

1. Need/Extent of the Problem

a. Target Geography

Target Area Census Tract	Foreclosure Score	Vacancy Score
2216	18	14
2218	18	18
2219	18	16
2221	18	14
2222	18	13
2223	18	16
2224	18	17
2225	19	11
2228	18	16
2229	19	13
2230	18	13
2231	18	14
2405	19	14
2407	20	14
2408	14	19
2409	20	14
2410	19	10
2411	20	11
2412	18	10
2413	19	13
2414	18	7
4548	18	10
4551	19	9
5325	20	13
5326	18	16
5331	19	17
5337	18	10
5338	18	14
5339	19	13
5342	18	11
5405	19	10
5406	19	10
5410	20	7
5412	20	7

Target Area Census Tract	Foreclosure Score	Vacancy Score
5413	19	12
5414	19	11
5416	19	11
5421	20	10
5422	20	11
5423	20	9
5424	18	8
5429	19	13
5430	20	10
5504	20	16
5506	20	13
5508	18	10
5509	19	13
5511	18	10
5516	19	10
5517	20	10
5520	18	9
5521	20	8
5525	18	13
5529	16	18
5530	19	11
5532	13	19
5534	19	8
5535	18	7
5538	19	8
5539	18	10
5541	19	5
5543	19	10
5544	20	9
5548	20	12
5549	20	11
5555	19	13
5557	18	9

b. Market Conditions and Demand Factors

Despite Harris County's strong housing market as compared with other metropolitan areas, USA Today reported in March that "the strained energy industry, a devastating hurricane and the trickle-down effects of the national economy have teamed to squeeze" the real estate market in the area.

(1) The Houston Association of Realtors (HAR) reports that sales for all types of property in May 2009 were 23.3 percent below the May 2008 sales. Within the metropolitan housing market, sales of single-family homes were down 21.2 percent during the same period of time while townhouses and condominiums were down 35.4 percent. From September 2008 to January 2009, the area's median sales prices dropped by more than \$25,000 and appeared to be a direct result of the increase of foreclosures entering the market.

During that same period of time, the month's inventory of single-family homes has remained consistent at approximately 6.5 months due the acquisition of foreclosures by the investment community. Neighborhoods that previously remained stable as a result of higher homeownership rates are beginning to deteriorate due to an increase in foreclosures and subsequent increase in investment properties. In 2006, approximately 65.2 percent of all occupied units in Texas were owner-occupied while Harris County had only 58.3 percent.

A June 2009 article in Reuters reports that the rental housing market has also been impacted and "the multifamily sector is leading all other types of U.S. commercial real estate in having the highest loan default rate...". The weak job market has affected the younger population and "about 70 percent are apartment renters who are now doubling up or moving in with their parents."

(2) During the period of December 2007 through December 2008 the Houston metropolitan area had a net increase of 53,700 jobs or 2.2 percent; however, initial claims for unemployment benefits rose 18.4 percent between November 2008 and December 2008 showing a potential recent decline. During that same period of time, there was an increase of 101.7 percent in the number of initial claims for unemployment. While delayed, the slowing of the nation's economy appears to have begun affecting the Houston metropolitan area later than most other major metropolitan areas.

(3) The target area selected as part of this application includes 22 of the 42 HUD designated target areas within Harris County. Each of these areas has greater than 51 percent low to moderate income population earning less than 80 percent Median Family Income (MFI) or \$51,050 for a family of four. This population is most at risk of overcrowding and increased cost burden.

A family earning \$51,050 should not pay greater than 30 percent of their income or approximately \$1,276 towards housing. In May 2009, HAR reported that the average home price in the Houston metropolitan area was \$209,100, which far exceeds the range of affordability for the average resident of Harris County.

(4) On September 13, 2008 Hurricane Ike added to the already declining financial conditions existing within Harris County and further impacted the housing crisis. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security reports in its Hurricane Ike Impact Report that over 60,000 residential properties suffered greater than \$8,000 in damage while nearly 500 were completely destroyed. Many of these homes are yet to be repaired or rebuilt for occupancy. As a result, the need for quality affordable housing increased exponentially during the last quarter of 2008.

(5) Harris County desires to stabilize homeownership rates and increase affordability of rental housing by acquiring both foreclosed single family and multifamily property. The acquired single family homes will then be made available to qualified income families after rehabilitation. The acquisition of these homes will be facilitated through the provision of down payment, closing costs and gap financing to increase the affordability of these homes. Harris County proposes to work with local developers to acquire multifamily foreclosures and increase the stock of affordable rental housing.

2. Demonstrated Capacity of the Applicant and Relevant Organizational Staff

a. Experience and Demonstrated Capacity of the Applicant

The organizational capacity and ability of Harris County Community Services Department is proven through our recent experience in managing neighborhood stabilization activities throughout Harris County. Our primary goal is to promote safe, accessible, and affordable housing through proactive marketing strategies and affirmative approaches to improving neighborhoods. Fair housing rights and individual choice play an integral role in creating stable neighborhoods, and the security and welfare of individuals and families that reside in Harris County is critical to the revitalization of neighborhood communities. Harris County Community Services Department strives to keep this goal at the forefront of every negotiation, every contract and every plan.

(1) Our experience in the development of neighborhood planning is key to the implementation of our stabilization activities. Our Planning Section released its Consolidated Plan for 2008-2012, which outlines the County's strategic vision for improving the quality of life for residents in the low and moderate-income areas of Harris County. Our planning team also relies heavily on its Community-Based Planning tool in strategizing for long-term neighborhood revitalization and stabilization. This tool elaborates on the County's continuous efforts to expand on citizen-participation projects within particular neighborhoods, and summarizes important principles that are vital to the continual growth and stabilization of Harris County communities. One of our most recent community plans, the Airline Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area, used a collaborative, participatory planning process where the residents were intimately involved in the revitalization and stabilization of their particular community. The Airline plan focused on retail and commercial (re)investment and development of the Airline community in order to revitalize the neighborhood, thereby increasing citizen commitment to neighborhood stability and the value of property within the community. Harris County Community Services Department strives to honor this collaborative,

coordinated framework in all of our planning efforts because we believe that neighborhood plans work best when community leaders, business owners, County officials and residents come together to actively improve a neighborhood.

(2) As for our experience in the acquisition and disposition of foreclosed real estate, we recently acquired a foreclosed property for the construction of an 88 unit, multi-family, senior-citizen housing complex. This multi-family dwelling will only serve individuals who are 80 percent or below the area median income. Forty-four units will be reserved for seniors who are 50 percent below the area median income. This senior-citizen housing complex will have access to mass transportation through the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO). A hospital is located within a two-to-three mile radius of the property location. We have acquired the property and are in the process of planning for this new senior-citizen multi-family housing complex. Next is the construction phase with a total projected cost of approximately \$11.3 million dollars. We are utilizing \$4 million dollars from our Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds to pay for this project and leveraged the remaining funds.

(3) Harris County Community Services Department has a sound infrastructure already in place to manage, monitor, implement and evaluate neighborhood stabilization activities. We have in-house staff and a list of certified, private contractors who work closely with us on various minor and substantial rehabilitation projects. We also have a network of state-licensed inspectors, appraisers, and surveyors that are available to handle a substantial amount of properties in a specific period of time. Additionally, we have developed important professional relationships with area title companies who assist us in the process of closing on various real estate properties.

Through our Harris County Home Repair Program, we provide financial assistance to low and moderate-income elderly, and/or disabled homeowners for the purpose of providing safe and decent housing conditions, as well as improving their quality of life. We offer two different categories of home repair assistance: minor repair and health and safety improvements. In the last 24 months, we provided minor repair assistance to forty-six families within Harris County. This means we provided up to \$10,000 in assistance in the form of a grant or deferred payment loan for minor home repairs for qualified housing including, but, not limited to, roof repair/ replacement, handicap accessibility improvements, mechanical, electrical, weatherization, and plumbing improvements. In the last twenty-four months we completed twelve health and safety units, thereby providing up to \$40,000 in the form of a grant or deferred payment loan for the purpose of repairing/ replacing water wells and septic systems that are not functioning properly or are in violation of governmental health and safety regulations. We also have provided lead-based paint hazard removal to 73 units in the last two years. Through this form of rehabilitation, we work closely with the Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services Department. By providing review and inspection services, our main goal under lead-based paint hazard removal is to ensure that unsafe, contaminated environments are correctly treated so that our citizens can live in a safe, healthy and lead-free environment.

(4) As part of relationship with both non-profit and for-profit developers, we work to acquire vacant lots in established neighborhoods in order to eliminate existing eye sores. We have provided financial assistance to organizations in an effort to redevelop these lots for the new constructions of affordable single family and multifamily rental housing. We consistently coordinate with the Harris County Housing Authority on these large-scale, rental projects. In the last 24 months, we have provided funding for the completion of 187 multi-family units, 41 single family rental units and 9 single family homeownership units .

(5) In order to market our program services, we utilize a variety of electronic, print, and human resources. Our main strategy is to provide as much information as possible to potentially eligible entities by maintaining our web resources and assertively reaching out to prospective individual and organizational applicants and service providers through educational trainings and seminars. Our website is constantly updated with new information on our neighborhood stabilization activities. Even better, we provide citizens with an interactive service through the Housing Resource Center website located at <http://www.hrc.hctx.net/>. The Housing Resource Center is the first stop for housing resources and assistance programs in Harris County. Through this collaborative network, we can help people find critical resources and information on down-payment assistance, home ownership opportunities under NSP, affordable housing, home repairs, and other important affordable housing information. We have also developed several brochures that we utilize in our community outreach efforts. Lastly, we have invaluable human resources through our Neighborhood Stabilization Program staff and supporting Community Services Department staff. Not only do we have dedicated staff answering telephone calls for our Neighborhood Stabilization Program, but we also have staff going out into the various communities in order to educate people about our various programs and services. This component of our marketing strategy is integral to our existing Neighborhood Stabilization Program because we strive to reach people in the community who may be able to afford a mortgage payment but do not know that home ownership is a reality for them. Many families and individuals may not know how to proceed with the financial process of buying a home or may not realize they are eligible for our program. The home is the foundation for families and communities. A home provides stability and security to its occupants. We consider the mission of our program in everything we do in order to truly reach our target community.

Assistance under the Harris County Home Repair Program is limited to a first-approved, first-served basis. Harris County Community Services Department maintains a Pending Eligibility and Approved Waiting List for all applicants for assistance. All applicants who meet the initial screening criteria and initial feasibility assessment are placed on a Pending Eligibility Waiting List. Upon receipt of all verification forms and a completion of the eligibility and underwriting process, approved applicants will be removed from the Pending Eligibility Waiting List and placed on the Approved Waiting List. Only those persons placed on the approved waiting list are considered as approved and are assisted in the order they are placed on the approved waiting list. To ensure the waiting list policy is adhered to, applicant approval dates are maintained in a database. Harris County reserves

the right to close the Approved Waiting List and accept no further applications when the number of approved applicants exceeds a six (6) month wait for repairs to be completed.

In addition to the Pending Eligibility and Approval Waiting Lists, the Administrative Assistant maintains an Inquiry and Intake Lists for the purpose of assessing program demand. The Inquiry List tracks all phone calls, electronic mail messages, referrals, and walk-in inquiries regarding interest in the program. The Intake List tracks all Applications submitted for assistance under the program whether approved or not.

(6) Separate and apart from over \$230,910,112 in state and federal grant program funding, Harris County Community Services Department has successfully accessed and utilized a variety of other funding sources for its operations and capital outlays since 2007. In particular, over the past three years the Harris County Community Services Department has leveraged an additional \$44.2 million in funding. This funding includes \$36,341,200 in local general funds, \$2,000,000 in local grant contributions from entities such as the Harris County Housing Finance Corporation, and another \$5,932,677 in special revenues and contributions from the county departments and tax increment reinvestment zones. These operating and capital resources have allowed the department to administer, fund and deliver over 230 separate activities and projects including, but not limited to, public infrastructure improvements, single and multi-family affordable housing acquisitions and development, down-payment assistance, lead hazard control and minor rehabilitation services, non-emergency transit services, social services case management, and other vital public service projects while maintaining a high level of program and financial monitoring oversight.

(7) Lastly, the Harris County Community Services Department is proud of the trusted, working relationships we have built over the years. From a development and financial perspective, we are fortunate that our experiences with the Harris County Housing Authority, the Harris County Housing Finance Corporation and the Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services Department have left a history of relationships that are characterized by integrity, respect and productivity. We have developed strong affiliations with numerous private and non-profit developers through our various neighborhood stabilization and revitalization projects. We value our relationships with units of local government and have cooperative agreements with 15 smaller cities within the County. We also work closely with several Community Development Corporations and Community Housing Development Organizations. Our relationships with local and national non-profit organizations are imperative to our productivity and efficiency as a County resource. For example, we have a solid working relationship with the U.S. VETS, our nation's largest non-profit organization dedicated to helping homeless and at-risk veterans. Other key relationships stem from our neighborhood planning activities. We assisted several neighborhood communities in the formation of Community Development Corporations (CDCs), which are non-profit organizations created to implement the activities in the various community plans. For example, the City of Refuge Educational Development Corporation was formed to implement activities such as healthcare programs, literacy and afterschool programs, first-time home ownership classes and a community Crisis Intervention Center, just to

name a few. Other Community Development Corporations who we maintain great working relationships with are Barrett Station CDC, Barrett Station Ministerial Alliance, Cloverleaf CDC and the Airline Improvement District.

b. Management Structure and References

(1) Our NSP2 management staff will include the Harris County Community Services Department Director, David B. Turkel, the Chief Financial Officer and Financial Services Director, Craig Atkins, the Assistant Chief Financial Officer, Charlie Watkins, the Community Development Director, Daphne Lemelle, the Housing Programs Assistant Director, Larry Moody, the Housing and Construction Services Manager, Ricardo Watson, and the Lending Services Manager, William (Scott) Dawson. Please see our organizational chart in Appendix 6.

Key management staff that will oversee the day-to-day operations of our proposed activities are Larry Moody, Scott Dawson and Ricardo Watson. As mentioned above, Larry Moody is the Housing Programs Assistant Director. He is in charge of monitoring and coordinating our Neighborhood Stabilization Program. He supervises an NSP team, including Wilma Bradford, our Program Assistant, Ebony Baylor, our Housing Analyst, and Amber Taylor, our Special Projects Coordinator. We also have an undergraduate intern, Meagan Freeman, who will be assisting us with the day-to-day progression of our NSP2 activities. Larry Moody manages and directs the implementation of federally-funded housing programs operated by the Department, including the Harris County Downpayment Assistance Program (DAP), the Home Repair Program, and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. These services include, but are not limited to, inspections, loan servicing, application reviews, and eligibility determination. Larry is responsible for program design, implementation and improvement, including the review and establishment of policies and procedures related to the operation of the Department's housing programs. Scott Dawson is our Lending Services Manager. He supervises our Lending Services team, which includes Deborah Lee (Senior Loan Coordinator), Diana Lohman (Loan Origination Analyst), Victoria Peay (Lending Assistant), Michelle Leija (Lending Assistant), and Eva Balderas (Lending Assistant). Scott's team is responsible for activities and programs affiliated with loan servicing. Scott monitors the lending programs, including Micro and Small Business Development loans and Down Payment Assistance programs. He determines appropriate and effective collection activity, and prepares assessments and budgets as needed. Ricardo Watson is our Housing and Construction Services Manager. He supervises Arturo Chacon (Superintendent), Roby Richards (Project Specialist), Andres Zavala (Project Specialist), Tom Sonnenberg (Project Specialist), and Adrianna Villuendas (Administrative Assistant). Ricardo conducts long-range planning and research on the Department's use of people and tangible resources, formulating life cycle audit policies to programs and activities, in order to identify the methods and system resources best suited to effect the efficient satisfaction of these resource requirements. He also provides specialized assistance to clients through our Home Repair Program. He works to improve program housing conditions through rehabilitation and construction of housing for low-to-moderate income, elderly, and handicapped residents in our target areas. He is responsible for the planning, control and accountability of all phases of the program, consistent with

established guidelines and regulations as prescribed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and other state and local regulations.

(2) We work very closely with the Harris County Housing Finance Corporation and the Harris County Housing Authority on projects similar to the programs described in the Notice of Funding Availability for the NSP2 competition. Our first reference is W.F. Burge III, Chairman of the Harris County Housing Finance Corporation. His physical address is c/o Ayrshire Corporation 2028 Buffalo Terrace Houston, Texas 77019. His phone number is (713) 524-4676 and his email address is bburgeiii@ayrshire-hou.com. Our second reference is Guy Rankin, CEO & Executive Director of the Harris County Housing Authority. His physical address is 8401 Lantern Point Drive Houston, Texas 77054. His phone number is (713) 578-2045 and his email address is guy_rankin@hctx.net.

3. Soundness of Approach

a. Proposed Activities

(1) Harris County's overall strategy will consist of three specific activities to create a comprehensive approach to stabilizing neighborhoods within the community, including rehabilitation and resale of single family homes, financial mechanisms to assist first-time and low-to-middle income homebuyers, and redevelopment of single family and multi-family properties.

Housing Rehabilitation & Resale

Under this program, Harris County will acquire homes that need minor rehabilitation and resell them at a discounted price to low-to-middle income homebuyers. This will be an expansion of the Foreclosed Housing Acquisition, Repair and Resale Program currently funded through Harris County's existing Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP1). This program provides for \$8 million to purchase and rehabilitate single family homes that have been abandoned or foreclosed. The NSP2 funding will increase this program to \$13 million. Harris County will target homes in new subdivisions where construction has halted or a large number of homes are in foreclosure. Homebuyers that benefit from this program may also receive financial assistance through Harris County's Downpayment Assistance Program (DAP).

Financing Mechanisms

Under this program, Harris County will provide a variety of financing mechanisms to first-time and low-to-middle income homebuyers including downpayment assistance, homebuyer assistance and gap financing. The \$2 million request for this program will assist qualified low-to-middle income homebuyers in achieving homeownership. This will stabilize neighborhoods by placing families in foreclosed vacant homes throughout the County. This program will be coordinated with Harris County's existing Downpayment Assistance Program, funded with HOME and CDBG funds, as well as non-federal funding from the Harris County Housing Finance Corporation.

Multifamily Redevelopment

Under this program, Harris County will use \$5 million to redevelop foreclosed or abandoned multi-family properties. Redevelopment of abandoned multi-family property will help stabilize the housing market by increasing the availability of affordable housing units throughout the County.

(2) Uses of Funds and Firm Commitments

(a) Table: Proposed NSP2 Funding Use

NSP Eligible Use	Responsible Entity	Funding Request
Housing Rehabilitation and Resale	Harris County Community Services Department	\$6,250,000
Finance Mechanisms	Harris County Community Services Department	\$2,000,000
Multifamily Redevelopment	Harris County Community Services Department	\$5,000,000
Administrative		\$1,325,000
Total		\$14,575,000

(b) Activity Narrative

Housing Rehabilitation and Resale: Harris County will purchase 50 foreclosed properties and perform necessary repairs. These properties will be available for sale to qualified applicants, who will be offered the properties at a price and on terms that are affordable. Ownership pending resale may be retained by County or conveyed to suitable non-profit. Any profits will be reinvested in the program to purchase more eligible properties.

Benefits to homeowners will depend on the total subsidy, from all NSP2 programs, received by the homeowner and will comply with the affordability period established in the Action Plan.

Funding under this activity is available for all eligible low-to-middle income residents, including residents that are 50 percent below median family income. This program also intends to stabilize areas with incomplete or under occupied new subdivisions throughout the County.

Financial Assistance: Harris County intends to provide downpayment assistance, homeownership assistance and gap financing to 66 qualified potential homeowners. Interest rates will be offered at 0-3 percent interest rate for up to a 30 year fixed loan.

Benefits to homeowners will depend on the total subsidy from all NSP2 programs received by the homeowner and will comply with the affordability period established in the NSP1 Action Plan, which closely mimics the HOME affordability period.

Funding under this activity is available for all eligible low-to-middle income residents, including homeowners that are 50 percent below median family income and current homeowners. This program will focus on HUD identified Target Areas within Harris County.

Multifamily Redevelopment: Harris County will acquire and rehabilitate foreclosed or vacant apartment project(s) of approximately 100 units. Ownership may be retained by County or conveyed to suitable non-profit.

Benefits to renters will continue as long as residents are income eligible. The requirements of the property owner and manager will depend on the total NSP 2 subsidy to the project and will comply with the affordability period established in the Action Plan.

Funding under this activity is available for all eligible low-to-middle income residents within the Harris County service area, but will allow for a majority of residents for these rental projects to be eligible for those at or below 50 percent of median family income. This program will focus on HUD identified Target Areas within Harris County.

(c) Firm Commitments

The leveraged resources of \$1,000,000 from the Harris County Housing Finance Corporation have been committed and are included in the Leverage narrative.

(d) Demolition and Preservation

Demolition is not a proposed activity under this proposal.

c. Income Targeting

Harris County plans to redevelop multi-family properties as well as single family homes to address the NSP2 requirement that 25 percent of funding be used to house and assist individuals who do not exceed 50 percent of median income. Harris County will allocate at least \$3,643,750.00 toward projects that will serve those individuals below 50 percent of median family income.

d. Continued Affordability

Harris County will use the same standards developed by the HOME program to ensure affordability. These standards include requiring a minimum affordability period for assisted units based on the benefit or subsidy provided by the County. For all projects, the affordability period will be at least five years. The table below describes affordability for homeownership activities:

Affordability Periods for Homeownership

NSP Benefit to Buyer	Minimum Period of Affordability
Under \$15,000	5 years
\$15,000 to \$40,000	10 years
Over \$40,000	15 years

The County also has affordability requirements for rental housing projects under the HOME program. Below is a table that describes such affordability requirements:

Affordability Periods for Rental Housing

Activity	NSP Subsidy	Minimum Period of Affordability
Rehabilitation or acquisition of existing housing	Less than \$15,000/unit	5 years
	\$15,000 - \$40,000/ unit	10 years
	Greater than \$40,000/unit	15 years
Rehabilitation with refinancing	Any Amount	15 years
New construction or acquisition of new housing	Any Amount	20 years

e. Consultation, Outreach and Communications

(1) As a unit of local government, Harris County works closely with other local governments, including the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the City of Houston, the City of Baytown, the City of Pasadena and the 15 cities that have collaborative agreements with us to ensure there are not duplication of efforts within each jurisdiction’s target geography. These efforts will continue during the program implementation to also complement the programs operated under each jurisdiction.

(2) As noted in Rating Factor 2, we also utilize a variety of electronic, print, and human resources to conduct outreach to the community. Harris County will continue utilizing the Housing Resource Center as well as relationships with lending institutions as existing resources to communicate with individuals within the community seeking opportunities for affordable housing.

(3) As part of our Housing Resource Center website, the Neighborhood Stabilization Program currently has a quick link included on the home page to provide current information regarding requirements for program participants. This information will be updated regularly and will reflect all opportunities available under the program.

f. Performance and Monitoring

(1) Monitoring Plan

Monitoring is an important component of the grants management process that Harris County Community Services Department oversees. Harris County is therefore very aware of the need to maintain the appropriate documentation in accordance with federal guidelines to support the proposed activities. Performance monitoring reviews are conducted regularly and typically result in recommended corrective action, or may require subrecipients to submit proposals for corrective actions for approval.

(2) Internal Audit Requirements

As a unit of local government, Harris County has an extensive system of internally auditing all Departments. In addition to regularly monitoring each Department, Harris County annually completes a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) which includes the Single Audit.

4. Leveraging Other Funds, or Removal of Substantial Negative Effects

a. Leverage.

The Harris County Community Services Department has a firmly-committed leveraged resource in the amount of one million dollars in cash funding as a grant from the Harris County Housing Finance Corporation. Please see evidence of this firm commitment in the form of an award letter included as Appendix 2. Harris County is applying for \$14,575,000 of NSP2 funding. For the purposes of this competition, leverage is expressed as the ratio of the value of firmly committed leveraged resources divided by the amount of NSP2 funds for which we are applying. This means that the value of our leverage equates to 6.86 percent.

b. Vacant Property Rubric

At this time, Harris County is unable to specifically identify 25 currently vacant properties; however, we anticipate acquiring and rehabilitating at least 101 properties of a total 1,516 currently available in this area, therefore resulting in a vacant property rubric of .1. The information utilized to calculate the rubric was provided by Foreclosure Information & Listing Service, Inc. located in The Woodlands, TX 77393 and phone number is (281)363-2631.

5. Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Development

a. Transit accessibility

In general, Harris County and the Houston metropolitan area have an expansive system of freeways and limited mass transit, including both bus and rail service which are mostly concentrated within the Houston City limits and outside the Harris County service area.

b. Green Building Standards

Harris County will utilize the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Energy Efficient Rehab Advisor (<http://rehabadvisor.pathnet.org/index.asp>) guidelines for conducting energy efficient housing rehabilitation and will require that all new construction meet Energy Star Certification. The rehabilitation of existing single family and multifamily property will require the use of water efficient toilets, showers and faucets as well as the installation and use of Energy Star appliances, heating and cooling, water heaters and lighting and will also take into consideration additional modifications to the building envelope that will create long term savings to the future homeowner. will also be required as part of the rehabilitation.

c. Reuse of Cleared Sites

While Harris County will not specifically focus efforts on the demolition of existing structures, any demolition will take the needs of the community into consideration to determine the best use of the property.

d. Deconstruction

Harris County will work with the Houston Habitat for Humanity Re-Store, a home improvement resale store, to both purchase and donate gently use building materials.

Whenever possible, contractors will be required to utilize salvages materials during the renovation of single family homes.

6. Neighborhood Transformation and Economic Opportunity

(1) As a governmental body, Harris County is involved in various levels of comprehensive planning and is a member of the Houston Galveston Area Council, a region-wide voluntary association of local governments in the 13-county Gulf Coast Planning region of Texas. H-GAC provides many tools, including region-wide plans and services to support the region's local governments. Key H-GAC governmental services, found at <http://www.h-gac.com/home/default.aspx>, include transportation planning, cooperative purchasing, homeland security, air and water quality planning, forecasting, and mapping.

In addition to the multi-jurisdictional planning, the 2008-2012 Consolidated Plan, located at http://www.csd.hctx.net/pr_consolidatedplan.aspx, submitted to HUD represents the Harris County's vision for improving the quality of life in Harris County, particularly in the low-to- moderate-income areas such as the census tracts that have been included in the proposed target area. It provides useful information about conditions within the County, and identifies its strengths and weaknesses on community and economic development issues. The Consolidated Plan also explains the long-term goals and objectives for improving the housing, infrastructure, and quality of life of financially challenged residents, and states its specific plans for making improvements throughout the next five years. Appendix I was added during 2008 to address the recent foreclosure concerns.

(2) The proposed NSP 2 activities address foreclosure concerns, complement the H-GAC's efforts to address the loss of housing resulting from Hurricane Ike and addresses the housing needs documented in the 2008-2012 Consolidated Plan. The H-GAC has been instrumental in the planning process as it relates to the recovery efforts following Hurricane Ike during September 2008 and is knowledgeable of the long term needs of the community.