MAGNOLIA GARDENS HOPE VI EVALUATION

FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1992, the United States Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development established the Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program, HOPE VI, to revitalize severely distressed urban public housing. HOPE VI provides grants to public housing authorities to transform obsolete public housing sites into attractive, economically viable communities and to improve the lives of public housing residents through community and supportive service programs. The Beaumont Housing Authority was awarded a HOPE VI grant in 2007.

This report addresses our final findings on the HOPE VI project at the once-named Magnolia Gardens in Beaumont, Texas. While previous interim reports have focused on yearly changes, in this report, we focus on overall changes from the beginning of the project in 2007 to the end in 2011. Findings are given in four main areas, the first two representing direct impacts, and the second two representing indirect, or spillover, effects. First, resident interviews and surveys provide an update on resident relocation and redevelopment experiences. Second, we provide a follow-up to our 2009 report on community partnerships. Third, we examine spillover effects from the grant program, looking at changes in the demographic, social, and physical characteristics of the target area, compared to the changes taking place in the city and metropolitan area as a whole. Fourth, we examine changes in the economic structure of the target area, compared to the city and metropolitan area as a whole. A summary of our findings follows.

Impacts on Residents

To assess resident relocation experiences, we conducted both surveys of residents and focus groups at both new developments. We identified evidence for several conclusions.

Physical redevelopment of the community has been highly successful.

Both resident surveys and focus groups consistently indicate that residents of both Pointe North and Regent I are much better off in terms of housing quality and neighborhood conditions than their previous units, whether they lived in Magnolia Gardens or not. The physical
redevelopment of these communities has been overwhelmingly positive. It has transformed the two sites from dilapidated, derelict sites into budding communities. It has provided families with high-quality units with good space and amenities at a low cost.

*The developments are now becoming communities.*

The social transformation of the developments has also started to show extremely positive signs. For most of our evaluation period, we have seen little indication that neighbors were bonding or building relationships that did not exist previously. This last year, for the first time, we see strong evidence of a change, from both resident surveys and focus groups. Residents are meeting one another, talking with one another, eating and sharing with one another. We expected that these relationships would be slow to build, but we are thrilled to see evidence of it happening now at the end of the project.

*The BHA is offering a consistent and satisfactory level of service to residents.*

The residents at Regent I and Pointe North are generally satisfied with the opportunity to live in these new communities. They appear to be satisfied with the housing authority’s responsiveness to the issues they have raised. While focus group respondents still had further suggestions about items which could be addressed by the BHA, for the most part, issues related to property management seem to have been resolved.

*Crime and the economy threaten continuing revitalization.*

While the developments have been highly successful, they still exist within a distressed neighborhood. Crime—even crime being perpetrated within the developments themselves—continues to plague the HOPE VI efforts. Perceptions of security have declined, with more respondents indicating some level of concern over personal safety. Residents, however, have responded by forming a Neighborhood Watch Program, demonstrating their commitment to eradicating the problem.

The economy also has affected respondents’ families negatively. While BHA can do little about the national economy, crime is an issue that must be aggressively addressed by both residents and city officials.
Partnerships

The BHA’s effectiveness at initiating and sustaining effective community partnerships has been one of the highlights of their HOPE VI program. Both in terms of meeting enrollment and participation goals (evaluated in previous reports), as well as in terms of working with community partners to build trust and reciprocity, the community partnerships fostered by the BHA have the potential to become the most important legacy of this program.

Neighborhood Revitalization

In a well-functioning economy (like the one we started with), we would have expected the HOPE VI program to have positive indirect effects on the neighboring community. We assessed demographic, economic, social, and physical indicators, and our evidence suggests that along most indicators, the neighborhood is not revitalizing significantly. There are some positive signs, but also some troubling indicators.

*Household incomes are up, and poverty rates are down.*

Using 2000 and 2010 Census data, we compared baseline revitalization area conditions to post-HOPE VI conditions. Generally, the data reveal a still-distressed community. Along every measure, the revitalization area continues to be worse-off than the city as whole. Yet, importantly, the revitalization area has defied city trends on two important indicators-- household income and poverty rates. While the City of Beaumont has seen significant declines along many socio-economic indicators, the revitalization has seen very modest improvements in some, and held steady or seen more mild declines in others, including homeownership rates. Housing stock has improved slightly, but is still generally more dilapidated than the city as a whole.

*The two revitalization sites have experienced somewhat different trajectories.*

When possible, we have collected data on each site separately (i.e., census tracts). The Regent area was better off to begin with, but has seen conditions much more comparable with what is going on in the City of Beaumont. Pointe North, the more populous of the two areas, and the original site of the old Magnolia Gardens, has proven more challenging. Crime rates are
much higher, and rents are quite volatile. Although some indicators are positive, based on several indicators, the area appears to be somewhat unstable.

_**Crime is the most troubling of the indicators we have tracked in the revitalization area.**_

Throughout our evaluation, crime has shown some positive signs, but over the past couple of years, crime has spiked, particularly in the Pointe North area, and much of it is taking place in the Pointe North development, according to Beaumont Police Department data. While the recession is something that is beyond the control of local efforts, crime is something that can and must be addressed locally. Granted, it is a challenging problem, and one that requires resources beyond that which the housing authority can bring to bear. Political will is necessary to find a way to address this important but intractable problem.

**Economic Development**

In previous reports, we have provided more detailed assessments of new businesses being created in the main commercial and retail corridors, business owners, and the condition of businesses in the revitalization area. For our final analysis, we look for evidence of spillover effects of the HOPE VI projects on the revitalization area by assessing macro-level changes in the both the jobs available in the revitalization area as well as the jobs filled by revitalization area workers. If new construction and new businesses are being catalyzed as a result of increased investment in the revitalization area, then we would hope to see it in increased jobs and wages for revitalization area residents. In general, we see little economic development taking place in the area. However, there are some positive signs.

_**Wages are increasing in the revitalization area.**_

Our findings reveal trends consistent with changes taking place in the city and nation in response to the economic recession. As we saw in the changes to household incomes and poverty levels, we do see some modest evidence for improvements in wages for jobs located in the revitalization area as well as for workers residing in the revitalization area. These increases in wages do outpace those seen in the city as a whole, suggesting that economic conditions, and specifically the quality of jobs, are improving more than we might expect if the revitalization area were following city-wide trends. It is likely that these improvements do reflect an increased confidence and interest in the revitalization by investors and businesses.
The diversity of the economy in the revitalization area is encouraging.

There are several industries represented among both jobs and workers in the area, suggesting a diversified and resilient economy that is not dependent on any one industry. This bodes well for the area as the national and city-wide economy rebound in the coming years, positioning the neighborhood to build on investment, confidence, and interest in the revitalization sparked by the HOPE VI project.

Conclusions

Overall, the direct impacts of the grant program have been extraordinary. The physical redevelopment of the sites, the building of community among neighbors, and particularly the building of networks and capacity among community partners are truly impressive. These bode well for a successful, sustainable community that serves the needs of both original and new residents.

The spillover effects, however, have been stymied by an economy in recession. While much of Texas has had milder impacts than some parts of the country, Beaumont has experienced effects much more like those of the harder-hit parts of the country. Beaumont has long been a more depressed economy than most of metropolitan Texas, and this has been reflected in the many economic and revitalization indicators that we have examined, such as lower than average wages, higher unemployment, and lower than average property values. One of the consequences of this is that at least one major goal of the HOPE VI program has not been realized: the homeownership element. While this may appear as a weakness, it is actually reflects responsible stewardship and a sensitivity to what is best for potential home buyers.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

0.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................ 1
0.2 Evaluation Design and Tasks ................................................................................... 1
0.3 Report Objectives.................................................................................................... 3

1. RESIDENT RELOCATION .................................................................................... 4
   1.1 Resident Survey....................................................................................................... 4
   1.2 Focus Group Findings .............................................................................................. 8
   1.3 Conclusions ........................................................................................................... 16

2. COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM AND PARTNERSHIPS .......... 18
   2.1 Community and Supportive Service Program ....................................................... 19
   2.2 Community Partnerships ...................................................................................... 21
   2.3 Conclusions ........................................................................................................... 45

3. NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ...................................................................... 47
   3.1 Social and Demographic Characteristics ............................................................... 47
   3.2 Housing Stock ........................................................................................................ 52
   3.3 Residential Lending ............................................................................................... 57
   3.4 Crime ..................................................................................................................... 66
   3.5 Conclusions ........................................................................................................... 70

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ............................................................................... 73
   4.1 Distribution of Jobs ............................................................................................... 73
   4.2 Jobs by Earnings .................................................................................................... 78
   4.3 Jobs by Sector ....................................................................................................... 78
   4.4 Distribution of Workers ....................................................................................... 81
   4.5 Workers by Earnings ........................................................................................... 85
   4.6 Workers by Sector ................................................................................................. 85
   4.7 Conclusions ........................................................................................................... 87

5. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .................................................... 89
   Acknowledgements .................................................................................................... 91
   References Cited ....................................................................................................... 92
TABLE OF TABLES

Table 0.1. Measurement of Individual and Neighborhood Aspects of HOPE VI Redevelopment ................................................................. 2
Table 1.1. Problems Reported by Respondents ................................................................. 6
Table 2.1. Supportive Service ......................................................................................... 20
Table 3.1. Texas Metropolitan Area Population Change, 2000-2010 ............................................ 48
Table 3.2. Area Population Growth ................................................................................. 49
Table 3.3. Revitalization Area Demographic Characteristics .............................................. 51
Table 3.4. Revitalization Area Housing Characteristics ..................................................... 54
Table 3.5. Revitalization Area Home Values and Rents .................................................... 55
Table 3.6. Target Area Crime Compared to Crime in Beaumont ....................................... 68
Table 4.1. Total Number of Jobs .................................................................................... 74
Table 4.2. Industrial sector composition of the revitalization area and the City of Beaumont, 2002-2010 ........................................................................... 80
Table 4.3. Total Number of Workers, 2002-2010 ............................................................ 81
Table 4.4. Industrial Composition Workers, 2002-2010 ................................................. 86
TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1. Comparison of Needs Expressed, 2010-2011 ................................................... 7

Figure 3.1. Multi-family Building Permits (Texas Real Estate Center) ............................... 56

Figure 3.2. Home Purchase Loans .................................................................................... 58

Figure 3.3. Refinancing Loans .......................................................................................... 61

Figure 3.4. Home Improvement Loans ............................................................................ 63

Figure 3.5. Denial Rates for Residential Loans ............................................................... 65

Figure 3.6. Crime in the City of Beaumont ..................................................................... 67

Figure 3.7. Change in Crime, 2007 to 2011 .................................................................... 69

Figure 4.1. Geographic Distribution of Jobs ..................................................................... 75

Figure 4.2. Jobs by Earnings, 2002-2010 ....................................................................... 78

Figure 4.3. Geographic Distribution of Workers ............................................................... 82

Figure 4.4. Percent of Workers by Earnings, 2002-2010 .................................................. 85
0.1. Introduction

In 1992, the United States Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development established the Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program, HOPE VI, to revitalize severely distressed urban public housing. HOPE VI provides grants to public housing authorities to transform obsolete public housing sites into attractive, economically viable communities and to improve the lives of public housing residents through community and supportive service programs. Each Public Housing Authority awarded a HOPE VI grant is strongly encouraged to retain a third-party evaluator to provide an on-going evaluation of the activities performed as part of the award. The Center for Housing and Urban Development at Texas A&M University was contracted as the third-party evaluator in June of 2007. Our evaluation has had the following purposes:

1. Identify goals/milestones outlined in the grant and compare these with actual accomplishments;
2. Compare measures both before and after intervention to determine program impact;
3. Determine what activities worked well and which did not and reasons why;
4. Develop mechanisms to obtain evaluation information from participants and agencies involved in the program; and
5. Distill the lessons learned from the program.

0.2. Evaluation Design and Tasks

Understanding the full impact of the HOPE VI redevelopment calls for measurement over the life of the project at two levels—individual and neighborhood (Table 0.1). Individual-level measurements have been taken to assess the impact of relocation on residents, including relocation experience (i.e., whether the resident has located into a better or worse neighborhood), the success of service providers at assisting residents during the relocation period, and the
decision of each resident to return to the development. Also at the individual level, resident participation in the redevelopment activities have been gauged, including their expectations of involvement, the reality of their involvement during the development phase, and their involvement in project management once the redevelopment is complete.

Table 0.1. Measurement of Individual and Neighborhood Aspects of HOPE VI Redevelopment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Component</th>
<th>Level of Measurement</th>
<th>Development Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PRE-DEVELOPMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INDIVIDUAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Residents</td>
<td>Relocation</td>
<td>Baseline conditions and perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Residents</td>
<td>Service Provision</td>
<td>Preparation for relocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of strategies</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Expectations about involvement in redevelopment and return to development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEIGHBORHOOD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Revitalization</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Baseline social, economic and demographic characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Baseline economic and labor conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>Land</td>
<td>Baseline land uses and land values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neighborhood-level evaluation evaluates changes that have taken place to the larger area in which the developments are located. These measurements examine changes to the population of the area, including their social, economic and demographic characteristics; the business
climate, including changes to the labor force and economic activity; and changes to residential and commercial property values and land uses.

0.3. Report Objectives

The purpose of this report is to capture changes that have taken place in the HOPE VI redevelopment area in Beaumont. Findings and conclusions are drawn from several sources, both primary (collected by us) and secondary (collected by others, but analyzed by us). First, resident interviews and surveys provide an update on resident dislocation and relocation experiences. Second, we examine changes in the demographic and social characteristics of the target area, compared to the changes taking place in the city and metropolitan area as a whole. Third, trends in neighborhood conditions are assessed. We examine investment patterns, home sales, business and residential vacancies, and crime in the revitalization area. Fourth, we examine changes in the economic structure of the target area, compared to the city and metropolitan area as a whole. Finally, we draw overall findings and conclusions from our five years of observation and reporting on the Beaumont HOPE VI project.
1. IMPACTS ON MAGNOLIA GARDENS RESIDENTS

Perhaps the most important outcome of the HOPE VI project is the impact on residents. Over the course of our evaluation, we have conducted surveys and focus groups of both Regent and Pointe North residents, some of which are former Magnolia Gardens residents. While we have routinely struggled to get adequate response rates for the survey, the introduction of focus groups in 2009 was an attempt to supplement the survey responses and understand resident needs and concerns better.

1.1. Resident Surveys

More than three hundred surveys were distributed by BHA caseworkers to the residents of both Pointe North and Regent in November 2011. The surveys were distributed in a self-addressed stamped envelope and mailed directly to members of the research team at Texas A&M University for compilation of the results. Only 18 surveys were returned completed. Only three of the 18 respondents had lived at Magnolia Gardens, and more respondents from Regent (12) responded than from Pointe North (6). The average time of residence at one of the two new developments was about two years (mean of 21 months, median of 24 months).

In addition to the survey, researchers conducted focus groups with a select group of residents at each site. With the assistance of BHA caseworkers, residents at Pointe North and Regent I were asked to participate in a one hour focus group in December 2011.

This report seeks to summarize the responses gathered, contextualizing this information with the information from earlier interim reports. For a copy of the questions asked, see Appendix B. The survey is reprinted in Appendix A.

1.1.1. Satisfaction with Units

Similar to the questions asked in the previous three years of this study, the relocated residents were asked a number of questions comparing their current residences to their homes at Magnolia Gardens. The residents indicated a number of reasons for choosing to live at the new communities. The most common reason identified was the opportunity to live in a larger and new unit (8 out of 18). The average rent paid by the surveyed residents was $286.35 (median of $212). This average represents an increase of $49 over last year. Given the low rents, this is a
substantial increase—about 20 percent. Thirteen of the 18 respondents surveyed reported receiving a form of governmental assistance to subsidize the cost of their rent. Just as last year, all residents indicated that they paid for their own utilities (17 of 18, with one not responding).

We have seen consistently through the years that the majority of the residents are very satisfied with their units at Pointe North and Regent. This year, 10 of the 18 respondents indicated a very high level of satisfaction with their units and five indicated that they were somewhat satisfied. This year, three residents indicated that they were somewhat dissatisfied. This is an increase from last year, when only one resident surveyed indicated any level of dissatisfaction, but is still a small minority. More respondents indicated that the physical condition of their units was good (10) than excellent (5), while two indicated that the physical condition was fair. These are slightly less positive than in years past, but are still quite positive. These findings indicate a general consensus that the units at Pointe North and Regent I are high-quality and in good condition. Sixteen of the 18 respondents indicate that the residence meets the family’s needs (9 very satisfied, 7 satisfied). However one respondent indicated that they were somewhat dissatisfied and one indicated that they were very dissatisfied with how well the residence meets the family’s needs. While still a very small number, it has been unusual during our evaluation period to receive responses indicating dissatisfaction.

1.1.2. Safety and problems in the neighborhood

Throughout the redevelopment process, concerns about safety in the North End, the neighborhood in which Pointe North and Regent I sit, have been raised. In order to understand those factors that might be leading to these feelings, the residents were asked to rate the degree to which certain issues remain problematic. Responses can be seen in Table 1.1. As it was last year, unemployment is the most frequently named problem. This is no surprise given current economic conditions. Little concern was raised with respect to graffiti, trash, and police response. More mixed responses were given for other problems, including concerns related to drug use and personal safety. These responses indicate a mild shift from previous years, when less concern was shown about school quality, public transportation, and both personal and property crimes. While some respondents marked “don’t know,” this more mixed response, particularly to criminal activity, is consistent with the increase in crime in the area (discussed in Section 3 of this report).
Table 1.1. Problems Reported by Respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are the following problems?</th>
<th>Big Problem</th>
<th>Some Problem</th>
<th>No Problem</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups of people hanging out</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teenage mothers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of public transportation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of schools</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash and junk in public spaces</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police not coming when called</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being attacked or robbed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People selling drugs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People using drugs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape or sexual attacks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shootings and violence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Pointe North and Regent I are vital communities, the North End neighborhood is just beginning to catch up. Redevelopment efforts have been slow as a result of a number of factors including both time and poor national economic conditions.

1.1.3. Relationships with New and Old Neighbors

The residents were asked a series of questions relating to relationships within the North End neighborhood. First, they were asked about friendships within the neighborhood. The majority of the survey respondents stated that none of their friends lived in the neighborhood (10 out of 18). However, six of the respondents suggested that a few of their friends lived near. This is about the same as last year, and provides some evidence of a shift in community building, as in previous years most respondents have indicated few personal ties. Neighbors chat with each other on a daily (4 out of 18), weekly (7 out of 18), and monthly basis (1 out of 18). While last year, four residents indicated that they never stopped to chat with their neighbors, this year no
one indicated that they never talked to neighbors. Further, several respondents indicated that they sometimes shared a meal or coffee with a neighbor (5 of 18), and 12 indicated that they sometimes or often helped their neighbors. Half (9) respondents indicated that neighbors occasionally helped them. These neighboring behaviors represent substantial increases over previous years, and show strong positive evidence of an increase in community-building!

1.1.4. Contact with Caseworkers and Use of Services

Last year, housing authority staff expressed some concern regarding the residents’ responsiveness to the services offered. Both last year and this year, we surveyed residents about services they were using and those they needed. A comparison of these results can be seen in Figure 1.1.

![Figure 1.1. Comparison of Needs Expressed, 2010-2011.](image)

Last year, a small but significant percentage of respondents expressed unmet needs with regard to finding a job (not surprisingly), identifying college counseling or financial aid, and finding budget or credit counseling services. This year, these needs are much less expressed. Most respondents do not indicate that they need help they are not receiving—only one or two respondents indicated unmet needs. A few respondents did indicate a need with learning to read and getting job and computer training, which is an increase from last year.
1.1.5. Impact of Recession

This year, we also asked a few questions about the impact of the recession on their families. Eight of the 18 respondents indicated that the national economic downturn has affected their family moderately, four indicated significantly, and four indicated that it had affected them very significantly. Only two indicated that the recession has had little impact on their families.

Most respondents also acknowledged that the recession had affected plans for redevelopment in the neighborhood. Four respondents indicated that the recession had impacted redevelopment plans very significantly, six said significantly, six indicated moderately, and only one indicated that the recession has had little impact on redevelopment plans.

Still, many respondents are optimistic that the neighborhood will improve as the nation’s economic situation improves. Fifteen of the 18 respondents indicated that they were very (4) or somewhat (11) optimistic, while only two indicated that they were not optimistic.

1.2. Focus Group Findings

Focus groups were conducted the first week of December 2011 (see Appendix B for a list of the questions asked). As in previous years, caseworkers worked with researchers to schedule and recruit participation for the meeting. Fifteen residents participated in the Pointe North and eight in the Regent I groups this year. These participation numbers are very similar to the previous year’s groups, in which eight residents also participated in the 2009 Regent I group, and ten in both developments in the 2010 groups. Responses are organized in the following sections: unit satisfaction, interaction with fellow neighbors, and overall project and neighborhood perceptions.

All eight (8) of the residents in the Regent I group have lived in the development over 2 years, with 6 of the 8 having resided there for over three. In Pointe North there were only two (2) residents that had been there for less than a year, two (2) for about a year, and the 11 others for more. While the overall number of participants was low relative to the total number of residents within each development, the majority of those who did show up are longtime residents. Their participation speaks to the validity of their perceptions.
1.2.1. Satisfaction with Units

Residents of Regent I were split with five (5) living in flats and three (3) in town homes, but in Pointe North an overwhelming twelve (12) lived in townhomes with two (2) other in garden apartments and only one in a flat. Although participants had not previously lived in Magnolia Gardens, in both communities all of the residents stated that their present units were larger than previous dwellings, except for three residents who moved from single family detached homes (two in Regent I and one in Pointe North). Additionally, all residents in both developments said that the condition of their present residence was better than the one they previously inhabited. The one exception came from a single family unit that was renovated prior to their inhabitation.

When asked to speak about what they liked and to elaborate on things that they wished were different we received a plethora of responses. The Regent “I like…” responses included:

“I like everything!”

“The modern conveniences of the appliances”

“The size of the units”

“The warmth and comfort felt by the units design and layout.”

“The spacious size of the kitchens and bathrooms, along with the number of rooms and the fact that my children, and I have our own rooms.”

“The number and size of the windows, the fact that there is a upstairs and downstairs bathroom in the townhome units.”

Additionally, while all eight residents stated that they are very happy with the units they have, and that they are a major upgrade from their previous units in terms of beauty, newness, size, and creature comforts, since we asked, they wished that:

“The bathrooms weren’t located right off the kitchens in the two bedroom units.”

“The developments had a large flat the same size of the townhome units, because I don’t like walking up stairs.

“The windows were better insulated. Six of the eight residents said they can feel the cool air in the winter radiating from the windows.”
“Nothing! I love my unit.”

“They had another bathroom in the two bedroom flat.”

“I like everything!

“All eight said they wished they had a screen doors, citing the fact that it is something that they are used to from the old units.”

Residents of Pointe North had a similar experience when expressing things they like about their units, and things that they wished were different. Outside of all fifteen residents stating “that they loved everything about their units and mentioning many of the elements mentioned in the Regent I answers”, when prodded to be more specific, the Pointe North, “I like…” responses included:

“The walk-in closets, and the size of the bathrooms and bedrooms.”

“The overall spaciousness and accessibility of the apartments.”

“The openness and size of the kitchens and the kitchen islands.”

“The fact that it was a brand new, fresh, clean unit, and that I was the first to live in it. I have never had that experience before.”

“My kids feel proud, when they tell their friends where they live. Additionally, they feel like it is theirs, because they have their own bedrooms and space to play and be kids, and they live. That makes me feel good as a parent.”

When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the physical make-up of their units, using a 5 point Likert-scale, with 5 being most favorable and 1 most favorable, the Regent I residents gave 4(5s), 2(4s), 1(3), and 1(2), and the Pointe North residents giving 13(5s), 1(4) and 1(3). When the lower scoring residents were asked to elaborate on their score the same comments were heard in both developments. The low scores were related to large families needing more living and storage space. In fact, the residents from each development that gave the lowest scores are on a waiting list for a larger unit to become available to move into.

These above noted resident affirmations of the design, quality and function of the units reinforces previous focus group findings of the high level of resident satisfaction.
1.2.4. Community Connections

When asked how many have friends living in their development, seven of the Regent I and twelve of the Pointe North residents answered affirmatively. Moreover, of those reported numbers, only four in each development classified those friends as new. We also asked how many had gotten to know their neighbors. In previous reports, these numbers have been extremely low, but surprisingly, there was a drastic turnaround this year. Seven of the Regent I residents and thirteen of the Pointe North residents stated that they have gotten to know their neighbors, and both listed that walking over to meet the neighbors was the most common way of introduction. Socialization was a different issue though, while six of the Regent I residents said that they did socialize with their neighbors on a regular basis, nine of the Pointe North residents stated that they did not. For those in each development with children, four in Regent I, and ten in Pointe North, only half of them in Regent I allow their children to play with neighboring kids, with the Pointe North children about the same at only six. This issue is not one solely attributable to the developments though, as both groups of parents stated that their children’s levels of play with neighboring children was about the same at their previous residence.

Overall their responses show they are warming up to their neighbors now, which was not the case in previous years. This year, they even answered that they have “friends” within the community. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for socialization between their children, which still seems to be a slow process. When asked about foreseeing the time that they would start socializing with their neighbors more, and what might lead to a change, 100 percent of the residents in both neighborhoods stated time would play a role in that process. They all felt that, while they might not grow closer to everyone, they could see having more personal and intimate relationships with more people than they do now. In the Pointe North, neighborhood, one of the residents stated that “we might not get along with everyone, but we are all we have!”

These findings are consistent with the resident surveys and represent a major improvement in the neighboring and community-building taking place in the developments. This is a very positive development that we believed would take time to emerge. We are very pleased to see that these developments are becoming true communities. We believe that will be key to their sustainability over time.
1.2.5. Problems and Needs in the Neighborhood

To assess the perceived changes in the revitalization area, we asked a series of questions about the neighborhood and how residents used it. Below, we identify the question and then show the variety of responses received.

How would you have described the neighborhood before these efforts began, and what did you dislike about the neighborhood?

Regent I:

“It was on!”

“OK,…good, it would pass.”

“It was drug infested.”

“It was ok, wink, wink.”

“It was bad!”

“The jail house fence surrounding the development.”

“Drama and adults fighting.”

“Drugs.”

“Not being safe for kids to play.”

Pointe North:

“Wretched!”

“Ghetto and messy.”

“Scary and horrible.”

“The Wild, Wild, West!”

“A home, because I had to be here.”

“Like a penitentiary, prison or jailhouse, because of the fence.”
What did you like about the neighborhood?

Regent I:

“The Lucky 7 grocery store being open and close, but inconvenient because of the fence.”

“It was not much to like, except that it was home.”

Pointe North:

“We used to have stores. The grocery & Family Dollar.”

What attracted you to live in this neighborhood now?

Regent I:

“The new developments change of the physical environment. It looks like a place to live now.”

“The new housing authority management and rules that filter people who might cause trouble. I like that not just anyone can live here. You have to want to do better. The lazy people live in the older developments that look like what this used to look like.”

“The affordability of the units.”

“The look and newness of the apartments.”

“The unit size.”

“I had to live here because Magnolia was not completed yet.”

“Access to city transportation.”

Pointe North:

“This was a better housing opportunity for me and my kids.”

“Nicer apartment units.”

“I came back home.”

“The redevelopment of the housing has impacted the entire community, and while it’s not complete it is 1000 times better than it was, from just sheer eyesight.”
“I needed a home and staying close to my kids who are buried at Forest Park cemetery was important.”

Are you presently satisfied with the conditions of the neighborhood?

Regent I:

“100%, yes votes!”

Pointe North:

“Yes, for the most part we are fine. We know there are going to be some outside things going on, but I can close my door and have peace.”

“No, there are still problems with traffic on Gill Street, trash being thrown in yards, vandalism.”

“There are also more kids than used to be, and the middle school & high school kids do not have an outlet so they hang out. Weekends are the worse and their language to each other and to adults approaching them to quiet down is horrible.”

“They need a curfew, and they also need something to do to stop them from tearing up what was built.”

“We wish there were more economic opportunities for adults and kids

Are you able to meet all your shopping needs in the neighborhood?

“A resounding 100% “NO” at both properties. “

If so or not, where do you go?

“Shops across town.”

How do you get there?

Regent I:

1 City bus

5 Personal automobile

2 Get a ride from others
Pointe North:

2 Bus

8 Personal automobile

“When it wants to work and isn’t broke, was the common statement from two of the eight.”

5 Rides from family or friends

Is getting where you need to go currently a problem for you? If yes, what would ease the burden? If not, how do you get around?

Regent I:

“Yes, catching rides is based on availability of others.”

“Having my own personal transportation.”

“Distance to the bus. My unit is in the back of the development. Bus frequency is not a problem though.”

Pointe North:

“A shuttle service would be great!”

“More bus passes.”

“Auto finance and maintenance assistance for residence would be something we could use, especially single women with kids and older women.”

1.3. Conclusions

1.3.1. Housing and Neighborhood Quality

Both resident surveys and focus groups consistently indicate that residents of both Pointe North and Regent I are much better off in terms of housing quality and neighborhood conditions than their previous units, whether they lived in Magnolia Gardens or not. The physical redevelopment of these communities has been overwhelmingly positive. It has transformed the
two sites from dilapidated, derelict sites into budding communities. It has provided families with high-quality units with good space and amenities at a low cost.

1.3.2. Neighboring and Community Building

The social transformation of the developments has also started to show extremely positive signs. For most of our evaluation period, we have seen little indication that neighbors were bonding or building relationships that did not exist previously. This last year, for the first time, we see strong evidence of a change, from both resident surveys and focus groups. Residents are meeting one another, talking with one another, eating and sharing with one another. We expected that these relationships would be slow to build, but we are thrilled to see evidence of it happening now at the end of the project.

1.3.4. Services

The residents at Regent I and Pointe North are generally satisfied with the opportunity to live in these new communities. They appear to be satisfied with the housing authority’s responsiveness to the issues they have raised. During the focus group meeting, we gave them an opportunity to share any additional issues they wanted to share. Their responses are below:

Regent I:

“School bus transportation is an issue that has come up, but the BISD says we are too close to provide transportation. We would like to reopen that discussion.”

Pointe North:

“We would like to have better job opportunities and training courses for us and our high school age children.”

“We all want to have a better relationship with our neighbors and have classes that assist with that. We all need to be better neighbors and taught how to be that. Additionally, we could have conflict workshops for us and our kids. Adults keep attitudes, but kids are back to being friends after a fight.”

“We have been having issues with the past management in terms of maintenance, but now we have a new maintenance person and they also live on the premises. We are open to see if things
are going to change. We know it will be slow because of back work orders so we are open to wait and see if things will change. But make it clear in your report that things need to change.”

Overall the feelings about neighborhood were similar for both communities of focus group participants. There are still some issues with residents not being cordial with one another, young adults with little to do, and a lack of economic opportunities. Additionally, residents identified community-based shopping needs as an issue (residents would like more grocery options). Residents appear to take ownership of the community, however, recognizing that if things were really going to improve, change would come from themselves. The message from the focus groups was strong: “The housing authority has built us a beautiful place to live and they can assist with rules and regulations to frame our direction, but it will take us working with each other to truly make these developments a safe, fun, neighborly place to live and call HOME!”
2. COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM AND PARTNERSHIPS

The work being performed by the Beaumont Housing Authority (BHA) in conjunction with its HOPE VI redevelopment projects takes place within an existing urban area. As third party evaluators, we are specifically interested in learning about effects the HOPE VI projects are having on both the public and private business entities that also provide services within the target area. HOPE VI funding is intended to catalyze efforts within the area to leverage existing resources for maximum impact. HOPE VI funding is expected to spark a collaboration of efforts between the housing authority and public and private investors, in an attempt to not only cause positive change within the projects themselves, but also to create spillover redevelopment effects in the greater neighborhood. These efforts are consistent with the project’s goals to:

- Change the physical shape of public housing;
- Establish positive incentives for resident self-sufficiency and comprehensive services that empower residents;
- Lessen concentrations of poverty by placing public housing in non-poverty neighborhoods and promoting mixed-income communities; and
- Forge partnerships with other agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses to leverage support and resources.

The Beaumont Housing Authority partners with several types of organizations to provide services directly to residents, to provide professional services to the BHA itself, and to inform the efforts undertaken by BHA and the city in meeting the needs of the redevelopment area. The previous interim report provided the findings of a survey conducted with 12 of the CSS partner agencies that focused on service provision, utilization, documentation and evaluation of services, and the partner evaluation of their relationship with BHA. In this section, we report on the CSS program’s progress for moving HOPE VI public housing residents towards self-sufficiency and the continued university-community partnerships that the BHA has undertaken with Texas A&M University.
2.1. Community and Supportive Services Program

A required element of the HOPE VI program, the CSS program ensures that residents at HOPE VI sites receive comprehensive social services aimed at assisting them in achieving economic self-sufficiency. The BHA CSS is an in-house program that places a strong emphasis on moving residents to employment and self-sufficiency. All residents living in the HOPE VI developments need to be enrolled in an education or job readiness/training program or be employed, unless they are elderly or have a disability.

The CSS program is integrated with the well-established in-house Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program that helps BHA residents achieve economic independence. Intensive case management and a coordinated referral program form the basis of the CSS program. A CSS case manager hired by BHA and located at each of the two HOPE VI project sites - Regent I and Pointe North - works with the residents to assess the needs of the entire household and make referrals to the extensive CSS partner network. To date the BHA has successfully partnered with over 30 CSS public, non-profit, faith-based, and private organizations to provide various services including job training and placement, education, youth services, health and mental health services, financial management and homeownership counseling, as well as emergency services, such as food, clothing and housing.

Table 2.1 below provides a breakdown of HOPE VI residents enrolled and completing various programs over the five-year evaluation period from September 30, 2007 - December 2011. Also shown are target goals for program enrollment and program completion. Program enrollment and completion (where relevant) has far exceeded goals in almost all service areas. Most notable is the enrollment in and completion of high school education and employment related programs. Also noteworthy is job placement and continued employment of HOPE VI residents despite the recent economic recession and high unemployment levels in Beaumont.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>No. Enrolled</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Enrollments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment preparation/placement/retention</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job skills training programs</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
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<td>Successfully completed</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>High school or equivalent education</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Successfully completed</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Early childhood education - original residents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood education - returning residents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation assistance</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling programs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse programs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New job placements</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently employed</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed 6 months or more</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOPEVI contract funds to Section 3</td>
<td>$370,658</td>
<td>$144,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident jobs resulting from Section 3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homeownership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership counseling- enrolled</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership counseling- completed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing a home</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOPE VI residents have also heavily utilized transportation and child care assistance that has enabled their participation in the various programs. Program funding for these two service areas however has ended which will likely affect resident enrollment and participation in various programs. BHA will have to continue to reach out to other community service providers to provide coverage in this vital area, such as its current practice of providing referrals for child care.

The BHA’s ultimate goal is to transition families off assisted housing into market rate housing as well as homeownership. Families residing in the HOPE VI developments who wish to become homeowners have access to on-site homeownership counseling and were also eligible for down payment assistance. Over the five-year period, twenty-two, out of a targeted twenty-three, HOPE VI residents enrolled in the homeownership counseling program and one-half (eleven) completed the program. To date, however, none have been qualified to purchase a home, and city funding for down payment and closing cost assistance is no longer available. This is not an unexpected outcome given that lower-income and higher risk borrowers have been the hardest hit by curtailed mortgage lending resulting from the mortgage crisis.

Another achievement in the BHA CSS program is BHA’s purchase of a police substation to house the CSS program. This facility, located adjacent to the Regent I development, will provide needed space to provide additional supportive services to HOPE VI residents. BHA also received approval to place $420,000 in savings from HOPE VI CSS funds in an Endowment Trust to continue the CSS program upon the completion of the HOPE VI grant in 2012.

2.2. Community Partnerships

From the beginning of the project, we have conducted interviews with residents to see how their lives have been over the duration of the project. Additionally, we have documented the opinions of members of the public-private partnerships (PPP) whose energies have assisted the housing authority in both the physical and people based redevelopment efforts. In this final report, we speak once again to five of the original seven partners, and include representatives from both the Beaumont Housing Authority and the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to get final perceptions on the effect of the overall development on both people and place. Through their final individual insights we sought to learn more than what needed to be solved, but rather what was solved, and where future work should take place.
In this final report, we followed up with members from the original list of public and private agencies, departments, and organizations interviewed in the previous report (MAGNOLIA GARDENS HOPE VI EVALUATION: Special Report on HOPE VI Collaborators, August 2009). As mentioned previously, all of the interviewees have provided services or are agencies that the Beaumont Housing Authority has directly interacted within its redevelopment efforts in the two HOPE VI targeted neighborhoods. The following is a list of interviewees, along with the interview type:

- City of Beaumont, Community Development (in-person)
- City of Beaumont, Planning Department (in-person)
- Beaumont Habitat for Humanity (in-person)
- Beaumont Housing Authority executive staff members (in-person)
- Beaumont Housing Authority HOPE VI redevelopment staff (in-person)
- Beaumont Housing Authority HOPE VI case workers (in-person)
- Beaumont Transit Authority (in-person)

To ensure reliability, all of the interviews were digitally recorded with the interviewee’s permission. In compiling the interview information, each of the recorded interviews was first listened to in their entirety to re-familiarize ourselves with the interview. From there, each interview was replayed and transcribed, rewinding as needed to ensure the validity of the presented findings. Once completed, to increase the reliability and to provide a check system for our results, the answers were reviewed again by listening to the interviews while checking them against the transcribed record.

We asked open-ended questions focused on learning how the different partners viewed change related to physical and people based results from the HOPE VI development. This information will not only allow the BHA to evaluate their overall redevelopment program in terms of public perception, teamwork, communication, and effectiveness, but it can also serve to highlight examples of best practices, identify areas of weakness or additional need, and point to areas of future development sparked by the HOPE VI efforts.

The following provides the results of our interviews. We present each question that was asked of the interviewees, followed by their answers.
What do you see as the needs or problems of the neighborhood? What about the assets or opportunities of the neighborhood? Have these needs and assets changed over the past 5 years?

BHA (Robert Reyna)

“Assets! Both new developments are assets to the community and each has its own story of how these transitioned from blight to asset. When we started the Fairgrounds property (Regent I) was barren land and had restrictions from the original owner, dating back to the 1930’s, which said that the ‘Fairgrounds must always remain a fairground’, which tied the city’s hands respective to development. We changed that, by talking to the city and explaining that the land is doing nothing for the city, however a housing authority by virtue of its enabling legislation has the power of eminent domain. So what we did was explain to the city that, if they allowed us to sue them and purchase the land in the lawsuit, the HA could make the restrictions go away. In the deal, we would build some multi-family affordable housing and eventually affordable single-family ownership homes also, that would go back on the tax roll and generate income for the city.”

“The Old Magnolia Gardens properties (Pointe North) was an old, ugly dilapidated, development consisting of about 195 units, with only 40 families living in the entire site that needed to be gone! The removal of that eye sore and replacement with Pointe North has had a major impact just on the curb appeal alone. It has prompted churches and retail development to take another look at the neighborhood.”

“Looking forward there are always problems, but the major issues of community perception, buy-in and collaboration have been overcome. Now what we would like to have happen is for additional development to come in that would afford neighborhood residents jobs, day-care service, a place to buy groceries, and a pharmacy for them to purchase medicine in close proximity to their homes. With us trying to encourage families to go to school and work, we need these services, but these are things we can’t provide. What we can do though is provide and create the atmosphere for easier facilitation of some of these efforts. Where possible, we are always looking to partner with agencies to work with our residents through the use of our facilities and through joint grant proposals.”
“In fact, to show our commitment, I can tell you about our relationship with Walgreens. They were looking for trained staff and we were looking to employ our residents. Well, I had a vacant building, so Walgreens came in and built out the space into a miniature store complete with stocked shelves, counter, register and the whole bit. They then trained our staff so that they could take the residents through the Walgreen curriculum, and upon graduation, they promised to hire them. Moreover, if they don’t want to come work for us, then fine, go take the skills learned in the program to seek employment somewhere else. The thing is that there commitment was to the program not individuals! ”

“Important for HAs, is to push the comfort zone. As long as we keep doing what was done, we will continue with the same results. Our outside-the-box creative-thinking approach to issues is critical to our success and is a major asset that sets us apart from other HAs. I encourage it and my staff is always looking to implement it. When I first came here talking about a HOPE VI grant, they thought I was crazy. Six years later look what we have accomplished. When you push the limits and get the proper support, input, and do things well, then you can’t help but succeed! So, in the end what I am saying is that there’s opportunities out there.”

Allison

“We need to prepare for the end of the grant and I think we have with the endowment.”

[Edward] Can you elaborate on what you mean by endowment?

“Because of our efficiencies in managing the community social service (CSS) budget, we only spent half of the one million that was allocated. So we received permission from HUD to roll the remaining funds into an endowment. It is a ten year endowment, which allows us to sustain the CSS program past the life of the HOPE VI grant. In addition to keep our normal CSS programs going, we will also be able to manage the new ‘Neighborhood Network Center’ (NNC). The NNC was a project that came available as a result of our biggest glitch in our HOPE VI efforts. Because of the national economic downturn, especially relating to housing, we have not been successful in securing funding for loans for the single family ownership portion of the HOPE VI plans. So we wrote and received permission from HUD to use money slated for that to instead assist us in purchasing the police sub-station located on
the property, which we will be turning into a community center to house our CSS program. The endowment funds will help us to fund staff, supplies, etc. to make sure its effective.”

“The biggest challenge we have to overcome is the home ownership aspect of our plans. The economy, along with Beaumont having one of the highest unemployment rates in the state, has been an impediment to us securing residents who can attain loans. We are hopeful that in the next year we will be able to pick up again.”

“As far as assets, we see the HOPE VI project as a potential incubator for future housing and retail infill within the neighborhood. We have seen a few new stores come in like the Dollar General and liquor store, along with the Family Dollar staying in the community relocating across the street, and a few other convenient type businesses popping up, but we are looking for a small grocery store and a pharmacy. We also think that additional services will be attracted by the NNC, especially for Regent I residents. The existing community space was too small for larger group events. This will allow us and providers to serve bigger groups and on site. The key is that we are always looking for partners and programs to invest in our residents, the NNC should allow us to attract additional partners.”

“One of the problems is the provision of youth services! When we started, the HOPE VI project, we had groups like the Boys & Girls, YMCA, and Girl Scouts on board to provide youth services, all of whom since disbanded, discontinued on-site, lost their grants to work in public housing or moved out of the community. This has made finding activities for youth very challenging, and we have to take on provision of these services ourselves.”

[Edward] Why can’t the CSS money be spent to provide services for the youth?

“It could, but we had to make a decision. Do we spend it on 300 youth, providing services where all of the funds could easily be spent within a year, or do we provide services for their parents that can last for years. Our decision was to focus on better education and job training programs for adults, and to continue to write for grants for additional youth services. While we do provide some youth services, we had to prioritize to try and get the most impact for our money. It’s rough though and not everyone understands. What’s more important a thirty youth football uniforms or thirty parent’s uniforms and bus passes to get to work?”

[Edward] What about the Sterling Pruitt Center across the street. Why can’t you go there?
“They can and some do, but it really only serves half our residents. Our experience is that if the kids are real young, or of high school age it’s not for you. It really only has programming focused at elementary and middle school kids. Additionally, its location is only convenient for Regent I kids and not Pointe North youth, because of the distance. Moreover, crossing the street keeps a lot of Regent I parents from allowing their kids to go over there by themselves.”

BHA Case Worker

“It’s still battling with the transportation issue, that’s been a big barrier. I have seen some improvement with the Beaumont Transit, like they redid the bus stop, so they’re very noticeable now. You can see them, they have benches. People don’t get wet waiting on them. I guess that is an improvement.

As far as the neighborhood is concerned, the Family Dollar that was across the way from Pointe North, they have moved it to across the street. They have built a brand new one. So, it looks really nice. It sits on the same side with us, it’s really nice and they are turning their shopping center into a grocery store.” “They’re finish, they’re in there. So that looks really nice, but they still don’t have a local grocery store and I guess in time that they will be finished with the store they’re building. They’re building a store. They are taking that whole entire strip and turning that into a grocery store.”

BHA Construction

“Education…we can provide the sheltering and supportive services to help people, to help lift them up and become self-sufficient. We can do all of these things for our residents and to the community, but none of it is going to get us to where we need to go unless we can stay connected as a community and understand how what happens here affects the Beaumont community at large. That’s where I see the biggest problem.

It can’t be an us against them thing… We need a sense of purpose and direction with some goals in mind and that’s what I hope happens moving forward. I think we’ve done some really nice things to show people…hey, you know this is what can happen when people make an effort and apply themselves. More than anything else we’re just an example of what can happen ‘good’, when people are prepared with an agenda to go out and make things like this
happen. They just don’t happen on their own. You got to do the same thing going forward. We serve people that struggle, and the goal should not just be to keep them above struggling, but to provide the opportunity for momentum, dreams and some hope that okay, maybe my children will do better.”

Planning Department

“Well, I think two things…continued cleanup of the area and secondly, probably the most important is much needed retail into that area, because there is just nothing basically there now.”

[Edward] When you say clean up….specifically what do you mean?

“Continued demolishing of old dilapidated housing and construction of new housing of all types.”

[Edward] When you mention retail, what type of retail would you envision or you think that neighborhood needs?

“A grocery store or pharmacy…when I talk to or hear from other neighborhood associations, the south end or north end that’s what they seem to want the most are grocery stores and pharmacies.”

[Edward] What assets do you think or opportunities do you think that the neighborhood brings about?

“The assets are the development that has occurred and the people who live there. When developers see rooftops, retail always follows rooftops.”

Beaumont Transit Authority

“First, I think that housing director Robert Reyna has done a great job. For years and years and years, they had a lot of problems and then he came in here and straightened things out. I think they did a great job in building these new facilities. I know they have some more planned…. but I don’t know if that’s enough or not. I don’t know how many people need housing here in Beaumont, but I’m sure it’s more than those two communities can assist. We need to redo all the old style projects, like they did for those. Obviously the needs are there,
not only for units, but to do it in a way that people are proud to live in and have in their communities.”

“The assets are the new developments and the people that live there. Hopefully, when the economy comes back around, we can get some private development to address some of the infill housing and retail needs of the neighborhood. If things continue to grow and develop, it may present a greater opportunity for us, because of concentration. So, that might be an opportunity to increase ridership. Ridership has been pretty constant for the last ten years. Before that we used to have probably about twice the ridership we have now. The issue here is that Beaumont is unlike Houston or Dallas where a lot of the middleclass and upper-class live outside in the suburbs, and it takes them an hour to drive in fighting the traffic and there is no place to park. Those systems have park and ride lots and they have the commuter buses so they can carry a lot of middle class white collar type workers to and from work.

Beaumont is small; you can be from one side of town to the other in ten or fifteen minutes. There is no parking problem, there’s no traffic…well, I mean early in the morning it can get a little congested, but not anything major. The bus system, we’re small …we don’t have a system like Houston, where bus may come every fifteen minutes, ours is like every thirty or forty-five minutes. So, it’s not as convenient. Until transit becomes more convenient than owning a car; and you fighting with traffic for an hour a day…people are not going to ride the bus in droves. But our system does provide for those who cannot afford a car or can’t drive for some reason. While we may not be as convenient as other systems we are committed, and will be here to provide for those that need us.”

Habitat for Humanity

“I think there is still a lot of work to do. Maybe not specifically with building new structures like HOPE VI, but dealing with the existing housing stock that is around there and repairing what we have in houses that are in that surrounding neighborhood. I think that’s an area that needs to be addressed. I know it is hard to get the resources for that kind of thing, but there are people there who own homes, but need assistance in fixing them.”

[Edward] What do you see are assets starting with the HOPE VI and maybe what that have spawn in that area?
“Well, I think what the HA has done has rejuvenated the area. The new housing just looks better, and it provides something that you can start building on as opposed to what was there before. What’s there now is quite a nice successful little area that can be expanded to increase the positive effect. The work done, gives you something to start from.”

What changes (both positive and negative) have you seen in this neighborhood that you attribute to the HOPE VI project and investment related to it? (Has there been more interest from developers and investors?)

BHA (Robert)

“The HOPE VI projects have spurred massive physical changes that have also created changes in the neighborhoods perception. With that has come interest and investment by others. The city is assisting the efforts by the creation of an Empowerment Zone along Magnolia Avenue, and condemning and demolishing old dilapidated structures, clearing the way for future development. Before the area was depressed and run down and now the residents, business owners and the city are all viewing the area in a different light and looking for opportunities. In fact, Habitat for Humanity has begun purchasing lots to build homes. In short, the HOPE VI development has sparked a change in perception in the community. Realizing that it is going to take time, the infrastructure is being put in to attract additional development. Developers want to see homes, people and the ability for value creation, and we are preparing that canvas.”

BHA Case Worker

“I’m not sure, if the HOPE VI project has sparked any redevelopment, but it has definitely kept some businesses here that would have probably moved. When I talked to the Family Dollar manager, she said that their building had a lot of problems and a lot of issues and they knew that they were going to move, but I don’t think they anticipated that it was going to move directly across the street. When they saw the type of first class project the BHA developed, I am sure that helped the decision to stay, because they already had clientele. They are very friendly workers over there. You wouldn’t believe that…even though the neighborhood has some issues with some people off the streets and people coming in and hanging out. They keep that store together. Even the Dollar General, not far from Regent,
those are the two places to go if you are looking to shop cheap like me. Those are the two dollar stores that I prefer to go into because it is neat, clean, and they have their inventory stocked and the environment is really pleasant. Additionally, the manager at Family Dollar keeps an eye out for my clients. If I go in there, she will tell me, “Hey, I’ve been meaning to talk to you”, will tell me something that happened over the weekend, if someone had taken some things, especially if she knew that the client lived here and she wanted to know who it was. It’s kind of like they know us.”

BHA Construction Manager

“The biggest thing I see happened with the HOPE VI project in the community is that it created a sense of progress and if we can add to that progress, and maintain the energy of momentum, we can actually get something moving forward from the community outward. If you don’t want things declining, you need sparks like a HOPE VI Project in key communities to initiate the kind of positive effects that happens in HOPE VI Projects. They are eye catching. What we’ve done here. It’s something to look at. I mean when you ride by it you may not even be living there, but you see what we have done and try to think of what was there…and you see what is there now…you may say to yourself…I wouldn’t mind living there. It’s that kind of thing…people start to have a sense of upward mobility, things become possible. That’s where I think we sparked a little hope there in this community. We all pulled together as a government and community to make this project successful. So, that’s where I think that the visual redevelopment has helped with the mental awareness of what is possible. Our approach was to create a sense of place and do everything we can to make it safe here for families. We wanted and achieved a place where you go to bed at night feeling safe. We realize that you can go into the nicest neighborhoods in the city and have that sense, but we haven’t had a lot of that in this community, but we’re offering an opportunity to do that now.”

Planning Department

“I think that we are seeing some new retail like the dollar stores. Additionally, when I hear comments from the residents that live there….there is a sense of pride in their housing that they didn’t have before when the old complex stood there. I think that means a lot for not
only the residents, but for the community. Moreover, it speaks volumes for the housing authority and the work they have done.”

Beaumont Transit Authority

“The image of the housing authority for years and years before Mr. Reyna came in, was terrible. There was a lot of corruption. Additionally, all the housing areas were run down and Magnolia Gardens looked like World War II after a bombing... I mean it was terrible. So, I think the image of the housing authority has just totally changed with the hiring of Robert and the development of the two HOPE VI projects. I think that it is a very positive image now. I just think that it is a very positive thing for Beaumont to get rid of these old nasty looking things and put new buildings in there; of course obviously if you put new buildings in there, hopefully that’s going to attract businesses to move in...neighborhood businesses that provide services the residents need. It’s just an overall positive thing for the city. I think he has done a great job and it’s just really improving the public housing situation in Beaumont a great deal.”

Habitat for Humanity

“I know what we are doing, but I have no idea of what developers are doing, and I don’t know if this has an effect on expanded development in the area. I haven’t really seen any as far as housing is concerned. I think it has an effect on this city’s approach to rejuvenating certain parts of Beaumont and I think the two HOPE VI projects have drawn some attention to the fact that revitalizing these parts of the city is something that can be done and the impact is significant, but I have no idea of what other builders or developers are doing.”

Allison

“I would say the Habitat homes could be attributed to the program, and I would also say the Dollar General coming in and the Family Dollar staying, but outside of that I wouldn’t know. I think a big problem with additional development is the economic crisis that the whole US are in. It is bad everywhere, and Beaumont is just a small piece of the everywhere pie. We are hoping that when things turn around they will for us too.”
“What we do have coming through are projects from the public sector. The city has big plans to improve infrastructure in the neighborhood that include road, lighting, sidewalks, etc. I don’t think that would be happening if we would have not received the grant.”

“Additionally, the perception of the community has changed with the HOPE VI development. The neighborhood is cleaner, there are less people hanging out on the streets, and the two developments have curb appeal. A lot of that probably has to do with the residency requirements that you have to be working, going to school, or in job training to live here now. It’s a long process to get things completely changed, but what we have now is a big difference from the past.”

Has the HOPE VI project changed your relationship with the BHA or project PPPs? In what ways?

Robert

“I have worked tirelessly to develop relationships with the city, the participating businesses, and the people of Beaumont that would assist the success of the BHA and these two projects. When I first came here the BHA had many issues. Now that they have seen the physical changes that HOPE VI has brought to the properties and neighborhood, along with the amount of money that this project has brought to the project we are viewed very differently. Remember, HOPE VI was only $20 million. We leveraged an additional $13 million in Hurricane Ike funds, and $17 million in tax credit money totaling $52 million for the two projects. This was an unheard of amount of money for a project here, which caused a paradigm shift in the mindset and the way BHA conducted its business. Contracting, procurement, regulatory compliance, reporting mechanisms, communication, bidding, wage rates, etc. all changed. Our goal was to educate them about the new way we were going to conduct business. Not everyone was happy, and some complained, but if they wanted in, they needed to get with the program. We have had HUD come down and review us, along with numerous audits. Historically the agency was passive, quiet and behind the scenes. We were just the opposite. We held meetings; open-houses, let people kick the tires, walk-through units, talked to everyone that would listen, brought you guys (TAMU) in to assist with evaluation, and were very transparent with the process. Officials at every level were a part of
the process also. In the end, it was an approach that has served us well, and I would not have changed a thing.”

“In addition, Audwinn Samuel, the Councilman for the district that encompasses the two HOPE VI sites, has been working diligently in the formation a working committee made up of private citizens, local business people and us to come up with a master development plan to attract more economic development. He is trying to get the pulse of what people want, what they need and what they would like to have. With this information we will then reach out to commercial developers to see what is viable in this community. Prior to the work we have been doing there was no interest in that.”

Allison

“Yes, we have established very close relationships with many of the public and private business entities in the Beaumont area. If we call the city, they are very responsive in addressing any concern or need of ours. Like the other day, we had a problem and needed Entergy’s help. Mr. Reyna shot an email to the CEO over there and we had a response within minutes! I don’t know many people who would have that type of response from a major corporation, and that’s including the city. Mr. Reyna has done a fantastic job creating relationships that make our job and our residents lives much easier. Additionally, we have fostered excellent relationships with all of our partners, large and small. We have set a standard around here where people now believe in the BHA. They know we spend their money wisely, take care of our residents, and do what we say we are going to do at a high standard. In fact, the deal for the Lucas property that will be the new ‘Neighborhood Network Center’ was made much easier to facilitate, because the banks were interested in working with us because of our track record. I want to also say that the community as far as residents have also began to believe in us, which is extremely important to our future success, especially as we continue to move toward mixed-income developments. Before, the BHA never did what it said it was going to do, so there was a lot of mistrust. We have proved ourselves by doing, and we have had an overwhelming amount of support from the people in the community, those who live both in and around the developments. Even with the media, we have not had any negative media or feedback as far as editorials to stories done on us. That
is rare. In almost any high profile publically funded project of this magnitude, there is always some lash back. We have not received any. This is not the old BHA.”

BHA Case Worker

“Yes, in fact, we had the BISD come and approach us last week, to come in and do the ACE program with the kids. We’ve worked with them on a GED program previously and it went well. They know us, our residents and their needs. The ACE program will be an afterschool program where the kids and parents can be involved. When I asked her, “How did you hear about us?” She said that someone at the main office actually directed her to this site and told her to come and speak to me. She asked if we wanted to do any activities. Not that this happens every day, but we do have different agencies that stop by from time to time.

Another school stopped by that is not part of the BISD, Premiere High School, they wanted me to hand out fliers and so did Lamar University. Additionally, there’s a group of students from Lamar that just want to do anything to help. They have brought cookies here and went door to door and meet the kids. We anticipate that starting in January we want to have a calendar of regular events with them. It’s nice because they are just a group of students that want to give back to the community. So, that’s been a good thing, and as you can imagine the kids and parents love it. I have no idea how they knew who to call. A lot of people, who come to assist, tell me that they called the main office and they were directed to call directly over here. So, the word is getting out and people are coming around.”

“We’re also very close with the police. They know us by name there. Anytime a situation happens when we call, they come just like that. I guess that’s more so because of whom we are. We have established a better relationship with them. At first if we called 911, it would take ten, fifteen to twenty minutes, but now if we call them, they will dispatch someone right away. Additionally, if it’s not a BPD cop that’s used to the area, that person will usually come to follow-up in shortly afterward, or when they get to work. It’s nice to have developed that relationship, for us, our residents and the police. “

“We also have developed a pretty good relationship with Child Protective Services, and the Salvation Army, they both have been involved with few of the families for different issues, and have assisted with furniture, especially with our families who were previously homeless.
They also help with food. All of the PPPs, who have assisted, have been great big help. In the end more agencies that know us by name the better.”

BHA Construction Manager

“Yes, but the first thing to remember with a HOPE VI grant is that there is a window, five years to get it all done. We have been successful and what that reflects for us and PPPs helping is that we were trusted with funds and we were successful. Where there is a need, we were very successful, and that has manifested in positive relationships in the community at all levels. People know that what the housing authority says it’s going to do, it does, and well.”

Planning Department, Manager

“Yes, to be honest with you I didn’t have that many dealings with the housing authority prior to and with these two developments, I mean I have been very much involved with Beaumont Housing Authority and getting these properties developed. I like Robert Reyna, the Executive Director, he and I are much closer and have a much better working relationship then we ever did before.”

“I’m just excited at the work that the housing authority and private sector partners have done. Everyone has stepped up to the plate and taken that first step in bringing new housing for not just low and moderate income residents, but also the farsightedness to bring in market priced housing, which I think is really cool. The private sector had not stepped up to the plate to do that, and it took the housing authority to do so. I’m really proud of them. I think it diversifies their income, so much so, that they are not depending on tax dollars so much anymore, but they also generate income to help them financially on other things, which goes back into the neighborhood.”

Beaumont Transit Authority

“Oh, absolutely…I mean it has changed not only my perception, but I think the whole community’s perception of the housing authority. Before those apartments and the area were both seen as the area where all the poor people and drug dealers lived, but now with all these new housing its nice and new. It’s totally changed the perception. Additionally, I think there were a lot of problems with the housing authority, prior to Robert taking over. He has
totally turned it around and changed it. I think that he has gained the trust of the people of Beaumont and the housing authority has a really positive perception with the public now. Moreover, before, the HA would have never invited us to meetings. But since Robert Reyna got here, the transit authority has been invited to all their monthly meetings, along with all the other different agencies. He had us sign a memorandum of understanding a few years back saying that we agree to do what we can to help work with the housing authority. So, I think that he has improved the relationship certainly with us with them and our perception of them.”

Habitat

“My relationship with them has not changed….my view of them is… I’m happy they built it. I think it’s a good thing they did and I’m happy that they did it efficiently, and they did it quickly, so that was impressive. I think that the maintenance is what will be a determining factor of the projects success or failure, in the end. Is it going to look good in a few years? Will it fall apart soon? It seems to me that they are maintaining the property well now, and I think they are trying to carefully select who lives in the community. I think that they are doing a very good job.

[Edward] Have you gotten more people that want Habitat houses in this area now?

“Not in that area, no, and I don’t know if people are calling us as a result…I know that there have been some interaction in a sense that some of the people that live in Pointe North know some of the people that live in the Habitat housing across the street, but they knew each other before, so, there may be some exchange of information there where people might be calling us because they see the houses right next to them and they know the person and they might be telling them to call Habitat because I see their houses and they are nice. It was not like that at all, when we first obtained that property on Grand Street from the city. If you told people “Hey we’re going to build you a house there” they were like “Are you kidding, I’m not going to live there”! In fact, the first family that moved into that little row of seven houses…the first time she been there, she would say “Oh I can’t believe you’re making me live here!” and I kept saying “Just hang in; it’s going to get so much better”. Luckily, very soon after she moved in, it all got demolished; so then, she was looking at a bare landscape of nothing, which she preferred to the vacant old buildings. In a very quick time, the development went
up and now that street where they are is really kind of cute. That has been a nice turnaround in a short time.”

**What has been the best outcome of the HOPE VI project, from your perspective?**

BHA Case Worker

“I think just the resident’s being able to see that their neighborhood can change, was the biggest outcome. The whole idea when we were building it, when they were applying was either, “Oh, it’s just going to be like Magnolia Gardens again, you’ll get shot up going out there”, or “I don’t know if I want to live here”. Additionally, having onsite case management was a great idea because now residents have someone to talk to. If they have any housing question, I can tell them or I can let them know what to do. I think that helps them more than anything...a lot of times they just don’t know who or where to go to. I still get clients that come to me and talk about their rent and I listen...then I say, well you know I don’t do rent, so let’s talk to the manager and let’s see if they can get that adjusted for you or send you to housing and who you need to talk to with that. Just being able to give these people services gives them some kind of hope. It builds relationships also. For instance, I do the assessments one of the questions is “what is your highest level of school?” A lot of them will say that they have dropped out of the ninth grade and just didn’t think that they could go back. At the end of the assessment, I start explaining to them, well we do have partner or we do have partners that will work with you. It doesn’t matter that you are old or you’ve gotten older, it’s ok. Just giving them that encouragement works to get them motivated to go back!"

[Edward]: Do they take advantage of it?

“Yes, they do! One thing that hurt us is when we didn’t have the funds for daycare. Not being able to support our daycare, but we do work with Catholic Charities who if they are working or in school they have a waiting list, but they have been exhausting their waiting list lately, so they come to the housing authority and say “Hey, do you have anybody that need services because we have this, this and this?” So daycare kind of hurt us. It hurts us when
clients get all depressed and didn’t have anybody to keep the kids anymore, but it was very good while it lasted. The key is to talk to them. Like now, we had to stop handing out bus tickets because it was a big expense every month. So I had to prepare them for that. I had been telling them this is a courtesy bus ticket. They are forty dollars a month per person. I told them that when the grant ends, in October, and my money go down I won’t be able to buy these every month. They were okay with it…they were like yeah you told us Ms. Stephanie that it was going to end. It’s been good for two years. They’re okay. I just tell it to them straight and they understand. My main point to them is to take advantage of programs while you can because they may not last forever. Do it now or miss the opportunity.”

BHA Construction Manager

“The obvious thing is that our residence has better facilities now…better living conditions, it’s safer, it’s cleaner, it’s newer, it’s modern…those are the obvious things, but again it’s what it does to the human spirit as well, giving people that otherwise would probably just feel like they’re left out of the American dream.”

Planning Department, Manager

“There is not just one thing that I can point to it’s more like a group of things. Robert has re-built the housing authority, in addition to redeveloping the two HOPE VI projects. This has created housing opportunities for residents of all income brackets, in an area that no one would have ever thought possible prior. Additionally, it has changed the perception of public housing developments for residents and the greater Beaumont community at large. There are people in other areas of the city that are envious of the level of construction that was attained with public dollars. Robert has also re-established the HA. There were some issues prior to him assuming this position, and he has shown us what a HA should be for a community. It’s the overall effect. The physical and mental changes are the most important outcomes.”

Beaumont Transit Authority

“The overall clean up the neighborhood…where they tore down the old junky looking buildings and rebuilt these really nice new apartments was great for the people and area.”
Habitat

“I think it does probably improve the image of affordable housing and housing assistance, because the project housing that was there before looked awful. There was a big metal fence around it like a prison. The image of it was so nasty. Then you have negative feelings about the people living there. Now, it looks like a nice condo development. It doesn’t have any preconceived idea with it, it doesn’t have some type of stereotypical image with it, and so I suppose, it probably helps people who may have negative attitudes toward that kind of thing to see it in a positive light...to see it better...it’s just housing, what’s the big deal! It probably gives them a better image and it probably helps people maybe have a more positive attitude towards housing that is low income and that kind of thing. I think that in Beaumont the discussion now is more one of ‘this business of mixed income’. Some of the new downtown market rate developments are talking about having mixed income. I think that people are still having rather narrow views on this.... I wish they would relax, it’s going to be nice.”

Allison

“The fact that we tore down a dilapidated eyesore of a community and have replaced it with new greatly needed affordable units is the best outcome. This demo and rebuild has changed the face of the community and assisted the BHA to re-establish itself as viable service entity among the residents and city as a whole. We have created new housing, put people to work, and provide needed services on a daily basis. Given the hurricanes, economy, and unemployment rate any dent we can put in the affordable housing need is a good thing.”

Robert

“We, the BHA, have been able to provide for the city and its residents affordable, beautiful, 97 % occupied housing in replacement of the dilapidated, horrible, unused units that once stood in their place. With that being said, we still have three-thousand residents on a waiting list. The economy now is getting worse, not better. This means that the need is greater even than when we started. Our work is opening doors and we are looking for additional relationships, other funding opportunities, and are even looking at rehabbing other properties. This has allowed us to demonstrate our proficiency at not only bring money for a project, but managing it so well, leveraging it and getting public and private investors to say ‘You know what, there professionals. They can find money, put together a program and
deliver on the goods. Moreover, the stuff there delivering is very appealing, marketable, competitive with the private sector, desired, and well done. We are no longer a risky investment. In fact, we are now being approached to be advisors to provide guidance for others looking to provide affordable housing. We have created a niche where we are an asset to constituents beyond our residents and the city.”

Have there been any disappointments related to it?

Robert

“Yes. We had initially indicated in our application that we would, with the HOPE VI funds, build out a single family home sub-division of 83 single-family homes. Forty-six would use HOPE VI money to assist the buyers with down payment assistance. Remember the grant began in 2006. In 2008, the bottom of the real-estate market blew out. Even with mortgage interest rates at 3%, we still can’t get buyers qualified, because the unemployment rate has sky-rocketed to 12-13% in our region. So, what we were able to do was put in the infrastructure. The streets, sewer, lights, utilities are all there. Unfortunately the buyers aren’t. What we did was draft a letter to HUD informing them that we did everything in our power to try and make this happen but the market is just not feasible now. But, using our outside the box, creative approach, we asked HUD to allow us to use the unused funds to purchase the police sub-station to provide on-site CSS services (mentioned earlier in the report). Be aware though, that once the market returns we fully intend on completing the sub-division.”

BHA Case Worker

“I guess for the most part, the budget actually going down as we spend that’s kind of a setback. The fact that after the grant ends, I don’t know if that will have two case workers one on each site or just bouncing one case worker. That’s kind of a disappointment because then I don’t know what the need will be like if they keep one of us…what days am I here and what days am I there? I guess that would be the biggest thing that will concern me. They are doing better as a person. They are doing things that they haven’t been able to do. They are doing things to get them further in life, but they still may need some assistance. I know eventually you have to cut them off at some point, but we have been so successful lately that I
don’t want to stop the momentum. It’s kind of like once we accept the relationship they know we’re there to help them. I have heard residents and potential residents say of the Pointe North or Regent development, “Oh girl, you can’t be living out there without working or going to school.” Believe it or not, this motivates them and then they will come in and say “I’m keeping my job, this apartment is nice.” I don’t know how to be once those services are gone. I just don’t know how that will be. I know the idea is to get in, get up, and get out. That’s the idea of housing, but at the same time I do have people that are trying. They might be struggling a little longer than others because they actually had nothing and now they just got furniture, got a job, and now they have all of these other issues that they’re trying to deal with, like actually being involved or staying clean. I have some parents that come from drug addiction and staying clean and trying to be there for their kids at the same is tough. Kids will tell me, “Ms. Stephanie, we like the football team that we joined, but my momma won’t ever come to see me.” The good thing about being onsite is being able to talk to them on a daily basis whether they have an appointment or not. I am here, so I see what’s going on and sometimes I see too much. They establish relationship with you very well. I just tell them I work for the housing authority and I need my job, so do the right thing.”

“Another thing is that, Pointe North, needs more help and for a longer period of time, because of the homeless stipulation. My people had a long way to go..., and they still have a long way to go. They’re starting off, they are getting in and getting services that they need, but it’s kind of like you have to keep guiding them along the way or they will get off track.

[Edward]: When you say the homeless stipulation, will you explain that?

“When we got the grant money for HOPE VI there was some additional money available from Hurricane Ike or Hurricane Rita. When we finish and finalized everything and they started to build Pointe North and the housing authority wanted to get extra points, and if they took on the homeless stipulation then they got additional points and the extra dollars that went with it. So, at Pointe North, we have fifty-one percent of our property considered homeless and we have quite a few people who had nothing when they came in...like literally nothing, just the clothes on their back. So I have been dealing with that and it’s kind of...they need me and services more than my regular residents. That’s been a challenge...I
had to understand that they had nothing and I had to try to step in and help as much as possible.”

BHA Construction Manager

“We tried to provide homeownership units, but the financial crash of 2008 has made it very difficult for us to pull off our third phase, the single family phase. We did everything in our power and we were not successful. Sometimes you can do everything in your power, but it’s not meant to be because there are other factors, and for this the timing was just not right. If we had hit that in 2005 we would have had people throwing money at us to build homes but 2008 put an end to that.”

Planning Department, Manager

“Yes, the single family…I think that is probably my biggest disappointment so far and that may be due to the economy and not anything to do with the housing authority, but that again is my biggest disappointment.”

Allison

“The two disappointments are the lack of us being able to complete the homeownership piece, and the lack of being able to provide more youth services. Both were out of our control. We could have never planned for the economic downturn that precipitated you service providers disappearing or running out of funding, and all of the new requirements for homeownership financing. Besides those, I feel and we have proved that we have gone way beyond what we said we were going to do. We are proud of what we have accomplished.”

Beaumont Transit Authority

“Not that I know of. If anything, the economy has probably slowed spin off development in the area around the project that would have addressed infill and the addition of things like a grocery store, but that’s not the HA’s fault, it’s just the economy. Things have slowed everywhere.”

Habitat

“The only disappointment I know of is a really minute one in a way and it’s kind of funny about my families that live across the street…the Pointe North families, the way it’s
constructed like there is series of allies in the back and they have parking in the back. Each
unit is allotted one or two parking spots that are covered and people keep parking out on the
road on Grand Street right in front of their front door and the street is quite narrow, so when
they fill it up with cars it becomes impassible for the Habitat families that live across the
street and they call us and complain, “Those peoples have a driveway, they have a back ally,
they have a place to park; why are they parking in the front?” Then we point it out that we
can’t enforce it oppose to…I don’t think my families think that they have a couple of parking
areas.”

Is there anything that you would like to tell me that I haven’t asked you or that you want
to make sure that we put in the report?

BHA Case Worker

“I guess just to let whoever is reading the evaluation know that this is the best thing that
could have happened. You know to the housing authority this is like wonderful…in
Beaumont, we’re what’s hot! Everybody wants to live in Pointe North and Regent I. It’s a
nice environment, we’re trying to change things…so it came out very well, it’s very positive.
The only stipulation is that, they still refer to it as ‘where the old Magnolia Garden use to
be’, but for the most part…they’re beginning to know that it’s different. I have heard
residents tell other people visiting ‘Oh no, it’s different…we don’t go through all of that stuff
that used to happen at the Old Gardens’. So, I just want to say that it had a very positive
impact. It really did. For Beaumont, its wonderful…it’s nice.”

BHA Construction Manager

“Yes. That I am proud to have worked on such a successful project that has changed a
neighborhood, allowing it to be weaved it back into a community. People, who never looked
over here, now do, and people who live here now have a sense of pride about where they live.
I would encourage the powers to be to continue fund HOPE VI, so that other communities
can experience what Beaumont has.”
Planning Department, Manager

“Well, the HOPE VI project and its two developments has been a fantastic thing. I mean it’s for the people and hopefully when you provide an individual with nicer and cleaner new home that they will have pride, in not only the unit, but the community as a whole also. Additionally, I really have been impressed with Robert Reyna. I have been here 18 ½ years, and I mean he has done wonderful things for our housing authority. In fact, several years back, the housing authority was in trouble and the government had to step in and to take control for a while, but Robert has done a really good job.”

Beaumont Transit Authority

“I think that Robert has done a great job with the housing authority and I think that has been a complete turnaround. I mean it was really pretty bad for a lot of years and he has come in here and turned it totally around creating a very positive image with the people of Beaumont now. Obviously, you hear about all the federal funds now these days on the stimulus program and things that were wasted on really stupid projects and then you see projects like this, which was a very good use of the money and federal funds. He has done a great job…I can’t say enough; it’s like night and day from what it used to be.”

Habitat

“I think that Beaumont is an interesting city and that it is slowly starting to move towards modernizing some of its ways with respect to housing and especially the idea of mixed affordable housing for all. I’m still surprised at the conditions of some the houses in this city and the neighborhoods and it makes you think ‘can’t there be something done about this kind of thing? Is there some of way to provide more decent housing to people?’ You don’t have to have your own freestanding individual house on a lot with a fence around it. You don’t have to, even though it’s nice, but there are so many other options... condos, townhouses and that kind of thing, that can be made more affordable, easier to keep up and not have to worry about mowing the lawn and stuff. There definitely needs to be new models created, allowing more American families, that perhaps can’t afford to purchase a home and can’t afford land to live affordably. There is a lot of work to be done...”
Allison

“That HOPE VI would have not been successful without the support of the community, and by that I mean the residents who live here and those in the surrounding area, the city, all the public and private partners and our staff. Additionally, the decision to keep CSS services on site was huge in facilitating the process. It’s key. When we go to conferences and talk to people who have not gotten anything off the ground, it’s more than not because they have not developed the community and PPP relationships necessary. They think that the HA can do it just because they have HOPE VI money, and that cannot be further from the truth. You NEED the community, or it will never happen, not on budget and in time anyway. Once again, Mr. Reyna did a fantastic job facilitating relationships that has allowed the program and us to reach our potential. This is especially true with the way he advertised the project, it was key that he involved the media early and advised them and the public of every step that we were going to have to go through in accomplishing this task. Once he did that, we received very few questions as to what was going on. His transparency early, with the process was instrumental in our success. I recommend that other programs adopt this model.”

2.3. Conclusions

The BHA CSS program has been a very successful element of the HOPE VI program. It is through this program that public housing residents can move from welfare dependency to become financially independent, upwardly mobile contributing members of their communities. Through partnerships with a wide range of social service agencies, a full range of services are available to HOPE VI residents to support their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency. BHA has also been very proactive in setting up the Endowment Trust to ensure the continuation of this very vital program.

Partnerships among community organizations are one of the highlights of the Beaumont HOPE VI program and the underlying secret of its success. Through the diligent, responsive, highly ethical efforts of the Beaumont Housing Authority and its stellar staff, the HOPE VI project has achieved the following:

- Developed trust among the project and area residents;
• Re-established the credibility of the BHA; and
• Built relationships with both public and private partners.

While the physical redevelopment of the communities might be more visible to both the larger community and residents, the achievements among community partnerships has the most potential for continued impact. The capacity that has been built between the BHA and its partners will have lasting effects not only on these two projects, but on all the future efforts of each organization involved. While we, as third party evaluators, have collected mountains of data over these past five years, the success of these partnerships is the hardest to capture empirically. But we predict that the impact of these relationships will be felt for years to come in the larger Beaumont community.

To these participants, it was not just another project, but an endeavor that would transform not only a neighborhood, but would set the stage and foundation for a community, expressly related to the inclusion of all its residents in future change. What this speaks to is the power of leadership. Many HOPE VI programs receive millions of dollars and are not successful. Not only do you need money, but you need the right people in place to steward the programs. Program leadership is perhaps the hardest thing to recreate in other locations.

While the HOPE VI program is ending, work and relationships created because of it are not over. The ‘Neighborhood Network Center’ project is moving along and the city will soon begin its infrastructure work along the neighborhood corridors. The CSS program is steadily growing, receiving volunteers on a regular basis to assist with resident programs. Additionally, the BHA is looking into redeveloping existing housing stock, new properties, and being sought as consultants and partners with other local entities in the provision of affordable housing. As one of the interviewees stated, “The work here has galvanized relationships that will endure for decades.”
3. NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

Investment by the BHA in the redevelopment of public housing into mixed-income communities was expected to have catalytic effects in revitalizing the surrounding neighborhoods. Our baseline report established baseline demographic and housing characteristics in the revitalization area (2007 report). New data on changes to these conditions is now available from the 2010 Census, which has been released over the past year and a half. Interim reports have focused on the physical infrastructure of the neighborhood, opportunities for improvement, new construction by BHA in the two redevelopment sites, and trends in neighborhood conditions. In this final report, we focus on changes in the social and demographic characteristics of the revitalization area, as well as changes in the physical and housing quality of the revitalization area. We assess overall changes in residential investments, housing sales, vacancy rates, and crime in the neighborhood.

3.1. Social and Demographic Characteristics

The state of Texas and each metropolitan area within it have undergone considerable change over the past decade. In this section, using data from the 2000 and 2010 Census, as well as the American Community Survey and other secondary sources, we consider the changes taking place within the revitalization area in light of changes taking place in the larger metropolitan area and the state as a whole. Making these comparisons help us understand the nature and significance of the changes.

Table 3.1 shows the very rapid growth that the state has experienced over the past decade. The table shows Texas’ 25 metropolitan areas, ranked by growth rate. The state has grown 16.6 percent over the past ten years. Many of Texas’ larger metros as well as the metros in the Rio Grande Valley have grown very rapidly. Beaumont-Port Arthur, on the other hand, is the slowest growing metropolitan area in the state. In fact, for most of the decade, it was losing population. It was not until the last year of the decade, 2009-2010, that Beaumont-Port Arthur rebounded with a net gain for the decade.
Table 3.1. Texas Metropolitan Area Population Change, 2000-2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metropolitan Area</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos</td>
<td>1,249,763</td>
<td>1,716,289</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen-Edinburg-Mission</td>
<td>569,463</td>
<td>774,769</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laredo</td>
<td>193,117</td>
<td>250,304</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown</td>
<td>4,715,407</td>
<td>5,946,800</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio-New Braunfels</td>
<td>1,711,703</td>
<td>2,142,508</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Station-Bryan</td>
<td>184,885</td>
<td>228,660</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington</td>
<td>5,161,544</td>
<td>6,371,773</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood</td>
<td>330,714</td>
<td>405,300</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville-Harlingen</td>
<td>335,227</td>
<td>406,220</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler</td>
<td>174,706</td>
<td>209,714</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland</td>
<td>116,009</td>
<td>136,872</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>679,622</td>
<td>800,647</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>20,851,820</td>
<td>24,304,290</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubbock</td>
<td>249,700</td>
<td>284,890</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odessa</td>
<td>121,123</td>
<td>137,130</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longview</td>
<td>194,042</td>
<td>214,369</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amarillo</td>
<td>226,522</td>
<td>249,881</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waco</td>
<td>213,517</td>
<td>234,906</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherman-Denison</td>
<td>110,595</td>
<td>120,877</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpus Christi</td>
<td>403,280</td>
<td>428,185</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Angelo</td>
<td>105,781</td>
<td>111,823</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texarkana</td>
<td>129,749</td>
<td>136,087</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>111,663</td>
<td>115,384</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abilene</td>
<td>160,245</td>
<td>165,252</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaumont-Port Arthur</td>
<td>385,090</td>
<td>388,745</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wichita Falls</td>
<td>151,524</td>
<td>151,306</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Although growth in the metropolitan area has been slow, areas within the metropolitan area have grown or declined at different rates. The Beaumont-Port Arthur metropolitan area is made up of three counties containing several cities. Table 3.2 gives us an idea of which of these areas has been attracting most of the growth. We can see that Hardin County, a suburban county of Beaumont, has experienced much more rapid growth than any other part of the area. Of the cities represented, only Beaumont and Groves have experienced any growth. This indicates that the growth occurring in Hardin County is occurring outside of the City of Beaumont, in the suburbs.
Table 3.2. Area Population Growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Percent Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardin</td>
<td>48,154</td>
<td>54,635</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>251,628</td>
<td>252,273</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>84,906</td>
<td>81,837</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Select Cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Percent Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beaumont</td>
<td>113,866</td>
<td>118,296</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groves</td>
<td>15,733</td>
<td>16,144</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nederland</td>
<td>17,422</td>
<td>17,547</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>18,643</td>
<td>18,595</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Arthur</td>
<td>57,755</td>
<td>53,818</td>
<td>-6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Neches</td>
<td>13,601</td>
<td>13,040</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vidor</td>
<td>11,440</td>
<td>10,579</td>
<td>-7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

To capture the revitalization area, we compare the combined characteristics of Census Tract 7 (the former Magnolia Garden site, now Pointe North) and Census Tract 9 (the fairgrounds site, now Regent) to those of the City of Beaumont, Jefferson County, and to the State of Texas. Demographic and social characteristics are seen in Table 3.3.

The Pointe North area has declined in population, while the Regent area has increased, by approximately the same amount. This may reflect the move of many of the Magnolia Gardens households to Regent I, but also likely reflects additional migration of population. Overall, the population of the revitalization area has declined by about 400 people. This is consistent with what we see going on the City of Beaumont and Jefferson County generally.

The racial and ethnic composition of the area has changed modestly in the last ten years. While it appears that the proportion of African-Americans in both census tracts has declined, we suspect that the concomitant increase in people of “other” races really reflects a change in how residents define their race, and not a real change. However, we do see a significant increase in the proportion of Hispanic households in both census tracts. In fact, in both tracts, the percentage of Hispanic households more than doubled, from 2.0 to 4.2 percent in the Magnolia Gardens area, and from 5.0 to 11.8 percent in the fairgrounds area. These values are still
considerably different from the city, county, and state. The proportions of African-Americans are 2-3 times that found in the city and county, and even higher when compared to the state.

Household sizes in the revitalization area have declined considerably over the last decade. For both sites combined, the average household size has declined by two-tenths of a person, which is ten times more than the decline seen in the city and county. Household size is something that changes very slowly, usually in response to changing fertility rates. It is particularly surprising to see this decline occur simultaneously with an increase in the proportion of the population that is Hispanic, since Hispanic birth rates are on average higher than those of other races and ethnicities. While household sizes in the revitalization area are still higher than that of the city, they are equivalent to county household sizes. All are smaller than the state of Texas, which is heavily influenced by the growing Hispanic population.

The next set of numbers is among the most interesting, and certainly the most encouraging. While we have consistently seen how much worse off the revitalization area is than the city, county, and state, here we see that household incomes and poverty rates are actually improving in the revitalization area, while these measures are getting worse at every other level! Incomes adjusted for inflation are shown in parentheses, giving a better basis for comparison. When considering the adjustment for inflation, the improvements in household income seem quite modest, but when compared to the real decrease in household income at the city, county, and state level, they appear to be quite significant. Further, we see fairly dramatic improvements in poverty rates, particularly in the Pointe North area (tract 7). Overall, the improvement in poverty rates is less than three percent, but when compared to the more dramatic increases in poverty rates in the city, county, and state, the net gain is fairly impressive.

Together, these indicators demonstrate that the revitalization area has seen a real and significant improvement in buying power and likely quality of life in the face of a severe economic recession that is affecting the state only moderately (a loss of about $2,000 in income), but has hurt the city and county, which have lost more than $10,000 and $5,000 in real income respectively.
Table 3.3. Revitalization Area Demographic Characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tract 7 (Pointe North)</th>
<th>Tract 9 (Regent)</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Beaumont</th>
<th>Jefferson</th>
<th>Texas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>3,779</td>
<td>2,975</td>
<td>1,631</td>
<td>2,206</td>
<td>5,410</td>
<td>5,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Size</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
<td>8.90%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>5.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>93.50%</td>
<td>93.20%</td>
<td>85.70%</td>
<td>79.40%</td>
<td>91.10%</td>
<td>87.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
<td>2.90%</td>
<td>7.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Alone</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>5.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income*</td>
<td>17,409 (22,045)</td>
<td>23,848 (20,744)</td>
<td>16,382 (21,639)</td>
<td>22,353</td>
<td>16,875 (20,716)</td>
<td>23,058 (21,639)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below Poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>33.20%</td>
<td>24.20%</td>
<td>44.20%</td>
<td>38.60%</td>
<td>37.20%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Female Householder</td>
<td>54.80%</td>
<td>39.20%</td>
<td>59.20%</td>
<td>67.20%</td>
<td>56.30%</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent high school graduate or higher</td>
<td>64.40%</td>
<td>76.30%</td>
<td>62.20%</td>
<td>57.60%</td>
<td>63.30%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>3.90%</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>4.30%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>13.00%</td>
<td>20.74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*amounts adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index
Despite these improvements, median household incomes are still much lower than those seen in the city and county—less than half the medians at the city, county and state level. As expected, the proportion of the population living below poverty standards is greater in both sites. Within these areas, there is a higher percentage of female-headed households living below these standards. This is the case in both study areas and for the state; both the city and county greater proportion of individuals living below the poverty standards.

While the majority of the population has attained at least a high school degree, the proportion of the population doing so has declined in the revitalization area. While increases in educational attainment have been seen in the city, county, and state as a whole, these improvements have not been realized in the revitalization area. Unemployment rates in the revitalization area also remain quite high, and are still outpacing those seen in the county. Unemployment rates in the revitalization area have increased from 13 percent to nearly 21 percent, while county unemployment rates have increased from 8 to 12 percent.

Overall, the story of change told by the census data is one of a still-distressed community, but one that has seen real improvements in household income and poverty rates, defying trends seen at the city and county level, where incomes have declined significantly and poverty rates have climbed. This suggests a strong positive impact of the revitalization effort—the changes made in the neighborhood have had a real and meaningful impact!

3.2. Housing stock

In this section, we examine the physical condition of the housing stock. Table 3.4 summarizes housing characteristics in the revitalization area in 2000 and 2010. The overall number of housing units has actually decreased somewhat, probably due to the demolition of Magnolia Gardens and associated efforts to demolish vacant and abandoned structures in the area. The rest of the area (city and county) have seen modest increases in the number of housing units, while the state of Texas has seen a large increase, associated with statewide population expansion.
While vacancy rates have actually declined in the fairgrounds area, they have increased in the Magnolia Gardens area, and in the revitalization area generally. These increases exceed the increases seen city-wide, county-wide, and state-wide. While higher vacancy rates are to be expected in the midst of a recession, these vacancy rates are significantly higher, and almost double than seen city-wide.

Although homeownership rates have been declining nationwide in conjunction with the housing market meltdown, we do not see drops as steep as we might expect. State-wide, homeownership rates have held steady over the decade. Both Jefferson County and Beaumont, however, have seen significant decreases of 3.5 and 4.7 percent, respectively. This is consistent with the other indicators of economic distress that we have seen for the county and city. Homeownership rates in the revitalization area, however, have declined just over half a percentage point. In the fairgrounds area, homeownership has increased significantly, perhaps due to the new construction sparked by the Regent development. The larger Magnolia Gardens area, however, has seen a decrease.

The quality of the homes also appears to have improved modestly over the decade. While the percentage of homes lacking plumbing has dropped from 1.1 percent to 0.06 percent, the percentage lacking complete kitchen facilities has increased from 0.05 percent to 1.2 percent. These trends, however, are consistent with what is seen across Beaumont and Jefferson County, suggesting that this is not a trend attributable to changes from the HOPE VI effort.

Median home values and rents are important indicators of economic health in the revitalization area. Table 3.5 shows housing values and rents. Adjusted values are 2000 nominal values adjusted for inflation. Percent change is calculated with the adjusted 2000 values and nominal 2010 values. The changes seen in the revitalization area are quite different than what is seen in the city, county, and state. Looking first at home values, we see that the fairgrounds area experienced changes in housing values comparable to what is happening in Beaumont, Jefferson County, and Texas. The Magnolia Gardens site, however, has experienced flat housing prices, increasing only with inflation. Thus, for the revitalization area as a whole, the increase in housing value has been about half of regional trends, suggesting a generally more depressed housing market.
Table 3.4. Revitalization Area Housing Characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tract 7 (Pointe North)</th>
<th>Tract 9 (Regent)</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Beaumont</th>
<th>Jefferson</th>
<th>Texas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Occupancy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units</td>
<td>1,655</td>
<td>1,303</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>2,367</td>
<td>2,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied Housing Units</td>
<td>87.3%</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Housing Units</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied Housing Units</td>
<td>1,445</td>
<td>1,037</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>2,016</td>
<td>1,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter-occupied</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units in Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-unit detached</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
<td>82.8%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more units</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile home, RVs, Vans, etc.</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected Housing Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking complete plumbing facilities</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking complete kitchen facilities</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*amounts adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index
Table 3.5. Revitalization Area Home Values and Rents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Median Value, owner-occupied</th>
<th></th>
<th>Median Rent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tract 7 (Pointe North)</td>
<td>$32,800</td>
<td>$41,538</td>
<td>$42,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tract 9 (Regent)</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$37,989</td>
<td>$45,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>$31,400</td>
<td>$39,762</td>
<td>$43,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaumont</td>
<td>$62,500</td>
<td>$79,143</td>
<td>$94,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>$59,400</td>
<td>$75,218</td>
<td>$93,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>$82,500</td>
<td>$104,469</td>
<td>$128,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rents are quite different, and are cause for concern. Nationwide, we have seen rents increasing as housing prices have dropped (Rich 2012). Rents have increased at about the same rate as housing prices in Beaumont and Jefferson County, and less across the state. In the revitalization area, however, and particularly in the larger Magnolia Gardens area, rents have skyrocketed. On one hand, this may reflect both an improvement in the quality of the housing available as well as increased demand for housing in the area (although housing price increases do not suggest this). More likely, the dramatic increase in rents reflects continuing uncertainty in the housing market due not only to the recession but also to a decrease in housing stock resulting from Hurricanes Rita and Ike, which struck the area in 2005 and 2008, respectively. As a result, fewer people are able or willing to become homeowners.

Figure 3.1, from the Texas Real Estate Center’s Market Overview for Beaumont-Port Arthur, indicates a steep drop-off in multi-family building permits since 2008. Financing for multi-family construction has long been more volatile than financing for single-family housing development (Colton 2001), and is currently compounded by an unstable financial system, making financing for multi-family particularly unpredictable. The decrease in construction may have tightened a rental market already tight due to Hurricane Rita in 2005.
This spike in rents, however, is cause for concern, since it may have the effect of displacing original or current residents. Particularly for low- and moderate-income households, an increase of this magnitude is a threat to housing security for these families who have few housing alternatives.

In the following sections, we examine the impact of this new investment on spillover effects in the surrounding neighborhood. For each of the analyses presented, we show trends over time (going back to 2005 if the data allows), and show a comparison between the city or metropolitan area (depending on data availability) and the target area, which is represented as Census Tracts 7 and 9, or as zip code 77703, except where noted. Trends over time help us to determine whether changes in the conditions are occurring, as well as whether they might be attributable to the HOPE VI activity taking place in the area. We look for changes taking place beginning in 2007, when the redevelopment began. Comparing the city to the target area helps us determine whether changes in the target area are consistent with city-wide trends (in which case, HOPE VI activity is an
unlikely explanation), or whether they are defying city-wide trends. Given the current economy, for example, we may expect to see a reversal of housing value trends. Seeing these in the city-wide economy as well as the target area would help us to understand the causes of these changes, and not falsely attribute them to local factors.

3.3. Residential Lending

In this section we use data available from the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC). The FFIEC collects information on lending institutions (banks, savings associations, credit unions, and other mortgage lending institutions) as prescribed by the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA, 1975). The purpose of HMDA was to provide the public loan data that can be used to help determine whether financial institutions are adequately serving the lending needs in their communities, and to help identify potentially discriminatory lending patterns. These data report the volume and amount of loans originated and denied for a number of loan types, including home purchase loans, refinancing loans, and home improvement loans. The data are compiled annually, and reported at a number of different units, including at the census tract level, allowing us to compare lending patterns in the revitalization target area to patterns across the rest of the Beaumont Metropolitan Area. Here, we extract data for Census Tracts 7 and 9 to represent the target area.

3.3.1. Loan Volume and Average Loan Amounts. Lending activity within the revitalization area provides indications of interest in the area. Private investment through home purchases and home improvement loans suggests confidence in the stability of the community, while refinancing may suggest that home owners are acting to take advantage of better interest rates, but may also mean that they are taking equity out of their homes to finance a variety of activities which may include home renovation, purchase of household goods, or financing an education or new business.

3.3.1.a. Home purchase loans. Data on home purchase loans are collected for two different loan types. First, data are reported for Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans and Veteran’s Administration (VA) loans. These loans are made by mainstream lenders but secured by the federal government and require certain qualifications for
applicants. They are more often available with low down payments and are intended typically for first-time home buyers (see www.fha.com). Also reported are conventional loans made from prime lenders covered by the HMDA.

Figure 3.2 shows both the volume and average loan amount for both FHA/VA loans and conventional loans for the target area (tracts 7 and 9, combined) and for a two-tract average for the Beaumont-Port Arthur Metropolitan Area. The two-tract average represents a metropolitan average for a comparably-sized unit of analysis (two census tracts). Loan volumes are shown as bars, using the left axis, while loan amounts are shown as lines, using the right axis.

![Figure 3.2. Home Purchase Loans.](image)

Source: Author’s calculations of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data.
Looking first at the volume of lending, we observe that in both the metropolitan area and in the target area, the volume of conventional lending has decreased dramatically (purple bars for Beaumont, red-orange bars for the target area), while FHA/VA lending has increased (green bars for Beaumont, blue bars for target area). This clearly reflects the changing availability of credit from mainstream financial institutions in response to the lending crisis that really hit in 2007. Conventional loans have become much harder to get, and government-backed loans have become more popular as this private lending has dried up.

Even with lending slowing dramatically in the metropolitan area, home purchase lending activity is still quite low in the target area relative to the metropolitan averages. While the volume of FHA/VA loans in the target is too small to detect any pattern, the pattern at the metropolitan level has been an overall increase in the number of FHA/VA loans being made, while the number of conventional loans has dropped. Although the disparity in the volume of lending has decreased somewhat over time, it is due more to an overall decrease in lending volume rather than an increase in lending in the target area. This trend mirrors the national trend of decreases in lending activity as a result of the subprime lending crisis that took hold in 2007.

While conventional lending peaked in 2006 and then dropped off in 2007 and 2008, conventional lending in the target area has decreased steadily since at least 2005. No conventional loans were made in the target area in 2009 and no FHA loans were made in the revitalization area in 2010. The disparity between lending volumes in the target area compared to a metropolitan average is striking. Remember that the comparison for the metropolitan area is a comparably sized unit, so if lending patterns in the target area were equivalent to what was going on in the rest of the metropolitan area, we would expect the bars for conventional loans to be roughly equal in height. While this disparity is what would be predicted for a low-income, disadvantaged neighborhood, it is not indicative of increasing confidence in the area.

Also seen in Figure 3.2 are average loan values, along the secondary vertical axis. The two higher lines reflect average loan amounts for FHA/VA and conventional loans in
the Beaumont metropolitan area. The lower two lines represent average loan amounts in the target area. Again, we see that loan values are not only much lower in the target area, reflecting lower housing values in these neighborhoods, but these values also appear to be much more volatile. This price volatility may simply be the result of very few data points, but may also reflect a mixed housing stock or greater uncertainty in the area. While in the Beaumont metropolitan area, loan amounts are similar for FHA/VA and conventional loans, in the target area, FHA/VA loans are somewhat lower than values for conventional loans. It should be noted that there were no FHA/VA loans made in the target area in 2007 or 2010, and no conventional loans made in 2009, which may give a false sense of the time trend.

While loan amounts have been steadily increasing in the Beaumont metropolitan area from 2005 to 2010, the trend has been different in the target area. Because loans volumes are so low, it is difficult to determine whether loan values are increasing or decreasing. Last year we noted that conventional loan amounts had increased from 2007 to 2008. We saw this as a potentially encouraging sign, indicating rising loan (and home) values in the area targeted for revitalization, despite national trends of stable or declining home values. We noted that the timing of this trend reversal was coincident with the implementation of the HOPE VI grant in the target area, and thus might suggest a positive response to the new construction taking place as part of the HOPE VI revitalization effort. We hoped to see a continued increase in both loan amounts, but perhaps more importantly in loan volumes, which indicate increasing development and lending activity in the area. However, 2009 and 2010 data do not support this earlier contention. We see a decrease from 2006 to 2010 in loan volumes, and insufficient data is available to assess loan amounts.

3.3.1.b. Refinancing loans. Households refinance to take advantage of lower interest rates or to take equity out of their homes. Nationally, refinancing loans have been increasing in number over the past 15 years, and many experts believe that they can place families at risk if used for the wrong reasons (such as financing additional consumer purchases; see Fellowes and Mabanta, 2007; Van Zandt and Rohe, 2011).
Unfortunately, the HMDA data do not tell us what the loans are being used for, which can make it difficult to interpret the data.

Figure 3.3 shows the volume and average amount of refinancing loans taken out in the Beaumont metropolitan area and the target area during the period of 2005 to 2010. These data do not show a consistent pattern (i.e., increase or decrease) over time, but changes are similar in both average Beaumont neighborhoods and the target area. However, again we see that the volume of loans is much lower in the target area than in the average Beaumont neighborhood, and in 2010 dropped almost to zero. As with the home purchase loans, the lower numbers of refinancing loans being made in the target area suggests little interest in the target area, but may also suggest a fairly high level of stability. It may also indicate that few people in the target neighborhoods are risking their equity by taking cash out of their homes.

![Figure 3.3. Refinancing Loans](image)

Source: Author’s calculations of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data.

Average loan amounts are also considerably smaller in the target area than in the average Beaumont neighborhood, but this is consistent with differences in housing
values. The trend in the target area is more volatile. Up until 2009, refinancing loan amounts were steadily increasing in the average Beaumont neighborhood, but dropped off considerably in 2009, and then picked back up in 2010, suggesting that 2009 may have been an anomaly.

3.3.1.c. **Home improvement loans.** Home improvement loans can be a good indicator of revitalization activity taking place in a neighborhood. These loans may be taken out either by a new home buyer who needs a separate loan to renovate or update a newly-purchased home, or may be taken out by existing home buyers who wish to upgrade or renovate as an alternative to refinancing to take equity out of the home.

Figure 3.4 shows the volume and average amount of home improvement loans taken out in the target area and the average Beaumont neighborhood. While a large disparity still exists between the average Beaumont neighborhood and the target area, the disparity is not as great as we have seen it for the previous loan types discussed. This likely reflects the age of the housing stock—no new housing is being constructed in the target area other than that being constructed by the housing authority, and most of the existing housing stock is close to 50 years old. While the neighborhood is fairly stable, it is also in great need of physical upgrading (see our 2007 report). Consequently, we would expect to see a relatively higher rate of home improvement activity than home purchase activity.

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1 Because the volume of loans is so low, however, one high or low value loan can really affect the mean.
The trends over time are consistent between the average Beaumont neighborhood and the target area—mild increases from 2005 to 2007, and then a fairly marked decrease through 2010. It is likely that this reflects the tightening of all lending that took place in response to the subprime crisis. Loans of all types have become harder to come by. Given the similarity in the trends between Beaumont and the target area, it is unlikely that home improvement lending changed in response to the HOPE VI grant.

With the exception of a very high loan value average in the target area in 2005 (which we believe is likely an outlier), home improvement loan amounts have been fairly flat. Consistent with what we’ve seen with the other loan types, loan amounts in the target area are lower than those in the average Beaumont neighborhood. Between 2008 and 2010, loan amounts in the metropolitan area increased slightly, while loan amounts in the target area decreased considerably. While not dramatic, this trend is troubling, suggesting that home improvement activity is steadily decreasing in the target area. While these low lending amounts are consistent with low housing values, we would have hoped to see increases in response to increasing activity and confidence in the area. However, it appears that the recession has been too strong to overcome.
3.3.1. Conclusions. Changes in loan volumes and average amounts give a strong indication of growth or revitalization in a particular neighborhood. While higher-than-average volumes can indicate neighborhood instability (high turnover), lower-than-average volumes typically indicate low levels of interest. Examining trends over time helps to identify responses to particular national or local changes. Trends seen in the data presented suggest both the target area and the Beaumont metropolitan area are reflecting the national housing market crisis, seen in decreases in overall lending volume after 2007. However, the data also indicate a low level of interest in the target area. Trends in refinancing and home improvement loans suggest little spillover effect from the construction activity taking place in the target area beginning in 2007.

3.3.2. Denial Rates

The previous section looked at numbers of loans originated, but did not take into account the numbers of loans that were applied for but denied. Denial rates give an indication of how risky lenders believe lending is in a particular neighborhood. Their perception of risk may be due to the neighborhood itself, or may be due to the characteristics of the borrowers wishing to borrow for homes in that neighborhood.

Figure 3.5 shows denial rates for each of the four loan types considered. Although in 2005 and 2008-2010, no FHA/VA loans were denied in the target area (loan numbers are very small), the trend is that for all loan types, denial rates are higher in the target area than in the average Beaumont neighborhood.
While denial rates for FHA/VA home purchase loans average about 15 percent in the average Beaumont neighborhood, the denial rate can go as high as 65 percent in the target area. Conventional home loans also have high denial rates from 5 to 20 percent higher in the target area than in the average Beaumont neighborhood. Numbers of FHA/VA loans
in the target area are too small to draw any conclusions. The number of conventional loans is also quite small in the target area, but trends since 2006 do seem to indicate that denial rates that are only slightly higher than metropolitan averages.

Refinancing and home improvement loans in general have higher denial rates than home purchase loans. Through 2008, the disparities between denials rates were decreasing, but from 2008-2010, the disparities have grown, particularly for refinancing loans. Decreasing disparities would suggest increasing confidence in the revitalization area; however, this is not the trend. However, we do not believe that the increasing disparity reflects a lack of confidence as much as it does a very tight lending environment in which low-income home owners are just very unlikely to be able to qualify for loans of any kind.

Overall, trends in residential lending patterns are consistent with what we would expect to see in a low-income, distressed neighborhood. Loan volumes are lower than the metropolitan average, and loan values are consistent with lower housing values. Denial rates are also considerably higher in the target area, consistent with the area being seen as a risk for lenders and investors. However, trends throughout the HOPE VI period suggest that confidence did initially increase, but was stymied by the recession that hit in late 2007 and really took hold through 2008.

3.4. Crime

The high rates of vacancy seen in Section 3.1 are very often associated with increases in criminal activity in a distressed neighborhood, particularly during an economic recession. Crime in the target area—both real and perceived—has been an ongoing obstacle to redevelopment, as discussed in previous reports. Using data from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports, as well as data from the Beaumont Police Department (made available to us through BHA), in this section we evaluate changes in criminal activity in the target area. Unlike previous secondary data sources, crime data is not available at the census tract or zip code unit of analysis. We worked with the Beaumont Police Department to identify a unit of analysis which would allow us to understand the amount and types of criminal activities taking place near the two new HOPE VI
developments. The Police Department provided us with a count of crimes taking place within a ¼ mile radius of the two developments, using their street addresses.

Figure 3.6 shows trends of crime in the City of Beaumont since 2005. Beaumont saw a significant decrease in crime from 2005 to 2006, and since then has seen a slower decline, in both violent crimes, and in property crimes. As would be expected, violent crimes are much less frequent than property crimes including burglary, theft, and car theft. Between 2009 and 2010 (the most recent year when crime data is available for the City of Beaumont), another substantial decline is seen, in both violent and property crime.

In Table 3.6, we document the numbers of each crime in the target area compared to crime in the city as a whole during the period 2006 through 2011 (we do not have revitalization area data for 2006 or 2010, or city data for 2011). This allows us to see how crime is increasing or decreasing both in the target area as well as in the city as a whole. We see that for most of the revitalization period, crime has decreased in every category except theft. While these patterns have been encouraging, they have been consistent with trends that are occurring city-wide. Consequently, we cannot attribute these decreases to other changes that are specific to the target area and surrounding neighborhood.

Source: Uniform Crime Reports, Federal Bureau of Investigation.
In the past two years, however, crime in the revitalization area has increased dramatically in some categories, particularly in the Pointe North neighborhood. This is the more distressed part of the revitalization area; the area where the original Magnolia Gardens was.

**Table 3.6. Target Area Crime Compared to Crime in Beaumont.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of Beaumont</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1707</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1665</td>
<td>1611</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>4525</td>
<td>4471</td>
<td>4170</td>
<td>4385</td>
<td>4041</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto theft</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8118</td>
<td>7716</td>
<td>7419</td>
<td>7333</td>
<td>6841</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto theft</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pointe North</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto theft</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Beaumont Police Department and Uniform Crime Reports, FBI.

In Figure 3.7, we graph the percent change in crime during the HOPE VI period, comparing the City of Beaumont to the revitalization area. The graph makes it clear that crime is down in every category across Beaumont. It is also down in several categories in the revitalization area, specifically the violent crimes of murder, rape, and armed
robbery. All property crimes, including burglary, theft, and auto theft are up. Assault, a violent crime, is up over 200 percent (most of which occurred in 2011). Theft is also way up in the revitalization area.

The increase in assault is of particular concern, since it is a violent crime. The increase in thefts is also striking, and together these increases have contributed to an overall increase in crime in the Pointe North area by three times what it was in 2009, and double the two previous years. Further, based on the data we were provided, we also counted the number of calls directly from the developments managed by BHA. In 2011, there were 142 calls to the police from the Regent development, and 14 of the 56 (25 percent) property and violent crimes reported in the neighborhood were on the Regent
property. In Pointe North, there were 776 calls in 2011 (averaging two a day), and 61 of the 120 (50 percent) of the crimes committed in the neighborhood were on the Pointe North property at 3710 Magnolia.

It is not unusual for crime to increase during a recession, but this spike in crime, despite all the stated efforts of the police department to address crime in these areas suggests that efforts need to be redoubled. This concern is reflected in the statements of residents made in focus groups and surveys as well. Clearly, residents of both developments, and Pointe North in particular, are concerned about crime and safety, and these concerns appear to be warranted. Crime is arguably the biggest challenge facing the success of the HOPE VI developments, and it is one that is a local, not state or national, level (like the recession is).

In response, residents, particularly those at Pointe North, have become proactive and are forming a Neighborhood Watch Program. The Beaumont Police Department has already provided a liaison to work with the residents to ensure they have proper training and information on how the Neighborhood Watch program should work and to provide the technical assistance necessary.

### 3.5. Conclusions

The purpose of assessing neighborhood conditions and trends is to determine whether the HOPE VI redevelopment of Pointe North and Regent I is having spillover effects on the surrounding neighborhood. The HOPE VI program seeks to serve as a catalyst in the neighborhoods in which new construction is placed, causing a reversal of indicators of neighborhood investment and vitality. Our final report captures overall changes in social and demographic characteristics, changes in the quality of housing and the housing market, and crime in the revitalization area. We compare changes to those that have taken place in the city as a whole to determine whether any positive changes can be attributed to the HOPE VI program.

Using 2000 and 2010 Census data, we are able to compare baseline revitalization area conditions to post-HOPE VI conditions. Generally, the data reveal a still-distressed community. Along every measure, the revitalization area continues to be worse-off than
the city as whole. Yet, importantly, the revitalization area has defied city trends on two important indicators--household income and poverty rates. While the City of Beaumont has seen significant declines along many socio-economic indicators, the revitalization has seen very modest improvements in some, and held steady or seen more mild declines in others, including homeownership rates. Housing stock has improved slightly, but is still generally more dilapidated than the city as a whole.

The two revitalization areas have experienced somewhat different trajectories. The Regent area was better off to begin with, but has seen conditions much more comparable with what is going on in the City of Beaumont. Pointe North, the more populous of the two areas, and the original site of the old Magnolia Gardens, has proven more challenging.

Housing and rental market conditions offer additional information about changes in the revitalization area. Housing prices in the Regent area have been comparable to what is happening in the larger city, which is positive, and suggests confidence in the area. Housing prices have been stagnant, however, in the Pointe North area. Further, rents in the Pointe North area have skyrocketed over the decade despite a high vacancy rate, while rents in the Regent area have risen much more modestly. We believe the increase in rents may reflect the new construction related to the HOPE VI program. The rents in 2000 were very low, so an increase in this very distressed area is a reflection of the increase in quality, but the rapid increase may mean that the Pointe North area is becoming less accessible for low- and moderate-income renters.

Investment and residential lending has declined precipitously nationwide, and across the City of Beaumont, and unfortunately, the revitalization area has not defied these trends. Loan volume is very low, and denial rates are quite high. These indicators, such as residential lending, show little interest in private investment in the revitalization area, and little change has taken place over the HOPE VI period.

Crime is perhaps the most troubling of the indicators we have tracked in the revitalization area. Throughout our evaluation, crime has shown some positive signs, but over the past couple of years, crime has spiked, particularly in the Pointe North area, and
much of it is taking place in the Pointe North development, according to Beaumont Police Department data. While the recession is something that is beyond the control of local efforts, crime is something that can and must be addressed locally. Granted, it is a challenging problem, and one that requires resources beyond which the housing authority can bring to bear. Political will is necessary to find a way to address this important but intractable problem.
4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In our last analysis, we examine the changes in employment and industrial structure in the revitalization area. As with the neighborhood conditions, we hope to see that the HOPE VI program has spurred interest in the revitalization area. We recognize, however, that the economic recession that has seized the nation has not overlooked the Beaumont area.

In this section, we examine overall changes in employment, earnings, and industrial structure. Importantly, we look at the changes in the geographic distribution of both jobs and workers. This helps us understand both what jobs are available in the revitalization area, as well as where residents of the revitalization area are working. We are relying on secondary data from the U.S. Census’ Center for Economic Studies. We report data from 2002, the closest date available to the 2000 Census data used in the previous section, as well as data from 2005, prior to the commencement of the HOPE VI project, and 2010, the most recent date for which data is available. Here, the smallest level at which data is available is the zip code, so we use the 77703 zip code to represent the revitalization area, comparing it to the City of Beaumont.

4.1. Distribution of Jobs

Table 4.1 shows total jobs by year, in both the revitalization area (Zip Code 77703) and the City of Beaumont. In 2002, jobs in the revitalization area were 4.6 percent of all jobs in the City of Beaumont. In 2005, this percentage had increased to 10.0 percent. By 2010, however, this percentage had dropped back to 4.1 percent. The trend indicates that although revitalization area jobs as a percentage of City of Beaumont jobs have dropped considerably between 2005 and 2010, they have returned to a more stable percentage seen at the beginning of the decade. The maps in Figure 4.1 demonstrate the geographic distribution of jobs in the revitalization area.
Table 4.1. Total Number of Jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zip Code 77703</td>
<td>3,247</td>
<td>7,286</td>
<td>2,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaumont</td>
<td>69,126</td>
<td>73,053</td>
<td>70,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization area as a percent of city employment</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Center for Economic Studies

On the following pages, Figures 4.1a-c show the distribution of the jobs in the City of Beaumont compared to the distribution of jobs in the revitalization area. We see that 2005 numbers look very promising, suggesting that employers are locating in the area, potentially providing jobs for residents of the area. However, this percentage has waned by 2010, returning to values seen earlier in the decade. As an initial indication, this trend suggests that the nationwide recession is exerting pressure on the revitalization area that may overpower the efforts of the HOPE VI project to catalyze economic development in the revitalization area.
Figure 4.1a. Geographic distribution of JOBS, 2002.
Figure 4.1b. Geographic distribution of JOBS, 2005.
Figure 4.1c. Geographic distribution of JOBS, 2010.
4.2. Jobs by Earnings

Figure 4.2 shows earnings over the HOPE VI period, from 2002 to 2010, comparing the revitalization area (Zip 77703) to the City of Beaumont. As we saw earlier in Section 3 with household incomes, wages show positive trends through the last decade. Few jobs were available at more than $3,333 per month in the revitalization area in 2002, and this proportion actually decreased between 2002 and 2005, it increased substantially by 2010. This suggests that although the number of jobs decreased in the revitalization area, the quality of them has improved through the period. While the largest proportion of jobs in the revitalization area is still mid-wage jobs, the overall picture is one of improving earnings in the revitalization area.

Source: U.S. Census Center for Economic Studies

4.3. Jobs by Sector

Examining the industrial composition of the revitalization area and comparing it to the City of Beaumont helps us understand the changes that have taken place in the area over the evaluation period. Table 4.2 shows us the industrial breakdown. The sectors employing the most employees in the revitalization area have consistently been retail trade, administration & support, waste management and remediation, and accommodation and food services. In the middle of the last decade, the proportion of workers employed
in the administration & support, waste management and remediation sector ballooned to 58.5 percent—employing more than 4,000 workers in 2005. Clearly, this was likely a single operation that was fairly short-lived. By 2010, this sector had returned to its previous level, accounting for about 13 percent of employees. The overall industrial composition of the revitalization area is fairly comparable to the City of Beaumont. Beaumont also has a large health care and social assistance sector, which accounts for the largest share of its employees through major employers Memorial Hermann Baptist Hospital and Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital.
Table 4.2. Industrial Sector Composition of the Revitalization Area and the City of Beaumont, 2002-2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of Companies and Enterprises</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; Support, Waste Management and</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remediation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services (excluding Public Administration)</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Center for Economic Studies
4.4. Distribution of Workers

The Center for Economic Studies also compiles data on workers. This analysis looks at the types of jobs that revitalization area residents work in (wherever they are), compared to the City of Beaumont. Table 4.2 shows the total number of workers in the revitalization area compared to the City of Beaumont. First, we observe that the number of workers follows a similar trend to the number of jobs seen in Table 4.1. The number of workers was climbing through the middle of the last decade, but after the recession hit, this number declined again.

Table 4.3. Total Number of Workers, 2002-2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zip Code 77703</td>
<td>5,858</td>
<td>6,348</td>
<td>5,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaumont</td>
<td>47,089</td>
<td>49,270</td>
<td>43,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization area as a percent of city employment</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Center for Economic Studies

Perhaps more interesting, if we compare this table to Table 4.1, we see that the number of workers in the revitalization area is much higher than the number of jobs available there, while the relationship is opposite in the city. Figure 4.3a-c shows this distribution.

This is not a surprising distribution, given that the revitalization area is close to downtown, and many of Beaumont’s workers live in the suburbs. It does, however, suggest that very few of the revitalization area residents are employed in the area. Many of them must travel outside the area to find work. We also see that this distribution has not changed dramatically during the study period, suggesting little relationship between resident jobs and HOPE VI efforts.
Figure 4.3a. Geographic Distribution of WORKERS (working residents), 2002.
Figure 4.3b. Geographic Distribution of WORKERS (working residents), 2005.
Figure 4.3c. Geographic Distribution of WORKERS (working residents), 2010.
4.5. Workers’ Earnings

Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of earnings by workers over the study period. We see that as with jobs, the proportion of workers earning lower wages has declined over time in both the revitalization area and the city, while the proportion earning higher wages has increased. On average, however, revitalization area workers are behind city workers, which is consistent with our earlier analysis of household incomes. These trends again appear to respond to national economic trends more so than any local factors such as the HOPE VI program.

Source: U.S. Census Center for Economic Studies

4.6. Workers by Sector

In our final analysis, we look at the industrial composition of workers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of Companies and Enterprises</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; Support, Waste Management and Remediation</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services (excluding Public Administration)</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We see that the most important sectors for workers have been health care and social assistance, retail trade, accommodation and food services, manufacturing, and administration & support, waste management and remediation. Health care and social assistance is a growing sector for revitalization area workers, with an increasing proportion, and one that is larger than that in the city as a whole. In general, we see that revitalization area workers are working in more lower-wage jobs than are most city residents, but good proportions are also working in somewhat higher paying industries like manufacturing and educational services. These findings are consistent with the lower levels of education that we find among revitalization area residents.

4.7. Conclusions

In previous reports, we have provided more detailed assessments of new businesses being created in the main commercial and retail corridors, business owners, and the condition of businesses in the revitalization area. For our final analysis, we look for evidence of spillover effects of the HOPE VI projects on the revitalization area by assessing macro-level changes in the both the jobs available in the revitalization area as well as the jobs filled by revitalization area workers. If new construction and new businesses are being catalyzed as a result of increased investment in the revitalization area, then we would hope to see it in increased jobs and wages for revitalization area residents.

Our findings reveal trends consistent with changes taking place in the city and nation in response to the economic recession. As we saw in the changes to household incomes and poverty levels, we do see some modest evidence for improvements in wages for jobs located in the revitalization area as well as for workers residing in the revitalization area. These increases in wages do outpace those seen in the city as a whole, suggesting that economic conditions, and specifically the quality of jobs, are improving more than we might expect if the revitalization area were following city-wide trends. It is likely that these improvements do reflect an increased confidence and interest in the revitalization by investors and businesses.

The diversity of the economy in the revitalization area is also encouraging. There are several industries represented among both jobs and workers in the area, suggesting a
diversified and resilient economy that is not dependent on any one industry. This bodes well for the area as the national and city-wide economy rebound in the coming years, positioning the neighborhood to build on investment, confidence, and interest in the revitalization sparked by the HOPE VI project.
5. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In our final report, we offer overall observations on the successes and shortcomings of the HOPE VI program in Beaumont. Unlike previous reports, we will not offer recommendations, but rather lessons learned as the BHA moves forward toward sustaining the developments, continuing to pursue goals, and moving on to other challenges.

We set out to evaluate four components of the grant program. In each of our interim reports, we have addressed resident relocation and satisfaction, community partnerships, neighborhood revitalization, and economic development. The two first of these impacts are direct—impacts on the clients of the BHA, and impacts on the BHA itself. The second two of these are indirect—spillover effects on the neighborhood around the two sites included in the project.

The direct impacts of the grant program have been extraordinary. The physical redevelopment of the sites, the building of community among neighbors, and particularly the building of networks and capacity among community partners are truly impressive. In each section of our report, we have provided evidence for these impacts, as well as our expectations for future positive consequences.

The spillover effects, however, have been stymied by an economy in recession. While much of Texas has had milder impacts than some parts of the country, Beaumont has experienced effects much more like those of the harder-hit parts of the country. Beaumont has long been a more depressed economy than most of metropolitan Texas, and this has been reflected in the many economic indicators that we have explored. As a result, some of the goals of the HOPE VI program—namely the homeownership element—have not been realized. While this may appear as a weakness, it is actually responsible stewardship. It would have been foolhardy to push ahead with the homeownership element in the face of a lending environment that would not support it. While it may have been possible to provide gap financing to low-income homeowners, it likely would have been unsustainable for these families. The consequences would have had a negative long term impact as people lost their homes.
To conclude, the evaluation team wishes to extend our sincere admiration for the leadership team at the Beaumont Housing Authority. Robert and Allison, in particular, have been joys to work with. Although our evaluations have not captured it, we fully understand that the success of this program has been due to the strong leadership provided by Robert and the actions taken by Allison, Cleve, Andre, and their teams. While it has been our job to objectively and somewhat passively assess the achievements and shortcomings of the program, it has been our pleasure to see it succeed, improving the lives of the residents in real and meaningful ways and building capacity for future success.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by Shannon Van Zandt, Edward Tarlton, Cecilia Giusti, Dawn Jourdan, and June Martin. Additional background research and data collection was contributed by graduate students Christopher Lazaro and Ross LaFour.
REFERENCES CITED


APPENDIX A. FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions Regarding Units

Q1 How long have you lived at Regent I/Pointe North?
Q2 How many individuals currently live in your unit?
Q3 What type of unit do you live in?
Q4 Is the unit smaller or larger than the one you lived in before moving to Regent I?
Q5 How would you rate the condition of your new unit compared to the one you previously inhabited?
Q6 What do you like best about your new unit?
Q7 Are there any things that you wish were different about your new unit? What are they?
Q8 How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the unit you live in?

Questions Regarding Neighbors

Q9 How many of you have friends living in Regent I/Pointe North?
Q10 For those of you with friends in Regent I/Pointe North, would you classify them as old friends or new friends?
Q11 How many of you chose to move to Regent I/Pointe North because a friend lives there or is trying to get a place there?
Q12 How many of you have gotten to know your neighbors since you moved into Regent I/Pointe North?
Q13 How did you meet your neighbors?
Q14 Do you socialize with them?
Q15 If you socialize with your neighbors, how often do you do so and in what kind of activities?
Q16 How many of you have children?
Q17 Do your children play with other children living in Regent I/Pointe North?
Q18 Would you say that your children play with your neighbors’ children more at Regent I then they did at your previous residence?

Q19 Where do your children play at Regent I/Pointe North? Inside or outside? Is this different than at your previous residence? Explain.

Q20 How many of you choose to stay to yourselves?

Q21 For those of you who choose to stay to yourselves, why do you do so?

Q22 Can you foresee the time that you will start socializing with your neighbors at Regent I/Pointe North? What might lead to this change?

Questions about the Neighborhood

Q23 How many of you, including those who previously lived at Magnolia Gardens, were familiar with this neighborhood prior to the housing authority’s efforts to revitalize Magnolia Gardens?

Q24 How would you have described the neighborhood before these efforts began?

Q25 What did you like about the neighborhood?

Q26 What did you dislike about the neighborhood?

Q27 What attracted you to live in this neighborhood now?

Q28 Are you presently satisfied with the conditions of the neighborhood?

Q29 Are you able to meet all your shopping needs in the neighborhood?

Q30 If so, where do you go?

Q31 If not, where do you have to go to get what you need?

Q32 How do you get there?

Q33 Is getting where you need to go currently a problem for you? If yes, what would ease the burden? If not, how do you get around?

Q30 Do you know about the housing authority’s plans for the neighborhood? How did you learn about those plans? What do you think of them?
Q31 If you are unfamiliar with those plans, what types of changes would you like to see occur in this neighborhood overtime?

Q32 The slowing economy has affected many families in Beaumont and across the nation. Has your family been affected? How?

Q33 Do you think the slow economic has had an impact on the redevelopment of your neighborhood?

Q34 Are you optimistic that once the economy begins to grow again, the neighborhood will also prosper? Why?

Q35 Is there anything else you would like to share with us beyond the questions we have asked you today?
APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

List of Interviewees.

- Chris Boone, City of Beaumont, Community Development, Director
- Steve Richardson, City of Beaumont, Planning Department, Manager
- William Munson, Beaumont Transit Authority, Resident Manager
- Allison Landrum, Beaumont Housing Authority, Communications & Grant Development Coordinator
- Andre Lewis, Beaumont Housing Authority, HOPE VI Coordinator
- Stephanie Yarbrough, Beaumont Housing Authority, CSS Caseworker - Pointe North
- Uliana Trylowsky, Habitat for Humanity, Executive Director
- Robert Reyna, Beaumont Housing Authority, Executive Director

Questions Asked.

1. What do you see as the needs or problems of the neighborhood? What about the assets or opportunities of the neighborhood? Have these needs and assets changed over the past 5 years?

2. What changes (both positive and negative) have you seen in this neighborhood that you attribute to the HOPE VI project and investment related to it? (Has there been more interest from developers and investors?)

3. Has the HOPE VI project changed your relationship with the BHA or project PPPs? In what ways?

4. What has been the best outcome of the HOPE VI project, from your perspective?

5. Have there been any disappointments related to it?

6. Is there anything that you would like to tell me that I haven’t asked you or that you want to make sure that we put in the report?