

THE LOVEJOY COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLAN



Prepared by the Florida State University Planning and Development Lab
April 2008



Lovejoy Community Revitalization Plan

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is intended to act as a basis for and guide to revitalization of the Lovejoy Community, a community consisting of the Sylvania Heights Neighborhood, located in unincorporated Okaloosa County, Florida, and the adjacent W.E. Combs Neighborhoods, located in the City of Fort Walton Beach, Florida. The planning issues and subsequent recommendations presented herein were determined through an extensive public involvement process with the various stakeholder groups that sought to take an active interest in enhancing the quality of life within the Lovejoy Community. These stakeholder groups include elected officials, representatives from public agencies, law enforcement officers, clergymen, and community residents. The implementation strategies presented within this revitalization plan will equip residents and other stakeholders within the Lovejoy Community with the strategies and methods necessary to improve the quality of life within the Lovejoy Community.

This document was created in response to a request from the Greater Sylvania Heights Front Porch, Inc. (GSHFP), an organization seeking technical assistance from the Florida Department of Community Affairs to develop comprehensive plan for neighborhood revitalization, including the mitigation of stormwater issues. With this in mind, the Florida Planning and Development Lab sought to create a comprehensive revitalization plan that the residents of the Lovejoy Community could utilize to better the quality of life within the community. It is anticipated that GSHFP will play a central role in responding to and implementing the strategies set forth in this plan.

The document begins with a brief description of the “planning problem” to which this document responds (Section 1.0). The document then offers a history of the Lovejoy Community that spans much of the latter half of the 20th Century (Section 2.0). Section 3.0 describes the existing conditions in the Lovejoy Community, paying special attention to the demographic and economic composition of the community, the overall condition of the community’s infrastructure and housing stock, crime trends, the environmental issues, and the assets contained within the community. Section 4.0 explains the planning process that was undertaken to facilitate ideas from community residents and stakeholders on how to better the

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community as a whole. Finally, Section 5.0 identifies implementation strategies related to capacity building, housing, infrastructure, and the environment. Also included in a separate document are nine (9) appendices—each of which includes in-depth data that further describe the processes contained within each section of the document.

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Acknowledgements

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This neighborhood revitalization plan was made possible through the continued support of numerous individuals. The project staff would like to especially thank Harrison Higgins, AICP, at the Florida State University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning for his assistance and support with the production of this document, as well as Dr. Bruce Stiftel and Dr. Jeffery Lowe of Florida State University, and Rick McCraw, Community Redevelopment Agency Manager for the City of Tallahassee, who served as advisors on the project committee. The project staff would also like to thank the Florida Department of Community Affairs, who provided funding for this project. In addition to the numerous residents, public employees, advisors, and academics that participated in interviews, provided documents, and offered valuable assistance, we would also like to thank the following people who attended technical steering committee meetings, without whose support, this project would not be possible:

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Project Description

SECTION 1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Greater Sylvania Heights Front Porch, Inc. (GSHFP), after identifying several important community issues, sought the technical assistance of the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for help revitalizing the Lovejoy Community. Florida State University was contracted by DCA to provide GSHFP, and through them, Okaloosa County and the City of Fort Walton Beach, with a comprehensive community revitalization plan for the W.E. Combs and Sylvania Heights neighborhoods. The planning area, consisting of these two neighborhoods, spans two local jurisdictions with 30 percent of the residents of the community living in Fort Walton Beach and 70 percent of the residents living in Okaloosa County, please see Map 3.1.

The Lovejoy Community Revitalization Plan is a five year comprehensive community plan that evaluates the existing conditions in the community, documents community goals based on these existing conditions and desires for revitalization, and provides strategies for revitalizing the Lovejoy Community as a response to these goals.

Florida Statutes (§§ 163.360-163.463) provides one framework for community revitalization planning through the Community Redevelopment Act (CRA); see Appendix A for a detailed description of the CRA process. This plan adopts the approach to redevelopment that the CRA requires, but this planning exercise has not gone through the formal steps to perform redevelopment planning under a Community Redevelopment Agency. This is largely due to the complexities associated with implementing community redevelopment under the statute within an area that spans two jurisdictions, a possibility that the authors of the statute did not anticipate. Without clear direction from the statute on undertaking redevelopment planning in an area that spans two jurisdictions, the costs associated with surmounting the barriers to creating an effective dual jurisdictional CRA may outweigh the benefits. Additionally the benefits of establishing a CRA have been constrained by the 2006 legislation (that significantly reduces the use of the power of eminent domain for redevelopment purposes) and by the lack of certainty regarding the use of Tax Increment Financing under the recent Florida Supreme Court case *Strand v. Escambia County* (Case No. SC06-1894).

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Instead this plan is community based and guided primarily by the efforts of a non-governmental organization. Its implementation is envisioned as being undertaken primarily by GSHFP, with assistance by the City of Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa County and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. Because the implementing agency is non-governmental organization, the plan and its recommendations have not been adopted as official policy by the City of Fort Walton Beach or Okaloosa County. It remains, therefore for GSHFP to advocate with local government for the plan's implementation.

This plan does not solve all of the problems facing the Lovejoy Community but it provides real workable solutions that address the issues identified as most important to the community for improving their quality of life. While establishing a CRA may be a potential future step, the planning process accomplished here gives this community the opportunity to immediately effect change in the neighborhoods.

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History of the Lovejoy Community

SECTION 2.0 HISTORY OF THE LOVEJOY COMMUNITY

The Lovejoy Community neighborhood is a mostly residential area with a predominantly African American population bordered by Fort Walton Beach Technology and Commerce Park to the south, Hurlburt Field to the West, Gap Creek and subdivisions to the North, and the community of Mary Esther to the East. Sixty years ago, according to an interview with long time resident Ruth Lovejoy, woods dominated the area. The area was referred to by many Okaloosa County residents as the “country” and was populated by only a handful of mostly white families living on large lots. Lovejoy tells stories of a rural way of life that took place on small farms, from which pigs occasionally escaped to munch on the gardens of other residents and where pony rides were held on land that is now the Fort Walton Beach Industrial Park. The rural character of the area was maintained until the 1950s when Okaloosa County experienced a population boom, especially in the southern, coastal areas of the county. According to Leonard Patrick Hutchinson, author of the *History of the Playground Area of New Florida*, the population of Fort Walton Beach in 1950 was 2,463 residents, and in 1960 the population increased to 12,147.

C.E. Wright wrote in the *New York Times* on July 30, 1961, that Fort Walton Beach was experiencing this impressive boom in population due in large part to Eglin Air Force Base, which encompassed around 800 acres of Okaloosa County and had over 12,000 military, civilians, and official personnel engaged in experiments having to do with missiles, aircraft, and space exploration. The air force base provided new employment opportunities for many residents in a racially integrated workplace. The area also became an attractive vacation destination, luring people to the beautiful beaches and the fishing opportunities. This spurred the building of resort villages, restaurants, gas stations, and shops in the area to service the visitors from northern metropolitan areas, including Chicago and New York.

Development in southern portions of the county spurred the urbanization of some of its rural areas, including the Lovejoy Community. Okaloosa Clerk of Courts records report that, Sylvan Marlar, an original landowner in what is now Sylvania Heights, platted the first residential subdivision of the area called Sylvania Heights, in May 1953. The subdivision

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stretched from Tilden Street to what is now Poplar Street, and from what is now Lovejoy Road in the south to beyond Elaine Street to the north. The subdivision plat included 116 residential lots. The first houses were completed in 1956, according to the Okaloosa County Property Appraiser website. In March 1954, a second subdivision was platted by John Bishop and his wife, Gracie. The original plat included 41 lots, on the area bordered by Poplar Avenue and Hickory Street. Residential construction began in 1955 and continued through the early 1960s. Both of these residential subdivisions were located in unincorporated areas of the county, outside the nearby City of Fort Walton Beach and were developed without the standard urban public services, including centralized potable water service, sewers, wastewater treatment, and paved roads. Table 2.1 shows the history of all subdivisions in the present day neighborhood, accompanied by a map of their locations on the following page.

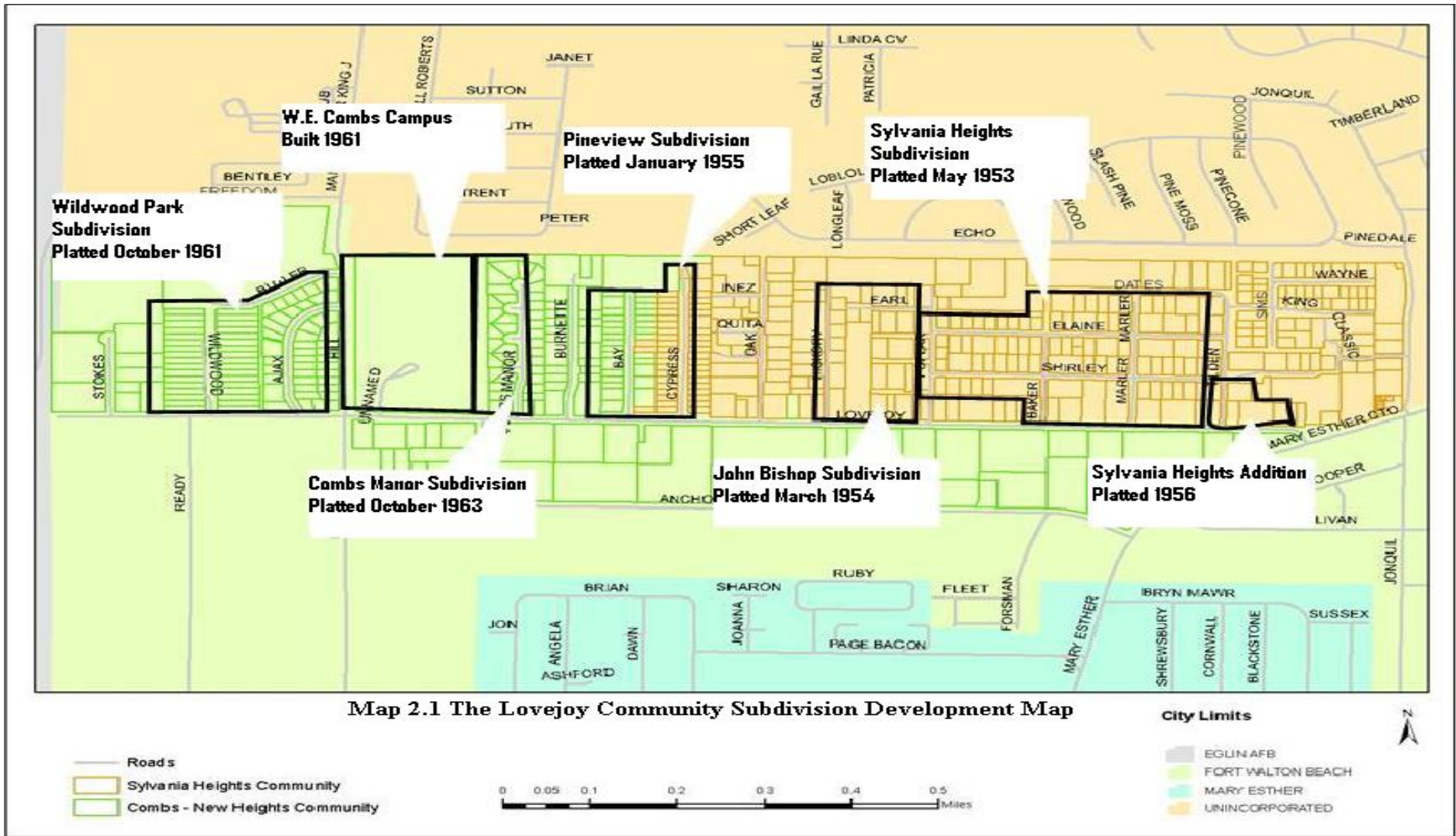
Table 2.1: Subdivision History of the Lovejoy Community

Subdivision Name	Year Platted	Land Owner when Platted	Jurisdiction	Characteristics of Original Plat	Year of Construction of Oldest Homes
Sylvania Heights Subdivision	1953	Sylvan Marlar	Okaloosa County	116 lots originally platted	1956
John Bishop Subdivision	1954	John and Gracie Bishop	Okaloosa County	41 lots in originally platted	1955
Pineview Subdivision	1955	Euchee Land Company, Inc.	Okaloosa County/Fort Walton Beach	81 lots originally platted along Bay and Cypress Streets.	1964
Sylvania Heights Addition	1956	Sylvan Marlar	Okaloosa County	9 lots originally platted	1958
Wildwood Park Subdivision	1961	Hurlburt Development Corporation	Fort Walton Beach	85 lots originally platted	1962
Combs Manor Court Subdivision	1963	Fladale Development Company, Inc.	Fort Walton Beach	35 lots originally platted	1970

Sources: Okaloosa County Property Appraisers, <http://okaloosapa.com/>, accessed February 2008. Okaloosa County Clerk of Courts, Official Records, <http://officialrecords.clerkofcourts.cc/>, accessed February 2008

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In the 1960s much of the development for the W.E. Combs portion of the Lovejoy Community occurred. In 1961, the W.E. Combs High School was built to serve the educational needs of African Americans. According to an interview with Ruth Lovejoy, it was built on farmland along what is now Lovejoy Road that was previously owned by a man named Callahan. According to Nancy Kenaston (1977) author of *From Cabin to Campus*, this new high school obviated the need for black students to be bused to Crestview in order to go to Carver Hill High School, then the only African American secondary school in the county. Charlie Hill was named the first principal of the Combs High School, which functioned as racially segregated high school for the next six years, and unfortunately, according to Kenaston, was immediately neglected by the school system. In 1968, the school board was integrated by race. The board decided that W.E. Combs should be closed and students should be transferred to the newly constructed, integrated Choctawhatchee High. Parents and community residents resisted the closing of the school because they did not want their children to have to leave their neighborhood school. They pleaded with school board members and threatened to send their students to DeFuniak Springs High, which was still an all black school. The school board did not keep the school open, and most of the students went to Choctawhatchee. In 1969, the school reopened as Combs New Heights Elementary. According to an article by Marilyn Passell (1968) in the *Playground News*, the school used progressive teaching methods, such as not assigning grades and allowing students to complete work at their own speed. The campus remains an elementary school today and also shares the campus with the University of West Florida which located a satellite campus at the site. The school has, through all its phases, been a central part of the neighborhood.

To the south of the earliest subdivisions built in the Lovejoy Community, across Lovejoy Road, the city of Fort Walton Beach developed an industrial area used for industrial, warehousing, and wholesaling enterprises. This land was strictly controlled by the city from 1960s until 1994. The city then removed restrictions and formed the M-2 Industrial Park District, which controls the land use in what is now referred to as The City of Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park (City of Fort Walton Beach, Department of Community Development Services, 2001).

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According to an interview with resident Barry Gray, during a period from 1966 through 1968, Eglin Air Force Base engaged in a program of upgrading housing for military personnel in an area of the facility known as Plew Heights. The Air Force sold former barrack buildings for reuse off-base rather than demolishing them. According to an interview with resident Ruth Lovejoy, a local business man from Fort Walton Beach purchased many of these barracks and placed them on lots in Sylvania Heights that were then occupied by African Americans, many of whom were forced to relocate from traditional enclaves in downtown Fort Walton Beach and were seeking opportunities for homeownership. Multiple buildings were occasionally put onto one lot, which dramatically increased the population densities in the community.

The road now known as Lovejoy Road, which is the main thoroughfare for the residents of the community, was previously a clay road. Resident Ruth Lovejoy fought to get the road paved when she noticed that, as a clay road, it was unsafe for children in school buses when it was raining. According to Lovejoy the road was paved in the late 1960s and renamed after her. The rest of the roads in the Lovejoy Community were paved sporadically, with the last of them paved as late as the 1990s. Many of the roads today in Sylvania Heights do not include curb and gutter.

Throughout all its transitions, residents of the Lovejoy Communities have implemented various strategies and programs dealing with issues concerning the neighborhood and quality of life of its residents. Some strategies used have been neighborhood meetings, clean-ups and the creation of the organization Burnette-Harmon-Wood Community Resource Center, which was incorporated in 2002 to bring support resources to the Lovejoy Community. In addition, members of the Sylvania Heights neighborhood applied to the Office of the Governor to become a Front Porch Community and were accepted in 2002. The Front Porch Initiative aims to revitalize underserved communities that are dedicated to positive cooperation and communication to make their community a better place to live, work and play (FL Department of Community Affairs, 2006). The local government has also been involved in revitalizing the neighborhood through measures such as locating a sheriff substation in the neighborhood to

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improve relations with law enforcement, and the rehabilitation of homes through the Okaloosa Community Development Corporation (FL Department of Community Affairs, 2006). These plans, initiated by residents of the neighborhood, are another effort to improve the quality of life for residents of the Lovejoy Community.

SECTION 3.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Section 3.0 documents the existing conditions within the Lovejoy Community. Specifically, this section contains data and analysis that describes the demographics of the Lovejoy Community, the community’s infrastructure, the housing conditions within the community, incidences of crime within the community, the environmental issues faced by the community, and the community’s assets as identified by the community’s residents and other stakeholder groups.

3.1 Demographic Study of the Sylvania Heights/Combs Neighborhood

Section 3.1 contains demographic and economic data for the Lovejoy Community. This section documents the racial makeup of the Lovejoy Community, as well as the income levels for a sample of the community’s population. A demographic study of the Sylvania Heights/Combs Neighborhood was undertaken in an effort to document existing conditions for the residents of the neighborhood. Data from the United States Census, as well as past economic surveys that were conducted by the City of Fort Walton Beach as part of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) process, were gathered and analyzed in order to better understand the overall quality of life in the Sylvania Heights/Combs Neighborhood.

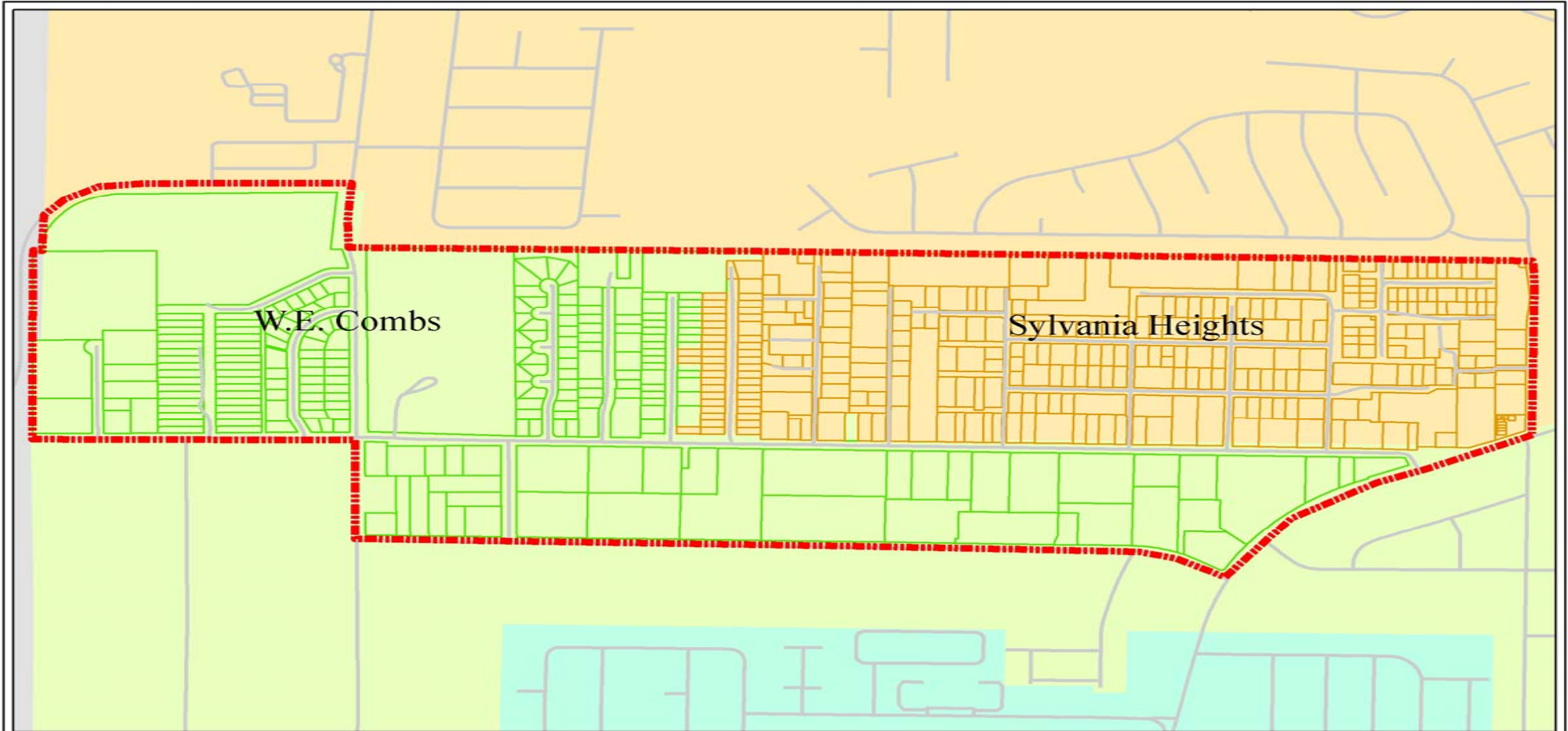
3.1.1 Methodology

Population data for the Lovejoy Community were gathered from the 2000 U.S. Census and 2005 Census projections. The total population of the Lovejoy Community (Sylvania Heights and W.E. Combs) was estimated to be 1,055 in 2005. Population for this community was disaggregated into the two neighborhoods that comprise the Lovejoy Community. Map 3.1 displays the boundary for the two individual neighborhoods, as well as for the Lovejoy Community as a whole. The community is comprised of part of census block 1014 and all of census blocks 1015, 1050, 1051, 1052, and 1053, Block Group 1, Census Tract 219 in Okaloosa County. Map 3.2 depicts the census blocks and their location within the study neighborhood.

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Existing Conditions

Demographic Study



Map 3.1: Jurisdictional Boundaries in the Sylvania Heights/W.E. Combs Community



City Limits

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| EGLIN AFB | Area of Interest Boundary |
| FORT WALTON BEACH | Roads |
| MARY ESTHER | Sylvania Heights Community |
| UNINCORPORATED | Combs - New Heights Community |

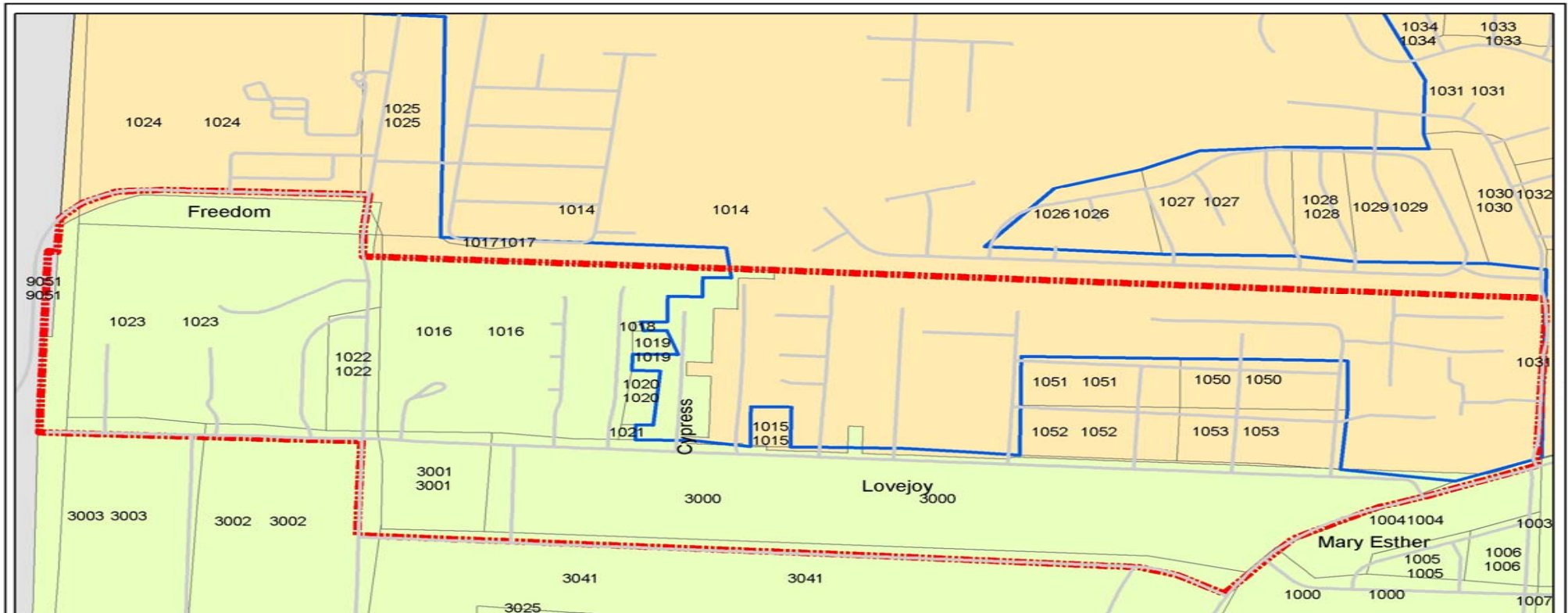


Prepared By: Michael Peacock
 Sources: Okaloosa County Information Systems:
 GIS Division

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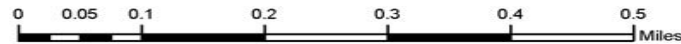
Demographic Study



Map 3.2: Census Blocks Contained within the Study Neighborhood

W.E. Combs
Census Tract 219
Block Group 1
Block's
(1016,1017,1018, 1019, 1020,1021, 1022, and 1023)

Sylvania Heights
Census Tract 219
Block Group 1
Block's
(1050, 1051, 1052, 1053 and 1014)



- City Limits**
- EGLIN AFB
 - FORT WALTON BEACH
 - UNINCORPORATED
 - Area of Interest Boundary
 - Census Block 1014
 - Census Blocks
 - Roads



Prepared By: Michael Peacock
Sources: Okaloosa County Information Systems:
GIS Division, 2000 US Census

Because portions of the Lovejoy Community and other neighborhoods to the north of the study area make up Census Block 1014, it was necessary to estimate the portion of the population of this Census Block that lies within the study area. The partial Census Block 1014 population for W.E. Combs and Sylvania Heights was estimated by multiplying occupied housing units by the average household size. To acquire the proper number of housing units, members of the planning team visited the W.E. Combs and the Sylvania Heights portions of Census Block 1014 to count the housing units in the Census Block. The total numbers of housing units were then adjusted by the community's average vacancy rate, which was obtained from the U.S. Census. The average household size was taken from the 2000 U.S. Census and was adjusted by the number of households in the Lovejoy Community, which included all of Census Block 1014. The data and results of this process are contained within Appendix B of this document.

3.1.2 Race

In addition to disaggregating general population data within Census Block 1014, it was also necessary to disaggregate racial data within the Census Block to estimate the racial composition of the Lovejoy Community. To do so, it was assumed that the racial composition of the Census blocks contained entirely within the Lovejoy Community accurately reflect the racial composition of the community as a whole. Thus, the African Americans in Census block 1014 were divided proportionally between the W.E. Combs and Sylvania Heights neighborhoods based on the existing patterns in non-1014 existing neighborhood Census Blocks. The non-African Americans were distributed among non-African American racial groups according to the same proportions that existed in neighboring Census Blocks.

Table 3.1 contains general population data from the Sylvania Heights and W.E. Combs neighborhoods, as well as aggregate data for both neighborhoods. Table 3.2 contains similar data from larger geographies including Census Tract 219, the City of Fort Walton Beach, Okaloosa County, and the State of Florida.

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Table 3.1: Demographics in Sylvania Heights, W.E. Combs, and Aggregate Totals, 2000

	Sylvania Heights		W.E. Combs		Total	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
White alone	101	14%	23	7%	124	12%
Black or African American alone	518	73%	302	88%	820	78%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	15	2%	2	1%	17	2%
Asian alone	21	3%	5	2%	26	2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Some other race alone	42	6%	9	3%	51	5%
Two or more races	15	2%	2	1%	17	2%
Total Population	710	100%	345	100%	1055	100%
<i>Source: US Census Bureau, 2000</i>						

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Table 3.2: Demographic Comparison of the Surrounding Communities, 2000

	Florida		Okaloosa County		Fort Walton Beach (City Limits)		Census Tract 219		Lovejoy Community	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
White alone	12,465,029	78%	142,218	83%	15,746	79%	4,407	70%	124	12%
Black or African American alone	2,335,505	15%	15,508	9%	2,664	13%	1,361	22%	820	78%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	53,541	0%	1,030	1%	90	0%	38	1%	17	2%
Asian alone	266,256	2%	4,205	2%	543	3%	214	3%	26	2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	8,625	0%	232	0%	16	0%	15	0%	0	0%
Some other race alone	477,107	3%	2,264	1%	243	1%	60	1%	51	5%
Two or more races	376,315	2%	5,041	3%	671	3%	210	3%	17	2%
Total Population	15,982,378	100%	170,498	100%	19,973	100%	6,305	100%	1,055	100%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

3.1.3 Age and Gender

In addition to analyzing the racial composition of the Lovejoy Community, an age and gender analysis was undertaken in order to further document the demographic characteristics of the community. Figures 3.1-3.3 contain age and gender data for the Lovejoy Community, City of Fort Walton Beach, and the State of Florida.

Figure 3.1: Lovejoy Community Percent Population by Age and Sex, 2000

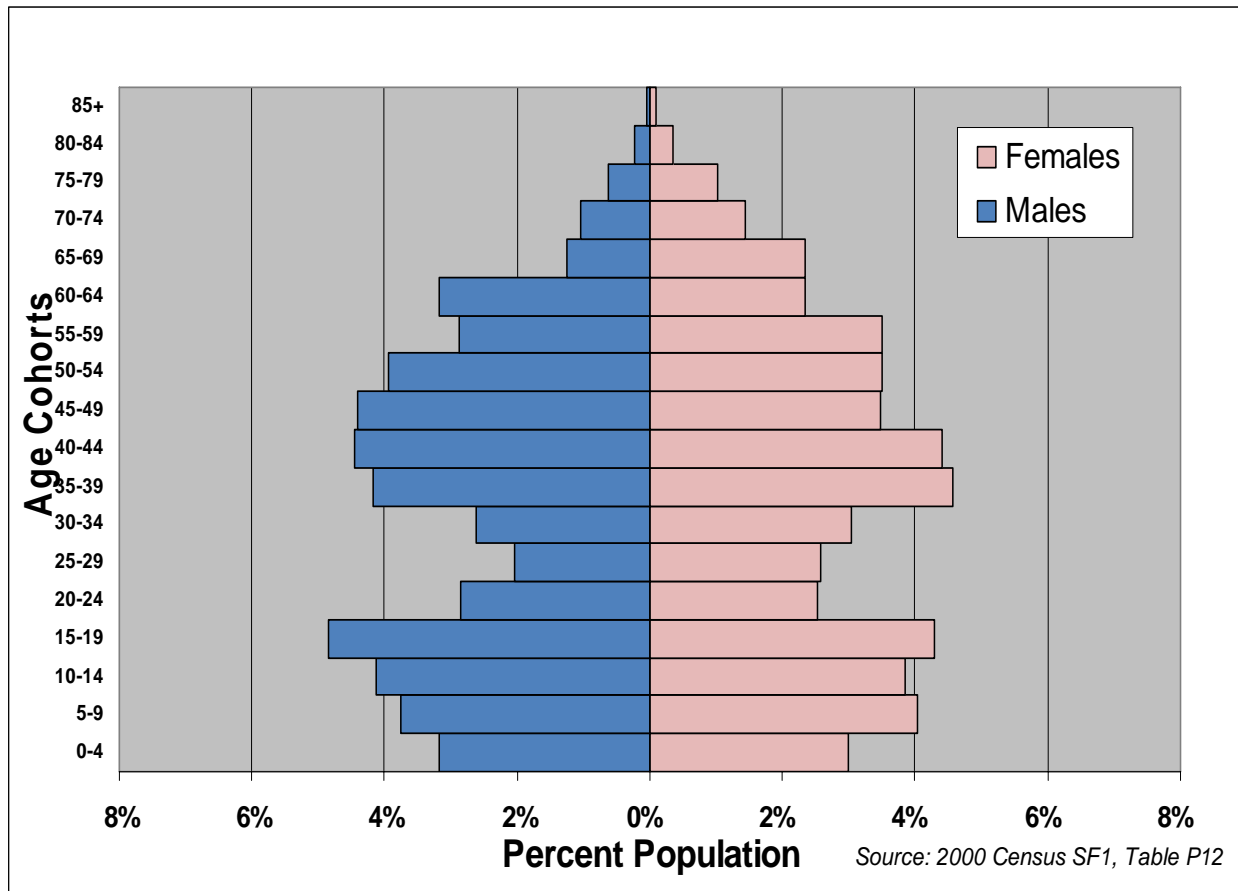


Figure 3.2: Okaloosa County, FL Percent Population by Age and Sex, 2000

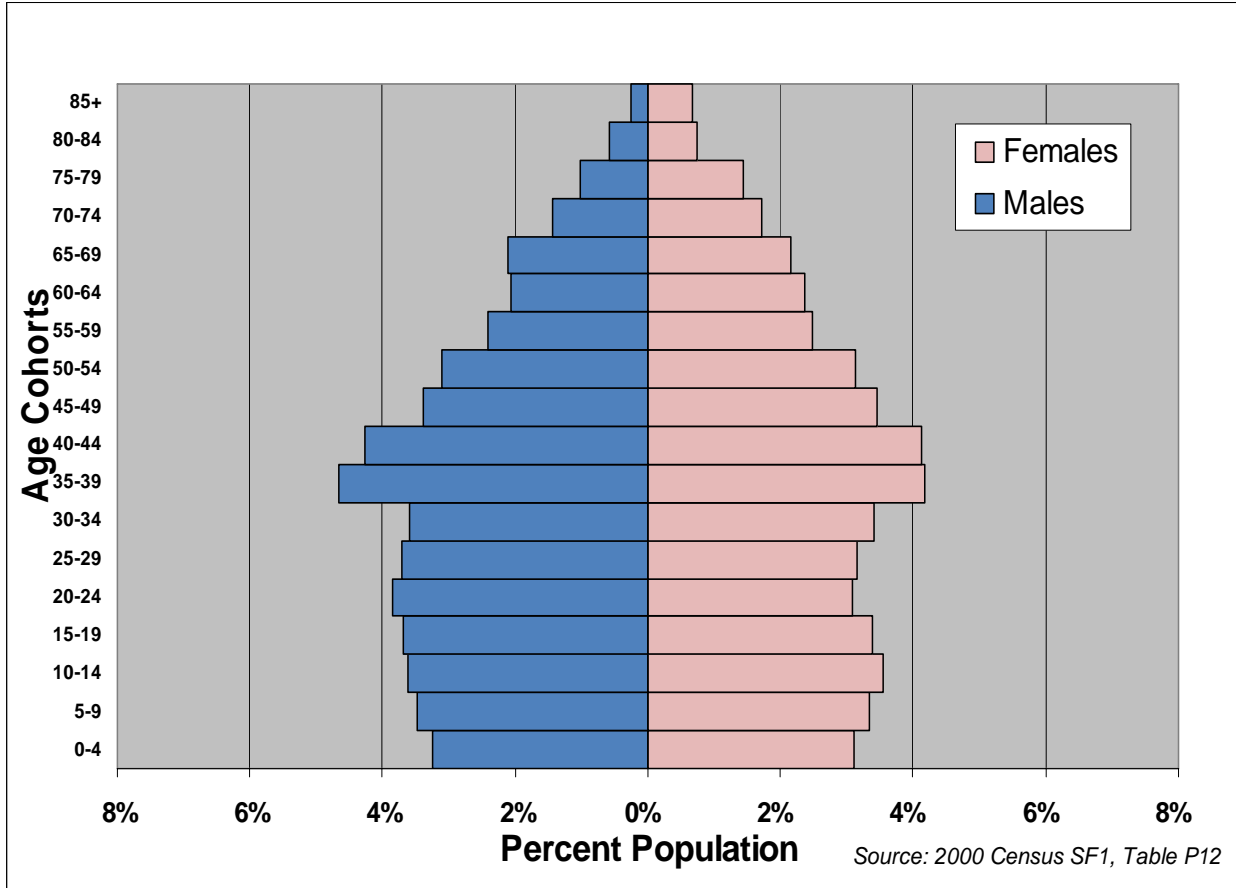
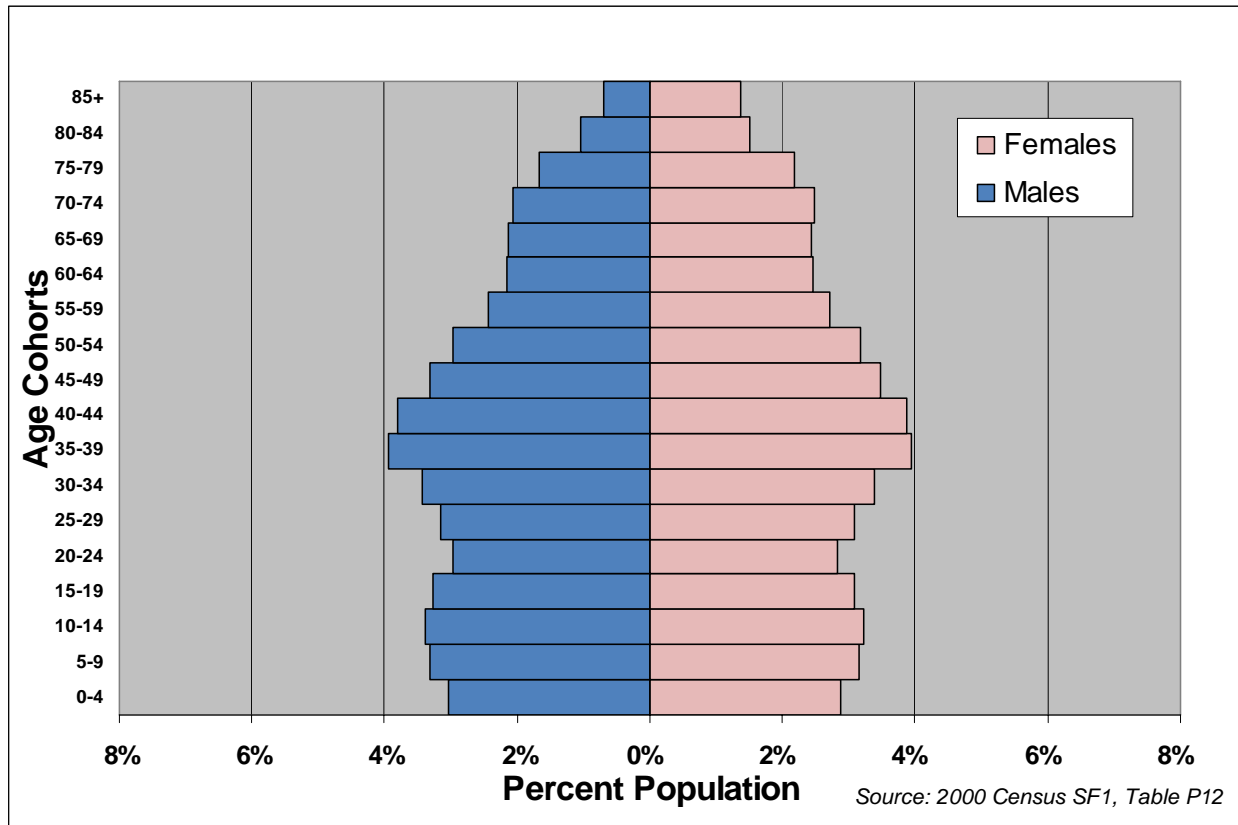


Figure 3.3: Florida Percent Population by Age and Sex, 2000



While the Okaloosa County and State of Florida population pyramids generally resemble the typical population pyramid of a developed country, in that the percentage of the population within young and middle-aged age cohorts are about the same, the population pyramid for the Lovejoy Community does not. Specifically, there is a noticeable absence of expected residents in the age cohorts of 20-24, 25-29, and 30-34. These residents make up a substantial portion of the working age population and are likely appearing in lower than expected numbers within the Lovejoy Community for several reasons, including a lack of employment opportunities in and around the area.

3.1.4 Household Income Data

The economic data discussed herein was obtained from the Okaloosa County Community Development Block Grant program. The county conducted two surveys of economic conditions in the Sylvania Heights neighborhood to determine the amount of grant money the county could

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obtain to subsidize the neighborhood’s connection to the county’s wastewater treatment system. The first survey, conducted in 1996, surveyed 58 households in the Sylvania Heights neighborhood, which is approximately one-sixth of the total number of dwelling units existing in the neighborhood today. The second survey, conducted in 1999, surveyed 152 households in the neighborhood, which equates to approximately one-half of the total number of dwelling units in the study neighborhood.

Tables 3.4 and 3.5 contain the results of each survey. The Thresholds used for “very low-income,” “low-income,” and “moderate-income” households are those established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1995. The same thresholds were used to define income levels in each survey. Table 3.3 contains the thresholds for defining income levels as prepared by HUD in 1995, adjusted for family size.

Table 3.3: Threshold of Income Levels as Defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1995, Adjusted by Family Size

Number of Persons in Family	Very Low-income Threshold (50% of Median Family Income for Area)	Low-income Threshold (80% of Median Family Income for Area)
1 Person	\$13,700	\$21,950
2 Person	\$15,700	\$25,100
3 Person	\$17,650	\$28,200
4 Person	\$19,600	\$31,350
5 Person	\$21,150	\$33,850
6 Person	\$22,750	\$36,400
7 Person	\$24,300	\$38,900
8 Person	\$25,850	\$41,400
<i>Note: Median Family Income in 1995 was \$39,200</i>		
<i>Source: City of Fort Walton Beach Community Development Block Grant Files</i>		

Table 3.4: 1996 Economic Conditions Survey Results

Households	Total	%
Total Households Surveyed	58	100%
Number of Very Low-income Households	45	78%
Number of Low-income Households	11	19%
Number of Moderate-income Households	2	3%
<i>Source: City of Fort Walton Beach Community Development Block Grant Files</i>		

Table 3.5: 1999 Economic Conditions Survey Results

Households	Total	%
Total Households Surveyed	152	100%
Number of Very Low-income Households	116	76%
Number of Low-income Households	24	16%
Number of Moderate-income Households	12	8%
<i>Source: City of Fort Walton Beach Community Development Block Grant Files</i>		

As evidenced by these data, a majority of the families living in the Sylvania Heights neighborhood are subsisting on very-low and low incomes. However, conditions in the W.E. Combs neighborhood are thought to be slightly better than in Sylvania Heights based on anecdotal evidence offered by residents of both neighborhoods. It is possible that the total percentage of families living on very-low or low incomes across both neighborhoods may be lower than it is for Sylvania Heights alone. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Lovejoy Community has fewer economic resources when compared to the surrounding geographies.

3.1.5 Conclusions

The analysis of the demographic data for the Lovejoy Community has revealed that the community is a mostly poor, predominantly African-American community. Many of the families in the community are subsisting on very-low and low incomes, and there is a lower than expected amount of working-age adults in the study neighborhood.

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3.2 Infrastructure Conditions

Infrastructure conditions were surveyed in the Sylvania Heights and W.E. Combs neighborhoods to identify whether any of the specific circumstances were found to be inadequate. Of particular concern were conditions that could endanger life or property and defective or inadequate streets and the layout of those streets. The following infrastructural systems were surveyed: roads, stormwater, wastewater, potable water, and parks and recreation. See Appendix C for details on how the infrastructure system was assessed.

3.2.1 Roads

The planning area, referred to as the Lovejoy Community, contains 7.8 miles of roadway (Table 3.6). Of these, 4.3 miles are within the Sylvania Heights neighborhood. There are 3.5 miles of roadways within the W.E. Combs neighborhood. Of all roadway segments within the planning area, there only five (0.7 miles) that are not paved. The entire Lovejoy Community has eight road segments (4 miles) that have sidewalks on at least one side of the roadway.

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Table 3.6: Lovejoy Community Street Network

Neighborhood	Street Name	Classification	Miles	Curb/Gutter	Paved	Sidewalks
W.E. Combs	Lovejoy	Collector	0.7	Y	Y	Y
	Hill	Collector	0.5	Y	Y	Y
	Butler*	Local	0.2	N	N	N
	Stokes	Local	0.1	Y	Y	N
	Wildwood*	Local	0.1	N	N	N
	Ajax	Local	0.2	Y	Y	Y
	Combs Manor	Local	0.3	Y	Y	N
	Burnette	Local	0.2	Y	Y	Y
	Bay	Local	0.2	Y	Y	Y
	Anchors	Collector	0.9	Y	Y	Y
	Baker	Local	0.1	Y	Y	N
	Unnamed	Local	0.1	N	Y	N
	Sylvania Heights	Lovejoy	Collector	0.7	Y	Y
Cypress		Local	0.2	N	Y	N
Oak		Local	0.2	N	Y	N
Inez		Local	0.1	N	N	N
Osie Brown		Local	0.1	N	N	N
Quita		Local	0.1	N	N	N
Hickory		Local	0.2	N	Y	N
Poplar		Local	0.2	N	Y	N
Earl		Local	0.1	N	Y	N
Baker		Local	0.1	N	Y	N
Marler**		Local	0.2	N	Y	N
Tilden		Local	0.2	N	Y	N
Dates		Local	0.2	N	Y	N
King		Local	0.2	N	Y	N
Sims		Local	0.1	N	Y	N
Wayne		Local	0.1	N	Y	N
Classic		Local	0.1	N	Y	N
Shirley		Local	0.4	N	Y	N
Elaine		Local	0.3	N	Y	N
Jonquil		Local	0.2	Y	Y	Y
Mary Esther	Arterial	0.4	Y	Y	Y	
TOTAL	ALL		7.8			
TOTAL	Sylvania Heights		4.3			
TOTAL	W.E. Combs		3.5			
TOTAL	*Not paved		0.3			

**One short segment of Marler Avenue is not paved.

Source: Okaloosa County Information Systems Department, Author's Calculations

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As can be seen in Table 3.6 there are 31 named streets within the planning area and one unnamed roadway. Lovejoy Road is the only roadway segment that is shared by both neighborhoods within the planning area. This indicates that the only access point between the two neighborhoods is via Lovejoy Road, which demonstrates a limited amount of accessibility for the residents when traveling between the two neighborhoods. The W.E. Combs neighborhood has a total of 12 roadway segments. Two of the roadway segments within W.E. Combs are not paved. These segments are Butler Road and Wildwood Road. Butler Road consists of graded gravel and Wildwood Road is a two-rut service road with no homes accessing it. Half (six) of the roadway segments within W.E. Combs have a sidewalk on at least one side of the roadway. Within W.E. Combs neighborhood there are six dead end streets. Of these six dead end streets four of them do not meet “turning area” standards set forth by the Florida Department of Transportation’s *Florida Greenbook*. These standards state (chapter 16-7):

“A residential street open at one end only should have a special turning area at the closed end, and a residential street more than 100 feet long and open at one end only shall have a special turning area at the closed end. This turning area should be circular and have a radius appropriate to the types of vehicle expected. The minimum outside radius of a cul-de-sac shall be 30 feet. In constrained circumstances, other turning configurations such as a “hammerhead” may be considered.”

Sylvania Heights has 21 roadway segments in all. There are four roadway segments that are not paved; Inez Street, Osie Brown Street, Quita Street and a segment of Marler Avenue (1/10 mile) between Elaine Street and Dates Street. This segment of Marler Avenue is a dirt road that is not maintained, yet traveled frequently. Lovejoy Road is the only roadway segment in Sylvania Heights that has a sidewalk. The Sylvania Heights neighborhood has 13 dead-end streets. Of these 13 streets in Sylvania Heights, 12 do not meet the “turn around” standards established by for local roads in the FDOT *Florida Greenbook*.

3.2.1(a) State Roads

The State of Florida maintains one segment of roadway within the planning area, State Road 393, known locally as Mary Esther Cut-Off, from its intersection with Beal Parkway to its intersection with Anchors Street. Mary Esther Cut-Off is a four-lane arterial roadway with a

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tree-lined grass median. A 4/10-mile segment Mary Esther Cut-Off runs from Jonquil Road to Anchors Street within the planning area. There is one traffic signal at Mary Esther Cut-Off and Lovejoy Road on this segment of roadway. The adopted level of service standard for the segment of roadway is “E” and the roadway is currently operating at or above that level of service. Once again this adopted level of service is based upon the methodologies contained within the latest edition of the FDOT Level of Service Handbook.

3.2.1(b) County Roads

Okaloosa County maintains all roadways within the Sylvania Heights neighborhood. The county also maintains Lovejoy Road, which is shared by Sylvania Heights and W.E. Combs neighborhoods. The Lovejoy Road segment extends from Mary-Esther Cut-Off on the east end of Sylvania Heights to Hurlburt Field on the west end of W.E. Combs. Lovejoy Road is a one and 4/10-mile, two-lane collector road that runs east and west through the planning area. On the north side of the roadway, a sidewalk extends from Mary Esther Cut-Off to Ajax Road. There are no sidewalks on the south side of Lovejoy Road. There are two traffic signals on Lovejoy Road, one at the intersections of Lovejoy Road and Mary Esther Cut-Off and one at the intersection of Lovejoy Road and Hill Street. Okaloosa County has adopted the two-way, peak hour level of service standards for county roads. This roadway segment has an adopted level of service standard “E” and is current operating at or above that level of service.

3.2.1(c) Local Roads

Of the 32 roadways in the planning area, 30 of them are considered local roads. There are 11 local roads in the W.E. Combs neighborhood and 19 local roads in the Sylvania Heights neighborhood. All of the local roads in the W.E. Combs neighborhood are maintained by the City of Fort Walton Beach. As mentioned earlier, Butler Drive in the W.E. Combs neighborhood is not currently paved, however a project to pave it is included in the City of Fort Walton Beach’s five-year capital improvement program and \$318,000 has been scheduled for those improvements. The local roads in the Sylvania Heights neighborhood are maintained by Okaloosa County. There are sidewalks on Bay Street, Burnette Street, Hill Avenue, and Ajax

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Road. All of the local road segments with sidewalks are within the W.E. Combs neighborhood. No local roadway segment within Sylvania Heights has sidewalks.

3.2.2 Stormwater

A stormwater system consisting of swales, curbs, gutters and one retention pond exists throughout the W.E. Combs neighborhood except on Butler Drive, Wildwood Road, and Stokes Road. All other named streets in W.E. Combs portion of the planning area have some form of curb and gutter to function as the stormwater system. There is a four-acre retention pond located in this portion of the planning area. This retention pond is located on the Combs Elementary property bordering Gap Creek.

The Sylvania Heights portion of the planning area has no stormwater system except on Lovejoy Road. Lovejoy Road has curbs and gutters as well as ditches with pipes, which funnel the water to a one and 4/10-acre detention pond located between Poplar Road and Hickory Road in the Sylvania Heights neighborhood. Okaloosa County owns property within the Sylvania Heights neighborhood that is a planned site for a stormwater facility (see Map 3.3). The stormwater systems in each neighborhood are managed by separate entities. W.E. Combs is managed by the City of Fort Walton Beach and Sylvania Heights is managed by Okaloosa County.

The Lovejoy Community has become increasingly surrounded by development with high percentages of impervious surface over the last several decades. To the south, the City of Fort Walton Beach has developed the Commerce and Technology Industrial Park with large amounts of impervious surfaces for parking and vehicle movement. The industrial park does not have any on site stormwater detention. To the north there has been at least two gated residential communities built. The direction of water flow in the Lovejoy Community is from the south to the north, as illustrated in Maps 3.3. With the industrial park to the south and the residential neighborhoods to the north, it is estimated that the Lovejoy Community collects more stormwater runoff than what is produced with the Lovejoy Community itself. Map 3.3 demonstrates that the stormwater flow from the industrial park runs through the Lovejoy

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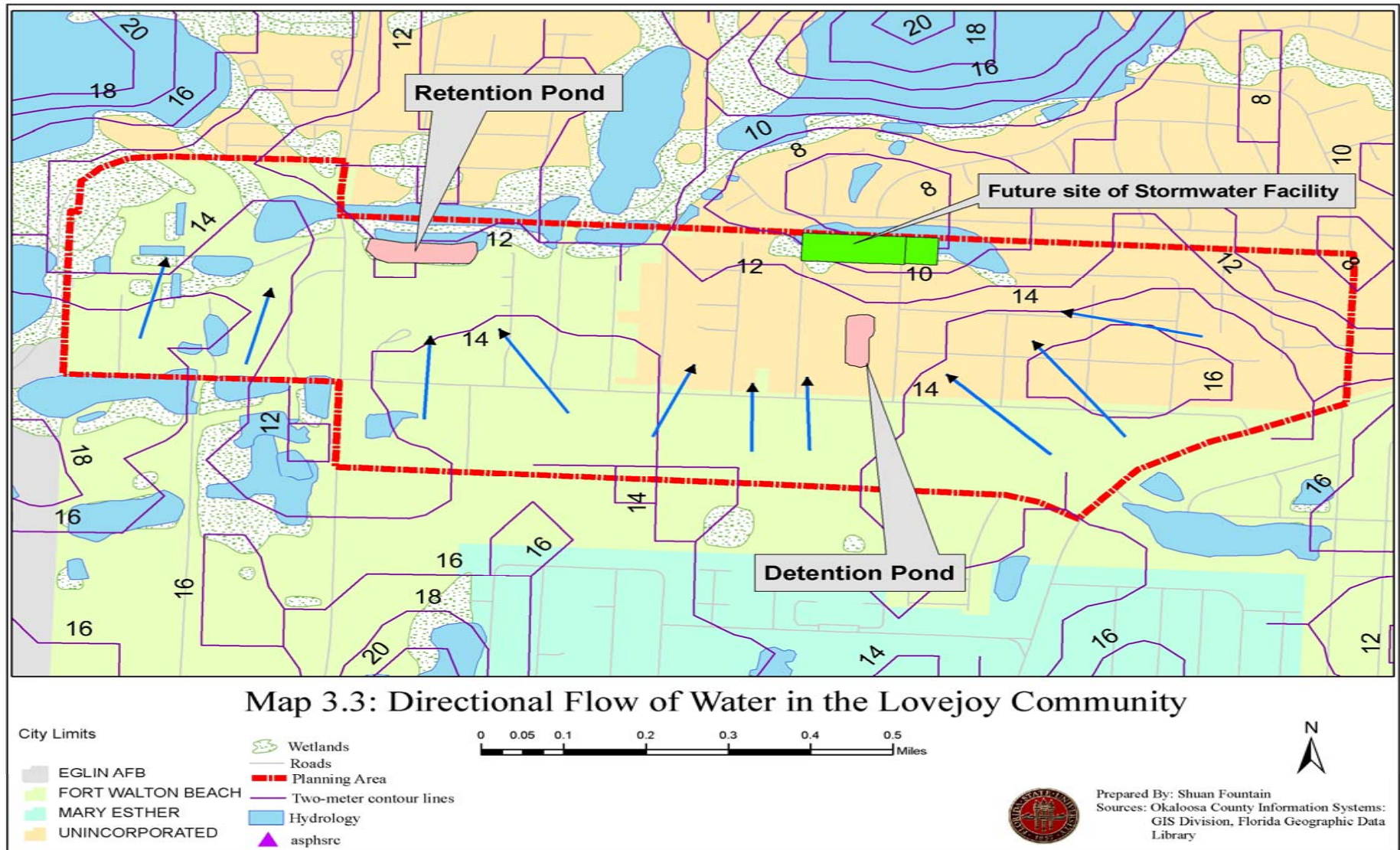
Community and the runoff from the residential neighborhoods backs up into the Lovejoy Community.

The existing stormwater infrastructure within the Lovejoy Community has several functionality issues. The swales and curbs on Lovejoy Road do little to manage stormwater runoff within the Sylvania Heights neighborhood itself. Also several streets within the Sylvania Heights neighborhood have standing water after hard rains. The effects on the ground from the inadequacy of the stormwater infrastructure have been negative. Each neighborhood within the Lovejoy Community has separate issues that can be related to the inadequate stormwater infrastructure.

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3.2.2(a) County Stormwater Planning

In 2003 Okaloosa County developed a stormwater master plan that identified an estimated \$32 million in required yet unfunded stormwater infrastructure projects. Among these is a project to design a stormwater system for Elaine Avenue in Sylvania Heights costing \$50,000. It is unlikely that this project alone will sufficiently address the storm water facilities deficiency in the neighborhood.

Additionally a hydrological study of the Gap Creek Drainage Basin is currently underway. The study will provide the technical information that facilitates resolutions to be made on reducing or eliminating the existing and/or potential water-related problems within the Gap Creek Basin. The Gap Creek Drainage Basin encompasses all of the Lovejoy Community in addition to neighborhoods to the north. Once the study is complete the county will know more about the stormwater infrastructure solutions that will need to be addressed for the Sylvania Heights neighborhood. These solutions will in part be addressed with the planned stormwater facility in Sylvania Heights mentioned above. This hydrological study is being funded by the Northwest Florida Water Management District, Okaloosa County, and the City of Fort Walton Beach.

3.2.2(b) City Stormwater Planning

The City of Fort Walton Beach identifies improvement needs and costs of these needs for each recognized neighborhood in their jurisdiction, extrapolated over a five-year period. These improvements are then assimilated into a “neighborhood improvement schedule”. Table 3.7 shows the neighborhood improvement schedule for W.E. Combs. The total dollars scheduled for infrastructure improvements in the five years is \$840,897. However, only a small percentage of this money is scheduled for stormwater infrastructure improvements. The money spent on stormwater will be primarily spent on the Storm Drainage Program. The Storm Drainage Program is a part of the Capital Improvement Program, which focuses on the maintenance of the stormwater drainage system in the City of Fort Walton Beach. Currently, the city is exploring the idea of implementing a Stormwater Utility with the hope of implementing a system, which

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would generate stormwater capital. The Stormwater Utility would fund these infrastructure projects identified in this neighborhood improvement schedule.

Table 3.7: Neighborhood Improvement Schedule for W.E. Combs, 2007-2012

Budget	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	5-Year Total
Economic Development	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environmental Resources	5,908	173,029	170,029	172,575	173,484	695,025
Government Relations	4,550	22,449	15,871	25,636	9,090	77,596
Infrastructure	31,943	221,453	291,172	223,301	73,028	840,897
Land Use	4,636	15,908	4,545	0	0	25,089
Neighborhoods	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Safety	0	8,182	9,090	29,546	60,455	107,273
Transportation	0	318,000	0	0	21,817	339,817
Total Improvements	47,037	759,021	490,707	451,058	337,874	2,085,697

Source: City of Fort Walton Beach Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvements Program

3.2.3 Waste Water Treatment and Potable Water

All of the planning area is provided with central sewer and water service. Okaloosa County Water and Sewer provides service to the properties within the Sylvania Heights neighborhood. The City of Fort Walton Beach’s Utility Department/Water Distribution and Operations Division provides the sewer and water service within the W.E. Combs neighborhood as well as the industrial park.

Sylvania Heights has had central water since the onset of subdivision activity. Prior to the subdivision activity most residents of Sylvania Heights had on-site sewage systems. Central sewer was not made available to Sylvania Heights until 1997-1998. Using funds from the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP) the county laid sewer pipes and subsidized hook

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ups for to private property. Simultaneous extensive central water maintenance was accomplished, including the looping dead-end pipes and installing fire hydrants which increased the efficiency and functionality of the water system. No additional sewer or water projects have been planned in the current five-year schedule of capital improvements for Okaloosa County and Sylvania Heights.

The City of Fort Walton Beach, on the other hand, has scheduled a variety of projects for water and sewer within the W.E. Combs neighborhood in the city's capital improvements program. These projects range from water meter replacement to pump station maintenance and sewage system rehabilitation. Additionally, the City of Fort Walton Beach and Eglin Air Force Base have undertaken the installation of gray water line to reuse effluent from Hurlburt Field. The "Hurlburt Water Reuse Main" runs through the Lovejoy Community at the end of Lovejoy Road into the industrial park. Currently the gray water main is dry due to a lack of funds to complete the project. Eventually the gray water will be used for irrigation of cemeteries and other uses in the City of Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park.

3.2.4 Parks and Recreation

Of the two neighborhoods within the planning area only the Sylvania Heights neighborhood has operational parks and recreation facilities: a playground at 311 Shirley Drive and a community garden. The playground consists of two half-court basketball courts, playground equipment for children (a jungle gym), and two picnic tables with a barbeque grill. The community garden, which is currently under construction, is also located on Shirley Drive.

A future park is planned for the W.E. Combs neighborhood on a one-acre parcel that lies between Burnette Avenue and Bay Street and fronts Lovejoy Road. Currently the City of Fort Walton Beach has a ten-year lease on the property. However, a twenty-five year lease is needed to be eligible for the grant the city seeks from the Florida Recreation Development Association Program (FRDAP) to construct improvements. (The lease requirement is stipulated by the rules set forth by the Department of Environmental Protection, Chapter 62D-5 Part V of the Florida

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Recreation Development Association Program.) There are no other park projects scheduled in either Okaloosa County or the City of Fort Walton Beach's Capital Improvements Programs.

3.2.5 Conclusion

After completing the infrastructure condition study inferences can be made towards the adequacy of the existing infrastructure. This adequacy can be measured by the existence of and functionality of the infrastructure. The results of the study suggest that there are inadequate streets that are not functioning at full capacity. Also the lack of sidewalks points to the inadequacy of the infrastructure within the planning area. The stormwater infrastructure within the planning area is meager at best. The stormwater infrastructure that does exist does not function well enough to alleviate the flooding problems within the planning area. Many problems have arisen with site and improvement deterioration from this inadequate infrastructure. Therefore, the condition of the existing infrastructure in the Lovejoy Community suggests the need for an intervention. It will be necessary for projects to be identified to help reduce the negative impacts upon the community from the inadequate infrastructure.

3.3 Housing Conditions

3.3.1 Existing Conditions

The Lovejoy Community consists of the W.E. Combs and Sylvania Heights neighborhoods. The community has a mixture of single-family homes, manufactured homes, multi-family properties and some commercial development. The overall area of the community is 350 acres. The average date of construction of the entire housing stock for both neighborhoods is estimated to be 1973.

3.3.2 Recent Construction in the Lovejoy Community

The Okaloosa County Habitat for Humanity is an active participant in the Lovejoy Community. Over the last several years Habitat for Humanity has averaged building one to two homes per year in the community. In addition to Habitat for humanity a group called World Changers, which is part of the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, brings youth groups from around the United States who donate their time and effort during the summer to help to rebuild communities. Okaloosa County and the City of Fort Walton Beach each contribute \$25,000 dollars to buy materials for the World Changers organization. World Changers visited the Lovejoy Community during the summer of 2007 and they are scheduled to visit again in the summer of 2008.

3.3.3 Housing Conditions Survey

A survey of housing conditions was completed to provide a detailed description of dwelling units in the Lovejoy Community. The survey was conducted by a four member team from the Florida Planning and Development Lab on February 9, 2008. The team surveyed a total of 416 dwelling units within the W.E. Combs and Sylvania Heights neighborhoods.

3.3.4 Survey Method

The survey included all dwelling units that could be viewed from the right of way within the neighborhoods of W.E. Combs and Sylvania Heights. A four member team completed the housing conditions survey. For the purpose of generating the highest possible reliability the

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group attempted to survey all of the housing units within the two neighborhoods. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was used to map all of the existing residential structures within the neighborhoods. Each of these structures was then tagged with an address number and a parcel identification number. The 2005 Okaloosa County property appraiser database computed that there were an estimated 431 dwelling units within the Lovejoy Community.

The subject area was divided into four separate sub-areas to correspond with the four reviewers assigned to complete this task. Each reviewer was given an aerial printout that displayed the dwelling units and streets that they were tasked with surveying. Any housing unit that was not in the GIS system was also surveyed and a score reported for it. After the survey was completed it was determined that there were a total of 416 dwelling units within the neighborhoods. There were 15 dwelling units that were not scored during the survey because their condition could not be assessed from the right of way.

3.3.5 Survey Technique and Classifications

To complete the survey, team members walked along the right of way of streets assigned to them and visually assessed the major exterior components of each dwelling unit and took photographs of the structures. The instrument for this evaluation was based on a survey employed by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (Model Housing Survey Instrument, Appendix D, <http://www.hcd.ca.gov>). The original survey focused on the condition of five major external building systems: foundation, roofing, siding and exterior walls, windows and doors, and electrical systems. Each of these systems was visually graded and a score applied to each one of them. The total number of points from all component systems was totaled and a corresponding condition of the unit was assessed based on the score.

The survey employed in the Lovejoy Community deviated from the California Department of Housing and Community Development survey that served as its model in several ways. The electrical component was deleted because of the difficulty of determining the quality of the electrical system from the right of way (Final Housing Conditions Survey, Appendix D). Beyond that alteration, the reasoning behind the point scale applied to the California Housing

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Survey was not available to reviewers. The reviewers created a new point scale using the construction costs to replace components as its basis. The total cost to repair the entire shell of the average sized 1,250 square foot structure was estimated to be \$41,600 dollars using the 2007 *Contractor's Pricing Guide* for mean residential square foot costs. The foundation (39 percent total cost of exterior shell) and roofing (29 percent) were assigned a higher number of points based on their higher replacement costs while the siding/walls (21 percent) and windows and doors (11 percent) were applied a lower number because the cost to repair to those systems was lower. Table 3.8 below shows the correlation between the cost to repair a home and the overall condition of a home. A 52 point scale was developed by dividing that amount by the smallest unit cost (\$800 for window replacement) and values were applied based on the cost to repair certain components of the home. The average value of residential buildings in the Lovejoy Community (the total value minus the value of the land) according to the 2005 Okaloosa County Property Appraiser data is \$76,000 dollars. Therefore, if a home has repairs that total 40 percent or more of the home than it will fall in the “substantial rehabilitation” or “dilapidated” category. If a house had 10 points assigned to it then it would need an estimated \$8,000 dollars of repairs. This would also put a house scoring ten points in the “minor rehabilitation” category.

Table 3.8: Correlation Between Costs to Repair and Overall Condition of the Housing Unit

Points	Cost to Repair	Condition of Structure
0 - 5	< \$4,000	Sound
6 - 14	\$4,800 - \$11,200	Minor Rehabilitation
15 - 36	\$12,000 - \$28,800	Moderate Rehabilitation
37 - 45	\$29,600 - \$36,000	Substantial Rehabilitation
46 - 52	\$36,800 - \$41,600	Dilapidated

Source: Author's Calculations

3.3.5(a) Pre-Test Survey

To complete a pre-test survey method, assessment team members met on February 2, 2008 to review the survey instrument and various photos that correlated with the conditions described in the survey instrument (Pre-Test Housing Conditions Survey, Appendix D). Once the initial training was completed, the team decided to assess 30 houses in the Frenchtown

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neighborhood of Tallahassee where dwelling unit types and characteristics similar to those in the Lovejoy Community exist. The team first assessed ten dwelling units as a group and discussed what each individual observed as they were evaluating the dwelling units. There was a random selection of houses, duplexes, and apartments evaluated during this pilot survey. An additional 20 dwelling units were reviewed by reviewers working independently and making their own judgments.

The pre-test surveys were tabulated. In 80 percent of the 20 dwelling units that were evaluated individually, reviewers arrived at the same category of assessment. Team members then reviewed the instrument and refined the definitions of the conditions and the relation of scores to the condition of the homes. For example, there were additional descriptions added to the major exterior components categories with particular attention to the siding/walls category. There was also a slight adjustment made in the point scale. A sound home was originally scored as six points or less, but after the pre-test and much discussion this score was moved to a total of five points or less. The discussion generated by the review team provided a common framework among the team members as to the level of scrutiny that would be applied when completing the survey in the Lovejoy Community.

3.3.6 Survey Results

The survey was completed on February 9, 2008 by the four member team. The results of the housing conditions survey are displayed in the following sections. The results are portrayed for the W.E. Combs neighborhood, the Sylvania Heights neighborhood and the Lovejoy Community as a whole.

3.3.6(a) W.E. Combs Neighborhood Results

The W.E. Combs neighborhood had a total of 111 dwelling units (Table 3.9). Ninety-seven percent of the dwelling units were classified as sound or in need of minor rehabilitation. Only three percent of the homes were in need of moderate rehabilitation (Figure 3.4). There were no homes in the W.E. Combs neighborhood that were in need of substantial rehabilitation

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or considered dilapidated. Ninety-six of the 111 homes or 86 percent of the homes in the W.E. Combs neighborhood were single family homes (Figure 3.5).

Table 3.9: Number of Dwelling Units by Type in W.E. Combs

Housing Type	# of Dwelling Units
Single Family	96
Manufactured Home	9
Duplex	2
Quadplex	4
Total # of Dwelling Units	111
<i>Source: Author's Calculations</i>	

Figure 3.4: Types of Dwelling Units in W.E. Combs by Percentage

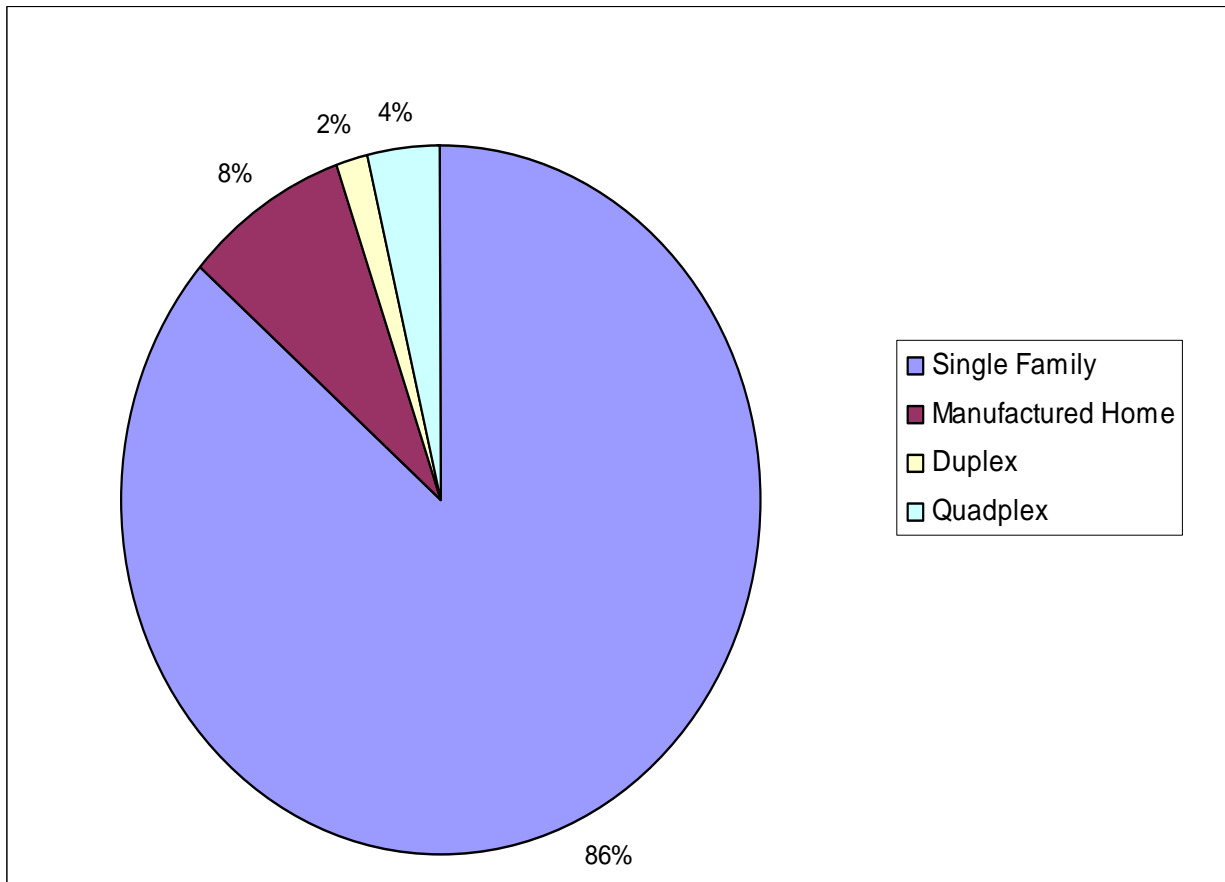
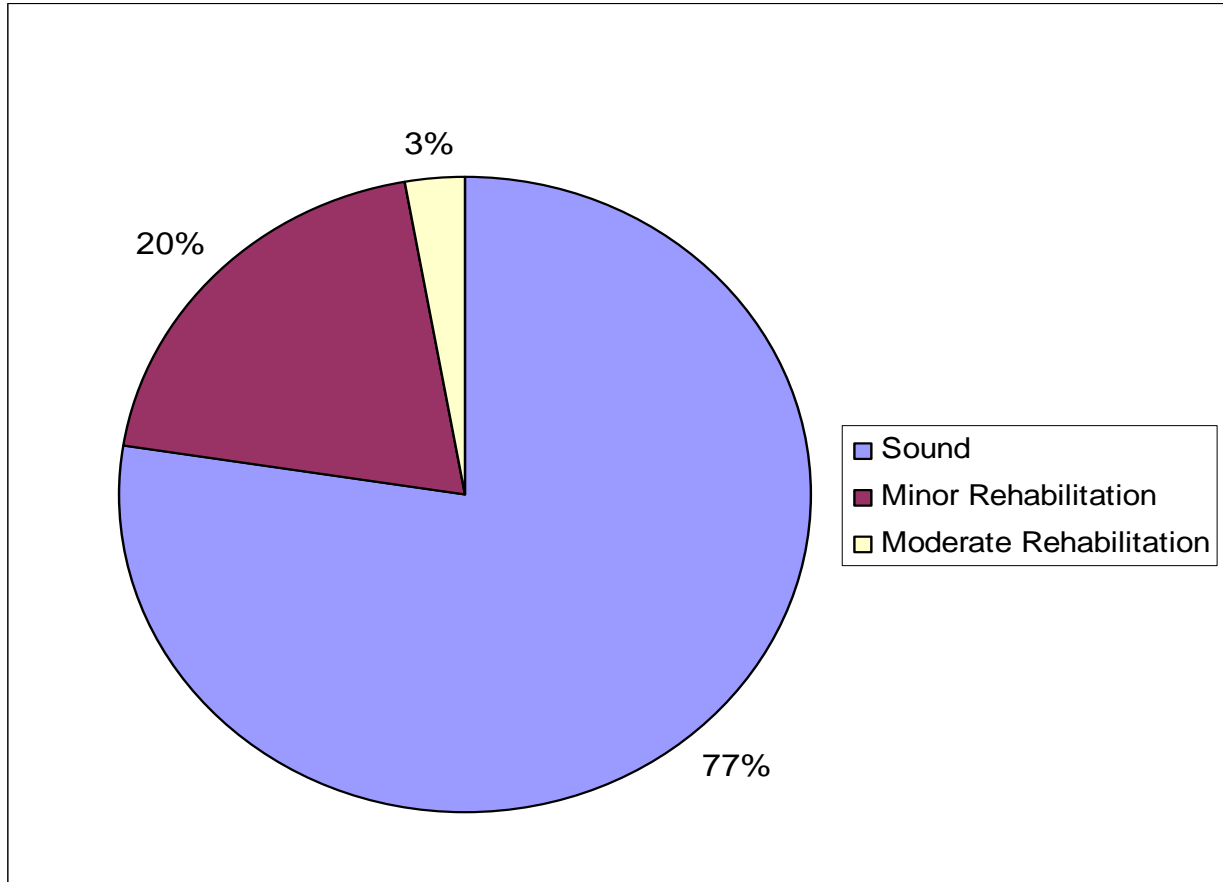


Figure 3.5: Condition of Dwelling Units in W.E. Combs by Percentage



3.3.6(b) Sylvania Heights Neighborhood Results

The Sylvania Heights neighborhood had a total of 305 housing units (Table 3.10). Eighty-seven percent of the homes were considered sound or in need of minor rehabilitation (Figure 8). Thirteen percent of the homes were determined to be in the moderate rehabilitation category or worse. A total of seven homes in the Sylvania Heights neighborhood were considered dilapidated and not safe for human habitation. Forty percent of the homes were classified as single family homes in the Sylvania Heights neighborhood (Figure 3.6). The 74 multifamily units in Sylvania Heights were all considered sound and therefore skewed the data. Team members felt these numbers would give a more accurate representation if the 74 multifamily units were excluded from the data. The next section goes into more detail about the Sylvania Heights neighborhood with the multifamily units excluded.

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Table 3.10: Number of dwelling units by type in Sylvania Heights

Housing Type	# of Dwelling Units
Single Family	122
Manufactured Home	69
Duplex	16
Triplex	24
Multi-Family	74
Total # of Dwelling Units	305

Figure 3.6: Types of Dwelling Units in Sylvania Heights by Percentage

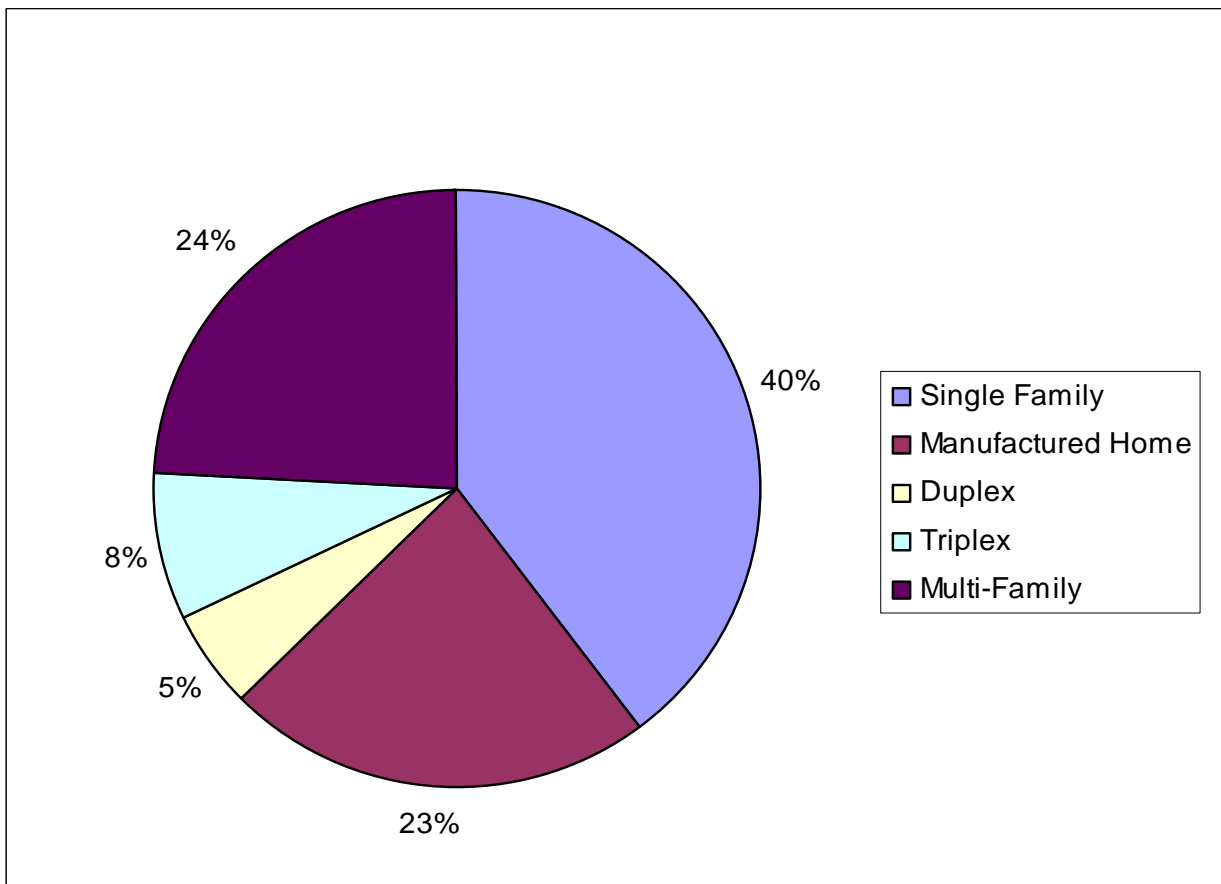
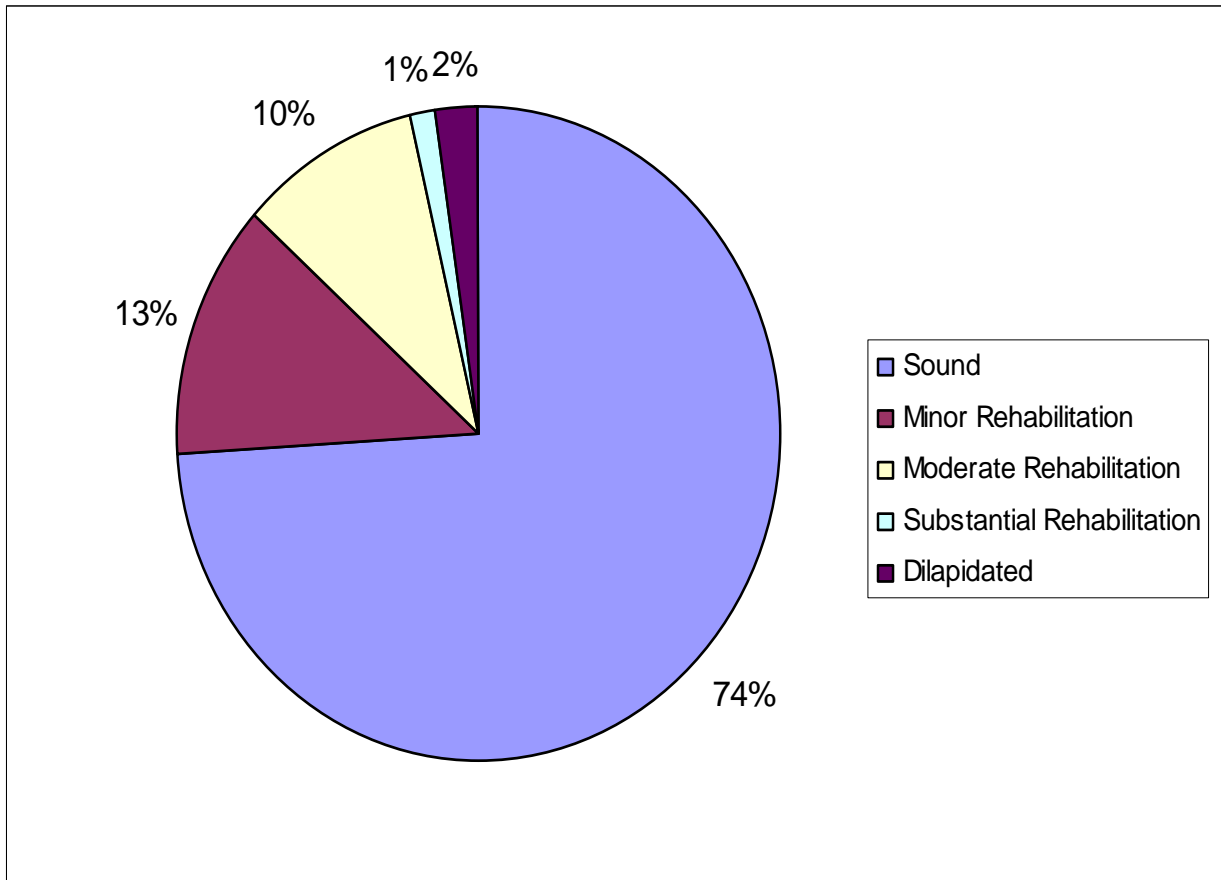


Figure 3.7: Condition of Dwelling Units in Sylvania Heights by Percentage



3.3.6(c) Sylvania Heights Neighborhood Results with Multi-Family dwelling units removed

Table 3.11 is included to show a breakdown of the Sylvania Heights neighborhood with the multifamily units removed from the results. When looking at Sylvania Heights without the multifamily units only 66percent of the homes are considered to be sound (Figure 3.9). Figure 3.8 shows that 83 percent of the dwelling units are either single family homes or manufactured homes.

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Table 3.11: Number of dwelling units by type in Sylvania Heights with multi-family units removed

Housing Type	# of Dwelling Units
Single Family	122
Manufactured Home	69
Duplex	16
Triplex	24
Total # of Dwelling Units	231

Figure 3.8: Types of Dwelling Units in Sylvania Heights with Multi-Family Units Removed by Percentage

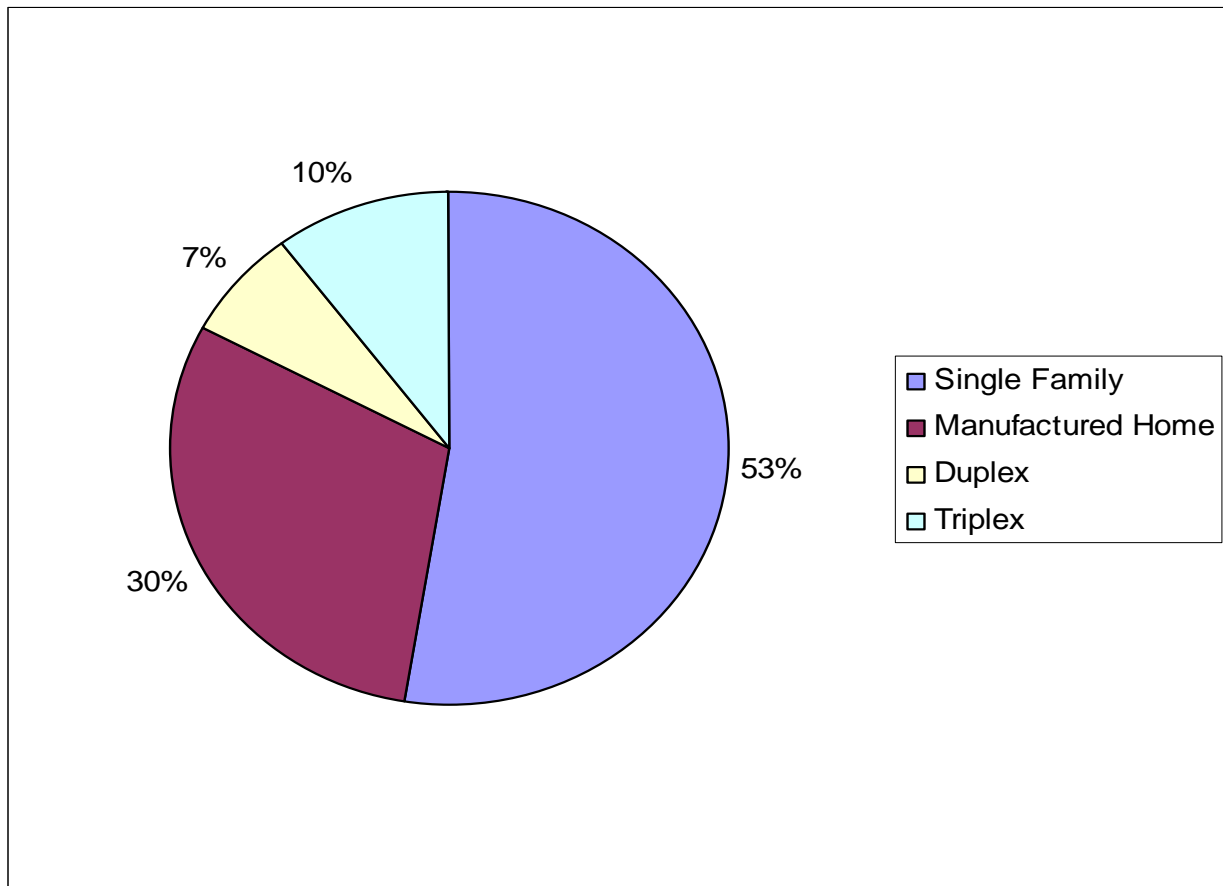
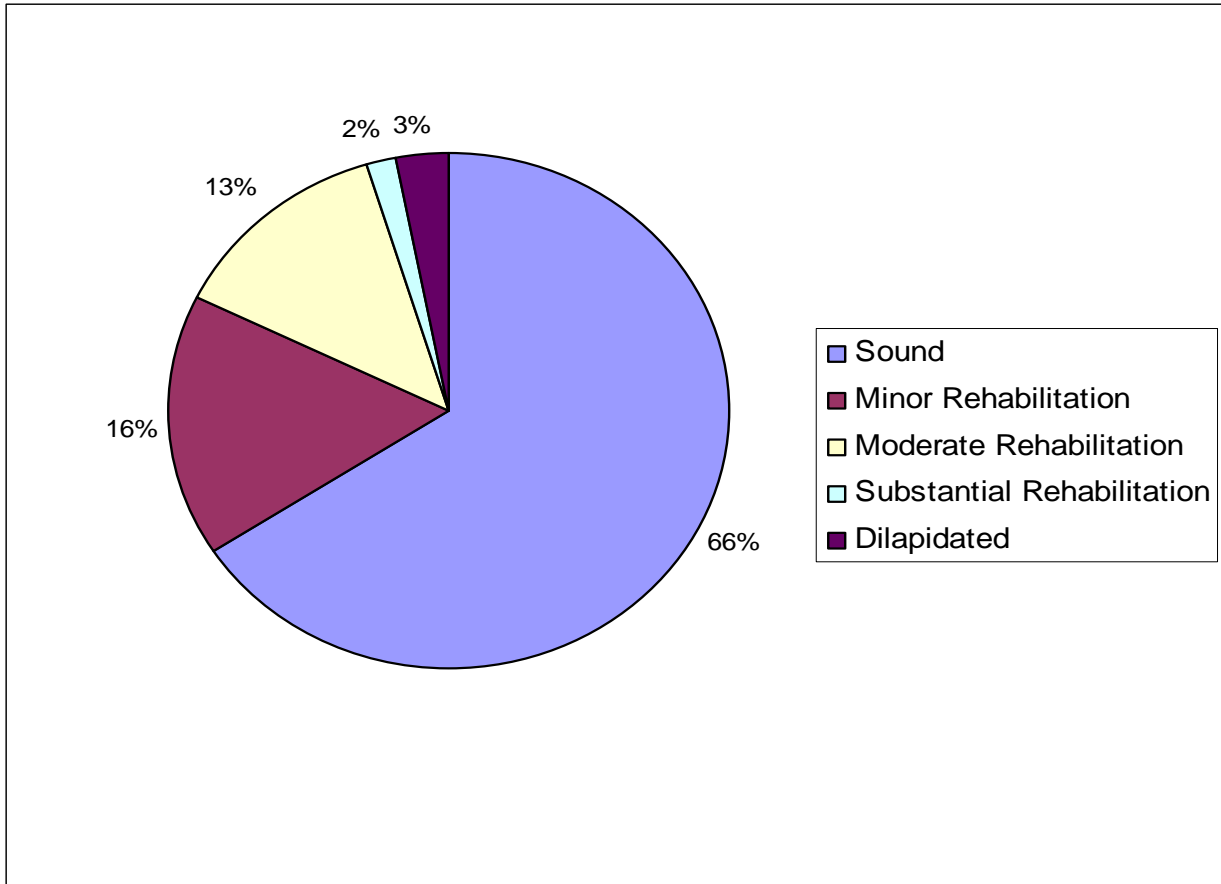


Figure 3.9: Condition of Dwelling Units in Sylvania Heights with Multi-Family Units Removed by Percentage



3.3.7 Housing Conditions Results for the Lovejoy Community

The overall results of the housing conditions survey are displayed below in Table 3.12. There were a total of 416 dwelling units surveyed. Over half of the dwelling units surveyed were considered to be single family homes (Figure 3.10). Seventy-five percent of all the homes in the neighborhood were considered to be sound (Table 3.13). Only two percent of the homes were considered to be dilapidated (Figure 3.11). The majority of the homes that are in need of repair are either single family or manufactured homes (Table 3.13).

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Table 3.12: Number of Dwelling Units by Type in the Lovejoy Community

Housing Type	# of Dwelling Units
Single Family	218
Manufactured Home	78
Duplex	18
Triplex	24
Quadplex	4
Multi-Family	74
Total # of Dwelling Units	416

Figure 3.10: Types of Dwelling Units in the Lovejoy Community by Percentage

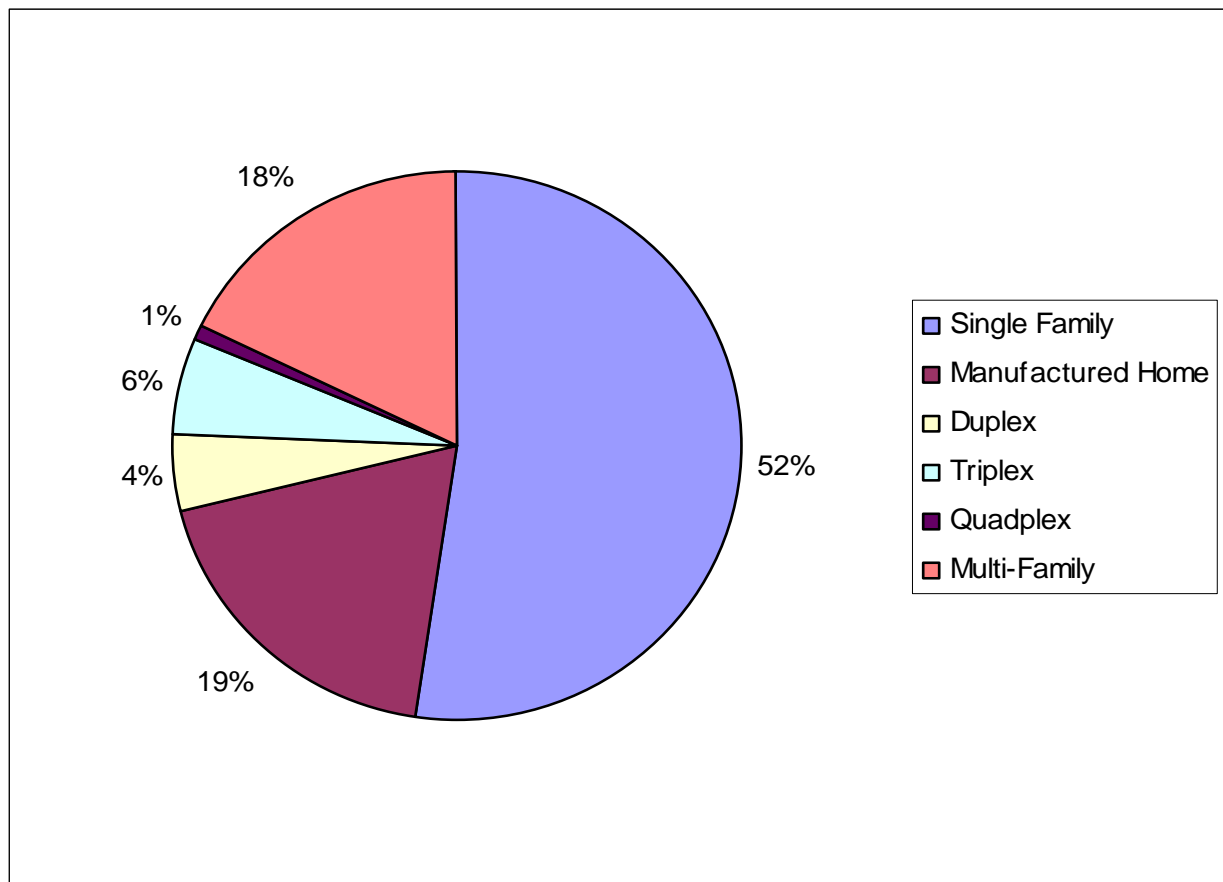
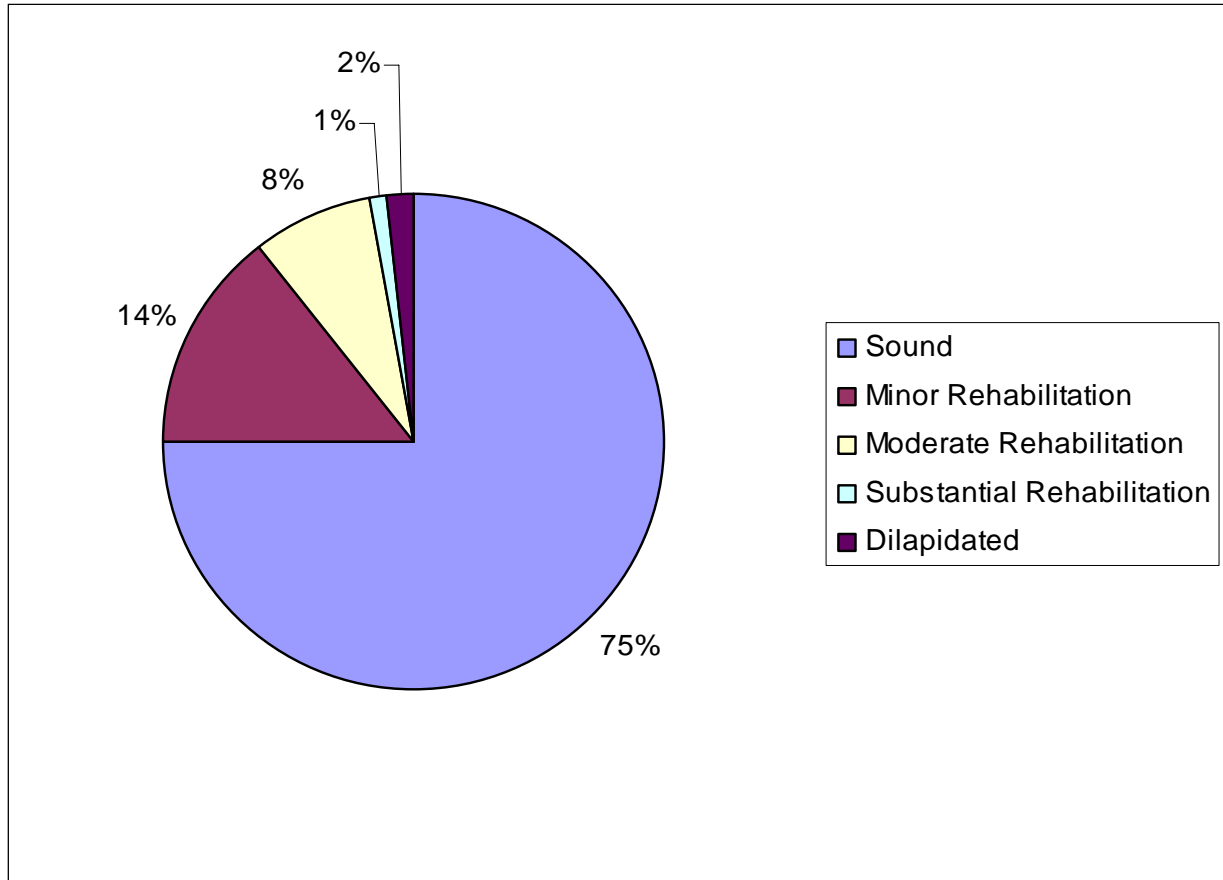


Figure 3.11: Condition of Dwelling Units in the Lovejoy Community by Percentage



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Table 3.13: Condition of Dwelling Units in the Lovejoy Community by Property Type

Housing Type	Sound	Minor Rehabilitation	Moderate Rehabilitation	Substantial Rehabilitation	Dilapidated	Total
Single Family	159 (73%)	36 (16%)	18 (8.5%)	1 (0.5%)	4 (2%)	218
Manufactured Home	48 (61%)	9 (12%)	15 (19%)	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	78
Duplex	18 (100%)	0	0	0	0	18
Triplex	21 (88%)	3 (12%)	0	0	0	24
Quadplex	4 (100%)	0	0	0	0	4
Multi-Family	74 (100%)	0	0	0	0	74
Total	323 (75%)	48 (14%)	33 (8%)	4 (1%)	7 (2%)	416

Source: Author's Calculations

3.3.8 Conclusion from Survey Results

The W.E. Combs neighborhood has a higher quality of housing stock than the homes located in Sylvania Heights. The results show that the majority of homes in the W.E. Combs neighborhood are either considered sound or in need of only minor rehabilitation. There are three homes in the W.E. Combs neighborhood that are in need of moderate rehabilitation and no homes are in need of substantial rehabilitation or are considered dilapidated. In contrast, the Sylvania Heights neighborhood has a total of 41 dwelling units that are classified as moderate rehabilitation, substantial rehabilitation or dilapidated (Map 3.4). These major differences could be attributed to the fact that the City of Fort Walton Beach has a higher level of building code enforcement.

Overall, 89 percent of the dwelling units within the Lovejoy Community are considered either sound or in need of minor rehabilitation. Forty-four dwelling units were classified as moderate rehabilitation, substantial rehabilitation or dilapidated (Map 3.4). Seven dwelling units were considered to be dilapidated. All but three of the dwelling units that required some form of serious repair were located in the Sylvania Heights neighborhood. In conclusion, the dwelling

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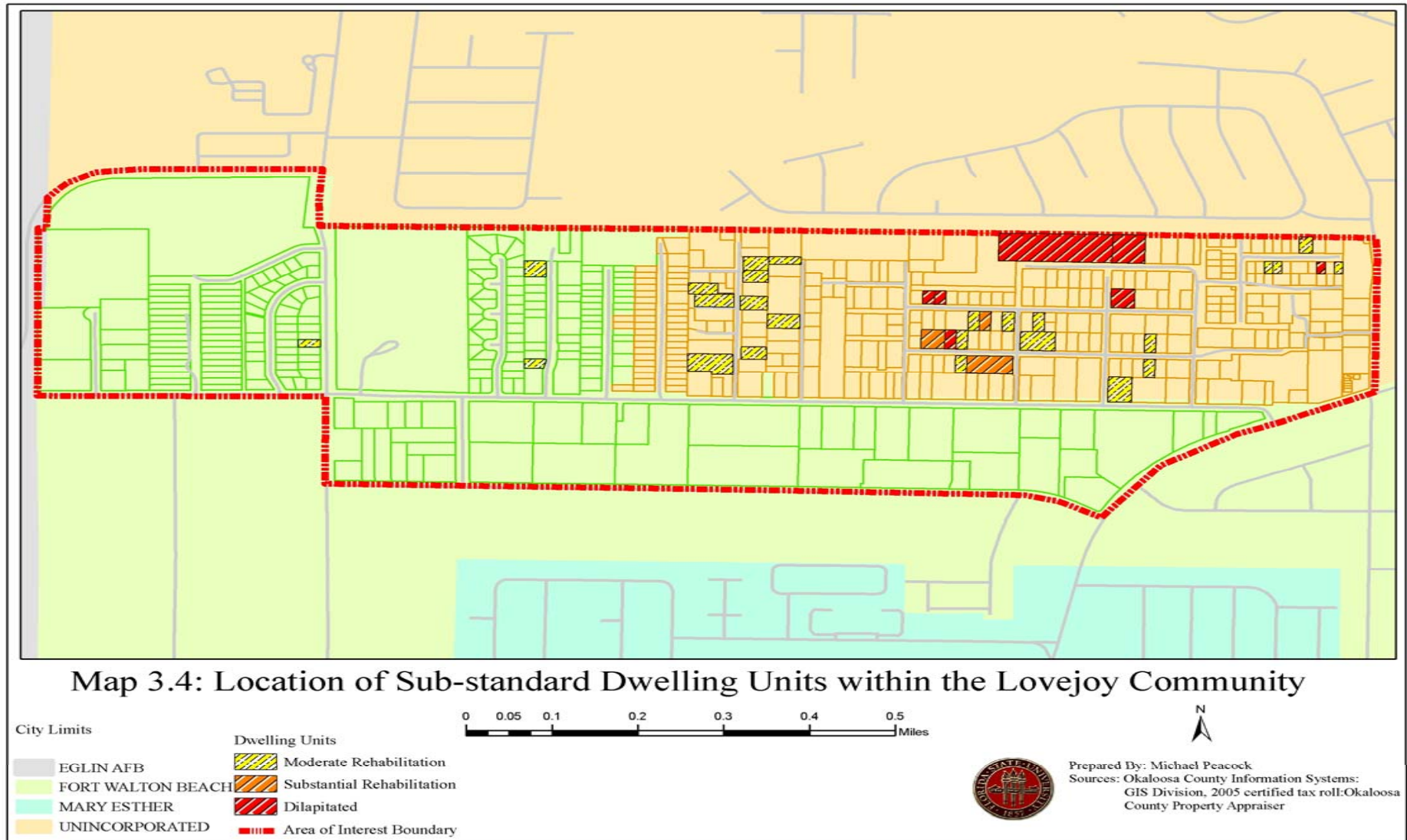
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units in the W.E. Combs neighborhood were in better condition overall than the Sylvania Heights neighborhood.

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3.4 Crime

Crime has been perceived as a significant problem in the Lovejoy community for several years, and members of the community have been seeking to address the perceived criminal problems in the neighborhood through several initiatives. As a balance to those perceptions, it is important to evaluate the existence of crime in this neighborhood as compared to the surrounding areas. The following analysis seeks to determine if this disparity exists and to determine what types of crime are problematic in the Lovejoy Community.

3.4.1 Crime Reduction Initiatives

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) operates a Community Oriented Policing Squad in four areas of the county including Sylvania Heights. Community policing began in Okaloosa County in 1998. The philosophy behind community policing is to improve relationships between the OCSO and the communities in order to empower those communities to address the causes of crime, the fear of crime, and other community issues. This requires the community to become actively involved in the planning and implementation of strategies to solve these problems (Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, n.d). The Community Policing Officer acts as a liaison between the community and the OCSO to help the community identify issues of concern and then communicate these issues to the OCSO. The OCSO then can respond to these issues as is appropriate.

Community Policing Units work with other agencies such as the Department of Juvenile Justice and state and county probation offices to assist those agencies' work within these areas, such as doing curfew checks. The Units also teach children about bicycle safety and coordinates a clean-up day each month in one of the four community policing areas (OCSO, n.d).

As a response to specific crimes in Okaloosa County, Sheriff Charles W. Morris created the Problem Oriented Policing Squad. This Squad targets specific crimes that are of "high impact" to the community including prostitution, street level narcotics, burglary, and criminal mischief. As the Community Policing Officers identify these high impact crimes in the

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communities, the Problem Oriented Policing Squad focuses on reducing these crimes in the targeted areas (OCSO, 2005).

The OCSO also has an Environmental Enforcement Unit made up of four officers. This unit operates mostly response to complaints for illegal dumping, abandoned vehicles, run-down buildings and other violations (“*Environmental Unit*,” 2006). The unit is primarily concerned with compliance with county ordinances and educating property owners about the codes but it does make arrests in approximately 10 percent of cases.

Greater Sylvania Heights Front Porch Inc., (GSHFP) has also initiated efforts to mitigate the opportunities for and effects of crime conditions in the community. They have established a neighborhood watch, sponsored programs such as National Night Out Against Drugs and Crime, and redeveloped specific buildings where crime, especially drug related crime, was prevalent (Florida Department of Community Affairs, 2006).

The City of Fort Walton Beach Police Department (FWBPD) also operates a Community Service Unit. The programs that the Community Service Unit operates include a drug awareness initiative and neighborhood watches (City of Fort Walton Beach Police Department, n.d.a.). The city has also begun an initiative called I.M.P.A.C.T. (Intensive Mobilization of Police and Citizen Teamwork) which assigns an officer to each area of the city to work closely with the residents to identify problems, devise solutions to these problems, and monitor the results. This model is currently employed in two areas of the city and will eventually be used city-wide (City of Fort Walton Police Department, n.d.b).

3.4.2 Sylvania Heights

Two data sets were gathered from the OCSO; 1) for offenses that occurred in Sylvania Heights and 2) offenses for the whole area served by the OCSO. These data sets consist of crime offenses for the years 2003 to 2007 and are disaggregated to the code level. For the full data sets, please see Appendix E. Because of the expected small number of incidences of crime in Sylvania Heights, five years of data was reported in order to gain a full understanding of crime in

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the area. Rather than aggregating the data over these five years, the data was averaged. The codes were then aggregated into various categories, see Table 3.14. These specific categories were created to include the Part I crimes, which are commonly reported crime categories defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and categories of crime of special concern to the community. Community leaders expressed concerns about several categories of crime in the neighborhood; the remaining categories capture these crimes (Barry Gray, personal communication, January 16, 2008).

Overall, crime offenses in Sylvania Heights are 1.47 percent of all crimes reported by the OSCO. This number is relatively small, however Sylvania Heights only holds 0.41 percent of the population of the county, and thus there is a higher per capita incidence of crime in this neighborhood than in other areas of the county. The breakdown of each crime category, the per capita crime rate and the percent of crimes that occurred in Sylvania Heights as compared to the county are included in Table 3.15.

Despite the low incidence, it is notable that approximately 47 percent of all prostitution crimes in the county and 11 percent of criminal homicides occurred in Sylvania heights. Per capita incidences of narcotics offenses, robbery and weapons charges are also higher in Sylvania Heights than in Okaloosa County as a whole. It is also notable that there are no reported environmental offenses in the neighborhood over this time period. This category includes illegal dumping, abandoned vehicles and littering, offenses of keen interest to residents and community leaders. The low incidence of these crimes could possibly result from under-reporting of these crimes as residence have become fatigued by them or could be a result of the approach taken by the OCSO Environmental Unit which seeks compliance through education rather than through fines and arrests.

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Table 3.14: Aggregation of Crime Codes into Categories for Sylvania Heights and Okaloosa County

Category Description	Crime Code	Code Descriptions
Part 1 Crimes		
Criminal Homicide	24-0	Death Investigation: Homicide
Rape	60-0, 60-1	Sexual Battery, Sexual Battery: Child
Robbery	52-0, 52-1, 52-2, 52-3, 53-0, 54-0, 55-0	Robbery: Business, Robbery: Convenience Store, Robbery: Bank/Credit Union, Robbery: Gas Station, Robbery: Individual, Robbery: Home Invasion, Robbery: Car Jacking
Assault/Battery (including aggravated)	7-0, 7-1, 8-0, 8-1, 9-0	Assault, Assault: Aggravated, Battery, Battery: Aggravated
Burglary	12-0, 13-0, 14-0, 15-0, 16-0, 17-0	Burglary: Business, Burglary: Church, Burglary: Residence, Burglary: School, Burglary: Vehicle, Burglary: Other
Theft	69-0, 69-1, 70-0, 70-1, 71-0, 71-1, 72-0, 72-1, 73-0, 74-0	Theft: Grand, Theft: Grand (bicycle), Theft, Theft: Bicycle, Theft: Retail (grand, employee related), Theft: Retail (grand, shoplifting), Theft: Retail (employee related), Theft: Retail (shoplifting), Theft: Retail (from vending machine), Theft: Retail (gas drive-off)
Vehicle Theft	85-0, 86-0, 87-0, 88-0, 89-0, 89-1	Vehicle: Theft, Vehicle: Theft (rental), Vehicle: Theft (trucks or buses), Vehicle: Theft (motorcycle), Vehicle Tags/Decals: Recovered, Vehicle Tags/Decals: Stolen/Lost
Arson	6-0	Arson
Crimes of Community Concern		
Prostitution	64-0, 66-3	Sex Offense: Prostitution, Suspicious Activity: Prostitution Complaint
Criminal Mischief	23-0, 23-1, 23-2	Criminal Mischief: Felony, Criminal Mischief: Misdemeanor, Criminal Mischief: Graffiti
Environmental Offenses	32-0, 32-1, 32-2, 32-4	Environmental Offenses, Environmental Offenses: Abandoned Vehicle, Environmental Offenses: Illegal Dumping, Environmental Offenses: Littering
Narcotics	49-1, 49-2	Narcotics: Felony, Narcotics: Misdemeanor
Weapons Crimes	92-0, 93-0, 94-0	Weapon/Firearm: Concealed, Weapon/Firearm: Discharge in Public Place, Weapon Offense: Other

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Table 3.15: Population and Crime Offenses in Sylvania Heights and Okaloosa County, Average of Years 2003-2007

Population	Sylvania Heights		Okaloosa County Total		Percent of County Population
	722*		177,962*		0.41%*
	# of Crimes	Crimes Per Capita	# of Crimes	Crimes Per Capita	% Crime Occurrence in Sylvania Heights
Part I Crimes					
Criminal Homicide	0.40	0.0006	3.60	0.00002	11.11%
Rape	0.60	0.0008	96.00	0.0005	0.63%
Robbery	4.60	0.0064	77.40	0.0004	5.94%
Assault/Battery	31.60	0.0438	1,733.00	0.0097	1.82%
Burglary	9.20	0.0127	1,486.80	0.0084	0.62%
Theft	8.60	0.0119	1,977.40	0.0111	0.43%
Vehicle Theft	5.60	0.0078	425.20	0.0024	1.32%
Arson	0.00	0.0000	7.20	0.00004	0.00%
Crimes of Community Concern					
Prostitution	1.80	0.0025	3.80	0.00001	47.37%
Criminal Mischief	8.20	0.0114	806.80	0.0045	1.02%
Environmental Offenses	0.00	0.0000	12.80	0.0001	0.00%
Narcotics	67.40	0.0934	850.20	0.0048	7.93%
Weapons Charges	2.20	0.0030	60.20	0.0003	3.65%
Other Crimes	73.00	0.1011	6,967.80	0.0392	1.05%
Total	213.20	0.2953	14,508.20	0.0807	1.47%
*Year 2000 U.S. Census population data was used to project population data for years 2003-2007. These projections were then averaged.					
Source: Author's Calculations					

To analyze the trend of crime in Sylvania Heights and Okaloosa County the categorized data for each year is plotted. Figures 3.12 through 3.15 show prostitution, weapons charges, robbery, narcotics, and assault and battery crimes in Sylvania Heights and Okaloosa County from 2003 to 2007. With the exception of prostitution, instances of crime in each of these categories in Sylvania Heights are lower in 2007 than in 2003. Conversely, all of the crime

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categories in Okaloosa County have increased in the past five years. Beginning in 2005, prostitution crimes increased significantly in both the county and the neighborhood. Between 2003 and 2005 there were no reports of prostitution in either area, therefore, it is assumed that either enforcement increased at this point or prostitution only recently moved into the area. In Sylvania Heights, narcotics crimes have decreased significantly since 2005. This may be a result of community policing and other initiatives.

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Figure 3.12: Prostitution, Weapons Charges and Robbery Crimes in Sylvania Heights, 2003-2007

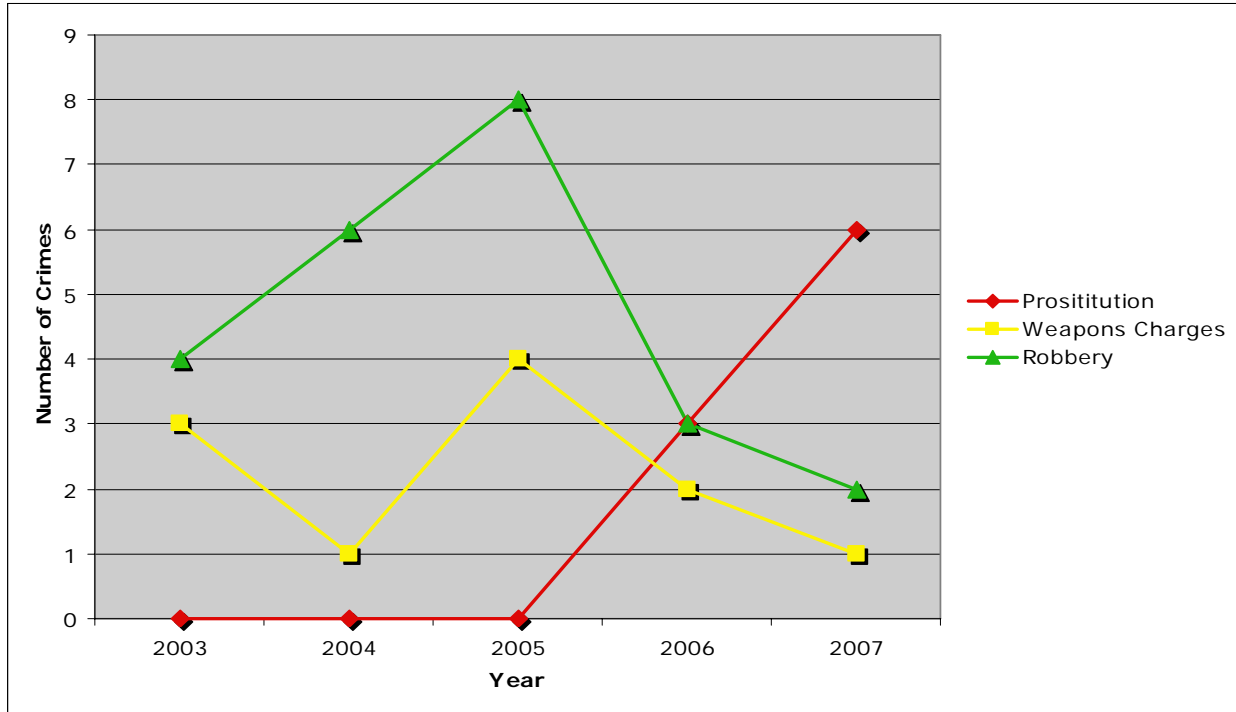
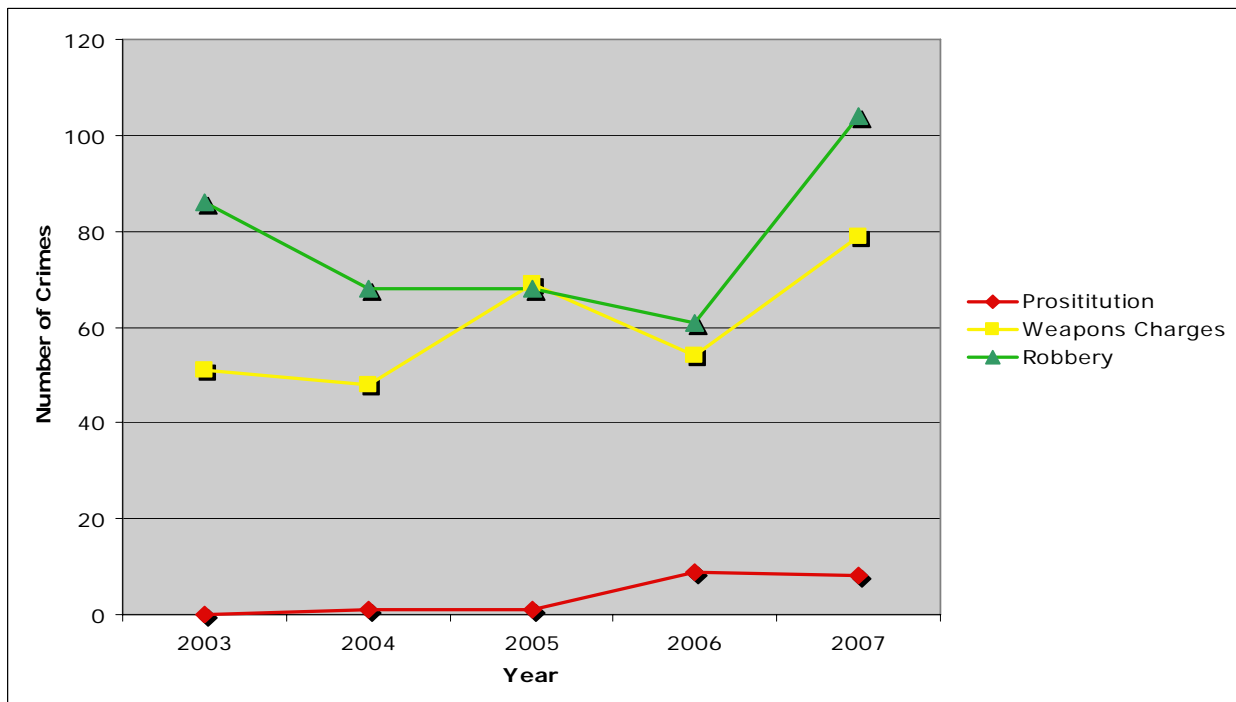


Figure 3.13: Prostitution, Weapons Charges and Robbery Crimes in Okaloosa County, 2003-2007



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Figure 3.14: Narcotics and Assault and Battery Crimes in Sylvania Heights, 2003-2007

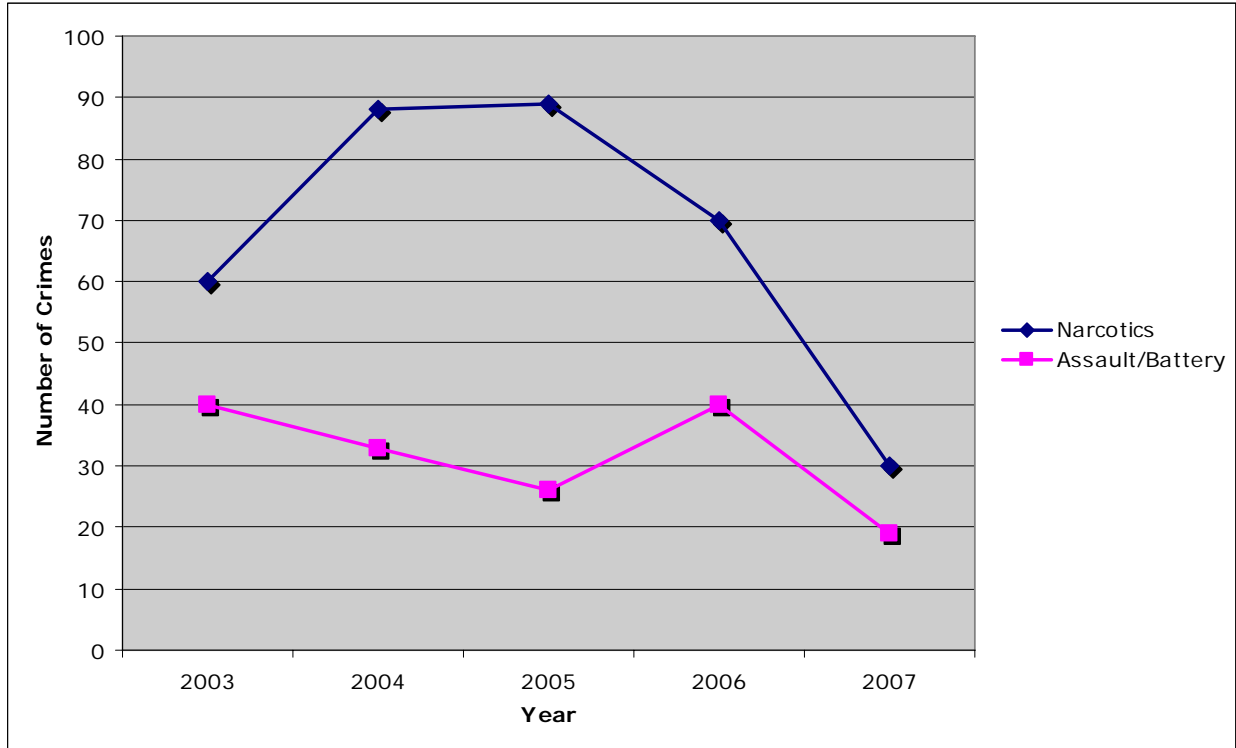
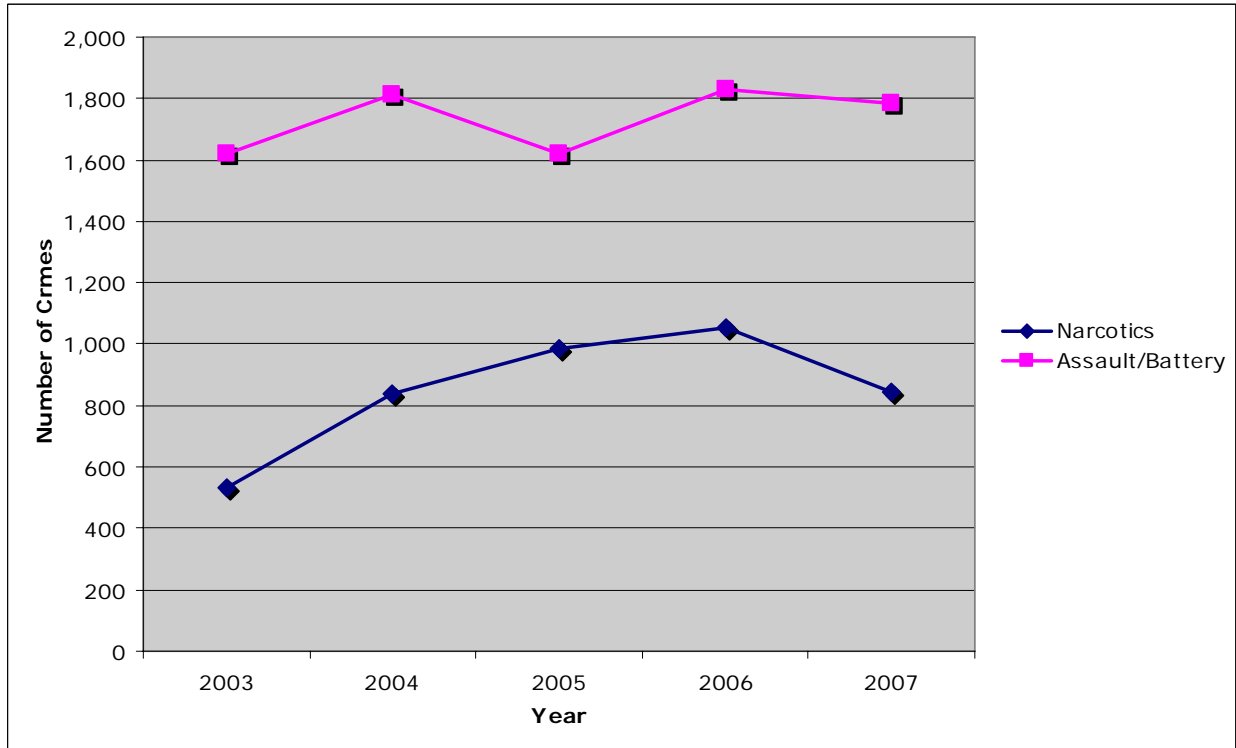


Figure 3.15: Narcotics and Assault and Battery Crimes in Okaloosa County, 2003-2007



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3.4.3 W.E. Combs

Data was obtained from the FWBPD for all offenses and calls for service for the years 2003-2007, see Appendix E for the full data. This data was also reported at the code level and sorted into offenses and calls to serve the W.E. Combs neighborhood and to serve the whole city. Again these codes were categorized into Part 1 Crimes and other crimes of community concern. The FWBPD does not use exactly the same codes as the OCSO so different but similar categories were created. See Table 3.16 for the code categorization.

Table 3.16: Aggregation of Crime Codes into Categories for W.E. Combs and Fort Walton Beach

Category Description	Crime Code Description
Part 1 Crimes	
Criminal Homicide	Homicide
Rape	Sexual Battery
Robbery	Robbery
Assault/Battery	Aggravated Assault, Aggravated Battery, Aggravated Battery on LEO, Battery, Battery on LEO, Assault on LEO
Burglary	Burglary, Burglary to a Vehicle
Theft	Theft, Grand Theft, Gas Drive Off
Vehicle Theft	Stolen Vehicle
Arson	Arson/Fire
Other Crimes of Community Concern	
Prostitution	Prostitution
Criminal Mischief	Criminal Mischief
Environmental Offenses	Abandoned Vehicle, Littering
Narcotics	Narcotics Complaint, Narcotics Equipment
Weapons Charges	Concealed Weapon, Weapon Violation

The same calculations were performed on this data as was performed on the Sylvania Heights data, including calculating total crimes for each category for the five-year period and then finding the average crimes per year. The W.E. Combs neighborhood represents 1.71 percent of the population of Fort Walton Beach but accounts for 4.50 percent of the total crime in the city. There is a significantly higher per capita instance of crime in W.E. Combs than in the city as a whole. There is also a significantly higher instance of crime in the W.E. Combs neighborhood than in Sylvania Heights. Table 3.17 details the average number of crimes and per capita crimes for each category in the neighborhood and the city.

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Table 3.17: Population and Crime Offenses in W.E. Combs and Fort Walton Beach, Average of Years 2003-2007

Population	W.E. Combs		Fort Walton Beach		% of County Population
		342*		19,997*	1.71%
	# of Crimes	Crimes Per Capita	# of Crimes	Crimes Per Capita	% of Crime Occurrence in W.E. Combs
Part 1 Crimes					
Criminal Homicide	0.00	0.0000	0.40	0.00002	0.00%
Rape	1.20	0.0035	25.40	0.0013	4.72%
Robbery	2.20	0.0064	27.00	0.0014	8.15%
Assault/Battery	7.00	0.0205	193.80	0.0097	3.61%
Burglary	12.20	0.0357	323.60	0.0162	3.77%
Theft	117.40	0.3433	1,381.20	0.0691	8.50%
Vehicle Theft	5.60	0.0164	101.80	0.0051	5.50%
Arson	5.00	0.0146	71.40	0.0036	7.00%
Crimes of Community Concern					
Prostitution	4.60	0.0135	9.80	0.0005	46.94%
Criminal Mischief	12.40	0.0363	339.40	0.0170	3.65%
Environmental Offenses	9.80	0.0287	176.00	0.0088	5.57%
Narcotics Charges	37.40	0.1094	424.00	0.0212	8.82%
Weapons Charges	0.40	0.0012	6.80	0.0003	5.88%
Other Crimes/Calls	1,265.00	3.6988	29,807.6	1.4910	4.24%
Total	1480.20	4.3281	32,882.20	1.6447	4.50%
*Year 2000 U.S. Census population data was used to project population data for years 2003-2007. These projections were then averaged.					
<i>Source: Author's Calculations</i>					

For each crime category except criminal homicide, the number of crimes in W.E. Combs, as a percentage of total crimes in the city, is higher than warranted by the percentage of the city's population living in W.E. Combs. This is most notable in terms of prostitution. Nearly half of all prostitution crimes occurring in Fort Walton Beach happen in the W.E. Combs area.

Narcotics crimes, robbery and theft are also very high. Because the FWBPD does not

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disaggregate theft and robbery to the level of detail that the OCSO does, it is difficult to determine if these robberies and thefts are occurring in the residential area of W.E. Combs or in the industrial area. There appears to be a high instance of arson in the W.E. Combs neighborhood. However, as noted in Table 3.16, the FWBPD does not code arson separately from fires. Therefore, this data may not actually reflect criminal fires, although there still remains the fact that there is more arson/fire in W.E. Combs than expected given the proportion of population. Per capita crime in W.E. Combs is 4.278 whereas for the whole city it is 1.6451. Residents of W.E. Combs are slightly more than two and a half times more likely to experience crime than all residents of Fort Walton Beach.

3.4.4 Conclusions

This analysis has sought to determine if the incidence of crime as a proportion of population in the Lovejoy Community is higher than in the rest of the City of Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa County. The per capita crime rate in Sylvania Heights is 0.2953, as compared to all of Okaloosa County in which the per capita crime rate is 0.0807. Therefore, there is a higher per capita instance of crime in Sylvania Heights than in Okaloosa County. This is also true for the W.E. Combs neighborhood as compared to the City of Fort Walton Beach. The per capita crime rate is 4.3281 in W.E. Combs and 1.6447 in Fort Walton Beach as a whole. This data also demonstrates that there is a much higher per capita instance of crime in the W.E. Combs area than in Sylvania Heights, although this may be a result of a large industrial area included in the W.E. Combs neighborhood, may be a result of better enforcement in the city over the county, or, given the small number of incidences, may be the result of chance.

This analysis also sought to determine which types of crime are most prevalent in the Lovejoy communities. Both neighborhoods represent nearly 50 percent of the prostitution crimes in their respective jurisdictions. A high proportion of narcotics offenses also take place in this community. Community leaders recognize these two crime categories as significant problems affecting the Lovejoy Community. In response, the police departments and the community have implemented several initiatives to combat drug related offenses and prostitution. Despite improvements, these two issues remain a problem for this community.

3.5 Environmental Condition

The residents of the Lovejoy Community have the perception that their neighborhoods suffer from significant adverse environmental conditions that are causing damage to their physical environment as well as their health. Much of this perception stems from the location of the community. The southern portion of the W.E. Combs neighborhood is a large industrial area. This area includes Ready Avenue, Hill Avenue, Anchors Street, and Lovejoy Road. There is no buffer between the industrial area and the residential portions of W.E. Combs and Sylvania Heights. Further to the west, outside of the boundaries of the Lovejoy Community, is Hurlburt Field, a military airstrip with a number of industrial uses. The perception of adverse environmental conditions in the area has led the community to seek a potential environmental justice action due to the perceived high instance of health issues in the community.

3.5.1 Hazardous and Toxic Materials

There are several hazardous waste generators located within this area permitted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Of the 27 facilities, two are large quantity generators (greater than 1,000 kg/month), two are small quantity generators (between 100 and 1,000 kg/month), seven are conditionally exempt small quantity generators (producing less than 100 kg per month), seven are non-handlers of hazardous waste (meaning that these facilities stopped generating hazardous waste) and seven are closed (Florida Department of Environmental Protection, n.d).

Hazardous waste is regulated by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), Subtitle C. To be considered a hazardous waste a substance may be listed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on one of four lists (the F-list, waste from non-specific sources; the K-list, waste from specific sources; and the P-list and U-lists, wastes that are hazardous when discarded in their unused form) or exhibits one of the following properties: ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity (US Environmental Protection Agency, Hazardous Waste, n.d.a).

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Although, these facilities are operating under RCRA permits, the proximity of the 16 generating facilities to the residential portions of the neighborhoods is a concern to the residents of the community because of the perceived public health consequences. Also, the industrial area has a stormwater pattern that funnels runoff under Lovejoy Road into a detention pond in the Sylvania Heights neighborhood between Hickory Street and Poplar Avenue. This detention pond may have hazardous conditions because of the potential for hazardous chemicals to have traveled from the industrial area through the stormwater system. Also, there is unsubstantiated evidence that this site was used as an unregulated, extra-legal dumping area by community residents and others prior to the conversion into a stormwater detention pond.

The Toxic Release Inventory (TRI), maintained by the EPA, is a self-reporting tool for entities to report any kind of toxic release. The TRI for the year 2005 indicates that there are 3 facilities in the Lovejoy Community with toxic releases (US Environmental Protection Agency, TRI Explorer, 2005). However, only one facility *actually* released toxic chemicals in this year, the other facilities are included because they have released chemicals in the past. The installation at Hurlburt Field is also included in the TRI database but did not have any releases for 2005. Reports by the TRI do not give any indication of human exposure to the releases; they simply state the chemical released, the amount and the method of release (air, land, water etc.).

The chemicals released in 2005 are methyl methacrylate (5,120 pounds as “on-site” fugitive air releases” and 250 pounds as “on-site point source air releases”) and styrene (14,860 pounds as “on-site” fugitive air releases” and 250 pounds as “on-site point source air releases”). Methyl methacrylate is used in the production of acrylic plastics, such as Plexiglas. The chemical has a relatively short life span when emitted into the environment but acute short-term exposure can cause dizziness, headache and irritation of the eyes, nose and throat. Styrene is used in the production of rubber and although it is synthesized, it is a naturally occurring substance. Styrene is only weakly toxic but has been determined to be a possible human carcinogen.

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There are no properties that are undergoing remedial action under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (also known as, Superfund) (US Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.b) or are listed in the National Priorities List for action (US Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.c). However, there is a site that was investigated to determine if it ought to be remedied under Superfund. This site is at the intersection of Ready Avenue and Lovejoy Avenue and is owned by the City of Fort Walton Beach. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection completed a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment on this site but it was determined that the contamination levels did not warrant further action. Outside of the Lovejoy Community, Hurlburt Field has also been studied to determine the extent, if any, of groundwater contamination caused by the activities at the installation. According to a letter from Cynthia B. Peurifoy, Regional Environmental Justice Manager with the EPA Region IV (B. Gray, personal communication, June 12, 2007), corrective measures have been taken in these areas and that there is no evidence that any groundwater contamination has migrated beyond the borders of Hurlburt Field.

Further to the south along Ready Avenue is a parcel owned by Okaloosa County where there have been three reported discharges of petroleum products between 1986 and 1991. The petroleum discharges have contaminated a detention pond and eventually contaminated the groundwater in the area. Earth Tech Environmental Systems is currently cleaning up the site (S. Wilson, personal communication, February 18, 2008).

3.5.2 *Brownfield Redevelopment*

The City of Fort Walton Beach has studied the environmental conditions of many of these sites and is currently considering pursuing a brownfield designation of some of the area. The Florida Legislature passed the Brownfields Redevelopment Act (§§ 376.77-376.85, F.S.) with the intent of reducing environmental and public health hazards on existing industrial and commercial sites so that the land could be reused and prevent the premature development of greenfield areas. For a site to be eligible for designation, it must be abandoned, idle or underused commercial property that may be contaminated or is perceived to be contaminated (Florida Brownfields Association, n.d.). By designating an area as a Brownfield Redevelopment

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Area, there may be federal money made available to assist in the cleanup effort and the owner of the site is removed from further liability for any adverse conditions of the site provided cleanup is done appropriately. The City of Fort Walton Beach is considering designating three parcels owned by the city as a brownfield area either independently or as part of a regional brownfield area that is being considered by the West Florida Regional Planning Council (S. Wilson, personal communication, February 18, 2008).

3.5.3 *Water Contamination*

As described in section 3.2, the Sylvania Heights neighborhood does not appear to have adequate stormwater facilities. Water flows north through this neighborhood, following the topography of the area, toward the Gap Creek Basin. Because of the lack of infrastructure such as curbs and ditches, stormwater tends to pool in various areas leaving standing water on streets and on property. The lack of attention paid to this situation has caused erosion throughout the neighborhood and therefore caused increased sedimentation in Gap Creek and around structures in the area. Due to the topography of the area, runoff from heavily traveled Lovejoy Road, which may contain toxic chemicals from the adjacent industrial area and petroleum products from the cars, ends up as standing water, potentially causing health hazards in the neighborhood. Also, standing water has the potential for spreading disease in the area, especially for mosquito borne diseases.

3.5.4 *Illegal Dumping*

Lovejoy Community leaders have identified illegal dumping as a problem not only as a criminal activity but also as an environmental problem (B. Gray, personal communication, January 16, 2008). Many of the streets in Sylvania Heights do not connect to one another, resulting in dead ends. These areas are often littered with garbage, construction materials, used furniture and large appliances. These areas are not only unsightly but pose potential health risks to residents living nearby and environmental risks to the hydrologic system of the area due to the proximity to the Gap Creek Basin.

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Existing Conditions

Environmental Conditions

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office has an Environmental Unit comprised of four officers whose job is to promote compliance on issues such as abandoned vehicles, littering and illegal dumping. These officers focus on educating citizens about proper disposal of waste and seek compliance through this education. In approximately 10 percent of cases, arrests are made and fines issued. Curbside pickup is essentially mandatory in Sylvania Heights and W.E. Combs. Anyone on public water automatically pays for garbage pickup and recycling. Appliances (also known as "white goods") are picked up at the curb free of charge. Hazardous materials must be brought to the transfer station located on Ready Avenue (this is the previously discussed county-owned contaminated site) and are accepted on every Thursday and every third Saturday. Yard waste is accepted at a different transfer station near Wright.

It is not clear if the dumping problem in Sylvania Heights is due to the behavior of residents living in the neighborhood or a result of people from outside bringing garbage into the community. Regardless, there has been a significant community response to the problem resulting in coordinated cleanup efforts.

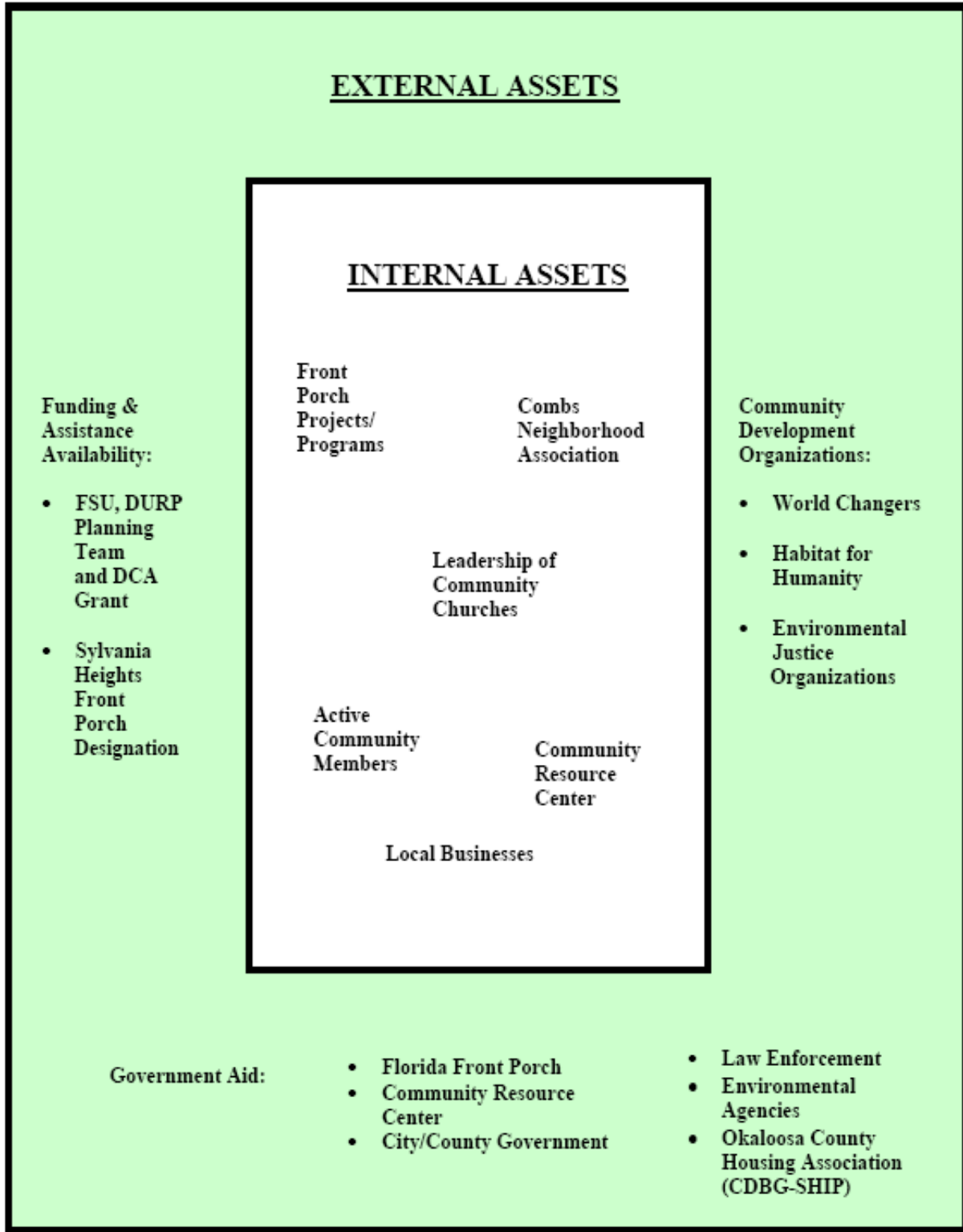
3.5.6 Conclusion

While many of the potentially adverse environmental conditions in the Lovejoy Community are easily observed (especially the standing water and illegal dumping), there are no data or analyses extant that connect these observed conditions to documented environmental impacts or connect those impacts to public health outcomes.. Members of the community assert that there is higher incidence of health problems in the Lovejoy Community than in the surrounding areas and have pursued legal help to potentially bring environmental justice claims.

3.6 Community Assets

During the visioning workshop of the community involvement phase (Section 4.0 Planning Process), an asset map was presented based on the planning team's assessment of possible assets internal and external to the community from results of the neighborhood analysis meeting and the discussion during that meeting. The asset map was created based on assets meeting participants recognized and groups or organizations which have previously been active in the community. The internal assets included GSHFP, Combs Neighborhood Association, community churches, community resource center, active community members and local businesses. The external assets included funding organizations, such as FSU and the Florida Department of Community Affairs, community development organizations, such as World Changers, Habitat for Humanity and Wild Law and local government assistance programs in law enforcement, environmental assessments and the Okaloosa County Housing Association. An illustration of the asset map is provided below in Figure 3.16.

Figure 3.16: Lovejoy Community Asset Map



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SECTION 4.0 PLANNING PROCESS

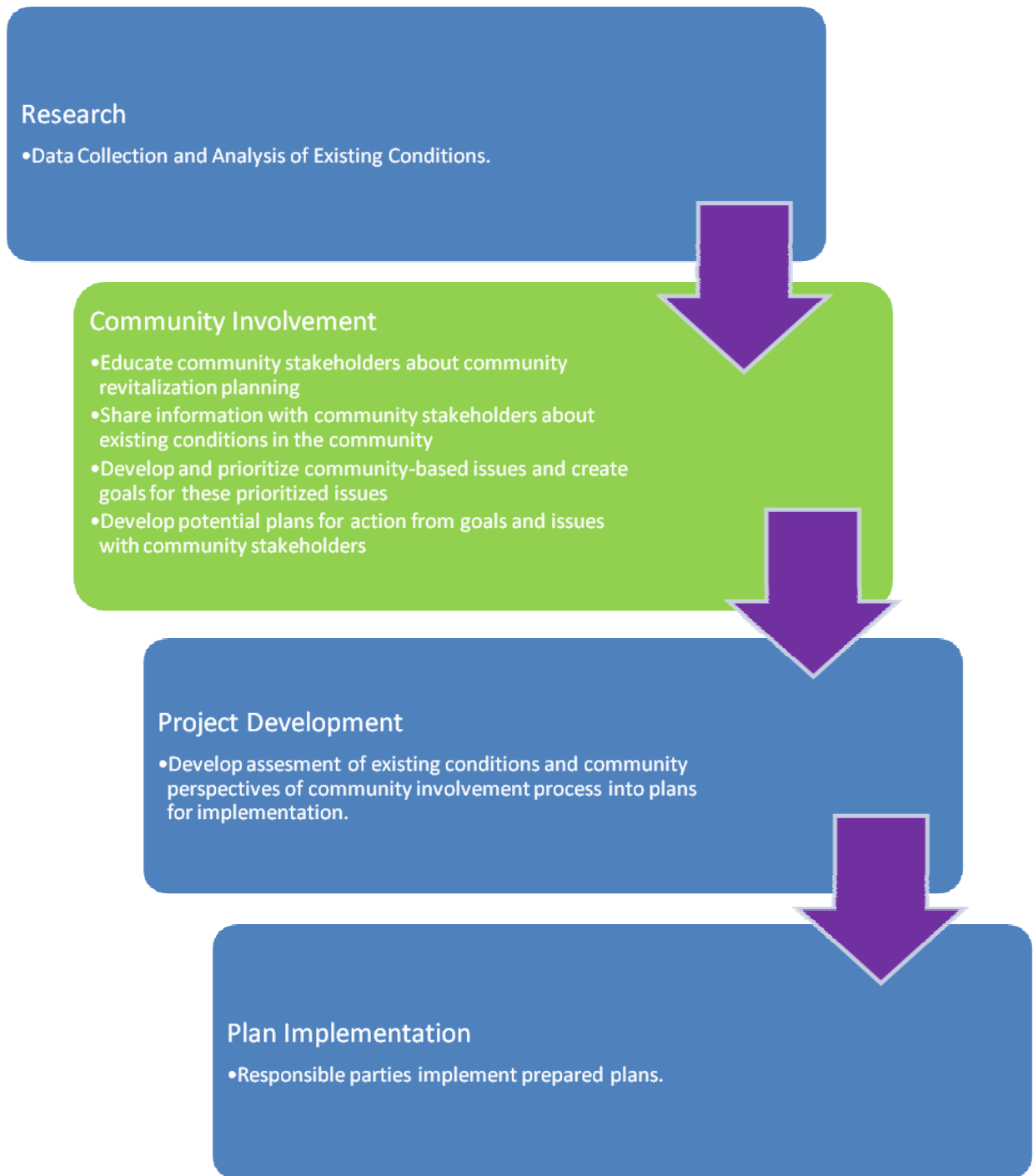
Extensive attempts were made to residents and the leaders of their institutions in a community-based planning process that also sought to engage appointed and elected officials from local government. Figure 4.1, below, outlines the revitalization planning process. The first phase (documented in Section 3.0 Existing Conditions above), is research and analysis of the community's existing conditions. The third and fourth phases, project development and implementation respectively, happen after the stakeholder inputs can be identified and investigated. In the second phase of the planning process, the community involvement phase, meetings have been facilitated to extract issues and develop community-derived goals, objectives and alternative plans. Information-sharing and stakeholder involvement are important parts of the revitalization planning process. The community involvement phase of the planning process presents an opportunity for stakeholders, representing a diversity of groups, to provide their input into the strategies developed to for future development in their neighborhood. Using information gathered from the research phase, a set of core issues facing the neighborhood were developed and their respective supporting organizations or specialists were contacted to see if they would participate in the visioning process through their active participation in three meetings.

The planning process, illustrated in Figure 4.1 below, depicts the community involvement process as executed by FSU, including input into the process from other project tasks. The community involvement process was the basis for the development of goals, objectives, strategies and directions on implementing those strategies.

Lovejoy Community Revitalization Plan

Planning Process

Figure 4.1: Outline of the Plan Development Process, with Emphasis on Community Involvement



Lovejoy Community Revitalization Plan

Planning Process

4.1 Stakeholder Analysis: Technical Team & Steering Committee

4.1.1 Stakeholder Identification Process

Stakeholders were identified based on their representations of key constituencies in the neighborhood such as homeowners, renter, business owners and community church congregations as well as representation of important organizations working in the neighborhood including local government agencies. The representatives of these organizations were involved because of their relationships to the revitalization planning process, their past activities and stakes in the community. Table 4.1 below identifies potential types of stakeholders and the actual organizations representing their concerns where such organizations could be identified.

Stakeholders in the planning process were recruited through emails with contact information obtained from GSHFP. At the first meeting the team sought validation of the stakeholder list with meeting participants. It became evident that several key stakeholders were not represented at the meeting, including residents and community church leaders. The list was then revised to include newly identified stakeholders. Representation of various stakeholders was not consistent throughout the planning process. Some participants were present at one or more meetings and there were many of the same residents and local government representatives and public officials present at every meeting.

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Table 4.1: Stakeholder Identification

Issues	Potential Stakeholders	Stakeholder Representatives
Housing	Property Owners Renters Local Planners	Okaloosa County Housing Association City of Ft. Walton Beach SHIP, CRA and Community Development Services Okaloosa County: Code Enforcement and Planning Division World Changers Habitat for Humanity Legal Services of North Florida
Environment	Residents Environmental Scientists Public Health Organizations/ Specialist	City of Ft. Walton Beach Environmental Enforcement Florida Department of Environmental Protection, NPDES Stormwater Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance Wild Law
Civic Activities	Church members Community Association members	Abundant Life Church Christ N Heaven Christian Ministry Lighthouse of Faith Community Church First Community Baptist Church New Hope Christian Church Pentecostal International Deliverance Ministry Sylvania Heights Church of Christ Sylvania Heights First Baptist Church Sylvania Heights First Presbyterian Church W.E. Combs Neighborhood Association Greater Sylvania Heights Front Porch Lovejoy Community Coalition
Infrastructure	Engineers Planners Community Members	City of Ft. Walton Beach: Engineering Division, Finance Department, Parks and Recreations, Planning Division, and Public Works Okaloosa County Parks and Recreation
Safety	Police	City of Ft. Walton Beach: Sherriff's Office of Community Policing
Economy	Teachers and other school volunteers Business owners	University of West Florida – Combs Campus Industrial and Technology Park
Political	City and County Officials State Planning Office	City and County Elected Officials and Commissioners Mayor of Ft. Walton Beach Florida Department of Community Affairs

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4.1.2 Stakeholder Notification and Responses

The participating stakeholders were divided into two groups: the Technical Team and Steering Committee. The Technical Team was responsible for helping to develop the technical elements of the redevelopment plan. These included housing, the environment, infrastructure, safety and intergovernmental relations. The Steering Committee's contributions included helping to develop possible areas of concern. The areas of concern represented were housing, the environment, civic activities, safety, and the economy. Housing and environmental issues were represented on both the Technical Team and Steering Committee because they include complex technical aspects as well as affect community health concerns. The goal was to have broad participation. However, many stakeholder representations were not present at all three meetings. Therefore the concerns of those groups may not have received the same attention as the concerns of those present, because there was no stakeholder representative present to advocate concern.

4.1.3 Assessment of the Degree of Participation of Primary and Secondary Stakeholders

In addition to the usual participative role fulfilled by stakeholders in developing and framing issues, stakeholders were also viewed by the team as bringing the resources and capacities necessary to successfully implement the plan's strategies. Informal groups, like community residents, renter property owners, community-based non-profits and organizations and the faith-based organizations in the community, may derive their power and influence from socioeconomic status, levels of organization, control of environmental and financial resources. Formal institutions, like the city and county governments and non-profit organizations located outside the community, may find power and influence from legal status, leadership authority, control of environmental and financial resources, and possession of knowledge and strength of position in negotiation.

Primary stakeholders are those affected by the project either in a positive or negative way. Secondary stakeholders are those engaged in an intermediary role in the delivery of project benefits. Table 4.2 below identifies stakeholder groups and details primary and secondary stakeholders' interests, capacities and available resources.

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Table 4.2: Primary and Secondary Stakeholder Participation Matrix

<i>Primary Stakeholders</i>			
<u>Stakeholders</u>	<u>Interests</u>	<u>Capacities</u>	<u>Resources Available</u>
Property Owners	Services for the betterment of community member health, environmental quality, storm water, housing renovations and open spaces and pedestrian friendly infrastructure and probate issues among others	Individual community member skill sets, volunteer capabilities	Community Resource Center, Faith-Based Community member networks
Renters			
Community Residents			
Churches and Congregations			
Internal Community Organizations: GSHFP, Lovejoy Community Coalition, W.E. Combs Neighborhood Association			
Community Business Owners	Profitable and safe environment	Community-wide businesses range in function from restaurants, retail clothing sales, waste management, information technology, aviation, resource manufacturing, scientific research and energy and electricity	Monetary and In-Kind Support and Technical Assistance
<i>Secondary Stakeholders</i>			
<u>Stakeholders</u>	<u>Interests</u>	<u>Capacities</u>	<u>Resources Available</u>
City and County Governments: Public Officials and Personnel	Legal obligations of the city and county which need to foster the public's health and safety	Technical and professional advising, development and revitalization planning experience, influence of political leadership	Grants and other funding sources available to governments, construction equipment, data
Non-Profit Organizations External to Community	To provide services, skills and other resources which support community development and revitalization projects and programs and their needs are incorporated in their missions, supporting community development in a variety of fields, including the environment, infrastructure, housing and capacity building	Projects and programs which facilitate community revitalization, supporting various fields of community interest, volunteer networks	Community specific programs and projects, financial support as well as in kind support like volunteers, equipment, land procurement strategies

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There seemed to be opposition from the community to the county government due to continued perceived neglect. In addition, jurisdictional issues, being 30 percent of the planning area is in the city and 70 percent is in the county, create not only legal challenges, but also creates coordination issues due to differing levels of service provided for the city and the county, among them code enforcement. Residents did not seem to consistently distinguish between the city and county governments or the differences in their operations, nor do understand why the coordination is even an issue and are frustrated by the lack of intergovernmental coordination. To community residents, if the city can do it the county should be able to as well.

4.2 Meeting I: Project Introduction

4.2.1 Logistics and Design

The meetings were held in a classroom at the University of West Florida-Combs Campus located in the Lovejoy Community. Members for the Technical Team and Steering Committee were identified and invited to participate and were continuously accepted on a rolling basis. These representatives are listed above in Table 4.1. They were emailed an invitation including the scope of work, the amount of participation needed for the Technical Team and/or the Steering Committee. A newsletter detailing our progress on the revitalization planning for the Lovejoy Community was also attached to the email. We received confirmation emails and referrals for other potential representatives. This newsletter was updated periodically to reflect the progress of planning for the Lovejoy Community. Representatives were given a folder with paper documentation complimentary to our presentation including contact information.

The purpose of this workshop was to educate the Technical Team and Steering Committee about community revitalization, to explain the importance of their participation, how we planned on facilitating the visioning process and how we planned to use the information they had provided us. This meeting was an introduction to the planning process and the Technical Team and Steering Committee's role in it.

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4.2.2 Communication In-Between Meetings

Emails in between meetings, including newsletter updates, meeting reports (for previously held meetings) and upcoming meeting information, were sent a week before each meeting. Participants were able to request any information they had not received at any time through email or mail. The Planning Department and Florida Front Porch's contact information was available at every meeting

4.3 Meeting II: Neighborhood Analysis

4.3.1 Logistics and Design

The meetings were held in a classroom at the University of West Florida-Combs Campus located in the Lovejoy Community. In the first half of the meeting, the State of the Neighborhood Report and the planning team's research and analysis for the Lovejoy Community were presented and discussed with meeting participants. The intent was to share the results of those analyses and to validate those findings with residents and elected and appointed officials and to prepare the planning team to create revitalization plans which would best fit the community's needs by obviating the needs and wants of the community. In the second half of the meeting, a SWOT Analysis was used to analyze the current situation based on the perspectives of the community. The results of the SWOT identify issues that can be further developed and helps to fill in research gaps through the Technical Team and Steering Committee's inputs into the analysis that may not have been identified in previous data and research analyses. The SWOT meeting brought together a diverse set of ideas and perspectives to develop an agreed upon preferred future. Nominal group technique was used to rank the issues identified in the SWOT. Considerations were given to urgency, time involved, cost, feasibility, desirability and impact.

4.3.2 SWOT Results & Analysis

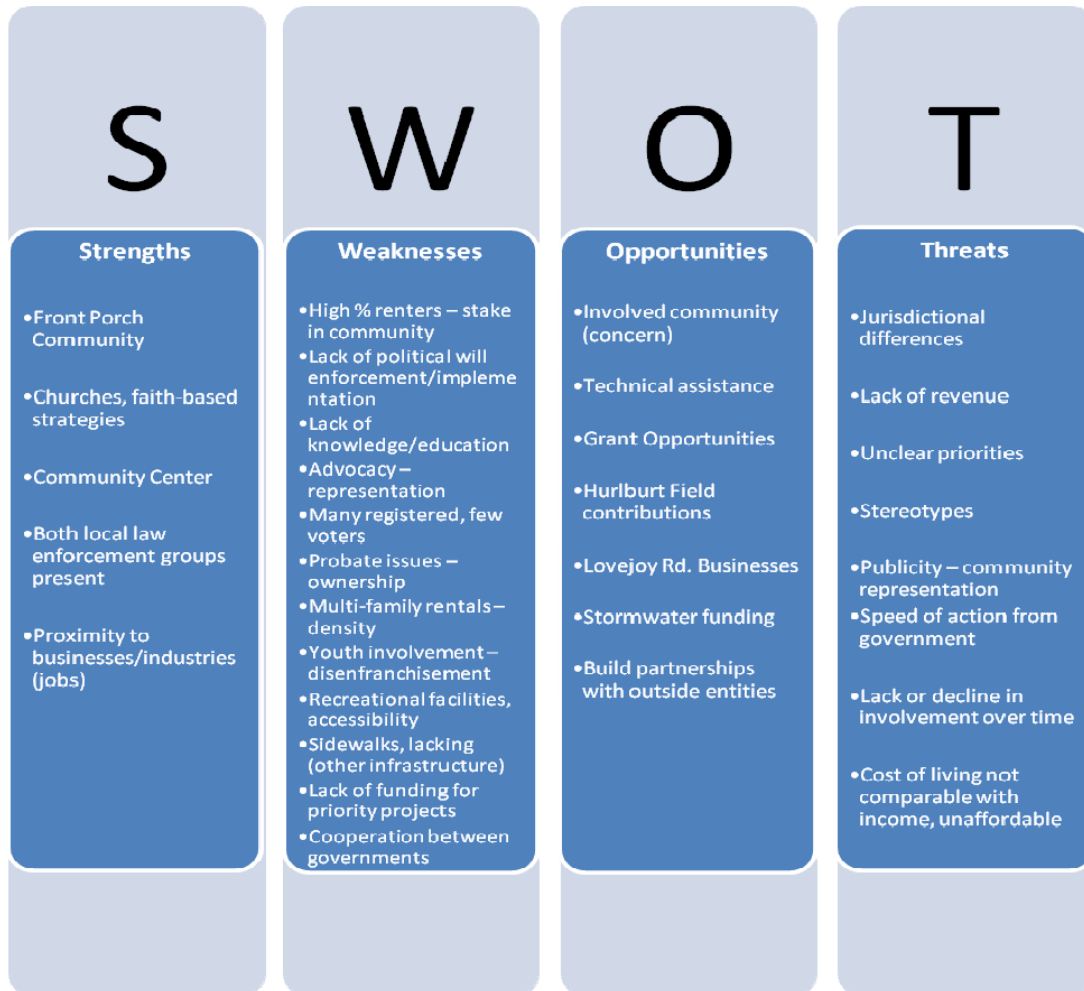
The SWOT analysis was conducted after the State of the Neighborhood Report was presented and discussed. The intended outcome of the combined SWOT analysis and nominal group technique was to create goals for the revitalization plan. We provided a description of the process, and explained what constituted strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and

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also provided examples. The SWOT process was conducted as an open discussion with committee members providing suggestions for each category, while an FSU planning student recorded them on large sheets of paper displayed at the front of the room. The results from the study are as follows in Figure 4.2 SWOT Analysis, below.

Figure 4.2: SWOT Analysis



After finalizing the SWOT, the nominal group technique was explained to the committee. The intent of this exercise was to allow the committee to identify the issues in their community to which they would give the highest priority to be included in the revitalization plans. . From this exercise, the top five issues for the Lovejoy Community were identified. The five highest priority issues are listed below in Table 4.3.

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Table 4.3: Prioritized Issues Recognized by Meeting Participants

1. The lack of stormwater infrastructure funding opportunities.
2. The jurisdictional differences require strong intergovernmental coordination.
3. The lack of revenue, or government income, available for community revitalization projects.
4. The high level of community involvement and concern.
5. The opportunities available through faith-based communities.

At the end of the meeting, the participants were asked to identify five-year goals that could be incorporated into the Community Revitalization Plan and which would address the issues identified above. The goals created by the committee are listed below in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Goals Developed by Meeting Participants

1. Alleviate stormwater problem in Lovejoy community.
2. Develop partnerships and networks and investigate funding opportunities.
3. Improve and enhance the relationship between the Lovejoy community, city and county
4. Open the lines of communication to, include and empower all groups in the community, especially youth, and create a community coalition.
5. Unify faith-based groups within the community and bring local churches together to facilitate neighborhood action.

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4.4 Meeting III: Visioning Workshop

4.4.1. Logistics and Design

The issues and resulting goals recognized during the SWOT analysis were used to develop these plans as well as a directed study circle for of the recognized issues; infrastructure, housing, environment and capacity building. At the beginning of the meeting, an asset map was presented based on the planning team’s assessment of possible assets, internal and external to the community, and from results of the discussion during Meeting 2 (a figure and description of the asset map can be found in Section 3.6 Community Assets). The purpose of the asset map was to illustrate a list of internal and external community assets for the meeting participants to utilize and incorporate while brainstorming potential project plans.

After the asset map was discussed, the group was divided into study circles by their issue preferences. Although limited by those in attendance, an attempt was made to have an equal representation of residents in each group. They study circles consisted of stakeholders and two FSU planning students acting as the facilitators and reporters for the individual study circles. Each study circle issue group (housing, environmental, infrastructure and capacity building) separated into four separate classrooms to complete the workbook. The workbook contained a copy of the goals developed in the second meeting, case studies for the four issue groups (see Appendix G for all of the case studies) and study questions to guide study circle participants in developing potential revitalization projects. The goals from the Neighborhood Analysis Meeting were used to guide the study circles brainstorming and discussion to incorporate ideas they may have had from the asset map and the case studies. The goals were also discussed and agreed upon before starting the case studies. The case studies highlighted revitalization strategies intended to be helpful to study circle participants when formulating their plans for action. A set of study questions and a directed discussion helped pull these ideas together into action plans from the case studies as well as spark new ideas. The groups then designated responsible parties to the community issue and funding ideas for possible sources of support. They wrote these ideas on poster paper and further discussed a plan for action and then also transferred these ideas

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to poster paper. The study circle participants were then advised by facilitators to choose a participant to present their ideas to the entire group.

4.4.2 Visioning Results & Analysis

The projects and implementation strategies that result from the visioning process were used to produce the main deliverable of this project, the plan. After the small workshops commenced, the committee came back together and presented their results to the group. One committee member from each group served as the spokesperson for the small group. The results of the visioning workshop are represented in terms of the goals and objectives in the forth following section.

SECTION 5.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

5.1 Capacity Building

5.1.1: Goal

Build the community's existing capacity in local institutions, secure funding that will be used for increasing capacity, develop partnerships between the existing community institutions, the private sector, and the public sector, including local government, and improve outreach between local institutions and members of the community, within the five year planning period.

5.1.2: Problem Statement

Through the public involvement process, stakeholders in the Lovejoy Community have identified lack of organizational capacity as a concern within the neighborhood. During an analysis of the neighborhood's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats it was made known that those involved with the community would like to build upon the existing capacity of the Greater Sylvania Heights Front Porch, Inc.(GSHFP). This increase in organizational capacity will increase the effectiveness of the non-profit organization to carry out tasks related to revitalization of the Lovejoy Community. In December, 2007, state funding for a staff person at GSHFP ceased. In order to bring this capacity back it is necessary for the organization to find new sources of funding as a means to hire new staff and fund operations related to revitalization. It was also made known through the community involvement process that the stakeholders would like to strengthen and increase partnerships between GSHFP and various private and public sector organizations including the local governments. One step toward accomplishing this is to create a more diverse board of GSHFP, with members who can provide a technical skill or financial contributions to revitalization efforts. Stemming from the newly developed partnerships between GSHFP and public and private organizations, a coalition will coordinate the efforts of GSHFP with other organizations that will help fulfill the objectives of the organization. This coalition was brought to life at a public involvement workshop, and is seen as a way to provide technical support, funding, and donations to GSHFP by matching the resources of various organizations with specific issues related to the revitalization of the Lovejoy

Community. Lastly, stakeholders identified a lack of outreach from local institutions, such as GSHFP, to members of the community to include them in the revitalization process, whether through programs aimed at improving the neighborhood or ways to communicate with the community regarding the revitalization process. The stakeholders found outreach to the youth in the neighborhood especially important in creating a sustainable revitalization plan and continuing neighborhood improvement efforts in the future.

5.1.3 Capacity

Several entities' resources are available to inform and accomplish the following tasks. The GSHFP, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, is vital to the success of the revitalization of the neighborhood. Established as a member of the Florida Front Porch Initiative in 2002, this organization has already taken on several projects to improve the quality of life for residents of the Lovejoy Community. Such projects have included crime watches, the creation of a senior activity center and education center, financial counseling services, and housing projects. It is vital that this organization continues to act positively in the community, and through its existing capacity, take the lead in year one of this revitalization plan by increasing the level of its own capacity within the organization. Important functions of GSHFP staff, which will increase the capacity of the organization, are to explore funding opportunities, schedule events, write grants, act as a liaison between GSHFP, the Lovejoy Community Coalition and its members, and organize and connect with primary and secondary stakeholders. The functions of GSHFP board that bring capacity to the organization include, enacting governing policies, which give direction to the organization, managing operations by making decisions and taking action, ensuring adequate and appropriate human and financial resources, monitoring staff, and evaluating revitalization efforts in the community. The roles of the task forces are constructed by the board to address priority community issues. Task forces may also be derived in order to execute strategies proposed in this plan for issues indicated community as priority issues, including housing, stormwater, and the environment. Other key players are other organized entities located within the community, which are also influential actors in the revitalization process, including businesses and the church community. Opponents to the effects of revitalization plans could bottleneck the implementation of community projects and slow the positive effects to other

beneficiaries in the community. If all stakeholders can benefit from the revitalization process, there is one less constraint to the positive effects of community revitalization efforts.

Stakeholders who advocate community change may also be more likely to contribute and support revitalization efforts and community organizations.

5.1.4 Objectives

Objective 1.0: Within six months of the beginning of the planning period, identify funding sources to increase the capacity of the GSHFP, apply for such funding, and invest in the growing capacity of the organization especially as it relates to implementing this plan. Examples of funding strategies are presented in Appendix H, Table H-1.

Task 1.1: GSHFP, in their current capacity, shall designate a person to research and apply for funding, including loans, grant opportunities related to capacity building, in-kind donations, and private sponsorships. This designated person needs to be currently involved with GSHFP, familiar with the community, and willing to take the lead role in writing grants or utilizing resources to develop grant writing skill. Alternatively, GSHFP, may be able to borrow staff from other organizations and agencies, possibly from city or county government who can assume the responsibility of running the organization as a portion of a complete assignment until such time as full time permanent staff can be established. The identification and designation of this person shall begin immediately

Task 1.2: GSHFP shall seek funding from the EPA through their Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) Grant. A more detailed explanation of this grant is described in section 5.4 of this report.

Objective 2.0: Strengthen and diversify the board of the GSHFP by the conclusion of year one to include members with special skills and knowledge related to neighborhood revitalization.

The board in its current capacity consists of five members, and serves as the governing body of GSHFP. It operates by contract under the bylaws passed down from the Department of

Community Affairs Front Porch Initiative and has, in the past, created the community's action plan and monitored task forces which have been established based on issues determined in that plan. Currently, it reports to DCA quarterly on the progress made by the existing task forces.

Task 2.1: Current members of the GSHFP shall seek new board members that have various skill sets which will benefit the revitalization of the Lovejoy Community. Examples of potential members for this strengthened board include: housing developers, consulting engineers, bankers, environmental specialists, and legal specialists, who will be able to apply their specific skills and knowledge to the implementation of this neighborhood revitalization plan.

Task 2.2: GSHFP will nominate new members to the board in the next nomination cycle. These individuals should have skill sets and assets that will prove to aid in the revitalization of the Lovejoy Community. The responsibilities of the board will continue to focus on three areas. The first of which is governance, where the board ensures that the organization is running according to the bylaws handed down to them by DCA. Secondly, the board will take on a management role in which they take actions and make decisions to ensure there are sufficient and appropriate human and financial resources for the organization to accomplish its work. Lastly, the board will oversee operations by ensuring that staff is working efficiently and appropriately towards the revitalization goals included in this plan.

Objective 3.0: Aggregate the necessary funding to support a full-time staff member to oversee the operations of the GSHFP, which will be fully operational by the beginning of year two.

Task 3.1: Once funding has been acquired it shall be aggregated and GSHFB shall hire a full time staff person to replace the position that was previously funded by the Florida Front Porch Initiative. This person shall undertake the following tasks: research and application for additional funding opportunities, grant

writing, scheduling of community events, developing and maintaining partnerships by acting as a liaison between GSHFP and coalition members, encouraging and organizing community participation, and preparation of reports required of the organization.

Objective 4.0: Create additional task forces of members with various skill sets pertaining to neighborhood revitalization within the GSHFP to focus specifically on issues identified by community members in order to improve them. These task forces will be identified and established by the end of year one of the planning period.

Currently GSHFP has three task forces that were identified in the Community Action Plan required by DCA. These include economic, public safety, and education task forces. In order to implement this revitalization plan, it is necessary to create additional task forces that will address the issues identified in the community involvement process of this plan.

Task 4.1: Members of the GSHFP organization shall be designated to various task forces in order to focus on the issues specified in this plan including infrastructure, housing, and environmental issues. Each task force would gather and organize resources to carry out specific projects that would each contribute to revitalization of the Lovejoy Community. These task forces will be monitored quarterly by the board in the same manner in which the current task forces are currently monitored to ensure they are working towards their goals in an appropriate manner.

Objective 5.0: Build a coalition of outside organizations that has the capacity to coordinate and support revitalization projects in the Lovejoy Community, including those developed by the GSHFP.

Task 5.1: This task seeks to provide a flexible organizational framework to help the Lovejoy Community Coalition build their capacity to support revitalization efforts in their community. It provides a plan to create an ad hoc committee that will appoint a more permanent advisory board for the coalition, control of the coalition will then be transferred to that board. This is a short-term, collaborative planning approach that will allow the ad hoc committee to use its skills and capacities to build the coalition's advisory board and organizational framework. Once the board is established, the ad hoc committee will dissolve and the board will take control of plan implementation. The advisory board will then organize and develop the Lovejoy Community Coalition to serve their mission of community revitalization and will implement strategic plans that promote project success and organizational sustainability.

The coalition will compliment the capacities of GSHFP and can help fill in the gaps of resource opportunities during the revitalization planning process. If GSHFP needs certain services, research and analyses, donations (monetary and in-kind support), or professional development and advising to support a revitalization project, these resources may be available to the coalition through the coalition. The purpose of the coalition is to create and organize highly resourceful member organizations which help foster GSHFP efforts and revitalization project success.

Sub-task 5.1.1 should be implemented the first four months, or quarter 1 of the first year. Sub-task 5.1.2, advisory board creation, should be implemented in quarter 2. Sub-Task 5.1.3, the ad hoc-advisory board collaborative, sub-tasks 5.1.4, advisory board's short-term plans, and sub-task 5.1.5, advisory board's long-term plans, should begin implementation in the third quarter of year one. Sub-task 5.1.3 should finish implementation in at the end of the third quarter and sub-task 5.1.4 should be completed by the end of the fourth quarter of the

first year. Sub-task 5.1.5 should continue implementation from the third quarter in year one to the end of the five year timeline and beyond.

Sub-Task 5.1.1: This sub-task addresses the organization of the ad hoc committee, whose purpose is to organize the coalition so that its efforts are well coordinated between community members, donor organizations and local government. The committee will help build an advisory board and organize the basic framework of the coalition to create sufficient capacity, or in other words, to increase the coalition's ability to coordinate member organizations' resources with revitalization efforts, especially those from GSHFP. The community members involved with the newly formed coalition, who also participated in the community involvement process facilitated by Florida State's Planning and Development Lab (FPDL), will be given the responsibility of convening the ad hoc committee. Other potential members of the ad hoc committee may include willing parties that were participants during the FPDL community involvement process, especially those capable of recruiting other potential members through their existing networks.

Sub-Task 5.1.2: Professionals, such as doctors and nurses, lawyers, bookkeepers, or others with certified skills should be considered for positions on the advisory board, due to their experience, education, and leadership capabilities to direct the proceedings of the coalition. The ad hoc committee will plan the initial meetings or initiate means of communication to plan for the coalition advisory board setup. The ad hoc committee should prepare at least one meeting for candidates to be discussed and voted onto the board.

Sub-Task 5.1.3: The advisory board will need plans to organize the coalition once the board has been selected. The purpose of the ad hoc committee

organizing the Lovejoy Coalition advisory board is to facilitate the creation of an organizational framework and strategic plans that will build capacity within the coalition and help sustain the full potential of its efforts for revitalizing the community.

The ad hoc committee will help the advisory board develop and formalize their own capacity by creating a mission statement and bylaws, developing subcommittees, and designing a plan for membership. The plans and strategies developed during the ad hoc, advisory board collaboration will then be revised, accepted, and implemented by the advisory board after the ad hoc committee is dissolved.

Once the ad hoc committee has served its purpose of recruiting the new advisory board and assisting with the development of their organizational capacity and strategic plans, the committee should dissolve through resolution in a final meeting.

Sub-Task 5.1.4: This task highlights the short-term plans for coalition establishment to be implemented by the new coalition advisory board, as well as strategic plans that advisory board members must consider, long-term, to ensure the coalition's mission and goals are attained.

Once the membership plan established by subtask 5.1.3 is underway, and member organizations have been accepted by the coalition, the advisory board needs to plan the first meeting to explain the functions of the board, the organizational framework, the different strategic plans, and the member organizations roles for involvement in those plans.

Sub-Task 5.1.5: The long-term responsibilities of the advisory board include coordinating projects with member organizations, specifically GSHFP,

bringing awareness of the coalition to the community, and actively soliciting support from member organizations. This enables the coalition to grow through continued recruitment of new member organizations that support the coalition's overall mission of community revitalization and bringing a diverse set of support and service capacities to the community.

Objective 6.0: Develop a membership plan to recruit member organizations with similar missions.

Task 6.1: Building alliances is heavily influential to the capacity building process. A good foundation must be laid before the organization can progress and grow. That is why it is important for the coalition to form its initial capacity through the capacity of existing alliances and networks. These existing networks are detailed in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Current Informal Coalition Members

<u>Community Organizations</u>
Greater Sylvania Heights Front Porch
W.E. Combs Neighborhood Association
Burnette-Harmon-Wood Community Resource Center
Abundant Life Church
Christ N Heaven Christian Ministry
Lighthouse of Faith Community Church
First Community Baptist Church
New Hope Christian Church
Pentecostal International Deliverance Ministry
Sylvania Heights Church of Christ
Sylvania Heights First Baptist Church
Sylvania Heights First Presbyterian Church
<u>Public Sector</u>
City of Ft. Walton Beach
Okaloosa County
Florida Department of Community Affairs
<u>Non-Profit Sector</u>
World Changers
Habitat for Humanity
Wild Law
<u>Private Sector</u>
City of Ft. Walton Beach Commerce & Technology Park

The role of community organizations is to coordinate, participate and utilize community development projects and programs received by the community. The needs of organizations located inside the community include services for the betterment of community member health, environmental quality, stormwater, housing renovations, and open spaces and pedestrian friendly infrastructure. The role of community private sector entities is to operate in a capacity and obey the law in such a way which does not decrease the surrounding community’s quality of life. It is also to make profit. A

beautified, safe surrounding area may prove more marketable to community businesses. The role of the public sector is to act upon the legal obligations of the city and county which need to foster the public's health and safety. These include adequate community infrastructure, voting services and other publicly provided services. The role of non-profit organizations is to provide services, skills and other resources which support community development, revitalization projects, and programs. The needs of these organizations are incorporated in their missions by supporting community development in a variety of fields, including the environment, infrastructure, housing and capacity building.

Membership is a type of alliance which will increase commitment to the coalition, thus motivating members to actively support community projects. The purpose of this task is to develop a strategy to identify organizations that could support projects needed in the Lovejoy community, then recruit those organizations into the coalition. The process includes generating a list of characteristics of member organizations and strategies for how to find and approach potential member organizations which could support the coalition's mission.

All of the sub-tasks under Task 6.1 should begin in quarter 3 (4 months) of the first year, or year 1. Sub-task 6.1.1, member identification process, should not be implemented until the end of quarter 3. Sub-task 6.1.2, member recruitment, should be completed in quarter 4 of year 1 and 6.1.3, retention and sustainability plans should be implemented throughout the entire five years.

Sub-Task 6.1.1: The types of organizations that will help build the capacity of the coalition are those with similar missions to the coalition. Ideal candidates would have access to volunteers, hard money (grants) and soft money (in-kind donations), the skills and certifications of their members,

organizational capacity and experience servicing issues like those present in the Lovejoy Community. Potential member organizations may not meet all these standards but should at the least be able to provide one of the above functions.

Sub-Task 6.1.2: Possible sources for membership organizations were identified during the community involvement process and are shown on the Community Asset Map, Appendix F.3.2 (a). It would be beneficial to explore the connections that exist within the community as well. It should then be decided how to market membership to the identified potential members. This membership plan should focus on marketing to and communicating with potential member organizations, providing formal and informal participation options, registering formal members, planning meetings, and developing communication methods.

Sub-Task 6.1.3: In terms of the sustainability of the coalition, the advisory board will implement long-term strategic plans and, at the same time, continue to recruit and retain members to be a sustainable organization. It should also solicit feedback from member organizations about the activities of the coalition and attempt to retain members by providing incentives for continued involvement in revitalizing the community and through positive evaluations of past projects.

Objective 7.0: The GSHFP should connect with, serve, and empower all people within the community, including the youth, by establishing the presence of the local organization in the neighborhood and keeping the organization current with community issues. This will allow GSHFP to connect with groups and people inside the community to make sure that the issues of focus and strategies for action within the coalition serve the needs of the Lovejoy Community residents.

Task 7.1: Build organization membership by inviting residents to become members of GSHFP.

Creating a membership system will allow residents to feel a sense of ownership and involvement in the program that they may not otherwise feel. Although it is referred to as the Greater Sylvania Heights Front Porch, it is necessary to invite all of the Lovejoy Community, including the W.E. Combs neighborhood, to become members. It is up to the organization whether or not they will collect membership fees. While membership fees may be a revenue source for the organization, it may discourage those on limited budgets from joining. In addition, those residents of the community who are renting their homes should not be excluded. The membership plan should be created early in year one of the revitalization plan, and implemented immediately thereafter, allowing a firm membership to be in place by the end of year one.

Task 7.2: Increase GSHFP's interaction with the Lovejoy Community by organizing social gatherings and providing service opportunities in the neighborhoods, thus overcoming the lack of organizational capacity in the Lovejoy Community.

By holding community wide activities, the local organization will establish its presence in the community and increase the potential to draw a larger membership base. If community residents see that the group is actively serving the needs in the community, they will be more inclined to participate in the organization, while trusting that it will be successful in accomplishing their goals. The community involvement process should begin during year one, in order to support the membership plan by bringing together potential members within the community.

Sub-Task 7.2.1: Suggestions for community activities fall into two categories, social and service. Social activities will bring the community members together and facilitate informal communication, while also providing

opportunities to enjoy leisure time with friends and family in the community. An example of a social event is a neighborhood barbeque or potluck dinner.

Sub-Task 7.2.2: Service activities are also opportunities to involve the community and bring neighbors together for a common goal. Performing services within the Lovejoy Community provides all residents with a chance to be personally involved with improving their community. Also, other residents who are not involved with the GSHFP will see first-hand how it successfully facilitates community revitalization. Suggestions for service activities are neighborhood garbage clean-ups and community gardening days. The efforts of participants can be rewarded by holding contests, such as, “most colorful garden,” or “best holiday decorations,” and announcing the winners in a community newsletter.

Task 7.3: Involve, educate and engage the youth in the Lovejoy Community by providing them with ways to contribute to the needs of the community, opportunities to learn, organized activities, and places to recreate.

The need for youth involvement in the Lovejoy Community has been identified through community workshops. It is the purpose of this task to require that GSHFP provide outreach and education to the youth of the community, as well as involve them in the redevelopment process. This can be facilitated through projects intended for youth in the community, which contribute to the three major areas of importance identified by the community: infrastructural improvements, creation of more adequate housing, and environmental clean-up.

Youth involvement in the community will give the youth a better understanding of the problems experienced by the community, as well as

knowledge of solutions and strategies to overcome those problems. This type of organized commitment to the community will also provide the youth with a sense of ownership and pride in their neighborhood. Ideally, this involvement will increase the likelihood that youth will remain in their community in the future, and continue to care for the neighborhood by enhancing its character and maintaining its trend towards improvement. In order to ensure successful organization of the community's youth, these projects should be implemented in years two and three. This allows GSHFP to become a more stable organization through enacting their membership system and undergoing a year of experience with more general community involvement strategies.

Sub-Task 7.3.1: Youth should contribute to infrastructural improvements in the Lovejoy Community by coordinating efforts for trail building and maintenance around retention ponds, or cleaning up clogged stormwater drainage areas.

Sub-Task 7.3.2: To help with affordable housing, youth in the community can partner with organizations like Habitat for Humanity to help build homes in the community. An organization called YouthBuildUSA, operated through grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) can facilitate education and training of youth ages 16 to 24 in the area of home construction, while they also work toward a high school diploma or GED through an alternative school program. The goal is to provide affordable housing in low income neighborhoods, while also building capacity of the youth in the community. There are currently 225 YouthBuild programs nationwide, with the nearest one located in Pensacola (Youthbuild).

Sub-Task 7.3.3: Youth can contribute to the improvement of environmental conditions by learning about the environment in their community and becoming involved with the EPA's CARE grant program. Because CARE

gives communities support in the form of resources and technical assistance, youth can form a group in the community that works with a specific task necessary for CARE, such as testing the ground for toxins.

Sub-Task 7.3.4: Engage youth through education. GSHFP could organize regular monthly classes or presentations given by members of the Lovejoy Coalition, volunteer educators outside the coalition, or experts and professionals from, or working with, the Lovejoy Community. These meetings, targeted toward youth, could be used to inform them about the GSHFP organization, community development, or other current issues within the community.

Sub-Task 7.3.5: Provide organized sports leagues or clubs, for youth in the Lovejoy Community, as well as playgrounds, sports fields, or a recreation area.

Children of all ages benefit from places for recreation and socialization within walking distance of their homes. Front Porch could establish sponsorships for funding to provide a sports field or playground, and eventually sponsor sports leagues and clubs for the neighborhood youth. Another suggestion is to construct a community center with resources such as a gym or library, or share resources, like internet access and computer availability, with existing entities such as the University of West Florida, W.E. Combs Campus. Churches also have the organizational ability to involve the youth through organized outreach programs and sponsored meetings and activities.

Task 7.4: GSHFP shall conduct regular surveys of residents to determine current community needs and issues.

Neighborhood surveys are essential to community outreach because they allow GSHFP to remain up to date with issues and needs of community members. Surveys should be distributed at a regular frequency determined by the organization, and should aim to include all residents in the community. Depending upon the aim of the organization, different surveys could be sent to different groups, such as youth and adults, and owners and renters. Distribution of surveys to all neighborhood residents not only allows GSHFP to gather information, they also serve as an advertisement for the organization. The surveys can be distributed by mail to local addresses, hand delivered in the neighborhoods, attached to an organized community newsletter, and/or distributed through churches. For an example of a neighborhood surveys, please refer to Appendix I-2. Residents may be asked to return the surveys at announced neighborhood drop off location, or the organization distributing them could include pre-addressed, postage paid envelopes. Surveys can be implemented as early as year two. Following the finalization of the membership plan, the GSHFP board may begin to distribute surveys to organization members and Lovejoy Community residents to gather input on subjects relevant to the community and GSHFP.

5.1.5 Implementation

The GSHFP will steer the process of capacity building to support the revitalization of the Lovejoy Community. Through the strengthening and diversification of their board, they will acquire new skills to aid in the process. Federal grants, such as CARE, are a possible means by which to get funding. Through new funding sources the organization will have the capacity to hire a new staff member to organize, run, and secure funding to provide support. The creation of task forces will more specifically address various issues pertaining to the neighborhood such as housing, environmental, and infrastructural issues, and will focus their energies on completing projects pertaining to the various issues. The newly expanded organization will locate members, inside and outside the community that would prove to be beneficial members to the newly formed neighborhood coalition, and will provide an organizational framework for that coalition.

This coalition will work hand in hand with GSHFP to achieve the goals of neighborhood revitalization through utilization of skills and knowledge of the various organizations within the coalition. GSHFP will implement membership, engagement and education plans, and community needs assessments to provide outreach to members of the community, especially the youth, to ensure that the residents interests are being served by the organizations.

The coalition will act as one large organization, composed of various smaller organizations that have a common mission of revitalizing the Lovejoy Community. The coalition shall use its capacity and various skills and resources to carry out projects related to revitalization. For the coalition to be able to support GSHFP projects and other community revitalization efforts, they will need to coordinate their efforts with GSHFP, coalition members, the community, and the local government. The coalition will also need to continue to stay organized and recruit new members.

5.1.6 Outcome

With the implementation of the above tasks, the GSHFP will have increased capacity. New partnerships between GSHFP and entities within the Lovejoy Community will allow for neighborhood outreach and youth involvement, which will then serve as a catalyst to develop a neighborhood coalition representing various aspects of neighborhood revitalization. These two groups working in unison will provide support for one another and will provide a form of outreach to ensure that members of the community are being heard and included in the revitalization process in order to take ownership of the betterment of their neighborhood.

5.2 Housing Strategy

5.2.1 Goal

Ensure that everyone in the community has access to safe, secure, standard affordable housing while enhancing access to housing for homeownership.

5.2.2 Problem Statement

The Lovejoy Community is facing a decline in homeownership rates in the community. The W.E. Comb's Neighborhood has a renter occupancy rate of 20.5 percent, and the Sylvania Heights Neighborhood has a renter occupancy rate of 63.1 percent. The community has expressed concerns that the high rates of renter occupancy are contributing to the deterioration of the neighborhood's quality and character. The Lovejoy Community needs to identify strategies and funding opportunities to create new homeownership opportunities and increase the number of owner-occupied dwelling units within the community.

The Lovejoy Community has several older manufactured homes that are in disrepair and currently being used as rental units. The 2008 housing survey reported that there were nine manufactured homes in the W.E. Comb's Neighborhood and 69 in the Sylvania Heights Neighborhood for a total of 78 manufactured homes. Of those manufactured homes, 31 were in need of rehabilitation. It is estimated that 38 percent of the manufactured units are renter-occupied. Furthermore, the Lovejoy Community has unimproved vacant lots in the neighborhood that contribute to signs of neglect and have become vulnerable to illegal dumping.

The Lovejoy Community also has some illiquidity among residential real properties resulting from heir property title issues. In this community it is a prevalent problem for homeowners to die intestate. Generally, when a home owner dies intestate the legal claim to the property is awarded to family members who could include parents, siblings, or children. When more than one heir has claim to the property, it results in tenants-in-common ownership among all heirs. Typically, the heirs that have claim to the property cannot mutually agree on what should be done and the agreement of all tenants is necessary before real property can be transacted. Community residents have also asserted that some homes in the community have liens on the property as a result of unpaid property taxes, medical bills and other debt. Over time

properties in this community have transitioned from owner occupied to rental occupied property possibly due to heir property issues and liens on these homes.

5.2.3: Alternatives Considered

Among the alternatives considered were programs such as the Morgantown Homeownership Preservation Initiative. This program facilitates the purchase, rehabilitation and resale of dwellings in targeted areas in an effort to increase the mix of owner-occupied housing and to improve housing quality. Properties are acquired on the open market by the housing authority, who then improves the property. These properties are then sold to persons committed to maintaining the property as owner occupied. A deed restriction is placed on the property to ensure owner-occupancy. The property must be maintained as an owner occupied dwelling and must not be leased at any time.

Arguably, the demand for student rental housing is the primary motivation for the transition from owner occupied to rental units in Morgantown. New construction is more prevalent in Morgantown and they rent those single family homes in that case. Similar economics do not exist in the Lovejoy Community where owner occupied units are trickling down to renters.

Another strategy discussed involved increased building code enforcement. Okaloosa County is currently meeting with the City of Fort Walton Beach to discuss code enforcement consistency between the two jurisdictions. These meetings will hopefully result in a more uniform application of code enforcement between the W.E. Combs and Sylvania Heights neighborhoods. As a result, simple issues such as trash pickup and lawn maintenance should be improved.

Another strategy discussed possible incentives that could be offered to investors within the county to encourage them to build housing within the Lovejoy Community. However, it is believed that investors could find a higher rate of return in other parts of the county and it would be difficult to incubate new growth within the community.

Another strategy discussed the idea of acquiring donated vacant land and establishing and maintaining a community land trust. Although this is a good strategy, the members in the group felt that affordability in the Lovejoy Community was not an issue at this time.

Finally, the possibility of the Lovejoy Community becoming a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) was discussed. While, GSHFP is a 501(c)(3) and may qualify as a CHDO, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development specifically discourages neighborhood focus CHDOs.

The following strategies that will be discussed were selected because they were developed to specifically address the unique planning problems within the Lovejoy community. The selected strategies are outlined below in objective and task format.

5.2.4 Objectives

Objective 1.0: The Lovejoy Community will work together with the public and private sector to build partnerships to promote homeownership opportunities.

Task 1.1: The GSHFP will establish a Lovejoy Community Housing Coalition. The Housing Coalition will be active by the end of the first year of the planning timeframe.

Sub-Task 1.1.1: Identify individuals within each of the following stakeholder groups who are willing and committed to participating in this partnership: Okaloosa County Habitat for Humanity, Okaloosa County Community Development Corporation, local financing institutions, Escambia County Housing Finance Authority, The City of Fort Walton Beach, Okaloosa County, residents of the community, and faith base organization leaders.

Task 1.2: The Housing Coalition will establish methods for stabilizing the stock of rental housing for renters of single family detached units dispersed throughout the community.

Sub-Task 1.2.1: GSHFP should consider approaching the owners of detached single family dwellings that are rental property and offer them property management services for a fee. These services may include the screening of potential tenants, rent collection, property maintenance and advertising vacancies for landlords.

Objective 2.0: The Lovejoy Community will work together with non-profit organizations to resolve heir property title issues within the community.

Task 2.1: The GSHFP and its membership shall work together with non-profit legal agencies to help facilitate conflict resolution in order to reach a mutual agreement between heir property owners. The Lovejoy community will resolve three heir property title issues by the end of the fifth year of the planning timeframe.

Sub-Task 2.1.1: The GSHFP will work together with the Okaloosa County Property Appraiser Office to identify a complete list of the properties that would qualify as heir property and properties that are otherwise encumbered with other liens.

Sub-Task 2.1.2: The GSHFP will contact the property owners that were identified and determine the individuals interested in resolving heir property issues. This would include engaging Legal Services of North Florida, Inc. to help settle heir property ownership.

Lovejoy Community Revitalization Plan

Implementation Strategies

Housing

Objective 3.0: Encourage the construction of new homes on vacant lots within the Lovejoy Community.

Task 3.1: The Lovejoy Coalition Housing subcommittee will use its partnerships to build new homes on vacant lots within the Lovejoy Community. There will be ten new homes built in the Lovejoy Community by the end of the five year planning timeframe.

Sub-Task 3.1.1: The GSHFP and its membership will contact the owners of the vacant lots within the Lovejoy Community to determine their interest in selling or donating their properties. The Lovejoy community will acquire fifteen vacant lots by the end of the five year planning timeframe.

Sub-Task 3.1.2: The GSHFP will provide a list to the Lovejoy Housing Coalition of available vacant properties for purchase and donation.

Sub-Task 3.1.3: Okaloosa County Habitat for Humanity would be a suitable organization to purchase these vacant properties.

Objective 4.0: The Lovejoy Coalition Housing subcommittee will remove older manufactured homes and build new site built homes.

Task 4.1: The GSHFP and its membership shall work together to remove older manufactured homes and build site built homes on the existing lots. There will be five older manufactured homes replaced with new site built homes by the end of the five year planning timeframe.

Lovejoy Community Revitalization Plan

Implementation Strategies

Housing

Sub-Task 4.1.1: The GSHFP and its membership will contact the owners of the manufactured homes within the Lovejoy Community to determine their interest in selling their properties.

Sub-Task 4.1.2: GSHFP shall provide a list to the Lovejoy Housing Coalition of available manufactured homes for purchase.

Sub-Task 4.1.3: The Housing Coalition partners which could include Okaloosa County Habitat for Humanity will purchase these older manufactured homes and the land associated with the home.

Sub-Task 4.1.4: The manufactured homes will be removed from the property and new single family site built homes will be constructed on the existing lots.

Objective 5.0: Secure funding to promote homeownership opportunities within the Lovejoy Community.

Task 5.1: Okaloosa County will apply for competitive based Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG) to assist the Lovejoy Community with new homeownership opportunities. During the five year planning timeframe Okaloosa County will annually apply for competitive based CDBG funding.

Sub-Task 5.1.1: Okaloosa County will apply for CDBG funding through the State of Florida's Department of Housing and Community Development.

5.2.5 Capacity

Several entities resources are available to inform and to accomplish these tasks.

Lovejoy Community Revitalization Plan

Implementation Strategies

Housing

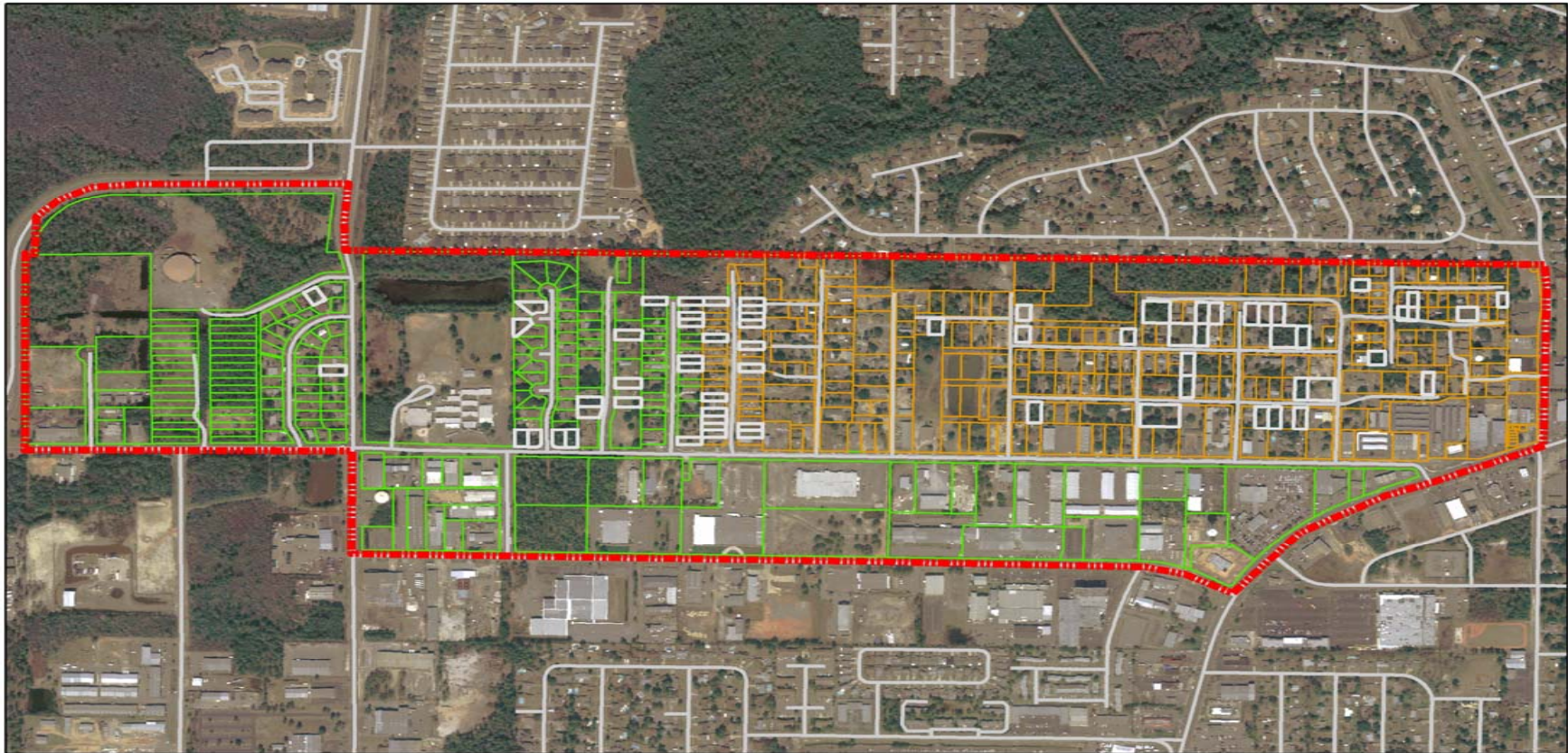
- In order to create a Lovejoy Community Housing Coalition, the GSHFP will contact Okaloosa County Habitat for Humanity, Okaloosa County Community Development Corporation, local financing institutions, Escambia County Housing Finance Authority, the City of Fort Walton Beach, Okaloosa County, residents of the community, and faith based organization leaders. Each organization that is interested in participating will nominate, at a minimum, one person to sit on the Housing Coalition Board. This coalition will be tasked with implementing all of the housing programs.
- To resolve heir property title issues within the Lovejoy Community the Housing Coalition will contact Legal Services of North Florida, Inc. Legal Services of North Florida, Inc is a non-profit legal services firm that provides assistance to low income residents throughout North Florida. To qualify for assistance a household's income must be no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. The homeowner will complete an application that will be reviewed by a case acceptance committee. If the applicant is qualified, Legal Services of North Florida will file actions or prepare necessary legal documents to clear title to real property. Legal Services of North Florida has well trained and experienced staff attorneys and paralegals. Volunteer private attorneys and third-year legal interns from the Florida State University College of Law are also available to assist clients. More information about Legal Services of North Florida can be found at <http://www.lsnf.org>. In addition, the Lovejoy Community can contact Jaimie Ross with the Florida Housing Coalition at 1-800-677-4548.

There is a concern that the resolution of heir property issues will result in the loss of property wealth among some African Americans. It should be noted that the resolution process of selling heir property will be on a voluntary basis. In addition, these heir properties are sitting vacant or rented in the community and the parties with claim to the property are not realizing a significant amount of property value increase each year. By selling the properties it will create new homeownership opportunities within the community and the equity from the sale of the property will go back to the individuals that were holding the

property in tenants in common. The proceeds from the sale can be reinvested by the individuals and they can create new wealth building opportunities for themselves.

Subsequently, as a result of resolving heir property title issues within the Lovejoy Community, there needs to be some recognition that some renters and very low income people will need to move out of their previously rented homes. Some of the renters will need to relocate to other rental properties because homeownership will be burdensome at their income level. As more opportunities for homeownership develop in the Lovejoy Community, there will be a migration of renters from the multi-family homes into the single family homes thus creating opportunities for the renters being displaced to stay in the Lovejoy Community if they choose.

- The Lovejoy Housing Coalition will utilize Habitat for Humanity, private landowners, and local lending institutions to acquire vacant lots and build new construction homes. There are 66 vacant lots suitable for single family homes in the Lovejoy Community according to the 2005 data available from the Okaloosa County Property Appraiser. Of the 66 lots, one is owned by the City of Fort Walton Beach, one is owned by Okaloosa County, and eight are owned by businesses. The Lovejoy Housing Coalition will identify the possibility of having some of the vacant lots donated by the various landowners to the Okaloosa County Habitat for Humanity. The Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) includes an Infill-Housing/Land and/or House Acquisition/Rehabilitation/Resale strategy. This strategy allows the Okaloosa Community Development Corporation the ability to purchase up to a maximum of \$150,000 for land for development. The targeted populations for this strategy are those individuals or households who are at 80 percent of the median income or less. If State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) dollars are allocated on a project that involves vacant land, a home must be built on the property within two years. For more information contact Pat Sunnarborg, SHIP Administrator, Okaloosa County Community Development Corporation at 850 863-1969 or pattisun@embarqmail.com.



Map 5.2: Vacant Lots Suitable for Housing in the Sylvania Heights/W.E. Combs Community



-  SF_VACANT
-  Area of Interest Boundary
-  Roads
-  Sylvania Heights Community
-  Combs - New Heights Community



Prepared By: Michael Peacock
Sources: Okaloosa County Information Systems:
GIS Division

Lovejoy Community Revitalization Plan

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- The Housing Coalition through its partners will purchase older manufactured homes and the land associated with the manufactured homes. These manufactured homes will be removed from the property and new site built single family homes will be built on the existing lots. This strategy will help transition individuals from renting to owning a home. Currently, Habitat for Humanity is seeking land to build homes on in the Lovejoy Community. Habitat for Humanity can build single family homes and sell the homes with restrictions that prevent the home owners from leasing the property. It is believed that many of the renters who occupy the manufactured homes in the Lovejoy Community are prime candidates for first time home ownership through Habitat for Humanity. This program could also be used for families that want to purchase a new home but do not have available land. This activity qualifies under the Infill-Housing/Land and/or House Acquisition/Rehabilitation/Resale strategy in the Local Housing Assistance Plan. In addition, the GSHFP is a member of the Florida Housing Finance Corporation's Homeownership Pool Program (HOP). Eligible homebuyers, whose adjusted income does not exceed 80 percent AMI, receive a zero percent deferred second mortgage loan for the lesser of 25 percent of the purchase price of the home or \$70,000, or the amount necessary to meet underwriting criteria (with the exception of Eligible Homebuyers with disabilities and Eligible Homebuyers at 50 percent AMI or below, which are limited to 35 percent of the purchase price or \$80,000). For more information about this program contact Robert Gray at (850) 244-2484.

It is a concern that residents currently renting the manufactured homes could be displaced from the community if this strategy is implemented. Not all of the residents who are renting in the Lovejoy Community are financially capable of purchasing a new single family home. Those that may qualify for home ownership are likely to need first time home buyer assistance and credit counseling. GSHFP, with the assistance of Consumer Credit Counseling Services of West Florida Inc., should coordinate first home buyer education for neighborhood renters.

- Obtaining funding is a significant component to ensuring the success of any homeownership program. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is one source of funds for the

community. CDBG funds are awarded through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The CDBG entitlement program allocates annual grants to larger cities and urban counties to develop viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and opportunities to expand economic opportunities, principally for low and moderate income persons. The City of Fort Walton Beach is currently an entitlement community for CDBG funds and is currently eligible to receive funding. The CDBG funding is administered through Fort Walton Beach's Office of Community Development Block Grant. Okaloosa County is not an entitlement community and therefore must apply for competitive based Small Cities CDBG funding. Eligible local governments must meet specific population requirements and cannot be participants in a CDBG Urban Entitlement Program. The population requirements are: cities with not more than 50,000 residents and counties with not more than 200,000 residents. As of the 2000 Census Okaloosa County's population was 170,498 and therefore eligible to apply for Small Cities CDBG funding. The application process is conducted through the Florida Department of Community Affairs, Division of Housing and Community Development. The application forms are available online at www.floridacommunitydevelopment.org/cdbg. For more information on how to apply for these funds, contact Esrone McDaniels, Administrator of the Small Cities CDBG Program, Florida Department of Community Affairs at (850) 487 3644 or contact via email at Esrone.McDaniels@dca.state.fl.us. Additional information on the Community Development Block Grant program can be found on the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development website at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs>.

The Florida Housing Finance Corporation offers several first time homebuyers assistance programs. Some of the down payment assistance programs that are available to income qualified residents are the Florida Assist program which offers up to 10,000 dollars in down payment assistance. The Homeownership Assistance for Moderate Income (HAMI) program offers down payment assistance of up to 5,000 dollars. To qualify for the first time homebuyer program in Okaloosa County a family of three or more can make up to \$66,470.

For more information on these programs contact the Florida Housing Finance Corporation at (850) 488-4197 or visit their website at www.floridahousing.org.

- Okaloosa County also receives funding every fiscal year from the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP). The SHIP program is part of the 1992 Sadowski Housing Act. Funding for the SHIP program is generated from documentary stamp taxes on all sales of real property in Florida. During the fiscal year 2007/2008 the Florida Housing Finance Corporation distributed \$188,659 dollars to the City of Fort Walton Beach and \$1,551,741 dollars to Okaloosa County. The Okaloosa County Community Development Corporation allocates the money accordingly throughout community by following the guidelines set forth in the Local Housing Assistance Plan. The Lovejoy Community qualifies for SHIP funding, however, this funding is available to all residents in Okaloosa County and the Lovejoy Community is not guaranteed a set aside amount each year. For more information about SHIP funding contact Pat Sunnarborg, SHIP Administrator, Okaloosa County Community Development Corporation at 850 863-1969 or pattisun@embarqmail.com.

5.2.6 Outcome

With the implementation of the above tasks, the GSHFP and its members will create a Lovejoy Community Housing Coalition that will promote new homeownership opportunities for the community. The number of homes in probate will be reduced with the assistance of non profit legal services. Vacant lots which have been contributing to the deterioration of the community will be cleaned up and have new site built homes constructed on them. Many of the manufactured homes in need of rehabilitation will be removed and replaced with site built homes. Additional funding for the Lovejoy Community will be obtained from the Small Cities CDBG application process. These procedures will ensure that everyone in the community has access to safe, secure, standard affordable housing while enhancing access to housing for homeownership.

5.3 Infrastructure Strategy

5.3.1 Goal

Alleviate the presence of standing stormwater having potentially detrimental effects in the Lovejoy Community through the retrofitting of existing stormwater retention and detention facilities and the introduction of native filtering plant species to the Lovejoy Community.

5.3.2 Problem Statement

Residents of the Lovejoy Community have long complained about and collected anecdotal evidence of flooded streets, soil erosion on residential lots, and increasing pollution levels in the Gap Creek basin as a result of inadequate stormwater infrastructure. Given that anecdotal evidence, existing stormwater infrastructure in the community does not appear to have the capacity needed to manage stormwater runoff generated within its neighborhoods or generated elsewhere and flowing through the neighborhoods especially during high precipitation storm events that are common in North Florida. Concurrent with the development of this plan, HDR Engineering is conducting a hydrologic study of the Gap Creek Basin for the City of Fort Walton Beach, Okaloosa County, and the Northwest Florida Water Management District to determine the direction and pattern of water flows and pollution levels throughout the basin. While the study has not been completed and the full extent of the stormwater issues or sources of the floodwaters are not known, there are some mitigation strategies can be undertaken at the present time.

Unfortunately, public funding for infrastructure projects that would alleviate this problem is limited due to reductions in both state and local government revenues as a result of the current economic downturn and changes in public policy. Nevertheless, other possible strategies exist to fund projects within the area. These alternative funding strategies, such as Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU) financing, will allow residents of the community to finance improvement projects within their neighborhoods.

5.3.3 Project Alternatives

Among the alternative strategies considered were two kinds of small scale, low cost interventions. These included landscaped curb extensions to capture, slow, and clean stormwater runoff, and planting rainwater gardens and installing rainwater barrels to filter, clean and reclaim stormwater runoff to use for the irrigation of a for-profit community garden. A more in-depth description of these alternatives is described in Appendix G of this document.

These alternatives were met with a certain amount of skepticism by the study circle participants because of the relative small scale solutions presented by these case studies and concerns about their ability to mitigate stormwater runoff on a regional scale. Indeed, it should be noted that the mitigation of stormwater in the Lovejoy Community is a regional issue. Due to the topography of community and the surrounding region, much of the stormwater that falls in this region flows through the Lovejoy Community on its way to the Gap Creek Basin. Therefore, because this is a regional issue, the community may be better served by soliciting the county to further consider the implementation of a county-wide stormwater utility, which the county is currently exploring. The implementation of a county-wide stormwater utility would relieve the residents of the Lovejoy Community of the financial burden associated with managing stormwater runoff at the neighborhood level, and would also allow for the more efficient management of what is considered by many to be a regional issue.

5.3.4 Objectives

Objective 1.0: Restore the functionality of stormwater infrastructure through the retrofitting of current stormwater facilities to ensure the originally designed capacity is available to correctly manage stormwater runoff. This objective shall be completed by the end of year two of the planning time frame.

Task 1.1: Restore function of two existing retention/detention ponds in planning area by re-grading and cleaning the bottom, re-shaping and stabilizing the slopes.

Objective 2.0: Increase stormwater capacity within existing stormwater facilities in order to better manage stormwater runoff. This objective shall be completed by the end of year two of the planning time frame.

Task 2.1: Increase the capacity of retention pond located behind W.E. Combs Elementary School by dredging the bottom and increasing the overall size of the retention pond. The amount of additional volume needed to better manage stormwater runoff is determined on a site-specific basis by county engineers.

Objective 3.0: Create passive recreation uses around the stormwater facilities that will enhance the quality of life within the community while also maintaining the area's capacity to manage stormwater runoff by creating more permeable surface within the neighborhood. This objective shall be completed by the end of year five of the planning time frame.

Task 3.1: Plant filtering native vegetation on repetitive loss properties and vacant lots within the neighborhoods.

Task 3.2: Plant more native flora and, using permeable construction materials, build nature trails and place park benches for use by the general public.

Task 3.3: Create a passive use park on repetitive loss properties in Sylvania Heights owned by Okaloosa County.

5.3.5 Capacity

The GSHFP has proven that it has the capacity to forge partnerships with outside organizations and facilitate community coordination in an effort to improve conditions within the Lovejoy Community. However, GSHFP lacks the technical tools needed to implement the infrastructure strategies presented herein. Therefore, more in-depth technical expertise will need to be available to implement these infrastructure objectives. Specifically, the City of Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa County and each local government's respective consultants will

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play a pivotal role in the community's ability to implement these objectives. Each of these local governments has a substantial amount of technical expertise in planning, geographic information systems (GIS), the implementation of the MSBU process, and oversight of similar projects, such as the Tanglewood Retention Pond Restoration project, which was undertaken by the county in 2003. In addition, because the retention pond within the W.E. Combs Neighborhood is located on property being leased to the University of West Florida by the Okaloosa County School Board, it is imperative that each of these organizations is involved in the implementation process.

5.3.6 Implementation

The implementation of the proposed project will begin with an inter-local agreement between Okaloosa County and the City of Fort Walton Beach. Currently, the City of Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa County each operate successful MSBUs within their jurisdictions. However, this MSBU will be the first of its kind to be implemented via an inter-local agreement between the two jurisdictions. Therefore, it is possible that issues may arise during the MSBU process that will prolong or hinder the implementation of the MSBU program within the Lovejoy Community.

The creation of an inter-local agreement will allow for the establishment of a cross-jurisdictional Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU) from which funds will become available to implement the proposed project. The City of Fort Walton Beach City Council and the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners will levy the assessments for the MSBU in addition to making sure the projects are carried out.

MSBUs are monetary assessments placed on each property within a specific area that allow funds to accumulate in order to finance area-specific improvement projects. The financial collection process for the MSBU is developed on a case by case basis. This plan will have a financial collection process that has the property occupants paying into the MSBU via their utility bill. The structure of the MSBU initialization process will follow the *Okaloosa County Municipal Services Benefit Unit Policy and Procedures for Road Construction, Improvement and Maintenance* guidelines (see Appendix I). The 12 steps required to implement a MSBU are:

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1. Initial request for MSBU procedures
2. Application for MSBU district
3. Application Review and Approval
4. Preliminary Engineering Report
5. Petition Submission
6. Petition Acceptance
7. Preparation of Ordinance
8. Public Hearing to establish MSBU
9. Creation of Advisory Committee
10. Intent Resolution and public hearing
11. Implementation
12. Final public hearing to establish final assessments

***Adoption of Resolution or Ordinance follows**

Source: Okaloosa County Municipal Services Benefit Unit Policy and Procedures for Road Construction, Improvement and Maintenance

Once the resolution or ordinance has been adopted, the residents within the MSBU district will begin paying into the MSBU fund via their utility bill. The amount they pay will be decided in the final step of the initialization process. The amount of the assessment is based on the cost of the proposed projects. Leveraging the money with a municipal bond will minimize the amount of the assessment. The actual costs of the proposed projects can only be determined by a site-specific preliminary analysis that will need to be completed by city and county staff. When the preliminary estimated cost of the project is determined, it will be possible to determine the estimated cost per dwelling unit residents will incur as a result of MSBU financing.

According to Rick Cosson, lead engineer of the Okaloosa County Public Works Department, estimated costs for a project of this nature will be approximately \$13 per cubic yard. The aforementioned Tanglewood Retention Pond Restoration project had a preliminary estimated cost of approximately \$144,000 to implement similar strategies for an approximately three-acre retention pond. In 2003, the Tanglewood project was completed with a cost of approximately \$5 per cubic yard. The scope of work for the Tanglewood retention pond system was to return the original stormwater design capacity. No additional capacity was created in the Tanglewood project.

The retention pond located behind W.E. Combs Elementary School is approximately four acres in area. The current acre-feet volume for this retention pond is not known. Never the less, the scope of work for this project is similar to the Tanglewood project. With that said, if the volume of capacity was increased by eight acre-feet the estimated cost of the project would be \$167,786 at \$13 per cubic yard (the estimated current construction costs). Leveraging this money with a 10-year municipal bond would reduce the fiscal burden imposed upon the Lovejoy Community. As of April 2008, a 10-year municipal bond has an interest rate of 3.92%. After leveraging this money, the monthly fiscal burden imposed upon the residents of the Lovejoy Community is estimated to be \$4.25 per month. This estimated cost per household is based upon the 400 occupied dwelling units within the Lovejoy Community. The number of dwelling units was calculated by using data from the 2000 U.S. Census.

Due to rising fuel prices, it is likely that the fuel needed to operate the heavy excavation equipment required for the project will substantially increase the costs of the proposed project. If oil prices continue to rise, it might be necessary to use a 20-year or 30-year bond to leverage the money needed. Leveraging the money needed over a longer term, as the price of project increases, will reduce the monthly costs to residents. With that said, we feel that this project and the MSBU process are feasible for the residents of the Lovejoy Community.

5.3.7 Outcome

The existing stormwater retention/detention facilities designed to service the Lovejoy Community have been degraded, leading to standing stormwater within the community, and the pollution of the Gap Creek Basin. By retrofitting existing stormwater detention/retention facilities, planting native filtering vegetation on repetitive loss properties within the community, and creating passive use recreation areas around these facilities, it is anticipated that standing water after heavy rains will be mitigated and pollution levels within the Gap Creek Basin decreased if impermeable surface areas are not increased and if other facilities in the system are maintained. This outcome will promote not only environmental stewardship, but also public health. However, it is possible that further steps may need to be taken in order to completely alleviate the stormwater problem within the Lovejoy Community.

5.4 Environment Strategy

5.4.1 Goal

Improve the environmental quality of the Lovejoy Community by identifying the extent of any human exposure to environmental hazards and mitigating the effects of those exposures on public health and safety.

5.4.2 Problem Statement

The Lovejoy Community is adjacent to an industrial park, a United States military installation, and includes industrial uses mixed into an otherwise residential neighborhood. Several community members believe that there has been significant environmental damage in the community that has been caused by these industrial and defense uses and that environmental degradation is ongoing. The community also suspects that the presence of hazardous (ignitable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic) materials is causing health problems for residents of the community. Nevertheless, only a few parcels in the community have been tested for the presence of toxins. These are the former landfill site at the intersection of Lovejoy Road and Ready Avenue where a Phase II Environmental Assessment was performed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection but no cleanup action was taken; Hurlburt Field where several cleanup operations have been undertaken by the military; and the Okaloosa County Road Department Site on Ready Avenue where there have been three separate petroleum spills between 1986 and 1991 which have contaminated the groundwater in the area and is currently undergoing cleanup activities by Earth Tech. Other sites that are suspected of contamination have not been tested, and no link between the industrial uses and the community health outcomes has been established.

There are also several hazardous waste generators located within this area permitted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, including two large quantity generators, two small quantity generators and seven conditionally exempt handlers. There are also three facilities that have self-reported toxic releases. The chemicals released by these facilities are methyl methacrylate and styrene.

Additionally, the average construction year of the housing stock in this community is 1973. Houses built before 1978 potentially contain lead-based paint, which has been linked to lead poisoning and resulting neurological damage, especially in children.

Residents are also concerned that the refuse that has littered neighborhood streets and Gap Creek not only creates environmental, health, and public safety concerns, but also creates an atmosphere that may attract further destructive behavior.

5.4.3 Alternative Strategies

Before discussing the recommended strategies for addressing this problem, the strategies that were discussed in the public involvement process are presented. While these strategies are not recommended at this time, it is possible that the circumstances in the community may change making these strategies more feasible.

As presented in the case study titled *New Hampshire Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (NH COSH)*, see Appendix G.4, developing a community health survey to attempt to establish a link between the toxins present in the community and any existing public health issues was proposed. Despite enthusiasm for this strategy, it was determined that undertaking an epidemiological study without fully understanding the environmental conditions in the community would not provide a useful outcome. Epidemiological studies are also costly in terms of time and resources and may not be able to be implemented within the five year time frame.

Also discussed in the public involvement process was creating the opportunity for youth from the Department of Juvenile Justice or adults from the Department of Corrections to serve community service requirements in the Lovejoy Community by removing litter and garbage from the vacant lots. While this strategy may be a successful one and has been used in the past in the area, it does not involve the residents and in fact requires that they are not present while the cleanups are taking place. The strategy proposed in the third project below, accomplishes a similar task while also engaging the community to participate in the action.

5.4.4 Project 1 Approach: Identify and Reduce Toxins

In order to assess the extent of environmental problems in the Lovejoy Community and to understand whether or not any connection to negative public health effects exists, the residents should form a broad based cooperative partnership between residents, local governments, business owners and Eglin Air Force Base. This partnership will bring all of the stakeholders together to increase the community knowledge of the potential hazards and remove any barriers to communication between stakeholder groups. The partnership will also ensure that any future solutions to environmental problems will be created by community-wide consensus and, thus, involve the best interests of each stakeholder group. This partnership will be the basis for securing funding and coordinating the implementation of programs.

The partnership will coordinate the identification the potential sources of multi-media toxic exposure (exposure through the air, water, or ground) and prioritize the clean-up of hazards that have the greatest potential to harm public health. The identification process will include the mapping of perceived and known hazards, testing for the existence of hazards in the areas where they are expected to exist in order to determine the need for remedial action, and the creation of detailed report of the harms that existing toxins may cause.

5.4.4.1 Objectives

Objective 1.0: Develop cooperative partnerships with public and private agencies to create a community-wide consensus on the solutions to any identified environmental problems within year one.

Task 1.0: Establish a community-based partnership and collaborative stakeholder group.

Sub-Task 1.1: Convene a collaborative partnership under the umbrella of GSHFP as described in section 5.1

Sub-Task 1.2: Identify individuals within each of the following stakeholder groups who are willing and committed to participating in this partnership, including the following.

- Representatives from the tenants of the City of Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park and representatives from each type of business (e.g. gas stations, restaurants etc.) outside of the industrial park but located within the community
- Representatives from the City of Fort Walton Beach Planning Department and representatives from Okaloosa County Planning Department
- Representatives from the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County
- Representatives from the Eglin Air Force Base 96th Civil Engineer Group, Environmental Management Division
- Faith-based organization leaders representing the community
- Representatives from the W.E. Combs neighborhood association and GSHFP to represent residents

Sub-Task 1.3: Adopt a memo of understanding stating that each member is willing to look fairly at their potential contribution to the environmental hazards in the community and is willing to participate in voluntary programs to reduce these risks. This agreement demonstrates the commitment of each partner to improving the state of the community and is important for addressing all causes of environmental damage from the industrial to the individual level.

Objective 2.0: Identify potential sources of exposure to environmental hazards that may be detrimental to public health and safety in year one and two.

Task 2.1: Using the City of Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa County GIS staff, data and facilities and EPA data on toxic chemical handlers, create a database of the following information within the Lovejoy Community:

- Existing commercial properties
- Types of toxic materials present at each commercial property
- Homes built before 1978
- Schools, playgrounds, parks and other public space
- Confirmed and suspected contaminated sites

Task 2.2: Create GIS map layers from this data to identify locations in the community with high potential for toxic exposure and, therefore, high risk for public health and safety. Use these materials to educate the community and the collaborative partnership on the existing environmental conditions in order to help identify and prioritize potential clean-up actions.

Task 2.3: Obtain and compile relevant reports from EPA on the environmental and health consequences of each toxin present in the community and the potential exposure vectors. Use these materials to educate the community and the collaborative partnership on the existing environmental conditions to help prioritize clean-up actions.

Task 2.4: Engage an environmental consultant to test for existence of toxins.

Sub-Task 2.4.1: Conduct indoor and outdoor air quality monitoring

Sub-Task 2.4.2: Test soils for contamination

Sub-Task 2.4.3: Conduct lead based paint testing in homes built before 1978

Objective 3.0: Secure funding to access technical assistance and professional expertise in order to sustain the partnerships developed and to undertake environmental testing in years one through three.

Task 3.1: Seek EPA Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) grant.

Sub-Task 3.1.1: Write grant proposal by March 2009 for Level I funding as described in section 5.4.4.3

Sub-Task 3.1.2: Create logic model of programs to include in the application

- Define
 - the resources, contributions, and investments that go into the program;
 - the activities, services, events or products that are created to reach people who participate;
 - the results or changes for individuals, groups, or communities;
 - the assumptions made; and
 - the external forces on the process to create a graphic representation.

5.4.4.2 Capacity

Several entities resources are available to inform and to accomplish these tasks.

- GSHFP will be the lead entity in obtaining the CARE grant.
- In terms of land area, the Lovejoy Community is located partially within the City of Fort Walton Beach limits. The city has shown its commitment to improving this community through its extensive participation in the public involvement process and in its allocation of resources to the W.E. Combs neighborhood. As the owner of the City of Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park, the city has the ability to effect change in the industrial

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area of the neighborhoods. The city also brings GIS mapping expertise and environmental planning experience to the partnership.

- Okaloosa County should be involved because the remainder of the community lies in this jurisdiction. The county offers GIS mapping expertise as well as planning expertise.
- Eglin Air Force Base represents the largest use of land in Okaloosa County; and Hurlburt Field, a subsection of the air force base, borders the Lovejoy Community. Hurlburt Field is home to several industrial uses, and there has been some evidence of soil and groundwater contamination within the boundaries of the base, although studies on this contamination maintain that it has not spread beyond the boundaries of Hurlburt Field. It is important for representatives from Eglin Air Force Base to be involved in this program because of its significant presence in the area and in order to improve the relationship between the installation and the community by bringing information to the partnership.
- It is important for representatives of the businesses located in the City of Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park to be involved in this strategy so that there is greater transparency regarding the types of materials being handled here and regarding safety precautions. Also, these businesses could potentially improve their operations to help reduce the risk of toxic exposure. These businesses also bring expertise on the handling of the chemicals that they use and information on the consequences of using these chemicals.
- Other local businesses both within the Lovejoy Community and immediately adjacent to the community ought to be involved in this strategy to have input on the programs that are implemented and to learn about ways that they can improve the environmental quality of the area.
- Other non-governmental resources/entities such as the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice at Dillard University in New Orleans, the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University in Georgia and the Center for Environmental Equity and Justice at

Florida A&M University could aid the Lovejoy Community in pursuit of environmental justice issues.

- The Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DSCEJ) provides programs of research, education, and community partnership. Also DSCEJ produces paradigms to address environmental injustice, demonstration of an integrative research and policy approach, and a sound and effective model of a community/university partnership, all to address environmental justice in a region of the country that has disproportionately borne the burden of environmental degradation.
 - The Environmental Justice Resource Center (EJRC) at Clark Atlanta University develops partnerships among “impacted” communities and historically black colleges and universities and other minority academic institutions. EJRC assists community groups in implementing benchmarks they have set for themselves. Lastly, EJRC facilitates the development of mechanisms for the inclusion of underrepresented groups into public decision making.
 - The Center for Environmental Equity and Justice (CEEJ) purpose is to conduct and facilitate research, policies, engage in education, training, and community outreach activities with respect to environmental equity and justice issues.
- The University of West Florida brings research and implementation capacity through several of its programs. Several students from the University of West Florida have already conducted research on the demographics of and environmental justice issues in the Lovejoy Community. There is certainly the potential to continue a partnership on an informal or potentially a formal basis.
 - Wild Law and the North Florida Legal Services have already been involved with studying the environmental issues in the Lovejoy Community. These two organizations bring legal expertise on environmental issues and toxic cleanup.

While the Lovejoy Community does have a number of resources available to help implement these programs, there is some capacity that is missing. Currently, there is no funding available to the GSHFP from the State of Florida and, given the current fiscal outlook for the state, this is not expected to change soon. Due to this lack of funding the GSHFP does not currently have full time staff member. Also, while the above partners bring many to the table, there is a lack of technical environmental testing capacity.

With the funding opportunities offered by the EPA, the Lovejoy Community can create new capacity by funding a full-time staff member for the GSHFP, as described in section 5.1, and hiring an environmental consulting firm to conduct the necessary environmental testing work.

5.4.4.3 Implementation

The CARE program offers two levels of funding depending on the capacity of the organization. The GSHFP would likely benefit from seeking Level 1 funding which would provide up to \$100,000 over two years to build the community's capacity to identify and reduce the level of toxic exposure in the community. Past grantees have received training and technical assistance to engage stakeholders and develop tools to reach consensus (US Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.d). The CARE program is designed to assist grant recipients in using other EPA programs and provides the EPA a significant role in the implementation of the funding. Ultimately the goal of the Level I funding is to secure Level II funding and then to become a financially self-sustaining organization working to improve the local environment. Communities that have received Level II funding have implemented programs such as educational programs, green space acquisition, mass transit projects and toxics risk assessments. While not all aspects of the CARE program may be exactly the approach that the GSHFP would take, the program seems to match the goal extremely well and provide the structure for improving the Lovejoy environment. The Request for Proposals for the 2008 CARE Program, which describes in detail the requirements for application and the benefits of receiving funding, can be downloaded from http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html#0802.

With this funding the following organizations would be responsible for the following tasks.

Greater Sylvania Heights Front Porch, Inc.

- Responsible for forming collaborative partnership
- Using results of mapping exercise to education the residents of the community and the collaborative partnership
- Act as the responsible agency for the CARE grant program

City of Fort Walton Beach/Okaloosa County/University of West Florida

- Write grant proposals
- Undertake data collection and GIS analysis

Business Leaders

- Actively participate in collaborative partnership

Eglin Air Force Base

- Actively participate in collaborative partnership

Environmental Consultant

- Conduct environmental testing

Wild Law/North Florida Legal Services

- Continue to provide legal support, as needed, for identifying and improving environmental conditions

5.4.4.4 Outcome

With the implementation of the above tasks, the GSHFP is expected to be able to have a functioning broad-based community partnership in which all of the stakeholders in the partnership make a commitment to reduce the presence of toxics in the community. The GSHFP and the community will have a complete understanding of the toxic hazard exposure to the community and have enough information to prioritize any needed clean-up effort.

5.4.5 Project 2 Approach: Brownfield Identification

The discovery and rejuvenation of the properties within the Lovejoy Community that are contaminated or perceived to be contaminated would help the community improve the overall environmental condition of the area. The Brownsfield Redevelopment Act (§§ 376.77-376.85, F.S.) provides a structure through which this community could pursue the redevelopment of certain properties. The West Florida Regional Planning Council (WFRPC) is in the process of creating a regional brownsfield area that will consist of sites across the WFRPC planning area.

5.4.5.1 Objectives

Objective 1.0: GSHFP, in consultation with the WFRPC and local property owners, identify potential sites for brownsfield designation based on the requirements in §§ 376.77-376.85, F.S in years one and two.

Task 1.1: Using the maps created in Project 1, identify parcels in the Lovejoy Community that are abandoned, idle or underused commercial property that may be contaminated or perceived to be contaminated.

Task 1.2: GSHFP coordinate with WFRPC to obtain funding from the Brownfield Redevelopment Act to redevelop properties.

5.4.5.2 Capacity:

Some resources available to accomplish these tasks are:

- GSHFP, as the central organization of the Lovejoy Community Coalition, has the ability to identify willing property owners and to provide the information it obtains to implement the above strategies.
- The WFRPC brings extensive technical knowledge on the designation of brownsfields. It also can act as the administrator for any areas that are subsequently designated.

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- GSHFP will coordinate with Florida Department of Environmental Protection Northwest District’s brownfields coordinator (Alexander Webster) to obtain funding within four months, after funds are allocated in May, to WFRPC for brownfield identification and cleanup.
- The City of Fort Walton Beach has already considered designating several sites as brownfields areas and therefore brings technical knowledge on the process and requirements of designation.
- Other non-governmental resources/entities such as the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice at Dillard University in New Orleans, the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University in Georgia and the Center for Environmental Equity and Justice at Florida A&M University could aid the Lovejoy community in pursuit of environmental justice issues.
 - The Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DSCEJ) provides programs of research, education, and community partnership. Also DSCEJ produces paradigms to address environmental injustice, demonstration of an integrative research and policy approach, and a sound and effective model of a community/university partnership, all to address environmental justice in a region of the country that has disproportionately borne the burden of environmental degradation
 - The Environmental Justice Resource Center (EJRC) at Clark Atlanta University develops partnerships among “impacted” communities and historically black colleges and universities and other minority academic institutions. EJRC assists community groups in implementing benchmarks they have set for themselves. Lastly, EJRC facilitates the development of mechanisms for the inclusion of underrepresented groups into public decision making.
 - The Center for Environmental Equity and Justice (CEEJ) purpose is to conduct and facilitate research, policies, engage in education, training, and community outreach activities with respect to environmental equity and justice issues.

- Individual property owners who own potentially contaminated sites, or sites with the perception of contamination, and who are willing to undertake clean-up of their property are vital to this process. Having willing owners is the first step toward completing the clean-up and beginning the revitalization process.

5.4.5.3 Implementation

The Florida Brownfield Revitalization Act (§§ 376.77-376.85, F.S.) was created to provide financial assistance for brownfield revitalization. The EPA is authorized to issue grants to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning at brownfields. Grants can be awarded on a community wide or site specific basis and can be used on both petroleum and hazardous substances sites. The EPA is also authorized to issue grants for brownfield cleanup.

5.4.5.4 Outcome

Upon implementation of this strategy and actual designation of brownfield sites, several underutilized commercial sites should be revitalized. As a condition for acceptance as a brownfield site under the statute, the property must produce five new permanent jobs when the clean-up process is complete. While there are likely to be few sites within the residential area of the Lovejoy Community that qualify for this designation there is the potential for several sites nearby that should qualify.

5.4.6 Project 3 Approach: Community Cleanup

The Lovejoy Community has coordinated community clean-up efforts in the past that have been moderately successful. GHSFP, working with the Environmental Unit of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office (OCSO), have hosted clean-up activities with bulldozers to assist in the removal of large areas of garbage that accumulate in the neighborhoods. These efforts, despite being welcomed by residents, have been limited by the lack of participation by the residents. Better coordination among the residents, OCSO, and the waste management companies servicing the area will improve the results of this type of effort by increasing awareness and support.

5.4.6.1 Objectives:

Objective 1.0: Provide the opportunity for residents to dispose of large quantities of waste and/or hazardous wastes in year one and annually thereafter.

Task 1.1: GSHFP should coordinate with the waste companies serving the two neighborhoods (Waste Management and Allied Waste) to provide a dumpster, two times per year for a community-wide clean-up day.

Task 1.2: GSHFP should initiate an advertising campaign to increase awareness among the residents of this event and encourage participation.

Objective 2.0: Increase execution of waste pick-up by contracted companies in year one and annually thereafter.

Task 2.1: GSHFP should initiate an advertising campaign to educate residents on the importance of notifying the responsible company of any missed curb-side pickup.

Task 2.2: GSHFP should initiate a campaign to educate residents on the services provided to them through the contracted waste services provided by the City of Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa County.

5.4.6.2 Capacity:

- The GSHGP, acting as the coordinating agency for this plan and the representation of the residents to the Lovejoy Community Coalition, brings organizational and capacity to this strategy.
- Allied Waste and Waste Management have the service capacity to assist the Lovejoy Community in clean-up activities.

5.4.6.3 Implementation

The waste management companies serving the community should provide available resources, such as dumpsters and pickup schedules, to aid the neighborhood clean-up projects. The Lovejoy Community Coalition will facilitate the organization of community volunteers and education for residents on the benefits of neighborhood involvement in the revitalization process.

5.4.6.4 Outcome:

Upon implementation of the above strategy, the residents of the Lovejoy Community will have increased awareness of the services available to them to keep their neighborhood clean, as well as, increased opportunity to actively participate in clean-up activities. Also, the result of implementing this strategy will be improved environmental conditions in the community by removing large quantities of garbage and, therefore, removing the potential hazards that are associated with this garbage.

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