

COLUMBIA REGION ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENTS
A JOINT AGENCY OF METROPOLITAN
CITIES AND COUNTIES

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plans in long

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From the desk of . . .

ELLY ADELMAN

13 May 1976

Dear Jean,

Thank you for lending me the enclosed copy of your notes. Your talk at our Housing meeting raised many vital points and sparked important discussion. I certainly hope you continue your advocacy of good, low-cost housing in Washington County, and continue to be involved in the CRAG planning process.

- Elly

Joan C. Johnson
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As a student in the Urban Studies Program at Portland State University, I did a study of the availability of, and need for low-income housing in Washington County, in January and February, 1976. (Up-dated in April, 1976, to include information not previously available.)

Based on this research, I wish to make several observations which I believe should be given serious consideration by CRAG:

1. Most available information relating to the need for low-income housing is based on statistics derived from the 1970 census. I believe there is strong indication that the population in need may have been seriously under-estimated in the 1970 census.
 - a. For example, according to information received from Washington County Community Action Agency, the 1970 census did not list any Spanish-speaking people in the Gaston area; yet at the same time, Community Action was in direct contact with approximately 100 Spanish-speaking people in that area.
 - b. In view of the fact that the census in Oregon was conducted primarily by mail west of the Cascades, it is highly likely that people residing in rural areas without an official address, or those unable to read English may have been completely missed by the census.

Further, the census was taken in April, a period when the annual migration of agricultural workers to Washington County was just starting; thus the estimate of migrant workers is undoubtedly very low.

2. Important decisions effecting Washington County have been made on the basis of census data which not only under-estimated the problem in 1970, but does not reflect Washington County's growth--

from 157,920 in 1970 to approximately 190,000 in 1975.

- a. For example, on the basis of a state-wide needs analysis conducted in 1973 by the State Housing Division, Washington County is described as having "no problem" relative to other counties in Oregon.

Because of this low priority, Washington County is currently ineligible to receive funding through the \$200 million state revenue bonding program to finance low-income housing, even though the need is real.

Using the state's figure of base need for Washington County as applied to the 1970 census, 1 out of every 8 households would be eligible for low-income housing.

In terms of actual need, Washington County ranked 7th of all Oregon counties in this needs analysis, followed by 29 counties.

- b. Although the 1975 annual report of the Washington County Housing Authority contained no estimate of need for low-income housing, the 1974 report estimated the annual need for low-rent subsidized housing at 140 units--at a time when the HA had a waiting list of 278 qualified applicants. The current waiting list is reported as 368 qualified applicants (1975 report) with a yearly turnover of 20.56%. The HA has 311 units under its control.

I believe this is another example of under-estimating the real need in Washington County.

When we consider the fact of Washington County's tremendous growth, the recession and inflationary trend of recent years, and the inadequacy of 1970 census data, it is clear that even on a proportional basis Washington County's need ~~may be even more serious~~ than generally realized.

maintained but during local housing shortage

3. Finally, I am very concerned that CRAG not rely on data and recommendations based on the 1970 census in making its recommendations for housing in Washington County, particularly in regard to low income housing. Without more current and reliable data, I am afraid that a serious need in Washington County--low-income housing--will continue to go unrecognized.