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# Acres Home Revitalization Strategies Plan



Developed by  
The Acres Home Citizen Council Coalition  
in conjunction with the City of Houston Planning & Development Department  
August, 1999

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# BACKGROUND



# History

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Acres Home was developed around the time of World War I when it was settled by African Americans mainly from rural areas. During this time, a few landowners sold homesites by acres, hence the original name Acreage Home. The area was attractive to African Americans because of inexpensive land prices, low taxes, and an agrarian lifestyle.

Residential development occurred slowly until the late 1930s when W. W. Mount and the Wright Land Company began building in the area. The subdivisions that were developed included Highland Heights, Highland Acres, Highland Heights Annex, Acres Acreage, Harvis Heights, Carver Addition, and Lincoln City.

Since the community was not inside the city limits, city services, such as water and sewer lines, were non-existent. The community's water supply was provided by privately owned wells equipped with electric pumps. Septic tanks were the means by which sewage was disposed.

"Despite the lack of infrastructure, the Acres Home community was not only economically self-sufficient but it also demonstrated a strong support for civic mindedness," according to Mr. Leonard Smith, a native of the community. The Harrison and Elmore Enterprises, a general merchandise store, established by B. J. Harrison and Bennie C. Elmore in the mid 1940s, housed many of the community's businesses, such as a post office, beauty shop, cafe, grocery, drug, clothing, and shoe stores. Utility bills were also paid at the facility. The Harrison and Elmore Enterprise, managed by Mr. Harrison, employed many local residents. Many of these businesses, and other major facilities, were located along West Montgomery Road.

In 1958, Mr. Harrison and six other shareholders established the

Acres Homes Transit Company with personal funds. The transit company, located in the 5800 block of West Montgomery Road, operated a fleet of 24 buses. It provided a viable link to downtown Houston at a time when jitney services and individual cars were the primary means of transportation. The transit company was sold to Houston Metro System in 1969.

In addition to operating their own businesses, Mr. and Mrs. Elmore and Mrs. Harrison held jobs with the Houston public school system. After their retirement, Mrs. Harrison and Mrs. Elmore continued to serve their community in various capacities. Mrs. Harrison owned and operated a Watkins Product franchise that employed more than 20 local residents. Mrs. Elmore embarked on



Taken in 1958, this photograph depicts the Acres Home Transit Company which provided a viable link to downtown Houston at a time when jitney services and individual cars were the primary means of transportation.

a writing career. She wrote her husband's biography, "History of a Great Pioneer in Education"; her autobiography, "Times to Remember"; and, "Children, Our Greatest."

Residents of Acres Home attended the George Washington Carver High School built at 7401 Wheatley in the early 1940s. The school was relocated to 2100 South Victory in the late 1950s. In the mid 1970s, the school's name was changed to George Washington Carver High School for Engineering/Applied Science/The Arts. It is now located in the Aldine Independent School District (AISD).

Acres Home was the largest unincorporated African American community in the South prior to annexation. Annexation was conducted in four stages: 1967, 1970, 1971, and 1974. After the community was annexed by the City of Houston from Harris County, it started receiving municipal services. According to the U.S. Census, 22,301 people lived in the community at the time of the 1970 annexation. When annexation was finally completed, Acres Home covered 5,390 acres. Residents still enjoy the agrarian lifestyle.

## Overview

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### The Plan

To develop goals and action plans to stimulate and guide revitalization in the Acres Home community.

### Participants

This Acres Home Strategic Plan is the result of a partnership effort between the Acres Home community and the City of Houston Planning and Development Department. The Planning staff organized this undertaking at the request of community leaders who formed an alliance to address community revitalization (see participating organizations and stakeholders).

### Planning Process

In January of 1995, the Planning and Development Department was requested to assist in the development of a community plan. The Planning staff met with community leaders to discuss issues

and concerns and to explain the Neighborhood Planning Partnership Program. Residents decided that basic city services needed to be addressed before looking to the future. The community created a coalition to work with the Planning staff. The coalition worked with various city departments for nine months focusing on basic service needs. Afterwards, the coalition was ready to work on a plan for the future growth and development of Acres Home. A kickoff town hall meeting was held on June 25, 1996. Following the town hall meeting, six subcommittees were formed: public services, housing, land use, youth services, urban design/beautification, and economic development. Since the kick-off meeting, each subcommittee has identified issues and formulated goals and action plans to address those issues. In some instances, the subcommittees have already moved ahead to implement components of their action plans. A summary of subcommittee activities is included in this report.

## Strategic Plan

As its first task, the coalition established a set of objectives as a guide to help formulate a strategic plan. The objectives were to:

- enhance the infrastructure and the physical appearance of the community as well as create safe, livable neighborhoods;
- improve existing housing conditions and create an environment that fosters the development of new affordable housing;

- develop a comprehensive land use concept map and employ stabilization strategies for the Acres Home community;
- increase communication, awareness, and participation among community youth organizations;
- enhance the environmental quality of the Acres Home community; and
- strengthen the economic base of the Acres Home community.

## Planning Process

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### First Contact: Community Leaders

At a meeting sponsored by community leaders, the Planning staff explained the community strategic planning process. Community residents in attendance explained that basic city services needed to be addressed before the community could work on a plan for the future. As a result of the meeting, it was agreed that the community would form a coalition that included residents, businesses, civic clubs, and other neighborhood associations. The coalition would work with the Planning staff to tackle basic city service issues, identified as follows:

- weeded lots and dangerous buildings
- street overlay repairs
- ditch cleaning
- crime spots
- livestock nuisances

The Planning staff created base maps that Coalition members used to conduct windshield surveys. The windshield surveys were undertaken to identify (by specific street address) vacant weeded

lots, dangerous buildings, streets in disrepair and other community problems such as high crime spots. The surveys were started in March 1995 and were completed in about two months. By July 1995, the Planning staff had compiled the survey data and plotted problem locations on the maps. After this task was completed, the Coalition used the maps to determine which problem locations required priority attention.

Planning staff met with Councilmember Yarbrough, Council District B, and with representatives of various city agencies (such as the Department of Public Works and Engineering Traffic and Transportation and Neighborhood Protection Divisions, and the Houston Police Department) to coordinate plans to address specific problem areas identified by the Coalition. Over a three month period, city departments began to deliver additional city services based on the information and maps generated by the Coalition. For example, after the Coalition sectioned the weeded lots and dangerous buildings map into 11 manageable work areas (see pg. 11), teams from the Neighborhood Protection Team conducted sweeps of

priority sites to clean the lots. Also, using the street repair overlay maps, the Coalition reviewed the repair condition of streets that provide the most circulation to community residents and designated them for priority repair on an "as needed" basis. The Public Works and Engineering Department is currently using the Coalition's street repair overlay map to identify and coordinate street overlay projects in the community. The mapping information was also helpful in identifying neighborhoods for participation in the Neighborhoods-to-Standard Program.

Having placed a plan in effect to deal with more immediate service delivery needs, the Coalition was now ready to discuss issues impacting on the future of the community. Coalition members cited factors such as the community's old housing stock and the disrepair of rental and senior citizen housing as causes of neighborhood deterioration. The abundance of vacant land was viewed as a positive asset to the community; however, mis-use of vacant land for illegal trash dumping was considered a problem area that would have to be tackled. Through the discussion process, the Coalition decided to focus its attention on several themes related to public services, housing, land use, youth services, urban design and beautification, and economic development.

### **Stages in the Planning Process**

The Neighborhood Planning Partnership Program process is two-fold; 1) Preparing to plan; and 2) Defining the planning process.

#### **Preparing to Plan**

The coalition agreed to:

- hold initial discussions with the planning staff on community issues and concerns;
- work together with any community organizations wishing to participate; and

- hold a town hall meeting to explain the planning partnership process and to build a consensus on what major issues should be addressed. During the meeting, residents were asked to sign up to participate in the planning process.

#### **Defining the Planning Process**

The planning process occurred over a 12 month period and consisted of the following activities:

- **issue framing process** - residents and organization representatives who signed up to participate in the planning process met several times to "flesh-out" in detail, issues raised during the town hall meetings.
- **formation of subcommittees** - working subcommittees were created to address the principal issues detailed by the issues framing team. Altogether, six subcommittees were formed: public services, housing, land use, youth services, urban design/beautification, and economic development. Comprised of community residents and organization representatives, the six subcommittees were responsible for working on specific issues, creating goals to address the issues, and developing action plans that would accomplish the goals.
- **goal and action plan workshops** - each subcommittee held brainstorming sessions on issues and problems related to their topic. Once this was completed, the subcommittee developed goals to address each problem specified. The subcommittee then developed specific action plans to achieve each goal. The action plan included: 1) selecting a lead person(s) who would take responsibility for researching information necessary to complete the action, (2) establishing a timeline for completing the action, (3) identifying a list of resources necessary to complete the action, and (4) developing a list of funding sources necessary to complete the action. Subcommittees brought in outside experts to give presentations on various topics.

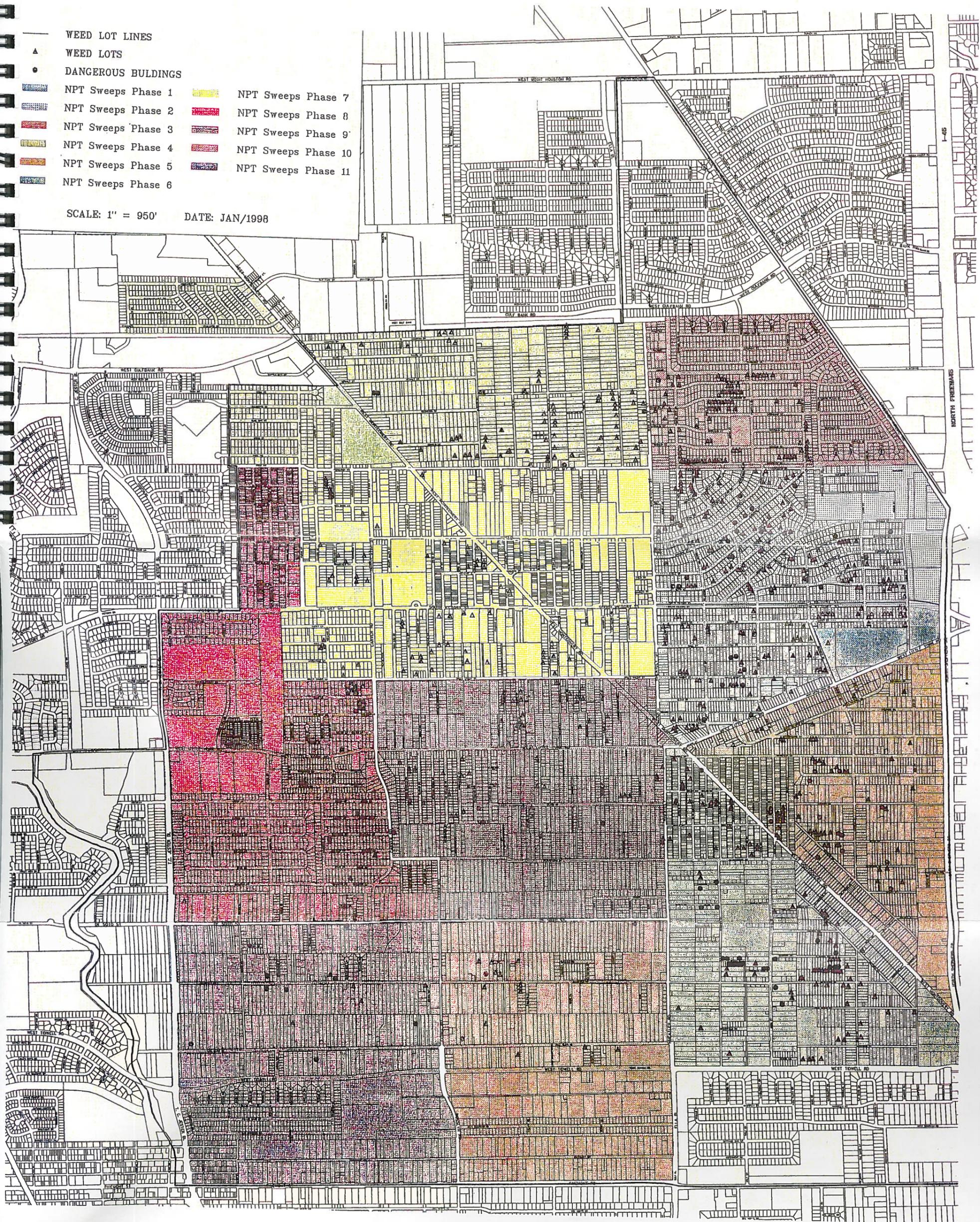
- **steering committee** - a steering committee was formed to review the goals and action plan being prepared by the subcommittees. The steering committee consisted of subcommittee chairpersons and coalition members.
- **town hall meeting** - on April 17, 1997, a second town hall meeting was convened to present a summary of the goals and action plans developed by the various subcommittees.
- **preparing the plan document** - writing, editing, and formatting of the plan document was done by the Planning and Development Department. Once completed, the steering committee reviewed, amended, and approved the final document.



# ACRES HOME NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION TEAM (NPT) SWEEPS

- WEED LOT LINES
- ▲ WEED LOTS
- DANGEROUS BUILDINGS
-  NPT Sweeps Phase 1
-  NPT Sweeps Phase 2
-  NPT Sweeps Phase 3
-  NPT Sweeps Phase 4
-  NPT Sweeps Phase 5
-  NPT Sweeps Phase 6
-  NPT Sweeps Phase 7
-  NPT Sweeps Phase 8
-  NPT Sweeps Phase 9
-  NPT Sweeps Phase 10
-  NPT Sweeps Phase 11

SCALE: 1" = 950'      DATE: JAN/1998



# GOALS AND ACTION PLANS



# Public Services Subcommittee

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## Project Summary

The Public Service subcommittee focused its attention on community infrastructure improvements and its physical and social environment. Civic association leaders and coalition members used base maps to identify problem areas: ditches in need of cleaning, culverts in despair, streets in need of paving, lots with livestock, and high crime areas. After coding the maps, Department staff created presentation maps of each service issue and met with other city department representatives to develop strategies addressing areas identified on the maps. Maps showing nuisance code violations and street repairs were given to the Department of Public Works & Engineering, while maps showing high crime areas were given to the Houston Police Department.

The coalition, along with the Planning and Development staff, coordinated clean-up efforts with the Neighborhood Protection Team (NPT) to conduct "sweeps" of the neighborhood. The "sweeps" were conducted in six phases, with the initial one starting in the northeast section of the neighborhood.

As part of the Neighborhoods to Standard (NTS) program, Yorkdale/White Oak Terrace and Lincoln City, both located in Acres Home, obtained 4,800 linear feet of new sidewalks. In addition, sewer lines valued at \$42.9 million were upgraded throughout the community.

## Mission Statement

To improve the health and safety of residents and to enhance the community's physical condition and infrastructure.

## Goals

***Goal #1: Develop and implement strategies to ensure that ditches are cleaned or improved, culverts are upgraded and that the city's nuisance code is enforced.***

### Actions:

- ◆ Provide maps to civic associations in the community to identify ditches that need cleaning or improving and culverts that need upgrading.
- ◆ Work with Neighborhood Protection Team of the Department of Public Works & Engineering and other city departments to enhance enforcement of nuisance codes in identified areas.
- ◆ Work with the Department of Public Works & Engineering to develop a strategy for upgrading the culverts identified.

Lead: Mr. Earl Harris

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Planning & Development Department

Funding Sources: NA

***Goal #2: Develop and implement strategies to ensure that roads are maintained and that rights-of-way are mowed.***

### Actions:

- ◆ Provide maps to civic associations in the community to identify roads in need of upgrading and rights-of-way to be mowed.
- ◆ Petition the Right-of-Way Division of the Department of Public Works and Engineering, for City of Houston, and/or Right-of-Way Department of Harris County for additional services.

Lead: Mr. Earl Harris

Time Frame: On a regularly on-going basis

Resources: Department of Public Works and Engineering

Funding Sources: City of Houston and Harris County

***Goal #3: Construct sidewalks along major thoroughfares and around all schools in the Acres Home community.***

Actions:

- ♦ Petition to be included into the Neighborhoods to Standard Program.
- ♦ Notify the community regarding public Capital Improvement Plan input meetings in Council District B and encourage citizens to attend.

***Goal #4: Install additional street lighting along major thoroughfares and local streets in the Acres Home community.***

Actions:

- ♦ Identify the major thoroughfares and local streets that need more street lighting.
- ♦ Petition the Street Lighting Division of the Department of Public Works and Engineering and HL&P to install more street lighting in the areas identified.

Lead: Mr. Earl Harris and Mr. Ben Mask

Time Frame: TBA

Resources: Planning and Development Department, Department of Public Works and Engineering, and HL&P

Funding Sources: City of Houston

***Goal #5: Provide a permanent paramedic at Station 67 and cut brush around fire hydrants in Acres Home.***

Actions:

- ♦ Periodically contact the Fire Department to ensure that a paramedic is always present at Station 67.
- ♦ Identify the fire hydrants with high brush and petition the Department of Public Works and Engineering to cut and clear them.

Lead: Mr. Earl Harris

Time Frame: On a quarterly basis

Resources: Councilmember Yarborough, Planning and Development and Fire Department

Funding Sources: None identified

***Goal #6: Mobilize political clout.***

Actions:

- ♦ Continue to conduct voter education forums.
- ♦ Foster a relationship with the Houston news media.
- ♦ Publish a community newsletter.

Lead: Subcommittee members

Time Frame: Twice a year

Resources: Planning and Development Department (temporary)

Funding Sources: Civic associations

***Goal #7: Locate abandoned hazardous utility sites (such as obsolete, buried gas tanks and septic tanks) in the Acres Home community.***

Actions:

- ♦ Identify and map lots or areas with gas tanks and septic tanks.
- ♦ Create a database regarding sites identified.

Lead: Planning and Development Department

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Department of Public Works and Engineering

Funding Sources: N/A

***Goal #8: Identify and report to appropriate authorities companies that dump hazardous materials in the Acres Home community.***

Action:

- ♦ Report businesses that dump chemicals into storm sewers.

Lead: Public Service subcommittee

Time Frame: 6 months

Resources: Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), The Department of Public Works and Engineering

Funding Sources: NA

***Goal #9: Work with the City to ensure enhanced enforcement of animal ordinances.***

**Action:**

- ♦ Create a database of companies and individuals violating the City's Animal Ordinance
- ♦ Notify appropriate city officials of violations identified.

**Lead:** Mrs. Britton

**Time Frame:** 6 months

**Resources:** Neighborhood Protection Team, HPD, and neighborhood civic associations

**Funding Sources:** NA

## **Housing Subcommittee**

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### **Project Summary**

The Housing Subcommittee formulated seven practical goals to improve housing conditions in the Acres Home community. Two of those goals, hold a "housing fair" and repair elderly homes, have been accomplished or are presently in progress.

On March 15, 1997, a housing fair was held at the Acres Home Multi-Purpose Center. Twenty-five (25) sponsors participated and over 200 residents attended. Through an informal survey, it was concluded that most of the residents received positive information at the housing fair. Since the fair, the subcommittee continues to receive positive feedback from the community. The subcommittee is considering holding future housing fairs in Acres Home on an annual basis.

In conjunction with Private Sector Initiative (PSI), over an 8 month period in 1997, the housing subcommittee assisted with the repair of 50 homes owned by elderly residents in Acres Home. Subcommittee members canvassed the neighborhood door to door to determine if applicants qualified for the program. If they did not

qualify, subcommittee members provided residents with information about other assistance services. This program is on-going.

The housing subcommittee is presently in the process of compiling information on local contractors and home builders. Essentially, the subcommittee plans to maintain an up-to-date database on reputable companies and individuals providing housing services in the community. This database was designed to create a housing referral program that focuses on delivering housing assistance services to Acres Home residents.

### **Mission Statement**

To improve existing housing conditions and to create an environment that fosters the development of new affordable housing in the Acres Home community.

## Goals

***Goal #1: Initiate a strategy to reverse the misconception that Acres Home CDCs (Community Development Corporations) and community home builders do not have the experience to build homes.***

### Actions:

- ♦ Promote area contractors in Acres Home and in the northwest area of the city.

Lead: Signora Tinsley, Brenda Lakey, Velma Holliday, Myra Edwards

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Acres Home CDC

Funding Sources: None identified

- ♦ Create a database of Acres Home and citywide contractors willing to undertake jobs in the community.

A: Identify known contractors and solicit their participation on local housing construction and rehabilitation programs.

B: Develop a pre-qualification criteria and encourage contractors to complete pre-qualification applications.

Lead: Signora Tinsley, Brenda Lakey, Velma Holliday

Time Frame: 9 Months

Resources: Acres Home CDC

Funding Sources: None

- ♦ Organize and present a Housing Information Forum (HIF) at Acres Home Multi-Service Center.

Lead: Signora Tinsley, Brenda Lakey, Velma Holliday

Time frame: 6 Months

Resources: Acres Home CDC and the Housing Subcommittee

Funding Sources: Banks and non-profit organizations

***Goal #2: Identify various repair/rehabilitation programs (such as the 203 (k) Rehabilitation Mortgage Insurance Program and the State Tax Credit Program) for single family homeowners and multi-family developers.***

### Action:

- ♦ Contact the City of Houston Housing and Community Development Department for information on repair/rehabilitation programs.

Lead: Velma Holliday and Charles Smith

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Housing and Community Development

Funding Sources: None

***Goal #3: Review the Emergency Housing Repair Program participation criteria to determine how it can benefit home owners in the community.***

### Action:

- ♦ Contact the City of Houston Housing and Community Development Department for information on the Emergency Housing Repair Program.

Lead: Mary Crowe and Michael Thibodeaux

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Housing and Community Development

Funding Sources: None Identified

***Goal #4: Promote the stabilization of existing multi-family housing in the neighborhood.***

### Actions:

- ♦ Review and create a database on current multi-family housing stock in the community.

- ♦ Partner with the Neighborhood Protection Division in order to promote stabilization of multi-family housing units in the neighborhood.

Lead: Leonard Smith and Myra Edwards

Time Frame: On-going

Resources: Neighborhood Protection Division

Funding Sources: None

***Goal #5: Identify four target areas in the Acres Home community and rehabilitate 25 houses in each of these areas within 24 months.***

**Action:**

- ♦ Using objective criteria developed by the Housing and Community Development Department (such as windshield surveys and interviews) survey and select 25 homes for rehabilitation.

**Lead:** Mary Crowe, Ruby Mosley, Myra Edwards

**Time Frame:** 6 months per area

**Resources:** None

**Funding Sources:** None Identified

***Goal #6: Construct 100 houses in the neighborhood over the next two to three years.***

**Actions:**

- ♦ Identify vacant lots that have adequate infrastructure.
- ♦ Identify a large vacant tract of land for the construction of 100 single family homes.
- ♦ Identify and encourage home builders and individuals within the area to build housing in the Acres Home neighborhood.

**Lead:** Mary Crowe, Myra Edwards and Michael Thibodeaux

**Time Frame:** Two to Three Years

**Resources:** Public Service Committee, Public Works & Engineering Department, Homes for Houston and Habitat for Humanities

**Funding Sources:** None identified

***Goal #7: Form a partnership with the Acres Home CDC and a major multi-family housing developer to participate in the State Tax Credit Program.***

**Actions:**

- ♦ Invite program representatives to make a presentation to the Housing subcommittee members on procedures of the State Tax Credit Program.
- ♦ Identify prospective developers who are willing to form a partnership with the Acres Home CDC.

**Lead:** Mary Crowe, Myra Edwards, and Michael Thibodeaux

**Timeframe:** 6 months

**Resources:** Acres Home CDC, Department of Housing and Community Development and Planning and Development Department

**Funding Sources:** None identified

# Land Use Subcommittee

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## Project Summary

The Land Use Subcommittee's efforts focused on two tasks: 1) creating a proposed land use map to serve as a guide for future development in the community, and 2) distributing letters to coalition members encouraging them to take advantage of the Pro-bono Deed Restriction Program (sponsored by the Houston Bar Association and the City of Houston Planning and Development Department).

The Land Use Subcommittee started the mapping process with a land use exercise. This exercise involved taking photographs of existing land uses throughout the community. Subcommittee members identified several incompatible land uses (for example, subcommittee members identified a number of single family uses adjacent to industrial land uses). Lack of adequate land use tools, such as deed restrictions and zoning, allows undesirable land uses to locate adjacent to residential uses.

The subcommittee used the current land use map of the community as a rough draft for outlining vacant land that could be developed (See Land Use Map, page 21). The result was the creation of a comprehensive land use map. This map was developed to be used as a guide for future development in the Acres Home community (See Concept Map, page 23).

The second strategy was to stabilize the residential core of the community by establishing deed restrictions. The subcommittee distributed information outlining the Pro-Bono Deed Restriction Program sponsored by the Houston Bar Association and the Planning and Development Department. In addition, a letter, signed by the Land Use Subcommittee chairperson, was sent to coalition members explaining the program's content and encouraging them to take advantage of the program. Many of the subdivisions in the

community meet the program's criteria to qualify for pro-bono deed restriction assistance.

## Mission Statement

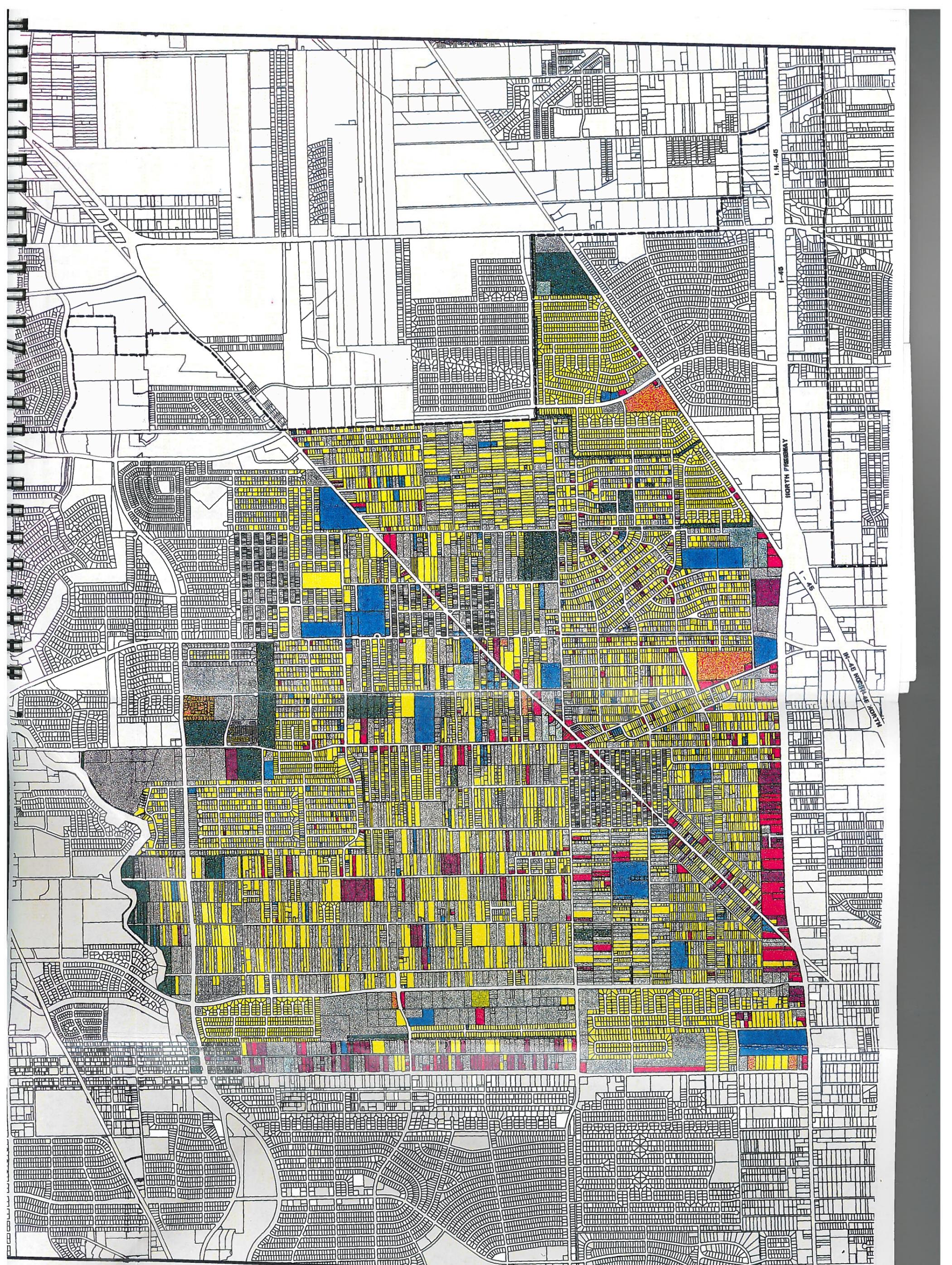
Develop a comprehensive land use map and employ stabilization strategies for the Acres Home community.

## Goals

***Goal #1: Create a proposed land use map concept to use as a guide for future development in the Acres Home community.***

### Actions:

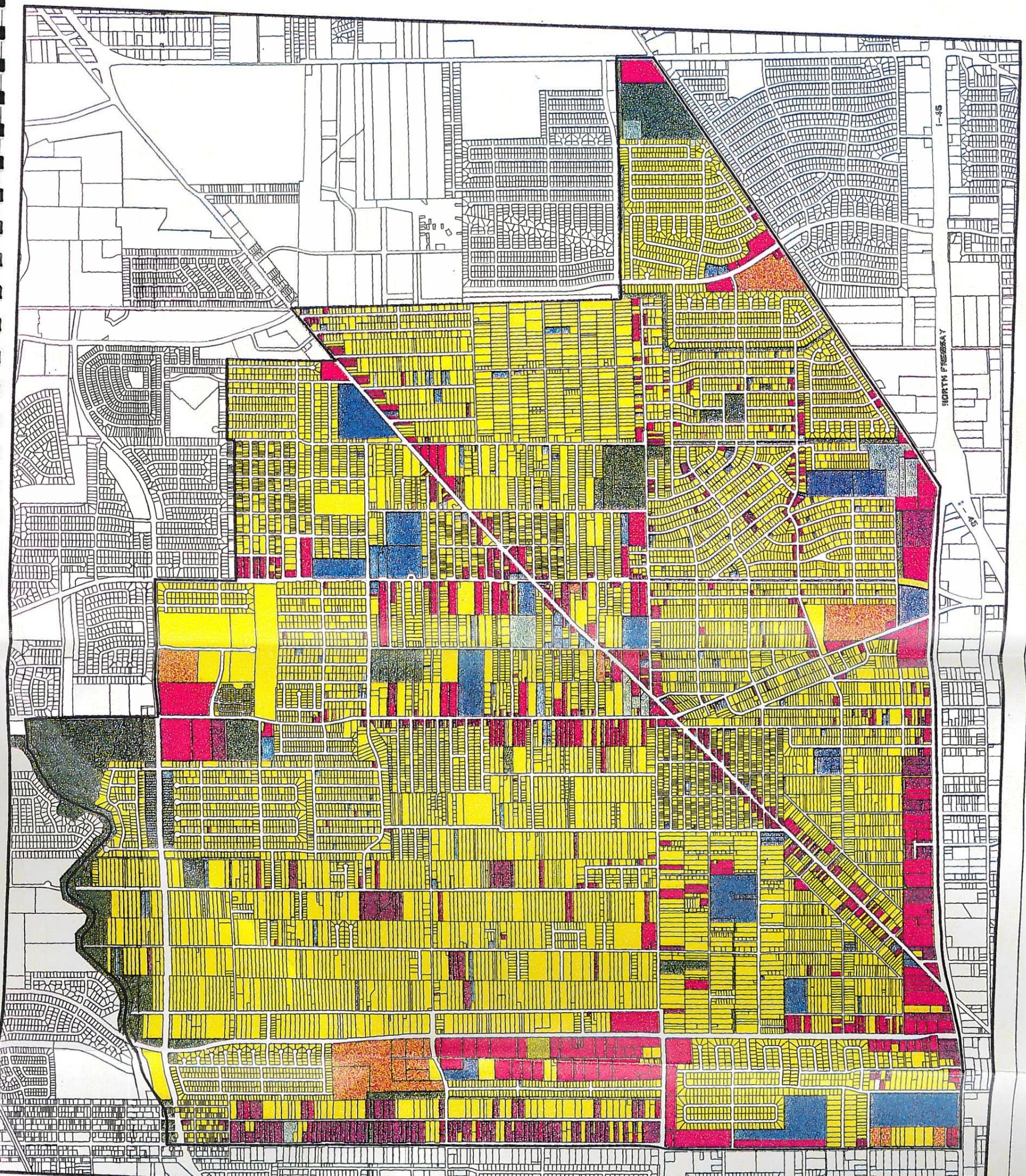
- ♦ Identify appropriate land uses.  
Lead: Planning & Development Department (Neighborhood Services)  
Time Frame: 2 Months  
Resources: Planning & Development Department (Neighborhood Services)  
Funding Sources: N/A
- ♦ Solicit input from the Acres Home Community Coalition Steering Committee.  
Lead: Pat Austin  
Time Frame: 4 Months  
Resources: Land Use Subcommittee  
Funding Sources: N/A
- ♦ Solicit input from the general public.  
Lead: Land Use Subcommittee (Pat Austin, Chair)  
Timeframe: 4 Months  
Resources: Acres Home Community Coalition  
Funding Sources: N/A



**ACRES HOME**

SCALE: 1" = 1850'

- |   |                                    |   |                          |   |                         |
|---|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|
|  | SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED RESIDENTIAL |  | INDUSTRIAL               |  | UNDEVELOPED             |
|  | MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL           |  | PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL |  | AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION |
|  | COMMERCIAL                         |  | TRANSPORTATION           |  |                         |



**ACRES HOME (CONCEPT)**

SCALE: 1"=1850'

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
DATA SYSTEMS DIVISION

- |                                    |                              |                             |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED RESIDENTIAL | INDUSTRIAL                   | UNDEVELOPED                 |
| MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL           | PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL     | AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION     |
| COMMERCIAL                         | TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES | OPEN WATER                  |
| OFFICE                             | PARKS AND OPEN SPACE         | OTHERS (MISMATCHED USECODE) |

***Goal #2: Stabilize existing residential area in the Acres Home community.***

**Actions:**

- ♦ Identify existing subdivisions without deed restrictions.  
Lead: Acres Home Coalition Civic Association  
Time Frame: TBA  
Resources: Acres Home Community Coalition  
Funding Sources: N/A
- ♦ Provide pro-bono deed restrictions assistance information to the Acres Home Citizens Coalition.  
Lead: Planning and Development Department (Neighborhood Services)  
Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Planning and Development Department (Neighborhood Services)

Funding Sources: Planning and Development Department (Neighborhood Services)

- ♦ Establish or amend deed restriction for subdivisions that meet City of Houston and Houston Bar Association requirements.

Lead: Planning and Development Department, Houston Bar Association, Acres Home Community

Time Frame: On-going

Resources: Planning & Development Department, Houston Bar Association, Acres Home Community

Funding Sources: N/A

## Youth Services Subcommittee

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### Project Summary

The Youth Services Subcommittee focused on two major projects: 1) conducting a survey (on youth issues) in the Acres Home community; and 2) developing a database of existing youth organizations in Acres Homes and the City of Houston.

The Youth Services Subcommittee members met twice during the month of January 1997 to identify and coordinate various tasks necessary to develop and distribute a Youth Program Questionnaire. Deborah Scott, Mildred Henry, Michael Burton, and Charles Simmons obtained listings of organizations, churches, and schools who could assist with distributing the questionnaire. In February 1997, a questionnaire was developed by the Acres Home Youth Subcommittee and the City of Houston Planning and Development Department. The purpose of the survey instrument was to gather

information on the Acres Home community's youth and parents' preferences for locating a new youth facility. Brenda Nicholas and Claudia Davis oversaw the distribution of the questionnaires to youth and parents in area schools, churches, and community centers. The Planning staff collected the questionnaires for analysis. The analysis was completed by the end of April 1997.

According to the survey results, a majority of the parents (80%) prefer to have their children participate in afterschool activities/programs between 5 to 7 pm. A majority of the youth (56%) prefer activities to be held between 3 to 5 pm. It is evident that the parents' response reflects the time they get off work, while the youth's response reflects the time they get out of school.

The survey results was distributed to various youth program service providers for two reasons:

1) to inform providers about the type of activities and hours of services preferred; and 2) to minimize the duplication of services.

Parents and youth were also asked to identify a preferred location for a new youth facility. Both the parents and youth identified the Lincoln City neighborhood as a preferred location. A majority of parents surveyed (56%) chose Lincoln City as the preferred location for a new youth facility. Preferences for location among youths surveyed were more diversified, with 34% selecting Lincoln City as the preferred location.

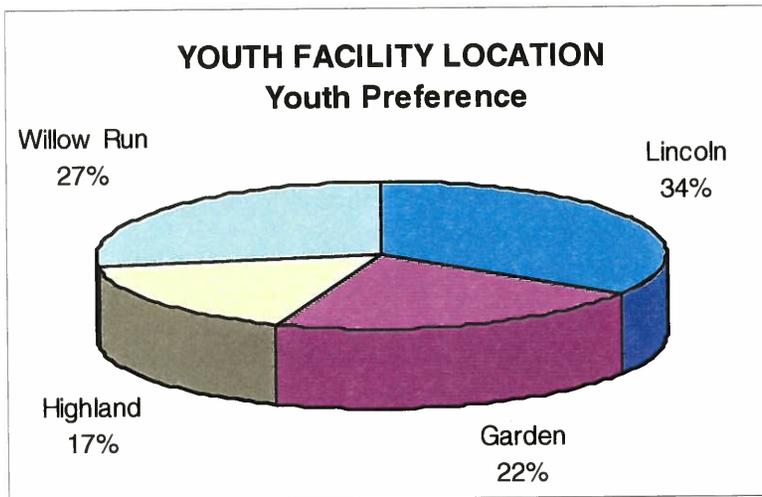
Both parents and youths surveyed selected "vocational activities" as the most preferred subject matter to be taught by youth service providers (37% and 19%, respectively). Parents selected "computer training" as their second highest preference, whereas youth survey participants were equally split between "etiquette classes" and "homemaking" (12% each) as their second preference.

The planning staff analysis concluded the following:

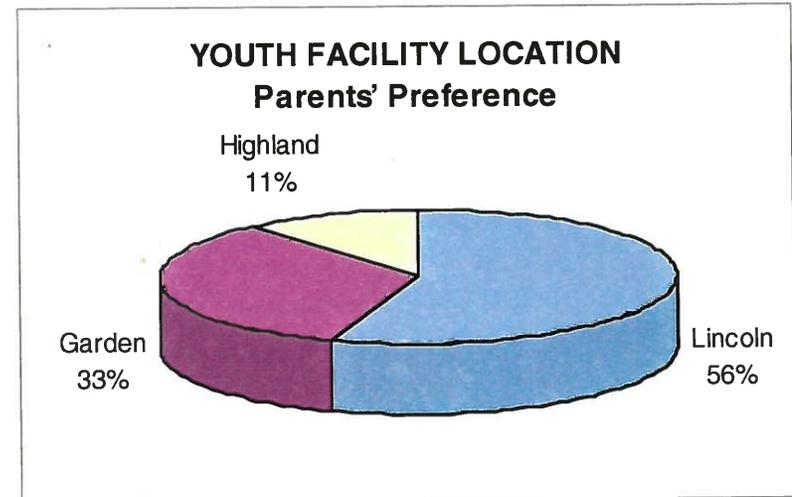
- Parents preferred to have youth participate in afterschool activities/programs between 5 to 7 p.m.

- Youth respondents preferred to participate in afterschool activities/programs between 3 to 5 p.m.
- Both parents and youth respondents chose vocational programs as the most desired activity.
- Both parents and youth polled would prefer constructing a new youth facility in the community.
- Both parents and youth polled chose Lincoln City as the preferred location for the new facility.

The subcommittee's second major focus was to develop a database of existing youth programs in the Acres Home community and to identify citywide youth programs that could be accessed by community residents. Brenda Nicholas collected information on existing community and citywide youth programs, while the Planning staff created a database booklet. The booklet was completed in March 1997.



Source: City of Houston Planning & Development Department  
Acres Home Youth Subcommittee



Source: City of Houston Planning & Development Department  
Acres Home Youth Subcommittee

**Mission Statement:**

To increase communication, awareness, and participation among the various youth organizations within the community.

**Goals**

**Goal #1: Conduct a survey regarding youth service program needs in the community.**

Actions:

- ◆ Develop a questionnaire for distribution to youths and parents.
- ◆ Identify schools, churches, and youth organizations that will assist with distributing the questionnaire.

Lead: Deborah Scott - list of organizations

Mildred Henry - list of churches

Michael Burton - list of schools

Charles Simmons - follow-up calls

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Planning and Development Department

Funding Sources: Planning and Development Department

- ◆ Distribute questionnaires to youth and parents.

Lead: Brenda Nicholas, Claudia Davis

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Challenge 2000, Planning and Development Department

Funding Sources: Planning and Development Department

- ◆ Analyze youth and parents survey results.

Lead: Kevin Calfee

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Planning and Development Department

Funding Sources: Planning and Development Department

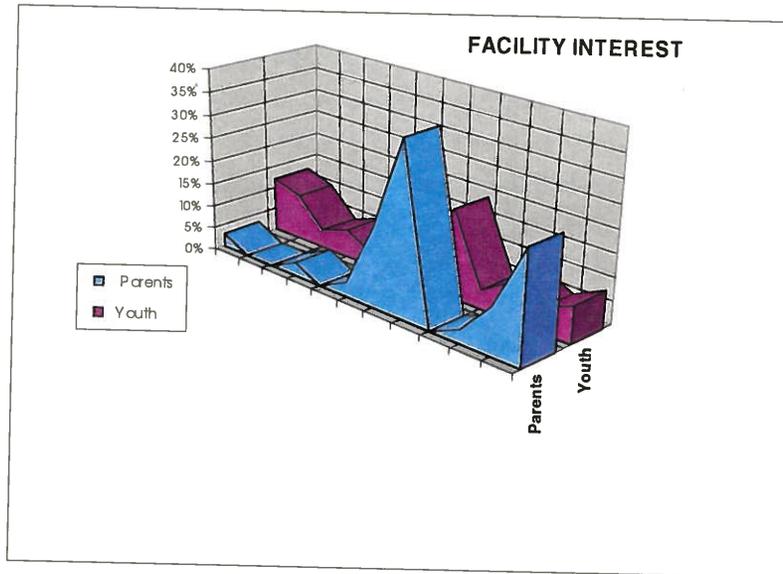
**Goal #2: Encourage representatives of the resident council and the City of Houston Housing Authority to get involved in the Acres Home community planning process.**

Action:

- ◆ Invite a representative of the resident council to participate in the

Interstet	Parents		Youth	
	#	%	#	%
Etiquette	1	3%	9	12%
Latchkey	0	0%	8	10%
Sex Education	0	0%	3	4%
Beautification	1	3%	5	6%
Homeless Youth	0	0%	2	3%
Homemaking	1	3%	9	12%
Child Dev.	5	17%	7	9%
Vocation	11	37%	15	19%
Video Prod.	0	0%	3	4%
Teen Court	1	3%	6	8%
Male Initiatives	3	10%	4	5%
Computers	7	24%	6	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Acres Home Youth Subcommittee; Youth & Parent Survey Analysis



Source: City of Houston Planning & Development Department; Acres Home Youth Subcommittee

planning process.

Lead: Deborah Scott, Brenda Nicholas

Time Frame: 3 Months

Resources: N/A

Funding Sources: N/A

*(No representatives from the above organizations elected to participate.)*

***Goal #3. Recruit a youth to serve on the Youth Services Subcommittee.***

Action:

- ♦ Identify and invite a parent and child to work with the Youth Services Subcommittee.

Lead: Brenda Nicholas

Time Frame: 3 Months

Resources: N/A

Funding Sources: N/A

*(Claudia Davis and her son, Gabriel Davis agreed to participate.)*

***Goal #4: Develop a database of existing youth organizations and programs.***

Action:

- ♦ Identify sources of information on youth organizations throughout the city.

Lead: Brenda Nicholas, Kevin Calfee

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Challenge 2000, Planning and Development Department

Funding Sources: Planning and Development Department

***Goal #5: Provide a TAAS (Texas Assessment of Academic Skills) tutorial program.***

Actions:

- ♦ Conduct a TAAS tutorial program in the community.

Lead: Brenda Nicholas, David Baxter

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Challenge 2000, Aldine ISD

Funding Sources: Challenge 2000, Aldine ISD

- ♦ Create a video tape of the TAAS workshop sponsored by Aldine ISD.

Lead: David Baxter, Eugene Smith, James Wilson

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Aldine ISD, FoxVision

Funding Sources: Aldine ISD, FoxVision

- ♦ Create a music video designed to teach students techniques to take a test.

Lead: Eugene Smith, James Wilson, David Baxter

Time Frame: 10 Months

Resources: FoxVision, Aldine ISD

Funding Sources: FoxVision, Aldine ISD, TBD

***Goal #6: Provide vocational, mentoring, recreational, sex education, parenting, and male initiatives programs.***

Action:

- ♦ Identify high priority program preferences from the youth and parent survey.

Lead: Brenda Nicholas

Time Frame: 7 Months

Resources: Challenge 2000

Funding Sources: TBD

***Goal #7: Contact and encourage local businesses to provide summer employment and train youths as entrepreneurs.***

Action:

- ♦ Identify existing summer youth employment programs in Acres Home and the City of Houston.

Lead: Charles Simmons, Raynetta Glenn

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: City Councilmember, One Stop Business Assistance Center Houston Community College, Jewel's Community Outreach Services

Funding Sources: Jewel's Community Outreach Services

***Goal #8: Address homelessness among the youth in the community.***

Action:

- ♦ Identify existing homeless youth programs in Acres Home.

Lead: Brenda Nicholas, David Baxter

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Challenge 2000, Aldine ISD

Funding Sources: N/A

***Goal #9: Address latch key youth problems.***

Action:

- ♦ Identify existing latch key youth programs in Acres Home.

Lead: David Baxter, Linda Trimble

Time Frame: 6 Months

Resources: Aldine ISD

Funding Sources: N/A

## Urban Design / Beautification Subcommittee

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### Project Summary

The Urban Design and Beautification subcommittee focused on three goals: 1) enhancing the environmental quality of Acres Home; 2) identifying locations for entrance signs to the Acres Home community; and 3) identifying the appropriate location for the ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) hike and bike trail.

The subcommittee's concerns included: how to regulate and limit the growing amount of livestock in the community; who to contact about abandoned landfills and underground gas tanks left in place by closed service stations; and how to get the Department of Public Works and Engineering to keep neighborhood ditches clean.

Staff provided base maps of the Acres Home community to all members of the subcommittee. The maps were used to help

identify and plot unregulated livestock, illegal landfills, underground gas tanks, and ditches in need of cleaning. In order to take action against the problems facing the community, the committee members armed themselves with maps that indicated possible site violations. These maps would be presented to officials who regulate and address the above concerns, for example, TNRCC (Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission) and NPT (Neighborhood Protection Team).

The Urban Design and Beautification Subcommittee used land use maps to designate appropriate locations for entrance signs. Because Acres Home is composed of 16 neighborhoods, the subcommittee decided that it would be best to locate an entrance sign at the entry of each neighborhood within the Acres Home community.

The City of Houston West White Oak Bayou Trail Extension

project, initiated by Mary Taylor (Chairperson of the Urban Design/ Beautification Subcommittee), was already funded before the Planning and Development Department began a neighborhood partnership program with the Acres Home community. The West White Oak Bayou Trail Extension project, funded by ISTEA, consists of a 10' - 12' wide trail with striped pedestrian and bike pathways and crosses the entire Acres Home community. Some amenities featured along the Hike and Bike Trail include: planted trees, paving, illumination, retaining block walls, and seeding fertilizer. The subcommittee met with Gus Nowak, P.E., and Mr. Gregory Denby, from the Department of Public Works and Engineering, to discuss the best location to lay the trail in the Acres Home community.

### **Mission Statement**

To enhance and permanently maintain the environmental and aesthetic qualities of Acres Home with the support of the community.

#### **Goal # 1: Enhance the environmental quality of Acres Home.**

##### **Actions:**

- ♦ Preserve as many trees as possible with every new development in Acres Home.  
Lead: All members in the subcommittee  
Time Frame: NA  
Resources: Parks and Recreation Department, Planning and Development Department  
Funding Sources: NA
- ♦ Create signs that encourage people to keep their neighborhoods clean and discourage illegal dumping. Place at least one sign per vacant lot.  
Lead: Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Cane  
Time Frame: 6 months

Resources: Civic Clubs, Planning and Development Department, Local School projects

Funding Sources: Civic Clubs, Local Schools, Public Works & Engineering, HPD

#### **Goal # 2: Improve the aesthetic quality of the Acres Home community through various Urban Design / Beautification projects.**

##### **Actions:**

- ♦ Identify possible entrances to the Acres Home Community and construct new signs and gateways.  
Lead: Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Cain  
Time Frame: 6 months  
Resources: Local Businesses, Neighborhood Civic Clubs, Planning and Development Department  
Funding Sources: Local Businesses, Civic Clubs
- ♦ Identify all landscape areas in the Acres Home community that require improvements and provide more trees, water, mulch, fertilizer, trimming, etc.  
Lead: Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Cain  
Time Frame: To be determined  
Resources: Local Businesses, Neighborhood Civic Clubs, Department of Public Works Engineering  
Funding Sources: To be determined
- ♦ Provide a sound barrier adjacent to Veterans Memorial Boulevard.  
Lead: Mrs. Taylor  
Time Frame: To be determined  
Resources: Department of Public Works and Engineering  
Funding Source: To be determined

#### **Goal #3: Improve the parks in the Acres Homes community.**

##### **Actions:**

- ♦ Apply for Neighborhoods to Standard (NTS) designation to upgrade existing parks with more lighting and recreational facilities.

Lead: Mary Taylor

Time Frame: Long term

Resources: Department of Parks and Recreation, City Council Members and the Mayor, Citizens Assistance Office

Funding Sources: N/A

- ♦ Identify various types of recreational programs and facilities that are needed in the Acres Home community parks. (Board games,

table tennis, basketball courts, weight room, and indoor and outdoor swimming pools)

Lead: Mary Taylor

Time Frame: Long term

Resources: Department of Parks and Recreation, a survey in the Acres Home community

Funding Sources: Department of Parks and Recreation

## Economic Development Subcommittee

### **Project Summary**

Members of the Economic Development Subcommittee participated in a series of training workshops with expert guest speakers addressing the following topics: small business lending, market studies, demographics analysis, commercial real estate, and public finance.

The subcommittee identified specific market niches to assist in the formulation of a series of goals, objectives and action plans. The subcommittee sponsored a job fair in the community during the summer of 1997 that built on the success of a housing fair sponsored by the Housing Subcommittee earlier in the year. Finally, the subcommittee chose to adopt a local barber college business for the purpose of expanding job training and entrepreneur opportunities for local residents.

### **Mission Statement**

To enhance and improve the community by encouraging technical labor force training, educating existing business owners

to enhance their growth, and utilizing CDC's effectively for the betterment of the community.

### **Goals**

***Goal #1: Create 100 - 200 jobs of various levels in phases.***

#### Actions:

- ♦ Conduct a job market study - from census data and State Retail Sales Tax Report.
- ♦ Identify existing niches and constraints in the technical and industrial job marketability of residents within the community.
- ♦ Provide guidance counseling and job interview skills by way of Job Development Seminars.
- ♦ Match skills/qualifications of applicants with potential employers.

#### Research:

City of Houston Planning and Development Department, Weingarten Realty Management Co. Inc., Acres Home Chamber of Commerce, and Northwest Community Baptist Church - Job Training Program.

Potential Resources:

Texas Southern University Career and Placement Director, Greater Greenspoint Management, NHMCCC District, Aldine ISD, Houston Community College District, Ser-Jobs for Progress College Vocational Training Program, and Texas WorkForce Commission.

Method of Communication:

Word of mouth, Acres Home Citizen Council, Houston Chronicle, local radio and TV media, flyers, Acres Home Citizens Coalition Council, local churches, businesses, and townhall meetings.

Action Plan:

1. Job Developmental Seminar
2. Job Fair

Time Frame: 2-3 years (short term)

Sponsorship: To Be Announced

***Goal #2: Strengthen the economic base of existing businesses.***

Actions:

- ♦ Provide technical assistance workshops for small businesses.
- ♦ Ensure businesses retention, development and expansion.
- ♦ Establish Enhanced Enterprise Zone(s).
- ♦ Foster collaboration between existing business owners, Acres Home Citizens Coalition Council, Acres Home Chamber of Commerce.
- ♦ Conduct retail market sales tax study.

Research:

Study successful plans such as the Heights, East-End, Third Ward, Spring Branch, and Memorial community plans.

Potential Resources:

Small Business Administration, Weingarten Realty, Chase Bank, Texas Southern University Small Business Development Department, City of Houston Planning and Development Department, and University of Houston Small Business Development Department.

Method of Communication:

Word of mouth, Acres Home Citizen Coalition Council, Houston Chronicle, local radio and TV media, flyers, Acres Home Citizens Coalition Council, local churches and business, townhall meetings.

Action Plan:

1. Conduct small business developmental information seminars
2. Meet with entrepreneurs, residents and other business owners

Time Frame: 3-4 years (long term)

Sponsorship: To Be Announced

***Goal #3: Identify locations for a supermarket/strip shopping center.***

Actions:

- ♦ Discuss economic development strategies.
- ♦ Identify main economic development corridor.
- ♦ Establish Enhanced Enterprise Zone(s).
- ♦ Apply for Hitachi Grant monies.
- ♦ Conduct retail market sales tax study.
- ♦ Prevent further blight in the community.
- ♦ Identify potential development projects, businesses, and entrepreneurs to take advantage of loans or grant funds available.

Research:

Weingarten Realty, Chase Bank, Texas Southern University Small Business Development Department, City of Houston Planning and Development Department, University of Houston Small Business Development Department, and Houston Small Business Administration.

Potential Resources: N/A

Method of Communication:

Word of mouth, Acres Home Citizen Council, Houston Chronicle, local radio and TV media, flyers, Acres Home Citizens Coalition Council, and local churches

Time Frame: 3-5 years (long term)

# List of Achievements and Future Projects

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## Public Services Subcommittee

### *Achievements*

- ☞ Coordinated with the Department of Public Works and Engineering to construct 4,800 feet of sidewalk along T. C. Jester Boulevard between Victory Street and West Little York Road and around some schools.
- ☞ Lobbied for the inclusion of Yorkdale/White Oak Terrace and Lincoln City in the Neighborhoods to Standard (NTS) Program.
- ☞ Completed a Neighborhood Protection Team (NPT) "sweep" which resulted in up keep of area properties and citation of others for non-compliance with city code.
- ☞ Coordinated with Houston Police Department (HPD) to identify crime spots in the Acres Home community.
- ☞ Lobbied for the completion of several street pavings and ditch improvement projects in the Acres Home community.
- ☞ Monitored the rehabilitation of sewer lines valued at \$42.9 million.

### *Future Projects*

- ☞ Monitor the repair of six streets in the Acres Home community included in the 1998 Capital Improvement Plan: Areba, Aston, Bayou View, Carmel, Cliffdale, and Garapan.
- ☞ Create a database of businesses that violate the animal ordinance and notify the Health and Human Service Department.
- ☞ Petition NPT to conduct another "sweep."
- ☞ Identify and map ditches that need to be cleaned, culverts that need to be improved, roads and rights-of-way that need to be mowed, and major thoroughfares and local streets that need additional lighting.

## Housing Subcommittee

### *Achievements*

- ☞ Organized and presented a housing information forum at the Acres Home Multi-Purpose Center on March 15, 1997.
- ☞ Identified four areas in the community to build 100 new houses (target the first 25 houses for completion within 24 months).
- ☞ Identified four potential sites to construct houses, with each site receiving 25 houses.
- ☞ Identified 80 home owners who meet the criteria established by the Emergency Home Repair Program.
- ☞ Identified local contractors willing to build homes in the Acres Home community.
- ☞ Created a database of contractors or builders/repairmen to be employed.
- ☞ Recommended 20 applicants for pre-qualifications by several local banks for the Acres Home CDC housing project.
- ☞ Identified three large vacant tracts of land that can each accommodate 10 single family homes (forwarded the information to Habitat for Humanity).

### *Future Projects*

- ☞ Form a partnership with the Acres Home CDC and a major multi-family housing developer to utilize the State Tax Credit Program.
- ☞ Construct 100 houses in the community over the next 2 to 3 years.

## Land Use Subcommittee

### *Achievements*

- ☞ Created a visual land use concept map to be used as a guide for future development in the Acres Home community.
- ☞ Sent letters to coalition members regarding the pro-bono deed restrictions program sponsored by the Houston Bar Association and the Planning and Development Department.

### *Future Projects*

- ☞ Stabilize residential areas in the community by providing pro bono deed restrictions assistance to subdivisions that meet certain City and Houston Bar Association requirements.

## Youth Services Subcommittee

### *Achievements:*

- ☞ Developed and distributed questionnaires to youth and parents to determine the types of youth programs needed in the community.
- ☞ Identified and contacted parents to select a parent and child to work with the youth committee.
- ☞ Created a video tape of the TAAS Workshop conducted by Aldine ISD (the tape will be used as a learning tool by students in the community).

### *Future Projects:*

- ☞ Analyze results of the youth and parent surveys.
- ☞ Create a database of existing community youth organizations and programs.
- ☞ Identify existing summer youth employment programs in Acres Home and the City of Houston.
- ☞ Create a music video designed to teach students test taking skills.

## Urban Design/Beautification Subcommittee

### *Achievements*

- ☞ Identified possible locations to place entrance signs to the Acres Home community.
- ☞ Identified a tentative location for the Hike and Bike Trail.
- ☞ Designed a prototype littering and loitering sign.
- ☞ Identified recreational programs and the types of facilities needed in the Acres Home community parks.

### *Future Projects*

- ☞ Identify the owners of vacant properties in the Acres Home community using the Baca LanData software and request their permission to place signs on their lots.
- ☞ Design a gateway to the Acres Home community or signs identifying each neighborhood.

## Economic Development Subcommittee

### *Achievements:*

- ☞ Sponsored a Job Fair in the community.

### *Future Projects:*

- ☞ Create local businesses that offer job training and entrepreneur opportunities.

# Challenges/Opportunities

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There are opportunities and challenges that the Acres Home community will need to address to accomplish its revitalization efforts.

## Opportunities

- ☞ Easy access to Interstate Highway 45
- ☞ Large tracts of undeveloped land comprising 43% of the total area
- ☞ Major thoroughfare business corridors (Tidwell, West Montgomery, Little York)
- ☞ Adequate infrastructure along business corridors
- ☞ Predominantly a single-family residential area
- ☞ New police command station

## Challenges

- ☞ Inadequate infrastructure in many residential areas
- ☞ No deed restrictions in many areas of the community
- ☞ Attracting larger business development
- ☞ Dealing with existing and future incompatible land uses



# Community Profile

The Acres Home community covers approximately 4,659 acres and is located 9 miles northwest of Houston's central business district in Council Districts A and B. The community is located west of North Shepherd Drive and Veterans Memorial Boulevard, north of Pinemont Drive, east of White Oak Bayou and Lincoln Street, and south of West Mount Houston Road (See Acres Home Map). The community is comprised of the following neighborhoods: Green Meadows, Shepherd Park Terrace, Pinemont Plaza, Highland Heights Annex, Highland Heights Addition, White Oak Terrace/Yorkdale, Lincoln City, Carver Estates, Highland Acres Home, Highland Gardens City, Montgomery Terrace, Melrose Garden, Nuben, Ella Park Terrace, Acres Home West, and 576 Neighbors in Action.

The Neighborhood Profile is comprised of physical and demographic data compiled by the City of Houston Planning and Development Department for the Acres Home community. Demographic elements include: population, education, employment, household income/poverty, housing, building permit activity, land use, and infrastructure. The Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC) has developed projections statistics for 1990-1995. The statistics generated by HGAC include a slightly larger target area than the statistics used for 1980-1990.

## Population & Ethnicity:

The population of the Acres Home community decreased by 16.5 percent between 1990 and 1997. The community's population in 1990 was 26,620 persons, a decrease of 3,761 persons by 1997. During the same time period, Houston's population grew by 2.2 percent. There is a general sense that the community population, once declining in part due to an out-migration of persons in the working age group (18-64 years), now has people moving into the

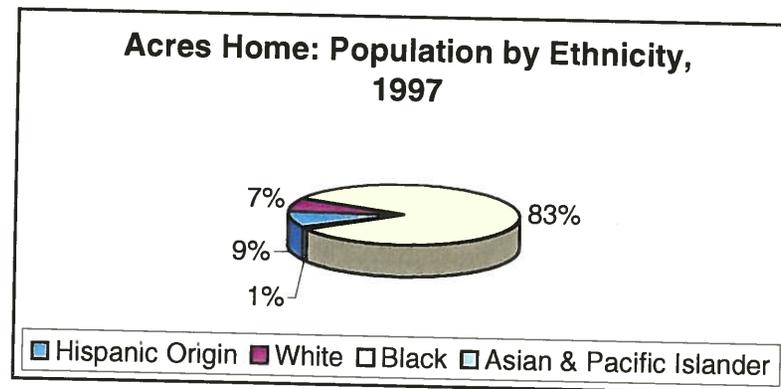
community.

Since its inception, the Acres Home community has always been predominantly African-American, but the percent of African-Americans comprising the community declined from 91 to 83 percent.

## Households

The number of family households in the Acres Home area decreased by 3.0 percent between 1990 and 1997. During the same time period, total households decreased by 1,084 households from 8,586 to 7,502.

The numbers of family and non-family households in the City and Acres Home are decreasing. For both household types this is happening at a greater magnitude in the Acres Home area than city-wide. Family households decreased by 15.8 percent in Acres Home while they fell by 1.2 percent in the City. The number of households headed by married couples in Acres Home declined at almost three times the rate of the City.



Source: U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development

## Educational Attainment

The Acres Homes population generally has lower educational attainment rates than the city population. The 1997 data show that 68.0 percent of the Acres Home residents 25 years of age and older have a high school diploma or higher, as compared to 73.0 for the City.

The most change in educational attainment is "Persons with some college." In 1990, 32 percent of persons 25 years and over completed some college which in 1997 only 5 percent completed some college.

## Property Data

According to the Harris County Appraisal District (HCAD), property values in the Acres Homes area total \$281,727,450. The average land value in the area is \$6,606 and the average improvement value is \$14,699. The average lot size tend to be quite large, averaging .82 of an acre. There are 5,043 vacant parcels in the area, which represent 38% of existing lots.

	Land Value	Improvement Value	Total Value	Acres	# of lots	# of vacant lots
<b>Total</b>	\$87,355,170	\$194,378	\$281,727,450	10,767	13,225	5,043
<b>Average</b>	\$6,606	\$14,606	\$21,304	0.82		

## Building Permit Data

Building permit activity (new residential construction, new non-residential construction, and remodels) is often used to gauge a community's economic health.

Between 1992 and 1997, overall new residential building permits totaled 507. Of this number, single-family units accounted for 494 permits. From 1992 to 1995, annual residential permits grew, with the greatest rate of 94.9 percent occurring between 1994 and 1995. From 1995 to 1997, new residential construction decreased. The

value of new residential construction in Acres Home between 1992 and 1997 totaled \$39.3 million.

From 1992 to 1997, a total of 258 new non-residential building permits were issued in Acres Home. Of this number, the other non-residential category (garages and other non-residential buildings) had the largest amount of new non-residential activity with 154 permits, while industrial building permits were the lowest with three permits. The total number of annual, new non-residential building permits fluctuated between 1992 and 1997. This activity declined between 1992 and 1993, but moved upward from 1994 to 1996, after which it declined. The largest decline (26.3%) occurred between 1996 and 1997, while the greatest rate of growth (32.5%) occurred between 1994 and 1995.

From 1992 to 1997, overall value of new non-residential construction was \$60.1 million, of which the category of institutional/public comprised 58.4 percent of the value (\$35.1 million), while industrial accounted for less than one percent (\$350,000). The annual value of new non-residential construction fluctuated during the six year period. From 1992 to 1994, it grew, but moved in a downward trend thereafter. The highest rate of growth (280.4%) occurred between 1993 and 1994, while the biggest decline

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	% Change 1992 vs. 97
<b>Single Family</b>	28	41	78	145	113	89	217.9%
<b>Multifamily</b>	0	0	0	7	6	0	---
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>217.9%</b>

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	% Change 1992 vs. 97
<b>Single Family</b>	\$3.98	\$3.74	\$5.57	\$9.76	\$8.81	\$7.28	82.9%
<b>Multi Family</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.13	\$0.04	\$0.00	---
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3.98</b>	<b>\$3.74</b>	<b>\$5.57</b>	<b>\$9.89</b>	<b>\$8.85</b>	<b>\$7.28</b>	<b>82.9%</b>

\*Values have been inflation adjusted, October 1997 dollars based on the CPI for the Houston-Galveston CMSA

**BUILDING PERMIT DATA**

New Non-Residential Buildings Permitted (1992-1997)

Source: City of Houston Planning &amp; Development Dept., Building Inspections Div.

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	% Change 1992 vs. 97
Office	0	2	1	0	2	0	---
Commercial	0	6	5	17	6	5	---
Industrial	0	0	1	0	1	1	---
Institutional/Public	10	8	6	7	17	9	-10.0%
Other Non-Residential	24	16	27	29	31	27	12.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>23.5%</b>

**BUILDING PERMIT DATA**

New Non-Residential Construction (1992-1997)

Source: City of Houston Planning &amp; Development Dept., Building Inspections Div.

(\$ Millions)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	% Change 1992 vs. 97
Office	\$0.00	\$0.05	\$0.01	\$0.00	\$0.58	\$0.00	---
Commercial	\$2.15	\$0.52	\$2.17	\$4.35	\$1.09	\$1.20	-44.2%
Industrial	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.05	\$0.00	\$0.28	\$0.02	---
Institutional/Public	\$0.24	\$2.21	\$15.71	\$8.54	\$7.89	\$0.52	116.7%
Other Non-Residential	\$2.13	\$2.27	\$1.27	\$1.94	\$2.34	\$2.62	23.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4.52</b>	<b>\$5.05</b>	<b>\$19.21</b>	<b>\$14.83</b>	<b>\$12.18</b>	<b>\$4.36</b>	<b>-3.5%</b>

\*Values have been inflation adjusted, Oct. 1997 dollars based on the CPI for Houston-Galveston CMSA

**BUILDING PERMIT DATA**

Value of Alterations and Remodels (1992-1997)

Source: City of Houston Planning &amp; Development Dept., Building Inspections Div.

(\$ Millions)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	% Change 1992 vs. 97
Residential	\$1.59	\$0.71	\$1.07	\$1.49	\$1.46	\$1.62	1.9%
Non-Residential	\$3.08	\$2.54	\$1.44	\$2.41	\$2.91	\$7.03	128.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4.67</b>	<b>\$3.25</b>	<b>\$2.51</b>	<b>\$3.90</b>	<b>\$4.37</b>	<b>\$8.65</b>	<b>85.2%</b>

\*Values have been inflation adjusted, Oct. 1997 dollars based on the CPI for Houston-Galveston CMSA

(64.2%) occurred between 1996 and 1997.

From 1992 to 1997, the overall value of remodeling projects (additions, alterations and conversions) totaled \$27,350,000, of which non-residential alterations and remodels accounted for the majority (71.0%). From 1992 to 1994, the annual value of alterations and remodels declined, but moved upward each year between 1994 and 1997. The greatest growth rate (97.9%) occurred between 1996 and 1997, while the largest decrease of 30.4 percent occurred

between 1992 and 1993.

Between 1992 and 1997, a total of 343 permits were issued for residential demolition, with no demolition permits granted for multi-family units in the area. The number of demolitions permitted each year from 1994 to 1997 was lower than the number of permits given in 1992 and 1993.

## Infrastructure

### Water:

In general, the diameter of water lines on the local streets in the community ranges from 6 inches to 8 inches. Water lines under 6 inches are considered insufficient for single family development. The major thoroughfare streets, such as West Montgomery, Little York, South Victory, Tidwell, and Shepherd have lines ranging from 8 to 20 inches.

### Wastewater:

Acres Home is serviced by 8 inch public wastewater lines throughout the community. Wastewater lines less than 8 inches are considered insufficient for single family development. The community's major thoroughfare streets have lines ranging from 8 to 12 inches. Wilberforce has one of the largest lines (30 inches) in the community.

### Storm Sewer:

Storm sewer drainage lines are primarily located along major thoroughfares in the community and vary in size from 24 to 84 inches. Local streets are generally serviced by an open ditch system.

## Capital Improvement Plan (Infrastructure Only)

The 1998-2002 Capital Improvement Plan reflects a variety of infrastructure improvements for Acres Home. The various agencies

involved in making infrastructure improvements have scheduled 116 projects for the area. The majority of the improvement projects are street repairs and overlays. Other major projects include sewer relief and rehabilitation projects, as well as a planned hike and bike path. Neighborhoods to Standard and speed hump projects also comprise a large number of Acres Home's improvements.

The Greater Houston Wastewater Program (GHWP) expended \$35 million in sewer relief and rehabilitation in the community between 1992 and 1997. GHWP expended \$7.8 million in sewer relief for West Montgomery Road and Knox Street. This project was completed in 1997.

Construction of the hike and bike trails and bikeway routes is estimated to cost a total of \$2.25 million, of which the federal government and City have allocated \$1.8 million and \$450,000, respectively. The Department of Public Works and Engineering met with community residents and chose one of five alternatives. The hike and bike paths will be 5.57 miles in length and 1.3 additional miles will be added if more funds are available.

Two neighborhoods within Acres Home have been designated as Neighborhoods to Standard (NTS) areas — Lincoln City and Yorkdale-White Oak Terrace. The NTS program prioritizes different types of projects for those neighborhoods (for example, street overlays and sidewalks) to improve the quality of the infrastructure in the area.

The speed hump program has also resulted in fourteen projects in Acres Home to more effectively control traffic in the area.

## **Flood Plain**

One neighborhood, Melrose Garden/Green Meadow, is located in the 100 year flood plain. The flood plain boundaries are Rittenhouse to the north, Rachel to the south, North Shepherd to the east and DePriest to the west. Properties located in this area are more susceptible to flooding than other areas in the community.

## **Retail Market Trends**

An analysis of retail trends in the Acres Home area shows overall growth in retail sales and significant household purchasing power. Trends in retail sales were analyzed for zip codes 77088 and 77091, which most closely match the Acres Home study area. Household income and expenditures patterns were also analyzed at the zip code level.

### *Retail Sales Trends*

Retail sales for the area, in inflation adjusted dollars, increased 28% from 1990 to 1997. In comparison, the City of Houston experienced a 46% increase in sales during the same period (See Table 1). In 1997, the Acres Home area captured a 1% share of Citywide retail sales.

Two categories of retail sales have experienced increases between 1990 and 1997: Food Stores (14%) and Miscellaneous Sales (513%, e.g. bookstores, sporting goods stores, and other businesses not included in major categories). A large decline in sales occurred in the Building Materials and Home Furnishings categories.

Figure 1 shows the overall trend in total sales from 1990 to 1997. In inflation adjusted dollars, sales were at their highest in 1997 (\$374 million). Sales were fairly stable, with a small decline between 1992 and 1997. Meanwhile the number of retail outlets in the area decreased 4% between 1990 and 1997 (521 vs. 501 outlets).

### *Household Income & Expenditure Patterns*

Approximately 25,045 households in 1997 made up the Acres Home area as defined by zip codes 77088 and 77091 (See Table 2). The average household income was \$34,679 in 1997, and when combined, totals \$868 million in aggregate purchasing power.

Consumer demand in several retail categories were analyzed based on the area's average household income. Average household expenditure patterns were derived from the U.S. Bureau of Labor

**Table 1**  
**Acres Home Area**  
**Retail Sales Activity in Zip Codes 77088 & 77091, 1990 & 1997**  
 (\$Millions: 1997 Real Dollars)

	1990	Estimated 1997	Net Change	% Change
Bldg. Materials	\$56.410	\$13.493	(\$42.917)	-76.1%
Food Stores	\$67.120	\$76.205	\$9.085	13.5%
Automotive	\$37.930	\$36.088	(\$1.842)	-4.9%
Apparel & Accessories	\$5.340	\$4.866	(\$0.474)	-8.9%
Home Furnishings	\$19.508	\$3.140	(\$16.369)	-83.9%
Restaurants	\$36.248	\$26.575	(\$9.673)	-26.7%
Drug Stores	---	\$22.681	---	---
Liquor Stores	\$5.476	\$3.717	(\$1.759)	-32.1%
Miscellaneous	\$30.391	\$186.280	\$155.889	512.9%
Undisclosed Sales	\$70.962	\$17.482	(\$53.480)	-75.4%
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>\$291.457</b>	<b>\$373.650</b>	<b>\$82.193</b>	<b>28.2%</b>
<b>City of Houston</b>	<b>\$22,226.170</b>	<b>\$32,500.080</b>	<b>\$10,273.910</b>	<b>46.2%</b>

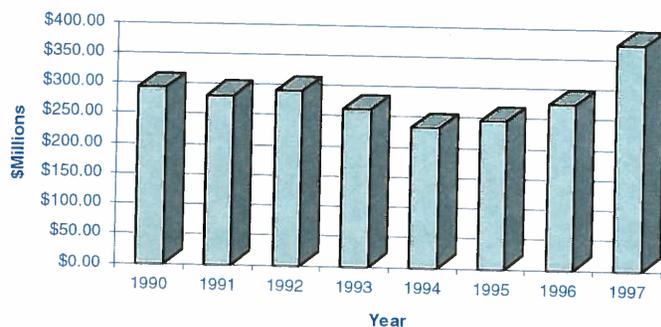
Source: Texas State Comptroller's Office.

\*Automotive (includes sales from Automobiles, auto parts, gasoline, service stations).

\*\*Note: Undisclosed retail sales represent expenditures occurring in four or less outlets within a zip code.

**Figure 1**

**Acres Home Area Retail Sales: 1990-1997**



Source: State of Texas Comptroller's Office

\*\*Figures are in 1997 Real Dollars

1997 Retail Sales were estimated

Statistics, 1995 Consumer Expenditure Survey. For the categories shown in Table 2, the total sales potential for the area was \$253 million.

A full retail market study would compare the area's potential demand and existing sales to determine if there were retail sales leakages. A sales leakage refers to dollars that could have been spent in the area but were spent elsewhere, or "leaked from the community". In analyzing support for new retail space based on any sales leakages, typical square footage figures for new stores and

**Table 2**  
**Purchasing Power of Acres Home Area**  
**(Based on Typical Expenditure Patterns by Household Income)**  
 1997 Real Dollars

	1997 Estimated Households(1) 25,045	1997 Avg. HH Income(2) \$34,679	1997 AGGREGATE INCOME \$868,544,074
Retail Categories	Annual Expenditures Per HH (3)	Sales Potential (\$Millions)	
Food Stores	\$3,030	\$75.875	
Restaurants	\$2,131	\$53.383	
Apparel/Accessories	\$1,728	\$43.273	
Home Furnishings (Furniture & Accessories)	\$488	\$12.229	
Automotive (Auto parts, gasoline/service stations)	\$1,916	\$47.997	
Drug Stores	\$804	\$20.143	
Miscellaneous(4)	\$1,750	\$43.835	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11,848</b>	<b>\$252.901</b>	

Notes: (1) U.S. Census Bureau--1990 Census figures have been adjusted based on Houston Galveston Area Council (HGAC) projected growth rates. HGAC growth rates (Acres Home Census Tracts) for 1990-95 were applied to 1990 figures to estimate 1997 households. For the Acres Home area (Zip codes 77088 and 77091), a 1% growth rate was applied.

(2) U.S. Census Bureau (Derived by dividing total income by total households).

(3) 1995 Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey (\$30-39,999 Income Range).

(4) Miscellaneous Retail includes: reading materials, tobacco products, entertainment including cinemas, film & related products, hobbies, sporting goods, gift stores, stationary, etc.

net deductions for existing retail supply would be taken into account.

*Conclusion*

Based on an initial review of retail sales trends and household purchasing power in the Acres Home area, the retail market appears to be healthy. However, it is difficult to determine the sales trends for specific stores in the study area. Overall sales have increased in

recent years. The retail categories of Food Stores and Miscellaneous Sales have experienced increases in sales. Household purchasing power in the Acres Home area is significant based on average household income and typical expenditure patterns. In order to determine the potential for new retail in the area, a full market study will need to be completed.

# Participating Organizations and Stakeholders

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Cora Street Civic Club	Council for Community Improvement
North Plaza/Willow Run Civic Club	Yorkdale/White Oak Terrace Civic Club
Montgomery Terrace Civic Club	Carver Estates Civic Club
Ella Park Terrace Civic Club	Highland Heights #2
Pinemont Plaza Civic Club	Challenge 2000
Ferguson Way Civic Club	Aldine Independent School District
Lincoln City Civic Club	Acres Home Center for Business & Economic Development
Acres Home West Area Civic Club	Acres Home Citizens Chamber of Commerce
Garden City Civic Club	Acres Home Community Development Corporation
Acres Home War Against Drugs	

# Acknowledgements

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Pat Austin  
Charles Smith

Ben Mask  
Laconia Cain  
Debbie Allen  
Signora Tinsley

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