

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CORRECTION and Update on Police “calls for service” for the Housing Projects.

GALVESTON, Texas – 28 October 2009

It is the policy of the Galveston Open Government Project to supply accurate data, and when we get it wrong; we will correct it. Yesterday’s press release got two types of police data mixed up, which lead to an error in our calculations. We apologize for any distress that this caused.

We ordered the “calls for service” for the grids containing the four Housing Projects, a few weeks ago, and when Palm Terrace was not included, we re-ordered data for Palm Terrace, and for the entire City. Our re-order incorrectly asked for “crime stats” which resulted in our receiving “case reports” instead of “calls for service”. This meant that we inadvertently had “calls for service for Cedar Terrace, Magnolia Homes, and Oleander Homes, but “case reports” for Palm Terrace and city-wide.

We are very grateful that GPD caught our error, notified us, spent several hours doing new data runs, and took the time to go over the data and tutor us in the complexities of policing data! We now present the corrected data below:

Calls for Service:

“Calls for service” count any citizen contact with the police, which include both activities that do not count as crimes, and everything that is logged in as a crime.

“Calls for service” from 01 September 2007 to 01 September 2008, i.e. the year before Hurricane Ike:

Cedar Terrace, police grids 43 and 48, 1,425 calls for service

Palm Terrace, police grid 60, 2,501 calls for service

Magnolia Homes, police grids 15 and 17, 1,061 calls for service

Oleander Homes, police grids 74 and 75, 4,400 calls for service

Total for the areas containing and surrounding the four Housing Projects, 9,387 calls for service

Total for the City of Galveston, 101,747 calls for service

9.23% of all calls for service in the City of Galveston were for the areas containing and surrounding the four Housing Projects.

Case Reports:

“Case reports” count everything logged in as a crime, and, therefore, they are much more serious than “calls for service”.

Cedar Terrace, police grids 43 and 48, **453 case reports**

Palm Terrace, police grid 60, **569 case reports**

Magnolia Homes, police grids 15 and 17, **270 case reports**

Oleander Homes, police grids 74 and 75, **1,266 case reports**

Total for the areas containing and surrounding the four Housing Projects, 2,558 case reports

Total for the City of Galveston, 12,018 case reports

21.28% of all case reports in the City of Galveston were for the areas containing and surrounding the four Housing Projects.

This project was undertaken to quantify the proportion of police resources and expenses that were used to service the four Housing Projects during the year prior to Hurricane Ike. The seven police grids that were used do not produce precise data, because they do include some areas outside of the Project grounds; but it is the best measurement available.

There were 569 housing units in the four Housing Projects, and typically there are 2.2 people per unit. This means that the total population of these four facilities was approximately 1,252, or 2.20% of the pre-Ike population of the City. Even if the total population living in these seven grids boosted their percentage of the City population to 4%; it should be clear that with 9.23% of the calls for service and 21.28% of the case reports, **the areas containing and surrounding the four Housing Projects used a highly disproportionate share of police resources and expenses!**

Our statement that “54% of all calls for service in the City of Galveston were for the areas containing the four Housing Projects” was inaccurate, due to the mix up of data types, but the conclusion that they take a very large share of police resources is still very much correct!

The fact that the GHA owned and operated Housing Projects were a crime problem should come as no surprise to anyone, especially GHA. The Executive Summary of their 2008 Plan stated:

“The struggle to maintain crime-free properties in Galveston requires constant vigilance. GHA has used operating funds for police services over baseline because the use of Capital Funds for physical improvements is crucial to its ability to maintain its properties. However, the money available for police services from operations is only around 25% of that provided through the former PHDEP grant and it **is insufficient to manage the crime level on and around GHA’s public housing.** Unfortunately,

without a comprehensive policing program, problems that were once dealt with reoccur as felons return to their previous neighborhoods from prison. The drug crime causes fear in residents, high turnover and collection loss, property damage, a high volume of trash on the grounds and management turnover."

<http://www.GalvestonOGP.org/GHA/Executive%20Summary%20FFY08.pdf>

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Once again, we apologize for any distress that our miscalculations may have caused, and thank GPD for all of their help!

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