# Is Dallas a Whole City?

## 2006 Wholeness Index Summary Report

October 23, 2006

THE J. MCDONALD WILLIAMS INSTITUTE

# 2006 Wholeness Index Summary Report

## 12 Quality of Life Indicators

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School Holding Power
SAT Scores
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Middle-Class Housing
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Renter Occupancy
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### Self-Sufficiency

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### Civic Engagement

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## In This Report...



### What Is Wholeness?

Wholeness means that each person in a city enjoys an equally productive and satisfying life, regardless of where in the city he or she lives. In a whole city, residents of every part of town have an equal opportunity to achieve financial success, are equally self-sufficient, and are equally active in political and civic life.

Disparity is the opposite of wholeness. The greater the disparities from one part of town to the other (in practice, often meaning from the richest to the poorest neighborhoods), the less whole the city is.

### Why Does Wholeness Matter?

At the Williams Institute and the Foundation for Community Empowerment, we believe that wholeness is the fundamental measure of a city's (or a nation's) success. Wholeness is a moral and political imperative, but data strongly suggest that it is also an economic imperative. That is, cities and regions with less disparity enjoy better overall economic growth—and spend less on prisons, emergency medical care and other band-aids for disparity—than those that are less whole.

### What Is the Wholeness Index?

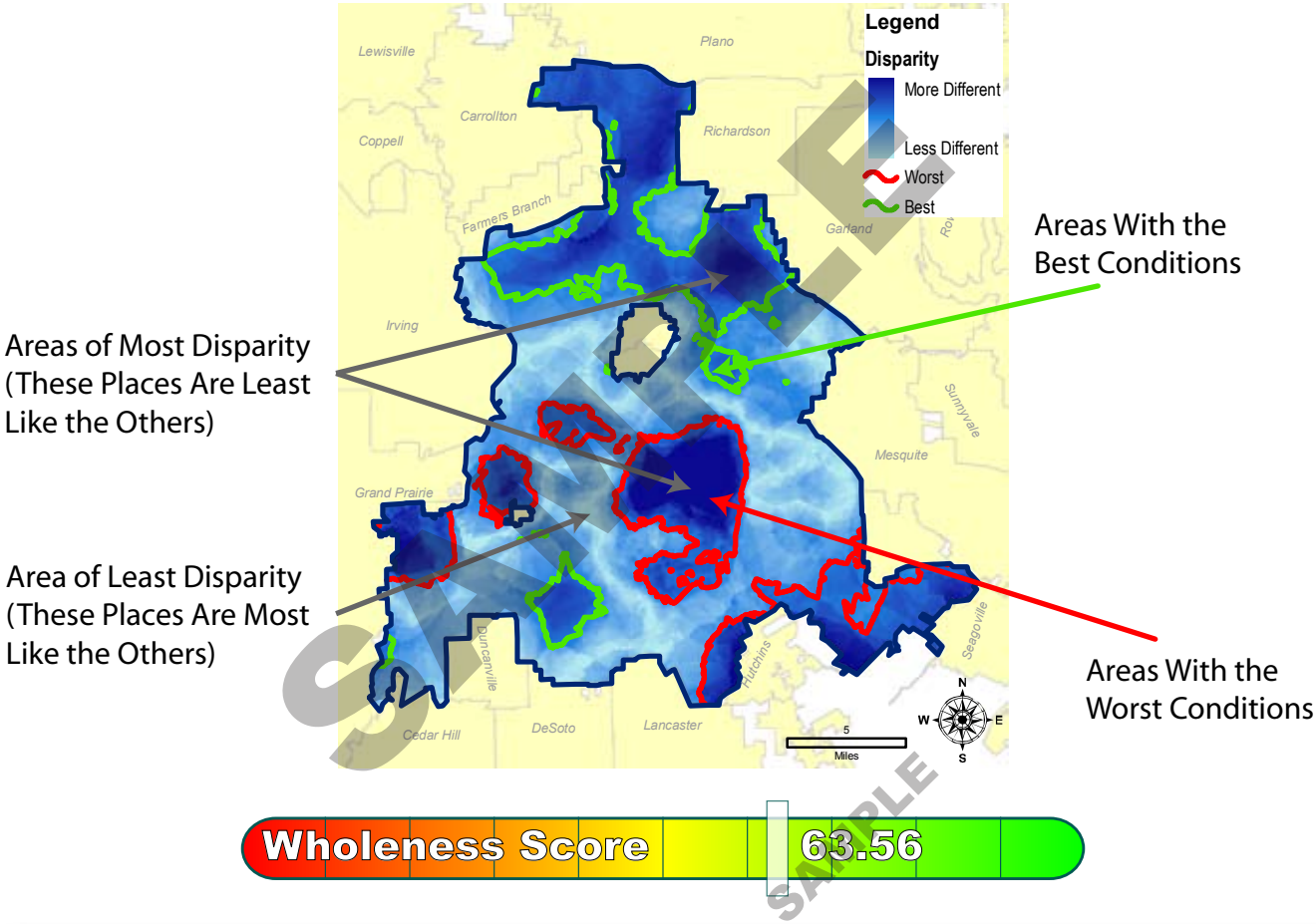
Most attempts to measure how a city is doing rely on averages. If some people's situations improve (in terms of wealth, say) and a roughly equal number of people's situations worsen, the average stays about the same. But averages don't experience life—people do.

The Wholeness Index takes a new—and more useful—approach, measuring whether the quality of life for people in various Dallas neighborhoods is converging (moving toward greater wholeness) or diverging (moving away from wholeness).

### How Do I Learn More?

Two resources are available to you. For a detailed explanation of exactly how the index is computed, where the data come from, and the limitations of the methodology, consult the *Wholeness Index 2006 Technical Report*. The report is available at the Second Annual J. McDonald Williams Institute Conference, or electronically at **www.thewilliamsinstitute.org**.

If you're interested in the complete findings of the 2006 Wholeness Index project, view the complete report online at **www.thewilliamsinstitute.org**.




# How To Use This Report

## Reading the Wholeness Map

Two basic facts are portrayed on each map. First, the map shows disparity—which parts of the city are more different than others. Areas shaded darker blue are least like the citywide average, while areas shaded lighter blue are more like the average.

Knowing where the most disparate parts of the city are is useful, but it's more informative to know if they're most different because they're better off, or most different because they're worse off. That's where the red and green outlines come into play.

Areas circled in red represent areas where differences are high, and in a bad way. Areas circled in green represent places where differences are high, but in a good way. Consider the case of two very different men—one wealthy and one poor. They're *both* equally different, but one has more money and one has less. Knowing who has less helps one make the decision about whom to help.

## Reading the Wholeness Score

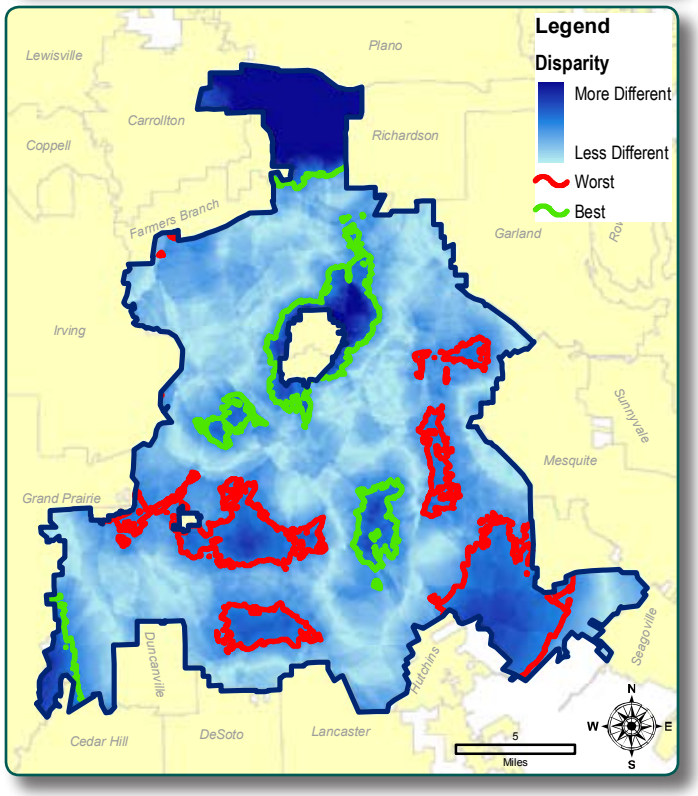
Wholeness scores range from 0 to 100. A score of 0 represents how whole the city would be if neighborhoods were all as different as possible, while a score of 100 represents how whole the city would be if all neighborhoods were as similar as possible.

2006 Wholeness Scores for the quality of life measures range from values in the 50s to values in the 80s. A wholeness score of 80 is better than a score of 50, but not as good as a score of 90.

## Interpreting the Wholeness Score

By far, the best use of the Wholeness Score is as a benchmark against which to evaluate next year's progress. While the maximum score is 100, interpreting the actual score as a percentage can be somewhat misleading. Furthermore, intercity comparisons are not entirely appropriate, as various geographic factors affect the Wholeness Score.

# School Holding Power




**Wholeness Score** 74.99

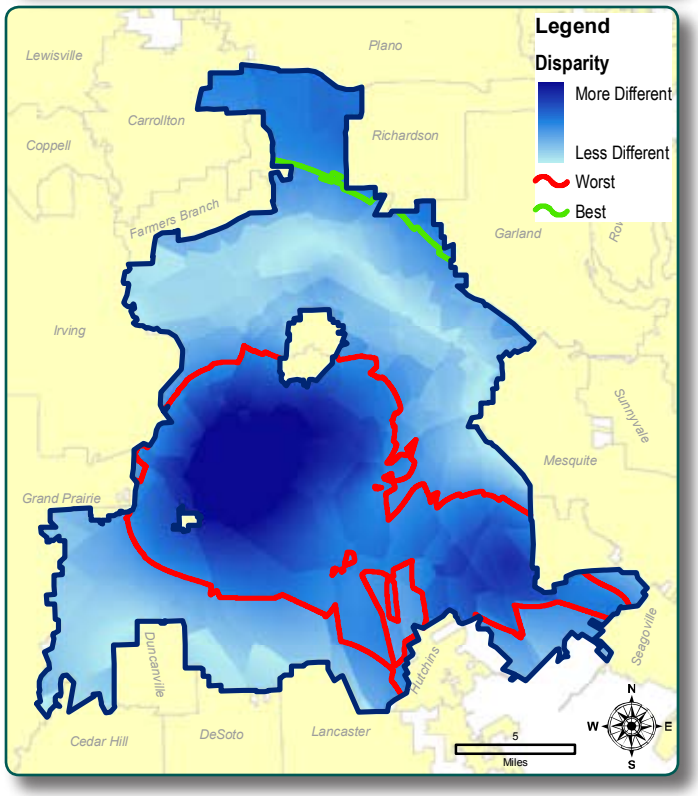
**What It Measures ...** This indicator reflects the willingness of middle-class parents to enroll their children in public elementary schools. It measures the difference between the percentage of public school students in a given neighborhood who are middle-class and the percentage of families with school-aged children who are middle-class. Citywide, the lag was 57 percentage points.

**Why It's Important ...** The performance of our public schools is of paramount importance to the city's future. If schools are performing adequately, then middle-class families, which can more readily afford alternatives, will not leave the public schools.

**Where It's Best ...** In Far North Dallas, around the Park Cities, and in pockets of the Southern Sector, the difference between middle-class kids in the community and in schools is minimal. The portion of Dallas in Plano ISD shows only a 6 point lag. The entire area north of I-635 had an average lag of 23 points.

**Where It's Worst ...** The far southeastern corner of the city, east of the Trinity River and south of Lake Junius Road, has the highest estimated difference—72 percentage points. Second highest was the area north and south of Illinois, extending from Cockrell Hill to Cedar Crest, and as far north as Jefferson. Beyond the Southern Sector, there is notable disparity on the city's east side. The area west of Jim Miller, running roughly from US-175 to Ferguson showed a gap of 70 points.

# Graduation Rate




**Wholeness Score** 56.20

**What It Measures ...** This indicator measures the proportion of students attending regularly zoned (e.g., non-magnet) public high schools who graduate within 4 years. The data are for students who began high school in the fall of 2000 and graduated in the spring of 2004. Citywide, 85% of students did so. All school districts that serve Dallas students are included.

**Why It's Important ...** Healthy communities require those who possess the education necessary to participate fruitfully in the labor market. Recent research suggests that, while a GED does confer an advantage in the labor market, it does not provide the same income potential as actually graduating.

**Where It's Best ...** As with income diversity, the city's highest graduation rates are seen in Far North Dallas, generally north of Spring Valley, Alpha, and Belt Line. In this area, the average graduation rate is 90%.

**Where It's Worst ...** Generally, much of the Southern Sector is cause for concern. In the area outlined in red, on average, only 79% of the public school class of 2004 graduated within 4 years. Within this broad area, the lowest graduation rates are seen in West Dallas, North Oak Cliff, and Old East Dallas, with four-year graduation rates of only 76%.

Wholeness Score 51.28

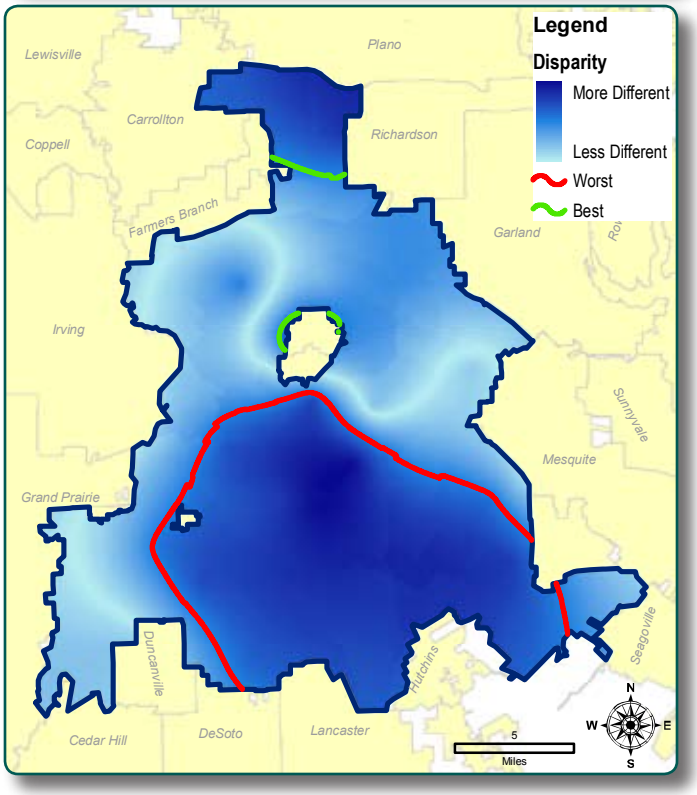
# SAT Scores

**What It Measures ...** This indicator measures the average SAT score for those attending regularly zoned (e.g., non-magnet) public high schools who took the test in 2004. All districts serving students in the city of Dallas are included.

**Why It's Important ...** High scores on the SAT influence both admission to and financial aid for attending quality 4-year colleges. Scoring poorly can severely restrict a student's range of college choices, thereby affecting their educational experiences and earnings potential.

**Where It's Best ...** Public high schools in Far North Dallas, generally north of Spring Valley, Alpha, and Belt Line, showed the highest SAT scores, with an average of 1098. Within this green boundary, areas to the northeast shown in darker blue had average SAT scores of 1122.

**Where It's Worst ...** Low SAT scores prevailed in most of the Southern Sector, as well as Oak Lawn and Old East Dallas, with average SAT scores of only 766. Pockets of even lower scores existed. Areas of darkest blue within the red boundary had average SAT scores of 744.




Wholeness Score 81.76

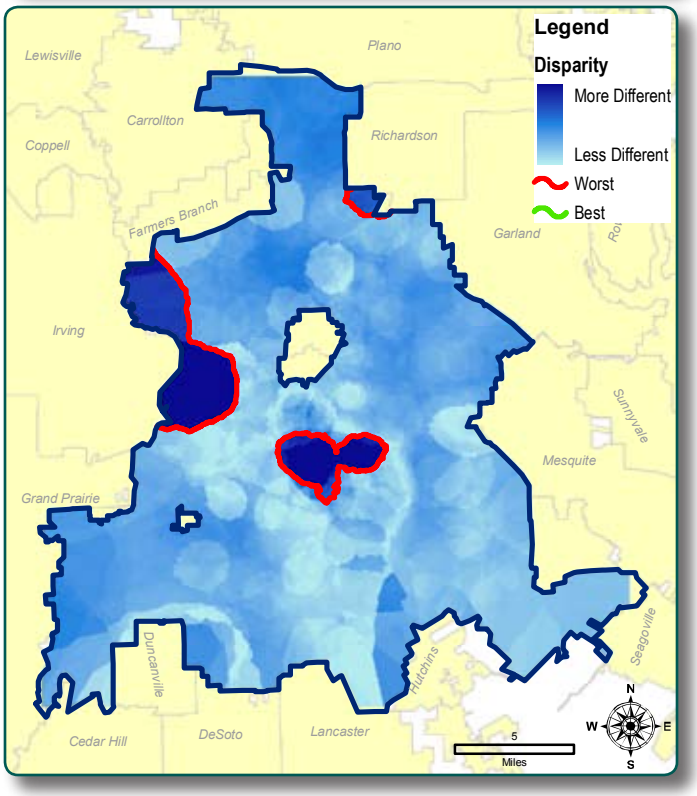
# Index Crime Rate

**What It Measures ...** This indicator measures the index crime rate at the block group level, as reported by the Dallas Police Department in 2005. Index crimes include murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, theft, burglary, and motor vehicle theft. The average rate for block groups citywide was 125 per 1,000 population.

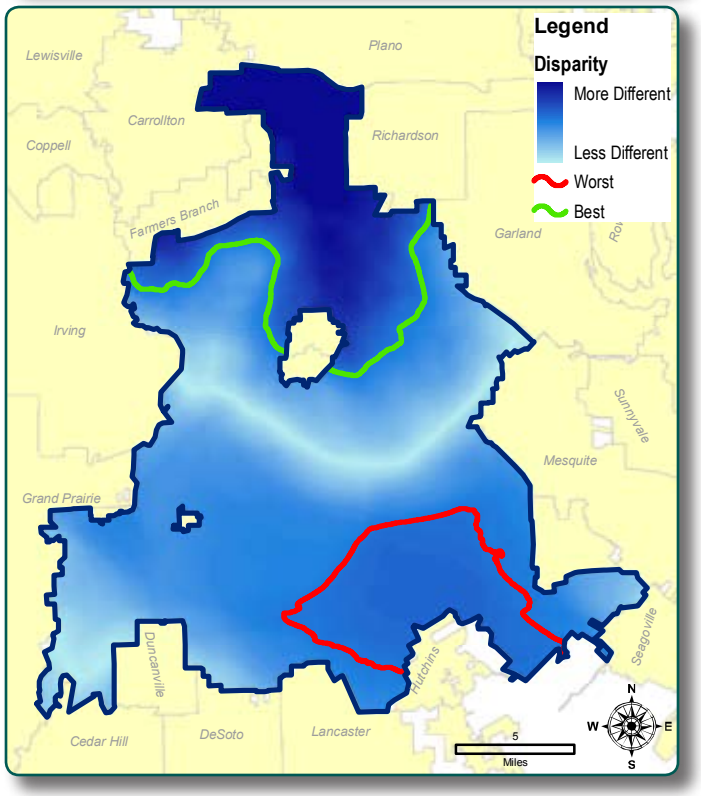
**Why It's Important ...** High crime rates cause families and businesses to leave an area (if they can afford to do so) and deter others from moving in. As middle-class families and businesses leave, neighborhoods are left without the building blocks of economic development that lead to wholeness.

**Where It's Best ...** Unlike other quality of life measures, data on crime do not typically produce a "normal" bell-shaped curve. Most areas of any city have relatively little crime, and Dallas is no exception. The index crime rate, excluding a handful of areas, was fairly uniform, averaging 91 per 1,000 population.

**Where It's Worst ...** The red-bordered area in the northwest, lying mostly west of I-35E, from TX-356 to I-635, had the highest average rate, at 386 crimes per 1,000 population, 3 times the citywide average. The second-worst area encompassed much of the South Dallas neighborhood and a small portion of West Dallas, with an average rate of 333 per 1,000 population.



# Middle-Class Housing




**Wholeness Score 50.02**

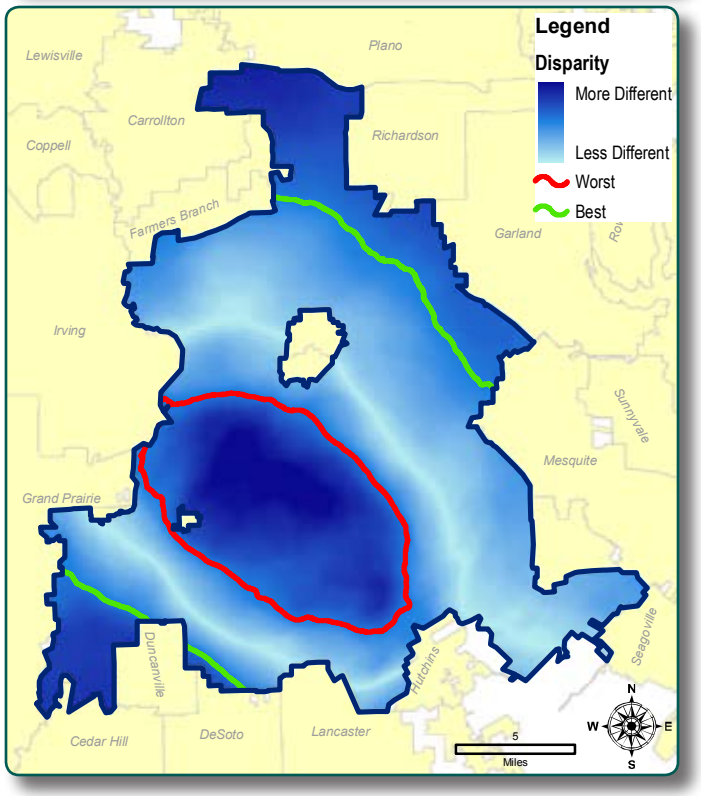
**What It Measures ...** This indicator measures the proportion of single-family homes in a given area that are valued in the range sought by middle-class buyers in 2005. The floor of the middle-class price range is defined by the largest mortgage a family can qualify for with an income that is 50% of the Dallas area median. The ceiling is the largest mortgage obtainable by a family with an income 120% of the area median.

**Why It's Important ...** Neighborhoods need homes that are desirable to middle-class families and the businesses that employ them. Without such housing, both new arrivals and families that move up the income ladder are forced to leave the city to find housing that is simultaneously desirable and affordable.

**Where It's Best ...** In general, the highest levels of middle-class housing were found in the Northern Sector. North of I-635, at least 50% of homes were in the middle-class price range; in the rest of the green-bordered area, 40% of homes were middle-class.

**Where It's Worst ...** Areas with the lowest proportion of middle-class homes were located in the Southern Sector, in an area bounded generally by Redbird on the west, Ledbetter on the north, and Buckner on the east. In these areas, fewer than 10 percent of single-family homes were middle-class.

# Fit Housing




**Wholeness Score 55.12**

**What It Measures ...** This indicator measures the proportion of single-family residences rated as fit (that is, in excellent, very good, good, or average condition) by the Dallas Central Appraisal District. Unfit houses are rated as fair, poor, very poor, or unsound. Citywide, 82% of single-family residences were rated as fit.

**Why It's Important ...** A healthy, fit house is vital for two reasons. First, adequate fit housing stock allows a neighborhood to become a desirable choice in the competition to attract new residents. More importantly, fit houses are important to the healthy growth and development of children and families.

**Where It's Best ...** Fit homes are more prevalent in the city's northeastern and southwestern areas. In the far southwest, generally south of Mountain Creek and I-20, 94% of houses are rated as fit. In the north and northeast, the area extending from roughly 1 mile south of I-635 north to the city limits shows 93% of houses as fit.

**Where It's Worst ...** The south central and near southwest side of the city exhibit the lowest prevalence of fit houses. The large red-outlined area is generally bounded by TX-356 and I-35E on the north, White Rock Creek on the east, and then generally along Loop 12 to the city limits. In this area of just over 75 square miles, only 69% of houses were rated as fit.

Wholeness Score 63.56

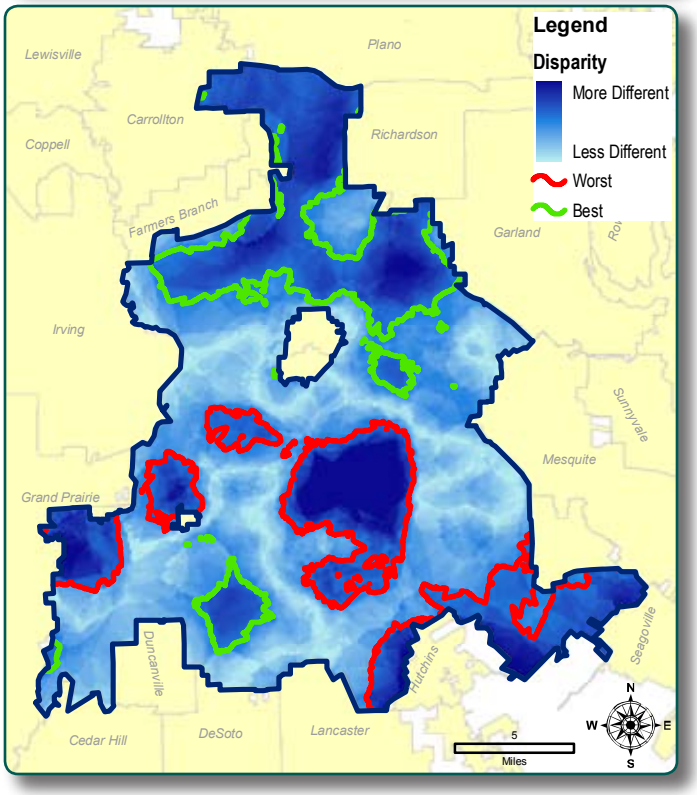
# Owner Occupancy

**What It Measures ...** This indicator measures the percentage of single-family residences that are occupied by the owner (rather than rented to someone other than the owner). It excludes apartments altogether. For the city as a whole, owner occupancy was 74% in 2005.

**Why It's Important ...** Besides serving as a staple of the "American Dream," home ownership provides a number of economic benefits to families and the neighborhoods in which they live. Homeowners have access to collateral to secure loans for education and new businesses, and tend to take a more active role in their communities.

**Where It's Best ...** The area of highest owner occupancy was generally north of Walnut Hill, with the exception of an area on either side of US-75, from Greenville on the east to Hillcrest on the west, from the city limits south to Royal. In the best area, 88% of homes were occupied by owners. The second highest level was in the Southern Sector, on either side of US-67, north of I-20. There, 87% of homes were owner-occupied.

**Where It's Worst ...** The South Dallas neighborhood has the lowest owner occupancy rates. Bounded by I-35E and Lancaster Road on the west, I-30 on the north, and White Rock Creek and Loop 12 on the east and southeast, this area has an owner occupancy rate of 57%. The other red-bounded areas have owner occupancy levels of 67% or less.




Wholeness Score 71.09

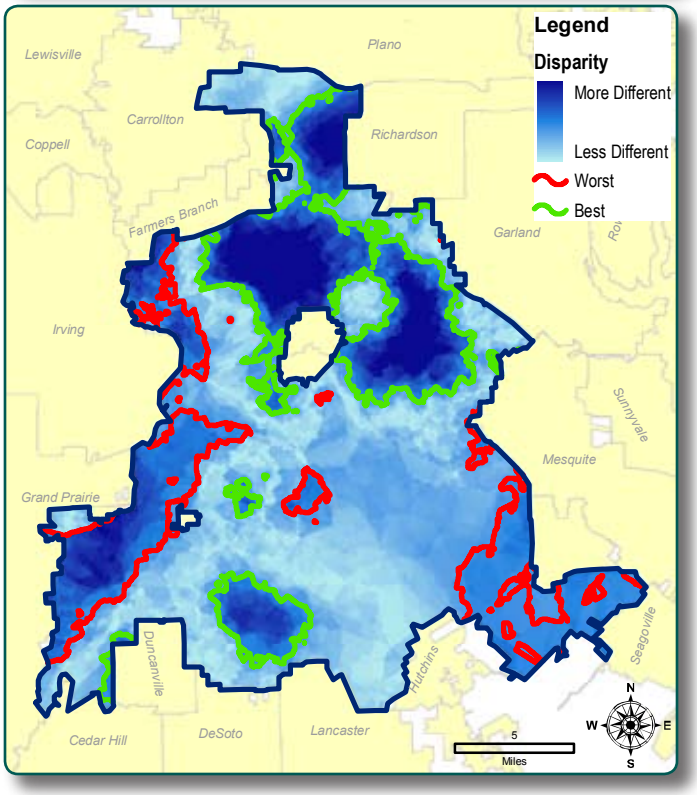
# Voter Turnout

**What It Measures ...** This indicator measures, at the election precinct level, the percentage of registered voters who cast ballots in the general election of November 2005. Citywide, the average was 17%.

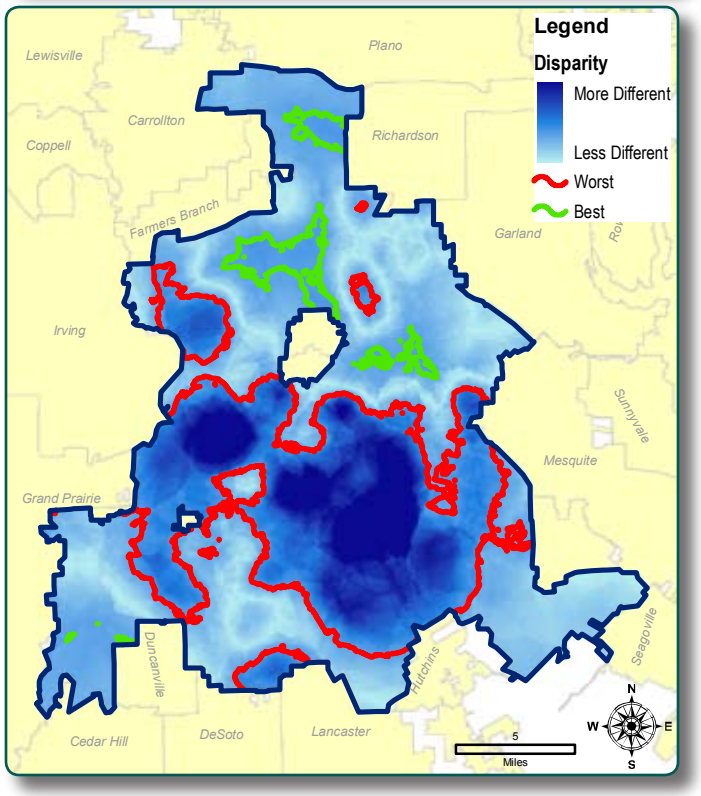
**Why It's Important ...** Voter turnout represents a key ingredient of "quality of life"—civic engagement. Civic engagement occurs when residents of the community participate in community life and collective decision-making.

**Where It's Best ...** The area in North and Far North Dallas outlined on the map in green showed the highest rates of voter turnout, with an average of 26% of registered voters casting ballots. The second highest rates were observed in the Southern Sector, north of I-20 between Houston School and Hampton, with an average of 24% of voters voting.

**Where It's Worst ...** The red-outlined areas on the western edge of the city, generally west of Spur 408, had turnout rates of less than 10%. Of the remaining red-bounded areas, the area just southwest of the Central Business District and the larger area in southeast Dallas had the next lowest turnout, at 11%.



# Families not in Poverty




**Wholeness Score** 67.50

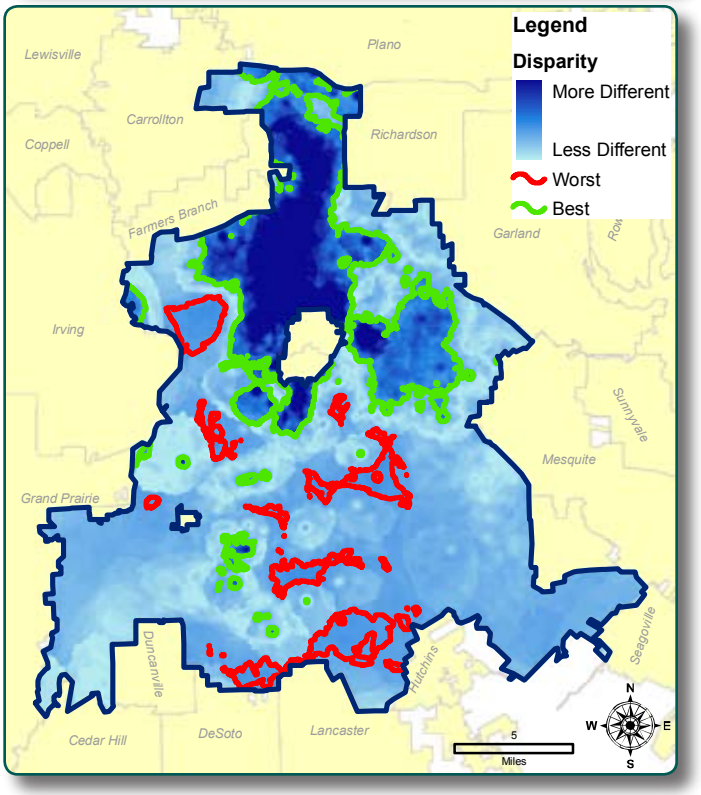
**What It Measures ...** This indicator measures, at the block group level, the percentage of families living at or above the poverty level in 2005. For a family of four, not living in poverty in 2005 meant an income of $19,350 or higher. Citywide, an average of 90% of families were estimated to be living above the poverty line.

**Why It's Important ...** Lower levels of poverty are vitally important to self-sufficiency. Living above poverty means having access to the resources necessary for sustainable community. Non-poverty families are more likely to have the resources available to own a home, pursue higher education, and invest in their neighborhood.

**Where It's Best ...** The Northern Sector had the area of least family poverty. The green-bounded area between Hillcrest, Royal, Forest, and Marsh had 98% of families above the poverty level. In fact, in each of the green-bounded areas the percentage of families above poverty was at least 97%.

**Where It's Worst ...** In the red-bounded area that encompasses much of the Southern Sector, only 74% of families were living above poverty. Within this large area were pockets of severe poverty. In West Dallas, in an area bounded by Canada, Puget, Singleton, and Pointer, only 57% of families were living above poverty.

# Wealth




**Wholeness Score** 80.38

**What It Measures ...** This indicator measures, at the block group level, how much income residents received from interest, dividends, and rents, compared with the income they received from wages, salaries, and self-employment in 2005. That ratio reflects their accumulated wealth and their economic stability. Citywide, non-wage (wealth-related) income was 0.05 times the amount of wage income.

**Why It's Important ...** The presence of wealth in a community is a key component of self-sufficiency. Like the absence of poverty, it permits a greater investment in the civic good, including investments in business and philanthropic causes.

**Where It's Best ...** In the area outlined in green, encompassing much of the Northern Sector, interest, dividend, and rent income averaged 0.14 times wage income. In the Southern Sector, the area west of I-35E, between Hampton and Polk, extending north from Kiest past Illinois, had a ratio of 0.11.

**Where It's Worst ...** One of the lowest ratios was located in the Northern Sector. The nearly 4-square-mile area immediately surrounding the intersection of Northwest Highway and Harry Hines had a wealth-to-income ratio of only 0.01. In the Southern Sector, the nearly 2-square-mile area south of Kiest, between I-35E and Illinois, and much of the South Dallas neighborhood also had a ratio of 0.01.

Wholeness Score 72.71

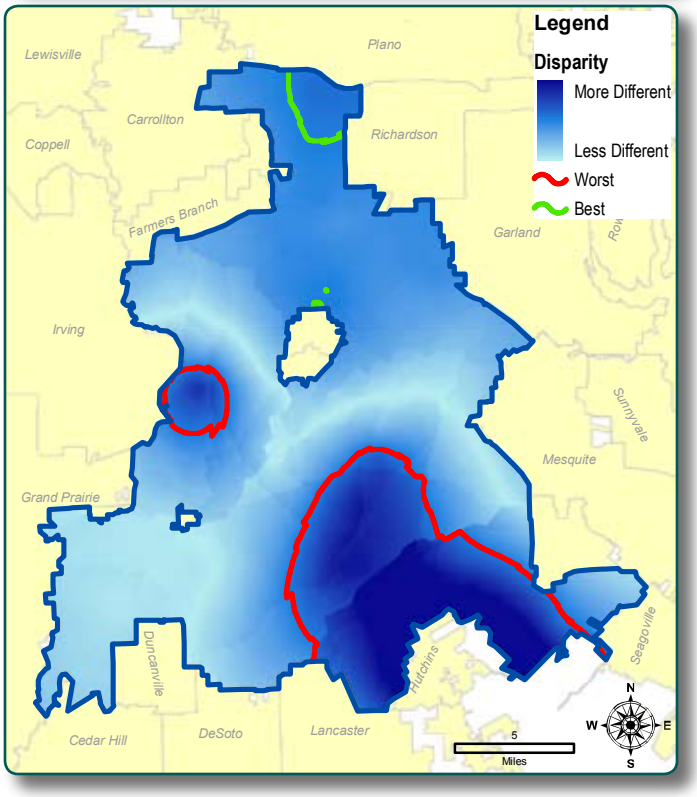
# Life Span

**What It Measures ...** This indicator measures, at the ZIP code level, the years of potential life lost due to the number of people who die before age 65, expressed as a rate per 100,000 population. If a person aged 55 dies, her death represents 10 years of potential life lost. Citywide, the average rate was 4,943.

**Why It's Important ...** A person who dies before 65, in what should be productive years, represents a loss not only to his family but also to the wider community. Early deaths also are a marker for pervasive public health problems that lower the productivity and quality of life in the affected areas.

**Where It's Best ...** The area with the lowest rate of pre-65 deaths, or longest life span, was in the eastern corner of Far North Dallas, running from the city limits south almost to Arapaho, and west past Preston. There, the average rate of years of life lost was 2,353 per 100,000 population, less than one-half of the city average.

**Where It's Worst ...** Two areas with especially high rates of pre-65 deaths are evident. All of the South Dallas neighborhood and southward to the city limits is an area of concern; the rate of lost years per 100,000 population is 9,054—almost double the city rate. Also of significant concern is the area bisected by the Trinity River, running between Inwood, SH-183, Bernal, and the city limits. This area had nearly 1.5 times the city rate, with 7,890 years of life lost per 100,000 population.




Wholeness Score 61.20

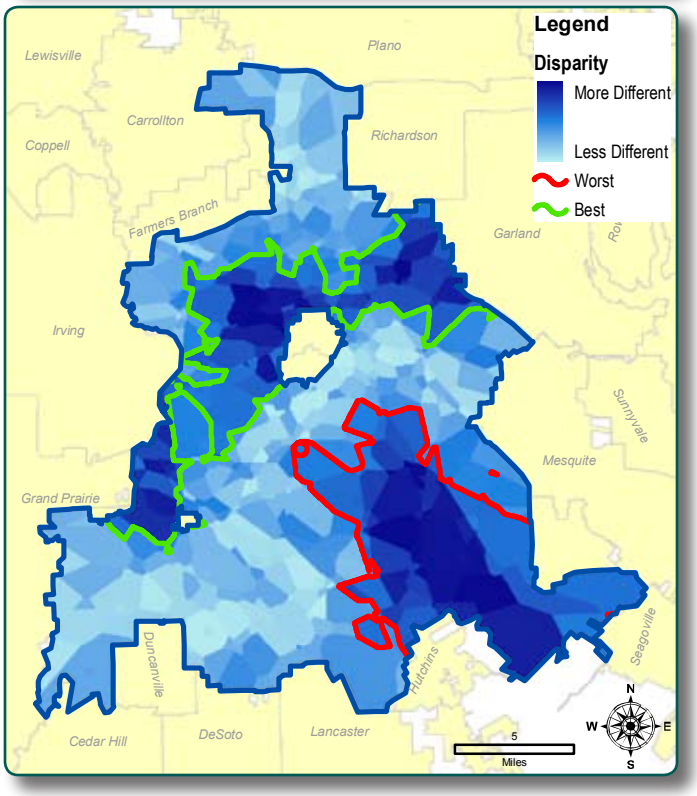
# Access to Retail

**What It Measures ...** This indicator measures, at the ZIP code level, the ratio of the retail sales generated in a neighborhood's grocery stores, drugstores, and clothing stores to the amount residents of that neighborhood reported spending on those commodities. Ratios above 1.0 suggest that people from elsewhere are coming in to shop. Ratios below 1.0 suggest that residents must go elsewhere to secure groceries, medicines, and clothing. Citywide, the latter scenario prevailed, with average sales equaling 0.86 of expenditures.

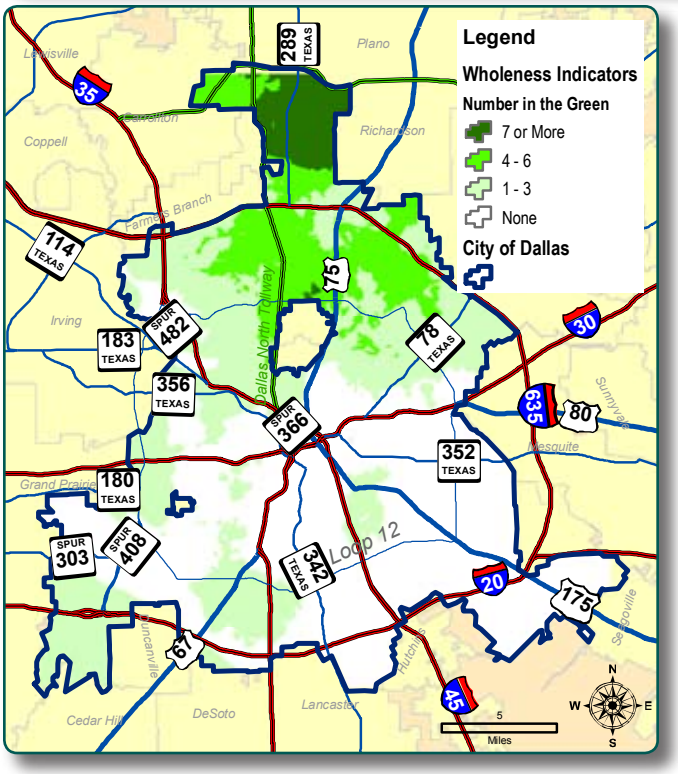
**Why It's Important ...** Communities, like individuals, become self-sufficient when they are better equipped to meet their own basic needs. Neighborhoods that provide residents with nearby access to staples such as food, medicine, and clothing do more—they provide opportunities for a secure future.

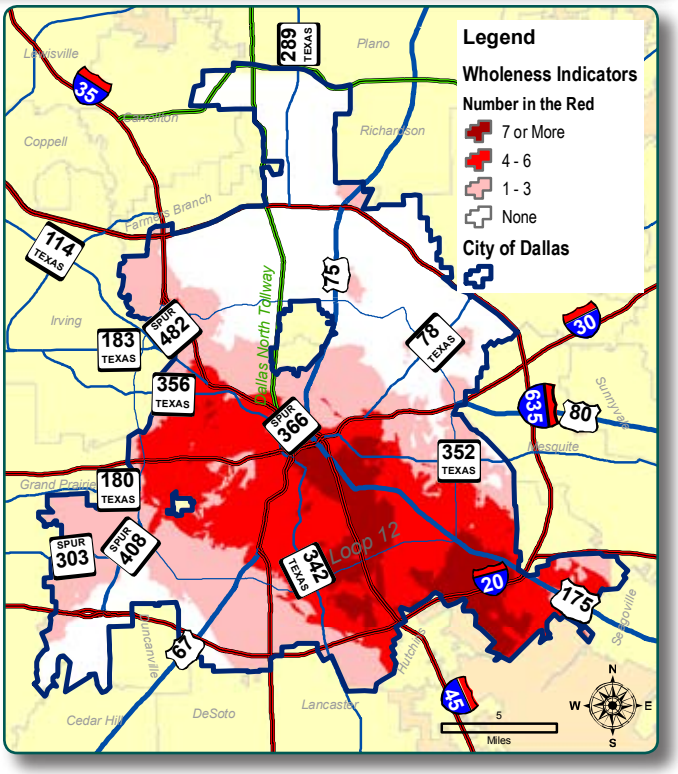
**Where It's Best ...** The Northern Sector area outlined in green is nearly 56 square miles. There, the ratio of retail sales to local expenditures was 1.16.

**Where It's Worst ...** The area encompassing the South Dallas neighborhood and extending southeast to the city limits had the lowest sales-to-expenditures ratio. In this area of nearly 70 square miles, the retail sales were just over half of local expenditures, with a ratio of 0.53.



# Taking the Good with the Bad




The two maps presented above tell strikingly different stories—one for those in the Northern Sector and one for those in the Southern Sector. The map on the left identifies, for any part of town, the number of quality of life indicators for which it fell within a green border (putting it in the "best" category). The darker the green, the greater the number of indicators on which the area rated as best.

Most of the Northern Sector achieved a best rating on at least one indicator. Areas between the Dallas North Tollway and US-75 generally were among the best on four to six indicators, while parts of Far North Dallas rated as best on a majority of indicators (seven or more).

The map on the right identifies, for any part of town, the number of quality of life indicators for which it fell within a red border (putting it in the "worst" category). The darker the red, the greater the number of indicators on which the area rated as worst. Much of the Southern Sector fell into the worst category on four to six indicators. More localized areas rated as worst on seven or more indicators.

It is important to note that this is not entirely a Northern Sector versus Southern Sector story. Many areas of the Southern Sector rated among the best on at least one indicator, and some areas of the Northern Sector rated among the worst on at least one indicator.

## Basic Terms

**Block Group**: A basic unit of Census geography; it literally comprises groups of street blocks, generally encompassing about 1,500 people.

**Northern/Southern Sector:** In Dallas, the area south of the Trinity River and I-30 is considered the Southern Sector, while the area to the north of this line is considered the Northern Sector.

## Data Sources

**Education Data**: Data related to public school performance and student composition were taken from the Texas Education Agency's 2004–2005 Academic Excellence Indicators System.

**Housing Data**: Data related to owner occupancy, housing condition, and fitness were taken from the Dallas Central Appraisal District's 2005 appraisal data.

**Crime Data**: Data related to crime were taken from Dallas Police Department 2005 reported offenses.

**Election Data**: Data relating to voter turnout were taken from Dallas, Collin, and Denton precinct-level election data for the 2005 general election.

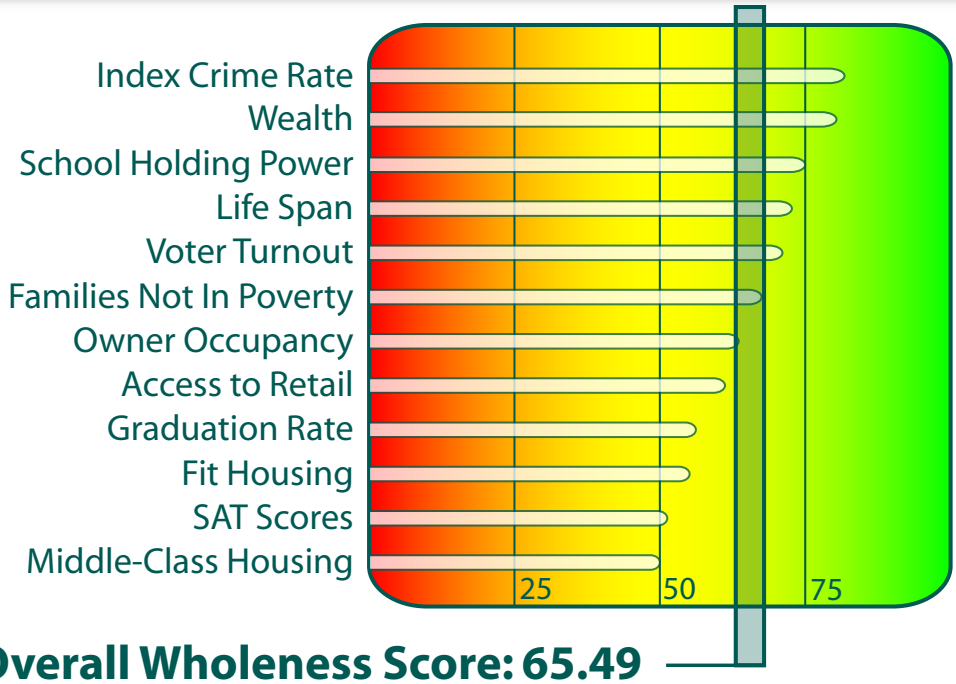
**Demographic Data**: Data related to estimates of poverty, wealth, and population in 2005 were provided by Claritas.

**Mortality Data**: Data related to 2004 mortality were provided by the Department of State Health Services' Center for Health Statistics.

**Retail Data**: Data related to 2004 retail sales and expenditures were provided by the City of Dallas via a report prepared in 2005 by CMC International.

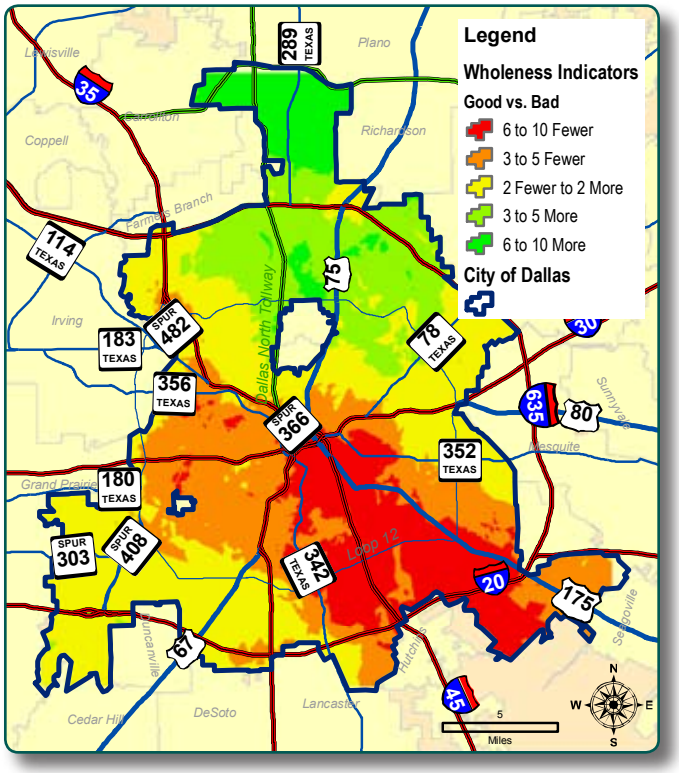
# Putting It All Together: Wholeness in Dallas

As the table to the right shows, Dallas' overall 2006 Wholeness Score across all 12 indicators was 65.49. Given a possible maximum score of 100, this suggests considerable disparity across communities in Dallas. Generally, housing indicators and two of the three education indicators had the lowest Wholeness Scores, while crime, wealth, and school holding power were among the highest.




**Overall Wholeness Score: 65.49**

While the maps on the preceding page show areas with concentrations of "best" and "worst" scores on multiple indicators, the map below depicts the preponderance of good and bad combined. In the Northern Sector, areas with the darkest shades of green had 6 to 10 more "best" indicators than "worst" indicators. In the Southern Sector, areas with the darkest shades of red had 6 to 10 more "worst" indicators than "best" indicators. Areas of Southwest Dallas and East Dallas had a roughly equal number of "best" and "worst" indicators.




Most importantly, the data pinpoint both the magnitude and the geographic distribution of the disparities that keep Dallas from being whole. These problems are not insurmountable, and geographic analyses can suggest potential strategies. For instance, larger, more continuous areas of concentrated good or bad scores tend to suggest larger-scale systemic issues, while smaller, more localized areas tend to reflect the need for locally tailored solutions.

Moreover, resolving the disparities has real, measurable benefits. Those benefits affect the entire city as well as individual residents. Referring back to the Fit Housing measure, the area outlined in red contains just over 22 million square-feet of residences that were classified as not fit. If those homes were elevated to fit status, we would anticipate an increase in value per square foot of $22.20. Based on 2006 property tax rates, the City of Dallas would realize an additional $3.5 million in tax revenue, while the Dallas ISD would realize an additional $7.4 million.

These dollars are real drivers, and have the potential to fund solutions in the other areas. For example, additional revenue to DISD provides the possibility for increased programs and services. Likewise, additional revenue to the City of Dallas can fund an expansion of infrastructure, helping to attract new residents and businesses to the area.


# About the J. McDonald Williams Institute

The J. McDonald Williams Institute is dedicated to conducting nonpartisan research and public policy evaluation related to comprehensive community revitalization of low-income urban areas.

## The Williams Institute Conference

Annually, the Williams Institute holds a conference on issues related to comprehensive community revitalization efforts to make cities whole. The conference is a combination of panel and participatory discussion among academics, practitioners, and public policy influencers to share thoughts on specific actions that can be taken to reduce the level of disparity among the residents of our urban communities.

## Williams Institute Policy Forums

In support of effective public policy, the Institute regularly convenes policy forums around key issues facing government and community leaders. These forums provide opportunities for the academic, practitioner, and policy maker to engage each other in meaningful conversations, inform decisions, and ultimately improve quality of life.

## Williams Institute Community of Scholars

In addition to research conducted by the Institute's staff researchers, the Community of Scholars brings together academics, public policy influencers and leading practitioners to engage in action-oriented research and policy analysis of issues that impact cities across the country.

## Williams Review

Each year six individuals are selected as Fellows to write journal-length scholarly papers for publication in the *Williams Review*. The *Review* is published annually and distributed throughout academic, public policy, and community-building circles. Each Fellow is provided a stipend to support research efforts during the two-year fellowship. Fellowships are named after leading practitioners in the Institute's areas of interest.

## Research Associates Training Program

The Institute's Research Associates Training Program gives masters- and doctoral-level students the opportunity to obtain in-house, applied research experience. Up to three research associates are selected each year.

## For More Information

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