

# ASSESSING SUITABILITY FOR HOMELESS RE-HOUSING PROGRAMS

A Multi-Criteria Evaluation in Dallas and Collin Counties, Texas

HOUSING CRISIS CENTER  
APRIL 2016

#### PREPARED BY

The buildingcommunityWORKSHOP is a Dallas based nonprofit community design center seeking to improve the livability and viability of communities through the practice of thoughtful design and making. We enrich the lives of citizens by bringing design thinking to areas of our city where resources are most scarce. To do so, [bc] recognizes that it must first understand the social, economic, and environmental issues facing a community before beginning work.

#### SUPPORTED BY

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## HOUSING CRISIS CENTER

Housing Crisis Center (HCC) works to prevent homelessness and to stabilize at-risk families and individuals by placing them in decent, affordable, and permanent housing and empowering them to address housing issues on their own. Currently, HCC serves clients in Dallas and Collin Counties facing homelessness for the first time in addition to the chronically homeless. To accomplish these goals, HCC utilizes funds from the federal government, local foundations, and individuals to provide a variety of services to those in need:

- **Legal Services and Education** – Tenants facing issues with their landlords can receive legal or educational counseling from HCC by telephone or in-person.
- **Long Term Transitional Housing** – Homeless individuals and families can be housed for up to 24 months, receiving rent and utilities as well as case management services if progress is made toward achieving goals set with HCC counselors.
- **Veterans Housing Partnership** – Veterans with an existing relationship with the VA are eligible to participate in the Veterans Housing Partnership to receive permanent supportive housing and case management through HCC and support services through the VA Medical Center.
- **Permanent Housing Services** – Chronically homeless individuals and veterans can receive permanent supportive housing and intensive case management.
- **All Citizens Empowered (ACE)** – Families and individuals with a head-of-household suffering a disabling mental condition and substance abuse issues are eligible for HCC’s ACE permanent supportive housing program.

## ABOUT THIS STUDY

Housing Crisis Center chose to engage buildingcommunityWORKSHOP as part of an additional consulting service offered through the Communities Foundation of Texas’ Data Driven Decision-Making (D3) Institute. [bc] is providing Dallas area nonprofit organizations with a data analysis package to inform decision-making on a specific problem or challenge defined by the non-profit. To date, reports have been completed for 10 D3 graduates working across North Texas.





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rents in North Texas have increased by 22 percent since 2009. <sup>1</sup> As the region continues to grow and attract new residents, competition for existing units will exacerbate access to housing for low-income residents. For Housing Crisis Center (HCC) this competitive environment adds pressure to identify apartment complexes willing to work with the organization and its clients.

With almost 200,000 units in Dallas alone, HCC needs a process to identify apartment complexes willing to work with their clients. <sup>2</sup> To address this issue, we examined a variety of factors such as: neighborhood features, transportation, and health services in order to identify Census tracts suitable for HCC's clients.

Key findings include:

- 11% of Census tracts across Dallas and Collin counties are suitable for the majority of HCC clients - of these, 96% are found in Dallas County.
- For Veterans, Veteran families, and single individuals, the City of Dallas provides better access to essential services, transportation, and employment.
- Better school quality in northern Dallas County and southern Collin County pulls the distribution of suitable tracts for families to the north.
- Unsuitable areas in Collin County can be attributed to low population density and lack of employment opportunities. In Dallas County, unsuitable areas are the result of high poverty, high unemployment, and low-quality schools.

This report highlights Census tracts in Dallas and Collin counties that meet the needs of HCC clients and their specific needs. This information can be integrated into strategies for more efficiently identifying apartment complexes for HCC clients in the two counties, while also improving clients access to services and amenities they need. Finally, data gathered for this report can serve as a starting point for future strategic planning efforts by Housing Crisis Center.



# INTRODUCTION

In 2009, more than 85% of adults surveyed thought that mental illness, alcohol, and/or drug addictions were primary causes of homelessness despite additional research showing that less than 40% of homeless individuals face those issues.<sup>3</sup> Evidence from Dallas and Collin counties suggests that many of the most chronic homeless individuals – individuals with a disabling condition who have been homeless for a year or more or at least four times in three years - suffer from substance abuse or mental health issues at a greater rate than the overall homeless population, although they represent only a small subset of those who are homeless.<sup>4</sup> As discussed in the Dallas Morning News, homelessness in North Texas is much different than many realize. The new reality is “families living out of storage units, young teens couch-surfing among friends, [or] 24 people sharing a two-bedroom apartment”.<sup>5</sup> These trends are not new, but where homelessness was once seen as an urban problem, the suburbanization of poverty has led to increased homeless population in many American suburbs.<sup>6</sup> However, as the Dallas Morning News notes, this increase in homelessness is often hidden from sight.

In North Texas, a variety of organizations work to provide safe places for homeless families and individuals through transitional housing programs, permanent supportive housing, or in-depth case management and legal advice.<sup>7</sup> Providing these services is incredibly complicated for a variety of reasons: rental prices increase as neighborhoods evolve over time, desirable areas might lack public transportation, ideal apartment complexes are unwilling to work with organizations wishing to house at-risk families, or complexes fall into disrepair over time.

Housing Crisis Center (HCC), a Dallas-based nonprofit, currently faces each of these issues in re-housing homeless families and individuals in Dallas and Collin counties. To overcome these challenges, HCC approached buildingcommunityWORKSHOP through the Communities Foundation of Texas’ Data Driven Decision-Making Institute to help identify suitable areas in the two counties to help drive their efforts to re-house clients. To do so, this report focuses less on the state of homelessness in North Texas and instead explores features of the urban landscape that play vital roles in the lives of those transitioning out of homelessness. Additionally, a series of geospatial models are employed to identify areas HCC can target for client housing.



## BACKGROUND & METHODS

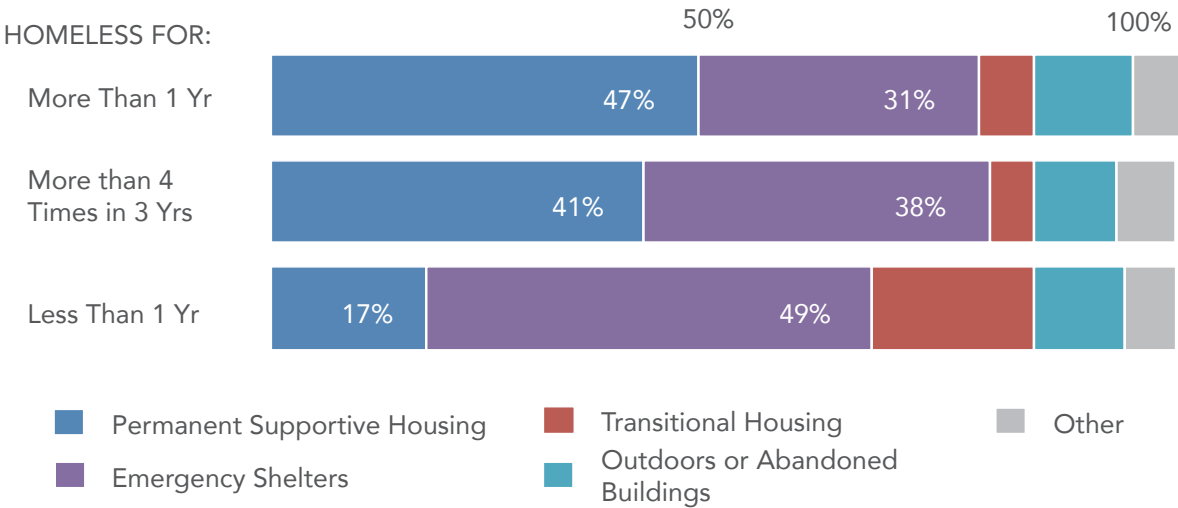
There were an estimated 3,141 homeless individuals in Dallas and Collin counties on January 22, 2015 during the annual Point-In-Time count. While this is a decrease from the 3,514 individuals reported in 2014, these numbers are only a snapshot and do not capture the full scope of homelessness in the region. The vast majority of Dallas and Collin counties' homeless populations, from the newly homeless to the chronic homeless, live in permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, or emergency shelters.<sup>8</sup> Smaller subsets of the population reside in drug or alcohol treatment centers, motels, or live with the assistance of rental vouchers from government agencies. Those who have been homeless for more than a year, or at least four times in the past three years, are more likely to have been placed in permanent supportive housing (Figure 1).<sup>9</sup> This likely coincides with the primary goal of those programs – to help chronically homeless individuals and vulnerable families reintegrate into the community.<sup>10</sup>

To achieve this goal, organizations that place clients in traditional apartment complexes must work to build relationships with apartment complexes

willing and able to accept rental subsidies and clients who have formerly been homeless. Apartment complexes that will accept subsidized tenants may vary greatly in condition, with some falling into disrepair over time. To overcome this problem, some organizations have begun developing their own housing stock, in various forms, to make sure quality housing is provided in coordination with case management, health services, and legal aid.<sup>11</sup> Where this is not the case, or where existing funding will not support such a solution, identifying affordable, safe apartment complexes in areas with access to transit, services, and jobs is incredibly important. Unfortunately, this is also an incredibly challenging task.

[bc] conducted a review of academic and professional literature related to homeless housing programs and multi-criteria evaluation (MCE) in order to identify Census tracts most suitable for housing individuals and families transitioning out of homelessness. Through this process, areas that better meet the various needs of HCC's clients are identified to help narrow the areas HCC staff must search for client housing.

Fig. 1: Place of Residence by Duration of Homelessness, January 2015



Before further discussing the methods and data employed in this study, it is important to better understand a variety of information related to both Dallas and Collin counties. Data on median household income, home ownership rates, poverty, and Fair Market Rent provide additional context when identifying and assessing areas for housing those transitioning from homelessness.

**Median Household Income**

In many fields, median household income (MHI) is frequently used as a simple metric for understanding the economic well-being of different geographic areas. For the United States, and Texas, MHI in 2014 was around \$53,000 (\$53,482 for the United States and \$52,576 for Texas).<sup>12</sup> Map 1 shows MHI ranges at the Census tract level across Dallas and Collin counties.

In Collin County, where the MHI was estimated at \$84,233 in 2014, large portions of the county fall near the higher end of tract-level MHI’s in the study area. Only the far reaches of northeastern Collin County and portions of eastern McKinney, Plano, and Richardson see MHI less than State or national levels.

This contrasts starkly with Dallas County, where the 2014 MHI of \$49,925 is just slightly below State and national levels. Large portions of southern Dallas and pockets of Oak Cliff and West Dallas have MHI’s falling below \$25,000. In Dallas, many Census tracts with MHI’s above \$135,00 are in close proximity to disadvantaged tracts across the City.

**Housing Tenure**

Homeownership is often described as one of the tenets of the “American Dream,” with considerable federal, state, and local policy aimed at increasing homeownership across the country. Higher homeownership rates in a neighborhood are linked to increased home prices, improved outcomes for children, and greater civic participation.<sup>13</sup> With increased civic participation can come an increased hostility to perceived threats to neighborhood stability, especially new affordable rental housing. These concerns often revolve around the effect of new affordable rental housing on existing amenities, creation of new or existing disamenities, and negative impacts on home value over time.<sup>14</sup>

For the purposes of this report, homeownership is used to get a better understanding of the conditions within each Census tract and in different parts of the two county study area. We use home ownership in conjunction with MHI to better understand the dynamics of a geography that, for all other reasons, might appear to be a good fit for re-housing.

Across both counties, homeownership rates are much higher in suburban communities than in areas close to the core of Dallas (Map 2). These areas represent large populations living in single-family detached housing, with relatively few apartment complexes or other multifamily dwellings. A variety of factors may feed into areas with low homeownership: proximity to colleges or universities, a large number of multifamily housing units compared to single-family detached homes, high poverty areas where residents are not able to easily purchase homes, and a variety of other factors.

**Fair Market Rent**

Many housing agencies rely on HUD’s Fair Market Rent (FMR) rates to determine the areas and units they can search for housing within. FMR is calculated and used at a variety of scales. HCC relies on county-level FMR valuations to place their clients in apartment complexes in Dallas and Collin counties. This does not always allow for considerations of areas that may be more or less affordable than the county as a whole.

To better understand where FMR is higher and lower than county levels, we applied ZIP Code level FMR rates to each Census tract. Then, these rates were subtracted from the appropriate county-level rate to produce estimates of affordability at the tract-level.

With this approach, Census tracts where county-level FMR rates are less than ZIP Code-level rates can be considered less affordable. In Dallas County, the majority of unaffordable Census tracts

Map 1. Median Household Income, by Census Tract

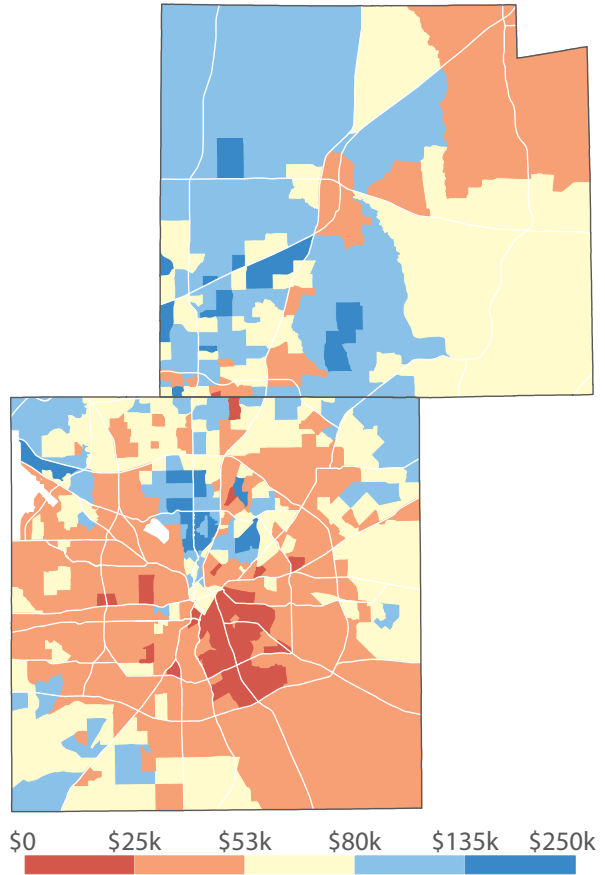
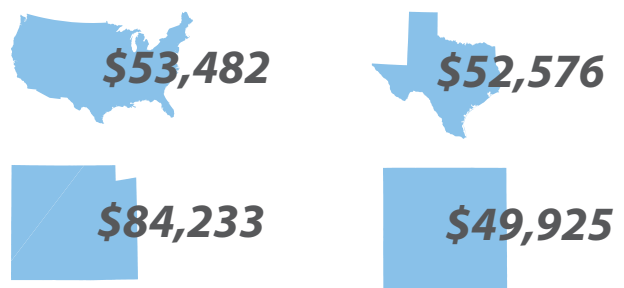


Fig. 2. Comparing Median Household Incomes



are found in the city of Dallas - particularly in the Downtown, Oak Lawn, Uptown, East Dallas, and Far North Dallas neighborhoods. In Collin County, unaffordable tracts are found in parts of eastern Plano, Frisco, and McKinney (Map 3).

**Methods**

Using data inputs discussed later in this section - such as proximity to libraries, presence of quality schools, or transit accessibility - four MCE models were developed to help identify areas of Dallas and Collin counties suitable for HCC’s clients. MCE modeling refers to a variety of approaches used to evaluate multiple, often competing inputs in a decision-making process.<sup>15, 16</sup>

To do so, Census tracts in the study area were compared against each other for each of the input datasets within a category (e.g. Basic Essentials). Where applicable, point features were aggregated to the Census tract as density values (the number of features per square mile). Tracts were then ranked by these values and given scores based on a quintile distribution (5 equal groups, with those in the top quintile receiving higher scores than those in lower quintiles). This process was repeated for each Category, with additional levels of classification and ranking based on the specific needs of each scenario.

Each MCE model allows for an objective selection of suitable areas based on a wide variety of inputs. Homeless populations rely on a variety of governmental and non-governmental services as they work to become more self-sufficient. The models were developed in order to help HCC narrow down their search for suitable housing options in Dallas County and Collin County. These models rely on the standardization of data at consistent geographic scale in order to identify areas more suitable for any particular model. They do not allow, however, for a particular site-based analysis.

Map 2. Housing Tenure

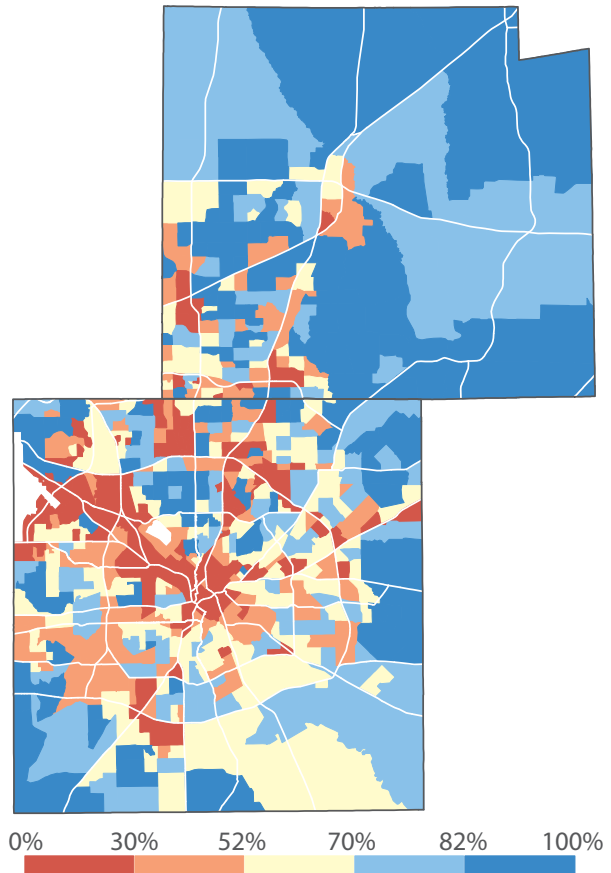
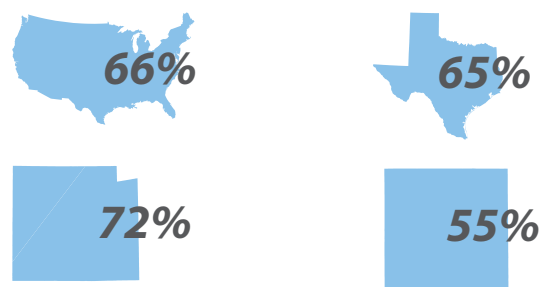


Fig. 3: Owner-Occupied Housing Units





**Scale**

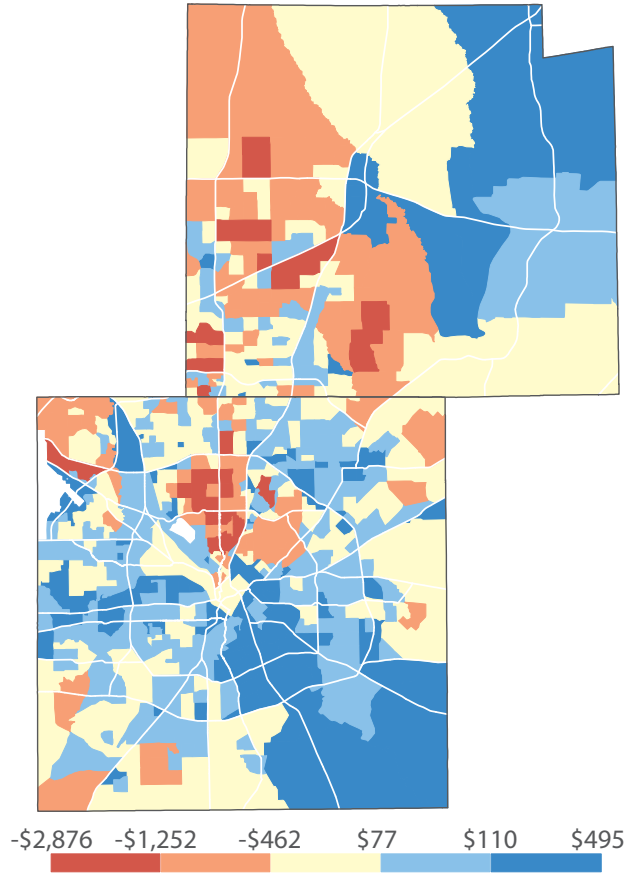
The Census tract is the smallest unit available at which all data needed for this analysis remains available and reliable. While smaller units of analysis allow for a more fine-grained assessment, data at that scale is not feasible for the purposes of this study. Many of the inputs identified for this report are available at the address level and can be aggregate to the Census tract for comparison and analysis with other demographic data provided by the Census' American Community Survey.

**Data**

The rest of this section documents and explains the rationale in choosing each of the datasets used in the MCE process. Maps throughout the section are provided in order to better represent the spatial arrangement of services in the study area. For the final MCE process, data were aggregated to the Census tract and analyzed in conjunction with a limited number of socioeconomic variables.

Data used in this analysis were grouped into six unique categories: Basic Essentials, Transportation, Veterans, Families, Employment, and Barriers. Each category is meant to reflect the needs of various client sub-populations and is utilized to different degrees in the MCE process. [bc] worked with HCC to identify the necessary features and services to include in this analysis and identified additional features based on existing research. The 6 categories were then developed based on similarities between data inputs and client needs.

Map 3. Fair Market Rent



## BASIC ESSENTIALS

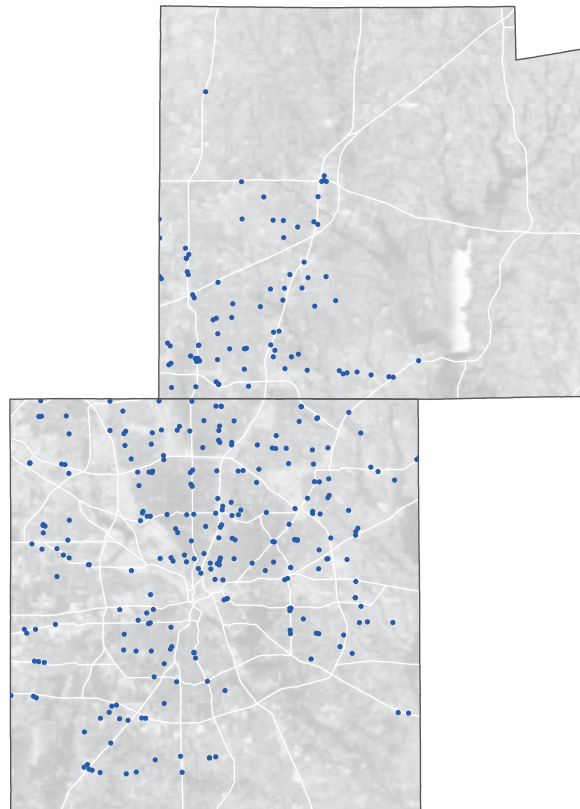
Regardless of family type, veteran status, and mental health or substance abuse history, all formerly homeless individuals and families should have access to essentials services. The Basic Essentials category encompasses access to a comprehensive set of services intended to function as a safety net for individuals and families in transition. As these groups transition into stable housing it cannot be assumed that all clients will have access to personal vehicles –increasing the need for housing in locations that are accessible to a variety of basic services. In order to measure the geographic coverage of these services, units were added up within each Census tract in the study area (Dallas and Collin counties) and converted into a density measure (units per square mile). This allows for an easier comparison across features and geographies to help target the most well served parts of the study area.

### **Grocery Stores**

Access to nutritional food is essential for anyone's health and well-being. While many are able to readily access a grocery store in close proximity to their home, this is not a given in many parts of southern Dallas. Food deserts, or urbanized areas with no grocery stores within 1-mile, are not ideal locations for housing formerly homeless families and individuals, especially for children who require well-balanced diets to grow and stay healthy.<sup>17</sup> While this problem is not unique to the formerly homeless, this population may not have ready access to a personal vehicle and must instead rely on friends, family, or public transportation to reach the nearest grocery store.<sup>18</sup> Areas where a variety of choices exist for obtaining food and groceries, including grocery stores, are more desirable than areas where choices are limited to fast food establishments or convenience stores.

While much of Collin County appears sparsely served by grocery stores, those areas are much more rural than the southeastern and central portions of the county. There is also a considerable gap in grocery store coverage in portions of

Map 4. Grocery Stores

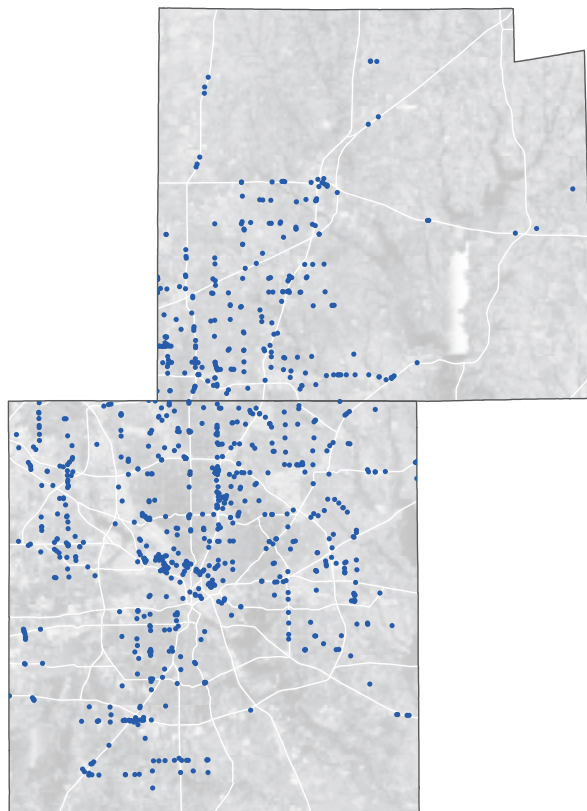


southern Dallas, frequently identified by academic studies and the USDA as a food desert (Map 4). While grocery stores do exist in these areas, they are often smaller businesses with higher prices than major national chains.<sup>19</sup>

### **Pharmacies**

Pharmacies can often be a forgotten piece of a neighborhood's landscape. For many, proximity to pharmacies may not matter at all. Due to the crucial role pharmacies play in a neighborhood, accessibility to these locations is important so that those transitioning out of homelessness can easily acquire any needed medication.<sup>20</sup> As pharmacies across the country begin to expand their services to include vaccinations, blood pressure tests, and minor health screenings, these locations may play an increasingly important role in the healthcare landscape.<sup>21</sup>

Map 5. Pharmacies



Pharmacies in Dallas and Collin counties are located along major thoroughfares in close proximity to residential populations, major centers of employment, or in concentrations of health care related entities. Major clusters appear in the Medical District along I-35E, northwest of Downtown Dallas, near Medical City along US-75 in northern Dallas, and in other pockets near smaller hospitals in Collin County (Map 5). Pharmacies are distributed throughout major residential concentrations in the two counties. As with grocery stores, many parts of southern Dallas, and southern Dallas County, appear to lack pharmacies at a scale that population density might suggest.

#### ***Laundromats***

Laundromats are important neighborhood amenities for residents living in older homes or apartments that do not have access to laundry facilities or appliances. For individuals and families

transitioning out of homelessness, laundromats also help promote personal health and cleanliness. As individuals' transition out of homelessness into then the job market, access to laundry services becomes more and more important. Without these services their jobs may be at risk or individuals may face social stigmatization based on their clothing.

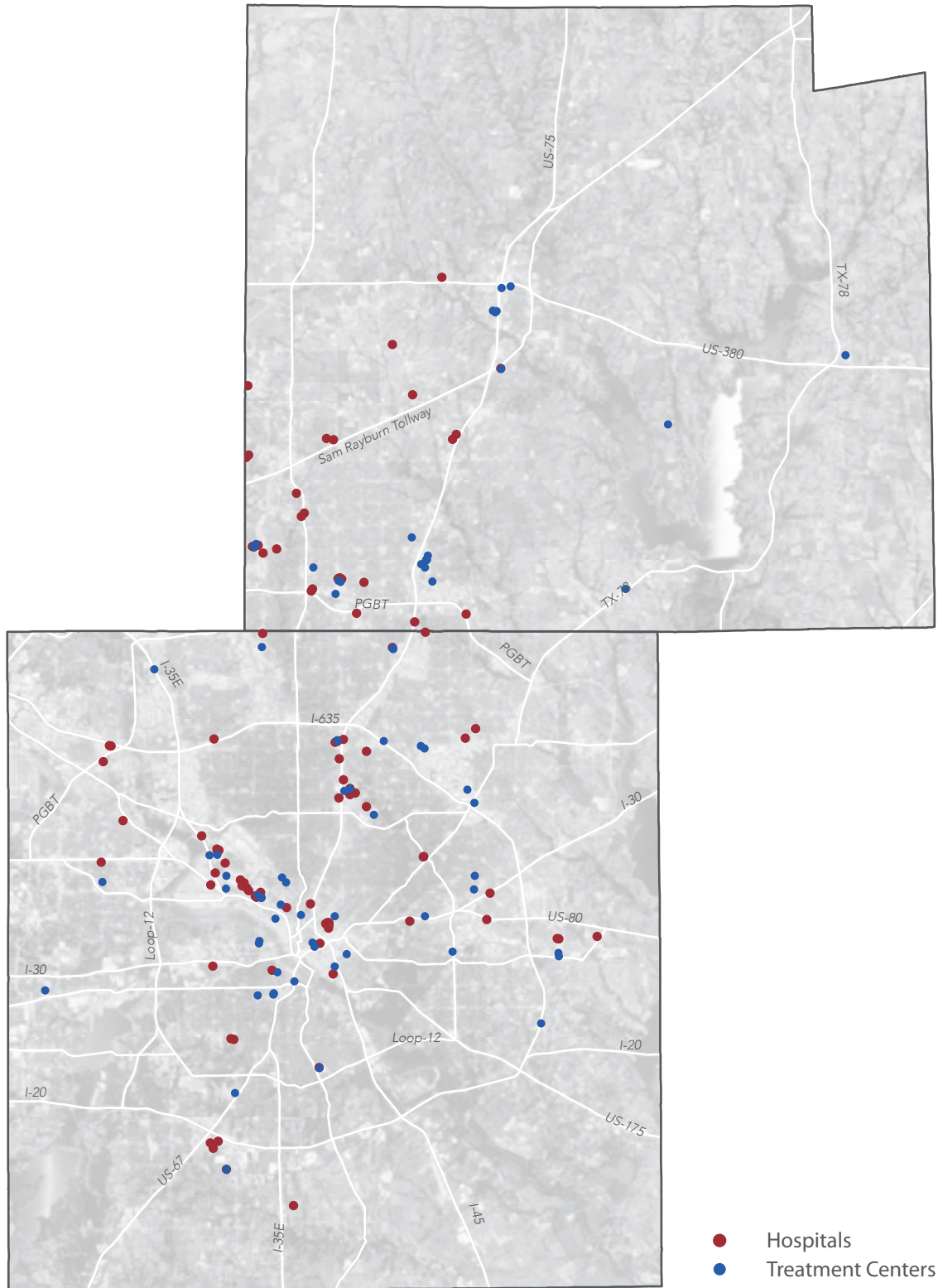
Laundromats are found across the study area, along major thoroughfares, and revealing a contrast to the types of services available in parts of northern Dallas County and southern Collin County and those of southern Dallas County (Appendix - 41). Some of these differences can be contrasted with differences in home ownership and age of housing stock - owner-occupied homes and newer homes can more easily acquire in-home laundry appliances than renter-occupied units. Parts of southern Dallas have much lower rates of owner-occupied units than other parts of the study area. Parts of Dallas and Collin counties with many laundromats also have low rates of owner-occupied housing (Map 2).

#### ***Barbershops & Salons***

Interactions in public or at the workplace require a minimum level of personal hygiene and grooming. For people reentering the workforce, grooming is a must during the hiring process and for everyday workplace interactions. While this may seem intuitive to most, personal grooming can be a challenge for transitioning individuals.<sup>22</sup> Access to barbershops and salons can increase confidence and positive self-image leading to better social integration.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to previous service maps, there is a stark difference between the geography of cosmetology licensing related to barbershops and salons (Appendix - 42). Data from the State of Texas identify a much denser concentration of these services in Dallas County than in Collin County. This may relate to the ways in which corporate chains license employees or how the State's licensing system tracks licenses.

Map 6. Hospitals, Mental Health, Alcohol, and Substance Abuse Treatment Centers





### ***Parks***

Parks, as a public space, are valuable in promoting physical activity. Growing evidence suggest proximity to parks increases the likelihood of exercise, which can help reduce the risk of heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes.<sup>24, 25</sup> Recent studies also highlight the positive effects of green spaces on individuals' psychological well-being.<sup>26</sup> While proximity to parks is important, parks are varied and provide access to different types of amenities and facilities.

Much of northern and eastern Collin County is privately owned agricultural land (Appendix - 43). As residential density is low, the spread of parks and recreational public space is decidedly different than it is in the denser, more urban parts of Dallas and Collin counties. While proximity to parks is beneficial in various ways for individuals and property owners, all parks are not created equal. Unfortunately, due to the scope of this project it was not possible to analyze parks based on the types of amenities or features present at individual locations. Thus, proximity to parks is used as a general way of identifying opportunity to access public space.

### ***Hospitals***

Homeless individuals and families often deal with significant health issues that require proper medical attention and follow-up care. Homeless individuals have higher rates of hospitalization than the general population.<sup>27</sup> While housing is the first step in addressing some of these health concerns, by providing a basic level of stability and a healthy living environment, housing formerly homeless families and individuals near hospitals can lead to improved health outcomes.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, hospitals are often the central features in large concentrations of health care related businesses, from smaller doctors offices and clinics to pharmacies (Map 6)

### ***Treatment Centers***

Mental health issues and problems with substance abuse are high risk factors for homelessness.<sup>29</sup> Ensuring housing in areas in close proximity to treatment centers can facilitate the reintegration back into mainstream society by providing adequate treatment care.<sup>30</sup> In the map above, data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration was used to identify treatment center locations across Dallas and Collin Counties.

## TRANSPORTATION

While Transportation could easily fit within the Basic Essentials category, we felt it needed to stand on its own to compare against areas where proximity to essential services exists but where public transportation options are scarce or infrequent. In doing so, we identify potentially suitable areas that require changes in transit service or modifying bus routes. Regardless, public transportation options are necessary to provide those experiencing economic hardship an opportunity to get to work, appointments, and buy food.<sup>31</sup> Given the auto-dependent nature of the region's transportation infrastructure, access to public transit and proximity to services is a must for this population.

### *Transit Service Areas*

The primary transit authority serving Dallas and Collin counties is Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), which serves much of Dallas County and large portions of southwestern Collin County. As of late 2015, the Texoma Area Paratransit Services (TAPS) had stopped providing service to Collin County, which had consisted of limited fixed-route and on-demand bus and shuttle services. Much of the northern reaches of Collin County are no longer served by public transportation.

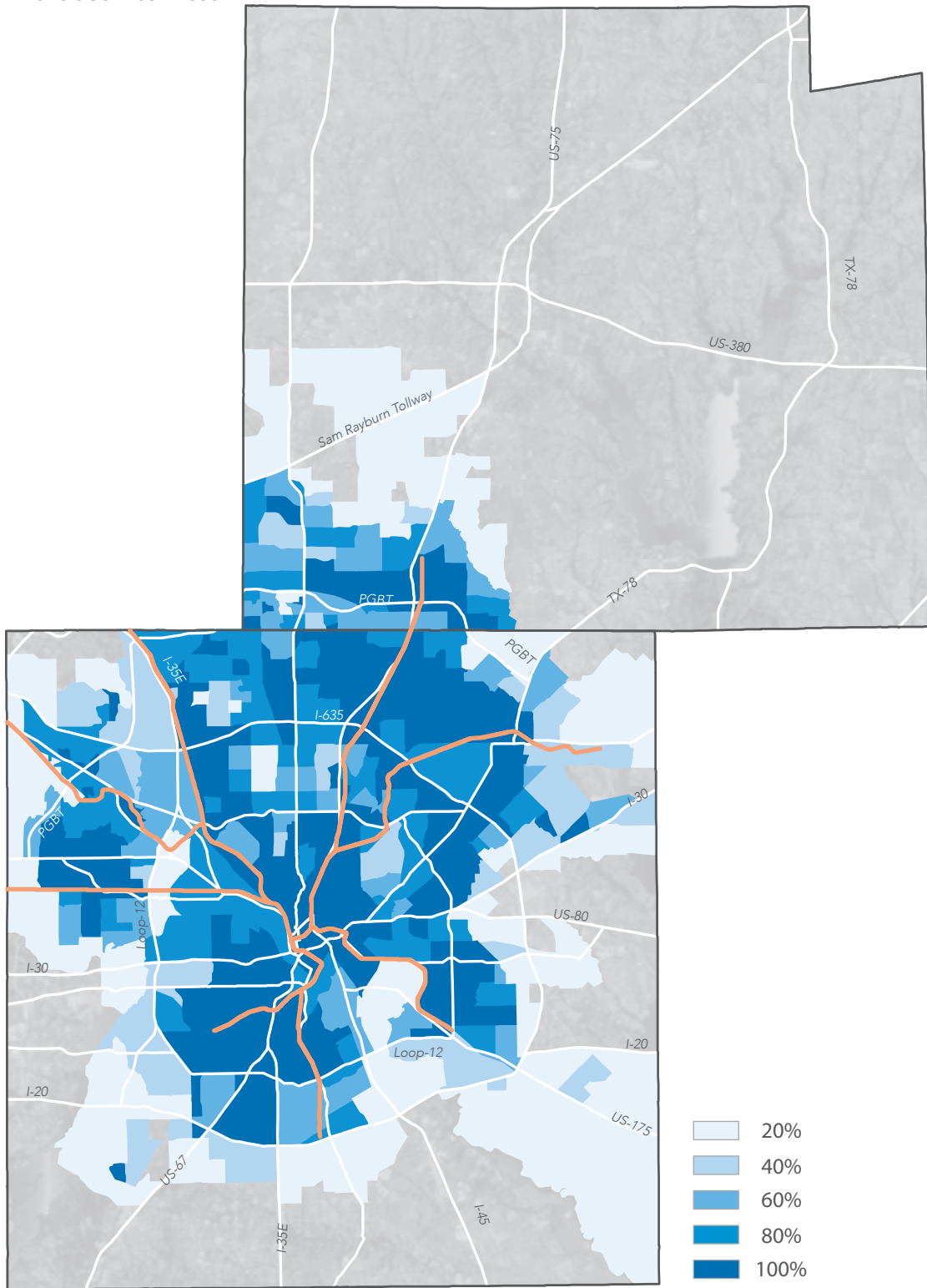
Existing bodies of research indicate that areas within a half-mile of a transit stop are more ideal in terms of enhance accessibility and mobility.<sup>32</sup> Much of Dallas County is well served in this regard, although suburban communities to the south are not served by DART. Similarly, only portions of southwestern Collin County are served by public transportation (Appendix - 44).

### *Transit Service Density*

Identifying the overall density of transit service at the Census tract is important for establishing parts of the study area most well suited for re-housing homeless individuals and families. This measure of service density allows for a better comparison to other aggregate level demographic and location-based data. In Map 7 areas of dark blue indicate a high level of transit service density while lighter blue areas indicate a decreasing level of service density. Grey areas indicate no access to public transportation.

Areas further from the urban core of Dallas see a decreasing level of service, as population and job density decreases. Transit service is not distributed equitably - different types of services are available at different parts of the study area. DART Rail and Trinity Railway Express routes are shown in orange, identifying areas where fixed-route or on-call bus services are required for those utilizing public transportation.

Map 7. Transit Service Areas



## VETERANS

The experiences of war often leave veterans with traumatic experiences that are dealt through self-medication.<sup>33</sup> Without a robust support system composed of friends and relatives, veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse increase their likelihood of becoming homeless.<sup>34</sup> Recent attention from the federal government and others has resulted in a 70% reduction in the number of homeless veterans of since 2005.<sup>35</sup> While this figure looks promising, homeless veterans continue to be over-represented in the homeless population.<sup>36</sup>

### *Veteran Affairs Service Centers*

Dallas County is home to the VA North Texas Health Care System. In 1990, the system established the first VA Comprehensive Homeless Center, which assists veterans experiencing homelessness and unemployment with community referrals, housing programs, vocational rehabilitation, and supportive services for veteran ran families.<sup>37</sup> Access to the VA, and smaller VA clinics, is incredibly important for homeless veterans. Luckily, the main VA hospital is located adjacent to a DART Rail stop in southern Dallas and several smaller clinics exist across North Texas (Appendix - 45). This makes it easier to access these services with limited transportation resources.

## FAMILIES

In North Texas, about 1,500 families were homeless during the 2015 Point-in-Time Count, with an additional 411 unaccompanied children identified by area school districts.<sup>38</sup> These families face considerable challenges that require a variety of housing and service needs.<sup>39</sup> For this category, we examined the distribution of childcare services, quality of schools, and libraries. Taken together with services from other categories, these services can help families pursue employment and educational opportunities while minimizing disruptions to their children's educational needs.<sup>40</sup>

Map 8. School Performance



### *School Performance*

For low-income students, including homeless children, access to a quality education is a key factor in helping students break the cycle of poverty. Using data from Children at Risk we are able to investigate the geography of schools in regard to a measure of school performance.<sup>41</sup>

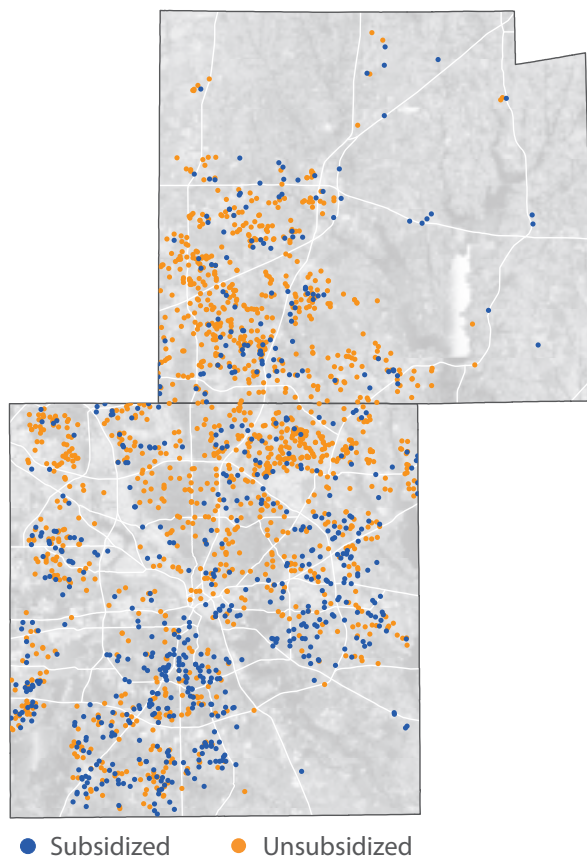
In Dallas and Collin counties, schools with higher rankings are most consistently located in the suburban communities to the north and in parts of North Dallas (Map 8). In our modeling process, we positively valued proximity and density of all schools, regardless of ranking, but we gave a higher weight to schools with a higher performance.

### *Childcare*

According to data from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' childcare permits database, 1,923 childcare centers operated in



Map 9. Childcare



Dallas and Collin counties in 2015.<sup>42</sup> Roughly one third of those offered some form of subsidy for families, however, the majority did not. For families transitioning out of homelessness, childcare is an incredibly important service as parents seek to re-enter the workforce or maintain an existing job. While the benefits of childcare centers are still unclear due to variation in quality, childcare centers are still one of the few options available to promote healthy development and socialization in children.<sup>43</sup>

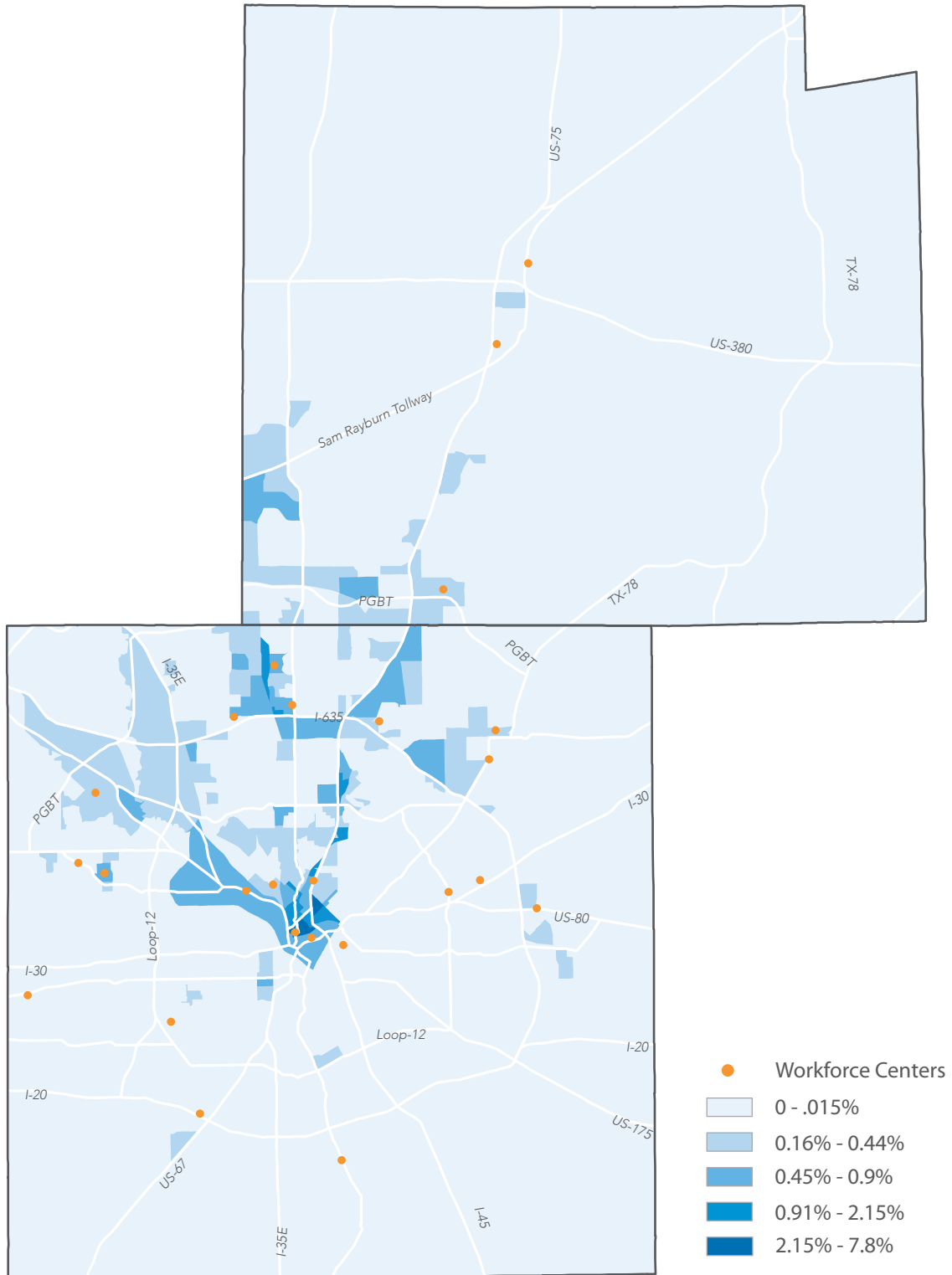
As seen in Map 9, southern Dallas, southern Dallas County, and parts of eastern Dallas County, near Pleasant Grove and Mesquite, appear to have a higher ratio of subsidized childcare options to non-subsidized. This is likely a response to area demographics, where more parents are in need of affordable childcare options.

### **Libraries**

In today's information-dependent society, libraries serve as an equalizer for those without access to computers or reliable Internet connection at home. For families, libraries provide a welcoming environment with programming that meets the needs of parents and children.

Additionally, libraries have become a very common informal place for homeless individuals to seek shelter from bad weather, access the Internet, and social service referrals.<sup>44</sup> In Dallas, the Dallas Central Library recently developed programs that bring together members of the homeless and housed community to share their stories in order to promote a more socially inclusive space for the local homeless population.<sup>45</sup> Residents in Dallas County appear to have greater accessibility libraries than those in Collin County (Appendix - 46).

Map 10. Share of Jobs in Dallas and Collin Counties, by Census Tract



## EMPLOYMENT

A successful strategy that results in stable housing requires meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities. Stable employment provides individuals and families a reliable source of income that can help minimize the gap between income and housing costs.<sup>46</sup> Achieving this requires a combination of workforce development programs, proximity to major employment centers, and short commuting times. Placing homeless individuals and families near employment and workforce training programs can increase accessibility to these resources and help support a successful transition out of homelessness.

### *Workforce Development*

Workforce development programs provide job preparation services, such as career exploration, cover letter and resume workshops, and unemployment support services.<sup>47</sup> For people on the path towards self-sufficiency, workforce centers address some of the challenging aspects of finding full-time employment. Proximity to these services for those transitioning out of homeless is important, although this can be challenging given transportation constraints of the population.

A number of workforce development offices are available to residents of Dallas and Collin counties, however this report has not identified workforce development programs that may be sponsored on-site by major job providers or institutions of higher learning.

### *Job Density*

Proximity to employment can affect social and economic opportunities for low-income and minority residents.<sup>48</sup> For individuals and families transitioning out of homelessness, proximity to jobs is a critical component needed to secure and maintain financial stability. Combined with transit access, proximity to employment centers can reduce commuting times for low-income and minority residents.<sup>49</sup>

As shown in Map 10, major concentrations of

jobs in Dallas are in Downtown, Uptown, the Medical District, and Medical City. Additional concentrations in Addison, Irving, Richardson, and western Plano help entrench Dallas' North-South divide.

### *Distribution of Jobs*

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program, we mapped the distribution of jobs in Dallas and Collin Counties at the Census block level. Where Map 10 allows for a comparison of Census tracts in the modeling process, a broader understanding of where jobs in the study area are is necessary context. Unsurprisingly, fewer jobs are concentrated in residential areas. However the overall number of jobs in heavily suburban areas in Plano and Frisco far exceed the number of jobs available in the major residential sectors of southern Dallas and Pleasant Grove (Appendix - 47).

# BARRIERS

The previous categories focused on positive attributes found within Census tracts – attributes that encourage or facilitate a path out of homelessness. However, in our models, we make room for negative features that may serve as barriers to stable housing. Doing so helps highlight areas across Dallas and Collin counties that have the potential to undermine opportunities for homeless individuals and families. Key barriers to avoid Census tracts with high poverty, high unemployment, and high concentrations of businesses that sell alcohol products, check cashing businesses, and payday lenders.

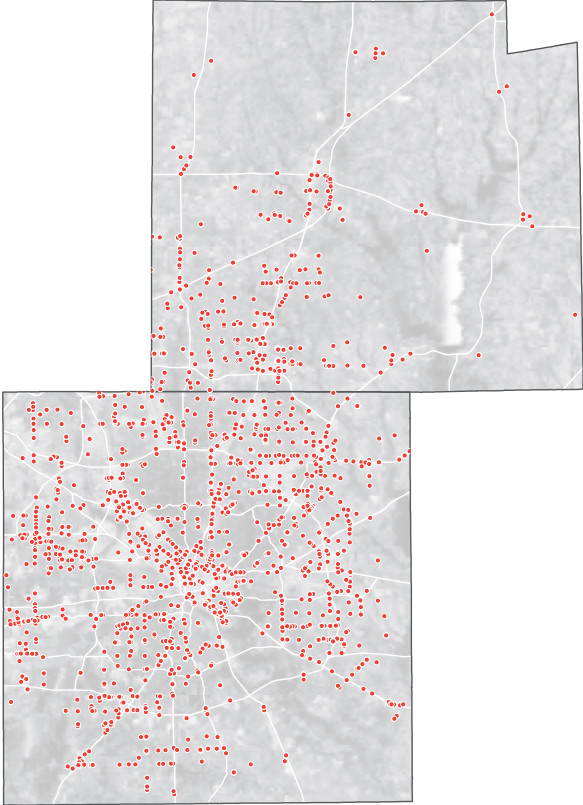
### *High Poverty Areas*

Areas of concentrated poverty place an added burden on families with limited resources. They can limit economic opportunity and hamper social cohesion with neighboring communities.<sup>50</sup> In Map 12, areas of concentrated poverty are emphasized in bright red and located in the southeastern part of Dallas County. Building off existing research on siting low-income residents, areas with greater than 40% of the population in poverty were excluded from the model.

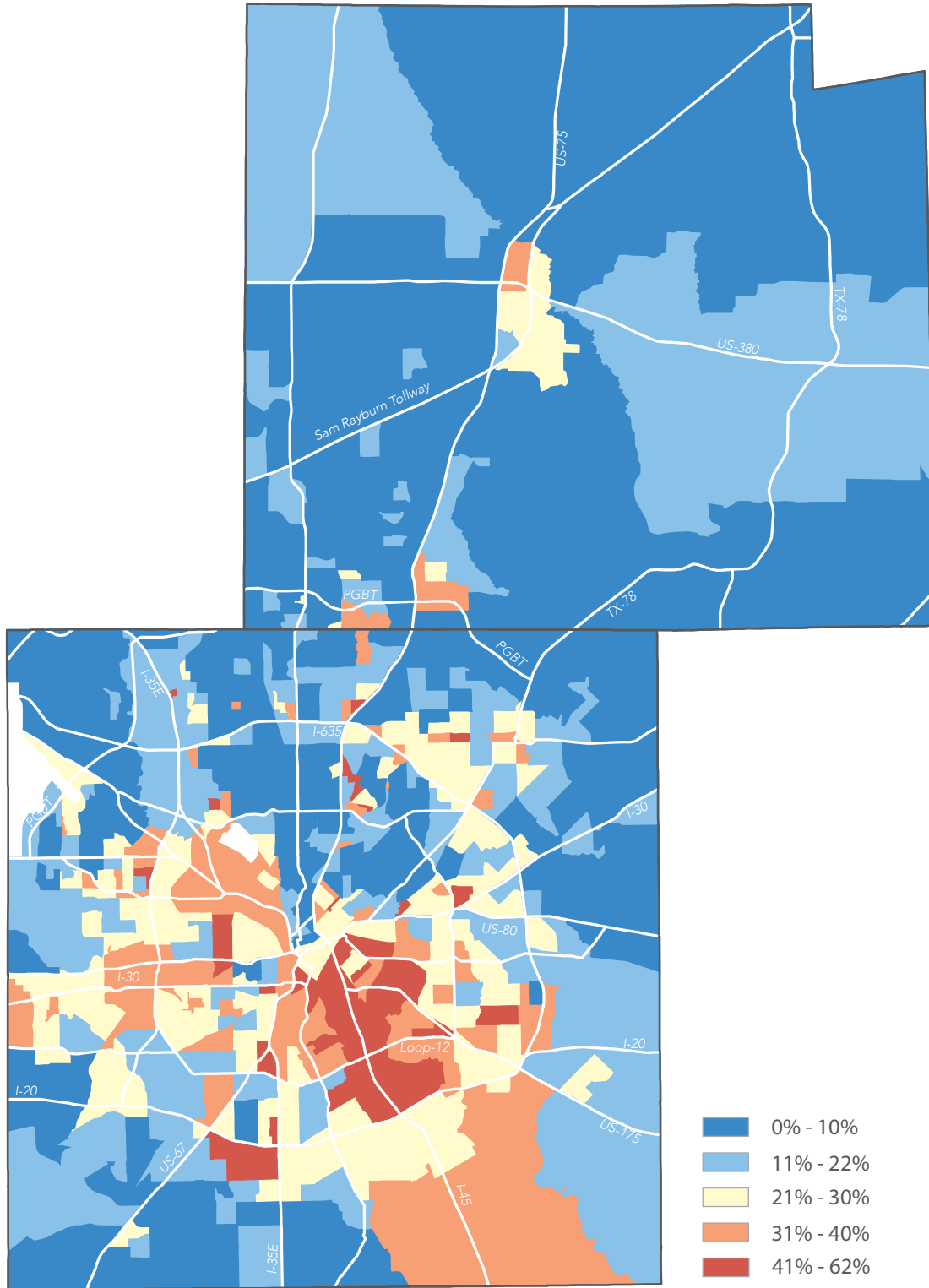
### *Alcohol Sales*

With high rates of substance abuse among the homeless population, Census tracts with high concentrations of bars, convenience stores, and liquor stores that sell alcohol products were de-emphasized in the modeling process.<sup>51</sup> Data pulled from the Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission shows that in 2015 there were 2,790 public-facing alcohol retailers across Dallas and Collin counties. Concentrations and clusters typically occur along major roadways, in existing entertainment centers, and in commercial centers (Map 11).

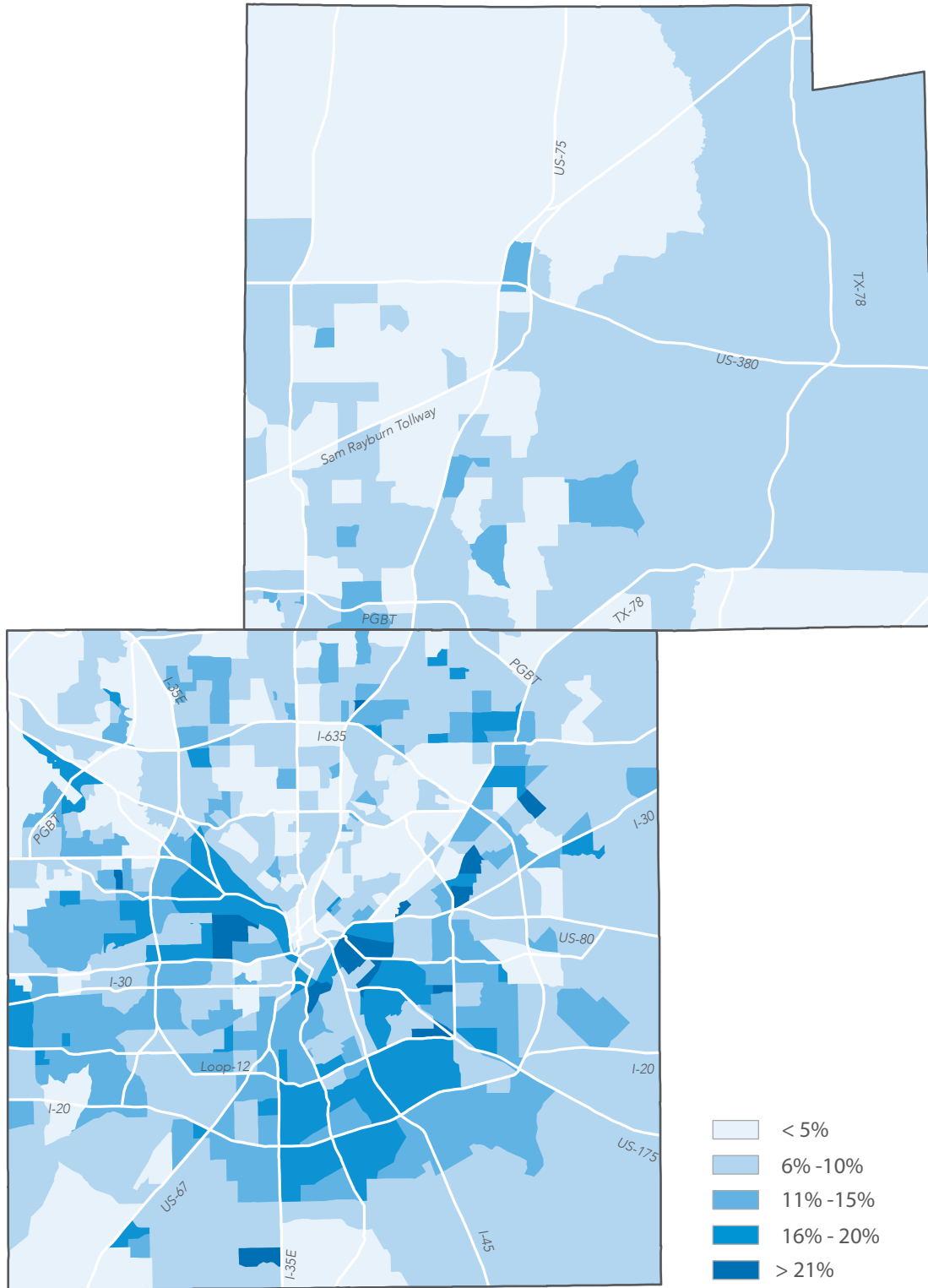
Map 11. Sites with Alcohol / Liquor Licenses



Map 12. Poverty (%), by Tract



Map 13. Unemployment Rate



### ***Payday Lending***

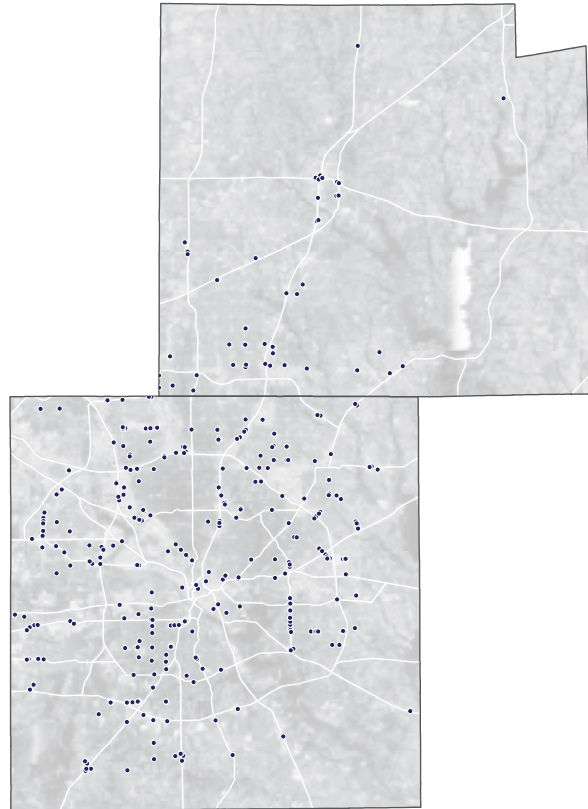
Payday lending and check cashing outlets can lead to negative perceptions of a neighborhood from residents and visitors alike. While these services expand financial services to areas often underserved by mainstream financial institutions, payday lenders often concentrate in poor and minority communities.<sup>52</sup> In addition, high interest rates associated with these lenders can act as a large financial burden on borrowers in the long-term, despite the short-term benefit afforded through the payday lending industry.<sup>53</sup>

Dallas County has a far greater concentration of payday lending and check cashing businesses (Map 14). These businesses appear to concentrate in areas with higher concentrations of poverty and large minority populations, with clusters in southern Irving, southwestern Dallas, Farmers Branch, Mesquite, and Oak Cliff.

### ***High Unemployment***

High neighborhood unemployment rates can have a negative impact on social and economic opportunities for individuals and families living in those places. Widespread neighborhood unemployment can contribute to low-quality housing, fewer job prospects, and a variety of negative health outcomes for children.<sup>54</sup> In addition, high neighborhood unemployment negatively impacts the probability of residents' gaining employment.<sup>55</sup> For these reasons, Census tracts with high unemployment were deprioritized in the modeling process. Many of these areas are located in Census tracts in southern Dallas (Map 13).

Map 14. Payday Lending





## RESULTS

Each of the 681 Census tracts in Dallas and Collin counties were evaluated in order to determine those areas most suitable for locating homeless individuals and families as they transition out of homelessness. Each of the four MCE models identified between 183 and 208 Census tracts that met a minimum threshold for suitability. When looking for tracts that were high performers across each model, 111 Census tracts were found to consistently outperform other tracts in the study area.

The MCE rankings function as indicators that measure the accessibility of services within a Census tract. For example, a tract that performed well under the Family category is in close proximity to high performing schools, childcare services, and libraries. Strong performance within a single category, however, does not inherently indicate that a Census tract is suitable for HCC clients. An overabundance of Barriers within a tract, for example, could decrease the overall tract score. High performing tracts were identified by assessing the overall performance of tracts within

a category, where those at least one standard deviation beyond the mean were considered to be “high performers” and therefore most suitable for HCC’s needs.

Maps on the following pages give geographic context to the results of each MCE scenario (Table 1), in addition to a final composite map reflecting the overall classification of tracts identified across each individual model. Each MCE scenario is tuned to specific client needs, identified and prioritized by HCC and [bc]. Each client need category is weighed higher than other categories included in each scenario’s calculation. In general, tracts that performed well in each model provided access to public transportation, job opportunities, and were concentrated in the City of Dallas. Pockets in Irving, Plano, Richardson, and Garland were also recommended.



Table 1. MCE Scenarios and Inputs

Scenario	Client Needs	Formulas
Veteran Family	Family and Veterans	Basic Essentials + Transportation + Families + Employment + Barriers
Non-Veteran	Family	Basic Essentials + Transportation + Family + Employment + Barriers
Single Veteran	Veterans, Transportation, and Employment	Basic Essentials + Transportation + Veterans + Employment + Barriers
Single Non-Veteran	Transportation and Employment	Basic Essentials + Employment + Transportation + Barriers

The following classification systems are used in order to better explain the differences between tracts of varying categories:

**Excellent**

All the categories for a Census tract performed well. In general, these tracts provide the best opportunities for those transitioning out of homelessness.

**Good**

Performed well in categories affecting client needs and above average in other categories. Categories performed well but not as well as those that received an ‘Excellent’ rating.

**Fair**

Performed well in categories affecting client needs, but not so well in others.

**Needs Improvement**

Performed well across categories, except for the categories affecting client type.

Additional socioeconomic data points for each scenario, and an overall composite map, are provided to help better compare the areas identified by the MCE process.

## VETERAN FAMILIES

The MCE geared towards Veteran Families identified 197 Census tracts in Dallas and Collin counties that address at least some of the needs of this client population. Twenty-two tracts were identified as “Excellent” candidates that merit further investigation - primarily in neighborhoods of East Dallas, Preston Hollow, Lower Greenville, and in proximity to the Bishop Arts District in Oak Cliff. With an average MHI of roughly \$70,000, these Census tracts are typically wealthier than other parts of Dallas County, and less wealthy than much of Collin County.

While it might be challenging to find quality, affordable housing units in these areas, especially rental units that will work with formerly homeless residents, these tracts do offer better proximity to a wide variety of services. Access to public transportation, jobs, and hospitals (including the VA Hospital) all contribute to the identification of these areas.

Much of Collin County does not meet the needs of veteran families transitioning from homelessness (as outlined in this analysis). The lack of public transportation, especially as on-demand service from TAPS is discontinued, would add a challenging burden to clients housed in many of these areas.

Fig. 4. Average Gross Rent (USD, 2014) <sup>56</sup>

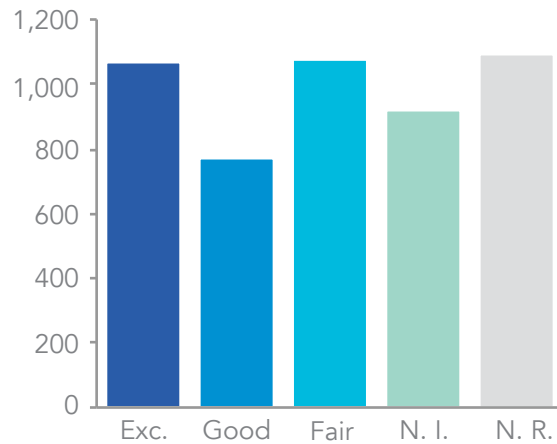


Fig. 5. Average Median Household Income (USD, 2014) <sup>57</sup>

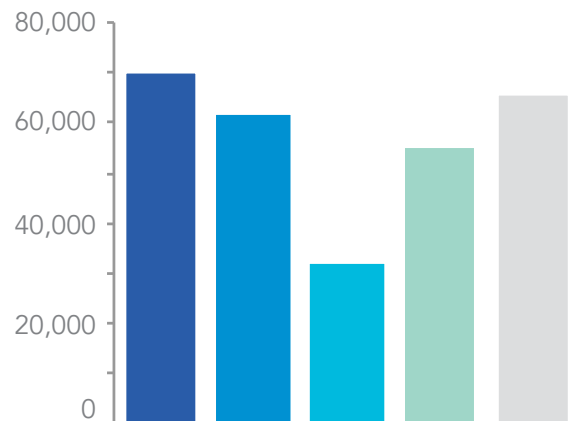
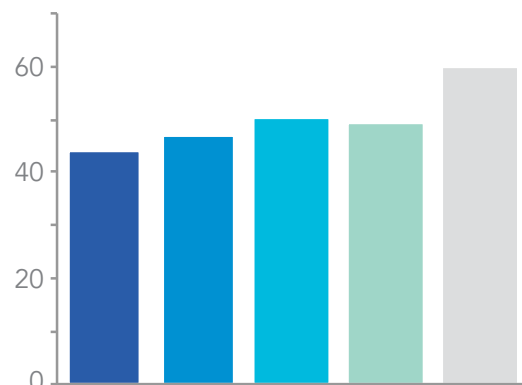
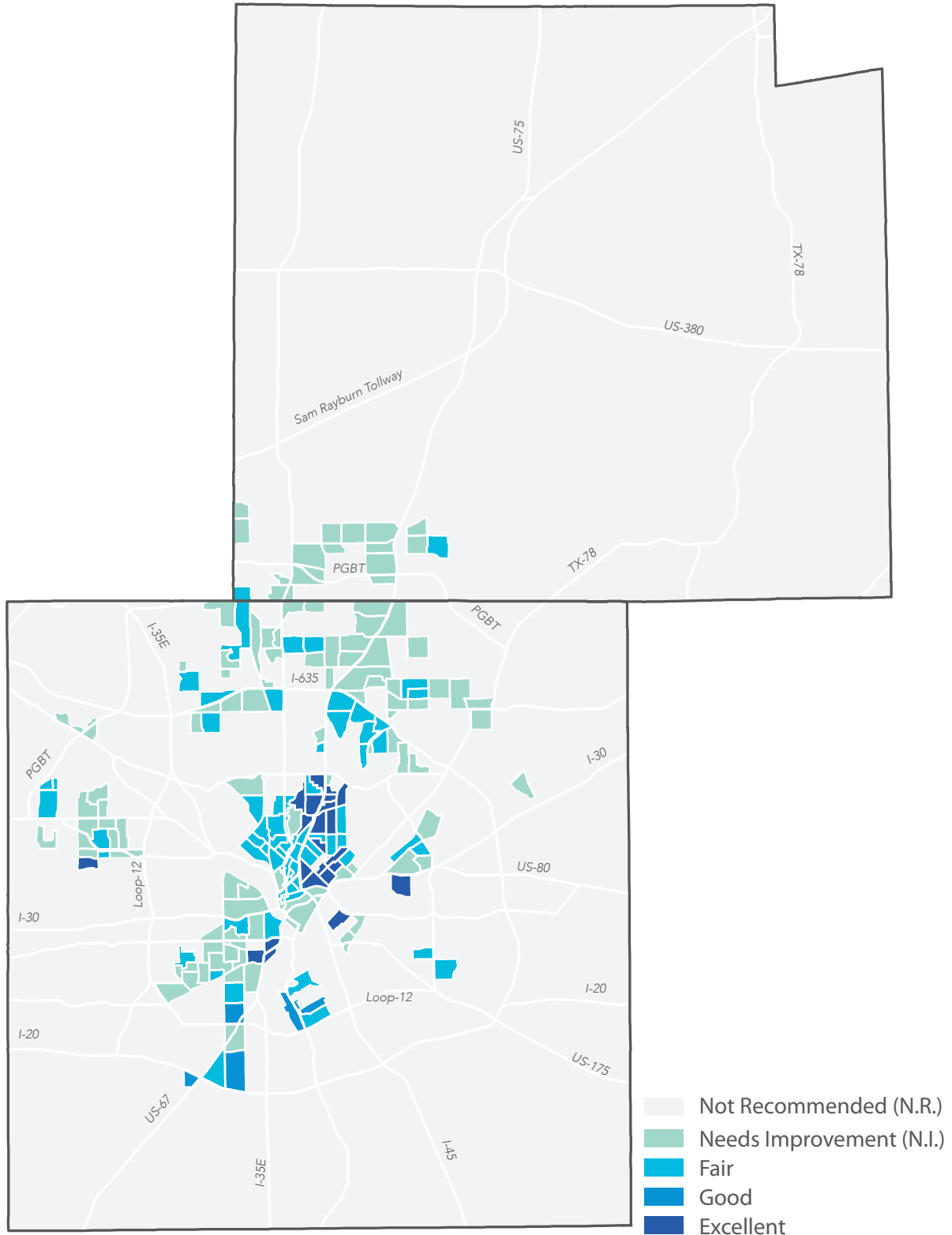


Fig. 6. Owner-Occupied Housing (%) <sup>58</sup>



Map 15. Veteran Families



## NON-VETERAN FAMILIES

Identifying suitable housing for non-veteran families is not much different than doing so for veteran families. The MCE model for this scenario identifies many of the same geographic areas as the previous model, but areas further removed from the VA Hospital campus score higher with that constraint removed. Only 11 additional Census tracts were identified (208 vs. 197), but the number of Census tracts classified as Excellent almost doubled (43 vs. 22). On average these tracts had an average MHI of \$65,000 in 2014.

While much of Irving, Richardson, Plano, and Garland were classified as “Needs Improvement” in the Veteran Families model, the results of the Non-Veteran Families model gives stronger preference to these suburban communities. Areas of East Dallas, Preston Hollow, and along Greenville Avenue are still high performers near the core of Dallas.

Fig. 7. Average Gross Rent (USD, 2014)



Fig. 8. Average Median Household Income (USD, 2014)

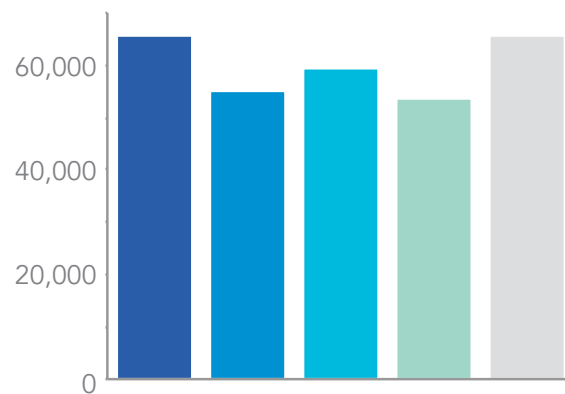
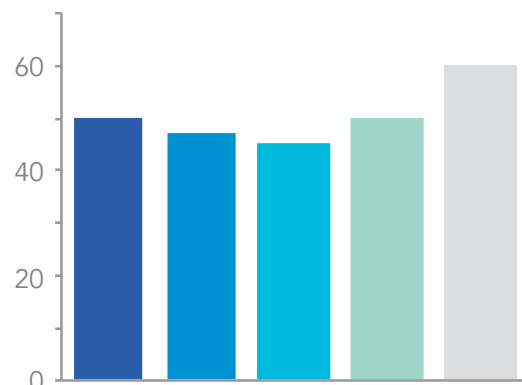
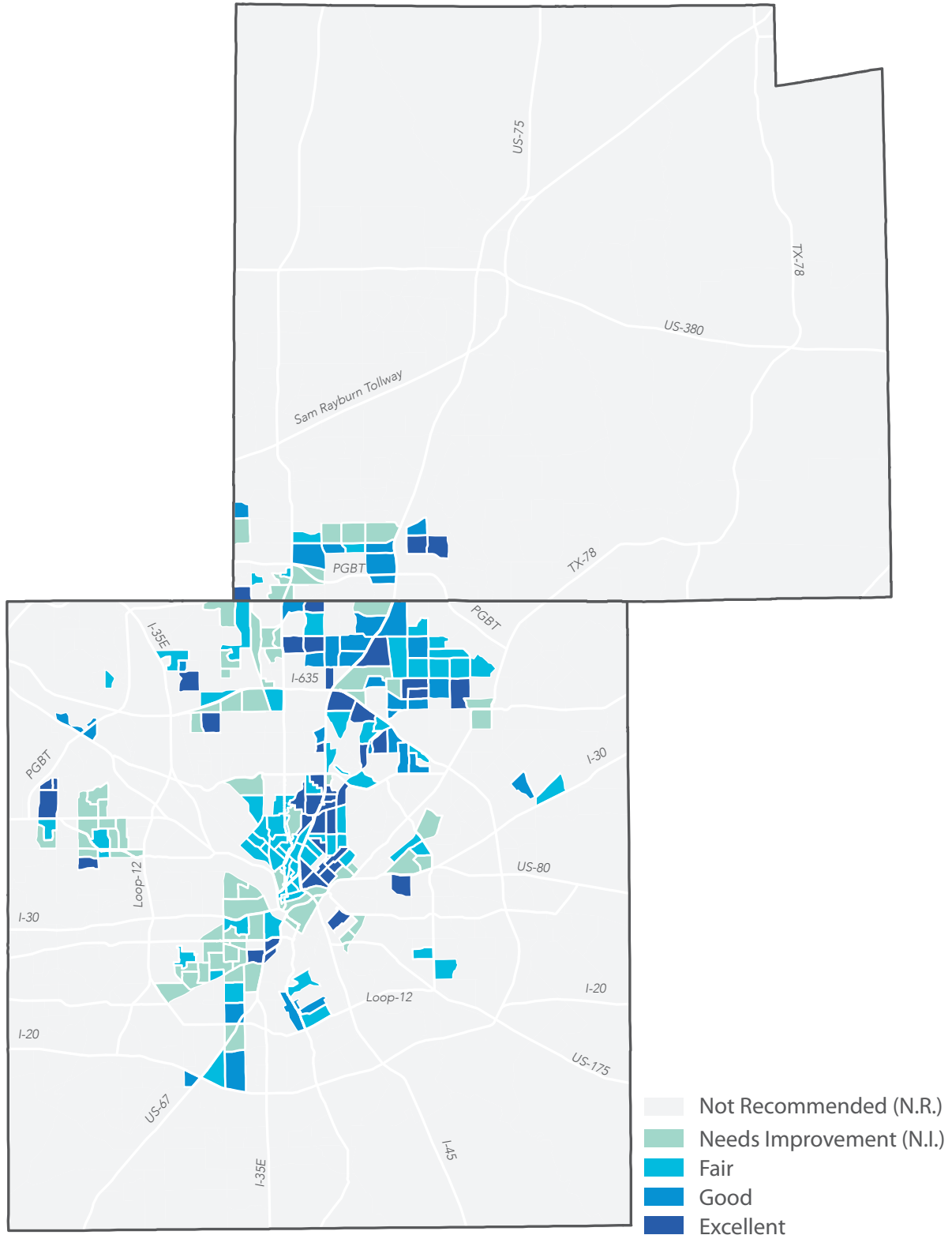


Fig. 9. Owner-Occupied Housing Units (%)



Map 16. Non-Veteran Families



## SINGLE NON-VETERANS

While the previous models have focused on the needs of families, including access to quality education, removing these constraints helps identify an even greater number of Census tracts classified as “Excellent” through the MCE process (82 in total). Many of these continue to overlap with areas discussed previously, however areas in closer proximity to central Dallas appear to benefit greatly from ready access to public transportation, both bus and light rail, and proximity to a large concentration of jobs.

“Excellent” tracts in this scenario typically have higher rents and median household income than “Good” tracts, and are concentrated in many areas of Oak Cliff, central Dallas, East Dallas, Irving, and Richardson. Many of these areas are well served by public transportation, but also coincide with other forces that may make it difficult for HCC to find complexes willing to provide units to their clients. Moving from the “Excellent” tracts to “Good” or “Fair” alternatives may be necessary for this client population.

Fig. 10. Average Gross Rent (USD,

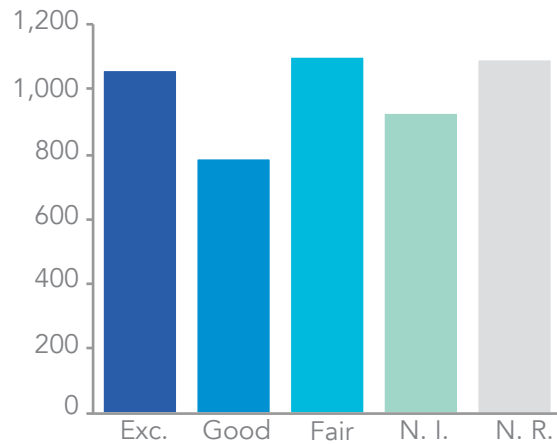


Fig. 11. Average Median Household Income (USD, 2014)

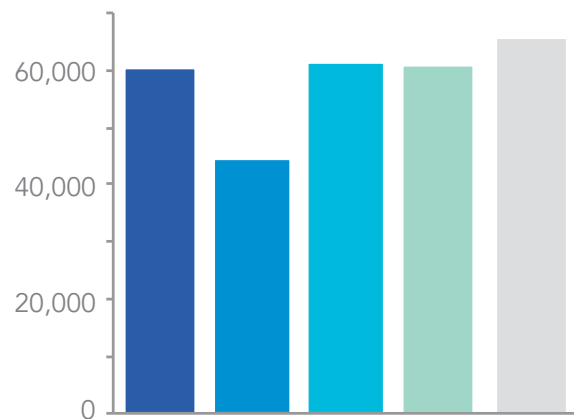
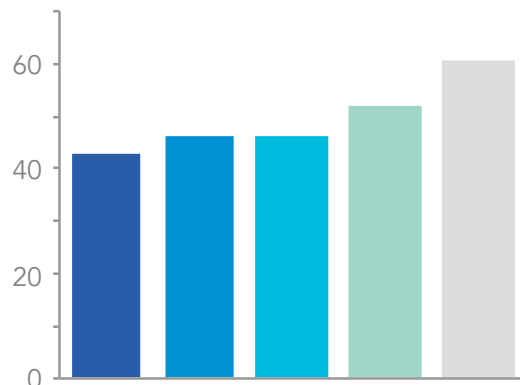
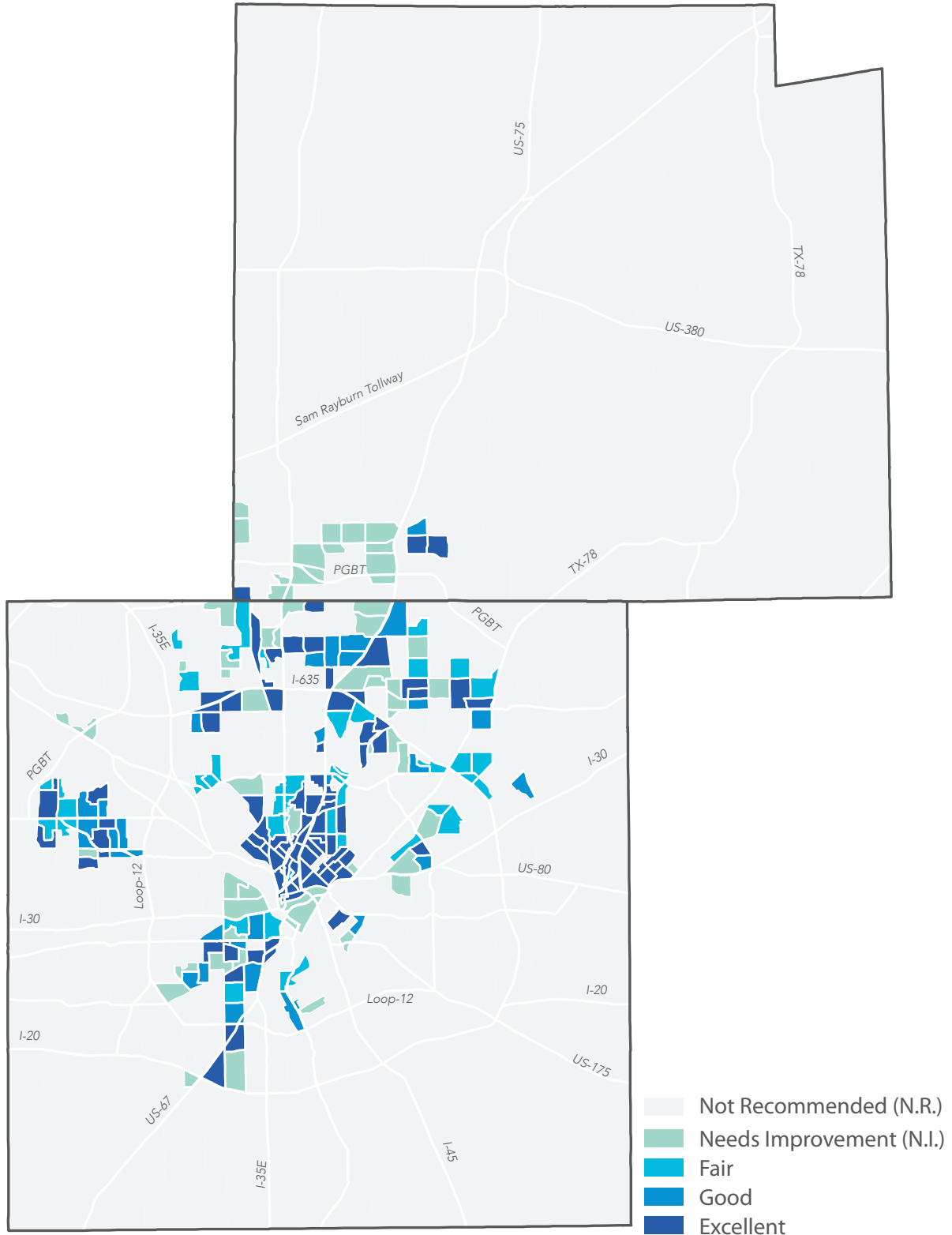


Fig. 12. Owner-Occupied Housing Units (%)



Map 17. Single Non-Veteran



## SINGLE VETERANS

Ideal tracts for HCC clients that might need proximity to the VA hospital are limited. However, the underlying model assumes residents will need to live in close proximity to the VA. If this is not the case, the same areas ideal for individuals transitioning out of homelessness are still viable for single veterans. Public transportation connections provide access to a wide variety of resources, including the VA Hospital. Commute times may be quite long for clients housed in parts of Richardson, North Dallas, Plano, or Garland that must visit the VA.

In this scenario tracts classified as “Good” are, on average, substantially less expensive than “Excellent” tracts - where the average Gross Rent is just \$783 a month (compared to \$1,055 in “Excellent” tracts). With average MHI less than the Dallas County MHI (\$37,000 vs. \$50,000), these tracts have strong accessibility to needed resources, but appear to be areas that are socioeconomically distressed. “Fair” tracts provide the same benefits but suffer from the lack of proximity to the VA.

Fig. 13. Average Gross Rent (USD, 2014)



Fig. 14. Average Median Household Income (USD, 2014)

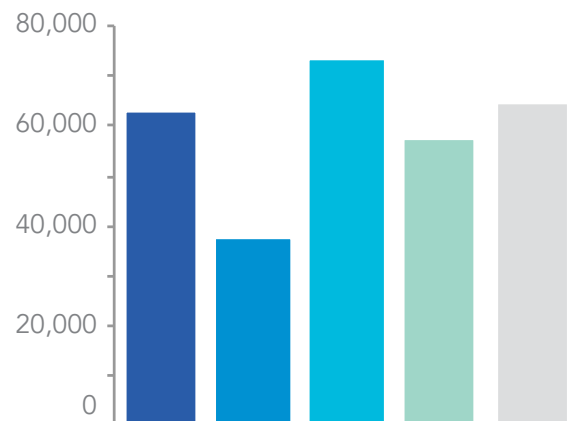
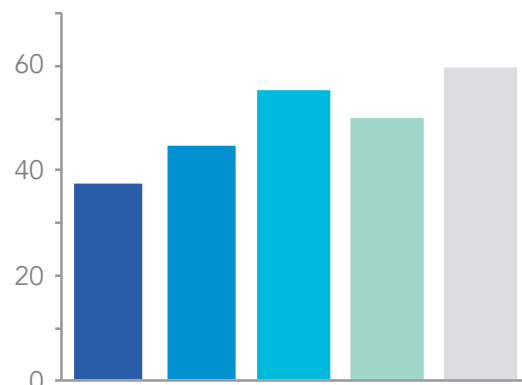
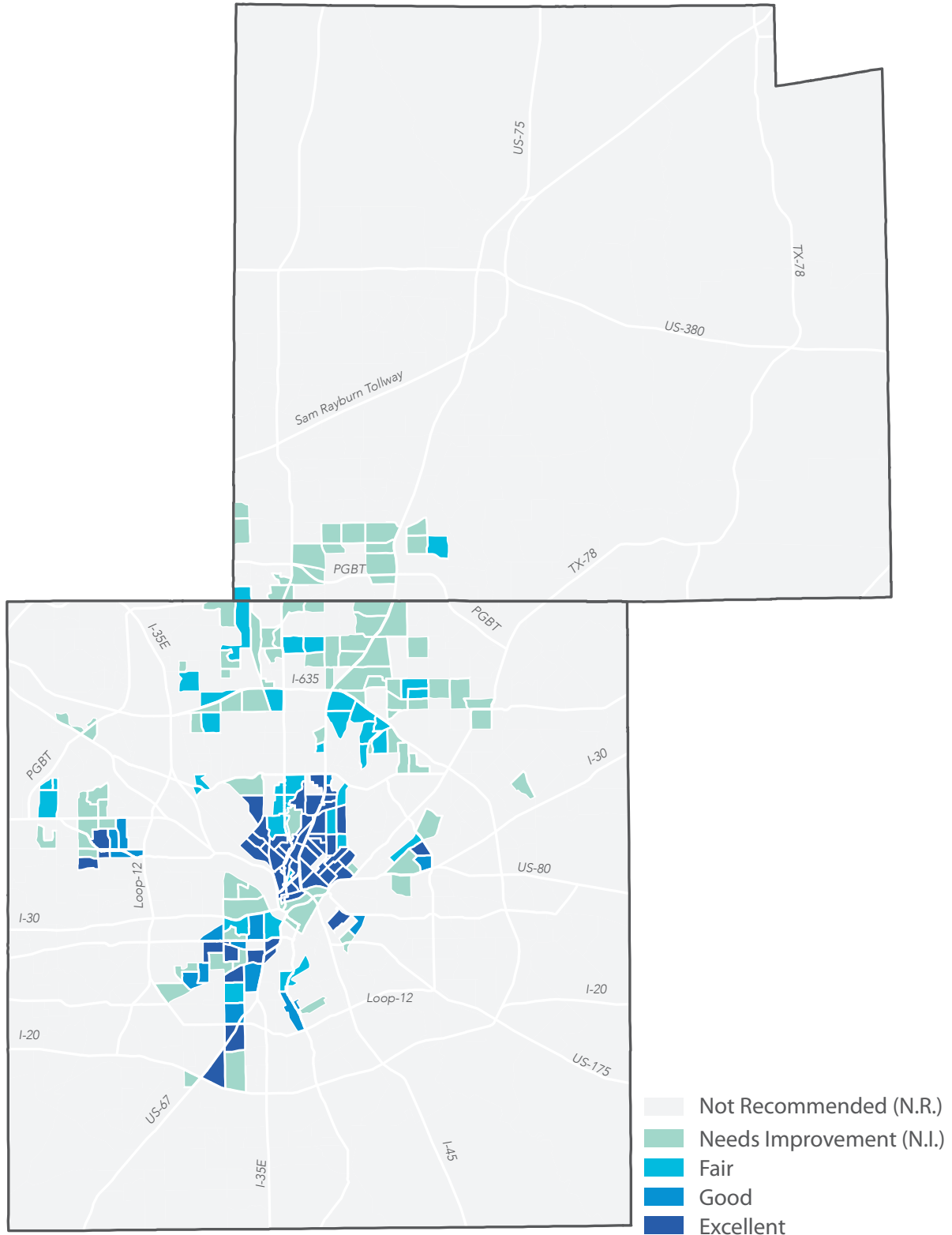


Fig. 15. Owner-Occupied Housing Units (%)





Map 18. Single Veteran



# COMPOSITE MAP

Results from each of the previous four models were used to develop an overall composite map identifying areas that are suitable for all HCC clients. These areas are consistently high performing across each of the four MCE models and are primarily concentrated in the City of Dallas, however, tracts in Richardson, Garland, Carrollton, and Irving also appear in this composite.

Of the 111 tracts identified in this map, nineteen are classified as "Excellent" and 43 as "Good." However, as demonstrated in the previous pages, all tracts identified in these pages are strong candidates for identifying apartment complexes in which to re-house formerly homeless individuals and families. Those in need of improvement are likely able to meet many of the needs of a typical HCC client, but may require some trade-offs in terms of specific client needs.

Additionally, areas identified in this composite map are areas HCC might prioritize as they work to identify potential apartment complexes. These areas are fairly well-suited for each client population, and provide a range of options for clients to better determine which parts of the city they might like to live.

Fig. 16. Average Gross Rent (USD, 2014)

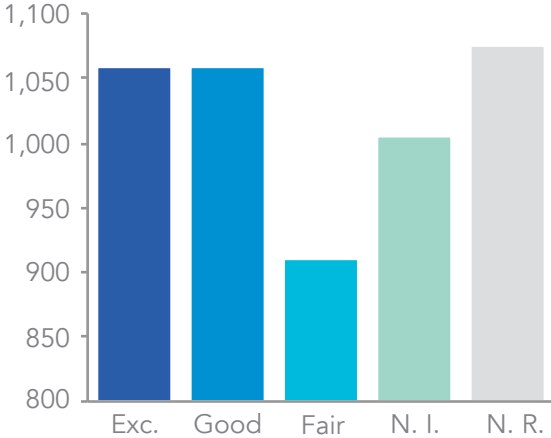


Fig. 17. Average Median Household Income (USD, 2014)

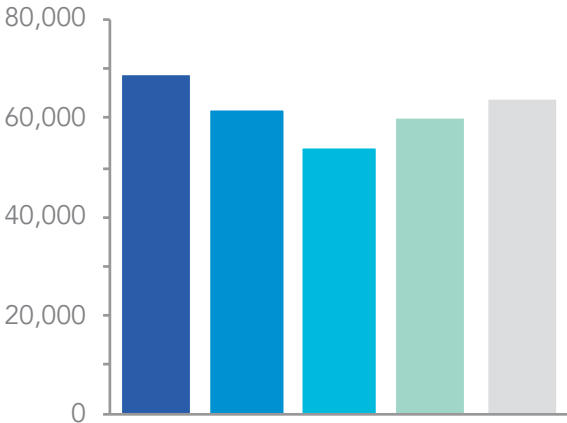
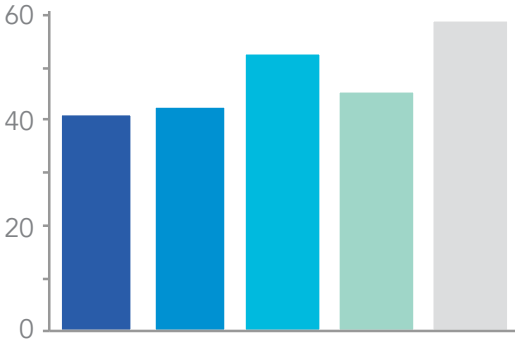
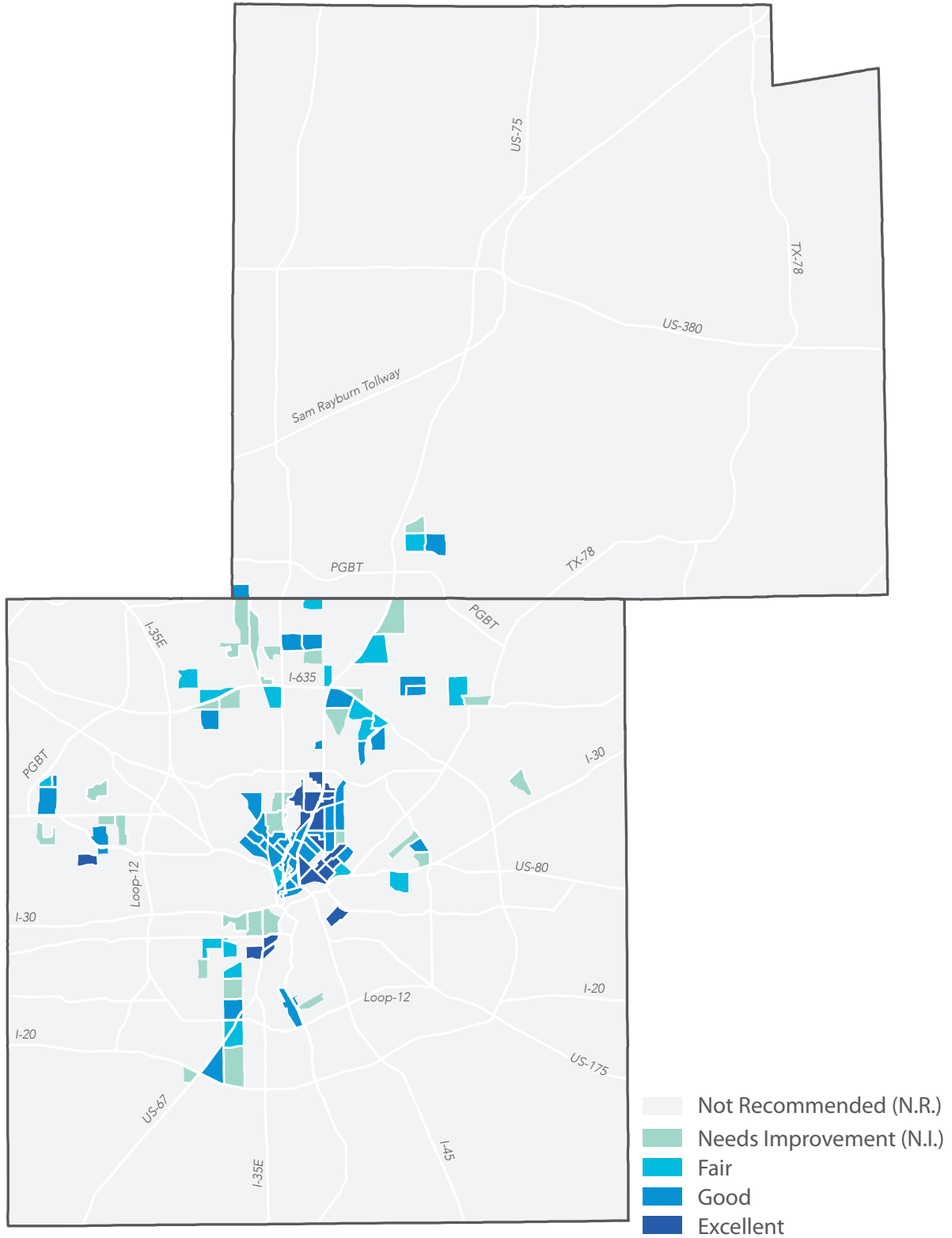


Fig. 18. Owner-Occupied Housing Units (%)



Map 19. Composite Map





## CONCLUSION

Identifying suitable locations for re-housing formerly homeless individuals and families is no easy task. As Dallas and Collin counties continue to grow - through suburban growth in Prosper, McKinney, Frisco, and Allen and urban revitalization in the denser, older neighborhoods of central Dallas - case managers, nonprofit leaders, and government leaders working to find housing for homeless clients will face increasingly tough odds. Units that are affordable might not meet the needs of clients and may be unsafe, far removed from public transportation, or nowhere near the jobs that clients need to help move past homelessness.

In order to help HCC tackle these problems, this report identified over 200 Census tracts in Dallas and Collin counties that can be targeted by HCC staff as they seek new apartment complexes or units for their clients. To do so, four MCE models were created to measure the performance of Census tracts in 6 categories: Basic Essentials, Transportation, Veterans, Families, Employment, and Barriers. Each category measured a variety of elements important for determining where to target the search for housing options. While particular apartment complexes are not identified in this report, the report allows for a narrower focus on specific parts of the study area. Tracts identified in this report are primarily concentrated in Dallas County, with only parts of southeastern Collin County, in Richardson, Plano, and Far North Dallas, providing access to each of the services and amenities used in this research.

The wide variety of locations recommended by the four models and composite map can allow HCC to tailor their search to a variety of areas that might more closely fit the preferences of their clients - either for living in newer, suburban communities; denser, urban environments; or in neighborhoods with proximity to the resources and services they need or want. Since each model prioritizes the density of desired services, any number of approaches to housing clients HCC wishes to pursue can work in these areas.

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# APPENDIX

Maps on the following pages are referenced in the BACKGROUND & METHODS section but not included in those sections. Maps are included here in the order in which they are discussed in the body of the report.

Maps included:

## ***Basic Essentials***

- Laundromats
- Barbershop
- Parks
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Centers

## ***Transportation***

- Transit Service Density

## ***Veterans***

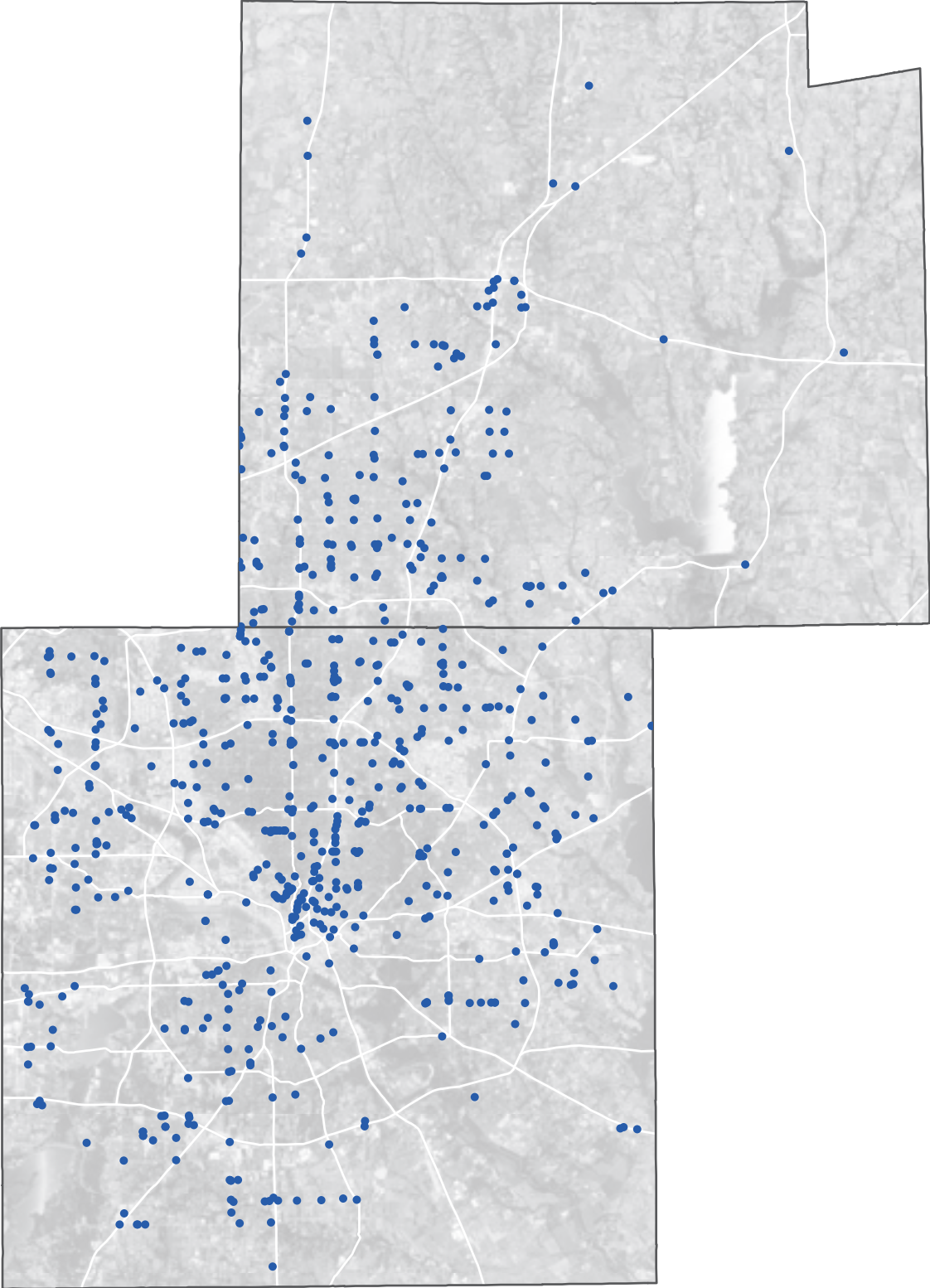
- VA Services

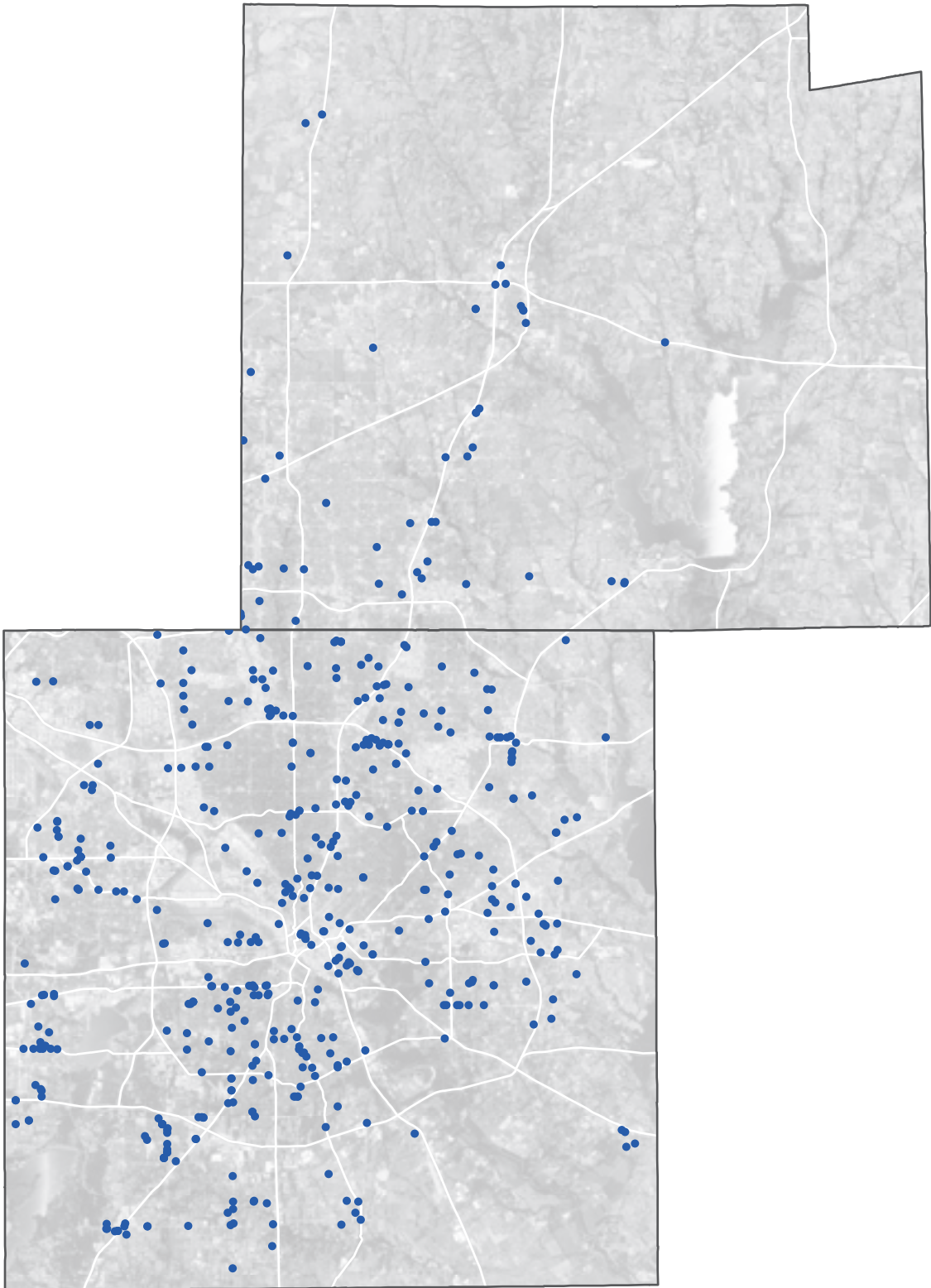
## ***Families***

- Public Libraries

## ***Employment***

- Workforce Development Centers
- Distribution of Jobs









■ Excellent

