

CENTER *for* CITIES & SCHOOLS



Evaluation of the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI Redevelopment

**The Center for Cities & Schools
University of California, Berkeley**

May 2006

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Prepared for the Oakland Housing Authority, Oakland, California

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2000, the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) received a HOPE VI grant to demolish the aging and distressed Westwood Gardens project, and to redevelop the site as a pioneer development in West Oakland's revitalization. OHA chose BRIDGE Housing as the developers of the site. Between 2000-2005, the development of the new Mandela Gateway HOPE VI project has come to be a symbol of the positive investment and opportunities that lay ahead of the West Oakland neighborhood.

Providing a one-for-one replacement of the 46 public housing units demolished, Mandela Gateway is a transit-oriented, mixed-income and mixed-use development located directly across the street from the West Oakland BART station. By assembling parcels adjacent to the original Westwood Garden site, Mandela Gateway houses approximately four times as many residents as did Westwood Gardens, and it serves residents at a variety of income levels. The award-winning development is based upon New Urbanist principles and is designed with residents and neighborhood security in mind.

In addition to addressing the need for new design and a neighborhood-serving orientation, the Westwood Gardens/Mandela Gateway HOPE VI revitalization process incorporated Community and Supportive Services into its funding. The original Westwood Gardens residents received relocation assistance during construction, and were provided with referrals to established social service organizations in Oakland.

This evaluation examines the impact that the Westwood Gardens/Mandela Gateway HOPE VI redevelopment had on the lives of residents, and on efforts to revitalize the historic West Oakland neighborhood. It also analyzes the effectiveness of the building's design in increasing on-site security and providing spaces for community building and service provision. The goal of this evaluation is to inform future HOPE VI efforts in ways to provide effective CSS service to residents and to create developments that are assets to the surrounding neighborhoods, and to the city.

Overall, this evaluation finds that:

- **The overall impact of HOPE VI on the lives of residents was positive.** While the Community and Supportive Services (CSS) funded through HOPE VI took time to get started, recruitment and participation among residents increased over time. By partnering with leading local service organizations, OHA created a flexible and adaptable program that addressed the needs of a diverse and scattered resident population. Partnering with BRIDGE Housing, CSS services expanded at Mandela Gateway to include a wide array of after school and summer youth programs, computer training, job placement assistance and on-site community building. Attempts to study the impact of HOPE VI on youth were frustrated by a lack of access to academic and school attendance data, but later reports of youth participation in CSS services indicate that they were receptive to the programs and participated actively over the course of the HOPE VI grant. Most residents expressed satisfaction with their relocation housing and the return rate of Westwood Gardens residents to Mandela Gateway was higher than the national average for HOPE VI sites.
- **Mandela Gateway is a pioneer development in West Oakland and has made a significant contribution to the revitalization of the area.** Although Mandela Gateway is not directly connected with the City's official Redevelopment efforts in West Oakland, the development falls in line with the goals the Oakland Redevelopment Agency (ORA) has set for the community. As a transit-oriented development (TOD), Mandela Gateway was the first large-scale residential

development next to the BART station, and its construction has attracted new investors to the area. However, the street level retail spaces remain untenanted, and this vacancy has kept the development from thriving and contributing to the revitalization of the historic 7th Street District.

- **The physical design of Mandela Gateway has improved security on-site, and is an effective building for providing community services to residents.** Mandela Gateway's location and award-winning design have added to a renewed sense of optimism in the revitalization of the West Oakland neighborhood. On-site, the design facilitates effective CSS provision and provides residents with a safe, attractive and well-managed place to live.
- **Administrative challenges made the efficient provision of CSS services difficult, and it is essential that they be remedied in order to improve the efficiency and evaluation of future CSS provision.** Staff turnover during the CSS contracting process delayed the provision of services until after Westwood Gardens residents had already relocated. While the service providers chosen to serve HOPE VI residents are well-established leaders in Oakland, they were not prepared to perform the intensive outreach necessary to recruit a scattered resident population. As a result, the CSS program started late and its effectiveness was limited. Similarly late in starting was the installation of an effective database to track residents' participation in CSS services. A database was not installed until the final months of the HOPE VI grant. By this time, Mandela Gateway was already fully leased and the service provision model had changed to include new, as well as, original HOPE VI residents. While CSS participation increased dramatically at this time, data was not collected in a way that enabled a thorough analysis of the impact of the CSS programs on the original HOPE VI population.

2. INTRODUCTION

About HOPE VI

The federal HOPE VI program was created in 1993 to address the problems of severely distressed public housing nationwide. The original HOPE VI sites were aging, dilapidated structures whose need for either physical rehabilitation or replacement was acute. Initial studies of distressed public housing sites reported broken elevators, unrepaired trash incinerators, mold, water leaks, roach and rodent infestations, broken plumbing and other major building systems.¹ The substandard quality of the housing units was seen as a major contributor to the ill physical, and often, mental health of residents. Deteriorated living conditions in severely distressed public housing are believed to contribute to the higher than average incidents of asthma, lead exposure, and chronic physical and mental illness reported by public housing residents.² The initial goal of HOPE VI was to improve the quality of housing and living environments of residents through the demolition, rehabilitation and replacement of the nation's most severely distressed public housing.

Since 1993, the goal of HOPE VI has expanded and taken on a neighborhood-based approach to revitalizing public housing sites. Largely due to the blighting effects of distressed public housing, HOPE VI neighborhoods were areas experiencing high levels of concentrated poverty, unemployment, and violent crime. Many were notorious as America's worst public housing projects, located in its worst neighborhoods. The areas lacked the basic physical infrastructure and social institutions that flourishing neighborhoods take for granted: libraries, parks, supermarkets, quality schools, banks and commercial centers. HOPE VI has attempted to position the rehabilitation and replacement of severely distressed public housing as a catalyst for positive change in the neighborhoods surrounding HOPE VI developments.

From its inception, HOPE VI attempted to address the negative social conditions that plagued the most notorious, distressed housing sites, and created unhealthy, stressful and often dangerous living environments. Many of the sites were high density, high rise apartment structures, plagued by violence, drug use and sales, and turf warfare between rival gangs. Isolation, segregation, chronic unemployment and intergenerational poverty were viewed as major contributors to the negative social environments many of these neighborhoods sustained, and later HOPE VI efforts sought to decrease the concentration of poverty through the development of mixed-income housing. One of the driving principles behind HOPE VI was the belief that deconcentrating poverty would counter the pervasive negative social climate inherent in many of these developments.

Across the nation, HOPE VI provided the capital that housing authorities needed to relocate residents, demolish and rehabilitate the worst public housing structures. By providing funds to support Community and Supportive Services (CSS) along with physical construction, HOPE VI attempted to blend traditional place- and people-based community development approaches into a new, comprehensive revitalization model.

HOPE VI developments attempt to create vibrant, sustainable new communities by incorporating a broad mix of incomes into the new projects, and by designing each to fit the local context of the

¹ Popkin, et al. "Baseline Report." p. 3-1 (2002)

² Ibid., pp.5-7, 5-9

surrounding neighborhoods. Most HOPE VI projects decreased density on site, and included an array of housing products to attract a broad income mix of residents. HOPE VI developments often include public amenities such as parks, community meeting rooms, and commercial spaces in their final designs. Taking on a neighborhood-based approach to redeveloping distressed public housing has reinvigorated many of these “worst-case” neighborhoods, and has laid the groundwork for encouraging private investment in areas that have been disinvested for decades.³

The Impact of HOPE VI on Residents

National studies indicate that HOPE VI residents are faring better as a result of HOPE VI than they were before. In particular, residents who relocated using Sec. 8 vouchers have reported living in neighborhoods with lower poverty rates than they had prior to HOPE VI. Approximately forty percent of the residents who did not return to the HOPE VI site after redevelopment reported living in census tracts with less than 20 percent poverty.⁴ However, given the high rate of concentrated poverty in the neighborhoods that they had been living in before relocation, the reported improvements are not surprising.

Although HOPE VI residents report living in less poor neighborhoods, the rate of racial segregation has remained high, particularly for African-American and Hispanic residents. This trend is consistent between residents who moved to other PHA units and those using Sec. 8 vouchers. One study of neighborhoods located outside of Chicago found that almost all of the residents who relocated with vouchers moved to neighborhoods that were at least ninety percent African-American.⁵

HOPE VI tracking studies have found that relocated residents are generally satisfied with their relocation housing and that they report feeling safer and healthier after relocation.⁶ In particular, stress, anxiety and depression levels were found to have decreased for many residents once they settled into their relocation units.⁷ Studies have also found that HOPE VI children generally attend less distressed, higher performing school after relocation. However, academic achievement data indicates that the change in school environment can have an adverse impact on student performance, particularly when relocation takes places during the school year.⁸

Displacement Debate

Studies of early HOPE VI projects found that at the end of the HOPE VI process, nineteen percent of households were living in revitalized HOPE VI developments, twenty-nine percent were living in other PHA units, thirty-three percent were renting units using Sec. 8 vouchers and eighteen percent had left assisted housing altogether.⁹ Critics of HOPE VI argue that the low percentage of relocated residents

³ For detailed accounts of neighborhood conditions before and after revitalization in selected sites nationwide see: Sean Zielenbach. “Assessing Economic Change in HOPE VI Neighborhoods.”(2003), Susan Popkin, et. al. “HOPE VI Panel Study: Baseline Report.” (2002)

Susan Popkin et. al. “A Decade of HOPE VI: Research Findings and Policy Challenges.” (2004)

Mindy Turbov and Valerie Piper. “HOPE VI Mixed-Finance Redevelopments: A Catalyst for Neighborhood Renewal.” (2005)

⁴ Susan Popkin et. al. “A Decade of HOPE VI: Research Findings and Policy Challenges.” P. 29 (2004)

⁵ Ibid., p. 29

⁶ Ibid., p. 30

⁷ For a detailed accounts of HOPE VI residents’ health before and after relocation, see: Popkin, et al. “Baseline Report.” (2002)

Popkin, et al. “How are HOPE VI Families Faring? Children.” (2004)

⁸ For the most detailed account of the effect of HOPE VI on the lives of children, see: Popkin, et al. “How are HOPE VI Families Faring? Children.” (2004)

⁹ Susan Popkin et. al. “A Decade of HOPE VI: Research Findings and Policy Challenges.” P.28 (2004)

returning to the revitalized HOPE VI sites is evidence that the policy favors displacing undesirable, low-income residents with new, gentrified communities. Rates of return for HOPE VI residents have been shown to vary across different housing sites, but that they generally remain below fifty percent. When asked what their housing preferences would be, most residents expressed that they would like to return to the new development upon completion. Given the low percentage of residents who return to the sites, critics argue that the criteria for return is too high and that housing authorities are doing a disservice to their residents by not preparing them better for the return qualifications.¹⁰ To critics, HOPE VI is simply a new name and face of the old Urban Renewal policies, and that the policy will inevitably result in the destruction of the poorest and neediest communities in the United States.

However, proponents of HOPE VI argue that many of the residents choose not to return to the redeveloped sites after having relocated to satisfactory units elsewhere. They point to studies of residents' overall improved health conditions and perceptions of personal safety as evidence that HOPE VI is proving successful in helping residents improve their living conditions at the same time that it is helping to reinvigorate distressed and disinvested neighborhoods.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid., p.28

¹¹ Ibid., p. 28

The Oakland Housing Authority and HOPE VI

The Oakland Housing Authority received its first HOPE VI grant in 1994 to begin extensively renovating 372 housing units at Lockwood Gardens in East Oakland. As a result of the rehabilitation of Lockwood Gardens, residents have reported an increased level of personal safety on-site, improved policing services, and a decrease in vandalism. The revitalization of Lockwood Gardens was part of a collaboration with the Mayor's office to reduce the amount of violence and drug trafficking taking place in the community surrounding the project.

Since that time, OHA has received an additional three HOPE VI grants to redevelop other public housing sites in the city: Chestnut-Linden Court, and Mandela Gateway in West Oakland, and Coliseum Gardens in East Oakland. At this time, only Coliseum Gardens remains under construction, and the completed HOPE VI sites are leased and fully operational. Chestnut-Linden Court and Mandela Gateway have both won awards for their New Urbanist designs, and have included affordable, tax-credit rental units, PHA units and affordable homeownership units. In each case, the Oakland Housing Authority has contracted with a private property management company to manage the buildings and to enforce lease agreements. BRIDGE Housing, Inc. was the developing partner of both Chestnut-Linden Court and Mandela Gateway. The East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) is the developing partner for the Coliseum Gardens redevelopment.

In addition to providing funds for the physical construction of these developments, HOPE VI grants have provided the funding necessary to implement Community and Supportive Services (CSS) to HOPE VI residents. The grants have funded CSS programs to assist with the relocation of residents to alternate units while construction is underway, and for case management, economic development and educational advancement during the five year HOPE VI period. To provide CSS services to HOPE VI residents, OHA created partnerships with established service providers in Oakland who have experience in delivering services to local community members.

Oakland Housing Authority HOPE VI Grants & Unit Break-Down						
	# Original Units	# PHA Units	# Tax-Credit Units	# Ownership Units	Amount (\$)	Year
Lockwood Gardens	372	372	0	0	\$26,510,020*	1994, 1996
Chestnut-Linden Court	83	59	35	28	\$13,105,010**	1995, 1998
Mandela Gateway	46	76***	92	14	\$ 10,053,254	1999
Coliseum Gardens	178	178	66	85	\$ 34,486,116	2000
Total	679	609	193	127	\$ 44,539,370	

*Includes an implementation grant of \$25,510,020 (1994) and an assistance award of \$1,000,000 (1996)

** Includes a planning grant of \$400,000 (1995) and an implementation grant of \$12,705,010

***Includes 46 PHA units and 30 site-based Sec. 8 units

Source: Housing Research Foundation, <http://www.housingresearch.org>, April 2, 2006

3. MANDELA GATEWAY HOPE VI

West Oakland has been known as one of the toughest neighborhoods in the Bay Area for the past forty years. An important, historic center of the region's African-American community, West Oakland witnessed the industrial "boom" of shipbuilding in WWII, the offense of Urban Renewal, the rise of the first African-American labor union and the Black Panther party, and most recently, the effects of economic decline and large-scale disinvestment. Positioned at the foot of the Bay Bridge, in the midst of a tight real estate market, many city officials and community members hope that positive change and revitalization will come to West Oakland. Others worry that the changes and reinvestment will displace the existing residents of the area, and will result in the loss of the historic heart of the Bay Area's African-American heritage.

However, West Oakland today seems poised for positive change, and to be reconnected to the economy and growth of the Bay Area region. After the collapse of the Cypress Freeway in 1989, new visions of rebuilding West Oakland became possible, and its demolition and reconstruction as Mandela Parkway has freed the neighborhood from the noise and visual blight that the elevated structure had generated for decades.

The region's severe shortage of affordable housing has continued despite a recent economic slowdown, and concerns about an impending population boom in California have drawn many to support Smart Growth, infill development and transit oriented development (TOD). Located at the center of the Bay Area, minutes from downtown San Francisco and the only BART station served by four of the system's five lines, West Oakland has begun to draw the attention of policymakers as a neighborhood ripe for revitalization.

Transformation of a Neighborhood: Westwood Gardens Becomes Mandela Gateway

"No other single location in West Oakland could be redeveloped with more impact on the image and opportunities of the community than the Westwood site. Changing the current conditions of blight, dilapidated housing and grunge uses into quality, well designed mixed income housing with resident and transit-oriented retail, commercial and open space will transform this gateway location at the most important transit stop in the BART system."

~ Oakland Housing Authority, 1999¹²

Built in the early 1960's, the Westwood Gardens development consisted of "four barracks style buildings (three story structures and one two story structure) massed on the central and northern portion of the site around a central courtyard featuring an elaborate array of weed and a partially dismantled play structure."¹³ The development included forty-six severely distressed units and occupied an entire 2.2-acre city block at the western corner of 7th Street and Mandela Parkway. Poor site planning and design

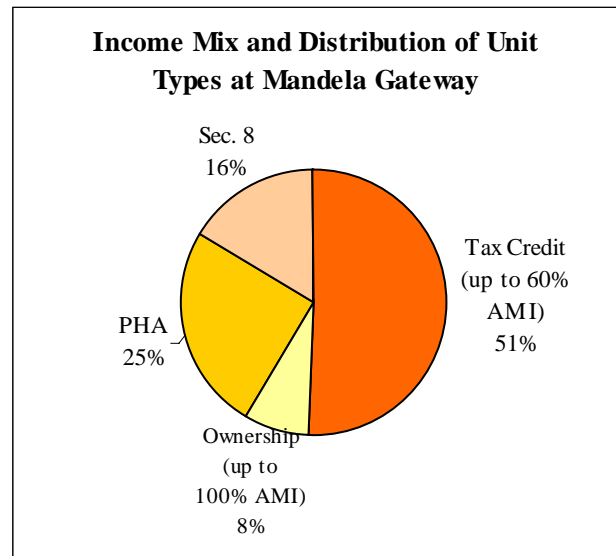
¹² Oakland Housing Authority, "Mandela Gateway: Application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Revitalization of Westwood Gardens under the HOPE VI Program." May 27, 1999, p. 9

¹³ Ibid., p.9

contributed to the “physical and social problems” that plagued the project. The buildings’ inefficient, dilapidated and hazardous conditions only increased its blighting role in the neighborhood.¹⁴

The new Mandela Gateway development includes 168 mixed-income affordable rental units, and 14 affordable ownership units on two larger parcels of land. The resulting development is much larger, and denser than the original buildings. The site design is grounded in New Urbanist principles and incorporates street level commercial spaces, centralized open space, and a high level of security.

Whereas many HOPE VI developments across the country were designed to decrease density on-site, Mandela Gateway was intentionally planned to increase density and to make better use of what many considered underutilized land. The rationale behind increasing density at the site was to incorporate a broader income mix of tenants, and to increase the local demand for retail services. Mandela Gateway also falls in line with the regional Transit Oriented Development (TOD) goal of increasing residential opportunities within walking distance of BART stations.



Westwood Gardens	
Unit Type	# Units
PHA	46
% Occupied	87%
Mandela Gateway HOPE VI	
Unit Type	# Units
PHA	46
Sec. 8	30
Tax Credit (up to 60% AMI)	92
Ownership (up to 100% AMI)	14
Total	182

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 11-13

Resident Demographics

At the time of relocation, there were 40 households living at Westwood Gardens. Over the course of the HOPE VI grant period, twelve households dropped out of the program due to eviction, moving out of the state or death. The remaining 29 households in the HOPE VI program will be the population referred to as the “Westwood Gardens” population for the purposes of this evaluation. As the original HOPE VI residents, it was members of this group who were interviewed for the purposes of this evaluation, and whose participation in CSS services was tracked for multiple years.

The Westwood Gardens HOPE VI community was evenly split between male and female residents, as well as, youth and adult residents, with each comprising close to 50 percent of the total resident population.

In November 2005, there were 49 adult residents age 19 or older. Of these 49, 11 claimed permanent disability, and 4 were 62 years old or older. This resulted in a “work-able” Westwood Gardens adult population of 34 residents. Sixteen percent of the original Westwood Gardens residents were employed at the time the HOPE VI grant ended in November 2005. At that time 14 of the original Westwood Gardens residents were receiving TANF benefits. The average household income of the Westwood Gardens population was \$16,718, approximately 25% AMI for a one-person household. As with most public housing developments prior to HOPE VI, the level of concentrated poverty at Westwood Gardens was very high.

Resident Population Demographic Summary: Westwood Gardens and Mandela Gateway		
	Westwood Gardens*	Mandela Gateway
Total Households	29	168
Total Population	98	422
Average HH size	3.4	2.6
Median HH size	3	2
	% Total	% Total
Gender		
Male	46%	n/a
Female	53%	n/a
Age		
0-18	50%	47%
19-61	46%	n/a
62+	4%	n/a
Employment		
Employed	16%	68%
Unemployed	22%	32%
Disability	11%	n/a
TANF	14%	n/a

*Westwood Gardens summary reflects the 29 households who remained in the HOPE VI program for the duration of the grant.

In contrast, the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI community is a mixed-income, working community. Sixty-eight percent of all households include at least one working adult. Both the OHA and the Section 8 units include 30% employed households and 70% unemployed households. For the OHA units, the proportion of employed households to unemployed households at Mandela Gateway is nearly double that of Westwood Gardens.

Mandela Gateway HOPE VI : Household Employment by Unit Type	
Unit Type	%
PHA (OHA-46 units)	
Employed	30%
Unemployed	70%
Section 8 (30 units)	
Employed	30%
Unemployed	70%
Tax Credit (92 units)	
Employed	100%
Unemployed	0%

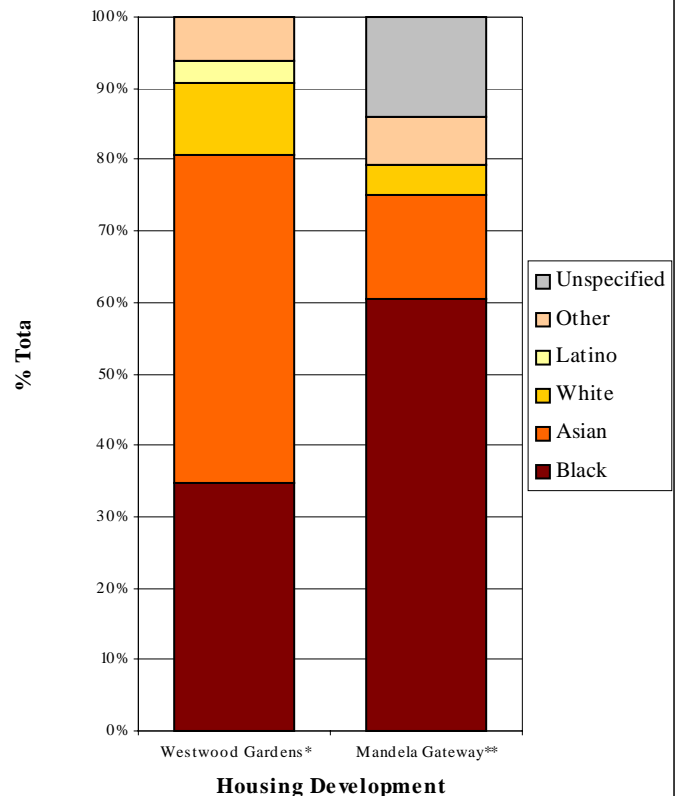
Racial and Ethnic Diversity

In addition to the dramatic changes in employments rates among residents at the two developments, the new Mandela Gateway HOPE VI community has a very different racial and ethnic character than did Westwood Gardens. The largest proportion of residents at Westwood Gardens was Asian, particularly Cambodian immigrant families. Many of these families spoke limited English, and reported that there was not much social interaction between them and the non-Cambodian residents at Westwood Gardens. Many of these households did not choose to return to Mandela Gateway.

Mandela Gateway residents are approximately 60 percent Black, with a much smaller Asian population than had lived at Westwood Gardens previously. The Mandela Gateway population includes a wider representation of races and ethnicities, with White, Multi-racial, Native American and Native Hawaiian, African American, Latino and Asian residents. While the overwhelming majority of residents are non-Hispanic and English-speaking, two households are Arabic-speaking and two households are Hispanic.

The racial and linguistic backgrounds of twenty-five households were unspecified in the development’s database, and so the exact portrait of the cultural diversity within the

Proportion Resident Race and Ethnicity at Westwood Gardens and Mandela Gateway



*Residents listed as “white” are all members of households in which other members of the family are listed as Latino, Black or Asian. This may reflect incomplete in-take forms or database error.

**Included within the “other” category are residents listed as multi-racial, or Native American and Native Hawaiian ancestry.

Mandela Gateway population remains unclear.

Due to the fact that the original Westwood Gardens property and population were both quite small, and Mandela Gateway HOPE VI is much larger in size and population, it is necessary to be specific when discussing resident experiences and CSS provision during HOPE VI. For this reason, both names will be used in this evaluation for the purposes of explaining details about resident experiences, CSS provision and neighborhood revitalization. “Westwood Gardens” is used to describe the original OHA property and the original 29 households remaining in the HOPE VI program throughout the relocation period. “Mandela Gateway” is used to describe the new development, the 168 households living at the site, CSS programs delivered since completion and neighborhood revitalization.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, this evaluation assesses the impacts of the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI project on the following three areas:

- The lives of the HOPE VI residents
- The revitalization of the West Oakland neighborhood
- The interaction between the physical design of the site and CSS provision on site

This report offers insights into the strengths of the Oakland Housing Authority's HOPE VI program, and the challenges encountered over the course of the HOPE VI grant between 2000 and 2005.

Data Gathering and Interviews

Interviews and Focus Groups

In order to gain an understanding of the impacts of the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI project on the lives of HOPE VI public housing residents, individual interviews were conducted with members of nineteen of the original twenty-nine families relocated from the Westwood Gardens site. Interviews were conducted at the residents' homes between November 2004 and April 2005. A member of the Oakland Housing Authority staff was present at all times during the interviews. Translation services for Cambodian residents were provided by Chanta Oum of the Oakland Housing Authority.

Residents answered questions regarding their experiences in the HOPE VI program, including:

- Satisfaction with relocation housing
- Choice to return to Mandela Gateway
- Interaction and support from OHA staff
- Participation in the CSS programs provided through HOPE VI
- School attendance of children
- Perceptions of West Oakland neighborhood and revitalization efforts
- Perceptions of the Mandela Gateway development

To gain an understanding of how the CSS programs were structured and administered through the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI program, Oakland Housing Authority representatives were interviewed on a number of occasions, and they assisted in setting up further interviews and focus groups necessary to this evaluation. A focus group was conducted with CSS providers to gather information about the provision of CSS services through HOPE VI and their views of the strengths and challenges of the program in terms of resident recruitment and participation.

Additional interviews were conducted with Oakland Redevelopment Agency officials, representatives of the BRIDGE Housing, Inc. (developers) and the John Stuart Company (property management) to understand how effectively the Mandela Gateway project operates and interacts with the surrounding neighborhood of West Oakland. These interviews also focused on how Mandela Gateway fits into the long-term revitalization strategies in place for West Oakland, and what these representatives believed were the strengths and challenges of the neighborhood's revitalization process.

Census Data

Census data was used to determine the effects of Mandela Gateway on the revitalization efforts taking place in West Oakland. Data was collected using census data from 1990 and 2000 to understand the demographic and market trends of the area. For data analysis, the 94607 ZIP Code was used to delineate the statistical neighborhood of Mandela Gateway. Although this area also includes the adjacent downtown area of Oakland, the residential population of the downtown was negligible in 1990 and 2000, and so its effects on demographic data within the 94607 area were insignificant.

Census data was used to analyze the following neighborhood demographics and trends:

- Median Income
- Poverty and Public Assistance
- Housing values

Non-Census Data

This evaluation also used other data sources to better assess the impact of the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI project on the lives of residents and the surrounding neighborhood. Due to the fact that the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI grant period began in 2000 and ended in 2005, census data was not available to analyze changes at the neighborhood level during that time. Other data sources were used to determine any changes taking place in the West Oakland neighborhood during the five years of the HOPE VI redevelopment on market and quality of life indicators such as:

- Crime and safety
- Housing values
- Construction permits issued
- Investment in neighboring properties
- Official redevelopment and land use planning
- School quality and test scores

For both census and non-census data, all dollar amounts have been adjusted to 2005 values in order to make comparisons between years possible.

Resident tracking data was provided by the Oakland Housing Authority, and data specifying the participation of HOPE VI residents in CSS programs was found in service providers' closeout reports to OHA.

Data Issues

Census Timing Does Not Match the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI Redevelopment Timeline

The Mandela Gateway HOPE VI grant period began in 2000 and ended in 2005. For this reason, using census data to determine the impact of the development on the broader community was not possible. Other sources of neighborhood data were found to gain a better understanding of the changes taking place in the neighborhood, but the statistical boundaries used in these sources was not always concurrent with those used in the census.

Isolating the Revitalization Effects of the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI Project Difficult

Determining whether Mandela Gateway was a catalyst for change in West Oakland has proven difficult, not only because of the unavailability on consistent neighborhood data, but also because the original Westwood Gardens PHA site was small compared to other HOPE VI sites in Oakland and nationwide. The original buildings included 46 PHA units, and only 40 households. The total population of Westwood Gardens residents was only 98 residents in 29 households - quite small compared to other HOPE VI sites. Thus, resident relocation and the demolition of the buildings did not make a statistical difference in median income, poverty rates or labor force participation relative to the surrounding neighborhood. While local property values and development in the area has increased dramatically in the past five years, it is difficult to determine causality between the changes at the Mandela Gateway site and improvements taking place in the neighborhood.

In addition to the new mixed-income community at Mandela Gateway, there are a number of other public and low-income housing projects in the neighborhood. For this reason, the local median income, labor participation rates, and home values will undoubtedly remain lower than those in more attractive neighborhoods in Oakland indefinitely. Using these measures to evaluate neighborhood improvement will continue to prove difficult in the future, and different measures of improvement will be required to study the effects of HOPE VI over time.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A. THE IMPACT OF CSS SERVICES ON THE LIVES OF RESIDENTS

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of HOPE VI has been the attempt to combine both people- and the place-based community development models into one revitalization strategy. Rather than simply funding the rehabilitation of the most severely distressed units, HOPE VI also allocated federal funds to assist housing authorities with the relocation of displaced residents, and to fund Community and Supportive Services (CSS) for residents during the HOPE VI grant period. In addition to helping residents adjust to relocation and displacement, the CSS funds were intended to provide services that would assist and enable residents to improve their families' self-sufficiency. By providing clinical case management and CSS services geared towards workforce development, policy-makers hoped that public housing residents would be able to break through the long term isolation of public housing and reconnect with the broader economic community.

The OHA HOPE VI staff partnered with established local service providers to provide case management and social services to residents during the HOPE VI grant period. The following section provides an analysis of the strengths of OHA's CSS model and the challenges faced in providing these services.

Strengths:

- Quality and Caring of CSS Staff
- Flexible and Adaptable CSS Program
Improved Resident Participation Over Time
- Partnership with BRIDGE Housing Expands CSS Offerings and Increases Utilization
- Created a Racially and Economically Mixed Community and a More Positive Social Environment

Challenges:

- OHA Staffing Capacity and Turnover
- CSS Providers Reluctant to Work with Westwood Gardens Residents and HOPE VI
- Recruitment to CSS Difficult Due to Scattered-Site Placement
- Lack of Internal CSS Database Software Until End of Grant
- CSS Nationally Established Goals Presented Unrealistic Expectations for Impacting Severely Distressed Population
- Ethnic and Cultural Differences Within the Resident Population were Difficult to Overcome

1. CSS Program: Strengths

Quality and Caring of CSS Staff

The Oakland Housing Authority has a distinctive model for contracting HOPE VI CSS services. While case management and direct service were provided by local community organizations and agencies, OHA Resident Services staff provided counseling and outreach to residents throughout the relocation and return process. The small number of original residents at Westwood Gardens made communication with staff easier and more personalized to the needs of each resident. Nicole Thompson and other staffers communicated with relocated residents during the HOPE VI over the course of Mandela Gateway's revitalization. Throughout the HOPE VI process, the CSS staff remained committed to serving the needs of the original Westwood Gardens residents, and this commitment was evident to the residents, as reported during interviews.

“The OHA managers understand the public, and they try to help us as if we were part of a big family...It's important, to know that I am not alone.”

~ Westwood Gardens HOPE VI Resident

Westwood Gardens residents interviewed for this evaluation spoke highly of the OHA staff and reported feeling encouraged by the staff's support. Residents who kept in close touch with OHA staff reported that they knew of the services available to them, and that they were encouraged to take advantage of the CSS programs. These residents took advantage of the opportunity to enroll in GED, higher and continuing education programs. They used CSS program funds to help pay for books and transportation to school. One resident reported completing the homebuyer's program, and said that with the help of a local IDA program, she looked forward to purchasing a home within the next year, potentially in the Mandela Gateway development itself. Another resident reported that she had not participated in any programs, because she did not have access to childcare. However, she stated that her experience working with the OHA staff had made her think more about her future and setting goals for her family. When her youngest child entered elementary school in the following year, she hoped to begin a GED program. A number of residents credited the OHA Resident Services staff with helping them to set goals for themselves and their families.

Westwood Gardens residents who reported having participated in CSS programs spoke very highly of the services they received during the time of their relocation. Residents reported that they found the OHA HOPE VI staff approachable and supportive, and that the services offered were very good.

Flexible and Adaptable CSS Program Improved Resident Participation Over Time

Over the course of the HOPE VI redevelopment process, the OHA CSS staff has adapted its policies to meet the needs of a diverse group of service providers and a very challenging resident population. They have approached the CSS program with open minds, and have worked to adapt the services to meet the needs of the resident population. The HOPE VI CSS staff, led by Patricia Ison, worked closely with service providers to create a feeling of teamwork and collaboration, and to find solutions to the challenges encountered in creating a comprehensive CSS program. Rather than administering a rigid and hierarchical CSS program, OHA was committed to on-going communication and flexibility during redevelopment.

“Patricia [Ison] recommended [service providers], but helped BRIDGE start the relationship on the right foot. She helped to lay the foundation for respect... This has made communication and trust to be very strong.”
~ Lara São Pedro
BRIDGE Housing, Inc.

Westwood Gardens residents were relocated prior to the completion of the contracting process with CSS service providers, and as a result, the service providers reported that recruiting residents into their programs was difficult. Learning from these experiences, the OHA staff contracted services earlier in the HOPE VI process at Coliseum Gardens, so that service providers could begin to establish relationships with the residents before they relocated to new housing. In focus groups, service providers report that having access to residents prior to their relocation has improved participation in service programs, and has made on-going communication with residents better. The OHA also continued to negotiate performance-based contracts with service providers to ensure that resident outreach was continued and effective during the relocation period.

Similarly, CSS guidelines changed once Mandela Gateway was fully leased to allow all Mandela Gateway residents, as well as the original Westwood Gardens HOPE VI residents, to participate in CSS programs offered on-site. CSS participation rules were amended to allow for greater community building at Mandela Gateway, and to create economies of scale and improved efficiency when scheduling programs. Once all Mandela Gateway residents were able to participate in CSS services, the number of HOPE VI residents being served increased dramatically, and service providers were better able to recruit and service new clients.

Service Providers’ Perspectives

Service Providers reported a number of positive outcomes for HOPE VI residents as a result of participating in CSS programs. The CSS providers reported that both youth and adults showed a lot of motivation to participate in classes that assisted in career and educational advancement, particularly within the immigrant communities. They also reported that many of their clients were working full-time, part-time and “on call”, and believed that services designed to provide employment training and job-hunting skills were particularly motivational for clients. All service providers reported an increase in the number of residents participating in their programs later in the HOPE VI grant period, particularly after Mandela Gateway was fully leased and programmed on-site.

Employment Training and Job Placement Assistance

Case management, referrals, job training and counseling assistance were contracted through OHA HOPE VI to the Unity Council. Officially known as the Spanish Speaking Unity Council, the organization is a local community development corporation based in the Fruitvale neighborhood in east Oakland, but which serves a diverse clientele from across the city. The Unity Council’s primary focus has been “to create a healthier and safer community for families and residents by implementing and managing integrated programs addressing the economic, social and physical development.”¹⁵

The Unity Council provides comprehensive services to clients in a variety of areas including: children and family services, workforce development, business assistance, homeownership assistance, literacy and main street programs. The organization is a leader in the Oakland community and has been instrumental in community development efforts in the city.¹⁶

By the end of the HOPE VI grant, CSS goals were exceeded in both job placement and enrollment in training programs. Much of the increase in participation can be attributed to the addition of new Mandela Gateway residents to the CSS program. Once new Mandela Gateway residents were able to enroll in CSS programs, referral services were located on-site at Mandela Gateway and the total number of households receiving services increased dramatically. The number of original Westwood Gardens HOPE VI residents served did not meet the goals set in the HOPE VI grant.

CSS Employment Training Goals and Outcomes			
	Westwood	HOPE VI Grant	
		Goal	Outcome*
Job Prep, Placement and Retention**	3	8	48
Job Skills Training			
Enrollment	1	6	18
Completion	2	3	3
Entrepreneurship Training			
Enrollment	0	2	0
Completion	0	1	0

* Includes original Westwood Gardens residents and new Mandela Gateway residents, 2000-2005.

**Placement number can reflect multiple placements of the same residents. Retention indicates that a resident remained in a position for 6 months or more.

Employment and Hiring

One of the goals of HOPE VI was to increase the number of residents who are employed full or part time, and to improve family self-sufficiency. The local agencies contracted to provide employment-related services to residents were: the Unity Council and ICRI. Also counted within the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI figures are Section 3 hires affiliated with construction on-site. Section 3 hires include any OHA residents who are hired to work on-site, regardless whether they resided in HOPE VI developments.

In 2004-05 Westwood Gardens residents were hired into a variety of positions including: administrative office support, food service, customer service, and retail cashier. Employers included the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), Jamba Juice, Santa Fe Tile Company, and Macy’s. A total of 4 OHA PHA residents were hired at Westwood Gardens Constructions during 2004-2005.

¹⁵ Spanish Speaking Unity Council website, <http://www.unitycouncil.org/organization1.htm>, 3/25/06

¹⁶ For more information about the Unity Council and its services, go to <http://www.unitycouncil.org>

CSS Employment and Hires			
	Westwood	HOPE VI Grant	
		Goal	Outcome*
Employment		4	146
Residents Currently Employed	16	18	137
Hires in 2004-2005	6	n/a	n/a
Employed 6 months or more	n/a	15	129
Resident-Owned Businesses	0	0	0
Section 3**			
HOPE VI Contract Funds to Sec. 3 Program	n/a	\$400	\$15,000
PHA Residents Resulting from Sec. 3	0	7	10
Sec. 3 Employees transferred to non-PHA jobs	0	3	0

*Includes original Westwood Gardens residents and new Mandela Gateway residents, 2000-2005.

** Includes all OHA PHA residents, not only HOPE VI residents.

A primary goal of ICRI was to enroll residents in child care training certification programs with the intent of helping residents enter the child care industry as either self-employed entrepreneurs or employees. However, only one resident completed the program. ICRI reports indicate that an unspecified number of residents attempted to start the program, but were unable to participate due to the required fingerprint clearance necessary to legally work with children.

Education: Enrollment and Completion

Overall, resident participation in CSS education programs surpassed the goals set out in the HOPE VI grant. In both ESL class and high school/GED completions Westwood Gardens HOPE VI residents exceeded expectations. However, enrollments into high school/GED programs fell short of HOPE VI goals. The discrepancy between enrollment and completion numbers may be a result of completion data reporting on youth who were already in high school completing their diplomas at the start of HOPE VI, rather than residents enrolling in education classes during the HOPE VI grant period.

Due to the fact that data were not collected about which individuals either enrolled or completed education programs, further analysis of the data to understand the discrepancies is not possible.

CSS Education			
	Westwood	HOPE VI Grant	
		Goal	Outcome*
Enrollments			
ESL	6	5	10
High School or GED	4	13	8
Community College	4	n/a	n/a
Vocational Training	1	n/a	n/a
Completions			
High School or GED	n/a	12	20
Community College	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Training	n/a	n/a	n/a

* Includes original Westwood Gardens residents and new Mandela Gateway residents, 2000-2005.

Case Management and Counseling

Counseling and case management services were provided by the Unity Council and the Alameda County Medical Center Family Services Collaborative at Highland Hospital. Case managers from each organization referred residents to one another as the need arose.

As described in further detail previously, the Unity Council provided services to residents including job placement, education counseling, ESL training, homeownership, and financial planning classes. The Alameda County Medical Center provided medical and health related case management services. Due to HIPAA rules and guidelines, detailed accounts of which residents have been served by the medical center and what services they received, are not available.¹⁷ However, overall numbers have been provided and HOPE VI residents are utilizing the case management services.

Both organizations reported increases in participation when Mandela Gateway residents were able to enroll in HOPE VI programs. Outreach and recruitment of new clients improved once case managers were able to go to the Mandela site to speak with residents about the services on offer.

No HOPE VI residents are reported to have received substance abuse counseling, although it is likely that there are residents who would benefit from such services. However, OHA has a “one-strike” policy that requires the eviction of residents after the first on-site drug-related offense. This policy acts to discourage residents from admitting to and seeking substance abuse services.

CSS Case Management and Counseling			
	HOPE VI Grant		
	Westwood	Goal	Outcome*
Supportive Services			
Counseling	n/a	8	48
Utilities	n/a		
Child Care	n/a	2	1
Transportation	n/a	13	35
Substance Abuse Counseling	n/a	0	0
Highland Medical			
Assessment	7	n/a	21
Receiving Services	7	n/a	n/a
Unity Council	9	n/a	40

* Includes original Westwood Gardens residents and new Mandela Gateway residents, 2000-2005.

¹⁷ The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) sets national standards to protect the privacy of personal health information. For more information, see: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/finalreg.html>

Homeownership Training and Assistance

Homebuyers’ workshops were provided by HBAC to HOPE VI residents. The workshops cover information concerning credit readiness, loan terminology, real estate practices, the escrow process and post-purchase financial planning.

In both enrollments and completions, HOPE VI outcomes did not meet the goals set in the grant. Most residents who enrolled in the program did not follow through to completion. While three residents completed the classes, none has purchased a home.

CSS Homeownership Assistance			
	Westwood	HOPE VI Grant	
		Goal	Outcome*
Homeownership Counseling			
Enrolled	4	8	5
Completed	1	5	3
Purchasing a Home	n/a	1	0

Partnership with BRIDGE Housing Expands CSS Offerings and Utilization

The construction of Mandela Gateway was completed in Winter 2005, and all rental units at the development were quickly filled.¹⁸ At this time, the HOPE VI CSS program shifted to include not only the original Westwood Gardens families, but also all residents living at Mandela Gateway. As detailed in the previous section of this report, resident participation in CSS programs increased dramatically at this time. This increase can be attributed to the much larger resident population at Mandela Gateway and the provision of referral services and CSS programming on-site.

Supervision of the CSS programs offered at Mandela Gateway was performed Lara São Pedro, Director of Resident Services at BRIDGE Housing. In addition to the on-going CSS programming provided during relocation, additional programs were offered on-site at Mandela Gateway that had not been available to residents previously. Partnering with BRIDGE to provide services on-site not only assisted Mandela Gateway residents in the process of community building, but it also allowed new insight into ways that mixed-income developments are both similar and different to other models of housing.

How CSS at Mandela Gateway Compares to Other Affordable Housing Developments in the State

Ms. São Pedro described the CSS programming at Mandela Gateway as “average” when compared to other BRIDGE sites across California in terms of participation by residents. She estimated that \$30-\$40K per year has been budgeted for services at Mandela Gateway – approximately 3 to 4 times more than other non-HOPE VI BRIDGE sites. This is the first HOPE VI CSS partnership that she has overseen with BRIDGE Housing, and her initial impressions are that residents at Mandela Gateway are a more difficult population to serve than most of the other affordable developments she oversees. In particular, the PHA residents at Mandela Gateway have experienced intergenerational poverty for much longer than residents at other non-HOPE VI sites. After a few months of operation, she reported that there were more conflicts between PHA children and non-PHA children than she had seen in other developments. In extreme cases, coordination between case managers and property management has been essential to mitigating tensions between youth and within families on-site. However, despite the challenges she has encountered with some PHA residents, she reported Mandela Gateway has grown to have healthy and positive interactions between residents of different income groups.¹⁹

Ms. São Pedro reports that Mandela Gateway does not have the perfect match of services to resident participation, and she is working to increase participation in CSS programs at the site. For instance, she reports that she often schedules ESL classes for residents at BRIDGE developments, but the numbers of residents needing ESL classes at Mandela Gateway is too low to make regular course offerings cost-effective. Similarly, the income mix at Mandela Gateway includes HOPE VI residents, as well as, households earning 50-60% AMI, and so scheduling services that cater to the entire resident population has been challenging. As a result, she believes that the CSS programs offered at Mandela Gateway are primarily serving the neediest families in the development.²⁰

In order to gain a deeper understanding of resident needs at Mandela Gateway, and to increase participation in CSS youth services, she surveyed resident parents in November 2005. The survey revealed that although the youth programs offered at Mandela Gateway were attractive to residents, most had

¹⁸ Affordable Ownership townhomes are scheduled for completion in 2006-2007.

¹⁹ Interview with Lara São Pedro, Dir. of Resident Services, BRIDGE Housing, 10/12/05

²⁰ Ibid.

already enrolled their children in after school care elsewhere, and did not return to the site until the evening. Residents asked for -more toddler activities, drop-in hours in the computer lab, and services for youth in the evenings.

In response to resident requests, BRIDGE hired a case manager/referral specialist to work 20 hours per week at Mandela Gateway. The case manager spends 10 hours per week after school and in the evening at the computer lab, so that residents can have supervised “drop-in” access to the facilities in addition to regularly scheduled computer classes. BRIDGE purchased an array of math tutoring software – covering basic math, algebra and geometry - for the computers in the lab. BRIDGE has received positive feedback from residents about both the case manager and the new computer lab availability.

Increased Service Offerings as a Result of Partnership: Job Fair, Scholarships and More

In October 2005, a job fair was jointly hosted by OHA and BRIDGE. The event was held in the community room at OHA’s newly constructed Union Street building. The job fair was open to OHA and BRIDGE residents from across the city. Ninety-six residents participated and over eleven employers attended, handed out information and accepted resumes at the event. Employers who participated in the event included: The Youth Employment Partnership, CalSTAR, Security Training and Recruiting, BACSIC, the Oakland PIC, CA Department of Rehabilitation, Job Corps for Women and more.²¹

“The [job fair] was... a success in terms of the strong collaboration between our team and OHA staff in the planning and execution of the day, and in our ability to connect participants with job skills building, training and placement agencies from the surrounding community, as well as greater Oakland.”
~ Lara São Pedro
BRIDGE Housing

Through the partnership between OHA and BRIDGE, the number of job-seeking residents was much higher, and as a result the job fair was able to attract more employers. While only five Mandela Gateway residents participated, the collaboration between BRIDGE and OHA was successful and provided a key learning experience that will allow for improved participation in the future.

Additional opportunities for Mandela Gateway residents through the partnership between OHA and BRIDGE included continuing education scholarships and tax prep assistance. BRIDGE Housing sponsors the Stein Scholarship Program that allows BRIDGE residents to receive financial assistance to pursue continuing education opportunities. Applications are accepted from over 300 BRIDGE properties statewide, and this past year, 10% of these applications were from Mandela Gateway residents. Notably, many of the HOPE VI applicants were immigrants or single mothers ranging from 17 to 60 years old. If awarded a Stein Scholarship, residents are able to pursue either college or vocational training of their choice, and recent applications have included both 2- and 4-year colleges, nursing school, cosmetology schools, medical assisting and ESL training.²²

Through a partnership with West Oakland’s People’s Community Partnership Credit Union, Mandela Gateway residents are able to receive tax preparation assistance two days per week during tax season and

²¹ Mandela Gateway Closeout Report, Nov. 2005

²² Interview with Lara São Pedro, 2/06.

financial literacy training over the course of the year. Over 300 residents receive this assistance per year at each BRIDGE Housing development. While total numbers have not been received for 2005, Ms. São Pedro reported that approximately \$200K was recovered for residents the first year the service was offered at the nearby Acorn development just a few blocks away from Mandela Gateway.²³

Created a Racially and Economically Mixed Community and a More Positive Social Environment

The Mandela Gateway development includes HOPE VI residents and others earning between 50% and 60% AMI.²⁴ The site itself is divided into two “sides” straddling Mandela Parkway. Early on, the economic and cultural differences between residents, and the physical separation of the two sides of the development seemed to be resulting in a divided community. Lara São Pedro of BRIDGE Housing reported that the division did not seem to be explicitly racist or classist, rather it was an “I’m better than them” attitude expressed by some residents.²⁵ However, in a follow-up interview four months later, São Pedro reported that the divisions along economic lines had faded. Due to the fact that the highest-income residents are earning 60% AMI, the differences in income level are not readily apparent. However, the physical division between the two sides of the development that has resulted from strict security measures continues to pose a challenge to service provision and community building on site.²⁶

Creating a positive community feeling at Mandela Gateway has been challenging, but in the months since its completion, a growing sense of community is taking place. Aside from regularly scheduled enrichment programs on site, targeted CSS efforts, particularly activities involving children, have laid the groundwork for connection between members of the Mandela Gateway community. To counter the feelings of division between adults on site, more fun events for children and parents have been programmed. A Halloween event was planned by BRIDGE with the help of a parent volunteer. Over 40 children, of all ages, and their parents participated in the festivities. Based on the success of the Halloween party, similar events are planned for the future.

A Halloween event planned in the fall, including candy and crafts for children of all ages, was specifically designed to bring parents together and to bridge the divisions between residents.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See Appendix for Oakland AMI levels

²⁵ Interview, 10/12/05

²⁶ Interview, 3/6/06

CSS Program Challenges

OHA Staffing Capacity and Turnover

At the time that the HOPE VI CSS contracts were being negotiated with service providers, the OHA staff member responsible for the contracts quit, leaving a vacancy that took months to fill. During the search for a replacement, the contract negotiations with CSS service providers stalled, and service provision did not begin. Service providers reported having to ask for contracts repeatedly, and contracts were signed months behind schedule. The pace of the contracting process slowed the disbursement of CSS funds.

Meanwhile, residents were relocated to new units and the physical construction of Mandela Gateway began. Once contracts were finalized, service providers found locating and recruiting Westwood Gardens residents difficult. Many of these service providers had worked with OHA on previous HOPE VI contracts, and Westwood Gardens residents were added to these client lists.

CSS Providers Reluctant to Work with Westwood Gardens Residents and HOPE VI

In addition to the fact that the HOPE VI CSS service providers did not feel that they could add Westwood Gardens residents to their client lists until the contracts were finalized, many were reluctant to work with Westwood Gardens residents, because there was such a high percentage of non-English speakers and they had already been relocated to scattered sites. Even though these service providers were already working with OHA to serve other HOPE VI sites in the city, they did not want to add Westwood Gardens residents to their client rolls. Most of these CSS providers' service models had been designed to work on-site, not to do outreach to a scattered population. As a result, very few Westwood Gardens residents participated in CSS services during relocation.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development changed its original policy to allow new residents of completed HOPE VI projects who were not included in the original population to participate in CSS programs. HUD changed this policy in order to increase CSS utilization and to assist in the community building efforts taking place on redeveloped HOPE VI sites. In this case, all Mandela Gateway residents were eligible to participate in CSS services offered through the HOPE VI grant.

Once residents moved back to Mandela Gateway, the lateness of the contracting process continued to make it difficult to spend CSS funds effectively. There was a lot of pressure to spend money quickly, before the end of the HOPE VI grant. This resulted in Mandela Gateway being over-programmed, and residents exhibited signs of "service fatigue." As a result, programming classes for maximum participation, and cost effectiveness, was difficult.²⁷

*"People move into buildings, because they want a safe, secure, affordable place to live. Not to go to school. There is some fatigue about classes."
~ Lara São Pedro
BRIDGE Housing*

²⁷ Interview with Lara São Pedro, 10/12/05

Recruitment to CSS Difficult Due to Scattered-Site Placement

Most Westwood Gardens residents contacted for this evaluation reported that they had not participated in any HOPE VI CSS programs provided by OHA. When asked if the presence of the OHA affected whether or not they used the CSS services, none of those interviewed reported any concern about participating in OHA-sponsored programs, or any negative feelings toward the OHA staff. Residents expressed that they were not interested in the services offered, or that the programs did not fit their schedule, childcare needs or travel requirements.

Many of the providers expressed frustration about having to make contact with residents who were already scattered around the city. One of the most effective ways of recruiting residents into their programs was by word-of-mouth referrals from other residents. The rate of word-of-mouth referrals declined significantly when residents were relocated into scattered sites. The service providers reported a higher participation level from residents at other HOPE VI sites who were recruited prior to relocation, Coliseum Gardens in particular. Being on-site before residents were scattered allowed service providers the opportunity to make connections with clients that were stronger and continued after relocation was underway.

Lack of Internal CSS Database Software Until End of Grant

Due to the fact that Westwood Gardens had a relatively small number of residents at the time of relocation, as compared to other HOPE VI sites in Oakland, the overall number of residents participating in CSS services was quite small. For this reason, CSS provision for Westwood Gardens residents was included in other HOPE VI CSS contracts in the city. When reporting to OHA about the services provided and the number of residents served, they often did not include specific details about Westwood Gardens residents apart from other HOPE VI populations. For this reason, determining the absolute numbers of residents served by the CSS programs is difficult, if not impossible, from the providers' reports and there are few quantitative measures of Westwood Gardens residents participating in CSS services.

As a result, one-on-one interviews with Westwood Gardens residents and focus groups with CSS providers present a more detailed, albeit self-reported, picture of the impact of CSS programs on the lives of residents.

The OHA HOPE VI staff did not have a fully functioning resident CSS database until the summer of 2005. While waiting for the installation of a system recommended by HUD, OHA was not able to keep detailed records of scattered residents' CSS participation. In a focus group, the CSS service providers expressed frustration about locating residents, and maintaining contact with them during the time that they were relocated.

As stated, the installation of the new database, and staff trainings in its use did take place in the summer of 2005. Using this system should greatly improve the tracking of residents' participation in CSS services. It will also make it easier to monitor the outreach of CSS providers over the course of future HOPE VI projects, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the HOPE VI CSS program.

CSS Nationally Established Unrealistic Expectations of Severely Distressed Population

One of the most important challenges faced by the OHA HOPE VI CSS staff was the expectation that HOPE VI families would be “self-sufficient” in a very short amount of time, regardless of pre-existing barriers to employment such as: health status, disability status, and low levels of academic achievement. While many residents are eager and able to successfully change their lives, the complexity of HOPE VI families’ lives will require time to accomplish these changes. It will take time to reverse the effects of decades of intergenerational poverty. National studies bear witness to the difficulties faced by families trying to overcome generations of poverty and disenfranchisement.

Key challenges to reversing the effects of intergenerational poverty:

- Mental health
- Drug addiction
- Low levels of education
- Low employment opportunities
- Low skill levels for today’s economy
- Teen pregnancy
- Jobs paying unlivable wages

Service Providers reported that HOPEVI residents who had experienced inter-generational poverty were often hesitant to envision themselves as changing their family economic situations. While there seemed to be a lot of excitement about the new developments, particularly Mandela Gateway, they felt that residents did not all share the same motivation to become homeowners, nor to return for further education. Residents who had experienced inter-generational poverty were often hesitant to envision themselves as changing their family economic situations. Immigrant families, particularly Asian families, participated more actively in homeownership programs; this was likely a result of trying to create a place for extended family.

In interviews, residents indicated a number of reasons why they did not participate in CSS programs:

- Lack of affordable child care
- Disinterest in the content of classes
- Welfare-to-work responsibilities
- Permanent disability status
- Part-time employment
- Full-time student status

Ethnic and Cultural Differences Within the Resident Population

Interviews with Cambodian residents from Westwood Gardens were conducted with the assistance of an OHA translator, Chanta Oum. When asked about their participation in HOPE VI CSS programs, these residents reported that they did not participate in any OHA services. However, a number did report that they were regularly involved with Asian Mental Health Services, a contracted HOPE VI CSS provider, located in Oakland’s Chinatown. It seems that they were unaware of the connection between OHA, HOPE VI, and Asian Mental Health Services. The fact that residents participated in the services, but did not otherwise associate with OHA may indicate that these residents harbor a resistance to the Housing Authority as an institution and do not wish to be associated with its programs.

Although the HOPE VI contract with Asian Mental Health Services ended earlier than other services contracts, residents continued to participate with the organization. Five of the Cambodian families reported that they attended social programs about once a week at the Asian Mental Health Services offices. These programs seem to serve a primarily fun, social function – potlucks, picnics and social gatherings. Mr. Oum explained that many of these residents attend these programs, because it is a requirement for receiving SSI benefits. Another, elderly Cambodian resident attended English, citizenship and nutrition classes through a different Asian services agency, but could not remember the name of it. She is diabetic, and reported that the nutrition programs were very helpful.

Racial Biases

The majority of the Cambodian residents interviewed had not chosen to move back to Mandela Gateway. In translating the interviews, Mr. Oum explained that many of the residents did not feel comfortable living near African-American neighbors, and blamed the safety and maintenance problems at Westwood Gardens on them. Based upon the comments made by Cambodian residents regarding African-American neighbors, it may be inferred that their lack of participation in OHA-sponsored programs that are not specifically geared towards the Asian community may reflect racial biases against the housing authority and many of its residents. The fact that many were unaware of the connection between OHA and Asian Mental Health Services through the Alameda County Medical Collaborative indicates that they do not look to OHA as a resource.

2. The Impact of HOPE VI on Children and Youth

Nationally, HOPE VI policies tended to focus on workforce development and family self-sufficiency as the primary goals of CSS programs provided to HOPE VI residents. Within this context, goals and outcomes were set for adult residents to participate in continuing education, “hard-” and “soft-skills” training, job placement and case management services. However, few detailed goals and outcomes were set for the children and youth affected by HOPE VI. While youth programs were always included in HOPE VI grant funding, the needs of children were not at the forefront of consideration as HOPE VI policies were formulated.

Researchers found that children living in distressed public housing faced environment hazards such as mold, rodents and lead paint that had negative impacts on their overall physical health. The asthma rate in HOPE VI children was many times the national average, and resulted in missed days of school and increased hospital visits. Few children reported feeling safe in their homes, and symptoms of stress and anxiety were evident in many HOPE VI youth prior to relocation. Most of the schools attended by these children were troubled themselves, and HOPE VI children reported higher than average behavioral referrals and disciplinary action than other children, and often struggled academically in school.²⁸

The following is an analysis of the impact of the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI process on children and youth. Particular effort was made to determine the effects of relocation on student achievement and attendance during relocation. As detailed in this section, tracking the impact of HOPE VI on youth was challenging and leaves many questions unanswered.

Strengths:

- Significant youth involvement and positive response to CSS
- OHA reaching out to local schools to support youth

Challenges:

- Mixed-Income youth population requires different service model
- Lack of Access to Student Academic Attendance and Achievement Data
- Lack of Neighborhood School Connection Before and During Relocation Made Tracking Difficult
- Outreach to Schools Costly and Time-consuming

²⁸ For a detailed account of research conducted about HOPE VI children and youth, see: Popkin, Susan J. et al, “How are HOPE VI Families Faring? Children.” 2004.

The Impact of HOPE VI on Children and Youth: Strengths

Youth Involvement and Response to CSS

During focus groups, the HOPE VI CSS providers reported that HOPE VI youth were enthusiastic and receptive of the CSS programs offered during HOPE VI. While the total number of youth served was low during the time that families were relocated, providers reported that those who participated were very motivated and responsive to assistance. Once residents had returned to Mandela Gateway, the number of youth participating increased as the total population at the site increased.

The Unity Council reported that youth were particularly receptive to case management, and felt that their organization was well suited to engage youth in making positive choices in their lives. The Unity Council provided case management, employment training and referrals to leadership programs to HOPE VI youth. A Unity Council representative reported that they had referred HOPE VI youth to summer youth leadership training programs, after-school classes and job training. The CSS providers also reported that youth showed a lot of motivation to participate in classes that assist in career and educational advancement, particularly within the immigrant communities.

One case manager at the Unity Council mediated an intervention with a high school student who was contemplating dropping out of school to find a job. The case manager coordinated a group meeting between the school guidance counselor and parents, and an arrangement was made to help the student stay in school.²⁹

Mandela Gateway HOPE VI CSS Programs for Youth

All residents at Mandela Gateway were able to participate in HOPE VI CSS programs regardless of whether they were included in the original Westwood Gardens HOPE VI population. By including the Mandela Gateway residents in CSS services, the number of children aged 0-18 increased from 49 to 200. At that time, the larger population enabled CSS services to become more comprehensive, serving a broader array of needs to all HOPE VI residents, particularly children and youth.

Forty-eight percent of all children at Mandela Gateway are between ages 0 and 5, while the remaining half of the population is divided between youth ages 6-10 and those 11-18 years old. Most of the CSS programming for children and youth is designed for elementary and middle school children, and so the largest proportion of children are not directly served by the youth programming at Mandela Gateway. Due to the high cost of toddler programs, HOPE VI parents are referred to outside agencies and child care services when seeking activities for children ages 0-5.

Mandela Gateway Residents: Ages 0-18		
Ages	#	%
0 to 5 yrs	95	48%
6 to 10 yrs	48	24%
11 to 18 yrs	55	28%
Unspecified	2	1%
Total	200	100%

²⁹Focus Group with CSS Service providers, 8/17/05

After school, tutoring and summer programs for older boys and girls were provided by Simba, Girls, Inc, and Mindful Messages on-site in the Mandela Gateway community rooms. Computer classes, nutritional cooking classes, and theatre workshops were offered on-site to all young residents, free of charge. Participation was greater during the summer months, with 39 children participating regularly in summer programs. Due to the success and popularity of these programs, similar activities are scheduled to continue after the HOPE VI grant has ended. Once the children’s and youth programming was provided on-site at Mandela Gateway, participation increased dramatically, and this level participation is expected to continue throughout the summer.

While the HOPE VI CSS grant did not specify exact goals and outcomes for youth participation in CSS programs, service providers reported that youth were the most receptive of all the HOPE VI residents to outreach and assistance. The diversity of programs offered on-site at Mandela Gateway has been of very high quality and the high level of participation indicates the support these types of program receive from the resident community.

CSS Youth Development and Services			
	Westwood	HOPE VI Grant	
		Goal	Outcome*
YMCA Off-site Summer Program	2	n/a	2
Youth Empowerment Program (YEP)	1	n/a	1
Youth Sounds	0	n/a	0
Children's Summer Arts	n/a	n/a	39
After school tutoring and activities	n/a	n/a	20

* Includes original Westwood Gardens residents and new Mandela Gateway residents, 2000-2005.

OHA Reaching Out to Local Schools to Support Youth

In an attempt to support HOPE VI children and youth during the HOPE VI process, OHA staff, led by Patricia Ison, met with local principals and visited OUSD schools, in order to learn new ways to support HOPE VI families during relocation. By reaching out to local schools, OHA sought to improve recruitment to CSS programs and to find new ways to engage HOPE VI families in the revitalization process. Developing relationships with local schools was unique to OHA and the Westwood Gardens/Mandela Gateway HOPE VI grant. In the event that this effort lays the foundation for future collaboration and mutual understanding between OHA and the local schools, then future transitions may be smoother for HOPE VI youth.

The Impact of HOPE VI on Youth: Challenges

Mandela Gateway Youth Population Requires Different Service Model

After school and summer programming for children and youth at Mandela Gateway is an important component of the CSS services offered to residents of the site. After school programming was offered 5 days per week, and included popular classes such as computer, cooking, theatre and tutoring. However, attendance in the after school programs was lower than expected, with only 20 unduplicated students out of 200 participating between March and November 2005. Ms. São Pedro of BRIDGE Housing reported that a survey was conducted to determine the cause of the low level of participation in after school programming. Resident responses indicated that Mandela Gateway students attend over a dozen different schools across Oakland, Emeryville and San Francisco. A number of these parents expressed that they didn't trust the quality of Oakland public schools, and so had chosen schools for their children located near their workplaces, or the residences of friends or family members. Some students attend private catholic schools.³⁰

The 50-60% AMI working families living in the tax credit units at Mandela Gateway have different after school child care needs than the traditional PHA families. Working parents reported that they had prearranged before and after school child care for their families, and so their children did not arrive back at Mandela Gateway until as late as 6:30pm on weeknights. These residents indicated that they approved of the programs being offered, and would enroll their children if the class schedules coordinated better with their workweek schedules.

Mixed-Income Community Requires Alternate Service Models

Parents suggested that programs for youth be offered later in the evening than traditional after school programming times. While BRIDGE has indicated that they would like to alter the after school programming schedule to meet residents' needs, it has been difficult to find service providers who have staff available in the evenings, and who are willing to come to West Oakland at that time.

In order to adapt to meet the needs of a mixed-income resident population, BRIDGE has hired a part time social service referral specialist who also monitors evening drop-in computer lab hours for later student and adult use. BRIDGE also purchased self-paced tutoring software for students to use at their leisure during drop-in hours.

³⁰ Data reported based on internal BRIDGE Housing survey of residents, Interview with Lara São Pedro, 2/06

Lack of Access to Student Academic Attendance and Achievement Data

Efforts to collect data about HOPE VI youth school attendance and academic achievement were very difficult and have made detailed analysis of the academic impacts of HOPE VI impossible. The Oakland Unified School District was unable to release individual student data of the Housing Authority. Initial attempts to analyze student mobility and the impact of relocation on the stability of student’s academic environment during HOPE VI have been unsuccessful.

Resident in-take forms did not require that residents specify their children’s school attendance or achievement level, and so the effects of HOPE VI on children’s educational circumstances is difficult to assess. The only data available was the self-reported data of residents during interviews conducted for this evaluation and during contacts with the OHA HOPE VI staff. While many residents spoke openly about their children’s academic attendance and achievement in school, others refused to openly answer questions. This reluctance to share information may reflect residents’ distrust of OHA’s motives for collecting the data, or a fear that poor attendance or academic achievement might affect tenant lease standing. Similarly, the Oakland Unified School District was unable to share confidential student data that would have allowed further tracking of the academic effects of HOPE VI on the lives on youth.

Lack of Neighborhood School Connection Before and During Relocation Made Tracking Difficult

Based on residents’ self-reported school attendance information, Westwood Gardens students attended 20 different schools during relocation.³¹ While some were located in West Oakland, others attended schools in distant city neighborhoods and different districts altogether. Some students switched schools when the family relocated, while others remained in the same schools they had attended while living at Westwood Gardens. As a result, attempts to find data describing the effect of HOPE VI on student achievement and attendance patterns were unsuccessful, and developing a further understanding of the impact of HOPE VI on the local neighborhood schools was impossible. As noted above, residents’ school attendance data was based solely on self-reported data, and the accuracy of the information is suspect due to suspicion of OHA motives and residents non-participation in interviews.

Schools Attended by Westwood Gardens Children*	
Public	
Elementary School	4
Middle School	5
High School	5
Charter	1
Alternative/Continuation	2
Private	
	2
Job Corps	
	1
Districts	
Oakland Unified	13
New Haven Unified	1
San Leandro Unified	1

* Based on self-reported data by Westwood Gardens residents, and so may not include school data of all school-aged residents.

Outreach to Schools Costly and Time-consuming

Unity Council case managers, OHA staff and BRIDGE housing service providers are in agreement that partnering with local schools would greatly increase their abilities to serve the needs of HOPE VI children and families. However, outreach to schools has proven costly, and frustrating given the frequent lack of a neighborhood school connection with HOPE VI housing sites. Turnover amongst school principals,

³¹ Information reported during interviews by 19 out of 29 Westwood Gardens families prior to HOPE VI relocation.

guidance counselors and teachers is high in distressed urban districts, and so creating lasting school-service provider connections is difficult. During a focus group with the CSS service providers, youth development providers and case managers found it important to work with schools to recruit participants, but expressed that they felt like schools were distrustful of their services and were often resistant to outside help.³² Lara São Pedro of BRIDGE Housing expressed that budgetary and bureaucratic constraints would make it too difficult for property managers to partner with multiple schools and districts to meet the needs of resident students, and so BRIDGE properties attempt to provide “gap-filler” services that are not available at many school sites, i.e. art, theatre, cooking and tutoring programs.³³

³² Focus Group with CSS Service Providers, 8/17/05

³³ Ibid.

3. The Impact of the Relocation Process on the Lives of Residents

Nationally, HOPE VI has been criticized for displacing resident populations and decreasing the total number of public housing units in the country. Critics argue that HOPE VI is simply an updated version of Urban Renewal, and aims to clear slums in favor of more affluent new residents. Many see the imposition of relocation and fear of displacement as placing unjust burdens on the neediest families in the United States. However, researchers have found that the majority of residents have been satisfied with their relocation housing, and many report that stress and anxiety levels decreased after relocation.³⁴

The Oakland Housing Authority executed an efficient and effective relocation process, with most of the residents interviewed reporting satisfaction with their relocation housing options. The resident return rate was higher than the national average, and most of the families who did not return to Mandela Gateway did so by choice. In the following section, the strengths and challenges posed by the relocation and return process will be analyzed in greater detail.

Strengths:

- Relocation Process was Efficient and Effective
- Overall, Residents Reported Being Very Satisfied with the Quality of Relocation Housing
- Returning Residents Report Being Pleased with the Quality of Mandela Gateway

Challenges:

- Residents' Distrust of Positive Social and Physical Change at New Development
- Moving and Relocating Twice is Difficult for Families
- Cultural and Ethnic Biases Deterred Some Residents from Returning to Mandela Gateway
- There was Not a Unit Size Match for All Families to Return to Mandela Gateway

³⁴ Harris and Kaye. "How Are HOPE VI Families Faring? Health." 2004

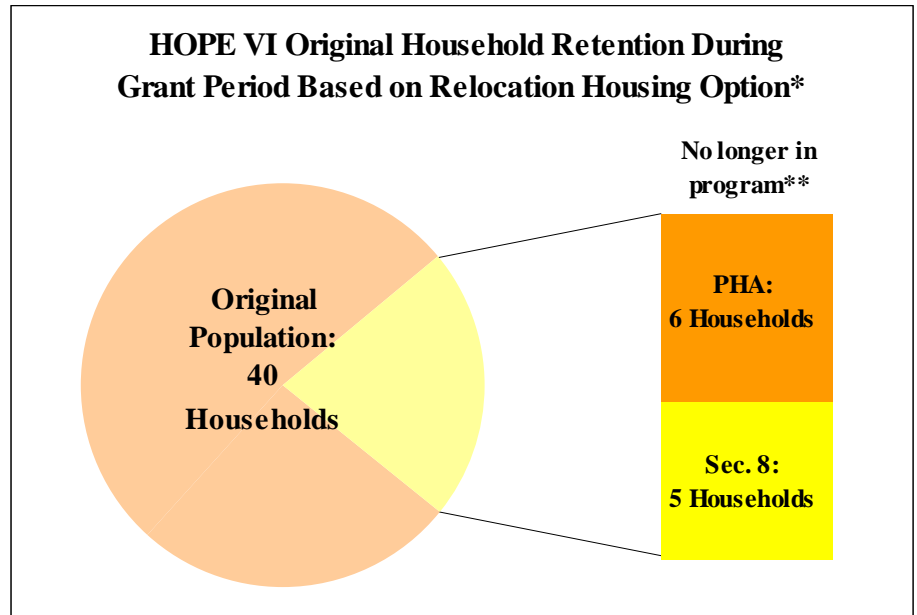
The Impact of the Relocation Process on the Lives of Residents: Strengths

Relocation Process was Efficient and Effective

Resident Retention and Relocation Housing Choice:

In 2000, the Westwood Gardens HOPE VI population included a total of 40 households. At the end of the grant in 2005, 11 were no longer in the program due to evictions, out-of-area moves or death.

Most residents reported that they had a choice between accepting a Sec. 8 voucher or moving to other PHA units at the time of relocation. Whether using vouchers, or moving to other public housing, most residents chose to remain in Oakland, with many remaining in the West Oakland neighborhood near to Westwood Gardens.



*27 Westwood Gardens residents relocated to other public housing units, while 13 others received Section 8 vouchers.

**Residents were removed from the HOPE VI program due to evictions, death or moving out of the city or state.

Those using Sec. 8 vouchers were more likely to move to other areas of Oakland, particularly East Oakland, in their search for housing. The housing stock in East Oakland is primarily single-family homes and residents with larger families preferred using a voucher to rent a larger house to staying in PHA units.

HOPE VI Resident Relocation Housing			
Original Resident Caseload		Remaining in Program	
Sec. 8	13	Sec. 8	10
PHA	27	PHA	19
Total	40	Total	29

Twenty-seven of the original forty Westwood Gardens households relocated to other public housing units in Oakland. During interviews, many indicated that they were pleased with their new PHA units, and had little desire to return to Mandela Gateway.

Thirteen out of 29 Westwood Gardens Households requested to return to Mandela gateway upon completion of the development. Two of the households were ineligible to return to Mandela Gateway due to lease violations and criminal records. Two of the households requesting to return declined to do so once units became available.

Westwood Gardens HOPE VI Households Requesting Return to Mandela Gateway	
Relocation Housing	
PHA	13
Section 8	0
Total	13
Returned	9
Ineligible to Return	2
Declined to Return	2
% Total Returned	31%

Overall, Residents Reported Being Very Satisfied with the Quality of Relocation Housing

National research has found that the majority of HOPE VI residents express satisfaction their relocation housing units during the HOPE VI process. In a survey of eight early HOPE VI redevelopment projects, nearly two-thirds of the residents surveyed reported being satisfied with their relocation housing units.³⁵ Fifteen out of the nineteen Westwood Gardens households interviewed indicated that they were very satisfied with their relocation housing choice. At the time of the interviews, these residents were living in both PHA units, and Sec. 8 housing. All of the residents who opted to use Section 8 vouchers were successful in finding landlords to accept their vouchers, and many reported that they “liked feeling like homeowners.” The majority of those using vouchers moved away from the West Oakland neighborhood to East Oakland, where the housing stock consists primarily of single-family homes.

A number of residents who had relocated to other public housing also wished to remain in these units, citing the larger size of the unit, a townhouse floor plan and quiet neighbors as the primary reasons for staying. These residents expressed satisfaction with the OHA HOPE VI staff, but did not wish to return to Mandela Gateway.

Returning Residents: Satisfaction with Relocation Housing

Whereas all of the residents who chose to return to Mandela Gateway were living in other public housing during relocation, residents who chose not to return lived in both public housing and Section 8 units. When asked why they chose not to return to Mandela Gateway, the residents cited a variety of reasons why moving was not a good option for their families: crime, safety, noise and the hassle of moving. Most of these families were living in lower density housing sites and liked the quiet that came with a smaller resident population. Section 8 families often reported that they “felt like homeowners” and didn’t want to return to public housing. An elderly Cambodian couple living in other public housing in West Oakland indicated that they wanted to return to Mandela Gateway, but that they did not understand the paperwork, and so had missed the requisite deadlines.

Section 8 families often reported that they “felt like homeowners” and did not want to return to public housing.

Returning Residents Dissatisfaction with Relocation Housing

All of the residents who opted to return to Mandela Gateway were relocated into other public housing units. According to residents, the primary factor that contributed to liking, or not liking their relocation housing was the size of the unit, particularly the number of bedrooms. Some responded that they chose their housing based on the size of the unit, with larger units being preferable to smaller ones. Families relocated to smaller units reported being either moderately, or very unhappy with their housing option.

All of the residents who opted to return to Mandela Gateway were relocated into other public housing units.

³⁵ Popkin, Susan J., et al., “A Decade of HOPE VI: Research Findings and Policy Challenges.” (p. 30)

Another major concern for residents was the character of the neighbors living around them in their new housing. The quality of neighbors and their overall respect for others' property was an ongoing concern for these residents, and contributed greatly to their sense of security and happiness in their relocation housing. Notably, the only two families interviewed who reported any personal harassment by neighbors were Mexican. They reported threats and vandalism by neighbors in their relocation housing. Both families expressed that they were eager to return to Mandela Gateway.

The most consistent complaints about residents' housing units (both PHA and Sec.8) during relocation were the following:

- Noise from upstairs and outside neighbors was a regular source of frustration
- Families with children concerned that the neighborhood was unsafe for children
- Gunfire outside and around housing caused fear and concern for safety
- Complaints of urination and defecation in housing site walkways
- Complaints of drug use and sales, violence and robbery
- Broken appliances causing flooding and mildew
- Ceiling damage and slow progress of repair

Returning Residents Report Being Pleased with the Quality of Mandela Gateway

Interviews with representative from nineteen former Westwood Gardens household were conducted at the time that the first phase of tenants were moving back to Mandela Gateway. While most returning families were awaiting move-in dates, all had toured the new development and were familiar with it. The response of former residents to the new development was overwhelmingly positive. All residents interviewed reported that they felt the changes and construction in West Oakland were positive. In particular, many stated that they like the way the design of the new buildings and how the neighborhood looked better than it had in the past. None of those interviewed expressed any concern that the neighborhood was changing too quickly, or for the worse, and there was no mention of gentrification as a source of concern.

At the time of the resident interviews, only two of the families had moved back to the new Mandela Gateway site. Both of these residents were excited by the newness of the facilities, and the increased security on site; each expressed hope that residents would respect the building and "take pride" once everyone had moved in. A few of the other returning families had toured the units and were impressed with the facilities at Mandela Gateway.

One resident reported that she was uncomfortable with the commercial spaces located at street level at Mandela Gateway. She worried that too many people hanging around would cause security problems and that it would be difficult to build a sense of community in a place that included retail spaces. She was particularly concerned about people loitering outside the stores and bringing unsafe influences near her children.

Returning HOPE VI residents expressed that:

- They were excited about the playground, the bathrooms and the secure entrance.
- They were enjoying the close proximity to the BART station.
- They were excited that West Oakland seems to be becoming more positive.
- They were proud of the “New and beautiful West Oakland.”
- They would not have come back to Mandela Gateway unless the neighborhood was better, no matter how new and exciting the apartments and facilities.

Challenges to the Relocation and Return Process

Residents' Distrust of Positive Social and Physical Change at New Development

Eighteen of the original households chose not to move back to Mandela Gateway. While many thought that the new construction looked impressive, they feared that the site would continue to be unsafe, and unhygienic, despite the new buildings and units. Many expressed concerns about previous drug use and sales, violence and the presence of strangers on site. Residents expressed fear about moving back to this environment.

Residents' concerns about returning to Mandela Gateway included the following:

- Need for better security around site
- Felt unsafe, avoided using the main entrance to the building
- Lack of cleanliness: dirty diapers, trash, urination, and defecation in hallways
- Reports of drug use and sales, violence, robberies and arson
- Strangers from outside the building would cause trouble
- Fear of "bad" neighbors
- Concern about safety of retail spaces

Moving and Relocating Twice is Difficult for Families

Non-returning residents reported that moving was difficult and a hassle to their families, and so they did not choose to move back to Mandela Gateway. While most of these families received Section 8 vouchers, a few had relocated to other public housing in the area. Often, residents relocated to other PHA units that were newer, two-story townhouses with back and front yards. These residents reported that they were pleased with their public housing units during relocation and had little desire to move again.

Cultural and Ethnic Biases Deterred Some Residents from Returning to Mandela Gateway

Of the 18 families that did not choose to return to Mandela Gateway, many were Cambodian immigrant families. During evaluation interviews, the OHA translator reported that many of these residents did not feel comfortable living near African-American neighbors, and that they blamed the safety and maintenance problems at Westwood Gardens on the African-Americans. These residents often attributed negative activities on-site to African-American residents and their visitors. While race was not explicitly cited as a reason for not returning to Mandela Gateway, it may be inferred that attitudes about race contributed to the low rate of return of original Cambodian residents.

There was Not a Unit Size Match for All Families to Return to Mandela Gateway

Mandela Gateway did not include units that matched those of every resident relocated from Westwood Gardens. In three cases, residents found that their unit needs were not available at the site. During an interview, one resident reported that he would have liked to return to Mandela Gateway, but that his seven-person household was too large for the rental units there. His family had opted to use a Section 8 voucher during relocation and would remain in a single-family home in East Oakland. Similarly, two one-person households were unable to move into PHA units at Mandela Gateway, because none of them were one-bedroom units. These residents were provided Section 8 vouchers and moved into tax credit units at Mandela Gateway.

B. MANDELA GATEWAY AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

At this time, the redevelopment of West Oakland is in its early stages, and there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the Mandela Gateway HOPEVI development has yet been a catalyst for the revitalization of the neighborhood. However, Mandela Gateway does appear to contribute to the broader redevelopment goals of the area, and has helped to improve investment and confidence in the community. For the first time in thirty years private investment is flowing into the neighborhood, new housing is being constructed, and new commercial businesses are interested in the area. The following section will provide a more detailed look into the ways that the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI development is contributing to the improvement of the West Oakland neighborhood. For this analysis, data for 94607 ZIP-code will be used to analyze HOPE VI neighborhood characteristics.

In 2006 West Oakland appears to be at a point of transition, and it remains to be seen what Mandela Gateway’s legacy will be to the neighborhood. For the first time in thirty years private investment is flowing into the neighborhood, new housing is being constructed, and new commercial businesses are interested in the area. The 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake damaged the freeway and galvanized the community to demand its removal. Beginning in the 1990’s, Federal HOPE VI funding has enabled the Oakland Housing Authority to replace aging and condemned housing projects with new, mixed-income rental and ownership units that provide residents access to social services. These new developments have been designed to deconcentrate the poverty in each project, with the broader goal of stabilizing the neighborhood. The redevelopment of vacant, former industrial “brownfield” properties into new housing offers hope that the neighborhood will again become a vital part of the city.

The Mandela Gateway HOPE VI development is not directly connected with the official redevelopment efforts taking place in West Oakland. However, it is a highly visible, pioneer project in the neighborhood. Its design and development preceded the creation of the West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area, but its completion has been lauded as a sign that revitalization is coming to the neighborhood. However, at this time, it is difficult to identify whether Mandela Gateway has been a catalyst for the neighborhood transformation taking place in West Oakland, or whether it is only one project playing a part in a broader process of neighborhood improvement.

Revitalization Strengths:

- Mandela Gateway is a pioneer development in the area
- Positive contribution to West Oakland Redevelopment and Revitalization
- Increasing on-site security and decreasing crime

Revitalization Challenges:

- Negative Perceptions of Public Housing are Difficult to Overcome
- Inability to Lease Commercial Spaces at Mandela Gateway
- Concentrated Poverty in West Oakland Remains High

Neighborhood Impact and Revitalization: Strengths

Mandela Gateway is a Pioneer Development in the Area

Mandela Gateway is located at the intersection of Mandela Parkway and 7th Street, across the street from the West Oakland BART station. It occupies a highly visible location within the neighborhood at the start of the community's redesigned Mandela Parkway. The Parkway itself is significant, in that it has replaced the fallen Cyprus Freeway that physically divided the area for decades. Mandela Gateway's development and design were undertaken prior to the City's designation of the West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area in 2004, and so it was a pioneer effort in the revitalization of the neighborhood.

Due to the fact that Mandela Gateway is located directly opposite the BART station and tracks, it is built in an area of the neighborhood that has not traditionally had a large residential population. In recent years, the historic 7th Street retail corridor has fallen into vacancy and disrepair, with few operating businesses and many reports of criminal activity. In a recent interview, officials at the Oakland Redevelopment Agency expressed hope that the increased residential density at Mandela Gateway will create demand for retail in the area. He also hoped that by building more residential units facing 7th Street, thus increasing the "eyes on the street", there would be an improvement in the level of security in an around Mandela Gateway and the BART station.³⁶

"The fact that it was done has laid important groundwork for future transformation."

*– Carol Galante
BRIDGE Housing*

Similarly, by pioneering new large-scale development in West Oakland, Mandela Gateway has contributed to an increasing sense of confidence that there will be an improving residential neighborhood in the community, and a growing commercial base to support local businesses. This increasing confidence in the future of West Oakland has begun to attract private developers and lending institutions that have not traditionally invested in West Oakland. BART has begun to move forward with plans to develop its lands near the station by encouraging partnerships with private developers.³⁷

³⁶ Interview with Dan Vanderprieem and Gloria King of the Oakland Redevelopment Agency, 9/26/05

³⁷ Interview with Carol Galante, President, BRIDGE Housing, 10/3/05

Positive Contribution to West Oakland Redevelopment and Revitalization

The West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area was created in 2004, and up to this point, there is little connection between official redevelopment efforts and HOPE VI. However, the Mandela Gateway development falls in line with the broader redevelopment aims of the Oakland Redevelopment Agency. Specifically, the West Oakland redevelopment plans include:

- The construction of new family housing
- An increase in the residential character of the neighborhood
- The creation of more commercial attractions along Mandela Parkway
- A focus on mixed use development
- The mitigation of incompatible land uses in the area, particularly industry and light industry

The Mandela Gateway HOPE VI development falls in line with each of these goals, and has contributed to strengthening the interest of private investors in West Oakland.



*Star indicates Mandela Gateway Location³⁸

Local Economic Development in West Oakland

The Oakland Redevelopment Agency hopes to attract more businesses to West Oakland, and has placed a priority on mixed-use development along key streets in the neighborhood. Of primary importance to Mandela Gateway is the revitalization of the historic 7th Street retail district, and the proposed new retail zone envisioned along Mandela Parkway. The Mandela Gateway HOPE VI development occupies a key position at the intersection of these two streets, and its mixed-use design fits in well with the retail attraction plans of the ORA.

When asked what impact Mandela Gateway has had on business attraction to the area, one ORA official expressed that “one new development did not bring in new businesses,” especially given the fact that HOPE VI is “still public housing.” However, she did mention that new businesses have been showing an interest in vacant properties along 7th Street and that the façade improvements being made in the area had done much to improve the overall look of the neighborhood.³⁹ Given that the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI development has involved entirely new construction, with new façade designs, it is clear that despite the fact that Mandela Gateway continues to include public housing, it is directly contributing to the overall transformation of the area.

³⁸ West Oakland Project Area Map located on City of Oakland’s Website:
<http://www.oaklandnet.com/budgetoffice/ORA2003-05.pdf>

³⁹ Interview with Gloria King, Oakland Redevelopment Agency, 9/22/05

Increasing the Residential Character of West Oakland

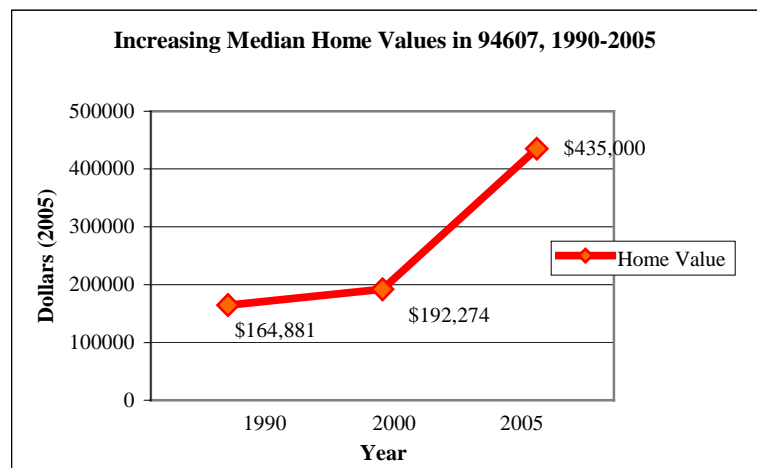
One of the Oakland Redevelopment Agency's primary goals for West Oakland is to mitigate the effects of incompatible land uses in the area, particularly those involving industrial facilities adjacent to residential properties. The existence of industrial activities in the neighborhood has discouraged private residential investment in West Oakland since the 1930's, and has contributed to the general perception of the area as an undesirable place to live. The ORA plans for the area have focused on increasing the residential character of the neighborhood, and converting many of the existing vacant and underutilized industrial properties to housing. It is hoped that by increasing density in the neighborhood, local-serving retail and commercial establishments will relocate and thrive in the community. However, West Oakland's proximity to the Port of Oakland will undoubtedly continue to bring traffic congestion and trucks to local streets, and this will hinder some of the ORA's plans to revitalize West Oakland through the development of residential areas.

The last comprehensive collection of neighborhood data for 94607 occurred with the 2000 Census. In the five years since the 2000 Census, real estate values in West Oakland have increased dramatically. The designation of West Oakland as a redevelopment area in 2004 has brought much needed public and private investment to the neighborhood, as well as the promise of improved economic development. The neighborhood's close proximity to San Francisco, and the availability of large, former industrial parcels for residential development has increased the number of new housing units in the area, and more are in the development pipeline.

Mandela Gateway is the first, and most visible large-scale revitalization project in the area. It has added residents and much-needed affordable housing to the neighborhood. The for-sale townhomes located on the 8th St. side of the property, scheduled to begin construction in 2006, will add to single-family character of the existing neighborhood stock.

Increasing Residential Property Values

In a tight real estate market such as the Bay Area, median home prices are one reflection of the attractiveness of various neighborhoods. In 2006, the median home price in the city of Oakland is \$547,000.⁴⁰ One indicator of neighborhood revitalization in West Oakland is the increase in residential property values in recent years. While the median value of owner occupied households increased \$23,237 (1999 dollars) between 1990 and 2000 to \$163,100, recent sales prices for homes in the 94607 ZIP-code are much higher. The median sales price for homes in 94607 between June and August 2005 was \$435,000.⁴¹ When adjusted for inflation, the \$163,100 median value in 2000 is equivalent to \$192,274 in 2005. The increase in the median value of homes in the 94607 ZIP-code is \$242,726. While home values in West Oakland lag behind other city



⁴⁰ <http://www.zillow.com/search/Search.z?citystatezip=oakland+ca&mode=browse>, April 11, 2006

⁴¹ Homes sales data: MLS listings, Sept. 2005

neighborhoods, they have risen dramatically in a very short amount of time. While it is not possible to attribute the rise in median values to the development of Mandela Gateway, it is clear that the redevelopment of the site has played a role in helping to create positive momentum in the revitalization of housing in the area.

Throughout the neighborhood adjacent to Mandela Gateway there is visible evidence of renewed investment in residential properties. Many homes in the community have undergone repairs and repainting, giving the neighborhood a feeling of improvement and hope. For the first time in decades, large-scale development projects are in the planning phases in West Oakland, and there is a sense of hope that new investment in the neighborhood will improve the quality of life for neighborhood residents.

*“1 in 5 residential buildings in West Oakland received permits for improvements in 2004.”
- Social Compact, Inc.*

A number of larger-scale residential and retail projects are currently in various stages of the development pipeline, indicating that West Oakland is receiving new attention from the development and investment communities. It is hoped that new construction in West Oakland will add to the total number of units in the area, increase the neighborhood population, bring increased income to the area, and assist in attracting much-needed neighborhood-serving retail to the West Oakland community.

Examples of improving investment and development in West Oakland:

- In 2004, 4,165 building permits (excluding demolitions) were issued and reported in West Oakland by the City’s Building Services Department.⁴²
- The nearby Wood Street Development will construct approximately 1200 new housing units, and community open space, as well as, retrofit and restore the historic Southern Pacific Rail Station.
- BART has entered planning phases for a new transit village adjacent to the West Oakland BART station.
- Aegis Equity Partners has engaged in three major entitlement projects in West Oakland adjacent to the BART station, and will work with ORA, CalTrans and the Alliance for West Oakland Development to develop high-density residential and transit-serving retail uses.⁴³

⁴² Social Compact, Inc., “The Oakland Drilldown Snapshot.” 2005 <http://www.socialcompact.org/pdfs/WestOaklandBook.pdf>

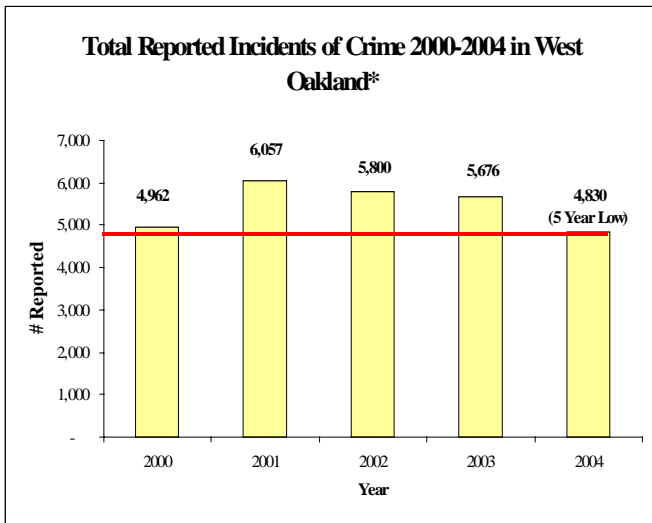
⁴³ www.aegisrealty.com

Increased On-site Security and Decreasing Crime

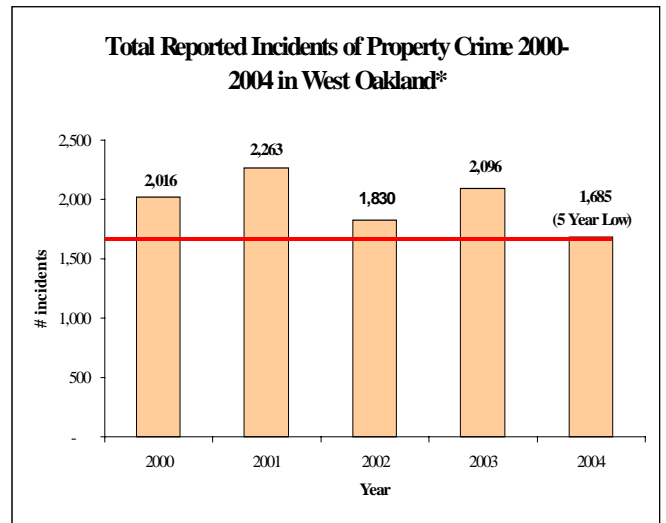
Based upon data cited in the 2005 Social Compact Drilldown Report about West Oakland's neighborhood security and market stability, it appears that crime has declined significantly during the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI revitalization process.⁴⁴ The Social Compact study included community, property and violent crime in its analysis. According to Social Compact, reported incidents of crime reached a five year low of 4,830 in 2004. This followed a steady decline in reported incidents every year since 2001. The number of reported incidents decreased by 846 between 2003 and 2004, resulting in a 14.9% neighborhood decline in crime.⁴⁵

Similarly, reported incidents of property crime in West Oakland reached a five year low of 1,685 in 2004. Although reported incidents did not decline each year between 2000 and 2004, the total number of property crimes decreased by 19.6% from 2003 to 2004.⁴⁶

Marie August, the on-site property manager at Mandela Gateway from July 2005 to the present, stated that there have not been many police calls from Mandela Gateway during her time as manager. Those calls that have resulted in police visits have been primarily domestic in nature, and none have been serious incidents requiring specific actions on her part. While she could recall two purse-snatchings at the bus stop, she did not believe that the site was particularly unsafe or lacking in security. Ms. August credits the buildings' excellent design as the primary reason behind the high level of security on-site and on the sidewalks directly adjacent to the development.



Source: Social Compact, 2005⁴⁷



*Property crime includes: burglary, larceny-theft, & motor vehicle theft
Source: Social Compact, 2005⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Social Compact, "West Oakland DRILLDOWN Report." 2005

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 31-34

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 33

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 31

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 33

Neighborhood Impact and Revitalization: Challenges

Negative Perceptions of Public Housing are Difficult to Overcome

Mandela Gateway “Is Still Just Public Housing”

Although many recognize the improved construction and design quality of HOPE VI developments, there is resistance to believing that rebuilding public housing can contribute positively to the revitalization of West Oakland. This opinion reflects a belief that many local residents, business owners and city officials share – that West Oakland is inundated with low-income rental housing, especially public housing.⁴⁹ The most publicly visible owner and operator of low-income rental property in the area is the Oakland Housing Authority, and so HOPE VI developments face the same resistance that other OHA properties do.

The high concentration of public housing sites in West Oakland, coupled with a very low median household income, is seen as a deterrent to economic development and neighborhood improvement.

There is a high concentration of public housing sites in West Oakland, and this concentration is seen as a deterrent to economic development and neighborhood improvement in the area. In particular, scattered-site public housing is blamed for causing the values of neighboring properties to decline.⁵⁰

- Dilapidated buildings and inadequate maintenance
- Lack of on-site managers to oversee property
- Concerns about security and police calls to scattered-sites
- Lack of on-site social services to meet residents’ needs
- Belief that OHA is bureaucratic and resistant to change

Concerns about the negative spillover effect of scattered-site housing have made further affordable, in-fill development projects difficult in many parts of the city. The West Oakland Project Area Committee (WOPAC) has recommended, and the City of Oakland has determined, that the only affordable developments to be approved in the neighborhood will be homeownership projects.

Inability to Lease Commercial Spaces at Mandela Gateway

Leasing the commercial spaces at Mandela Gateway has been challenging, and all remain vacant. As detailed in the previous section, the low median household income in West Oakland can be a deterrent to attracting new businesses to the area. Businesses have expressed concern that there is not enough of an economic base in the area to ensure consistent sales. Similarly, fears about inventory shrinkage, particularly internal and external theft, and on-site security have swayed businesses from leasing space at Mandela Gateway.

⁴⁹ Interviews with Dan Vanderprieem and Gloria King of the Oakland Redevelopment Agency

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Regardless of the retail and business attraction plans of the ORA, West Oakland’s low median household income has made leasing the commercial spaces at Mandela Gateway difficult. The initial anchor tenant, Walgreens, pulled out after signing a letter of intent, because they did not believe in the future transformation of the area, nor the potential draw of BART pedestrians walking across the street.

The inability to find tenants for the retail spaces has made it difficult for Mandela Gateway to fully engage in the revitalization of the neighborhood, and the vacancy contributes to critics’ notions that creating positive change through the redevelopment of public housing is impractical. Finding retail tenants will anchor the development, allow it to flourish, and also assist add to the improvement of local economic development efforts along 7th Street and Mandela Parkway.

The “Down-Side” of being a Pioneer

The challenges facing Mandela Gateway thus far - vacant retail spaces, building at the edge of an established residential neighborhood and battling negative perceptions about public housing – are all inherent difficulties that come with being a pioneer development in West Oakland. The community appears to be at a crossroad, and there is a real possibility of dramatic positive neighborhood transformation on the horizon. However, the timeline for this transformation may extend into the next ten years. If other developments in the immediate area surrounding Mandela Gateway had been completed before it, then Mandela Gateway may have been able to diminish some of the challenges that it faces today:

- Leasing commercial spaces would be easier if more stores were open along 7th Street
- Attracting strong retail tenants would be easier if the surrounding community had already demonstrated itself as a strong market
- Affordable and public housing units would not stand out so much in the community if other developments were underway, or complete

New surrounding development will be good. Mandela Gateway is isolated right now, so it is easier for it to stand out and to flourish. But more development will help it flourish even more.
~Carol Galante,
BRIDGE Housing

Although it has already made a significant contribution to the improving neighborhood climate of West Oakland, it will take time for the full effect of the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI development to become fully apparent.

Concentrated Poverty in West Oakland Remains High

The West Oakland neighborhood continues to have one of the highest levels of concentrated poverty in Oakland. The 2000 Census provides the most recent detailed analysis of residents' incomes, and so changes that have taken place in the intervening five years are not known at this time. However, according to the 2000 Census, the median income of West Oakland households living in the 94607 ZIP code was \$21,124, the equivalent of \$25,049 in 2005 dollars. This is nearly half the median household income of the city of Oakland - \$40,055 in 1999 dollars - during the same year.⁵¹ In 1999, 79% of the 94607 households earned incomes less than \$50,000, with 49% earning less than \$20,000.⁵²

Median Household Income 94607 & Oakland			
1990 (1989\$)		2000 (1999\$)	
94607	Oakland	94607	Oakland
16,338	36,411	21,124	40,055

Source: US Census (SF3) 1990 and 2000

Percent 94607 Households Receiving Public Assistance		
	1989	1999
With public assistance income	0.41	0.16
No public assistance income	0.59	0.84
Total	7,325	7,494

Source: US Census (SF3) 1990 and 2000

Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of families in the 94607 area receiving public assistance income declined sharply, even as earned incomes remained low. This is likely a result of federal and state welfare policies that changed the qualifications for receiving assistance during the 1990's. However, in 2000, 16% of 94607 households continued to receive public income assistance, which was double the citywide percentage of 7.9%. The low median household income in West Oakland, coupled with the high percentage of families receiving public assistance, indicates that there is ongoing concentrated poverty in the neighborhood.

The Role of Mandela Gateway in Decreasing Poverty in West Oakland

One of the primary goals of HOPE VI nationwide has been to stabilize neighborhoods, and to deconcentrate poverty, by incorporating non-public housing units in new developments. Mandela Gateway provided one-for-one replacement for the demolished Westwood Gardens units, but increased overall density on-site, by including 168 rental units and 14 homeownership units to residents earning 50-60% AMI.⁵³ While the income mix at Mandela Gateway has deconcentrated the level of poverty on-site, given the high percentage of public and low-income housing located in the area, it is unclear at this time whether the development will be a catalyst for other efforts to deconcentrate poverty throughout the immediate neighborhood.

⁵¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, SF3

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ For a detailed look at the local 2005 AMI levels for Oakland see the Appendix to this evaluation or the City's website: <http://www.oaklandnet.com/government/hcd/policy/docs/IncomeLimits2005.pdf>

C. INTEGRATING THE PHYSICAL AND CSS ASPECTS OF MANDELA GATEWAY

One of the overarching goals of HOPE VI nationally has been to integrate a place-based approach to community revitalization through the reconstruction of severely distressed public housing with a people-based approach through the funding of Community and Supportive Services for HOPE VI residents. The vision of Mandela Gateway includes both of these approaches in its long-term contribution to the revitalization of West Oakland.

As discussed in the previous section of this evaluation, Mandela Gateway’s location and award-winning design have added to a renewed sense of optimism in the revitalization of the West Oakland neighborhood. In the following section, the integration of place- and people-based strategies on site will be analyzed in order to provide further detail about how the development’s physical design and CSS programs perform at Mandela Gateway.

Integration Strengths:

- Effective teamwork between property management, CSS providers and OHA staff
- Income mix is very successful, “seamless”

Integration Challenges:

- Multi-building complex poses difficulties for on-site CSS delivery and community building
- Timelines different for CSS outcomes and development construction

Integrating the Physical and CSS Aspects of Mandela Gateway: Strengths

Effective Teamwork Between Property Management, CSS Providers and OHA Staff

The Mandela Gateway HOPE VI development is a partnership between the Oakland Housing Authority and BRIDGE Housing, Inc. The building management, rent collection and administration of the site was contracted to the John Stuart Co. Representatives of all three organizations have reported that the teamwork structure for managing the site has been highly effective. Similarly, each has praised the efforts on-site to balance the needs of residents with those of management.⁵⁴

The John Stuart Co. has been able to contact BRIDGE and the case management teams when they've needed to work with families.

By all accounts, the first year of operation has been overwhelmingly positive at Mandela Gateway. However, there have been times that managers have had to mediate resident conflicts, and to enforce rent payment from PHA residents on-site. The most common cause of conflict between residents seems to be the noise generated by children playing on the play structures located at the center of property, and management has intervened by mediating conversations between residents, holding community meetings regarding rules of children's play, and by suggesting alternate units for residents desiring to avoid children's noise. In the case of PHA residents facing eviction due to rent nonpayment, representatives from OHA, BRIDGE and John Stuart have worked together to find solutions to residents' needs, to provide referrals to appropriate CSS programs, and to enable residents to meet their rent obligations.

Although resident eviction proceedings can be difficult both administratively and emotionally, property managers have been able to work with the HOPE VI case management teams to try to avoid evictions. For instance, a mother and her five children were required to pay \$80 per month in rent, and failed to do so for six months. John Stuart Co. contacted case managers to work with the family to find a resolution. While this family was eventually evicted from the unit, the property manager believed that every effort had been made to work with the resident and to accommodate the family's needs prior to their eviction.

⁵⁴ Interviews with Lara São Pedro of BRIDGE Housing on 10/12/05 and Marie August of John. Stuart Co. on 2/21/06

Income Mix is “Seamless”

Marie August, the on-site property manager, reports that the mix of income at Mandela Gateway is working very well. Due to the fact that the highest-income residents are earning 50-60% AMI, there are few visible, noticeable differences between them and the PHA residents living at the site. As Ms. August explained, “nobody knows the income differences unless they tell each other” and the differences do not seem to be impeding residents’ participation in services and community meetings on-site.⁵⁵ The most common problem thus far is that residents don’t understand how rents are set for different units, but Ms. August deals with these residents’ concerns on a case-by-case basis. Otherwise, she reports that Mandela gateway residents do not seem to notice or care about the income differences between residents living in the building.

“Mixing in the PHA units make a huge difference”.
~Marie August
On-Site Property Manager
John Stuart Co.

⁵⁵ Interview with Marie August, 2/22/06

Integrating the Physical and CSS Aspects of Mandela Gateway: Challenges

Multi-Building Complex Poses Difficulties for On-site CSS Delivery and Community Building

As described in the preceding section of this evaluation, Mandela Gateway's award-winning, New Urbanist design has added greatly to the renewed sense of optimism surrounding local economic development in West Oakland. Similarly, it is credited with creating a safer and more positive environment for residents living on-site. Ms. August reported that Mandela Gateway is like "a building turned inside out" and that the design is effective at keeping people from hanging out and causing trouble on the corners bordering the site. She also credits the design and the high-quality construction with creating a property that is easier to manage and to operate.⁵⁶

However, Mandela Gateway is a multi-building complex, with east and west buildings straddling Mandela Parkway. The parkway creates a physical line of division through the property, and also a psychological barrier to community building between residents of the two sides. While one building includes the community rooms, the other houses the social services and referrals office. Residents of one side of the development do not have access to the other side, due to its high level of security. Ms. São Pedro reports that CSS provision on site was difficult to program into these divided spaces. Because residents, often children, did not have access to the "other" building, they would miss scheduled programs, or choose not to participate at all. To counteract the physical and psychological divisions at Mandela Gateway, community events like the Halloween Party and resident meetings have been scheduled to foster a sense of community at the site. While these efforts have been positively received by residents, the site's physical division remains an obstacle to community building efforts at Mandela Gateway.⁵⁷

Timelines Different for CSS Outcomes and Development Construction

The Mandela Gateway HOPE VI grant was awarded in 2000 and ended in November 2005. While the timing of the grant was appropriate for relocating residents, demolishing the existing structures and developing new structures on-site, the grant did not allow for a sufficient amount of time to address the needs of residents during the first 15-18 months of occupancy. Due to the fact that the grant term was ending, CSS funds earmarked for the Mandela Gateway residents had to be spent quickly in less than a full year of occupancy. This resulted in the site being initially "over-programmed" with CSS services, and then programs being severely cut back at the end of the grant term.⁵⁸ If the grant and timeline for CSS services were decoupled from the grant and timeline required for physical construction, then a more efficient and cohesive CSS program would be possible. This would not only improve CSS services to residents, but would assist OHA and BRIDGE in effectively rebuilding the community at the new development.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Interviews with Lara São Pedro, 10/12/05 and 2/20/06

⁵⁸ Ibid.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Community and Supportive Services:

1. Plan for on-site provision of services prior to relocation in order to improve recruitment and service provision throughout the relocation period. Similarly, planning for, and funding CSS services at the redeveloped site improves the community-building process on-site and sets a positive base for interaction and participation among mixed-income residents.
2. The process of service delivery must follow residents' needs and not construction schedules, particularly in terms of move-out timelines. Enabling CSS services and recruitment to begin prior to relocation will ease the burden of transition on residents, and may improve participation rates over the course of the grant period.
3. It is essential that the Housing Authority have an effective data tracking system for residents' participation and CSS provider reports from the beginning of the HOPE VI grant period. Consistent and detailed information about residents' participation will allow for better monitoring of outreach and service efforts to a scattered population. It is also recommended that there be a consistent reporting format for service providers, in order to facilitate efficient evaluation of the CSS programs.
4. It is recommended that the Housing Authority improve its connection to CSS providers, so as to create cooperation, consistency in staffing and consistency in performance objectives, particularly during the relocation period when residents are scattered. Because many service providers were not set up to perform recruitment and outreach to a scattered population, on-going communication will allow for greater support in meeting the needs of residents.

Children and Youth

1. It is important to continue and expand programs for youth and child populations during the HOPE VI grant period. Not only are children active participants in programs, but their participation also increases the possibility of connection and outreach to parents. By increasing CSS programming for youth, maintaining connections to parents will likely improve.
2. Coordination between OHA and OUSD should take place above the site level, as principal and teacher turnover is high in distressed neighborhoods. Building relationships with local school district will also help in tracking population needs throughout the term of the HOPE VI grant as they change schools and grade levels, and will enable the Housing Authority to assess the needs of children in conjunction with teachers and school officials.
3. It is recommended that more detailed tracking of youth and children be recorded in the HOPE VI data management system throughout the term of the grant. This will make tracking the impact of HOPE VI on residents easier, and will facilitate more effective outreach to local agencies and schools. As reported by BRIDGE Housing, surveying parents' CSS needs for their children provided detailed feedback about the efficacy and timing of the programs offered, recommended other programs for the future and improved residents community participation.

Relocation and Return

1. Communicate clear and consistent relocation and return policies from both OHA and property management (e.g. credit requirements, criminal record, lease standing) from the beginning of the HOPE VI grant. Residents' concerns and anxiety about being allowed to return to Mandela Gateway were fueled by confusion and a lack of clarity about return requirements. Increasing outreach to English-language-learning populations will also help to alleviate anxiety about returning to the new development and may result in a higher return rate overall.

Neighborhood Revitalization

1. Conduct a public relations campaign to broader city and regional housing and redevelopment communities in order to improve perceptions of public housing and HOPE VI. The persistent belief that public housing will deter investment in a neighborhood and have an overall blighting effect on the area makes recruiting retail tenants and partners difficult.
2. Form greater and more effective partnerships with businesses and retail community members prior to construction in order to improve tenanting of retail spaces. By securing commitments from retailers prior to redevelopment, the developer can tailor the design of the spaces to fit tenant needs. Similarly, by securing an "anchor" tenant early in the redevelopment process, other retailers will be more likely to take a chance on an untested location.

Integration of CSS with Physical Development

1. Relocation timelines and service needs must be better understood and planned-for during the predevelopment stages in order to avoid crisis management later in the grant period.
2. Continue to build collaborative and consistent policies and practices that benefit both the "hard" and "soft" sides of development. While the primary role of the Housing Authority has historically been that of landlord and property manager, the CSS provision in the HOPE VI grant required that OHA take on the additional role of social services coordinator. Lack of cooperation and teamwork between the 'hard' and 'soft' sides of the OHA HOPE VI staff added to the challenging nature of the redevelopment.

7. CONCLUSION

By redeveloping the old Westwood Gardens site and replacing it with the Mandela Gateway HOPE VI development, the Oakland Housing Authority did more than simply build new dwelling units – it provided a symbol of hope for the revitalization of West Oakland. Although its planning and construction pre-date the official Redevelopment efforts of the city, Mandela Gateway has done much to attract other private investment to the neighborhood, and to reverse the pattern of neglect and disinvestment that has plagued West Oakland for decades. The difficulties encountered in finding retail tenants speaks to the need for further efforts to deconcentrate poverty in the area, and to attract more private investment in the future.

The HOPE VI CSS program offered comprehensive case management and social services to residents. Although initial resident participation was low, and the services were underutilized, participation increased with time. By partnering with BRIDGE Housing at Mandela Gateway, the diversity of the programs expanded and resident participation increased significantly. Addressing the needs of a scattered population proved challenging, and important lessons were learned that can inform HOPE VI redevelopment efforts in the future.

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