



## A Case Analysis: The Broad Creek Renaissance Plan

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### Abstract

Mixed-income developments are becoming a common mechanism to transform public housing in urban communities. Housing authorities use this new form of housing to change the demographic profile of deteriorating inner city neighborhoods. The purpose of this study was to examine the conversion of public housing to mixed-income/mixed-use communities through a case analysis of the Broad Creek Renaissance Plan in Norfolk, Virginia. The researcher analyzed Broad Creek's land-use patterns and socioeconomic factors to determine if the HOPE VI initiative is meeting its goals and objectives. The results of this study revealed that through revitalization the Broad Creek Renaissance neighborhood's demographic profile was slightly changed from the pre-existing community to include individuals of different economic status, age ranges, and ethnic backgrounds.

**Keywords:** Mixed-use; Mixed-income developments; Hope VI; Broad creek renaissance; Public policy; Public administration

### Introduction

Cities all over the United States are experiencing a transformation to the 21<sup>st</sup> century public housing system. Traditional public housing units, which usually consist of high-rise project units and scattered housing sites confined to one area, are being replaced by mixed-income housing developments. Mixed-income developments include housing for families that are at various income levels. Mixed-income developments are intended to promote the deconcentration of poverty and give lower-income households access to improved amenities [1]. Socially integrating residents of various income levels into one community to reinforce the concept of self-sustainability for lower-income residents is the impetus behind the transformation to mixed-income communities. The transformation from traditional public housing units to mixed-income developments has caused controversy throughout the nation. One controversial issue that has caused numerous debates among advocates and critics is whether or not mixed-income developments lead public housing residents to self-sufficiency. Because of mixed emotions regarding the change in public housing, there are key questions to which many people want answers.

The collapse of the banking system in 1929 gave birth to a financial crisis in the United States known as the Great Depression. Housing in the United States at that time was financed by local investors and banks through short-term and non-amortizing loans in which some Americans had to refinance their home loans every few years. Loss of available capital to refinance homes left millions of Americans in jeopardy of losing their homes. At that time, public housing gave aid to working-class citizens experiencing a home crisis. Public housing was at first administered through the Public Works Department within the federal government. However, the Wagner-Steagall Act of 1937, better known as the Housing Act of 1937, created separate housing authorities in the United States to handle housing issues [2]. Public housing was formed as a way to alleviate present and recurring unemployment and to remedy unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions and an acute shortage of decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for low-income families [2].

The Housing Act of 1949 was crafted to limit public housing to low-income people, requiring that the highest rent paid be twenty percent lower than the lowest prevailing rents for decent housing in the private market, and by authorizing the eviction of above-income families [2]. This housing act made public housing available for extremely poor citizens. By the end of the 1980s, public housing was

widely viewed as a failure. Although many local housing agencies maintained and operated high-quality programs, living conditions in the nation's most dilapidated public housing developments were deplorable, and a complex layering of problems left these developments mired in the most destructive kind of poverty [3]. These problems included extreme racial and economic segregation and inadequate public services, particularly police, schools, and sanitation. Ineffective housing authority management and inadequate federal funding had left these developments with huge backlogs of repairs, creating hazardous conditions that placed residents at risk for injury or disease. In an effort to reform public housing, in 1987, Congress and President Reagan established the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) as an investor subsidy to spur production of low-income housing developments by private investors. This initiative gave investors an incentive to clear slum-ridden areas to rebuild the neighborhood in order to generate revenue for localities. This tax credit made public housing a business more than a social program.

The idea of mixed-income developments originated from researchers' in-depth analysis of the Social Isolation and Concentration Theory. The Social Isolation and Concentration theory refers to groups of individuals in society being segregated into one area, with little or no interaction with individuals of different economic status. Research found that having individuals secluded to one area leads to high levels of segregation by class. It also makes it more likely that political boundaries will coincide with class-specific enclaves. This serves to reinforce political inequality by separating the "haves" and "have-nots" into separate political jurisdictions [4]. One researcher who has performed an enormous amount of studies regarding the social isolation of society's poor is William Wilson.

Wilson's [5-7] research outlines factors presumed to contribute to poverty among African-Americans, such as limited work opportunities for youth and others with limited skills in predominantly black

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communities in urban centers. The solution suggested is to invest in education and training, but also to create opportunity structures that connect people to the workforce, emphasizing the value of working regardless of wage level [8]. Although Wilson acknowledges that racial discrimination is still an issue, he attributes it primarily to individual behavior rather than to institutionalized racism.

Public housing and other high-poverty communities create generational poverty by isolating and concentrating poor people-- a large majority of them receiving public aid--and by not offering opportunities for people through formal but also informal means to connect to the labor force [9]. The logical prescription was to not only "end welfare as we know it," but also to provide a means for low-income residents to get out of public housing. Wilson's work in social concentration influenced the redevelopment of public housing, and more broadly, the ghetto [10]. Wilson's [6] work discussed in Popkin's [11] research described a new urban poverty characterized by the geographic concentration of high rates of joblessness and welfare dependency, high proportions of female-headed households, out- of-wedlock births, teen pregnancies, and high levels of social disorganization, violence, and crime in certain neighborhoods [12]. Massey [4] found that concentrated poverty in contemporary impoverished urban communities creates the social dysfunctions that numerous early urban sociologists discussed in their research. The researchers suggest that integrating social classes will bring order to inner-city neighborhoods.

The purpose of this case study was to analyze the conversion of traditional public housing sites to mixed-income developments. To analyze the conversion of traditional public housing sites to mixed-income developments, this research examines the Broad Creek Renaissance Plan. An in-depth analysis of the Broad Creek Renaissance project's land-use patterns and socioeconomic factors are examined to explore if the HOPE VI initiative.

## Methods

This study examined the Broad Creek Renaissance Plan through an in-depth analysis of Broad Creek's land-use patterns and socioeconomic factors. Land-use patterns of the project site are composed of a mixture of residential, commercial, transportation and recreational amenities. This research analyzed the socioeconomic variables of age, race, household income, and educational attainment to interpret the Broad Creek Renaissance's progress of becoming a mixed-use community. The research investigates the conversion of traditional public housing projects to mixed-income/mixed-use communities by observing the Broad Creek Renaissance's development progress as of January 2011.

## Data Sources

The data presented are based on secondary data analysis for the years of 1990, 2000, and 2010 [13,14]. The data were retrieved from the Demographic Now database and the US Census fact sheet through analysis of the city of Norfolk's census tract 44. Census tract 44 consists of the area in the Broad Creek community that formerly contained the Roberts Park and Bowling Park public housing communities and the surrounding area. A thorough examination of the official site subdivision plats retrieved from the City of Norfolk of the project area dated 1941 to present was undertaken. The subdivision plats are too large to exhibit in the research appendix; but they are available upon request from the researchers. The subdivision plats showed that the completed portion of the Broad Creek Renaissance started developmental stages in 2002 and has been redeveloped in four phases. These four phases of development expanded the neighborhood after

demolition of the public housing units of Roberts Park and Bowling Park by adding numerous streets which enabled developers to extend the once only residential-use area.

## Data Collection

Data collection consisted of analysis of secondary sources that included the Broad Creek Renaissance HOPE VI Application, City of Norfolk Subdivision Plats, US Census data, newspaper articles, and other media sources. The official documentation such as the US Census Bureau data, Housing Authority site plans, neighborhood surveys and official grant proposals were used to examine the project site in its current state and prior to redevelopment. The data collection sources for this research can be broken down as follows: administrative data for demographic profile of the project area, and city site plans for location of commercial and residential development. Secondary analysis of data such as interviews with key informants in particular neighborhoods, organizations, or government organizations and in-depth interviews with residents about how their neighborhoods have changed and about their residential mobility experiences as well as their use of neighborhood space was performed.

## Data Analysis

An in-depth analysis of the project area's socioeconomic factors was performed in this case study through examining the demographic profile of the area. The variables of age, race, educational attainment, and income were studied to compare the current state of the project area to that of the project site prior to redevelopment in 2000. Examining these variables showed how the Broad Creek Renaissance plan has addressed socioeconomic factors. To examine how redevelopment has addressed land-use patterns in the project area, the community's site plans in its current state and prior to 2000 were analyzed to observe the change in land-use patterns due to redevelopment.

To analyze the socioeconomic variables of age, race, educational attainment, and income, data were retrieved from the US Census Bureau for the years of 1990, 2000, and 2010. Each variable was converted to its own table to observe the changes in the project area throughout the years. Data for US Census tract 44 in Norfolk, Virginia were obtained from the US Census database, City of Norfolk archival files, and Demographics Now computer software. The US Census data for the current state of the project area was analyzed in the Demographics Now database to create maps of the current layout of the project area. Notes from documents such as the Broad Creek Renaissance Hope VI Grant Application, Roberts Park, Bowling Park and Broad Creek's Subdivision Plats, and the Broad Creek Renaissance Neighborhood Plan book were used to interpret how revitalization has addressed land-use patterns as well as recreational and cultural amenities in the project area. Tables were created to evaluate the change in land-use patterns for a concise and clear analysis. Observing these sources allowed the researcher to note amenities that have not been achieved in the project area.

## Findings

Data were retrieved from the Demographic Now database and the US Census fact sheet through analysis of the city of Norfolk's census tract 44. Census tract 44 consists of the area in the Broad Creek community that formerly contained the Roberts Park and Bowling Park public housing communities and the surrounding area. A thorough examination of the official site subdivision plats retrieved from the City of Norfolk of the project area dated 1941 to present was undertaken. The subdivision plats showed that the completed portion of the Broad

Creek Renaissance started developmental stages in 2002 and has been redeveloped in four phases. These four phases of development expanded the neighborhood after demolition of the public housing units of Roberts Park and Bowling Park by adding numerous streets which enabled developers to extend the once only residential-use area.

### Demographics

The data revealed that in the project area, blacks remain the leading population in the community after redevelopment. The racial makeup of whites in the project area has increased from 8.5 percent to represent 9.2 percent of the total population. The Broad Creek revitalization is not in its completed state; however, the progress of the redevelopment initiative has attracted a small number of residents of different ethnicities.

The data show that the age range of 5 to 14 years has remained the leading group in the community before and after redevelopment. The project area has a broad range of ages in the community; however, almost half of the residents in the project area are under the age of eighteen. The majority of the households are female-headed, which also has not changed since redevelopment. Educational attainment data indicate that education in the project area since redevelopment is slowly on the rise. 34% of the residents in the project area have only high school diplomas. 21% of the residents in the community have only completed high school. 17% of the residents had some form of college education. 19% of the residents in the community have an associate's, bachelors, or graduate degree. Education levels of residents in the Broad Creek community have been on the rise in the past ten years.

**Question 1:** How has the Broad Creek Renaissance changed land-use patterns in the project area?

The findings for this research question examined the land-use patterns in the original project site, which was a crescent of residential neighborhoods. According to the neighborhood maps, the Broad Creek Renaissance Plan proposed to address land-use patterns by integrating residential, commercial, and recreational amenities into one community. The subdivision plats of the Broad Creek Renaissance area displayed that developers inserted several streets into the project area in four phases in order to expand the neighborhood and give the institutional-style model neighborhood access to the surrounding community.

The physical reconstruction of Broad Creek Renaissance demolished Roberts Park and Bowling Park public housing facilities, which to some, resembled a brick prison institution. The brick housing blocked the public housing residents from the surrounding community which limited their access to diverse social networks, heightened resources, and economic growth. The redeveloped community has open spaces, community access to regional transportation, and multi-style housing units. Due to revitalization, community beautification and integrating land-use patterns, the Broad Creek community's demographic profile

should reflect a diverse population. However, the data in this research showed that the demographic profile of the project area has changed only slightly since redevelopment.

Table 1 provides a description of the four phases of land reconstruction in the Broad Creek Renaissance area. The information was retrieved from official city of Norfolk subdivision plats obtained from the City Surveyor's Department. These subdivision plats of the project area date back to 1941 with the construction of Roberts Park and Bowling Park public housing facilities. The subdivision plats can be seen upon request from the researcher due to the size of the document. Each plat exhibits physical changes to the Broad Creek neighborhood throughout revitalization of the community.

Table 2 depicts the housing structures in the project area. There are a total of 1,088 housing units in the Broad Creek neighborhood. 21% of the residents own their home, 72% rent their home and 6% percent of neighborhood is vacant as of January 2011. The neighborhood has a mixture of government-assisted housing, affordable housing, market-rate rental units and home owner properties. The data shows that since redevelopment there has been a 1% increase in homeownership in the project area from 2000 to 2010. However, that is a 2% decrease in homeownership since the overall revitalization began. The project area shows a 4% decrease in rental units and a 2% increase in vacant units. The percentage of vacant units has doubled since revitalization began in the project area. The data described land-use patterns in the project area as consisting of a mixture of residential, commercial and recreational amenities. This new combination of land-use patterns has altered the project area from its original state of being only a residential area.

**Question 2:** How has the Broad Creek Renaissance contributed to the deconcentration of poverty in the project area?

De-concentration of poverty in the project area was analyzed by reviewing the socioeconomic factors of race, age, household income and educational attainment. Socioeconomic data of the project area were retrieved for the years of 1990, 2000 and 2010 to determine changes in the project site. Table 3 is an analysis of the racial profile of the Broad Creek Renaissance community. Blacks are the majority race in the project area, making up 87.4% of the population. This is an 11% decrease since redevelopment began in 2002. The percentage of white residents has increased in the project area by 9% since revitalization. The small change in racial makeup of the project area shows that the Broad Creek neighborhood is slowly diversifying and attracting different ethnicities.

Table 4 displays the age ranges of residents that live in the project area. Age is one of the variables in this research that depicts socioeconomic factors of the Broad Creek Renaissance community. The data indicate that there is a mixture of age ranges in the Broad Creek neighborhood. The age range of 5 to 14 years remains the leading population in the project area. The large number of children living in

Phase	Change	Date
Phase I	Demolition of Roberts Parks and Bowling Park with redevelopment of Marshall Manor which is the start of redevelopment.	1-1-2002
Phase II A & B	Subdivision of block D subdivision of Bowling Park and portion of Mapleton Avenue, lots 7 thru 14 and block 4, a portion of Woodlawn Ave south lots 8, lots 9 thru 19. Single-family addition plot subdivision of block b & f of Bowling Park. Removal of property to widen Virginia Beach Boulevard.	10-9-2003 6-28-2004
Phase III A & B	Addition of Dogan Street through Woodlawn Ave. Drainage to addition to street centerlines. Extension of Ballentine Boulevard and Virginia Beach Boulevard.	10-15-2007
Phase IV A & B	Right of Way dedications of Godfrey Ave, Cary Ave, Monitor Ave. Demolition of Block 4 of Roberts Park East, creation of Merrimac Ave extension, insert of Norchester and creation of Harrell Court.	9-15-2005

**Table 1:** Phases of redevelopment in the broad creek renaissance community.

	1990 Census		2000 Census		2010 Census	
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>1,107</b>		<b>1,100</b>		<b>1,088</b>	
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>21.7%</b>
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>73.4%</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>76.5%</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>72.5%</b>
<b>Vacant</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>5.8%</b>

Table 2: Housing unit structure of the broad creek renaissance community.

	1990 Census		2000 Census		2010 Census	
<b>White</b>	12	0.4%	16	0.5%	275	9.2%
<b>Black</b>	3,219	99.3%	3,121	98.2%	2,621	87.4%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	8	0.3%	6	0.2%	12	0.4%
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander</b>	3	0.1%	6	0.2%	24	0.8%
<b>Some Other Race</b>	0	0%	2	0.1%	8	0.3%
<b>Two or More Races</b>			27	0.9%	59	2.0%

Table 3: Population by race in the broad creek renaissance community.

	1990 Census		2000 Census		2010 Census	
0 to 4	393	12.1%	412	13.0%	393	13.1%
5 to 14	747	23.0%	905	28.5%	743	24.8%
15 to 19	284	8.8%	295	9.3%	247	8.2%
20 to 24	233	7.2%	242	7.6%	210	7.0%
25 to 34	436	13.4%	338	10.6%	391	13.0%
35 to 44	289	8.9%	340	10.7%	277	9.2%
45 to 54	218	6.7%	231	7.3%	246	8.2%
55 to 64	221	6.8%	153	4.8%	232	7.7%
65 to 74	266	8.2%	119	3.7%	119	4.0%
75 to 84	131	4.0%	109	3.4%	94	3.1%
85+	24	0.7%	34	1.1%	47	1.6%
<b>Median Age:</b>	<b>24.2</b>		<b>19.1</b>		<b>22.7</b>	

Table 4: Population by age in the broad creek renaissance community.

the project area can be a result of numerous elements such as the large number of single-parent households in the Broad Creek neighborhood. The data showed that since redevelopment in the Broad Creek neighborhood, there has been an increase in the number of residents over the age of 55. This is due to the senior citizen residence, Franklin Arms, which was built in the Broad Creek neighborhood. Table 5 measures educational attainment in the Broad Creek Renaissance neighborhood. The data are presented for residents who are 25 years of age and older. The data measured education levels starting at kindergarten through graduate school degrees. Research shows that the population of residents that have obtained a high school diploma has risen to 34.7% since revitalization. The percentage of residents that have obtained associate’s degrees, bachelor’s degrees and graduate degrees has gradually increased over the past ten years.

Table 6 shows household income of residents in the project area. Data for household income ranges in the Broad Creek Renaissance neighborhood are retrieved from US Census tract 44. Census tract 44 includes the majority of the Roberts Park and Bowling Park public housing sites and the surrounding area which was altered due to Hope VI revitalization. The household income ranges in Table 6 express the change in poverty over the years in the project area. Residents with household incomes below \$15,000 have decreased in the Broad Creek neighborhood. Even though residents with a household income of below \$15,000 have begun to slowly decline, these residents remain the

current majority in the project area, making up 65% of the population. 65% of the current population in the redeveloped neighborhood earns less than \$15,000 a year. This is a 3% decrease since revitalization. Households with an income range of \$35,000-\$49,000 have increased in the project area by 2%, which follows to be the second leading household income range. Prior to the year of 2000 households who earned \$75,000 and above were nonexistent in the project area. Since redevelopment, that household income range has increased to 5.7 percent.

Breaks down the redeveloped area by US Census Blocks and household income. The map shows residents that have household incomes below \$29,000 a year reside in the census block of 44001, which was formerly occupied by Roberts Park public housing facility. Households that earn above \$30,000 live in census blocks 44002 and 44003. Census blocks 44002 and 44003 of the Broad Creek neighborhood are where Bowling Park housing units were located. The data portray that the project area is no longer an enclave for minorities in the city of Norfolk.

### Recommendations for Further Study

The goal of this research was to analyze the conversion of traditional public housing units to mixed-income developments through a case analysis of the Broad Creek Renaissance Plan. To examine the Broad Creek Renaissance Plan, the researcher used one major research question which analyzed the land-use patterns and socioeconomic factors of the project area. The major research question was broken down into three sub-research question. The data collection for this research was collected to interpret the progress of the project area in its current state. The land- use patterns and socioeconomic factors of the HOPE VI-funded redeveloped portion of the Broad Creek Renaissance were analyzed to examine the Broad Creek community’s change because of the revitalization initiative.

A recommendation for future case studies of mixed-income/mixed-use communities is to collect data throughout each phase of construction; this way, the researcher will capture data from the

	1990 Census		2000 Census		2010 Census	
Age 25+ Population	1,585		1,324		1,406	
Grade K-8	288	18.2%	156	11.8%	100	7.1 %
Grade 9-12	591	37.3%	403	30.4%	305	21.7%
High School Graduate	349	22.0%	394	29.8%	488	34.7%
Some College, No Degree	215	13.6%	208	15.7%	244	17.4%
Associates Degree	21	1.3%	16	1.2%	47	3.3%
Bachelor’s Degree	69	4.4%	70	5.3%	119	8.5%
Graduate Degree	51	3.2%	58	4.4%	103	7.3%

Table 5: Educational attainment of resident in the broad creek renaissance community.

	1990 Census		2000 Census		2010 Census	
\$0 - \$15,000	736	68.8%	746	70.1%	669	65.3%
\$15,000-\$24,999	163	15.2%	103	9.7%	91	8.9%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	65	6.1%	43	4.0%	44	4.3%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	82	7.7%	102	9.6%	121	11.8%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	25	2.3%	33	3.1%	42	4.1%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	0	0%	20	1.9%	44	4.3%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
\$150,000 +	0	0%	17	1.6%	14	1.4%

Table 6: Household income ranges of the broad creek renaissance community.

beginning to the end of redevelopment of the community. Another recommendation is to collect separate data based on government-assisted housing residents versus non-government-assisted residents, to analyze the community's turnover rate and to see how many residents from the pre-existing community moved back to the community.

### Limitations of the Study

The delimitation of this study is that the project site is not completed in its entirety, so it is hard to tell if the developing of a mixed-use community was the right way to address numerous socioeconomic issues in the neighborhood. Another delimitation of this research is that because previous residents and current residents of the community were not interviewed, this study has no way of interpreting if residents socialize with each other to gain access to different cultures or networks. Also, by interviewing the residents, the researcher would have been able to see if some of the previous stigmas of the neighborhood such as crime and poverty are still present in the community.

### Concluding Statement

The Broad Creek Renaissance Plan case analysis expands the research on mixed-income/mixed-use communities that received funding from the HOPE VI program. The case analysis analyzed the project area's land-use patterns and socioeconomic factors pre- and post-revitalization to examine the initiative's progress. The Broad Creek Renaissance, through Hope VI funding, converted two public housing facilities, Roberts Park and Bowling Park, which were said to be crime infested and separated minorities to pockets of poverty in the city of Norfolk.

The Broad Creek Renaissance Plan proposed to create a culturally diverse community tied together by cultural and recreational amenities. According to the research findings, in the community in its current state, black residents are the majority race, making up approximately 87% percent of the total population, which is an 11% decrease since redevelopment began in 2002. A Case Analysis: The Broad Creek Renaissance Plan is similar to other studies performed on mixed-income developments that received the HOPE VI grant. When analyzing the HOPE VI initiative, researchers have run into numerous obstacles in collecting data because several sites are incomplete and do not have to meet specific quotas in order to become a mixed-income development.

According to Hope VI grant regulations, sites had to accomplish the following: demolish existing public housing infrastructure and create new housing structures with updated amenities. The Broad Creek Renaissance case analysis displayed the broad impact that the HOPE VI initiative had on urban communities. HOPE VI, through mixed-income developments, set the framework for social integration of public housing in general. The program's core ideology stemmed from the concept of mixing the economic classes to drive values to promote self-sustainability. However, because of the flexible federal regulations of the program, local housing authorities have had tremendous latitude in how they chose to design and implement their local HOPE VI initiative. This has contributed to the lack of social integration in some project sites. Some HOPE VI sites have achieved monumental success and some have not. In converting traditional public housing sites to mixed-use communities housing authorities

should research: (1) the previous reputation of the community, (2) the proximity of the community to the city's downtown area, and (3) area businesses. If these three key factors are taken into account and there is a set of standardized grant regulations, mixed-use communities will have greater potential for success across the nation.

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