

Analysis of Choice and Access to Opportunity in the H-GAC Region

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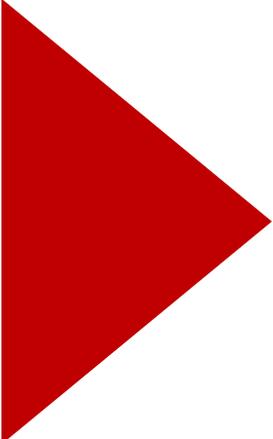
Presented to
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Fair Housing Equity Workgroup

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Update on BBC's Report

BBC has completed the following sections of the report, which will feed H-GAC's Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA)

- **Section II**—Indicators of Opportunity (demographic and housing market review)
- **Section III**—Access to Opportunity (Community Opportunity Modeling)
- **Section IV**—Fair Housing Landscape
- **Section V**—NEW! Case Studies, Best Practices and Recommendations. Economic benefit discussion is emphasized throughout section.
- **Appendices** contain a summary of jurisdiction AI and FFAST form findings, a summary of PHA 5-year plans, methodology details and a bibliography.

Primary Findings Summary

- The region is very diverse and has grown in diversity during the past decade. Most change has occurred outside of the urban core.
- Non-Hispanic White residents are most likely to live in a homogeneous Census tract, followed by Hispanics.
- Census tracts that are majority African American or Hispanic are most located in eastern Houston, the inner ring suburbs and, for Hispanics, in rural Census tracts.
- The dissimilarity index—a measure of segregation—shows moderate levels of segregation in Harris and Fort Bend Counties, and, to a lesser extent, in Brazoria, Galveston, Liberty, and Matagorda.
- Poverty concentrations occur in many racially and ethnically concentrated areas—mostly within and surrounding the urban core.
- Many Census tracts contain a range of households by income.
- High performing schools are present throughout the region but job training sites are not correlated with areas of high employment.

Primary Challenges to Choice and Opportunity

- Subsidized and affordable rental housing is lacking in high opportunity areas.

Subsidized housing makes up just 4 percent of housing units in a Census tract, on average. No subsidized rentals exist in 21% of Census tracts. 8% of Census tracts have high to very high concentrations of subsidized units.

- Concentrated poverty is very high in many Census tracts. More than 900,000 people in the region live below the poverty level.

6% of Census tracts have poverty rates exceeding 40%--these tracts house 13% of the region's poor.

16% of Census tracts have poverty rates of less than 5%--these tracts house 3% of the region's poor.

- Minority-concentrated neighborhoods have high concentrations of subsidized housing, high rates of poverty and lower-performing schools.

53% of subsidized rentals are in minority-concentrated areas, compared with 30% of all housing units and 38% of all rental units.

54% of the region's poor live in minority-concentrated areas, compared to 32% of the population overall.

Primary Challenges to Choice and Opportunity, cont.

- Minority-concentrated neighborhoods have high concentrations of subsidized housing, high rates of poverty and lower-performing schools (cont.).

86% of housing to buy in minority-concentrated areas is priced less than \$150,000, compared to 55% in the region overall.

Of the 2% of the region's elementary schools receiving the lowest academic ratings by the state, 58% are located in minority concentrated areas.

Goals for Increasing Access to Opportunity

Two broad goals: 1) Diversify housing stock, and 2) Reduce and improve high poverty areas.

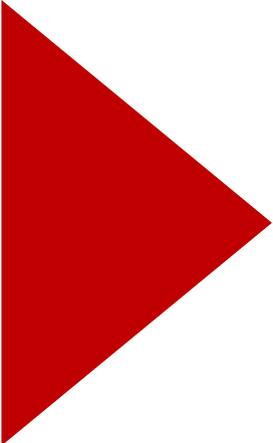
To that end, the following efforts are recommended:

- Increase employment and build self-sufficiency of residents living in poverty-concentrated areas; Promote balanced housing stock where subsidized and affordable housing stock is lacking;
- Revitalize disadvantaged communities while preserving their cultural heritage and income, racial and ethnic diversity;
- Address Not-in-My-Backyard Syndrome (NIMBY), which can be a barrier to housing diversification;

Goals for Increasing Access to Opportunity, Cont.

Two broad goals: 1) Diversify housing stock, and 2) Reduce and improve high poverty areas.

- To that end, the following efforts are recommended (cont.):
 - Boost resident access to capital to purchase and/or improve a home;
 - Be a model for regional collaboration to advance opportunity; and
 - Improve the regional fair housing infrastructure.



Discussion:

Consider the best practices and recommendations

Which will work well in the region?

Not so well?

Are we missing best practices that you know of?

Which of the best practices do you want to know more about?

What do you need to know?

Increasing Employment and Self Sufficiency

Studies have shown the most effective efforts do the following:

- Combine the strengths of community colleges and local workforce nonprofits (rather than each working alone),
- Target a specific industry or cluster of occupations,
- Provide supportive services to students (counseling, job search skills).

Case study: Valley Settlement Project volunteer and mentor program.

Recommendations:

1. Explore partnerships with small business lenders.
2. Capitalize on large scale economic development efforts.
3. Continue to pursue economic development initiative grants.

Promoting Balanced Housing Stock

Lessons learned for regional approaches to improving housing diversity:

- Political will and leadership is most important element,
- Need for affordable housing must be reframed as a market inefficiency to be corrected (v. charity or welfare for the poor). The role of the private sector is critical.
- A regional institution must be charged with identifying and understanding the scope of the problem and creating a forum for action,
- States should be aggressive in persuading local governments to remove regulatory barriers to affordable housing,
- Reliable sources of funding must be place (for subsidies, infrastructure support), and
- Local governments must have a full toolbox of techniques to provide diverse housing opportunities.

Promoting Balanced Housing Stock

Case study: Lowry Air Force Redevelopment.

Recommendations:

1. Provide guidance, leadership to jurisdictions about benefits of housing diversity; reducing regulatory barriers; how to work with PHAs to increase mobility.
2. Jurisdictions consider visitability ordinances, deconcentration policies, land use/zoning regulatory reviews.
3. Jurisdictions make a priority to innovate to accommodate changing needs—and market demands.

Revitalizing Distressed Communities

Case study: Midtown Global Marketplace.

Recommendations:

1. Improve local ability to address vacant/blighted properties. Inform local governments about effective strategies.
2. Promote community-oriented revitalization models.
3. Improve access from distressed areas to job training centers and employment centers.

Addressing NIMBYism

Effective elements of anti-NIMBY strategies:

- Include education of local officials about the importance of housing diversity,
- Include public educational campaigns,
- Provide accurate information to neighbors about proposed affordable housing developments.

Case study: Faces and Places of Affordable Housing poster campaign

The Places of Affordable Housing in Northern Colorado

The Meadows
Housing Affordability of the City of Loveland
Rentable for those below 50% of average area income

City of Fort Collins Home Buyer Assistance Program
Home Ownership

Place del Milagro
Greasley
Catholic Charities Northern
Farm Labor Housing

Straw Hat Circle, Palmdale Housing
Fort Collins Housing Authority
Rentable for those below 50% of average area income

It takes over \$14.00/hour to afford the average 2-bedroom apartment here.
It takes almost \$27.00/hour to afford the average home here.

**Great-looking homes for hard-working people.
Support affordable housing
in your neighborhood.**

For more information contact:
FirstCall at 970-407-7066 in Larimer County
or HHS.FORT at 970-355-8108 in Weld County

This outreach is funded by the City of Fort Collins and The Group, Inc. It is endorsed by the Northern Front Range Consortium of Care and the Affordable Housing Coalition of Larimer County.

Please post until _____

Addressing NIMBYism

Recommendations:

1. Develop or support a regional public education campaign and/or offer assistance to local jurisdictions to develop such campaigns.
2. Develop a toolkit for local elected officials with practical, actionable ways to support housing diversity.
3. Jurisdictions adopt anti-NIMBYism policies.

Boosting Access to Residential Capital

Case study: Hybrid credit union/check cashing branch.

Recommendations:

1. Make information on economic loss from personal credit challenges known.
2. Analyze HMDA data to better understand resident credit needs.
3. Explore hybrid CDFI to serve unbanked and underbanked residents.
4. Jurisdictions with large lending gaps to work with local lenders to increase access to credit and improve resident creditworthiness.

Collaborating Regionally

Best practices in regional collaboration (many already present in H-GAC region):

- Update and interpret the regulations guiding key funding programs to provide flexibility and support for municipal clusters, particularly those that provide development capital.
- Allow public funding to support administrative and general operating functions, as successes stem from shared staff.
- Provide incentives for interjurisdictional collaboration by changing program criteria and goals, and reviewing competitive point structures.
- Adapt a portion of HUD funding, such as CDBG, to flow directly to metropolitan planning organizations and councils of mayors. This strengthens the ability of subregional clusters and regional agencies to address issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- Create a space for innovation, a “regulatory-free” zone similar to “Performance Partnerships” described in current federal budget proposals.

Collaborating Regionally

Best practices in regional collaboration (many already present in H-GAC region):

- Provide support to communities to establish predictable and consistent development approval processes.
- Through mechanisms such as intergovernmental agreements, secure commitments by member municipalities to actively participate in the cluster and to work through their shared staff on local housing and community development issues.
- Adopt by-laws or some form of governance and rules to allow for prompt joint decision-making when needed.
- Structure the cluster so that it can receive public sector funding and leverage private sector resources. This could mean establishing the cluster under an existing government agency such as a council of governments or a county.
- Structure partnerships with organizations that can perform property renovations and expand the cluster's development capacity. These development partners can serve as advisors on and help execute redevelopment

Improving Fair Housing Infrastructure

Case studies: City inclusion teams, accessible playgrounds, fair housing webpages

Recommendations (H-GAC):

1. Support regional fair housing testing.
2. Advise jurisdictions on how to use FHEA information and data.
3. Support workshops on how to conduct and use AIs; fair housing education and information.
4. Create a fair housing information webpage that jurisdictions can link to.
5. Create an online clearinghouse for fair housing and equity information; add ongoing research and educational activities.