RESIDENTS’ VOICES & VIEWPOINTS IN COFFELT COMMUNITY

BY
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AND
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And generous, enthusiastic participation by Coffelt-Lamoreaux residents, Hamilton School staff, & HAMC staff

All photographs used in this report were taken by Hamilton School students unless noted otherwise.
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Overview: Purpose & Process

Working with 36 undergraduate planning students and Professor Ruth Yabes from the School of Planning in Spring 2009, the Stardust Center engaged Coffelt-Lamoreaux public housing residents in identifying & discussing their assessments, preferences & aspirations of their homes and community. This project involved resident youth, seniors, adults and parents. As the Housing Authority of Maricopa County (HAMC) Board of Commissioners pursues future planning and program redevelopment of this public housing, these findings can help inform HAMC what needs and values are foremost on the minds of residents. While time and resource constraints limited the sample size of this research, the 9 school-age children, 10 seniors and 33 parents who participated provided remarkable convergence on several prominent issues.
Coffelt-Lamoreaux Housing Development

- 296 residential units in 148 single-story duplex buildings
- Building began in 1953, first unit occupied in 1954
- The oldest operational project in HAMC’s public housing stock
Methodology

- ASU students divided into six teams, each conducting research on the following:
  - Interviews with 10 Seniors
  - Survey of 33 Adults
  - Photo Project with 9 Children
  - Healthy Development Measures of:
    - environmental stewardship; sustainable/safe transportation;
    - access to goods & services/public infrastructure
  - Community Asset Mapping
  - History of Coffelt
- The data and information from each team was individually analyzed, and then synthesized into major theme findings for this report
National, longitudinal research shows that living in public housing during childhood can result in positive self-sufficiency as an adult, in part because of residential stability. But some critics contend that public housing assistance should be a temporary leverage for moving into market-rate housing. A number of residents expressed a desire to stay in Coffelt-Lamoreaux, although doing so if certain improvements were made.
While two-thirds of surveyed adults said they would prefer to stay in Coffelt than move somewhere else if the cost was the same, the vast majority of these (80%) wanted to have improvements made in their home, yard or streets.
Reasons for Wanting to Stay

Top 7 Reasons (from 21 adults)

1. Safe Here, Violence Elsewhere - 76%
2. Stay Near Transportation - 71%
3. Stay Close to Family or Friends - 63%
4. Afraid Encounter Discrimination - 36%
5. Can’t Afford to Move Out - 28%
6. Low Rent - 27%
7. Keep Children @ Same School - 27%
Improvements Desired, If To Stay

Top 5 Desired Changes

- Assistance with Utility or Food: 25%
- On-Site Classes: 25%
- Air Conditioning: 25%
- Home Improvements or Public Improvements: 50%
- Safety & Security: 58%
liked best about homes: top 3 responses

28 respondents

comfortable 18%
lots of room 29%
yard 39%

note: when asked about what they liked least about living in coffelt, 57% said streets, followed by 18% who mentioned their children staying out late
Seniors’ Statements About Stability

Aging in Place

- I had my four children [here]. Now my oldest son is 52, when he was small [and we moved here] he was 2 years old.. I worked because I was left alone and I had to support my 4 children. I have lived here in two apartments. (Resident for 50 years)

Moving Within Coffelt

- I have been in 5 apartments. It is due to Coffelt’s system and it has to do with the size of the family. As the family is reduced, the number of bedrooms in the apartment [is reduced] All of [my 8 children] lived in that home... They all studied. All of my children were educated. (Resident for 31 years)
Valuing: Social Networks

National research suggests that social networks, support and capital can often mediate health & well-being impacts of low-income residents brought on by deleterious housing conditions.

Home is not only a physical place but holds important social meanings of rootedness and family.
Extended Family Ties

- Nearly 1 out of 5 residents surveyed (18%) had other family members living at Coffelt
Seniors’ Statements About Social Ties

Loaning, Sharing Resources

- If you are going out, that person will ask you where you are going. “I’ll take you!” That helps out a lot because things are very distant from here. (Resident, less than 5 years)

- Recently when I was sick there were 2 ladies who came to visit me and bring me food. (Resident, of 15 years)

- I have gone to them [i.e. neighbors] for help many times when I have not been able to afford to pay my rent and all that… they bring me food… from time to time, when they have a party or something like that. (Resident of less than 2 years)
There was a program called The Golden Years. We used to have many gatherings, we would talk, have conversations, and we would make handicrafts. But now it is over with because there are no funds. (Resident for 30 years)

Everyone is in their own home and I live peacefully in mine. I don’t get in anyone’s business and no one gets in mine. (Resident, less than 10 years)

Our neighborhood is pretty split up. One group walks around one place and another around another place. (Resident of less than 5 years)
Friendship with Neighbors

- *I have many friends, many people. There are two or three Cuban families here.* (Resident, less than 5 years)

- *Friendship among neighbors is very important ... We respect each other, we serve each other and it is wonderful.* (Resident, less than 10 years)
Survey: Activities with Coffelt Neighbors

Weekly or Almost Always

- Help with Chore or Repair: 7%
- Loan or Borrow Things: 11%
- Coffee or Meal: 23%
- Attend Community Meeting: 25%
- Help in Emergency: 26%
- Loan Phone: 31%
- Greet Neighbor: 54%
Children’s Social Ties

- Children have strong relationships within the Coffelt community.

- Nearly every child referenced an adult at least once. Some mentioned several.

- Mothers are the most influential adults in the lives of these children.
Asset Mapping inventories resources or assets, capacities and skills of people and their communities. Assets can be of *individuals*, *associations* or *institutions*.

For Coffelt, assets were mapped within a 2-mile radius.
Community Assets: Individual

- Six reported skills held by over half of the resident respondents surveyed:
  - 65%: caring for children, ages 1 to 6
  - 62%: general household cleaning
  - 62%: baking
  - 58%: window washing
  - 58%: wash dishes for large numbers of people
  - 54%: caring for babies, under age 1

See Appendix A for list of additional skills of residents
Assets:

Institutions within 2-mile radius

- Within 2-mile radius of Coffelt
  - 4 fire stations
  - 1 police station
  - 1 library
  - 5 museums
  - 1 elementary school
  - 2 other educational institutions
  - 3 hospitals
  - 1 health clinic
  - 1 school-based medical center
  - 2 major sports facilities
  - 1 recreation center
  - 16 parks
Assets:
Institutions within 1-mile radius

• Within 1-mile radius of Coffelt
  • 1 fire station
  • 3 museums
  • 1 elementary school
  • 1 hospital
  • 1 health clinic
  • 1 school-based medical center
  • 1 recreation center
  • 4 parks
A two-mile radius from Coffelt captures many institutional assets; but much fewer are closer to home.
Community Assets:
Associations

- Children’s Programs
  - Girls Scouts & Camp Fire USA with Family Resource Center, Hamilton Elementary School
  - Boys & Girls Club
  - Valley Christian Center (until recently)

- Emergency Care
  - Phoenix Rescue Mission
  - St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance
  - Valle del Sol

- Not all Coffelt residents may be aware of these
A comprehensive review of national research by the Center for Housing Policy shows that a supportive, stable and affordable home environment can complement the efforts of educators, leading to better student achievement.
Arthur M. Hamilton Elementary School

- K through 8
- Enrollment: 445 (165 from Coffelt)
- Student Teacher Ratio: 19.1
- 98% Qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch
- Title 1 School
- Adjacent to Coffelt
- Family Resources Center implements 15 programs for children, adults & families, including resource/referrals to social services/food banks.
Liked About Children’s School

29 Adults Responding

- Care of Children's Needs: 14%
- Parental Programs: 14%
- Proximity: 14%
- Classes, IEP, Special Ed: 28%
- School Teachers, Principals, Counselors, Staff: 82%

NOTE: Of the 16 adults who said they would prefer to leave Coffelt than stay, 69% said a reason to leave was to have better schools for their children
Positive references to Hamilton School were about:

- Teachers
- Open space
- Artwork and murals
- Huskies, the Hamilton mascot

My school park, which I really like a lot.
This is a blank mural. My classmates and I are going to paint about Obama on it. I'm really excited to do it.
VI. Is Coffelt a Healthy Place to Live?

Based on San Francisco’s Healthy Development Measurement Tool, 3 categories of healthy development surrounding the Coffelt community are examined here:

- Environmental Stewardship
- Sustainable and Safe Transportation
- Public Infrastructure / Access to Goods & Services
According to a 2002 report by ASU faculty, 11 factories located within a 3-mile radius of Coffelt release toxic emissions.

The 2 facilities producing the most emissions are located within 2 miles of Coffelt.
Sustainable and Safe Transportation

- Poorly identified bus stops, providing no shelter
- Only one stop on 19th Avenue has a canopy and bench

Street view of Buckeye Avenue
Access: Grocery Stores

- No major grocery stores within 2-mile radius
- More than half of survey respondents shop at chain groceries more than 2 miles away
- Less than half the respondents (42%) said it takes them less than 30 minutes to get to grocery store. 29% said it took them more than 90 minutes
- Every senior interviewed wanted a grocery store nearby

Method of Travel to Buy Groceries

- My Car: 47%
- Bus: 29%
- With Someone Else in Their Car: 21%
- Walk: 3%

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Access: Health Services

- Most of the survey respondents provided locations of health care providers. Only a few named facilities including a health clinic within a mile of Coffelt.
- None mentioned any of the three hospitals within a 2-mile radius.
- None mentioned using the Hamilton Elementary School Medical Center located at the school.

Method of Travel to Health Services

- My Car: 44%
- Bus: 30%
- Someone else's car: 16%
- Walk: 7%
- Other methods: 3%

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Seniors’ Opinions:
Healthy Place

Perceived Healthy Interiors

- I believe that the way that I live in my home.. is how clean and hygienic you keep your home. (Resident, less than 5 years)

- … Inside and outside it is very ample [to walk or exercise] in the apartment. (Resident of 30 years)

... but still could use changes

- I think that [it is healthy] with the fans but they should have put in air conditioning… (Resident of 50 years)
Seniors, adults and children all mentioned problems with public space in Coffelt, focusing on:

- Physical Quality
- Crime, Graffiti & Degradation
- Parking Problems
Survey:
What Disliked about Coffelt

28 Adults Responding

- Dirty, Pests: 21%
- Crime: 32%
- Apartment Needs Repair: 46%
- Streets: 57%
Seniors’ Comments

In Disrepair

- All the holes in the street. The taxi drivers complain when they come to pick us up for medical appointments… they don’t like the terrible conditions… This is terrible! (Resident of less than 10 years)

- I would fix the streets. I would ask the people to keep the public spaces beautiful. To keep their grass green. I would like to see all of those things, all of those details to maintain a clean area. (Resident of less than 5 years)

Parking Problems

- We have a problem because my son has a borrowed car. He can’t park it here because a tow truck will haul it away. (Resident of 15 years)
When I first got here there were many problems with gangs that would break into cars, they would steal cars, and they wouldn’t let the neighbors sleep at night with all of their noise and shooting off of their guns. Then the police came down on them, and now it is very tranquil. (Resident of less than 10 years)

There was a problem and a concentration of violence there [i.e. parking]. Why are you parking here, you are coming from somewhere else? Now one can feel safety because they issue tickets and I have heard that they even tow cars away. (Resident of less than 5 years)
While many positive photos were taken by the children, one clearly negative aspect of the community photographed by many kids was graffiti and tagging.

Graffiti, I don’t like it because OTD stands for ‘out to destroy’ and they destroy the community.

This is more graffiti. I don’t like it because you can’t see what’s behind it, what it’s trying to tell us.
While many residents surveyed said they prefer living in Coffelt to moving some place else, they continued to hold aspirations of where they may want to live in the future.
Survey: Where would you like to live in 5 years?

27 Adults Responding

- Another local city: 7%
- Stay here: 22%
- Own Home: 52%
Survey: What would be your ideal home or neighborhood?

26 Adults Responding

- Well-maintained streets: 15%
- Nice house: 15%
- Friendly neighborhood: 19%
- Clean: 23%
- Safe: 23%
When asked about income levels in their ideal neighborhood...

Among the 27 people responding,

- 63% said income levels do not matter
- 30% said they would like their neighbors to be from all different income levels
- 7% said they would prefer their neighbors to be from the same income levels as themselves
IX. Children’s Images

A “photo club” of 9 Hamilton Elementary School students who lived in Coffelt were given cameras and asked to photograph places and people important to them within the community. After their photos were developed, each Hamilton student sat down with an ASU student, talked about what was important to them about each photo, and then created their own digitized photo book. The following represent the major themes derived from all the children’s photos.
Important Themes in Children’s Photographs

Top 5 issues most often mentioned when describing photographs

- Family and friends: 40%
- Natural environment: 13%
- Possessions: 11%
- Built environment: 8%
- Grafitti: 5%
Natural Environment

My mom’s rose, I like that rose because red is my favorite color.

It was raining and this is a rainbow and I wanted to take a picture of the rainbow. It has cool colors like red and blue and purple and yellow.
Family and Friends

...friends will always stick together forever and ever and ever

My mom’s friend... comes over and helps us when we’re sick.
Children’s Special Things: Their Personal Possessions

My closet with all my clothes and shoes. I like to wear clothes that fit and are stylish.

My memory shelf. It reminds me of my old memories.
Seniors, parents, kids all mentioned strong social connections with neighbors, nearby relatives and staff at Hamilton Elementary School. Breaking these social bonds and trying to build new ones in an entirely new location could add disruption to their lives. Potential social costs could be minimized if efforts were made to relocate residents in clusters (instead of scattered-site relocation) as well as co-relocation of new housing with the school or within the same school district. Any relocation efforts should focus on strengthening ties to schools over an extended period of time.
The most disliked condition were the streets: seniors, parents, adults, kids all mentioned problems with them being in poor repair, parking availability and regulations, graffiti and tagging. Elements of the public areas they wished they had more of were trees. As residents continue to live at Coffelt, providing safer and healthier public space remains a key desire among many residents, young and old alike.
Conclusions: #3

- While residents continue to live at Coffelt, community services and assets need to be better integrated into the immediate community; this is also an issue for non-Coffelt residents living nearby, some in other public housing developments. Efforts should be made to provide innovative ways to bring affordable, convenient food and grocery items to residents, perhaps in alliance with WIC and seniors’ programs, community supported agriculture, and other food service agencies. Circulator bus systems that are available in other Phoenix neighborhoods could be considered for this area that would connect residents with those community assets (e.g. library, grocery) at further distances.
## Appendix A: Individual Skills of Coffelt Residents

### Table 1: Top Ranked Individual Skills of Coffelt Residents

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<thead>
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<th>Skill</th>
<th>No. of people</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring for Children (1-6)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Household Cleaning</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window Washing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing Dishes for Large Numbers of People (over 10)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for Babies (under 1 yr)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor Waxing or Mopping</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Children on Field Trips</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mowing Lawns</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting &amp; Caring for Gardens</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving a Car</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing and Cleaning Carpets/Rugs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving Food for Large Numbers of People (over 10)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearing/Setting Tables for Large Numbers of People (over 10)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for Children (7-13)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing Meals for Large Numbers of People (over 10)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Source: Coffelt Residents Skills Survey*
Appendix B: References Used in Research

- Maricopa Association of Governments. ASU Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) GIS Data Repository, Accessed April 1, 2009.