

Ensure that a variety of residential development and ownership types ~~will be~~ are available in urban and rural areas such as detached and attached single family housing, cluster housing, duplexes, planned developments, ~~lot size averaging~~, cohousing, condominiums, and mixed residential/commercial uses.

POLICY 5.2

Encourage accessory dwelling units (ADU) in all residential zones provided that development standards and design criteria are satisfied.

POLICY 5.3

Permit manufactured housing in the same locations and at the same density as other housing, ~~not just in mobile home parks~~, consistent with state law

POLICY 5.4

Be flexible in ~~the~~ permitting ~~of~~ farm housing units for farm employees and their families in agricultural areas and on working farms (as defined in RCW 84.34.020).

POLICY 5.5

Review new farmworker communities through special use permit procedures.

POLICY 5.6

Allow one additional temporary dwelling unit, over and above the maximum number of units permitted on a lot by zoning, for family members within ~~the~~ lower density rural areas outside ~~the~~ UGAs. Family member units ~~will~~ shall be removed after they are no longer used by family members.

GOAL 2: Ensure concentrations of housing units are located close to transportation, employment, shopping, and daily activities, and adequate capital facilities and utilities are present for the housing. (NEW)

POLICY 1.1

Consider access to transportation and proximity to employment, shopping and community services in planning the location of new housing.

POLICY 1.2

Use development standards to address the impacts of new residential development on transportation and other public facilities.

POLICY 2.1

Work with cities to ensure group homes, foster care facilities and facilities for other special populations are located near services and public transportation routes wherever possible.

GOAL 3: Work to enhance the existing housing stock. (NEW)

POLICY 4.1

Lead a countywide study of the quality and preservation, rehabilitation and redevelopment potential of the county's existing housing stock, and work with all jurisdictions to identify existing subsidized and low-cost non-subsidized housing that may be lost due to redevelopment, deteriorating housing conditions, or public policies and actions.

POLICY 4.2

Encourage the rehabilitation of substandard housing and maintenance of older housing which appears to be of sufficient quality to be rehabilitated rather than abated. Consider identifying geographic target areas or a series of priority areas for focused attention and resources.

POLICY 4.4

Seek opportunities to identify, protect, and rehabilitate historic properties to meet housing goals.

GOAL 4: Collaborate with local jurisdictions, non-profits, private developers and other agencies to provide and maintain affordable housing. (NEW)

POLICY 1.6

Work with the private sector, the Lewis County Affordable Housing Network, neighborhood groups, the tribes and other affected citizens to facilitate the development of attractive, quality low- and moderate-income housing that is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and is located with easy access to public transportation, commercial areas, and employment centers.

POLICY 2.2

Facilitate the development of low-income and special needs housing, by considering techniques such as:

- a. Developing an inventory of publicly held land within rural and urban growth areas and making suitable parcels available (sale, lease, donation) for low-income housing and housing for special needs populations, where appropriate.
- b. Promoting the use of surplus publicly owned vacant lands for special needs or transitional housing, where appropriate.

POLICY 2.3

Encourage self-help housing efforts and promote programs such as Habitat for Humanity and the Lower Columbia Community Action Council. ~~The County will consider participating in efforts to revise~~

~~legislation that discourages use of "sweat equity," volunteer, and self-help programs.~~

POLICY 2.4

Participate in the Housing Trust Fund (HTF), ~~utilizing SHB 2060 funds to support~~ address extremely low income housing including special needs.

POLICY 4.3

Consider participating in efforts to retain existing subsidized housing, such as:

- a. Encouraging the extension of existing contracts to avoid conversion of subsidized housing to market-rate units (for example, letters of support to landlords),
- b. Working with housing advocates and providers to develop sources of funding and strategies to enable the production of affordable housing, including multifamily tax exemptions, bond issues and levies, and grants and loan programs.

GOAL 5: Allow housing units in a manner consistent with the Fair Housing Act. (NEW)

POLICY 2.6

Encourage housing opportunities for all citizens regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap disability, economic status, familial status, age, sexual orientation, or other discriminatory factors.

GOAL 6: ~~Encourage the preservation and protection of existing residential areas and Plan future development in a manner which promotes quality neighborhood settings and environments.~~
(EXISTING GOAL 3)

POLICY 3.1

Resolve residential/non-residential land use conflicts in the unincorporated areas through performance standards such as buffers, setbacks and other development standards.

POLICY 3.2

Design and site residential construction adjacent to or within designated natural resource lands to reduce potential land use conflicts. Such housing ~~will~~ shall be considered secondary to the primary use of those areas.

GOAL 7: *Work to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers and permitting processes that discourage housing construction.* (NEW)

POLICY 1.5

Where appropriate, reduce regulatory barriers and other requirements that add unnecessary costs and thereby discourage affordable and market rate housing construction. Some strategies to consider are revision, replacement or elimination of regulations that cause higher than expected costs or time periods for the review of a permit to enable permit processing to be more predictable; ~~removing uncertainty~~ for both builders and lenders.

POLICY 5.7

Strive to improve permit processing services, ~~including pre-application materials and consultations.~~

POLICY 2.5

~~The county will identify sufficient land for existing and projected residential needs including, but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for low income families, single family housing, manufactured housing, and residential care facilities. (SEE APPENDIX)~~

POLICY 5.8

~~Zoning and subdivision regulations will provide for the efficient use of lands for residential development through incentives that take advantage of site development suitability, infrastructure, and market feasibility. (EXACT INTENT UNCLEAR)~~

Within goals and policies there is no mention of:

- *Disaster mitigation*
- *Housing for the homeless and the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness*
- *Senior housing*
- *Affordable rental housing*
- *The idea that housing (including more urban housing types) should be encouraged in LAMIRDs*
- *The idea that we should target the provision of more jobs near residential clusters*
- *The idea that certain fair housing types need to be regulated similar to single-family homes*

HOUSING APPENDIX

Lewis County currently allows housing units for a variety of populations. Current allowed housing types are summarized below, and changes recommended by this Comprehensive Plan update are shown in the rightmost column.

Type of Housing	Current Zoning/Land Use Designations	Proposed Changes as a Result of the Plan
Government-Assisted Housing	Allowed in all zones, if consistent with the type of housing allowed within the zone (Single-Family, Multifamily, etc.). Density requirements limit some development of higher-density government-assisted housing in certain zones	Increase allowed density in certain LAMIRDS to allow a greater variety of government-assisted housing
Housing For Low-Income Families	Allowed in all zones, if consistent with the type of housing allowed within the zone (Single-Family, Multifamily, etc.). Density requirements limit some development of higher-density housing for low-income families in certain zones	Increase allowed density in certain LAMIRDS to allow a greater variety of housing for low-income families
Manufactured Housing	Allowed in all residential zones as a single-family use	No change proposed

Type of Housing	Current Zoning/Land Use Designations	Proposed Changes as a Result of the Plan
Multifamily Housing	Limited multifamily allowed in certain LAMIRDS. Maximum density allowed is 6 units per acre	Increase allowed density in certain LAMIRDS
Group Homes	State-licensed group homes allowed as Special Use in all residential zones	Allow group homes that house individuals protected under the Fair Housing Act outright in all residential zones. Continue to regulate other group homes as a special use
Foster Care Facilities	Allowed in all zones/designations that allow housing	No change proposed

Based on the existing standards and the suggested changes proposed within this Comprehensive Plan, Lewis County has a sufficient range of potential housing options for its population.