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**AMERICA'S HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM
SHIFTS TO THE SUBURBS, RECLUSTERING OR
DISPERSION? A CASE STUDY OF CINCINNATI, OHIO,
USA**

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to update an on-going spatial study of US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) distribution in Hamilton County, Ohio, drawing from previous quantitative studies of 2000 (Wang & Varady, 2005) and 2005 (Varady et al., 2010) voucher holder location data that utilized GIS hot spot analysis to investigate the spatial distribution of HCV households throughout Hamilton County, Ohio in those two time periods. This involves repeating the previous studies' methodology in order to accurately gauge changes in voucher distribution and concentration. In addition to analyzing dispersal on the county level, this paper focuses in on suburban hot spots identified by Varady, et al's 2010 study in the Finnwytown school district and in a contiguous suburban area comprised of parts of the City of Forest Park, Springfield Township, and Colerain Township.

This study finds that voucher holders are generally moving away from fewer locations within Cincinnati to a greater number of locations around the county, but that voucher distribution is characterized for a large part by relatively few, fairly concentrated locations within and outside the city. This conclusion is drawn from density-based spatial analysis as well as comparing the appropriateness of US Census block groups versus tracts in quantifying dispersion.

Introduction

Since 1980, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has shifted its focus from subsidies to building owners to subsidies for tenant assistance, that is, the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. One of the program's primary stated purposes is to provide low income renters with access to better quality housing, safer neighborhoods, and better neighborhood amenities. Academic discourse on the subject has focused in part on how well the HCV program succeeds at deconcentrating poverty and desegregating racial minorities, as well as the real and perceived impacts of voucher holders in local communities, especially suburbs.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the distribution of voucher holders within Hamilton County, Ohio, particularly the suburban community of Finneytown and a contiguous suburban area comprised of parts of the City of Forest Park, Springfield Township, and Colerain Township. For purposes of brevity we refer to the former as "The Finneytown Hot Spot" and the latter as "The Forest Park Hot Spot." These areas were chosen because a previous study (Varady et al, 2010) defined two voucher holder hot spots in those areas.

We seek to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What trends, if any, appear in the spatial distribution of voucher holders within Hamilton County between 2000 and 2011? In what ways are voucher holders concentrating or deconcentrating?
- 2) What trends, if any, appear in the spatial distribution of voucher holders within Finneytown, Ohio between 2000 and 2011?
- 3) What is the nature of the Finneytown and Forest Park hot spots including the style and condition of housing and the demographics of the population?

Voucher holder dispersal is analyzed on the county level and on the community level within two study areas as simple dot distribution as well as density. This GIS-based analysis is complemented by community profiles of both study areas and photographs taken during a windshield survey of both study areas.

The Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) provided a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet of all voucher holder addresses within Hamilton County, which is up-to-date as of December 2011. Geocoding the 2011 dataset created a dot shapefile, of which 10,545 out of 10,630 addresses, or 99.2% of all addresses, were successfully matched or tied. We deleted from the dataset the eighty-nine unmatched addresses and manually matched the tied addresses. We plotted the shapefiles for all three time periods to analyze the spatial distribution of voucher holders as dots in all three time periods. The distribution of voucher holders as dots were quantified spatially using a variety of geographic boundaries, including municipal boundaries, census tracts, and census block groups.

We also analyzed voucher holder densities for all three time periods, repeating the methods outlined in Varady et al's 2010 study in order to preserve methodological consistency throughout the time series. We used the kernel density tool available through ESRI's Spatial Analyst extension for ArcMap 10 to convert the dot shapefiles for all three periods into raster density files. We used a cell size of 500 feet, search radii of

2640 feet (half mile), and an area unit (output) of square kilometers. To define hot spots within the density raster files, we considered any density that was equal to or greater than the highest density in 2000 to be a hot spot. We calculated this density to be 111.443 voucher holders per square kilometer.

In addition to analyzing the county as a whole, this research focuses on two study areas: Finneytown and a contiguous suburban area comprised of parts of the City of Forest Park, Springfield Township, and Colerain Township. Voucher locations were analyzed using dot distribution and voucher holder density in the three time periods. This research also explores the characteristics of various parts of both study areas and how vouchers are distributed within and between them.

The research included community profiles of the two study areas in order to better understand their dynamics and background within suburban Hamilton County. We studied the community's history, demographics, school system, land use patterns, governmental structure, transportation systems, economy, and housing stock.

Finally, the study included a windshield survey of both study areas on April 2, 2012. We visited areas in which the spatial analysis indicated clusters of voucher holders, few voucher holders, and no voucher holders. We paid particular attention to housing typology and property maintenance standards in each location. The photographs included in this paper represent the results of that survey.

Spatial analysis of voucher holder distribution: Hamilton County

Spatial analysis of voucher holder distribution throughout Hamilton County in 2000, 2005, and 2011 involved two primary methods: dot distribution and voucher density. We analyzed the distribution of voucher holders as individual locations in terms of city versus suburb locations, census tracts, and census block groups. The density analysis defined a number of hot spots throughout Hamilton County.

The first step in understanding the distribution of voucher holders throughout Hamilton County and how that distribution has changed over time was to plot voucher holder locations as simple dot distributions. For the 2000 and 2005 time periods, we used voucher holder location dot shapefiles produced for an earlier study (Varady et al. 2010). For the 2011 time period, we collected a table of voucher holder locations from CMHA in December of 2011, which we geocoded by address. Plotting voucher holder locations in these three time periods produced Figures 1, 2, and 3.

The most striking change between any of the three dot maps (Figures 1, 2, and 3) may be the increase in the number of vouchers between 2000 and 2005. The number in 2011 increased comparatively marginally. In 2000 there were 5,032 vouchers in Hamilton County, in 2005 there were 10,214, and in 2011 there were 10,545. Based on the dot distribution maps, the overall pattern of voucher distribution appears not to have changed substantially between the three time periods, though those areas where voucher holders lived in 2000 appeared to have densified in 2005 given the county-wide increase in vouchers.

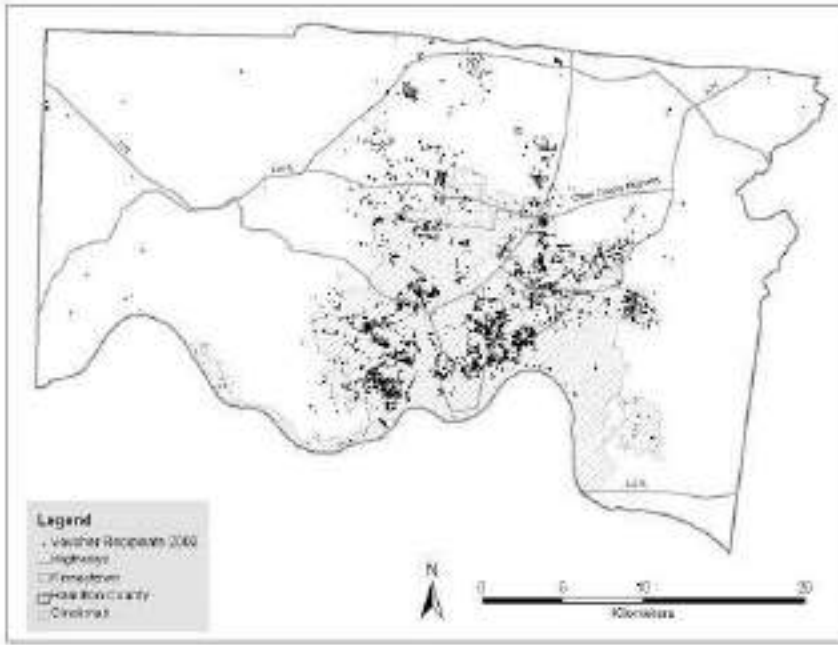


Figure 1. Dot map of 2000 voucher holders

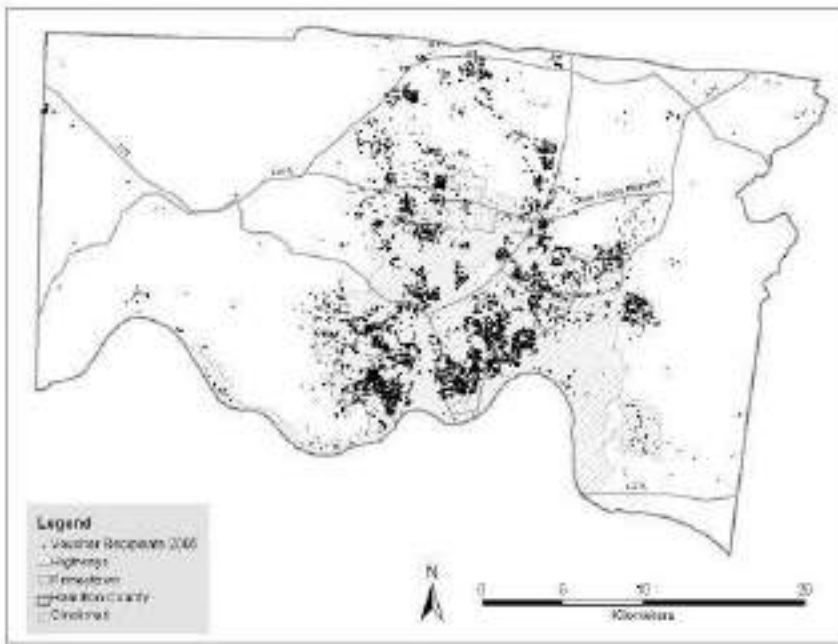


Figure 2. Dot map of 2005 voucher holders

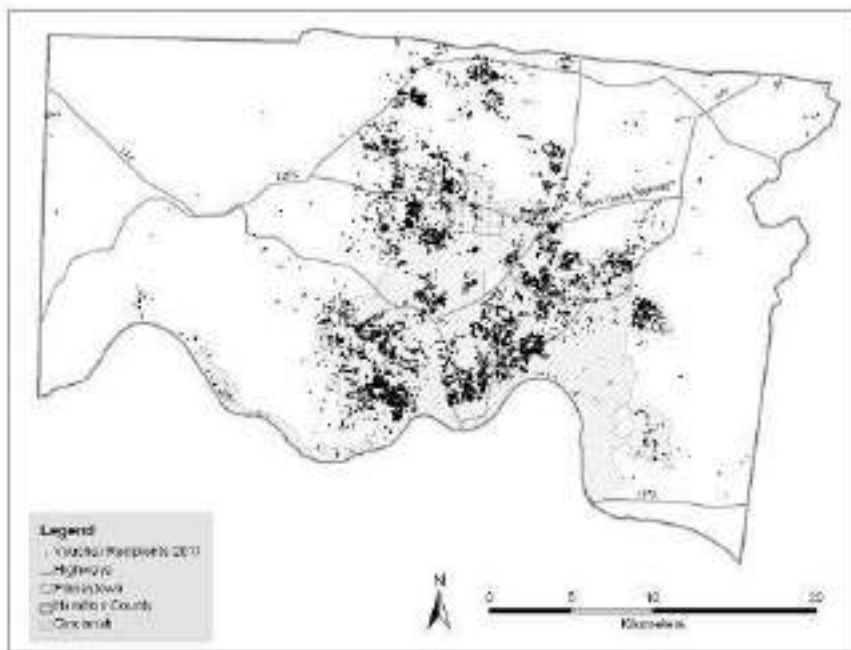


Figure 3. Dot map of 2011 voucher holders

One simple measure of voucher distribution is to compare those within the city and those within the suburbs. Given the complex nature of the Cincinnati metropolitan area, like others in the US, in terms of suburban neighborhoods that have been annexed to the city and urban neighborhoods that lie outside the city boundaries, myriad criteria exist for defining city and suburb. For the purpose of this analysis, we considered the Cincinnati city boundary to be the line between city and suburbs within Hamilton County.

Table 1. HCV distribution within/outside Cincinnati

	2000	2005	2011
Total vouchers in Hamilton County	5,032	10,214	10,545
Vouchers within Cincinnati city limits	3,738	7,303	6,915
% Vouchers within Cincinnati city limits	74%	71%	66%
Vouchers outside Cincinnati city limits	1,294	2,911	3,630
% Vouchers outside Cincinnati city limits	26%	29%	34%

Table 1 shows both the dramatic increase in vouchers between 2000 and 2005 that comparatively leveled off by 2011 as well as the steady movement of voucher holders from Cincinnati to other jurisdictions within Hamilton County over all three time periods.

Census tracts are a basic unit of spatial analysis when considering issues at the neighborhood, county, or metropolitan level. We calculated two measures of voucher dispersal within Hamilton County. The first measure is how many census tracts contained at least one voucher. The second measure is how many tracts contained half of all vouchers in the county.

The second measure was calculated by sorting in ascending order all Hamilton County census tracts according to how many vouchers each tract contains. Selecting from the top of that list and working down, this measure represents the number of census tracts required to surpass half the total number of vouchers in Hamilton County.

Table 2. HCV distribution by census tract*

	2000	2005	2011
Total tracts	230	230	222
Tracts that contain at least one voucher	172	208	198
% Tracts that contain at least one voucher	75%	90%	89%
50% of total vouchers in Hamilton County	2,516	5,107	5,273
Tracts that contain 50% of total vouchers**	26	59	72
Vouchers within the above tracts	2,550	5,128	5,295
% Tracts that contain 50% of total vouchers	11%	26%	32%

*2000 and 2005 figures represent calculations obtained using 2000 census tract boundaries; 2011 figures represent 2010 tract boundaries

**When tracts are sorted in ascending order according to how many vouchers they contain, this figure represents the minimum number of tracts that contain at least half of the total number of vouchers in the county in that time period

Table 2 shows that the increase in total vouchers between 2000 and 2005 also came with an increase of dispersal in terms of how many tracts contained at least one voucher. That measure of dispersal remained steady in 2011. The number of tracts that contain half of all vouchers indicates a steady increase in dispersal throughout Hamilton County between the three time periods. So it appears that while the number of census tracts containing vouchers did not increase between 2005 and 2011, a considerable number of voucher holders moved from tracts with more vouchers to tracts with fewer vouchers. If this trend continues, it seems reasonable to expect that half of the census tracts in Hamilton County will contain half the vouchers within the next decade.

Census block groups are a geographically smaller unit compared to census tracts and thus represent a finer approach to spatial analysis within metropolitan areas. We calculated the same two measures of voucher dispersal within Hamilton County for block groups as we did for tracts. The first measure is how many block groups contained at least one voucher. The second measure is how many block groups contained half of all vouchers in the county.

The second measure was calculated by sorting in ascending order all Hamilton County block groups according to how many vouchers each block group contains. Selecting from the top of that list and working down, this measure represents the number

of block groups required to surpass half the total number of vouchers in Hamilton County.

Table 3. HCV distribution by census block group*

	2000	2005	2011
Total block groups	736	736	697
Block groups that contain at least one voucher	417	528	506
% Block groups that contain at least one voucher	57%	72%	73%
50% of total vouchers in Hamilton County	2,516	5,107	5,273
Block groups that contain 50% of total vouchers**	48	71	74
Vouchers within the above block groups	2,531	5,116	5,304
% Block groups that contain 50% of total vouchers	7%	10%	11%

*2000 and 2005 figures represent calculations obtained using 2000 census block group boundaries; 2011 figures represent 2010 block group boundaries

**When block groups are sorted in ascending order according to how many vouchers they contain, this figure represents the minimum number of block groups that contain at least half of the total number of vouchers in the county in that time period

As was the case for census tracts, Table 3 shows that the increase in total vouchers between 2000 and 2005 also came with an increase of dispersal in terms of how many block groups contained at least one voucher. That measure of dispersal remained steady in 2011, as it did for tracts.

The percentage of block groups that contain half of all vouchers indicate a trend in voucher deconcentration between 2000 and 2011. By this measure, vouchers deconcentrated modestly between 2000 and 2005, when the number of vouchers in Hamilton County doubled. This trend continued marginally between 2005 and 2011.

Almost all measures of voucher dispersal in this section indicated deconcentration between the three time periods and those that showed reversal showed it modestly. Perhaps the most interesting difference comes with comparing tracts and block groups that contained half of all vouchers in each of the three time periods. Deconcentration appears more modest when analyzing block groups, both in terms of quantity and trend. It would appear that there are a number of census tracts in Hamilton County that contained no or few vouchers in 2000, but many more in 2005 and 2011. Within those tracts, it seems that vouchers tended to locate within a relatively limited number of block groups, thus accounting for the comparatively modest indication of dispersal of vouchers amongst block groups vis-à-vis tracts over the three time periods.

Because multiple voucher holders living in the same or neighboring buildings may overlap and cluster in ways difficult or impossible for the eye to perceive when viewing a dot distribution map, we continued analyzing voucher dispersal throughout Hamilton County by calculating voucher densities. Using the ESRI ArcGIS Spatial Analyst Kernel Density tool, we created raster layers that displayed the density of voucher locations using a cell size of 500 feet, search radii of 2640 feet (half mile), and area unit of square miles. These parameters were chosen to replicate those used in an

earlier study of voucher locations in 2000 and 2005 (Varady et al. 2010). The raster layers were symbolized in classified values in terms of vouchers per square kilometer.

In addition to displaying voucher density, we identified hot spots for all three time periods. Borrowing criteria from Varady et al.'s 2010 study, we defined hot spots as areas in which the density of vouchers was equal to or greater than 110 vouchers per square mile. This value is half the greatest density found in the analysis of voucher locations from 2000. Figures 4, 5, and 6 display the voucher densities plus hot spot locations throughout Hamilton County for the three time periods.

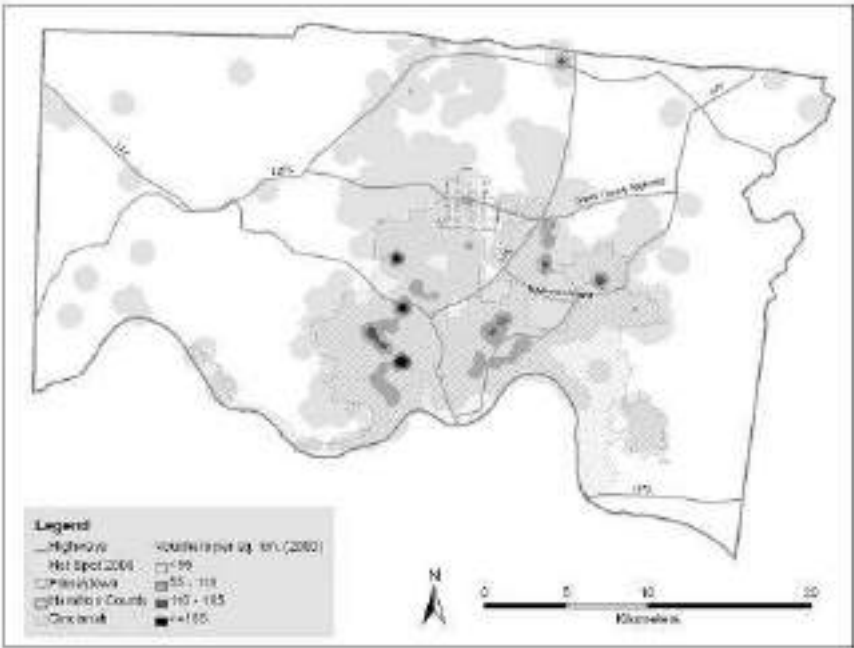


Figure 4. Raster density map of 2000 voucher holders

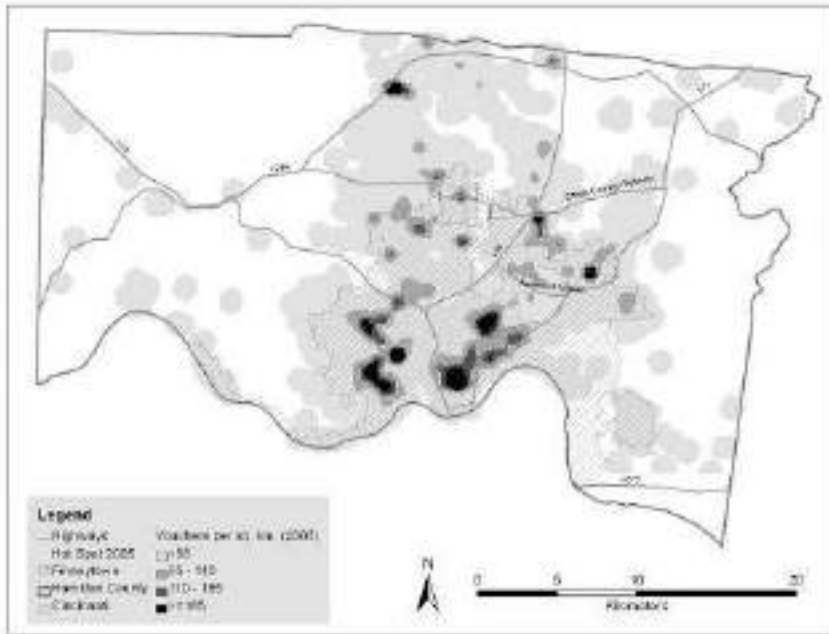


Figure 5. Raster density map of 2005 voucher holders

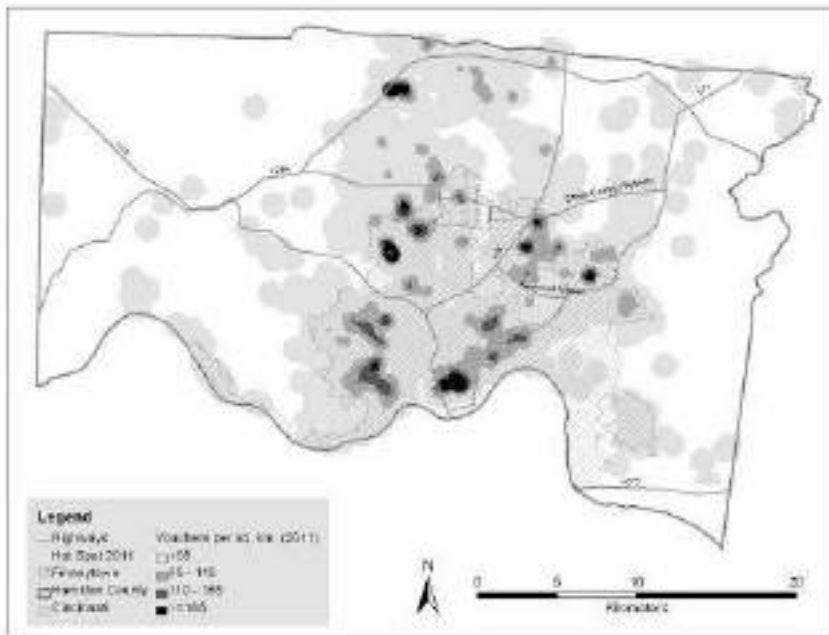


Figure 6. Raster density map of 2011 voucher holders

When the number of vouchers in Hamilton County doubled between 2000 and 2005, new voucher holders appeared to have located largely within the same sections of the county, but most notable increases in density included an area where Forest Park, Springfield Township, and Colerain Township intersect, neighborhoods on Cincinnati's West Side, and the central neighborhoods between Over-the-Rhine, Avondale, and Walnut Hills. In 2011, those hot spots on Cincinnati's West Side and central neighborhoods appear to have decreased some in size and density. At the same time, Cincinnati's northwestern neighborhoods and the intersection of Forest Park, Springfield Township, and Colerain Township all increased in voucher density.

Table 4. Hot spots*

	2000	2005	2011
Hot spots in Hamilton County	9	19	21
Hot spots within Cincinnati**	6	13	14
Hot spots outside Cincinnati	3	6	7
Total hot spot area (sq km)	3.56	19.29	16.60
Area of hot spots within Cincinnati	3.03	16.76	12.78
Area of hot spots outside Cincinnati	0.53	2.53	3.82
Max hot spot density***	223	380	407
Tracts that intersect with a hot spot	19	71	136
Block groups that intersect with a hot spot	29	142	126

*2000 and 2005 figures represent calculations obtained using 2000 census tract boundaries; 2011 figures represent 2010 tract boundaries

**Hot spots that have their centroid within Cincinnati city limits

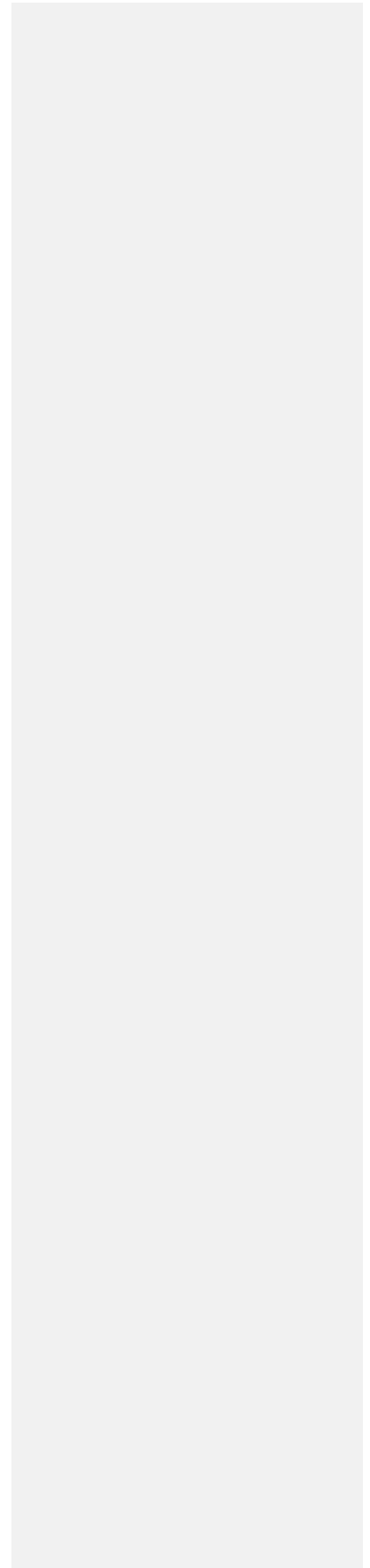
***Vouchers per square kilometer

The figures in Table 4 suggest a complicated pattern in which voucher holders were dispersed throughout Hamilton County in the three time periods. The number of hot spots has risen, though most of that increase came with the twofold increase in the total number of vouchers between 2000 and 2005. And yet, the total area of hot spots dropped moderately between 2005 and 2011, at the same time that the number of hot spots, as well as the maximum density, was increasing. Hot spots inside and outside the city both increased by one, but the area occupied by city hot spots decreased considerably while the area occupied by hot spots outside the city increased moderately.

As part of this analysis, we counted the number of tracts and block groups that intersected with hot spots in the three time periods. We found that these numbers increased and decreased substantially based on inconsequential changes in the hot spot shapes relative to census boundary borders. As a result, we do not consider the measure of block groups and tracts that intersect with hot spots to be a meaningful calculation. The results are nevertheless included in Table 4.

Dot-based measures of voucher holder dispersal fairly consistently indicated a trend toward deconcentration within Hamilton County, though the comparison of tracts versus block groups that contain half of all vouchers raised an interesting question about

how dispersal was taking shape. The density-based measures offer a more complicated set of indications of both deconcentration as well as deconcentration. It seems reasonable to conclude, when comparing both, that voucher holders throughout the three time periods have tended to move away from fewer locations within Cincinnati to a greater number of locations around the county. However, vouchers holders are not spreading out evenly throughout the county, but rather locating within relatively few, fairly concentrated locations within and outside the city.



Finneytown, Ohio community profile

The purpose of this community profile analysis is to better understand the dynamics and background of Finneytown as a suburban community within Hamilton County. We studied the community's history, demographics, school system, land use patterns, governmental structure, transportation systems, economy, and housing stock.

Finneytown is a neighborhood within Springfield Township, most clearly defined by the Finneytown Local School District. The fact that the neighborhood is spatially defined by its school district reflects a suburban community traditionally characterized by young, middle class families with school-age children.

The US Census Bureau recognizes the Finneytown Census Designated Place, the boundaries of which are close to those of the school district. The census designated place is about four square miles in size.

Finneytown shares a border with the City of Cincinnati, but is about twelve miles from Cincinnati's Central Business District. Winton Road and Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway are the primary transportation facilities connecting the two.

Finneytown's built character reflects its period of primary growth between 1947 and the end of the 1970s. As an older post-war suburb, road and building configurations are auto-oriented, but more compact than newer, more far-flung Cincinnati suburbs such as West Chester in Butler County. The dominant land use is single family residential, with areas of retail along primary thoroughfares. Finneytown is traditionally regarded as a largely white, middle class suburb of primarily Proctor and Gamble and General Electric employees and their families, but recent demographic changes show a decreasing median income and growing proportion of Blacks.

Finneytown gets its name from Ebenezer Ward Finney, a Revolutionary War veteran and New York farmer who was the area's first permanent white settler and proprietor. The land area that became Finneytown was purchased from John Cleves Symmes by Finney's grandfather, from whom it was willed in 1795. Finney and his family moved to the area in 1798, building a farmstead near what would become the intersection of North Bend Road and Winton Road (Bean, N.D.).

What would become Winton Road was established by Native Americans and used by US soldiers traveling between Fort Washington (what would become Cincinnati) and Fort Hamilton (what would become the Hamilton) before Finney's arrival (Finneytown Local School District, 2004). The other early thoroughfare established around this time was North Bend Road. The intersection of these two roads formed the center of town in the early nineteenth century. Winton Road was not paved until 1926 (Bean, N.D.).

Finneytown's first school opened in 1800 in the basement of the New Light Church, but the first school building was not built until 1860. The school district was established in 1910. Shortly thereafter, the school district built the first brick school building, which later became Whitaker Elementary. The original 1915 structure exists, but is surrounded by multiple additions (Bean, N.D.).

The character of Finneytown changed dramatically after World War II from a small, independent town into a suburban community associated with major employers Proctor and Gamble and General Electric, as well as other firms in the Mill Creek Valley. In the first decade after WWII, student population in the school district increased 368%.

The school district responded by building a new high school, which opened in 1958 (Bean, N.D.).

Most of Finneytown’s population growth occurred between the end of World War II and the end of the 1970s. Population growth stabilized in the 1980s. Finneytown’s character began to change again at the turn of the twenty-first century as median income has begun to decrease and the proportion of black residents increase.

Table 5. Finneytown demographic profile

	2000	2009	Absolute Change	Percent Change
Total Population	13,492	13,687	195	1.4%
Median Age	38.5	38.9	0.4	---
% Enrolled K-12	23.5%	22.6%	---	-1.0%
% White	73.0%	65.4%	---	-7.6%
% Black	23.8%	31.5%	---	7.7%
% Asian	1.1%	1.7%	---	0.6%
% Hispanic	0.8%	0.8%	---	0.0%
Native Born	97.2%	97.0%	---	-0.2%

Sources: US Census Bureau, Census 2000 and American Community Survey, 2005-2009

According to the US Census Bureau, Finneytown’s black population is growing and its white population decreasing, as a proportion of the total population, while total population is modestly increasing. Despite this modest increase in population, school enrollment is decreasing modestly.

Table 6. Demographic comparison

	Finneytown	Mason, OH	Hamilton County	United States
Total Population	13,687	29,354	851,867	301,461,533
Median Age	38.9	36.2	36.8	36.5
% Enrolled K-12	22.6%	24.4%	17.6%	17.8%
% White	65.4%	87.3%	71.3%	74.5%
% Black	31.5%	2.8%	24.2%	12.4%
% Asian	1.7%	6.6%	1.8%	4.4%
% Hispanic	0.8%	3.5%	1.9%	15.1%
% Native Born	97.0%	91.0%	96.0%	88.0%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009

Comparing Finneytown’s demographics to Mason, Hamilton County, and the US is helpful in understanding what is and is not different about Finneytown. Mason was chosen as a more recently developing middle class suburb to compare to Finneytown as an older suburb. As a suburb traditionally defined by young families and its school district, it is not surprising to see school enrollment is higher than the county and the

nation. Mason, the newer suburb, has higher enrollment, as a proportion of its population. Also indicative of its status as an older suburb, Finneytown’s median age is a little older than the comparison areas.

Racial, ethnic, and native born statistics are all interestingly different among the different areas. While Finneytown is less white and more black than Hamilton County, it is considerably less white and vastly more black than Mason. However, Asian and Hispanic population in Mason is much higher, which may correspond with a much lower proportion of native born population.

The Finneytown local school district consists of three schools: Brent Elementary (K-2), Whitaker Elementary (3-6), and Secondary Campus (7-12). According to the representative from the Finneytown Civic Association we interviewed, a little less than half of the parents in Finneytown send their children to Catholic school, which include John Paul II Catholic School (K-8) and St. Xavier High School (9-12).

Single family residential is the most predominant land use and accounts for most of the residential land in Finneytown. Multifamily is largely limited to a few sections, namely Galbraith Pointe, Prince Frederick Townhomes, and a concentration of older apartment buildings on Cottonwood Drive. Suburban style commercial and office land uses are concentrated along Winton Road, most notably near the interchange with Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway and the intersection with North Bend Road. Brentwood Plaza, just north of the highway interchange, is the largest single commercial complex. St. Xavier High School and the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science also occupy large tracts of land on North Bend Road east of Winton Road.

Finneytown is spatially defined by its school district, but for purposes of governmental administration, Finneytown is a neighborhood within Springfield Township. As a township, Springfield may not collect income taxes from its residents and must rely on property taxes to pay for public services. Since 2004, Springfield Township has administered its own zoning code. Before 2004, the township deferred to Hamilton County for this authority.

Finneytown’s roadway pattern reflects the early post-war period in which it was developed. Roadways follow a hierarchical pattern, with semi-disconnected local residential streets leading to collector streets that connect to a limited number of thoroughfares. Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway connects Finneytown to Interstates 71 and 75. Winton Road is the primary north-south thoroughfare, connecting to secondary east-west thoroughfares of Galbraith Road and North Bend Road. Finneytown is also serviced by four bus lines operated by the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority: 20, 41, 16, and 15X.

Table 7. Finneytown economic profile

	2000	2009	Percent Change
% With High School Diploma	24.0%	28.6%	4.6%
% With Bachelor's Degree	24.0%	24.8%	0.8%
% Unemployed	2.7%	4.8%	2.1%
% Families Below Poverty Line	4.3%	6.4%	2.1%
Median Household Income*	\$64,416	\$59,630	-7.4%

Sources: US Census Bureau, Census 2000 and American Community Survey, 2005-2009

*2000 Income Adjusted to 2009 Dollars

The proportion of Finneytown's population that has attained a high school diploma has increased in recent years, though the proportion of those holding a bachelor's degree has stayed largely the same. This may correlate with the increasing median age, as fewer school age children are living in Finneytown in recent years. Unemployment and families below the poverty line have increased comparatively dramatically, as median income has also decreased. These figures suggest socioeconomic decline in Finneytown.

Table 8. Economic comparison

	Finneytown	Mason, OH	Hamilton County	United States
% With High School Diploma	28.6%	22.1%	29.1%	29.3%
% With Bachelor's Degree	24.8%	31.4%	19.9%	17.4%
% Unemployed	4.8%	3.7%	7.3%	4.7%
% Families Below Poverty Line	6.4%	2.6%	10.4%	9.9%
Median Household Income	\$59,630	\$103,459	\$65,081	\$51,425

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009

Finneytown is above the county and US average for bachelor's degree attainment, but well below Mason. Finneytown's unemployment is higher, the proportion of its families living below the poverty line higher, and the median income much lower than Mason's. However, most of these statistics reflect better on Finneytown's socioeconomic status when comparing the Hamilton County and the US as a whole.

Nearly seventy-seven percent of Finneytown's housing stock was built between 1940 and 1969; about forty-five percent was built in the 1950s alone. These figures correspond to when Finneytown's population boomed the most. By comparison, less than five percent was built before 1940 and about nineteen percent was built after 1970.

Table 9. Housing stock comparison

	Finneytown	Mason, OH	Hamilton County	United States
% Vacant	4.1%	2.5%	13.1%	11.8%
% Single Family	88.0%	87.0%	62.0%	67.0%
% Multi-Family	12.0%	12.0%	37.0%	26.0%
% Mobile Homes	0.5%	1.0%	1.0%	7.0%
% Built Since 1990	11.0%	67.0%	11.0%	26.0%
% Owner-Occupied	80.5%	87.4%	62.2%	66.9%
% Renter-	19.5%	12.6%	37.8%	33.1%

Occupied				
Median Value	\$138,100	\$227,500	\$146,100	\$185,400
Median Rent	\$873	\$916	\$632	\$817

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009

The proportion of single family housing units in Finneytown is similar to Mason, but greater than Hamilton County and the US, reflecting these two communities' suburban character. The same can be said about Finneytown's and Mason's relatively low proportion of multifamily housing. Finneytown's proportion of rental housing is greater than Mason's, however, indicating that more of Finneytown's single family dwellings are renter-occupied. Nevertheless, Hamilton County and the US have higher proportions of rental housing, given Finneytown's and Mason's traditional suburban character.

Mason and Finneytown differ on the age of their housing stock, the majority of which in Mason was built since 1990, as compared to eleven percent in Finneytown. In this regard, Finneytown is similar to Hamilton County. Also notable is that Finneytown's median home value is the lowest of all four areas and Mason is the highest by far.

Finneytown presents itself as a suburban community like many others that were developed near mid sized and large cities in the early postwar period. That period is when population grew the most, the housing stock was largely built, and many of the roadways laid out. Perhaps coinciding with the growing age of its building stock and infrastructure, Finneytown's demographic characteristics are moving away from those traditionally associated with white, middle class suburbs and are becoming more like those of the city of Cincinnati. The characteristics that once defined Finneytown as a middle class suburb have been shifting to suburbs further from the core, such as Mason in Butler County.

Forest Park Area community profile

A significant suburban hot spot has formed and grown since 2000. It is located in north-central Hamilton County and traverses three different communities' boundaries - the City of Forest Park, Springfield Township and Colerain Township. Forest Park is a community with both single-family detached and multi-family attached housing. In its southwest corner Forest Park housing consists of two drives containing mid-rise apartment complexes. The nearby Ashley Woods Apartments is a multi-building apartment complex with a high percentage of voucher residents. Sevenhills, just to the east of Ashley Woods in Springfield Township, consists of single-family detached homes as well as some attached housing, and contains a high number of voucher residents. The three housing areas feed into Hamilton Avenue and Waycross Road and exist at the periphery of their respective municipalities. In fact, the entrance to the Ashley Woods complex is technically in Springfield Township. Note Figure 7 below which identifies Ashley Woods and Sevenhills in relation to Forest Park, Colerain Township and Springfield Township.

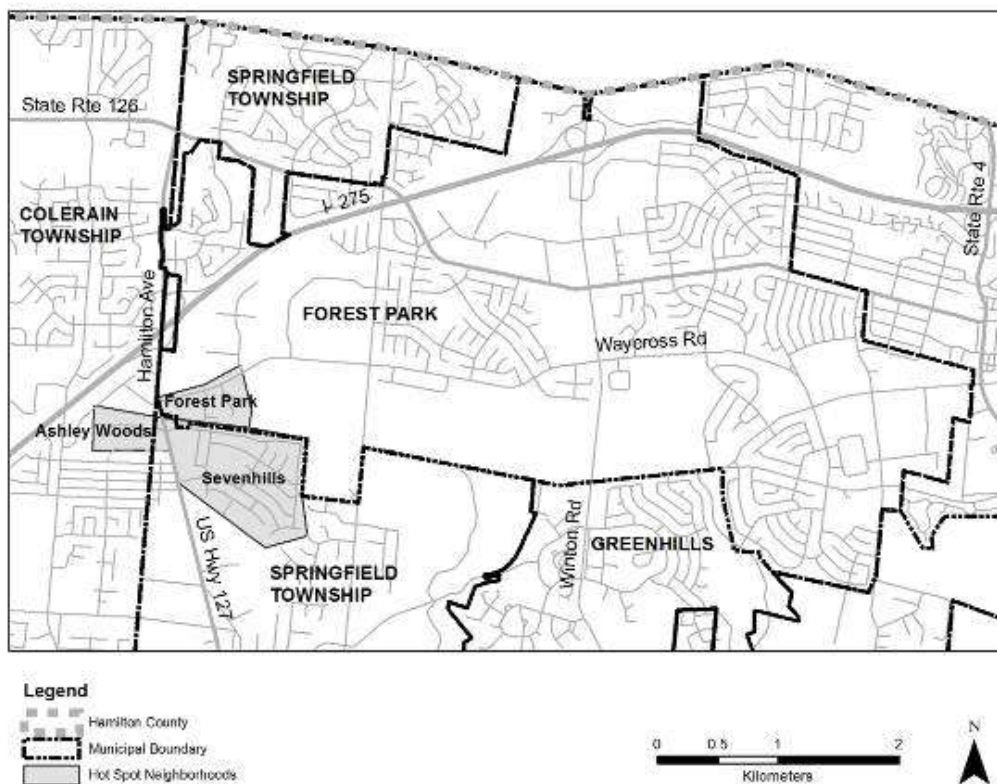


Figure 7. Map of the Forest Park area hot spot sub-neighborhoods

These three communities, and the portion of this hot spot contained within each, contain a variety of different housing types, but are experiencing some of the same demographic and population shifts. The following section first examines in more detail the historical and demographic backgrounds of these sub-communities, with an emphasis on Forest Park. It then continues with a quantitative analysis of Housing Choice Voucher distribution in the area, including changes in the number of voucher households within the hot spot, and a closer look at the progression of the hot spot since the year 2000. This hot spot exemplifies the fact that such clusters do not always respect municipal boundaries, but instead may grow around important commercial corridors or transportation nodes. The quantitative analysis will also go outside the hot spot boundary to examine voucher household numbers and density in the City of Forest Park overall. There are two reasons for an expansion of the study area to include Forest Park. First, it is a city that has experienced a significant increase in voucher households since 2005 on its eastern half, away from the hot spot location. Second, Forest Park offers an interesting history of post-World War II development into a diverse middle-class suburb. Finally, as a city Forest Park likely has greater capacity than either Colerain or Springfield Townships to respond to housing, social and economic issues. Photo images of housing in Forest Park and the area of the hot spot will also be provided throughout this chapter.

The City Forest Park is located about 14 miles north of downtown Cincinnati, connected to the greater metropolitan area by Interstate 275, which encircles Cincinnati. Today the city is governed by a city council and administered by a city manager. It has its own police and fire departments, and has a Community Development department which oversees planning and zoning, among other things. The city is divided between two local school districts - Winton Woods and Northwest (City of Forest Park, 2011). The land which is now Forest Park was originally designed to be the greenbelt portion of a new Federally-funded greenbelt town, Greenhills, formed to the south on agricultural land (Miller, 1981). After congress passed legislation in 1949 authorizing the sale of Greenhills and other greenbelt towns around the US, the town was sold. Its greenbelt, now called North Greenhills, was bought in 1954 by developer Warner-Kanter. Zoning changes were approved to allow development and the name of the area was changed from North Greenhills to Forest Park (Miller, 1981).

Forest Park was planned by its developer from its inception to be a true community occupied by active residents involved in cohesive leisure and civic activities. The developer's target buyer was an upwardly mobile post-World War II middle class white collar worker. As a comprehensively planned community, Forest Park went through several design iterations in the 1950s and 1960s, navigating the dynamic of sometimes conflicting desires of the developer, the residents, and the civic associations and municipal government. Initially, the development was more concerned with the balance of residential, commercial and industrial than creating a socio-economic or racial balance. Additionally, despite being comprehensively planned, Forest Park was built by subdivision, and each subdivision was fairly homogenous in terms of housing price and age. Forest Park continued to grow and in 1961 was incorporated as a village. Soon after, in 1968, it reached city status (Miller, 1981).

While Forest Park began as a largely white community, between 1960 and 1970 the percentage of residents living in Forest Park who were black rose from 0.5% to 2.8%. In 1973, in response to claims of realtor's "steering" blacks to specific city

neighborhoods and whites to others, city council declared its commitment to fair housing practices. During the 1970s as the black population continued to increase in all Forest Park neighborhoods, issues of uneven integration and fears of blight became prevalent. By 1975 the black population had reached about 12% of total. Residents voiced opposition to multi-family housing and public housing, and support for larger lot sizes to accommodate more expensive homes. Public worries were expressed that blighted areas would lead to a concentrated influx of black residents and the formation of black ghettos. But during this time of change the community also recognized the right of any individual to choose to live where they pleased, and avoided setting quotas or seeking to implicitly segregate incoming populations (Miller, 1981). Figures 8 and 9 present photographs showing Forest Park residences. These are examples of typical single-family housing in central Forest Park.



Figure 8. Typical single family detached housing, along Waycross Road in Forest Park.



Figure 9. Typical single-family attached housing, Waycross Rd. in Forest Park

Forest Park is currently a city of 18,720 people. Prior to the 2010 decennial census, the city was the 3rd-largest city in Hamilton County (City of Forest Park, 2011). Forest Park's population, however, contracted by 3.8% between 2000 and 2010, shifting it from 3rd-largest city in Hamilton County down to 5th-largest. If county townships are included in the comparison, Forest Park is the 9th-largest city or township in Hamilton County, by population (US Census Bureau, 2011). Figures 10 and 11 show a multi-family apartment development in Forest Park, a development containing some voucher residents but not part of a hot spot. Figure 12 is an example of a street containing relatively large single family homes in Forest Park.



Figure 10. Low-rise multi-family apartment complex, Northland Village on Waycross Road



Figure 11. Private back patios and common yard at Northland Village on Waycross Road

Forest Park is a racially changing community. Census results suggest it has in fact become a predominately black community. In 2010 it was 24.9% white and 65% black. Between 2000 and 2010 the black population increased by 8.7%, while the white

population decreased by 11.8%. The Hispanic population increased between 2000 and 2010, from 1.5% of total population to 6.4% of total. Forest Park is also an aging community, with its median age increasing by from 33.9 to 35.8 between 2000 and 2010. Not surprisingly (considering the housing climate nationally and in Ohio) the number of vacant housing units in Forest Park increased by 5.1% between 2000 and 2010, even as the total number of housing units increased 1.4% (US Census Bureau, 2011).



Figure 12. Larger single family detached homes along a Forest Park street

Forest Park is characterized by residential districts, commercial corridors and a greenbelt, but is currently in a period of transition as new business opportunities and developments choose to locate in other places further out from Cincinnati. The community is almost completely built-out, and lacks prime developable land. The City's most recent redevelopment plan calls for a renewed focus on making vacant and underused sites more attractive for redevelopment, and the creation of individualized growth and improvement strategies for distinct districts (City of Forest Park, 2007).

The population changes that Forest Park is undergoing are mirrored in the Sevenhills neighborhood in adjoining Springfield Township. The statistics which follow incorporate not only the portion of Springfield Township within the I-275/Hamilton Avenue hot spot, but all of Springfield Township. It would have been difficult to isolate and analyze only the small portion within the hot spot, and allows for an "apples-to-apples" comparison of data from this jurisdiction with the city-wide Forest Park data already presented. The total population in Springfield Township in 2010 was 36,319, down 3.4% from 2000. The percentage white population also decreased by 11.4% between 2000 and 2010 to 55.7%, while the black population increased by 10% to 39.9%.

The Hispanic population doubled from 0.9% to 1.8%. The vacancy rate doubled as well, from 3.4% of total housing units to 6.9% (US Census Bureau, 2011).



Figure 13. Sevenhills neighborhood in Springfield Township, part of primary HCV hot spot

Springfield Township considers itself a collection of neighborhoods, and according to key informants its residents tend to identify themselves with these neighborhoods more strongly than with the township. Furthermore, Springfield Township is divided between four different school districts – Finneytown, Winton Woods, Mount Healthy and Princeton. Finneytown, an area on the southern edge of the township, is technically a school district. Yet when asked where they are from, its residents would likely claim Finneytown as their neighborhood or place of residence. It is in fact a US Census Designated Place. The Sevenhills neighborhood of Springfield Township is located in the Winton Woods Local School District in the northwest corner of the township, and the problems and issue occupying Sevenhills residents are likely not of concern to Finneytown residents (and vice versa).

The primary land use in Springfield Township is single family residential. Figure 13 shows small brick single family homes typical of the Sevenhills neighborhood. The housing stock in the Sevenhills neighborhood is predominately single family homes on small lots, and the area is seen by key informants as one in transition due to the age of the stock and a lack of investment, both factors leading to affordable housing prices attractive to moderate income families seeking to move from neighborhoods closer to the city center. Additionally, the commercial sector along Hamilton Avenue, marked by vacant and underutilized storefronts, fast food restaurants and small retailers is considered to be “in distress” (see Figure 14). The Township vision for the neighborhood includes revitalization of existing stores and homes, as well as the encouragement of light

industrial and office development in about half of the existing residential neighborhood (Springfield Township, 2011).



Figure 14. Hamilton Avenue Commercial District near Sevenhills neighborhood

Ashley Woods Apartments (Colerain Township)

Now we turn to the third sub-area, Ashley Woods Apartments in Colerain Township. The latter has a higher population than either Springfield Township or Forest Park. While its population declined between 2000 and 2010, the decrease was only 2.7%, less than in the other two communities. It has a higher proportion of white residents as well, although that is changing. Between 2000 and 2010 the proportion of whites in Colerain Township decreased by 8.9% to 78.9%, while the black population increased by 7.3% to 16.7% (US Census Bureau, 2011).



Figure 15: Ashley Woods Apartments

At the eastern edge of Colerain Township and where the southwestern corner of Forest Park meets the northwestern corner of Springfield Township is Ashley Woods Apartments (Figure 15). This gated, 352-unit complex, containing both townhomes and apartment units, provides amenities and is surrounded by woods and natural growth (Varady et al. 2010; Ashley Woods Apartments, 2011). The gate remains open at all times, and there is no monitoring of who comes and goes. This development contains a high proportion of Housing Choice Voucher residents, making it a particularly interesting case of many voucher holders in a clustered area. Although Ashley Woods is under the jurisdiction of the Colerain Township Police Department, and within a primarily Colerain Township school district, its close physical proximity to both Forest Park and Springfield Township make this complex of interest to them.

Spatial analysis of voucher holder distribution: Finneytown area

Within Finneytown, we analyzed voucher holder distribution as dots and density, focusing on the following sub areas: Galbraith Pointe, Cottonwood Drive, North Hill Lane, and Glencoe. Spatial analysis of voucher holder locations within these sub areas is complemented by photographs from the April 2, 2012 windshield survey.

Figures 16, 17, and 18 display voucher holder dot distribution within the Finneytown school district in 2000, 2005, and 2011. For the 2000 and 2005 time periods, we used voucher holder location dot shapefiles produced for an earlier study (Varady et al. 2010). For the 2011 time period, we collected a table of voucher holder locations from CMHA in December of 2011, which we geocoded by address.

In 2000, seventy-seven voucher holders lived within Finneytown. In 2005, that number increased to 130, reflecting the overall increase throughout Hamilton County. In 2011, the number of vouchers increased comparatively modestly, to 153. Galbraith Pointe has accounted for a significant proportion of Finneytown's vouchers throughout all three periods. A considerable number of voucher holders also located in Glencoe, just outside the Finneytown boundary but within Springfield Township, between 2000 and 2005. Those voucher holders do not contribute to the Finneytown total.

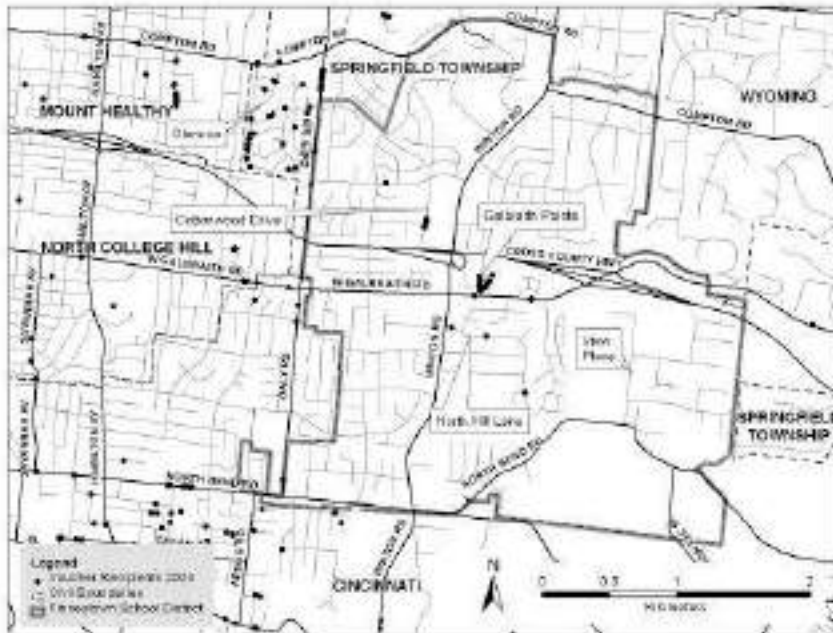


Figure 16. Dot map of 2000 voucher holders within Finneytown

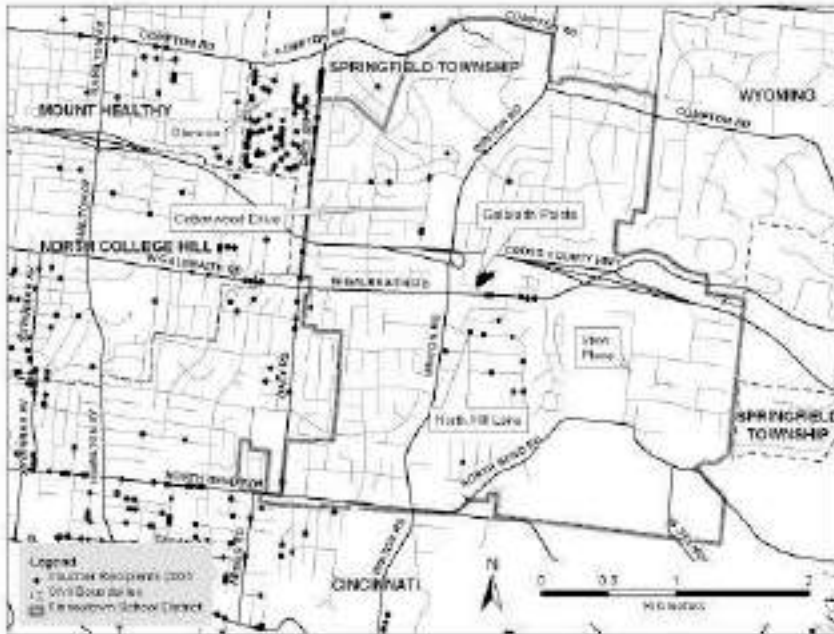


Figure 17. Dot map of 2005 voucher holders within Finneytown

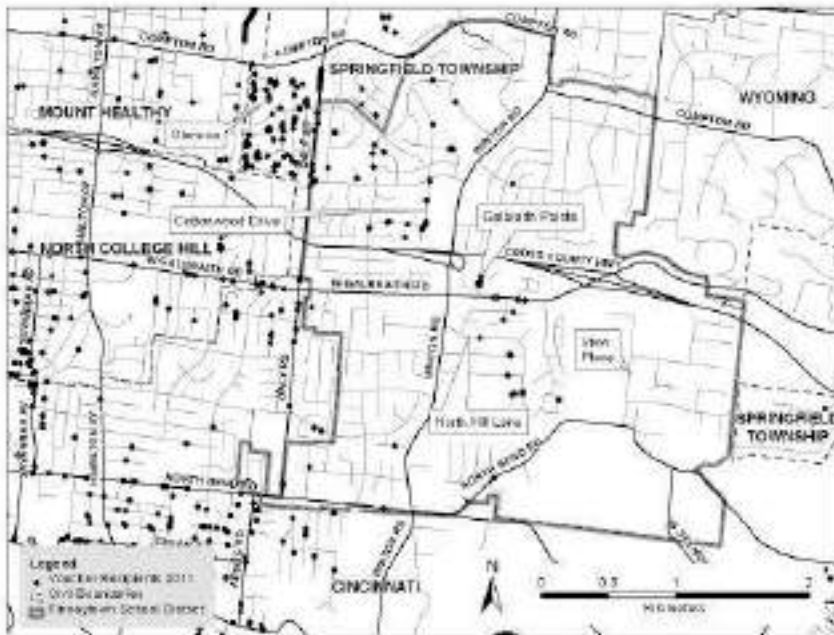


Figure 18. Dot map of 2011 voucher holders within Finneytown

After analyzing the dot distribution of vouchers throughout Finneytown, we displayed the voucher density raster layers created for all three time periods at the county-wide level. Figures 19, 20, and 21 show voucher density within Finneytown.

The voucher density analysis shows Galbraith Pointe at the center of the highest concentration of vouchers in Finneytown for all three time periods. Glencoe, just outside the Finneytown boundary, appeared as a voucher holder concentration in 2005 and 2011. The rest of Finneytown's voucher holders are dispersed enough to remain at the lowest density level.

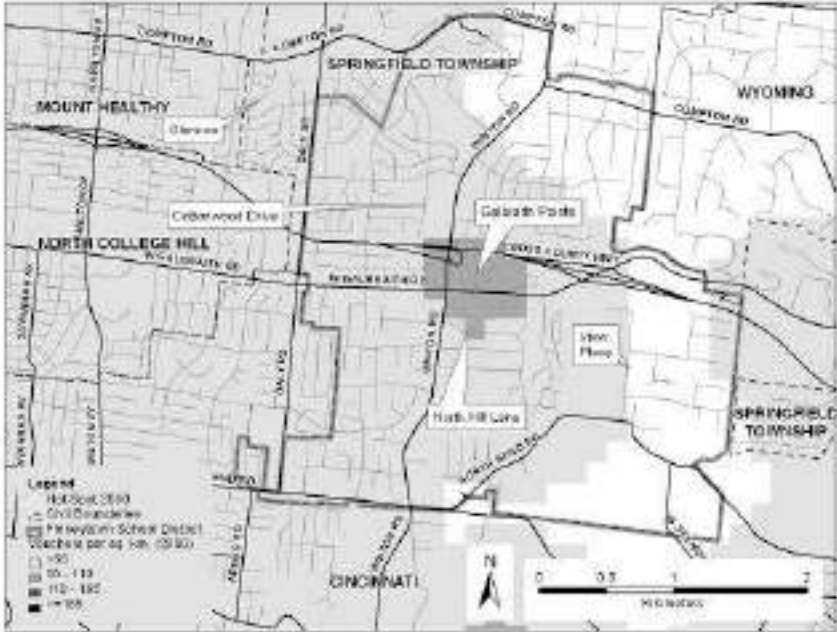


Figure 19. Raster density map of 2000 voucher holders within Finneytown

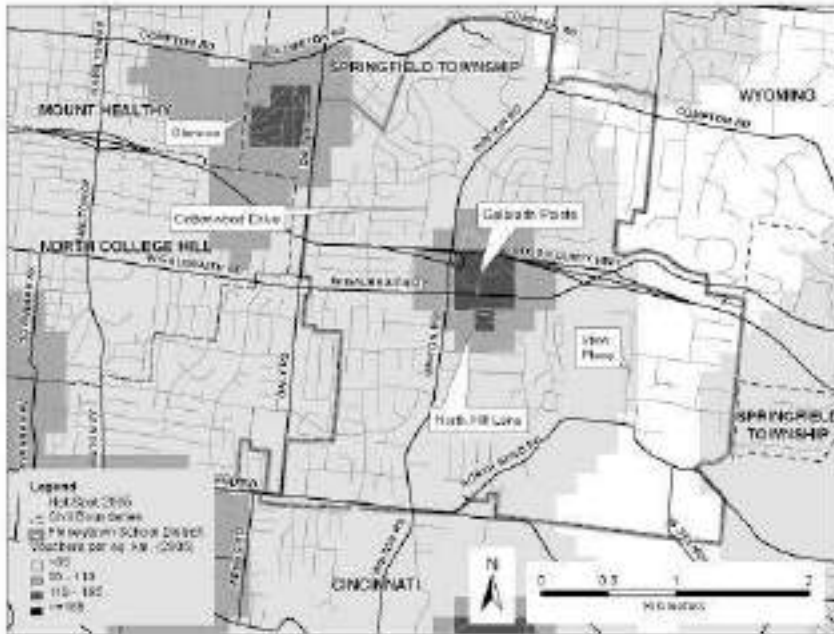


Figure 20. Raster density map of 2005 voucher holders within Finneytown

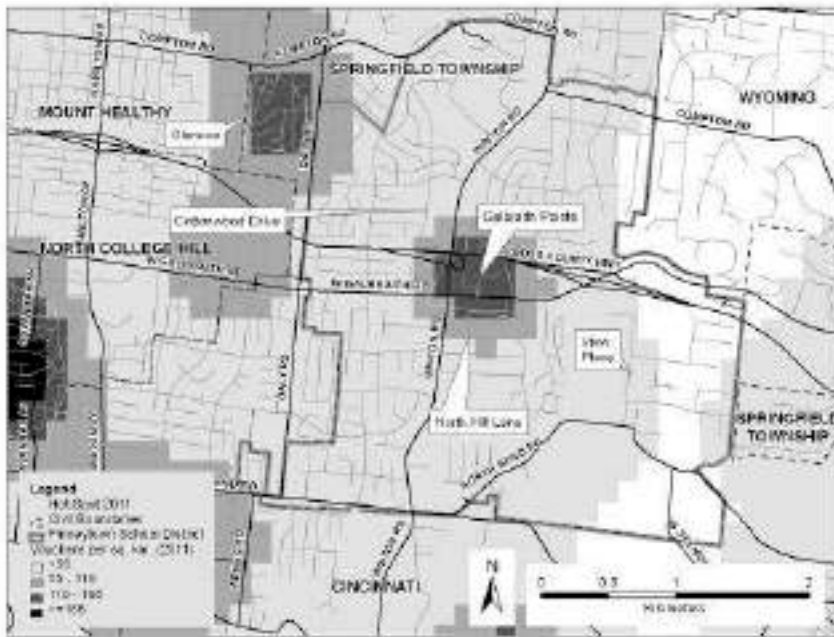


Figure 21. Raster density map of 2011 voucher holders within Finneytown

Galbraith Pointe is an apartment complex built in the mid-1990s and financed by the Low Income Housing Tax Credit. The number of voucher holders at Galbraith Pointe increased dramatically between 2000 and 2005, but decreased marginally between 2005 and 2011. In 2000 there were 55 vouchers; in 2005 there were 91; and in 2012 there were 88. Voucher holders account for the majority of this complex's residents.

In 2000, Galbraith Pointe's highest density was 86 vouchers per square kilometer; in 2005 it was 144, and in 2011, it was 139. In 2005 and 2011, Galbraith Pointe met the criteria of a hot spot.



Figure 22. Galbraith Pointe LIHTC apartment complex

Cottonwood Drive south of Hempstead Drive runs parallel to and exists behind the Brentwood Plaza Shopping Center, which faces Winton Road. The majority of the housing on this street is composed of apartment buildings, though there are a few single family houses. There are 29 apartment buildings and three single family houses that front this leg of Cottonwood Drive. In 2000, there were 8 vouchers; in 2005 there were 7; and in 2011 there were 10. At its highest proportion, in 2011, this accounted for an average of only one voucher for every three apartment buildings.

Vouchers are not evenly distributed along the street, however. In 2000, the vouchers were all located near the intersection with Thunderbird Ave. This pattern persisted in the two latter time periods, though vouchers appeared near the corner of Hempstead Drive in those two latter periods. Nevertheless, the relatively low number of

vouchers seems to belie the stereotype that the area has earned as a voucher neighborhood.



Figure 23. Apartment buildings along Cottonwood Drive near Thunderbird Ave

The North Hill Lane neighborhood stands out as one of a couple Finneytown neighborhoods with some voucher holder residents. This neighborhood includes Congresswood Lane, North Hill Lane, Denier Place, Finney Trail, and the smaller streets that stem from those streets. In 2000 there were 4 vouchers; in 2005 there were 9; and in 2011 there were 11. Locations within the North Hill Lane neighborhood appear to have changed in all three time periods and in no time period do they appear to be clustered within one section of the neighborhood.



Figure 24. Single family rental on North Hill Lane

The Glencoe neighborhood exists just beyond Finneytown's boundary, but within Springfield Township. It is roughly bound by Daly Road to the east, Compton Road to the north, and the Springfield Township boundary to the west and south. It is characterized by smaller single family homes in a suburban setting. In 2000 there were 28 voucher holders in Glencoe, in 2005 there were 82, and in 2011 there were 88. In all three time periods, vouchers were fairly evenly distributed within this neighborhood.

In 2000, Glencoe's highest density was 51 vouchers per square kilometer; in 2005 it was 130, and in 2011 it was 133. In 2005 and 2011, Glencoe met the criteria of a hot spot.



Figure 25. Single family homes in Glencoe

To summarize the results for the Finneytown area, Galbraith Pointe and Glencoe represent the highest concentrations of voucher holders within and directly adjacent to Finneytown; these concentrations increased substantially between 2000 and 2005, which is when the number of vouchers in Hamilton County doubled; and North Hill Lane and Cottonwood Drive represent comparatively low concentrations of voucher holders in all three time periods.

The Forest Park Area Hot Spot

The three dot maps below (Figures 26, 27 and 28) show Housing Choice Voucher household locations within the I-275/Hamilton Avenue hot spot and adjoining areas; that is, the entire City of Forest Park and parts of neighboring townships and municipalities. The maps represent data from the years 2000, 2005 and 2011. The dot maps indicate that the City of Forest Park experienced an overall increase in voucher families between 2000 and 2005. Additionally, a statistically significant hot spot appeared in part of Forest Park between 2000 and 2005 and thus was noted in the Varady *et al.* 2010 article. As previously mentioned, Forest Park forms only a portion of this hot spot, sharing it with the adjacent communities of Colerain Township and Springfield Township.

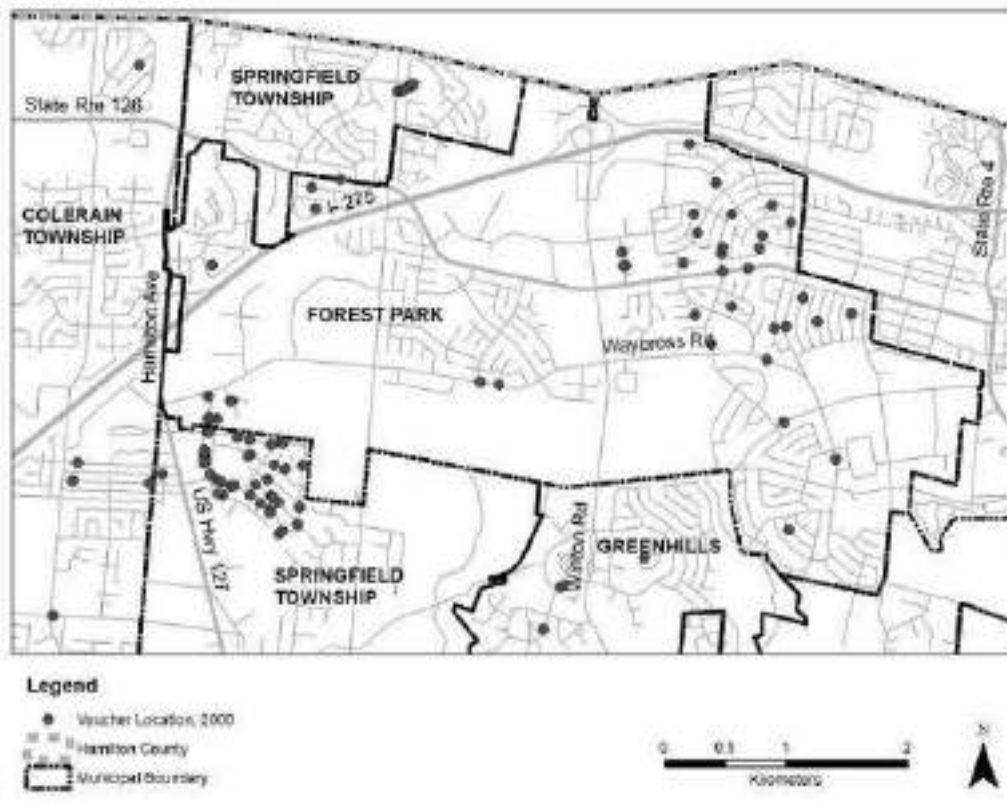


Figure 26. HCV Households in I-275/Hamilton Avenue hot spot and Forest Park, 2000

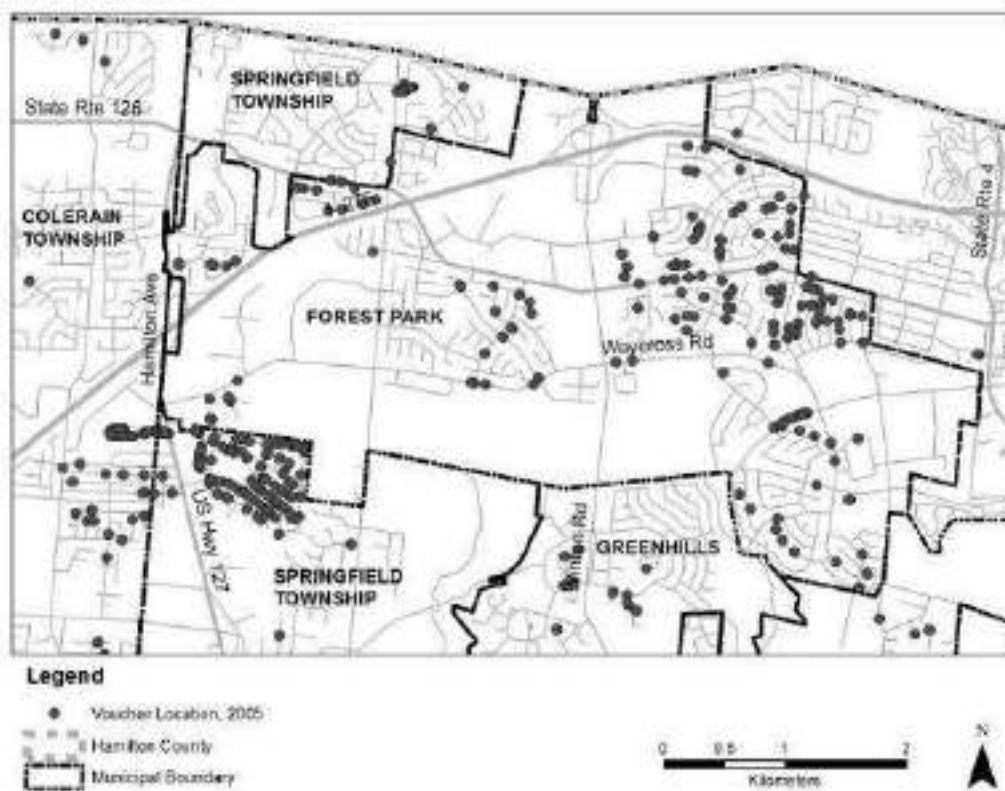


Figure 27. HCV Households in I-275/Hamilton Avenue hot spot and Forest Park, 2005

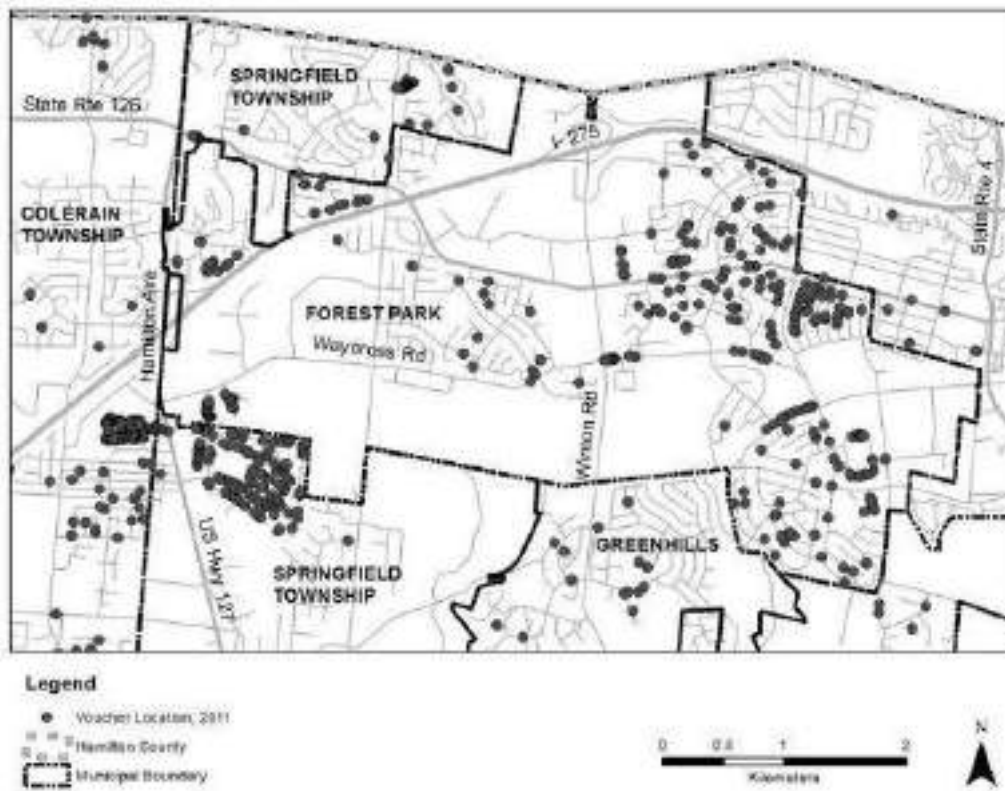


Figure 28: HCV Households in I-275/Hamilton Avenue hot spot and Forest Park, 2011

Figures 26, 27 and 28 show a steady increase in the number of HCV households in specific areas. First, the Ashley Woods development goes from no HCV households in 2000 to what appears to be a concentration of them in 2000 and perhaps an even denser concentration in 2011.

Table 10: Voucher households in study area

	2000	2005	2011	% Change, 2000 to 2005	%Change, 2005 to 2011
HCV Households					
Forest Park (Portion)	19	27	93	42%	244%
Ashley Woods	0	195	215	n/a	10%
Sevenhills	46	122	136	165%	11%
Total Within Hot Spot	65	344	444	429%	29%

Specifically, there were 195 HCV households in the development in 2005 and 215 HCV households in 2011. The Sevenhills neighborhood also shows what appears to be a steady increase between 2000 and 2011. In 2000 there were 46 HCV households, in 2005

there were 122, and in 2011 there were 136 HCV households in the Sevenhills neighborhood. In the southwest corner of Forest Park it is more difficult to see to what degree the number of vouchers has increased, but a count of vouchers in that area reveals a slight increase, from 19 to 27, between 2000 and 2005, followed by a large increase, to 93, between 2005 and 2011. Further study of the type of housing at these locations (single-family vs. multi-family), along with a hot spot analysis, will reveal the level of clustering here.

After a sharp increase in voucher households between 2000 and 2005, it appears that Sevenhills' HCV population has roughly stabilized. Ashley Woods saw a slight increase between 2005 and 2011 as well, and 61% of its units are now occupied with HCV households. Overall in Forest Park, it is apparent that the number of voucher households has increased, especially between 2000 and 2005, and especially in the eastern and south-eastern areas of the city. Between 2000 and 2011 the number of vouchers in total within Forest Park increased more than 600%. The total number of vouchers within the City of Forest Park rose from 57 to 253 between 2000 and 2005. The number rose again to 446 between 2005 and 2011. Forest Park overall saw a 76% increase in voucher households between 2005 and 2011, compared to a 48% increase within the I-275/Hamilton Avenue hot spot neighborhoods.

The previous section used numerical data to track the growth in voucher households of a suburban area of Hamilton County where a statistically significant hot spot was detected in a previous study. A density analysis of that area adds to this study by revealing whether and to what degree the hot spot has changed since 2005, and by showing additional areas in Forest Park that have seen densification. Figures 29, 30 and 31 show HCV household density and hot spot locations for the years 2000, 2005 and 2011. This density analysis was conducted using the same method and parameters as the previous county-wide analysis, and is in fact a result of that larger analysis, simply zoomed in to a larger scale.

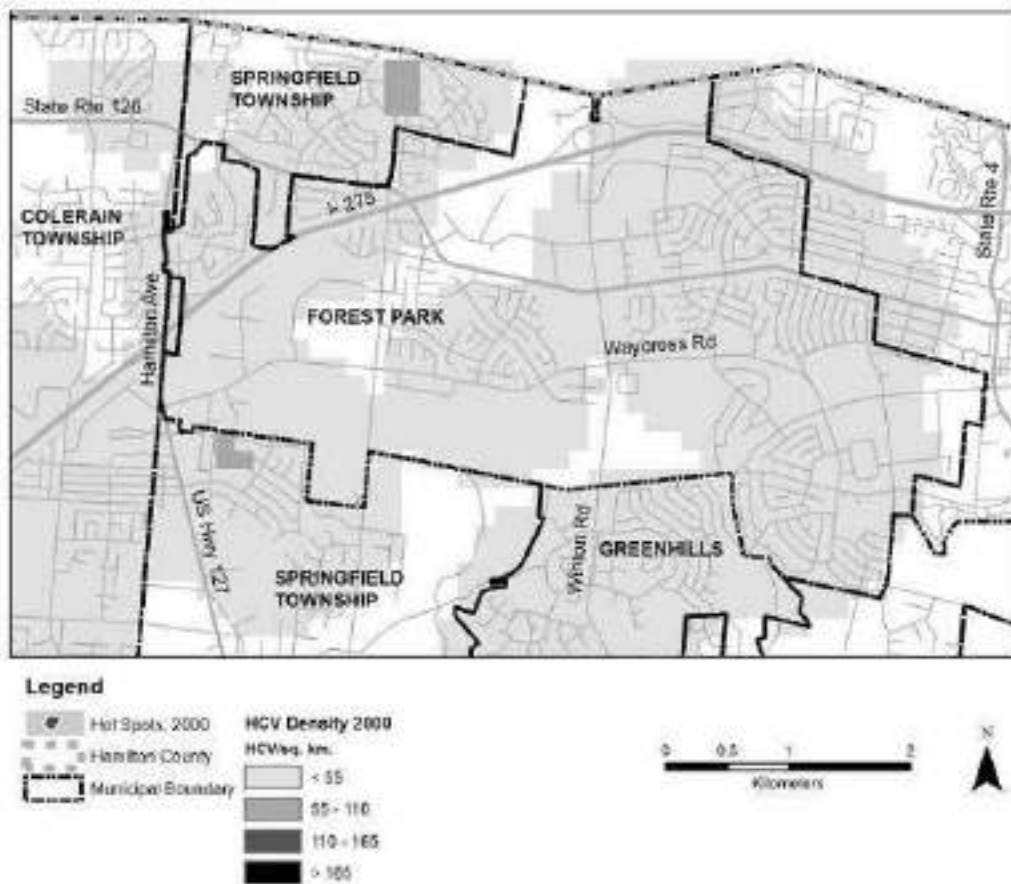


Figure 29. HCV Hot Spots in Forest Park Study Area, 2000

In 2000 much of Forest Park is at a density of less than 55 household units per sq. km. The area which will later become a hot spot shows only a small area with density higher, in the Sevenhills neighborhood. No hot spots are present in the area, but the precursor to a hot spot is visible.

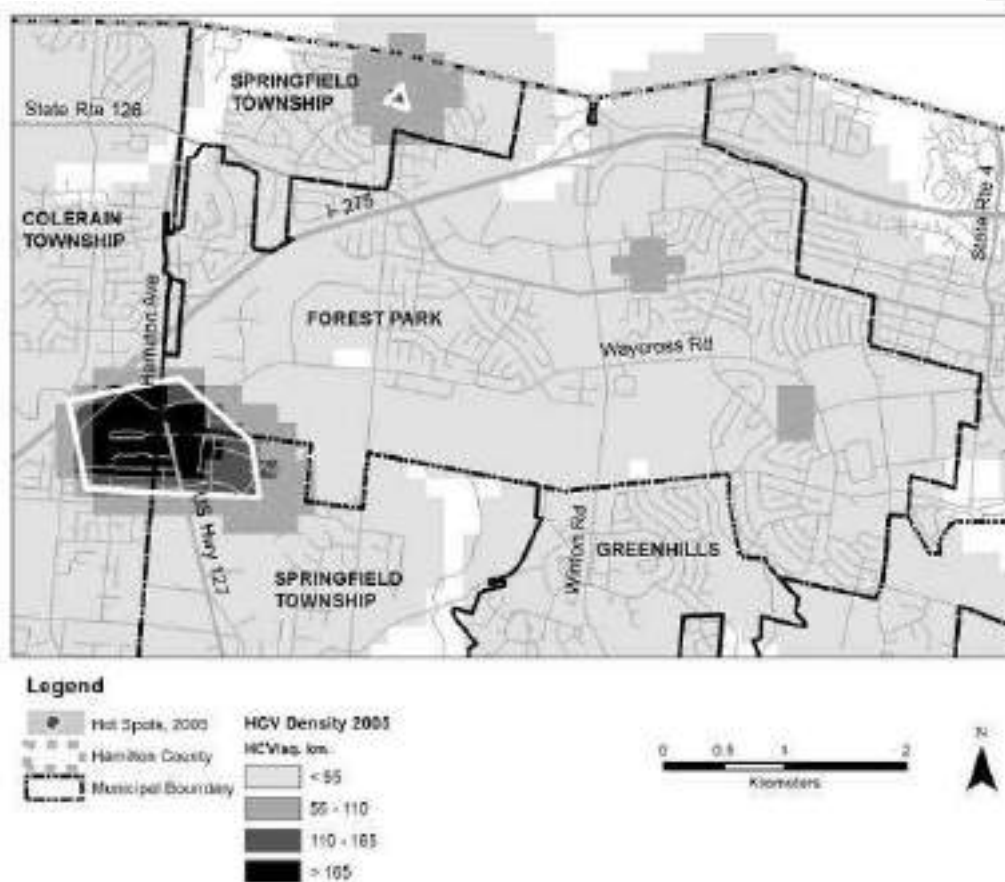


Figure 30. HCV Hot Spots in Forest Park Study Area, 2005

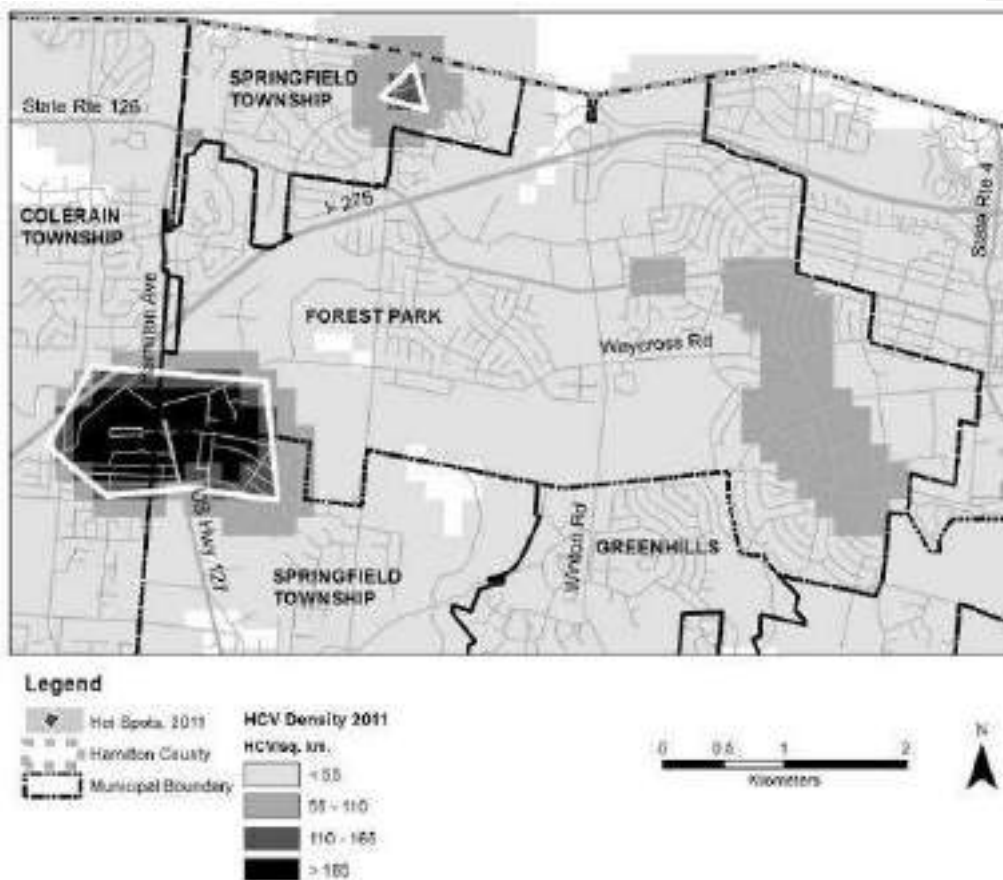


Figure 31. HCV Hot Spots in Forest Park Study Area, 2011

The change between 2000 and 2005 is dramatic. In 2005 there was a large area with a density of more than 165 HCV households per sq. km. This sharp increase came in large part from an increase in voucher households at Ashley Woods Apartments (Colerain Township). The Sevenhills neighborhood also experienced an increase in HCV density in 2005, in an area of the neighborhood of predominately single-family attached housing. An area north of Forest Park has also become a small hot spot zone. This small hot spot is in a small separated section of Springfield Township. It formed in 2005 and increased in size slightly between 2005 and 2011. In addition to a growing concentration in its southwest corner, Forest Park began to see some increasing HCV household density in two locations on its eastern side. Because of the distance between these areas and the hot spot, it is unlikely that the growth of the hot spot has induced the increase in voucher density in eastern Forest Park.

Between 2005 and 2011 the changes in HCV density throughout Forest Park, as well as within the I-275/Hamilton Avenue hot spot, were not as drastic as they were between 2000 and 2005. The hot spot has grown in area, now encompassing more of

Sevenhills, specifically areas of single-family detached housing. It also includes new areas of southwest Forest Park.

The Forest Park portion of the I-275/Hamilton Avenue hot spot consists of low- to mid-rise apartment buildings along two separate streets, shown in Figures 32 and 33 below. Two separate drives, Quailridge and Quailwood, lead off of Waycross Road and provide access to several separate apartment complexes, from one to three stories tall. Quailridge Drive is predominately brick three-story multi-family apartment buildings. At the end of a series of dead-end drives is a low-rise apartment complex with separate unit entrances. All of these structures and the yards surrounding them were in good condition during our windshield survey, reflecting responsible upkeep and maintenance. Quailwood Drive (Figure 33) was comprised of low-rise apartment buildings with common mailbox structures and private patios. The low-rise structures are unusual in the area, but due to time limitations I was unable to further investigate the development history of these complexes. Note in Figure 33 (right) the children's toys and games in the yard outside the private patio, signifying the presence of families here.



Figure32. Apartment buildings on Quailridge Dr. in Forest Park, part of HCV hot spot



Figure 33. Apartment buildings on Quailwood Dr. in Forest Park, part of HCV hot spot

Ashley Woods Apartments are of a similar form, but the complex also includes a centralized recreational and rental office facility. Figure 34 is a view of the gated entrance to Ashley Woods Apartments. There are security measures in place, such as a card scanner console and separate vehicle and pedestrian entrances, but the gate is no longer in operation.



Figure 34. Ashley Woods Apartments, “gated” main entrance



Figure 35. Ashley Woods Apartments, a gated complex and part of the HCV hot spot

Figure 35 shows the type of buildings within the Ashley Woods Apartments complex, part of the hot spot within Colerain Township. Housing types include both apartment-style (upper-right) and townhouse-style (upper-left). Also prevalent in the complex were posted signs governing acceptable behavior. The sign in Figure 35 (lower-left) reads in part “This property is protected and enforced by a curfew of 10:00pm daily for any persons under 18 years of age. This curfew is strictly enforced by law enforcement personnel.” Ashley Woods Apartments overall is characterized by multi-family apartment buildings, limited access streets, fairly high quality construction, professional upkeep of the properties and rules in place to govern resident behavior¹. A single Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA) bus line, the #17, serves the Ashley Woods and Sevenhills neighborhoods. This route starts in downtown Cincinnati and terminates in a loop through Sevenhills. During weekdays the route runs every 30 to 80 minutes depending on time of day, until about 9pm, and during weekends runs even less frequently. Nevertheless, it is an important link to employment centers in Uptown and Downtown Cincinnati.

¹ It is unclear whether the curfew and rules signage was installed originally or as a response to problems. This is something we would have investigated if we had had additional time.



Figure 36. Sevenhills neighborhood in Springfield Township, part of HCV hot spot

In the Sevenhills neighborhood of Springfield Township, the hot spot encompasses an area of predominately detached single-family homes, along with some attached housing near the main thoroughfare of Hamilton Avenue. Figure 36 displays photos from the Sevenhills neighborhood. The picture at top left is of attached single-family housing in the part of the neighborhood closest to Hamilton Avenue. The other three homes shown in Figure 36, located in Sevenhills further east of Hamilton Avenue, are notable for several reasons. First, landscaping on these homes is minimal, with long grass and no flower beds. Second, these homes exemplify the generally small size of the homes in Sevenhills. Third, the driveway and yard of the home shown at top-right are cluttered with lawn chairs, a grill and an infant stroller. Complaints about upkeep conditions such as these were commonly heard during informant interviews. Despite landscaping and maintenance deficiencies, the homes themselves appear to be of solid and lasting masonry construction.

Other areas of Forest Park bear mentioning because, while not defined as hot spots, they do contain increasing concentrations of HCV households, particularly in eastern Forest Park. This area of densification has united two previously observed areas of increased density into a single density “corridor” along Waycross Rd. and Kenn Rd. This corridor is not part of the hot spot. It is possible in the future that this area will become a hot spot of its own.

Figure 37 is representative of housing in the southeast region of Forest Park where the voucher population has gradually densified over the last 10 years. Forest Park Apartments is a fairly well maintained project, with a portion of the land in the area developed and other areas still sitting vacant. Access to the complex is limited to three streets, none of which can be considered a thru-street or useful for non-residents. This apartment complex is similar to those seen on Quailridge Drive in terms of style of housing and limited access. In fact, Forest Park Apartments contained 25 voucher holders in 2011, compared to 68 along Quailridge Drive and 25 along Quailwood Drive. There are several factors which may be preventing Forest Park Apartments from becoming a hot spot, including the lack of dense HCV households surrounding the complex, better management, or higher average rents which allow for a more selective process for choosing tenants. Eastern Forest Park HCV households are generally fairly spread out.



Figure 37. Forest Park Apartments, low-rise complex containing voucher residents

Figure 38 shows the small detached housing in eastern Forest Park, an area that has experienced an increase in voucher residents since the year 2000. As in Sevenhills, all four homes shown are of partial or completely brick construction and of similar size, but two of them appear occupied and well-maintained, while the other two appear vacant and less well-maintained. Note the “For Sale” sign in the yard of the home shown top-left. Also note the open-air car port on the home at lower-right, typical of homes in Forest Park and Sevenhills. This layout is typical of homes built in the 1950s and 1960s that are considered ‘downmarket’ today. The home shown in the upper-right photo likely used to have a car port, but it was converted to living space. The generally good conditions show that neighborhoods from this time period (e.g. with “slab-on-grade” houses) do not necessarily deteriorate simply because the homes do not have the latest amenities.



Figure 38. Small single family detached homes along a Forest Park street with many vouchers



Figure 39. Small single family homes on Ramondi Pl. and Rangoon Ct. in north Forest Park

While the homes shown in Figure 39 may or may not be voucher households, this area in northwestern Forest Park, north of I-275, has experienced an overall increase in HCV residents since 2000, starting with one, then eight in 2005 and 14 in 2011. The neighborhood seems to be better maintained than neighborhoods in eastern Forest Park, even though the housing stock is similar in construction and size. There is no obvious reason why this is the case.



Figure 40. Street with no vouchers in Sevenhills neighborhood in Springfield Township

Figure 40 above shows two homes along a street on the eastern end of Sevenhills which has few vouchers, and these two homes are not occupied by voucher holders. The home on the left is well-maintained and landscaped, with a carport. The home on the right is similar, but note the for-sale sign in the yard. Because of the proximity of this street to other streets with more vouchers, homes along it are likely at higher risk of becoming voucher rental properties. The “for sale” sign signals that this home is undergoing a transition in occupancy, and if a buyer is not found or the buyer is an investor, this home may be converted to rental occupancy.

Conclusion

Forest Park and Springfield Township were once considered desirable and affordable locations for working- and middle-class families as they moved outward from Cincinnati toward more suburban locations. Today, these older suburbs have ceded their most-desirable status to cities and townships located even further north, such as Mason in Warren County and West Chester in Butler County. As upper-income residents move toward more peripheral suburbs or (if they have the means) to affluent and distinctive inner suburbs such as Indian Hill and Wyoming in Hamilton County, property values in the other inner-ring suburbs decrease, making these areas both attractive and attainable to lower-income and minority populations. The changes currently taking place, such as the evolution of Forest Park into a predominantly black, middle-class suburb but one with a growing voucher population, reflect these broader trends.

The number of voucher households in all of Hamilton County has largely leveled off. The increase in HCV residents from 2005 to 2011 was much smaller than that from 2000 to 2005. In Forest Park and the vicinity, however, the increase between 2005 and 2011 remained substantial, albeit not as substantial as the in-migration between 2000 and 2005. The I-275/Hamilton Avenue hot spot expanded further into Sevenhills and Forest Park, and increased in density in Ashley Woods. While no new hot spots formed elsewhere in Forest Park, an area of increasing density is apparent in eastern Forest Park. This area has the potential to continue to attract voucher residents.

The I-275/Hamilton Avenue hot spot represents several different housing types: a gated multi-family apartment complex, non-gated multi-family apartment complexes, and

a neighborhood containing mostly detached single-family homes. In the first type, Ashley Woods Apartments, we see a highly regulated and centrally-run apartment complex, with a single gated (although non-operable) entrance and a curfew for juveniles. The second type, in southwestern Forest Park, includes apartment complexes along one or more streets in a fairly quiet and secluded area. The buildings and property are generally well-maintained and offer several styles of housing, from one- to three-story. Finally, the Sevenhills neighborhood contrasts with both Ashley Woods and southwestern Forest Park in several ways. First, it is comprised of mostly small single-family homes that have been converted to rentals. Second, it exhibits areas of landscaping and structural neglect, varying by the street and individual home. Third, it was areas such as this that seemed to present the most problems for the key informants which we interviewed. Complaints on physical conditions were minimal or non-existent for the larger apartment complexes, but were fairly consistently addressed towards single-family rental home owners and their tenants. Assertions regarding single family rental properties and larger complexes will be elaborated on in the next chapter covering key informant interviews.

Three sets of policy implications may be derived from this study. First, HCV policymakers need to develop improved methods for guiding deconcentration planning efforts by local housing authorities, such as guaranteeing the use of up-to-date census data in defining areas of low poverty concentration. Second, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which runs the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program (not HUD) needs to change its regulations so as to encourage mixed income tenancy. Current regulations provide incentives to landlords using the tax incentive to attract as many housing voucher recipients as possible. Finally, the only long term solution to the problem of voucher clustering is to increase the dispersal of rental units throughout the metropolitan area. Achieving this goal will be difficult because of zoning regulations excluding rental housing.

The aim of this paper has been explore time series trends in voucher holder distribution in Hamilton County. A companion paper examines the views of politicians, developers, housing activists and civic leaders concerning negative neighborhood spillovers (e.g. crime, property values). Nevertheless, neither of our papers examines the extent to which housing voucher clustering causes negative spillover effects.(see Galster et al., 1999 for one such study). , it does not consider spatial correlation with presumed spillover effects such as lower property values, higher crime, and lower property maintenance standards. This study also leaves many opportunities for research questions regarding the issue of correlation versus causation between voucher holders and commonly attributed spillover effects. Many studies explore causation, which some extrapolate as causation. This research could also be extended by comparing voucher holder distribution with socio-economic census data throughout Hamilton County. An examination of trends between the 2000 census and 2010 census and how these correlate with voucher distribution trends would be useful.

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