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Fort Hancock, Texas Research Background

Sergio Pena
University of Texas at El Paso, spena2@utep.edu

Daniel J. Quiñones
University of Texas at El Paso, djquinones@utep.edu

Juan Carlos Gomez

Fort Hancock, Texas
Research Background

Co-Principal Investigator
Sergio Peña, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

Research Assistants
Danny Quiñones
Juan Carlos Gomez

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Institute for Policy and Economic Development
University of Texas at El Paso
500 W. University, KEH 410
El Paso, Texas 79968-0703
915 .747-7974
Fax 915.747-7948
Email: iped@utep.edu
Website: iped.utep.edu

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Executive Summary

Fort Hancock is located approximately 52 miles Southeast of El Paso, Texas. Fort Hancock was first established as a military outpost called Camp Rice in 1881 in connection with two other military outposts in the area. In 1882, Camp Rice was purchased by the U.S. War Department and was re-established closer to the Southern Pacific Railroad. Camp Rice became an independent non-military outpost in 1884.

In 1886, the camp was renamed Fort Hancock to honor the death of Union Major General Winfield Scott Hancock. Major General Hancock fought for the Union Army at the battle of Gettysburg and became the commander of the 5th Military Department which included Texas. Fort Hancock along with nearby Fort Quitman, supported Fort Davis which was the larger central fort for the region. The military post at Fort Hancock was closed in 1895; however, just east of the post, a small town named Fort Hancock began to form, and shortly thereafter, a post office was established.

After the military outpost was closed farming activities became the life and blood of the town because of its privilege location on the Rio Grande. Today farming continues to play a key role in Fort Hancock, however, the need to attract employers that will provide alternative economic activities has been the main challenge identified through this background research. The main employers are either local government or employers outside the area mainly in the metropolitan area of El Paso, located 50 miles to the west.

The need to improve educational attainment of the population is another challenge identified through this research. Fort Hancock, compared to the state of Texas, lags behind in almost all educational attainment indicators. To make the town more attractive to new businesses and employers it is a necessary, although not sufficient, condition to improve educational attainment of the younger population, as well as increase training opportunities through vocational education to the older population.

Another challenge identified is the need to improve decision making with regards the urban development of the town through better urban planning policies. The urban growth of the town is skewed to the east where new subdivisions are being developed. Better coordination and decision making is needed to create policies that will redirect urban growth so that the existing infrastructure, services, and resources are used more efficiently and effectively.

Section I: Area of Study

Fort Hancock is located in Hudspeth County in west Texas. The boundaries of Hudspeth County are El Paso County to the west; to the east Culberson County, to the north the state of New Mexico and, to the South the international border with Mexico.

The Fort Hancock area of study is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as a census designated place within Hudspeth County, Texas also known as a CDP. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) the total area covered by the CDP amounts to 37.65 square miles, approximately equal to 24,103 acres (see Map I-1). Fort Hancock CDP is the geographical unit employed in this report because of the accessibility of data from the U.S. census.

Map I-1
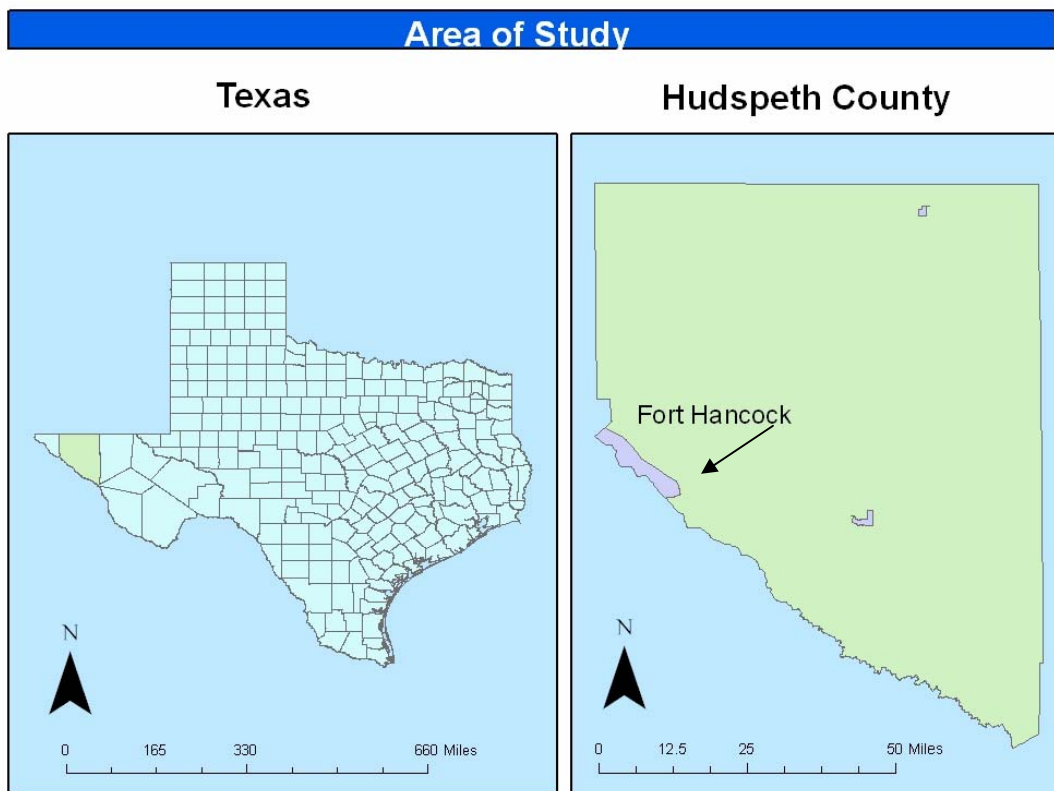
Source: Institute for Policy and Economic Development (IPED):
using U.S. Census Bureau base map

Section II: Basic Mapping

Land Use

An analysis was undertaken to determine the different land uses in Fort Hancock. The land use map of Fort Hancock was elaborated using census data at the block level as a unit of analysis applying the land use methodology procedure seen in Figure II-1. The demographic information at the block level gives us an indication of where residential uses are distributed. Furthermore, Landsat images were primarily used to determine the amount of land used for agricultural purposes. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) technology was used to identify landmarks, as well as the location of main intersections to update the existing map of the urban area. Finally, estimates were made using Geographic Information Systems software in ArcView ®.

Figure II-1: Land Use Methodology
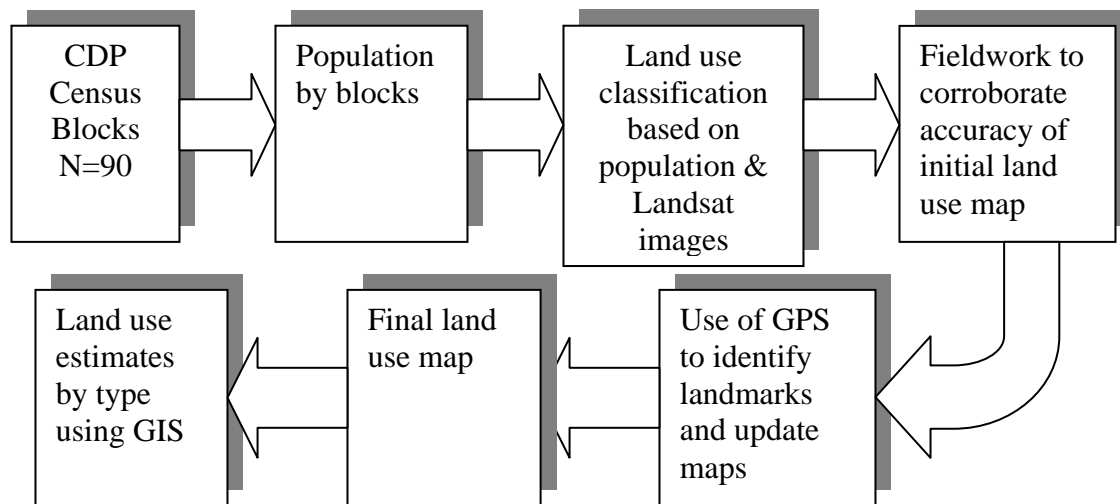
Source: Institute for Policy and Economic Development (IPED)

The study followed the guidelines suggested by Daniels, et al. (1995) in *The Small Town Planning Handbook* with regards to land use classification for small and rural areas. The study also used the standard color coding endorsed by the American Planning Association (APA) to differentiate land use and for displaying map information. The uses were classified as follows:

- Open space (O): refers to areas where no development is allowed or no development has taken place.
- Resources protection (RP): refers to land designated for agriculture uses.
- Rural low density (RLD): is where scatter housing is located in the agriculture fields without forming an urban cluster.

Four different uses are used to classify the urban area.

- Residential (RS): in which single family housing is the norm.
- General service (G): refers to commercial activities that cater to non-residents, such as hotels, gas stations, etc.; neighborhood services is used to refer to those commercial activities targeting the local residents, such as convenient stores.
- Public use (P): are areas of common use for the community, such as schools, government facilities, etc.
- Social uses (SOC): refers to common public spaces that serve a social purpose, such as churches or cemeteries.

As reported in Figure II-2 and Table II-1, the most prevalent land use is resource protection (48.63 %), open space accounts for 21.02 percent, and rural low density 16.12 percent. The urban area accounts for only 14.23 percent of the total land area and the most prevalent land use is single residential (RS) which amounts to almost 98 percent of the urban land. In sum, Fort Hancock CDP can be described as a bedroom community.

Figure II-2 Percent Land Uses
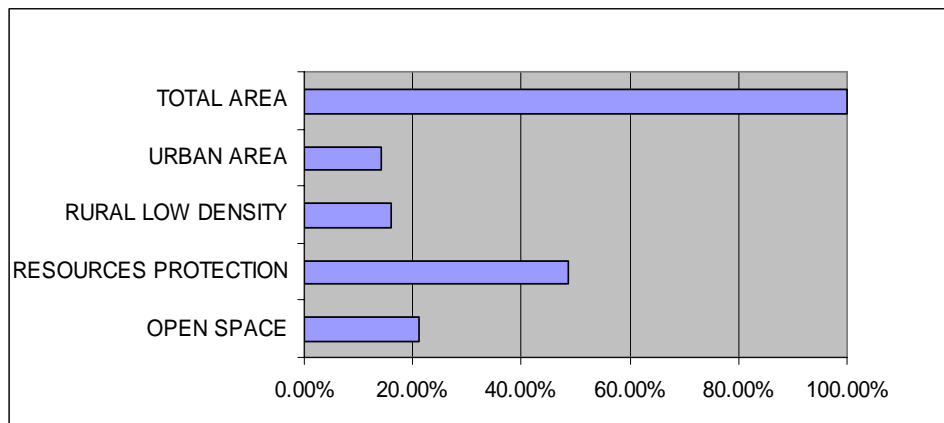
Source: Institute for Policy and Economic Development (IPED)

The study area is located about 10 miles to the east of the western county line and to the south of highway I-10 at exit 72. The land use map shows that most of the land designated as RP is located between the Rio Grande and State Highway 20. There is a long and narrow polygon of open space to the west of town and south of I-10 which some is part of the right of way of the interstate (see Map II-1).

Table II-1: Land Use Acreage

LAND USE TYPE	CODE	ACRES
OPEN SPACE	O	5,066.58
RESOURCES PROTECTION	RP	11,721.83
RURAL LOW DENSITY	RLD	3,885.08
URBAN AREA		3,429.58
Residential	RS	3,357.62
General Service	G	37.13
Public Use	P	20.66
Neighborhood Service	NS	1.96
Cemetery & Churches	SOC	6.40
TOTAL AREA		22,663.25

Source: Institute for Policy and Economic Development (IPED)

Map II-1: Fort Hancock CDP Land Use

Fort Hancock, TX
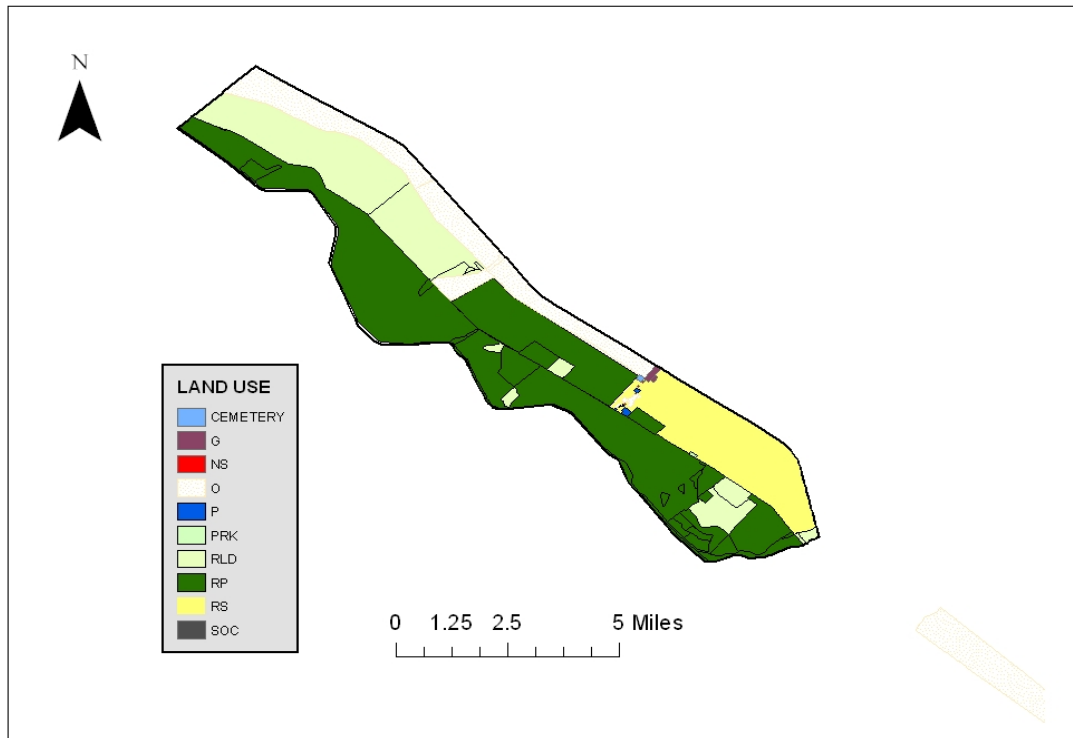
Source: IPED: additions using U.S. Census Bureau base map

Knox Avenue is Fort Hancock's main street and, subsequently, the core of town is located. As Map II-2 shows, the most prevalent use is residential (RS), particularly, single family homes. General services (G) is second in urban uses, and because the range of the services extends beyond the local population, it is no surprise that they are located near a highway exit (I-10 exit 72); hotel, gas station and restaurant services are part of these G land uses. Public use (P) is also prevalent among the urban land uses; these include schools, post office, municipal buildings, border patrol quarters, etc. Finally, social uses (SOC), such as churches and the cemetery would complete the land use map (Map II-2).

Map II-2: Fort Hancock Urban Land Uses
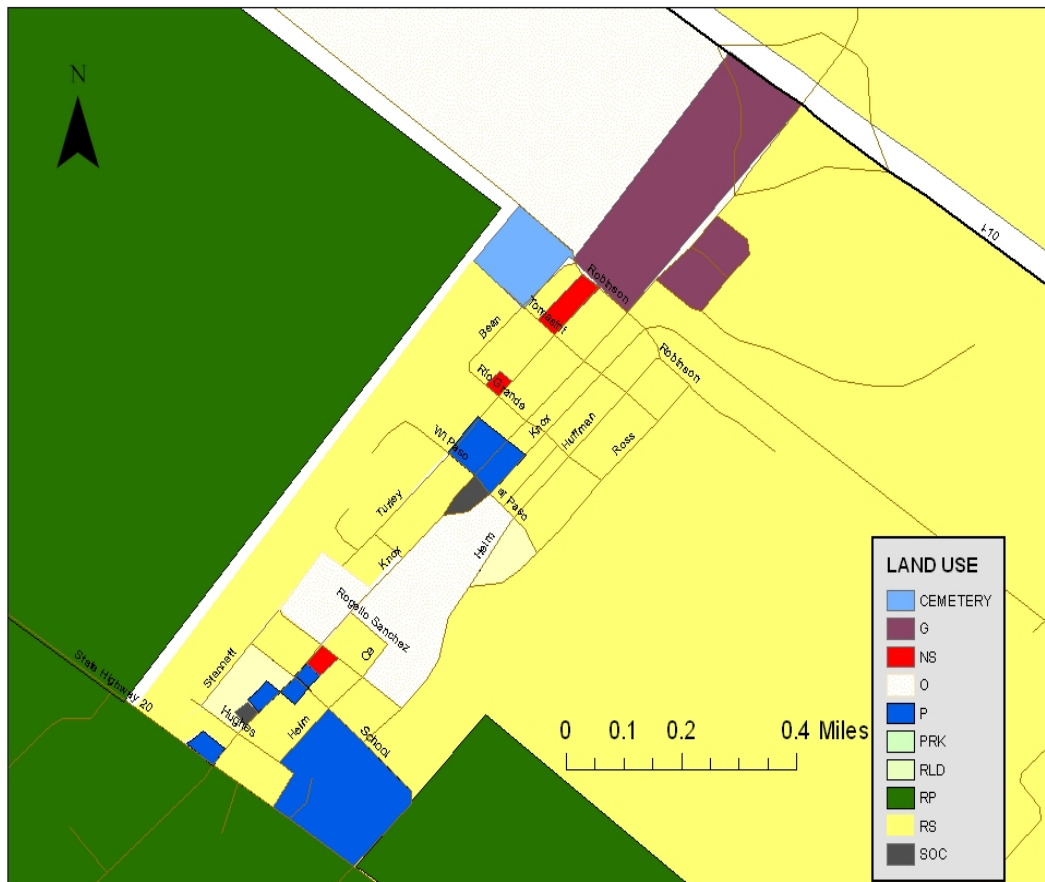
Source: IPED: additions using U.S. Census Bureau base map

It is important to emphasize, however, that most of the growth of the town has not followed the patterns expected of a core in which urban growth takes place around a central point, such as an highway interstate or a main road (i.e. Knox Avenue). A large proportion of the urban growth in Fort Hancock has been taking place to the east of Knox

Avenue along 5th Avenue (see Map II-1). As a result of this pattern of growth, the base
maps from the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau needed to be updated because development has
taken place. Newer streets do not appear along 5th Avenue where residential development
already exists, or are already marked for future subdivisions. The new streets are shown
in red (see Map II-3).

Map II-3: Updated Streets Map (August 2005)
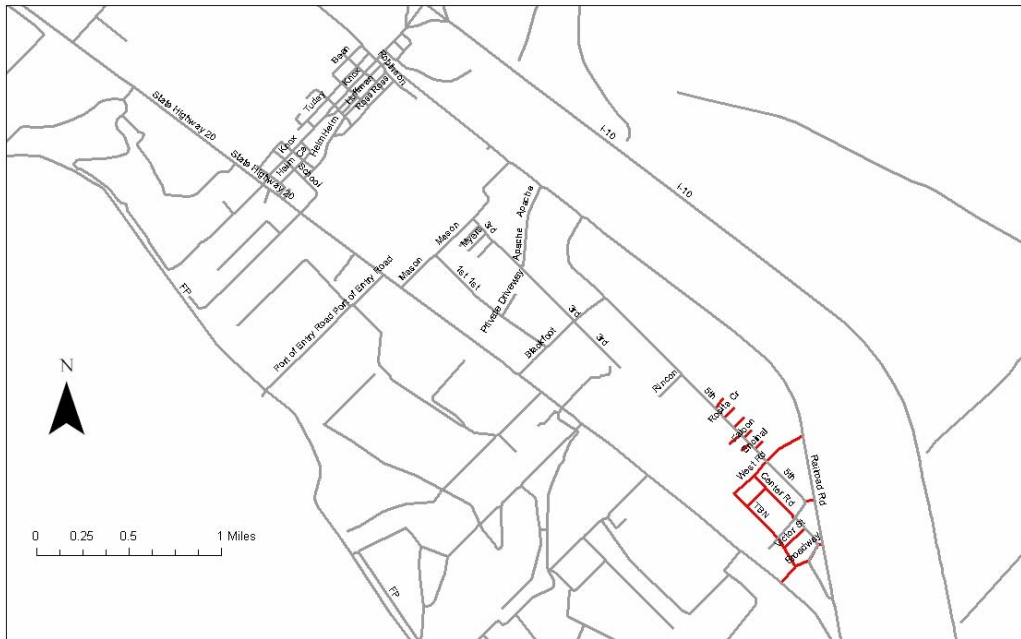
Source: IPED: additions to U.S. Census Bureau base map and GPS

The explanation for this pattern of urban growth, according to the Ft. Hancock
Appraisal office, is related to water supply. The Fort Hancock Water Control and
Improvement District (FHWCID) has been restricted to supplying only 250 units that are
mostly located in the central core of town. As a result, new growth is dependent upon
other provider of water services. The Esperanza Valley Water Service enterprise based in
Toyah, TX has complemented the FHWCID; as a result, the urban growth has been
skewed eastward of Knox Avenue.

The urban growth pattern currently taking place presents a challenge to local
authorities with regards not only to the supply of urban services, but also the ability to
perform the basic function of police power to protect the public safety and health of the
citizens. Furthermore, the urban growth is taking place in high risk areas near arroyos that
may threaten property and the population's safety due to flood conditions. On the east

side there are two arroyos, Camp Rice and another arroyo which goes through residential areas, and as a result, exposing them to flash flooding (see Map II-4 and exhibits).

Map II-4: Fort Hancock Natural Hazards (Arroyos)
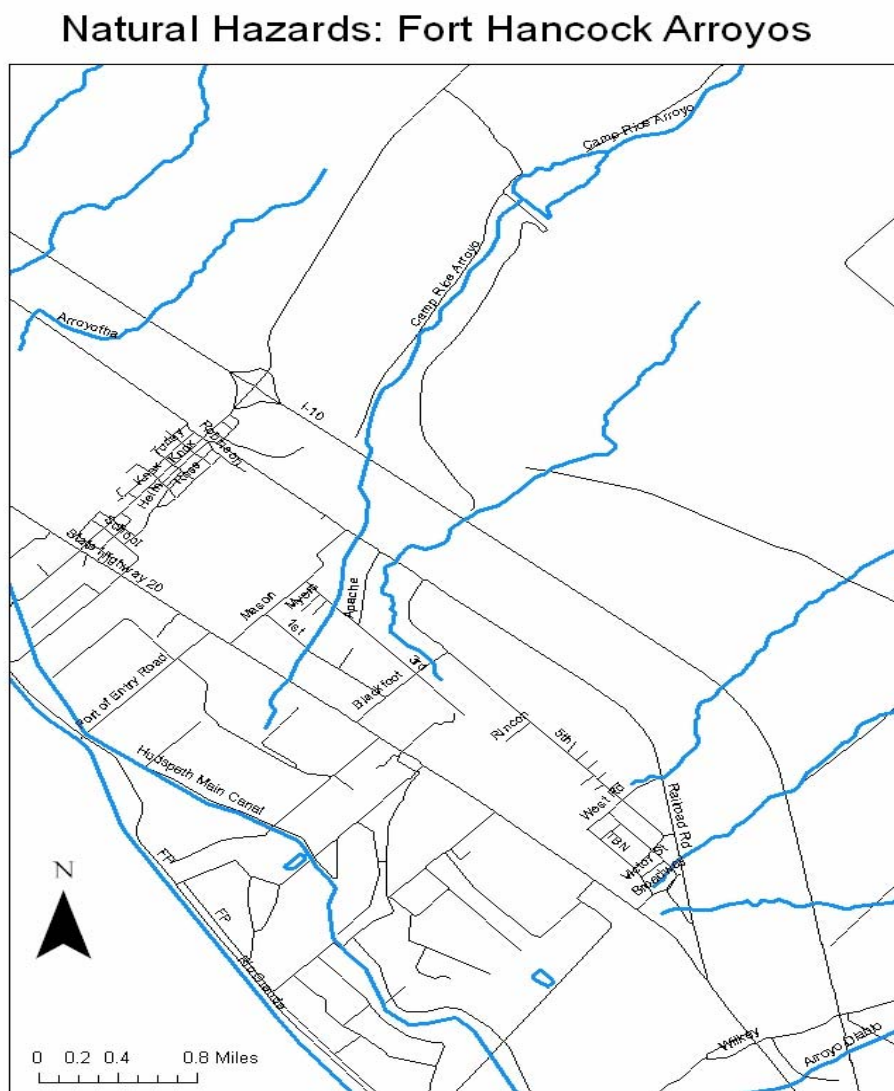
Natural Hazards: Fort Hancock Arroyos

Source: IPED: additions using U.S. Census Bureau base map

Homes Built Near Arroyos (Ft. Hancock)

Bodies of Water

There are two main channeled bodies of water crossing Fort Hancock from West to East: The Rio Grande and the Hudspeth Main Canal. There exists at least thirteen arroyos whose flow goes from North to South; Camp Rice, Alamo, and Diablo are among the most important arroyos because they provide an opportunity to harvest water whenever it rains. There also exist different water reservoirs, such as Cavett Lake, Alamo Reservoir No. 3, Camp Rice Reservoir No.1, Walker Lake, and Diablo Reservoir No.1 and 2 (see Map II-5). The buffer shown along the Rio Grande is the 100 year flood plain. The International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) is the agency in charge of flood control projects along the Rio Grande and as such, the IBWC has built levees along the Rio Grande to handle a 100 year flood standard. The 100 year flood plain buffer was identified using *landsat* imagery.

Map II-5: Major Bodies of Water
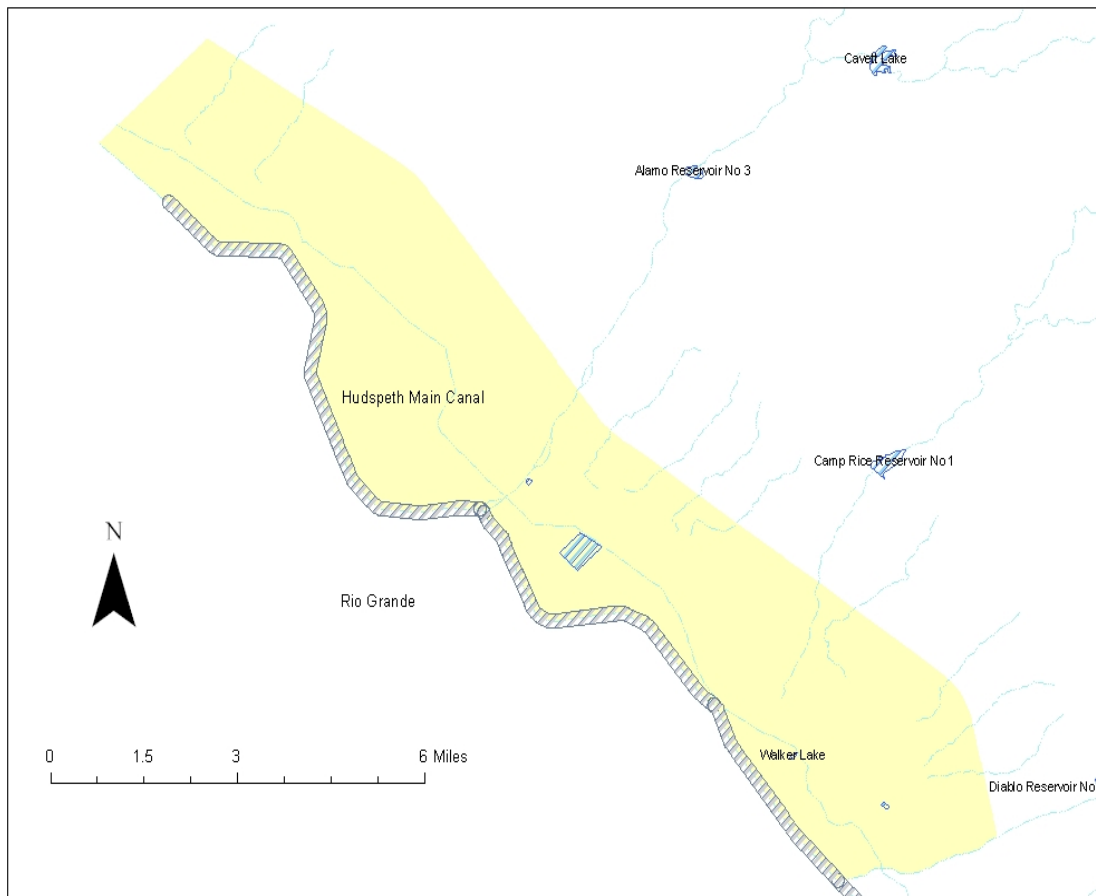
Source: IPED: additions using U.S. Census Bureau base map

Transportation Networks

The main transport networks (highways and railroads) linking Fort Hancock with the rest of the state and country run primarily in an east-west direction. State Highway 20 and Interstate Highway I-10 run parallel linking Fort Hancock to El Paso to the West, and Sierra Blanca to the East. No major state or inter-state highways running in a North-South direction exists; the main north-south highways are State Highway 54 and Interstate Highway I-20 which are 60 and 110 miles, respectively, west of Fort Hancock. Complementing the transportation network is the Southern Pacific Railroad which also runs in an east-west direction (see Map II-6).

Map II-6: Major Transportation Networks
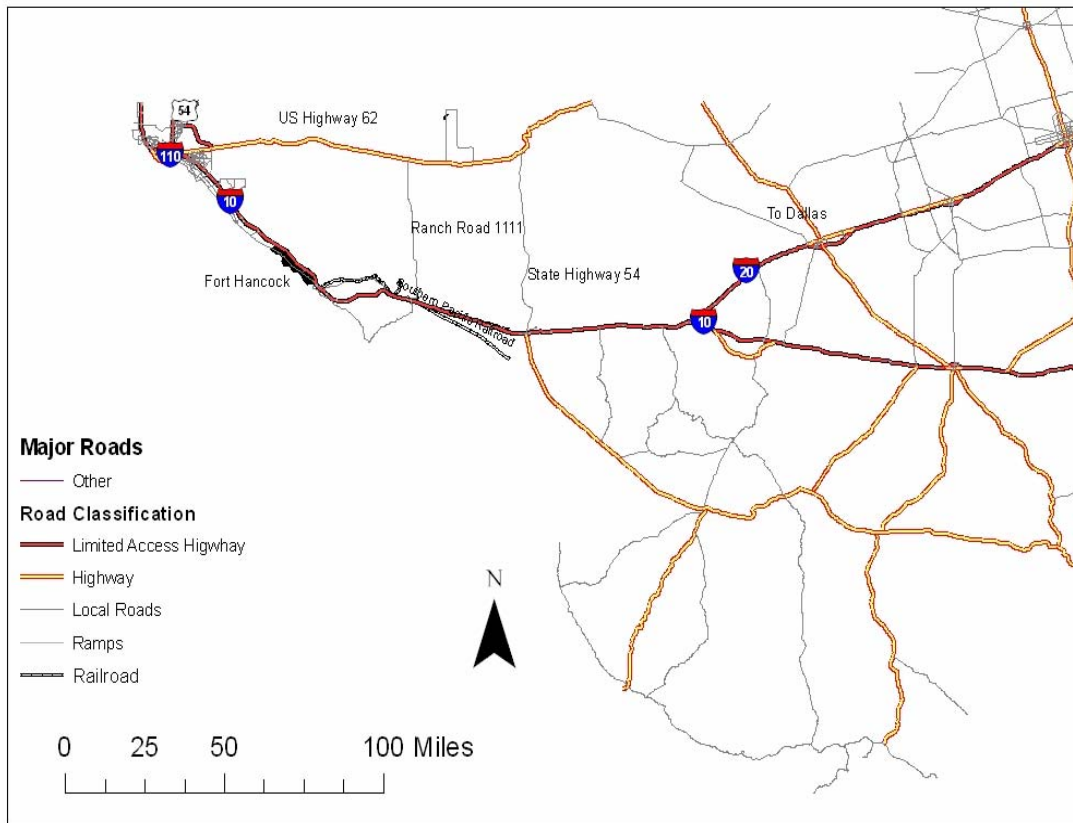
Source: IPED: additions using US Census Bureau base map

Parks & Recreation

An important step in the park and open space planning process is to define a set of minimum standards. These standards enable a community to determine how well existing recreational facilities meet the needs of its residents at the present time, as well as to project the future need for such facilities. A widely used standard is the gross acreage standard, expressed as population ratio, that is, the minimum number of acres recommended per 1,000 persons.

For the gross acreage standard The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends a figure of 10 acres per 1,000 population. Taking into account that the population of Fort Hancock reported in the 2000 census is 1,713, therefore, there should be at least 17.1 acres dedicated to recreational facilities or parks. Only one park, Lovelady Park, was identified during the site visit. Lovelady Park amounts only to a 1.15 acre area; in addition, the park is located on State Highway 20 and Blackfoot. As Map II-7 shows, the park is not centrally located near the residential areas; also the park is located on a highway road which makes it dangerous for children to walk to and from the park. Thus, it is important to expand the number acreages dedicated to parkland, as well as to locate them closer to residential neighborhoods.

Map II-7: Fort Hancock Parks & Recreation Facilities

Source: IPED: additions using US Census Bureau base map

There are two other standards. First, the service area standard, expressed as a park service radius which differs by park type. Second, the activity-related standard, expressed as the population limit per specific activity. Table II-2 presents some selected activities and determines whether or not the recreational facilities exist in Fort Hancock. The activity related-standard is perhaps the best standard for rural communities because their lower density; whereas, the service radius is more appropriate for higher density communities. Judging by activity-related standard, Fort Hancock is in relatively better position regarding recreational facilities as shown in Table II-2.

Table II-2: Recreational Facilities Standards

ACTIVITY/ FACILITY	NO. OF UNITS PER POPULATION	SERVICE RADIUS	# EXISTING IN FORT HANCOCK
Basketball	1 per 5,000	¼ to ½ mile	FH High School BM Elementary Middle School
Baseball	1 per 5,000	¼ to ½ mile	FH High School
Football	1 per 20,000	15 to 20 minutes travel time	FH High School
Soccer	1 per 10,000	1-2 miles	None
Softball	1 per 5,000	¼ to ½ mile	FH High School
Multiple recreation court (GYM)	1 per 10,000	1-2 miles	FH High School Middle School
Swimming Pools	1 per 20,000	15 to 30 minutes travel	Community Pool
Mini-park	. 25 to .5 acres per 1000 population	Less than ¼ mile	Benito Martinez Elementary Lovelady Park

Source: Adapted from the National Recreation and Park Association

Policy Recommendations

- Promote a more balance urban growth around the central core of town by redirecting growth to the west which will also improve service delivery.

- Improve coordination and cooperation among the different water providers in order to improve land use decision making.

- Improve coordination and cooperation between government officials and landlords/developers to improve land use decision making.

- Increase the number of acres dedicated to parks.

Section III: Housing Analysis

Housing Type

Fort Hancock's housing stock is primarily consists of single family units as there are no multiple family complexes in the area. The single family units can be differentiated into two broad categories: 1) permanent homes build of wood, stucco, or other material, and 2) manufactured mobile homes. According to Census data for the year 2000, the ratio of single detached permanent homes with respect to manufactured homes is about 3 to 2 as shown in Figure III-1.

Figure III-1: Housing Types
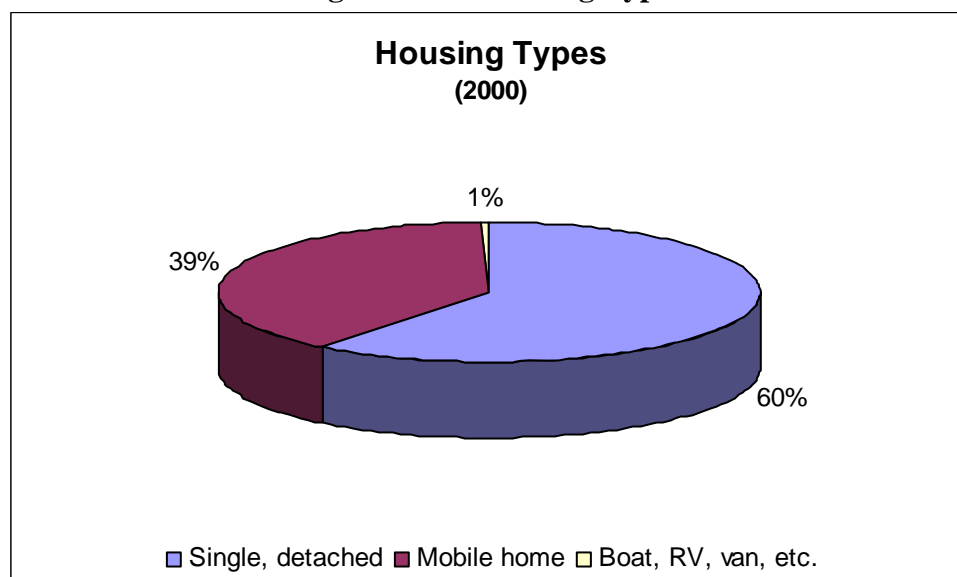
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

In 2004, the mean value for a single-family unit in Fort Hancock was $25,945. The mean value of the manufactured mobile homes in Fort Hancock depends on whether or not the mobile home owner owns the lot in which the mobile home stands. In 2004 the mean value for a manufactured mobile home and the lot on which it stood was equal to $20,483. However, if the owners solely owned the mobile homes in 2004, the mean value decreased to $12,464. Comparing the mean value of a single-family unit it is about 85 percent with respect to Hudspeth County ($30,500) and 31 percent with respect to Texas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Housing Ownership Status

In 2000, the ownership rate in Fort Hancock was approximately 75 percent. Ownership includes homeowners with a paid mortgage and homeowners with an existing mortgage. Only 9.5 percent reported to be renters. The most striking information is the number of reported vacancies (16.1%) which is substantially higher when compared with the State of Texas rate (9.3%). The vacancy status of these units could be due to units

being placed for rent, for sale, for recreational, seasonal, occasional use, for migrant worker use, or other vacant use (see Table III-1).

Table III-1: Housing Occupancy by Status

Housing Occupancy	Units	Percent
Owner Occupied	431	74.4%
Renter Occupied	55	9.5%
Vacant	93	16.1%
Total Units	579	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

The use of GIS allows the analysis of housing status spatially; that is, which areas of the city had the highest or the lowest ownership rates. Map III-I shows that ownership rate is relatively lower on those areas immediately surrounding Knox Avenue. This is especially true for the southern end of Knox Avenue, which is the area where the lowest housing ownership exists. Within these areas of relatively low ownership, less than 1 in 3 individuals own a home.

Map III-1: Owner-Occupied Housing Units
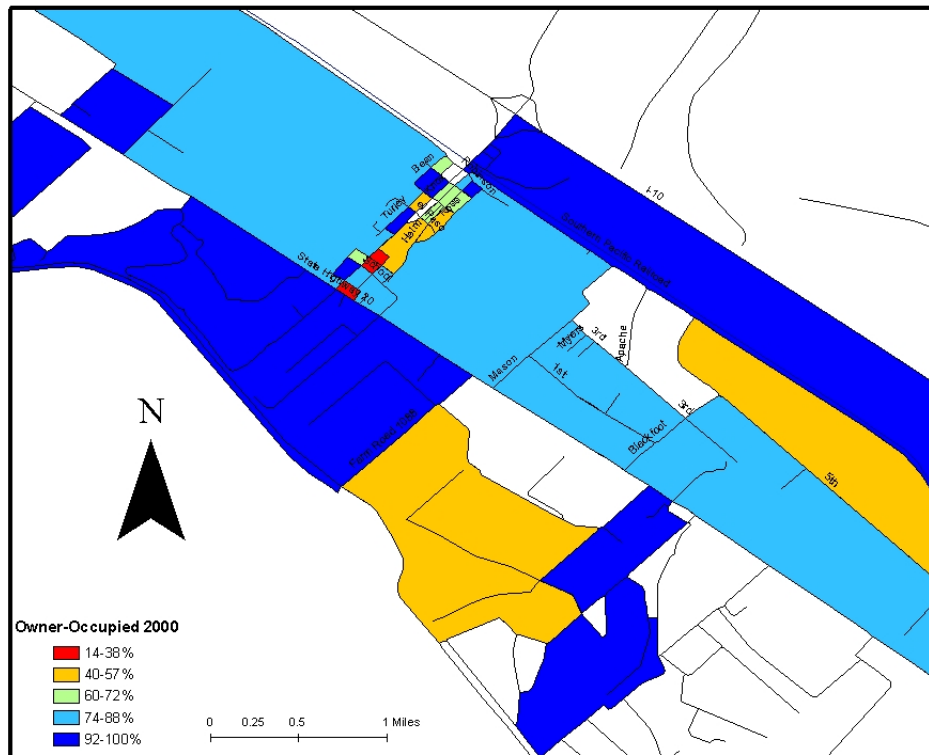
Source: IPED: additions using US Census Bureau base maps and information

With regards to vacancy rates, Map III-2 shows that the Census Block 2773, the largest located east of Knox Avenue and North of State Highway 20, presents mixed results. It has one the largest concentrations of occupied homes; but, it also contains a large number of vacant units. In addition, the map shows that the area located to the south of State Highway 20 is the most stable in terms of occupancy as no vacancies are reported. It is important to note that those homes are primarily owner occupied farms.

Map III-2: Occupied and Vacant Housing Units
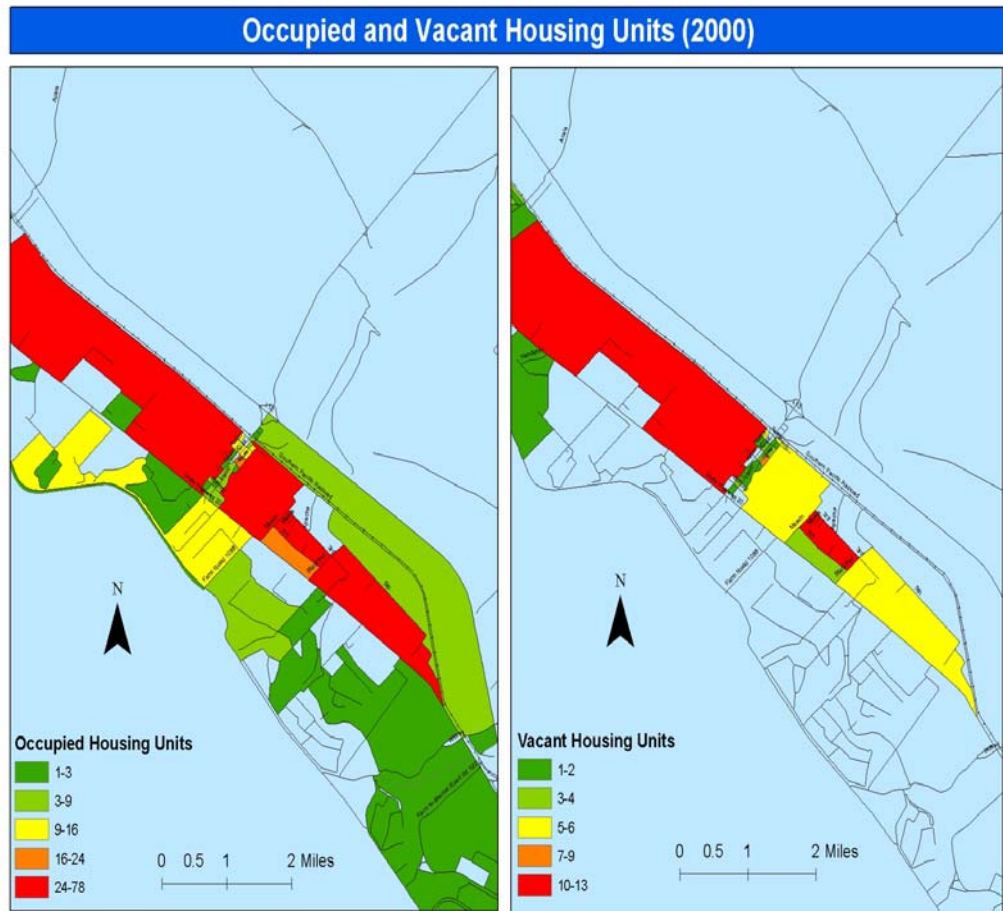
Source: IPED: additions using US Census Bureau base maps and information

The age of the housing stock indicates that about 32 percent was built between 1990 and March 2000; this rate is higher than the State average of 20.7 percent. Between 1980 and 1989, Fort Hancock experienced its greatest housing expansion. The largest number of housing units was built during the 1980s as one out of three existing homes was built. Fort Hancock's housing expansion goes hand in hand with population increase, specifically, between 1970 and 1980, Fort Hancock's population increased by approximately 17 percent; and, between 1980 and 1990 the population increase was about 34 percent. In sum, the number of housing units constructed since 1980 constitute 66 percent of the total. The number of housing units in the 1990-2000 decade is close to the same number of units reported in the previous decade.

Table III-2: Housing Stock Year Built

Year structure was built	Units	Percent
1959 or earlier	91	15%
1960 to 1969	14	2%
1970 to 1979	103	17%
1980 to 1989	204	34%
1990 to 1994	107	18%
1995 to March 2000	86	14%
Total	**605**	**100%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Housing Units 2000-2005

Fort Hancock's housing growth since 2000 has primarily been taking place east of Knox Avenue. In particular, the housing growth has concentrated within three or four census blocks. These blocks are located within Mason, 3rd, 5th, and Railroad Road (see Map III-3). Based on census data and the housing survey that was conducted on June, 2005, it can be stated that the area surrounded by Mason, 3rd, Apache and Railroad Road increased in the number of housing units. In 2000, this area did not have any reported housing units, while in July, 2005, this particular area reported 26 housing units. This increase is also evident in the polygon that is comprised of Apache, 3rd, Blackfoot, 5th, and Railroad Road. In 2000, there were no reported housing units in this block, however in July, 2005, this area showed 22 housing units. Similarly, the block that is surrounded by 5th, Railroad Road, and West Road, has experienced an increase in housing units. Between 2000 and 2005 the number of housing units within this block increased by as much as four times. In 2000, the number of reported housing units was 9, while in 2005 the block contained 38 housing units.

Map III-3: Housing Units by Census Block: 200-2005
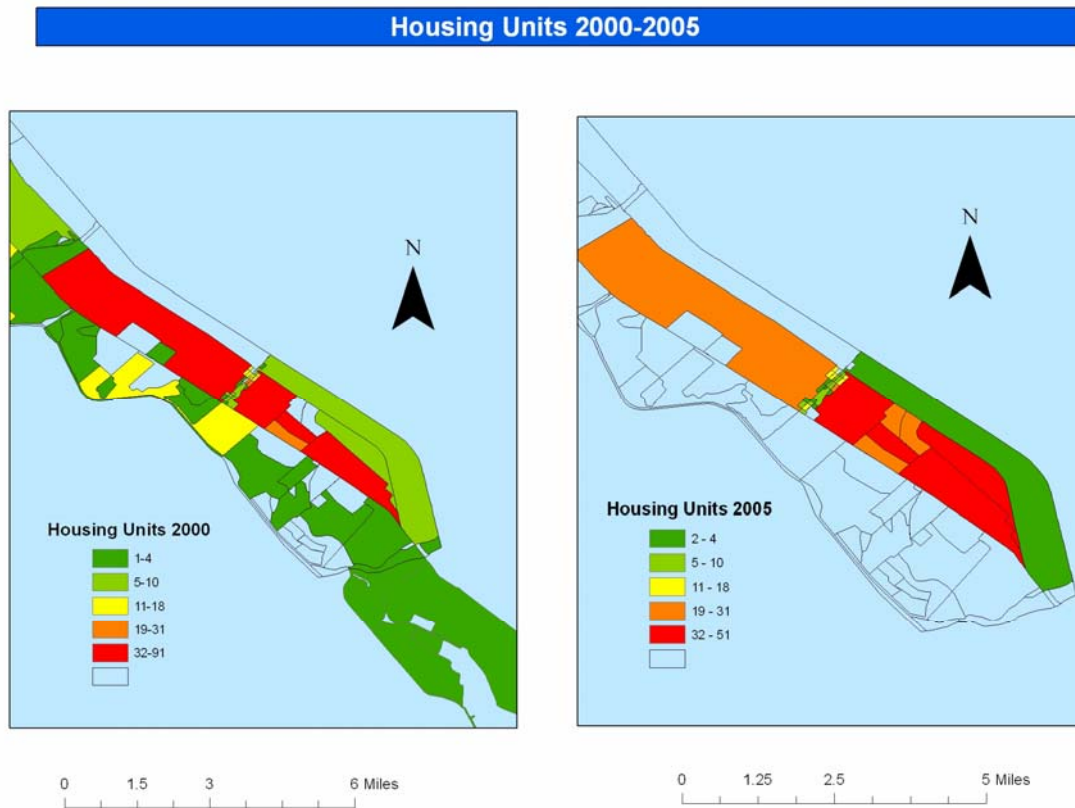
Source: IPED: additions using U.S. Census Bureau base maps and information. Information for 2005 obtained from the windshield survey

The changes that occurred west of Knox Avenue are qualitatively different from those occurring to the east of Knox Avenue. While the number of housing units has been increasing east of Knox Avenue, conversely, the number of housing units west of Knox Avenue have been decreasing. In particular, the block that is surrounded by Robinson, Soto, State Highway 20, and Knox Avenue has decreased in the number of housing units by 70. In 2000, there were 91 reported housing units, while on July, 2005, there were 21 housing units within this particular area.

Housing Conditions

In June 30, 2005 a windshield survey[1] was conducted to evaluate the condition of the housings units in Fort Hancock. The physical conditions of the dwellings were evaluated based on the criteria suggested by Daniels, et al. (1995) and taken from the Kansas Property Appraisal Manual. Table III-3 presents the criteria used.

Table III-3: Housing Evaluation Criteria

Condition Rating of Dwellings	Definitions
Excellent	Building in perfect conditions; very attractive and highly desirable
Very Good	Slight evidence of deterioration; still attractive and desirable
Good	Minor deterioration visible; slightly less attractive and desirable, but useful
Average	Normal wear and tear is apparent, average attractiveness & desirability
Fair	Marked deterioration but quite useable; rather unattractive and undesirable
Poor	Definite deterioration is obvious; definitely undesirable and barely usable
Very Poor	Condition approaches unsoundness; extremely undesirable and barely usable
Unsound	Building is structurally unsound, not safe and practically unfit for use

Source: Daniels, et al. (1995:94)

The methodology employed consisted in using the census blocks as a unit of analysis so the data can be analyzed and displayed using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Thus, the survey provides not only the aggregate data but also disaggregate spatial data that can be display at the census block level. This procedure allows us to determine where the best and worst conditions of housing units exist, as well as where planning intervention is needed to protect the safety of the residents. The units surveyed included only those located in the urban area excluding those in the rural areas due to logistical problems, such as access in addition to possible invasion of people's privacy. The 2000 census in the area of study reports 502 units; and, the windshield survey implemented includes a total of 466 units.

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[1] A windshield survey consisted on driving street by street and evaluating housing conditions from the outside using pre-determined standards as those shown in Table III-3.

Table III-4: Windshield Survey Results

Windshield Survey Results			
	Units	*Percent*	*Sum Percent*
Total Units-Census 2000	502		
Total Units-Windshield Survey 2005	466		
Excellent	30	6.4%	----
Very Good	53	11.4%	17.8 %
Good	120	25.8%	43.6 %
Average	134	28.8%	72.4 %
Fair	78	16.7%	89.1 %
Poor	42	9.0%	98.1 %
Very Poor	2	0.4%	98.5 %
Unsound	7	1.5%	100.0%
	466	100.0%	

Source: IPED windshield survey; June, 2005.

The results in Table III-4 show that almost half of the housing stock (43.6%) is considered to be above average. About 11 percent of the total housing stock is below average. Most of the homes were considered to be average (28.8 %) or in good conditions (25.8%). This means that either the homes show normal wear and tear and are relatively attractive and desirable.

The above results, however, do not reveal any information regarding urban spatial segregation. In other words, whether or not clusters of poor quality housing (and poverty as well) exists or if these homes are distributed randomly across town. However, the use of GIS technology allows us to assess the extent to which urban spatial segregation exists in Fort Hancock based on the windshield survey data.

Map III-4 shows where the worst housing stock is located and, thus, where demand for some policy intervention would be needed. The larger percentage of poor quality housing was primarily concentrated west of Knox Avenue, more specifically, south of Lester Ray Talley. Approximately 1 out of every 3 housing units was considered to be in poor conditions. On the other hand, west of Knox Avenue, more specifically, west of Mason, is where one can find the lowest percentage of poor quality housing. Two areas west of Mason have no homes rated as in poor quality. In the remaining areas, less than 9 percent of the housing stock was rated in poor conditions. The highest concentration of housing considered to be in an excellent condition was concentrated in Fort Hancock's main urban area between El Paso and Tomasini.

Map III-4: Concentration of Poor Quality Housing
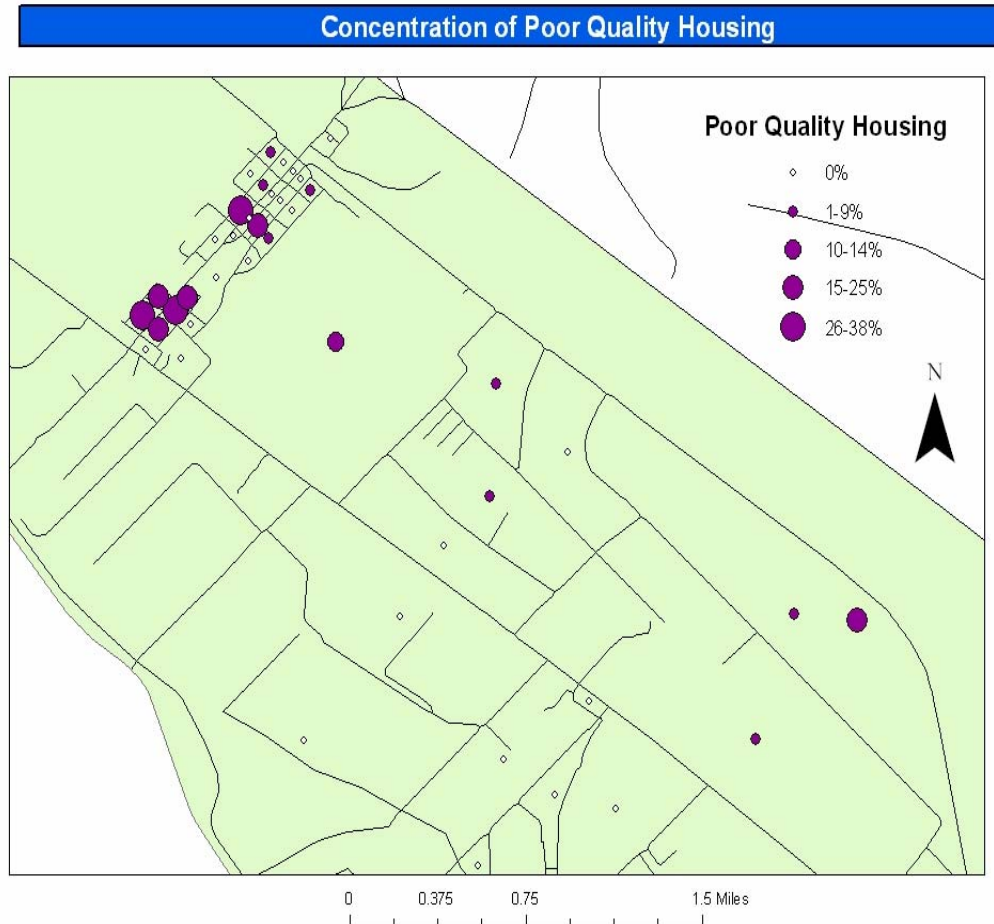
Source: Elaborated by IPED using US Census Bureau base maps. Information for 2005 housing conditions obtained from the windshield survey

Another element with regards to housing that became apparent during the survey, is the relative high number of mobile homes, which according to Figure III-1, accounts for 40 percent of the housing stock. Again, the windshield survey combined with the use of GIS allows us to identify clusters or high concentrations of mobile homes. The percent of mobile homes increases as one travels east of Knox Avenue (see Map III-5). Between Knox Avenue and Mason, approximately 31 percent of the housing units are mobile homes, while the percentage of mobile homes increases between 42 percent and 64 percent in the blocks composed of Mason, State Highway 20, Blackfoot, and Railroad Road. Additionally, between Blackfoot and West Road., the percentage of mobile homes found within the area increases to approximately 73 percent of the total housing units.

Map III-5: Location of Mobile Homes by Census Block
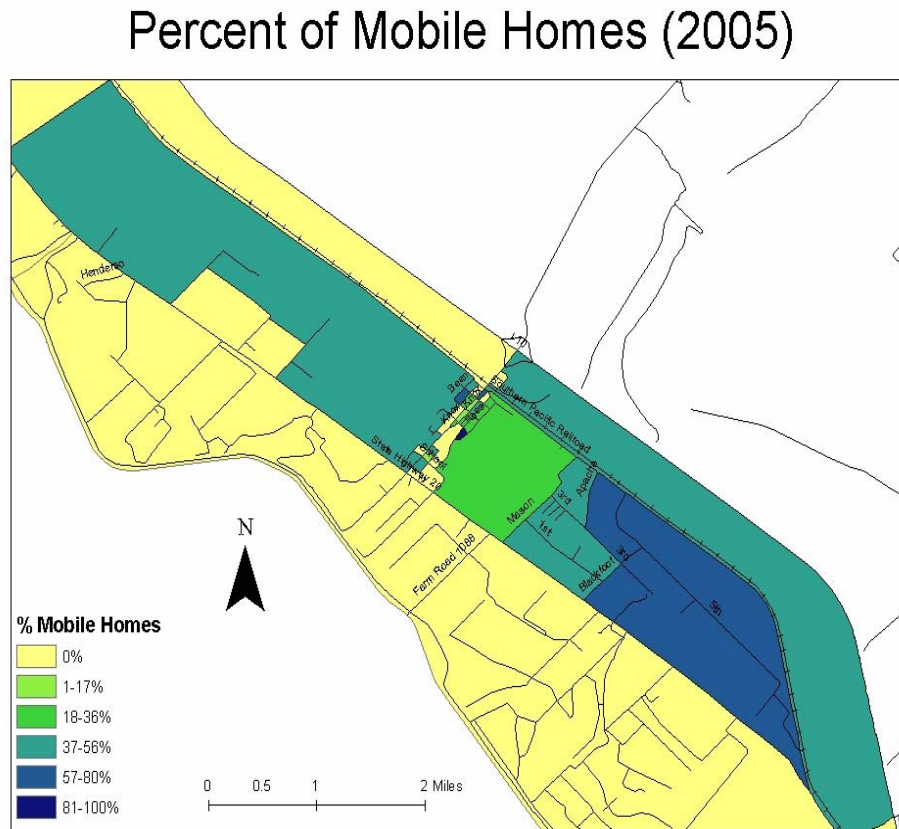
Percent of Mobile Homes (2005)

% Mobile Homes
- 0%
- 1-17%
- 18-36%
- 37-56%
- 57-80%
- 81-100%

N

0   0.5   1   2 Miles

Source: IPED: additions using US Census Bureau base maps. Information for 2005 housing conditions obtained from the windshield survey

Property Taxes

Revenue derived from property tax constitutes one of the key income sources for local governments to be able to deliver local services to its population. The assessed value of a property, hence potential local government revenue, depends on two factors—the land itself and the building that is on the land. Therefore, it is in the best interest of local government and local residents to ensure that the housing stock will appreciate, or at least maintain its current property value. When property values decline and population increases or stays the same, local government will necessarily have to either increase the tax rate to maintain the current level of services, or keep the current tax rate and cut the level of services.

Table III-5: Fort Hancock ISD Tax Information (2004)

Category	Fort Hancock ISD	# of units	Local tax roll value	Average Value
A	Single Family Residences	609	$ 14,355,050	$ 23,572
B	Vacant lots	11,341	$ 9,176,465	$ 809
C	Rural Real (Taxable)		$ 36,249,188	
D	Commercial Real Estate	33	$ 1,710,040	$ 51,819
F1	Industrial Real Estate	2	$ 771,508	$ 385,754
F2	Combined Real Estate	35	$ 2,481,548	$ 70,901
G	Oil, Gas, Minerals	49	$ 453,583	$ 9,257
J	Utilities	33	$ 42,764,670	$ 1,295,899
L1	Commercial Property	43	$ 659,361	$ 15,334
L2	Industrial Property	2	$ 635,000	$ 317,500
L1+L2	Combined Property	45	$ 1,294,361	$ 28,764
M	Mobile Home (Lease Land)	60	$ 747,849	$ 12,464
N	Intangible			
O	Residential Inventory			
S	Special Inventory			
	SUBTOTAL		$ 107,522,763	
	LESS TOTAL DEDUCTIONS Homestead & Vets $ 5,504,816 Cap Value loss $ 2,198,953 Over 65 Freeze $ 217,213 All other $ 0	(7.4%)	$ 7,920,982	
	TOTAL TAXABLE VALUE		$ 99,601,781	
	Acreage CCD	880,749	$ 99,607,781	$ 113

Source: Data retrieved from the Comptroller of Public Accounts - Property Tax Division 2004 Fort Hancock ISD Summary Worksheet, Interviews with the Hudspeth County Appraise, and official data from Texas Comptroller

Table III-5 shows property appraisal for the Fort Hancock Independent School District (FHISD) which in some ways reflects the challenges the community faces ahead. As it has been discussed in this section, an important proportion (about 40%) of the housing stock is mobile homes, and overall, the housing stock for them was evaluated as in average condition (72%). According to Texas law, anyone who owns a home and uses it as a primary residence is entitled to a $15,000 *homestead exemption*, it does not matter if the residence is a house, condominium, or mobile home; other special taxing districts (water, school districts, etc.) may also offer the *homestead exemption.* Table III-5 shows that the average value of a single family residence is $23, 572; after the homestead exemption property taxes can be levied only on $8,572.

Table III-6: School and Appraisal Districts Property Value Study 2004

		Fort Hancock	**Texas**
A	Single Family Residences	13%	50%
B	Vacant lots	9%	2%
C	Rural Real (Taxable)	34%	4%
D	Commercial Real Estate	2%	14%
F1	Industrial Real Estate	1%	5%
F2	Combined Real Estate	2%	0%
G	Oil, Gas, Minerals	0%	4%
J	Utilities	40%	3%
L1	Commercial Property	1%	7%
L2	Industrial Property	1%	5%
L1+L2	Combined Property	1%	0%
M	Mobile Home (Lease Land)	1%	0%
N	Intangible	0%	0%
O	Residential Inventory	0%	0%
S	Special Inventory	0%	0%
	SUBTOTAL	100%	100%
	LESS TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	7%	12%

Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

According to Table III-5, the three most important potential sources of revenue for Fort Hancock are utilities, rural real estate, and single family residences. Comparing Fort Hancock's potential sources of revenue with the State of Texas (see Table III-6), it can be seen clearly that revenues from single family residence represent only 13 percent of the taxable property compared to 50 percent for the State as a whole. Because small rural community property tax is limited, they are taxed on other assets to the maximum;

therefore, they cannot afford to give too many deductions. The data supports this claim, total deductions in the State accounted for 12 percent compared to only 7 percent for Fort Hancock. This shows again that, in average, small communities with a smaller tax base have a heavier tax burden. Therefore they have to tax heavier the other productive assets, such as agriculture, commercial, industrial, utilities which, as a result, may discourage further investment from coming into the community.

Section IV: Demographics

Population CDP

Census 2000 was the first census conducted that listed Fort Hancock as a Census Designated Place (CDP). Previously, Census data listed Fort Hancock as a Census County Division (CCD). Since Census 2000 is the only Census data for Fort Hancock CDP, Census data from 1990 and 2000 for the population of Fort Hancock CCD will be used to make historical comparisons. Population trends will also be analyzed in comparison to Sierra Blanca CCD and Dell City CCD. The Texas State Data Center (TSDC) has provided bi-annual population estimates for Fort Hancock CDP, Sierra Blanca CDP, Dell City, and Hudspeth County from 2001 to 2004 using Census 2000 data as a base. According to Census 2000, the population of Fort Hancock CDP is 1,713 representing 88.7 percent of the total population of the CCD (1,931) and 58 percent of the total population of Hudspeth County.

Population Growth

The decade from 1960 to 1970 was the last decade in which the population of Fort Hancock CCD declined, dropping from 1,188 to 804. Over the next three decades (1970-2000), however, population increased by 6.5 percent (1971-1980), 29.2 percent (1981-1990), and 74 percent (1991-2000), respectively (see Figure IV-1). These population changes mirrored those of Hudspeth County. The Fort Hancock CCD has been the only CCD in Hudspeth County to show consistent growth. The Dell City CCD experienced population decreases of 16.3 percent and 30 percent from 1980 to 1990 and 1990 to 2000, respectively. The Sierra Blanca CCD saw an increase in population of 132 from 1970 to 1980, but an increase of only 115 over the next decade. From 1990 to 2000, the population of the Sierra Blanca CCD decreased by 13.45 percent.

As stated earlier, in the Census 2000 Fort Hancock CCD accounted for 58 percent of the population of Hudspeth County (see Figure IV-2). This percentage increased over the previous two decades. From 1980 to 1990, the Fort Hancock CCD went from 31 percent to 38 percent of Hudspeth County. In 1990, the populations of the Dell City CCD and the Sierra Blanca CCD each accounted for 31 percent of Hudspeth County, thereby, making Fort Hancock CCD the most populated CCD in the county.

Figure IV-1: Population Growth Fort Hancock CCD (1960-2000)

Population Growth-Ft. Hancock CCD
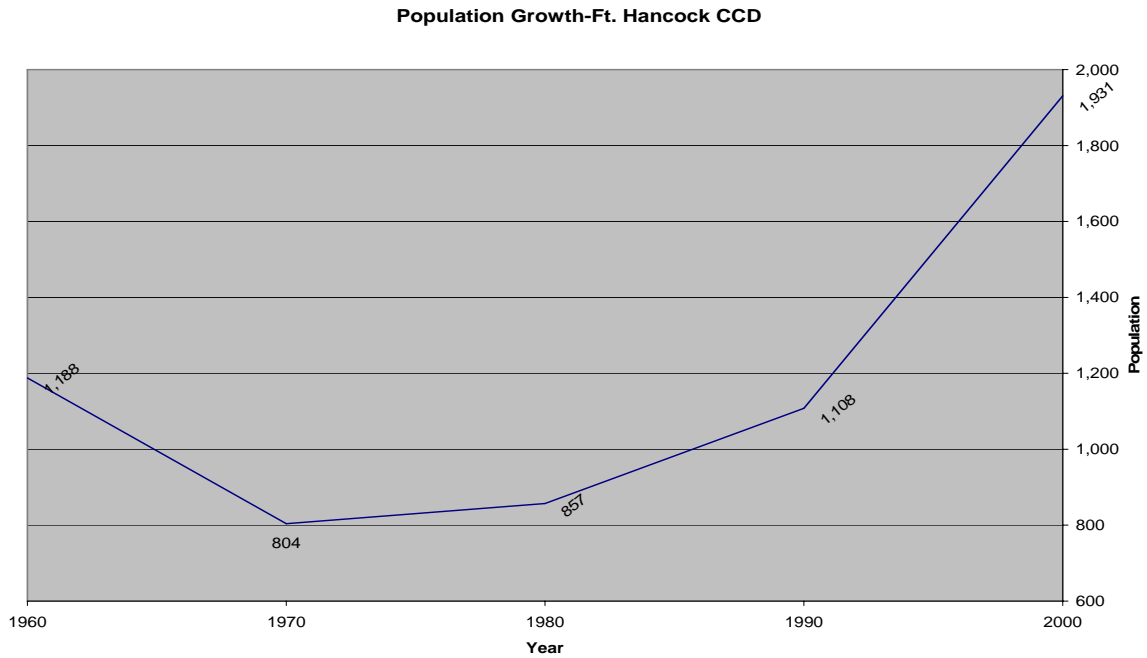
Source: U. S. Census Bureau

Figure IV-2: CCDs Population as Percentage of Hudspeth County 2000

CCDs as Percentage of Hudspeth County 2000

- FORT HANCOCK CCD
- DELL CITY CCD
- SIERRA BLANCA CCD
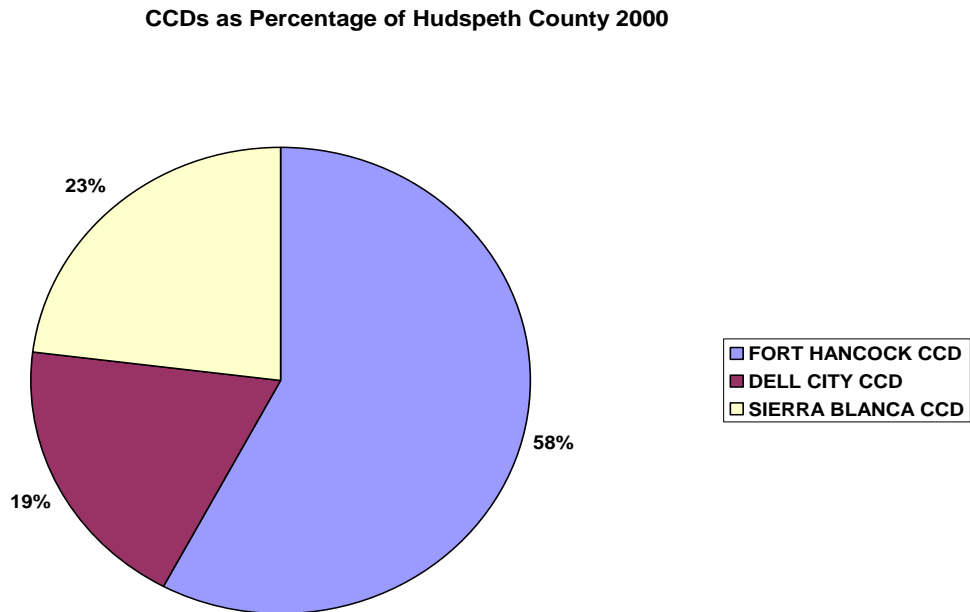
Source: United States Census Bureau

Estimates provided by the TSDC show that Fort Hancock CDP's single population loss since Census 2000 was from January 2003 through July 2003 when its population went from 1,812 to 1,792. For comparison purposes, we use population estimates for Sierra Blanca CDP and Dell City, the most recent estimates being for January 1, 2004. All three places have had net population increases from Census 2000 to January 1, 2004, but the increase of Fort Hancock CDP is by far the greatest. The net increases of the Sierra Blanca CDP and Dell City were 21 and 5, respectively. In contrast, the population of the Fort Hancock CDP increased by 82. According to TSDC's population estimates, the Fort Hancock CDP has accounted for more than half of the county's population since Census 2000. In fact, from 2000 to 2004, the population of Fort Hancock CDP as a percentage of Hudspeth County increased from 51.2 percent to 51.4 percent; for the same period, the population of Dell City as a percentage of the county decreased from 12.3 percent to 12 percent; and, the population of the Sierra Blanca CDP as a percentage of the county remained at 15.9 percent.

Population Forecast

Making population forecasts for rural communities is extremely difficult because the population base is small; and as such is very sensitive to unforeseen events, such as drought, prices of crops, etc. that will affect migration, and consequently, population. Thus, the best way of dealing with uncertainty in the future is to offer different scenarios that can be adjusted as more information over time becomes available.

Different scenarios of future population forecasts are offered here that will give us some range of best and worst case scenarios (see Table IV-1). The scenarios developed by Institute for Policy and Economic Development (IPED) assume that annual population growth rates (5.7%) for the previous decade (1990-2000) will continue to be constant, making population growth follow an exponential trend; another scenario assumes a rate of growth (2.5%) more than half of the previous decade's (see Figure IV-3). These scenarios are contrasted with those of the State Water Plan of the State of Texas. The scenario for 2020, in which a rate of growth half of the previous decade is assumed, is closer to the estimates made by the State Water Plan in Texas; a population range of 2,403 to 2,806. In contrast, the high rate (5.7%) scenario estimates a population 3 times larger than 2000.

Table IV-1: Population Forecast (2000-2020)

2002 STATE WATER PLAN	**2000**	**2010**	**2020**
HUDSPETH COUNTY	3282	3631	3884
DELL CITY	728	781	809
SIERRA BLANCA	610	653	672
COUNTY-OTHER (FORT HANCOCK)	1944	2197	2403
IPED (5.7% rate) (FORT HANCOCK)	1713	2985	5202
IPED (2.5% rate) (FORT HANCOCK)	1713	2192	2806

Source: State Water Plan and IPED

Figure IV-3: Fort Hancock Population Forecast (2000-2020)
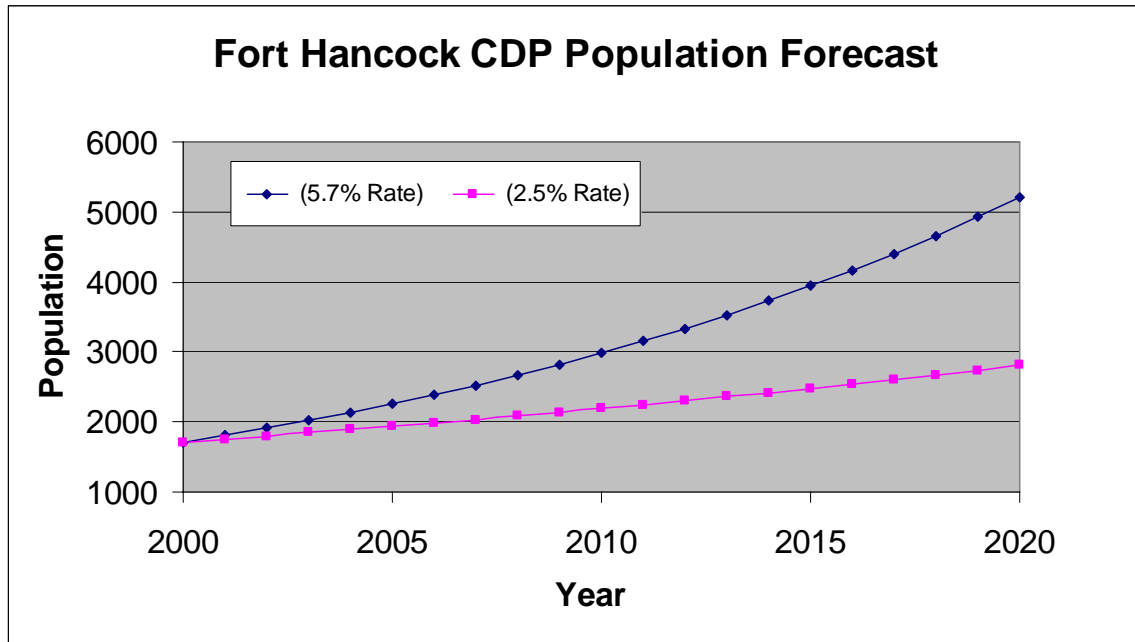
Source: IPED

Population Structure

Census 2000 reported the median age in Fort Hancock to be 25.9 years: 22.7 years for males and 29.2 years for females. Without adjusting for migration, birth, or death, at least 43 percent of Fort Hancock's population is currently less than 25 years of age. The largest 5-year age cohort is the 15 to 19 age group, making up 12 percent of the current population. Furthermore, the 10 to 24 age group makes up nearly one-third of the population as shown in Figure IV-4. This could have several implications for the city, such as increases in voting, births, property ownership, and in turn, tax revenue. This may also bring about more residential development and an increased need for utilities, such as water, gas, and electricity. A cohort analysis allows us to have a better understanding of the structure of the population which helps us to understand the weakness and strengths in regards to economic development.

Figure IV-4: Fort Hancock & U.S. Population Structures
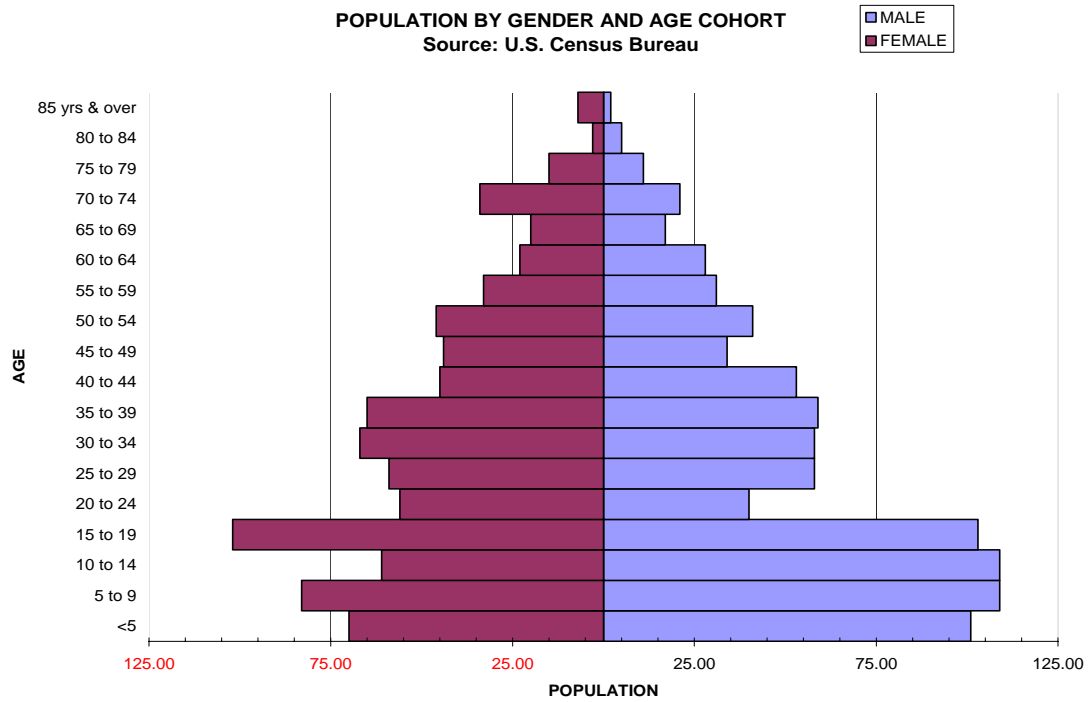
Source: U.S. Census Bureau
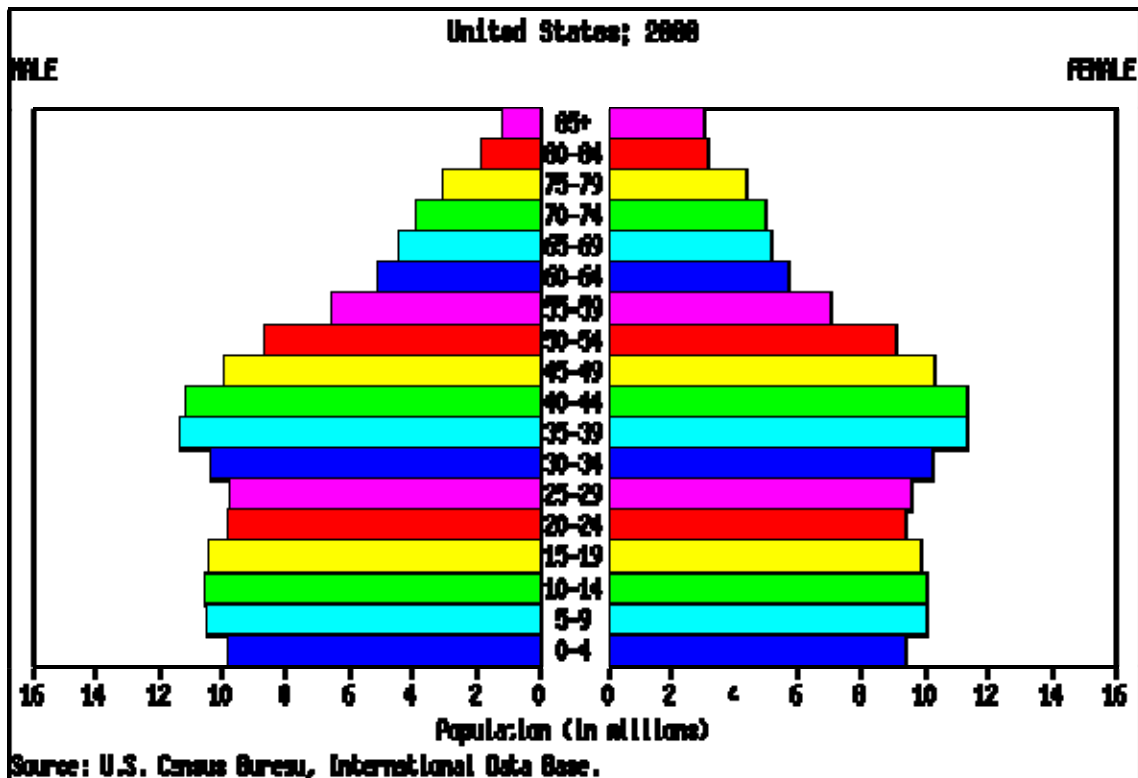
The Fort Hancock population structure in Figure IV-4 shows a resemblance to those of developing countries where a high dependency burdens exist. Dependency burden, also known as dependency ratio, is the proportion of the population aged 0-15 and 65 +, which is considered economically unproductive, and therefore not counted in the labor force, thus posting a burden to the productive small labor force (16-64). Furthermore, the dependency ratio can be divided into two types—old and youth dependency ratio.

Comparing Fort Hancock's population pyramid with the United States in 2000, two issues emerge. First, the population at younger ages (< 15) is larger, relatively speaking, to the nation as a whole, whereas the 65+ population cohort is smaller. The overall dependency ratio for Fort Hancock is .70, the youth dependency ratio is .53, and the old dependency ratio is .17. Fort Hancock's dependency burden is the opposite of that of the United States, that is, the U.S. labor force is beginning to be burdened by the old dependency ratio (health care, Medicare, pensions); whereas, Fort Hancock is burdened by the youth dependency ratio (schools, housing, job opportunities, etc.).

Second, some age cohorts, such as the 20 to 24 age group, show an imbalance with regards to gender; there are more females than males. The imbalance in the older population is a trend that is not peculiar to Fort Hancock; females have a higher survival rate than males. But the imbalance at younger cohorts (20 to 24: 56 females, 40 males as of Census 2000) is worrisome. Migration is explained by pull and push factors. Plausible explanations for migration include: 1) the pull factor, going away to college and not returning —the brain drain of the local economy seeking "greener pastures" and, 2) the push factor, lack of job opportunities at Fort Hancock forcing young people to migrate.

Fort Hancock CDP Demographic Profile

The Hispanic population in Hudspeth County has been increasing since 1980, while the number of white, non-Hispanics has been decreasing. This is in contrast to the almost 19 percent increase of white, non-Hispanics seen in Fort Hancock CCD from 1990 to 2000. From 1980-90 and 1990-2000, Hudspeth County's Hispanic population increased by 18.3 percent and 33.5 percent, respectively. For those same decades, the decreases of white non-Hispanics were 13 percent and 19.3 percent, respectively. In short, Hudspeth County is experiencing an increase in its Hispanic population and a decrease of white non-Hispanics (see Figure IV-5).

Figure: IV-5: Hudspeth County Race Profile
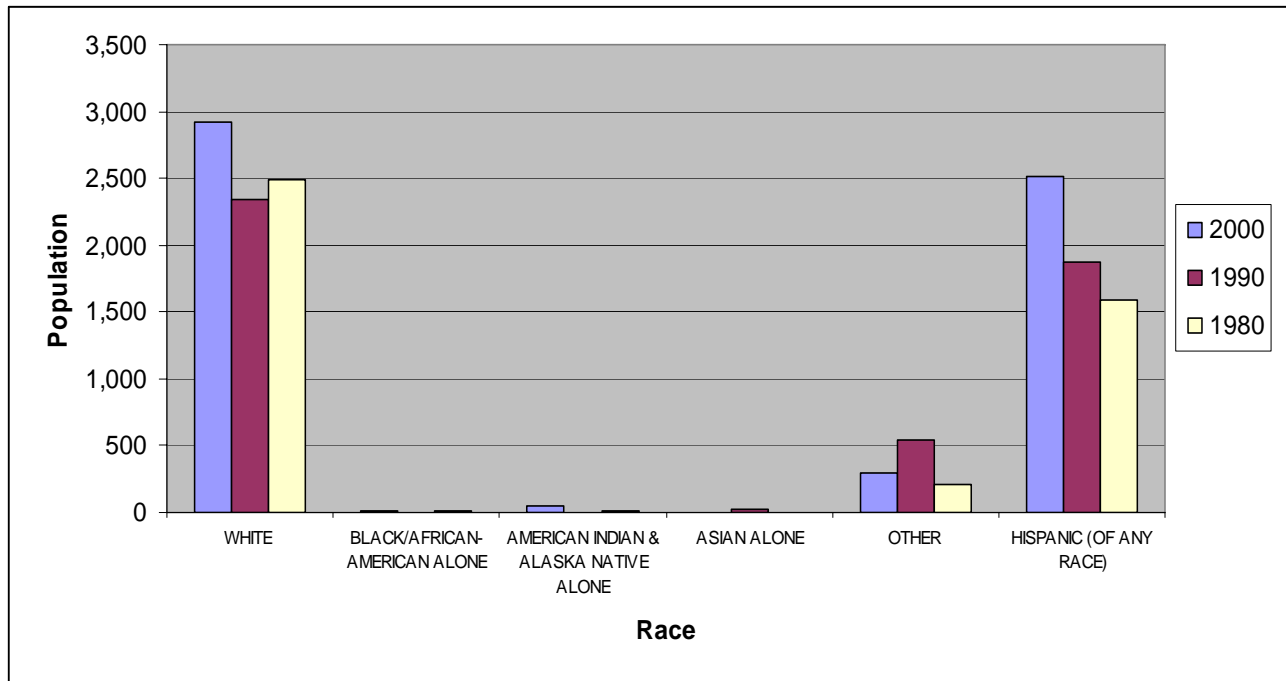
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Hispanics of all races numbered 1,556 and accounted for nearly 91 percent of Fort Hancock's population (see Figure IV-6). In addition to 1,470 white Hispanics, the 69 respondents who answered "some other race alone," and 17 of the 22 who answered "two or more races" called themselves Hispanics. In terms of ethnicity, 97 percent of Hispanics categorized themselves as Mexican, this ethnic make-up is normal for towns along the U.S.-Mexico border. The Hispanic population for Fort Hancock CCD increased by 56.6 percent from 1980 to 1990 and 86.1 percent from 1990-2000.

For "Race," 1,619 answered "white alone," 3 answered "American Indian/Alaskan Native alone," 69 answered "some other race alone," and 22 answered "two or more races." Of the 22 "biracial" answers, 15 were "white and some other race" and 7 were "white and American Indian/Alaskan Native."

Figure IV-6: Fort Hancock Ethnic Profile (2000)

Fort Hancock Ethnic Profile (2000)

- HISPANIC
- WHITE
- NATIVE AMERICAN
- OTHER
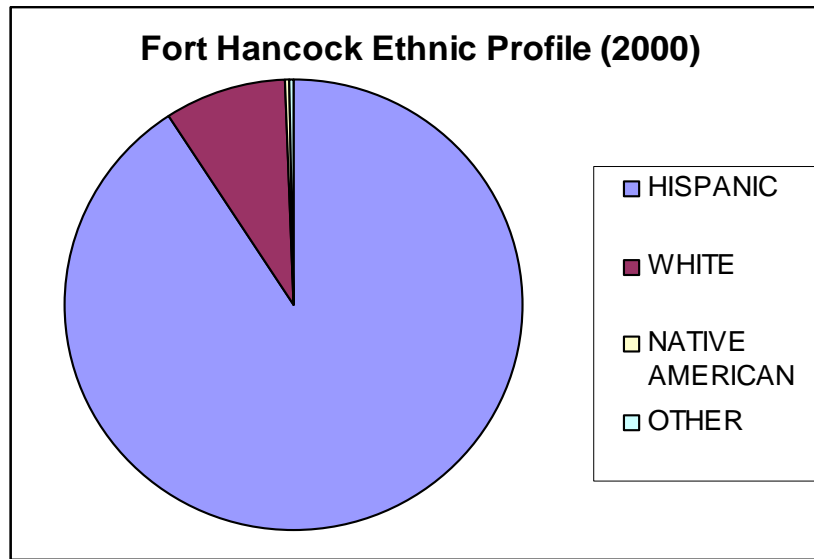
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Foreign Born Population

Figure IV-7 shows the gross estimates for the foreign born population. As it can be seen, the foreign born population has increased steadily since 1980. As a matter of fact, foreign born population increased by 25 percent from 1980 to 1990 and 55 percent from 1990 to 2000 (see Figure IV-7). In 1990, foreign born population represented 21 percent of total population, and by 2000 the proportion increased to 33 percent; this means that 1 of 3 persons living in the county is foreign born.

Figure IV-7: Hudspeth County Foreign Born Population

Hudspeth County Foreign Born Population

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

32
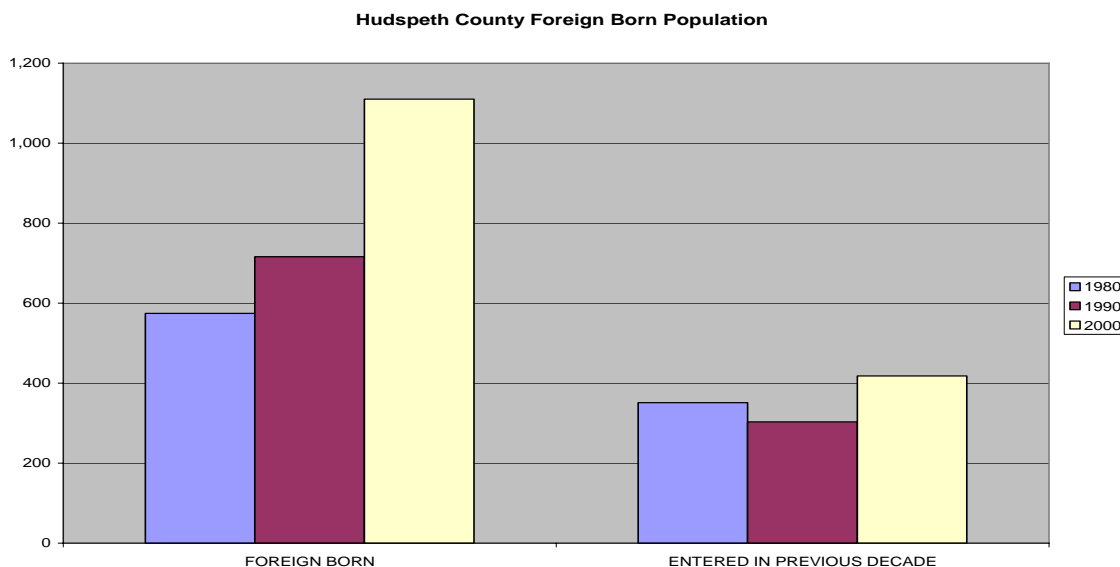
The fact that a large proportion of the population is foreign born and the majority are Hispanics of Mexican descent, relates with the question of what language is spoken at home. Not surprisingly, Spanish is more common than English. As Figure IV-8 shows, households speaking "English only" have been declining over time, whereas Spanish speaking households are on the rise. The ratio of Spanish speaking households to English only speaking households went up from 1.5 to 2.8 from 1980 to 2000.

Figure IV-8: Language Spoken at Home (5 years and over)

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOMES (PERSONS 5YRS AND OVER)
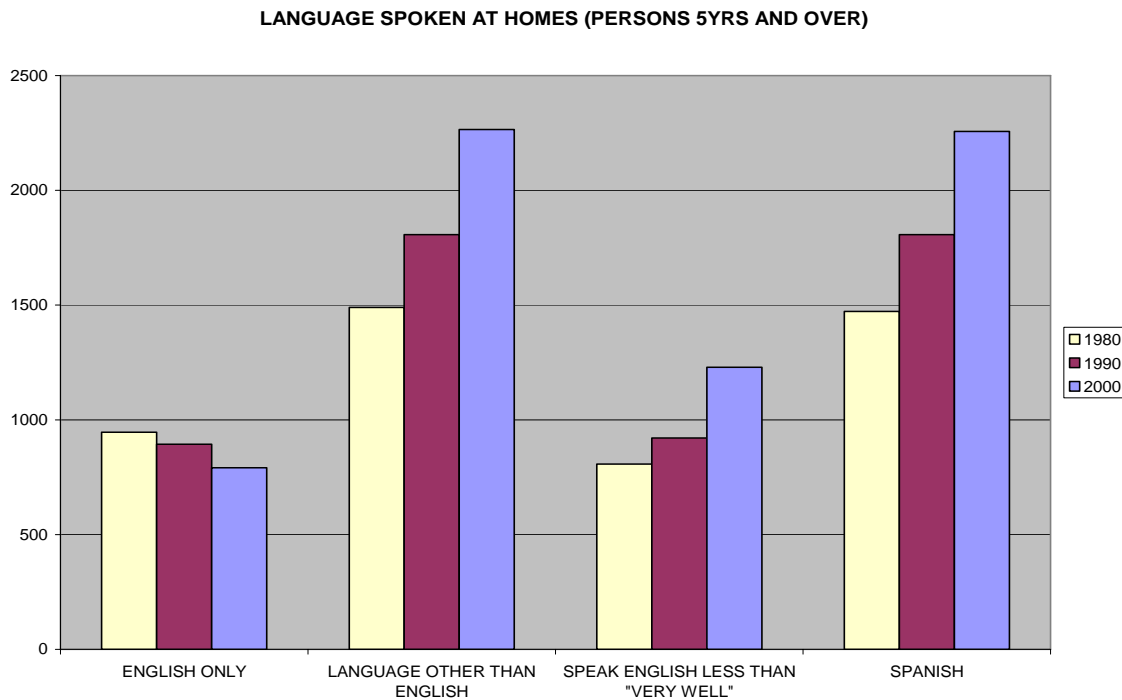
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Female Householders

Another increase in Fort Hancock CCD from 1990-2000 is the number of female heads of households. There were a total of 235 female heads of households in the Fort Hancock CCD and 224 in the Fort Hancock CDP in 2000. The number of "female householders in family households with no husband present" increased by nearly 76 percent for Fort Hancock CCD, from 41 in 1990 to 72 in 2000; these 72 were in the Fort Hancock CDP. Females living alone went from 12 to 49 for that same period of time; 45 of these were in the Fort Hancock CDP. Female head of households with husbands present, tallied 108 for the CCD and 101 for the CDP.

Population Distribution

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 45.5 is the average number of people per square mile in the Fort Hancock CDP compared with only 0.7 for the entire county. Population density is higher east of the Fort Hancock CDP (see Figure IV-9). Population distribution was analyzed at the census block level and GIS technology was employed to develop a map of where population is located in Fort Hancock. Most of the population lives in the eastern portion of the CDP east of Knox Avenue between interstate highway I-10 and State Highway 20 (see Figure I-8). Because census blocks were used, it seems that population is located east and west of Knox Avenue; however, this is misleading because the census block west of Know Avenue is mostly agriculture and most residents live near the avenue as discussed in the land use section.

Figure IV-9: Fort Hancock Population by Census Block
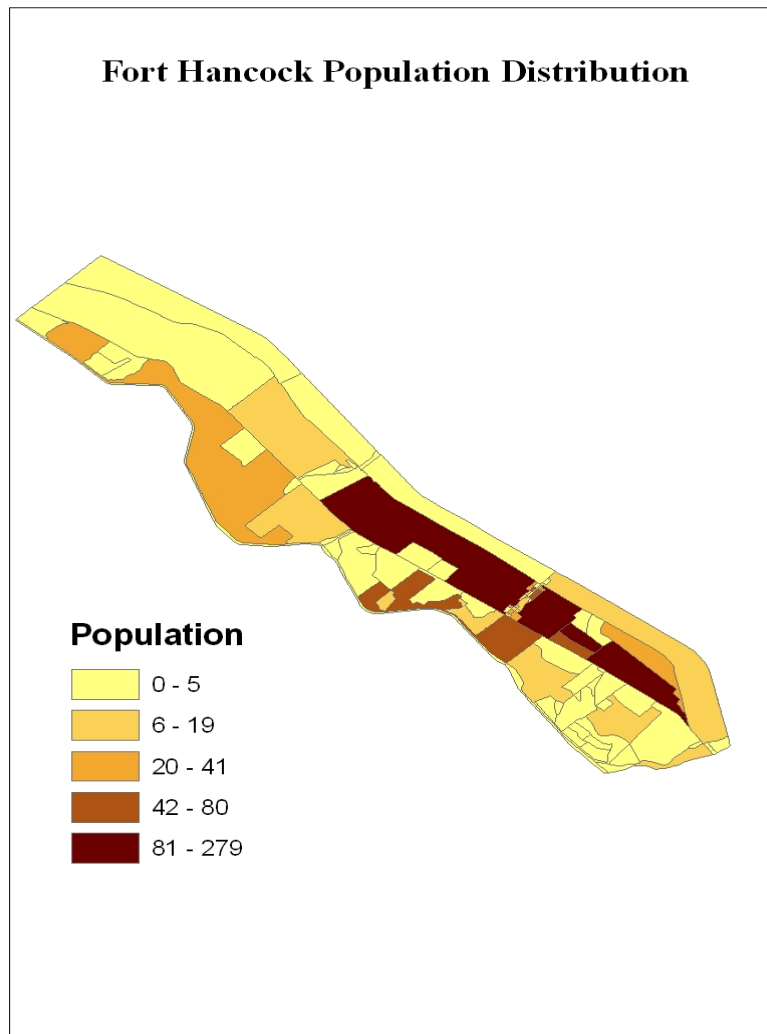
Source: Institute for Policy and Economic Development

Section V: Labor Force and Income

Labor Force

Table V-1 summarizes some of the key characteristics of the labor force 16 years of age and over for Fort Hancock and Texas to establish a benchmark in order to make comparisons and draw conclusions. From a total of 1189 persons that potentially could be in the labor force, only 43.9 percent are active in the labor force; however, this share is smaller (63.6%) when compared to the state Texas.

Fort Hancock lags behind the State rates with respect to the percentage of the civilian labor force employed and unemployed; only 38.4 percent of the civilian labor force is employed in Fort Hancock compared to 59.1 percent in Texas; thus, this implies a higher dependency burden for Fort Hancock (See Section IV). Unemployment rates are also higher in Fort Hancock (5.5%) compared to the State (3.8%).

Finally, there is also a significant difference with respect to the state in regards to gender tendencies of the labor force; the percentage of female labor force employed is almost twice as large for Texas compared to Fort Hancock. In sum, the need of increasing the percentage of employed labor force is a key issue that Table V-1 makes clear; that is, there is an important need to increase job opportunities in the area.

Table V-1: Labor Force Comparisons (2000)

		Fort Hancock CDP	Texas
Population 16 years and over	1189	100.0%	
In labor Force	522	43.9%	63.6%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	.7%
Percent of Civilian labor Force	12.5	1.1%	6.1%
Not in labor force	667	56.1%	36.4%
Civilian Labor force	522	43.9%	62.9%
Employed	457	38.4%	59.1%
Unemployed	65	5.5%	3.8%
Female 16 years and over	618	100.0%	
in labor force	186	30.1%	56.2%
Employed	162	26.2%	52.3%
unemployed	24	3.9%	3.9%

Source; U.S. Census Bureau

Two questions are important to pose. First, in what type of industry are people employed? And second, where do the people work? Both questions allow us to get a better picture of the labor force and the economic base of the community.

Table V-2 demonstrates the type of industries people work and what industries constitute the economic base of the community. The location quotient (LQ[1]) is a standard measure that is used to identify what are the key industries that constitute the economic base of a community.

Table V-2: Employment by industry (2000)

NAICS	Industry	Fort Hancock CDP Percent	Texas Percent	LQ
500	Manufacturing	23.19%	8.68%	**2.7**
1500-1600	Educational, health and social services	16.63%	9.48%	**1.8**
100	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	15.54%	4.83%	**3.2**
2000	Public administration	9.85%	14.06%	**0.7**
400	Construction	8.75%	6.89%	**1.3**
800	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	8.10%	4.11%	**2.0**
700	Retail trade	6.35%	11.20%	**0.6**
1700	Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	2.84%	7.91%	**0.4**
1200	Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	2.41%	12.42%	**0.2**
1900	Other services (except public administration)	2.41%	5.66%	**0.4**
900	Information	2.19%	2.42%	**0.9**
600	Wholesale trade	1.31%	4.17%	**0.3**
1000-1100	Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	0.44%	8.17%	**0.1**
		100.00%	100.00%	

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

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[1] $LQ_i = e_i^t / e_T^t \ / E_i^t / E_T^t$

e_i^t = local employment in industry i in year t
e_T^t = total local employment in year t
E_i^t = State employment in industry i in year t
E_T^t = Total State employment in year t

The location quotient "measures the extent to which an area is specialized, relative to another area, in the production of a particular product" (Klosterman, 1990). The State of Texas is used as a reference region to determine the relative importance of the different sectors in Fort Hancock. A LQ greater than 1 indicates a greater specialization in that specific industry compared to the reference region; a LQ of 1 indicates the same degree of specialization of the area of study with respect to the region; a LQ less than 1 indicates that the area lags behind or it is less specialized than the reference region in that specific industry.

Fort Hancock had a LQ greater than 1 in 5 (38.5%) out of thirteen NAICS industries. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining are activities that play an important role in economic base for the area. The greatest LQ shows that the area has a greater specialization in primary activities with respect to the state; this kind of specialization is expected due to the fact that the area is located along the Rio Grande and this facilitates agriculture. But one issue that stands out is the fact that almost a quarter of the population works in manufacturing. According the LQ, the area is more specialized than the State in this specific sector; however, Fort Hancock lacks an industrial base.

Another important issue to highlight is that educational, health, and social services are also big employers and, according to the LQ, it plays an important role. The Fort Hancock Independent School District (FISD) in the school year 2003-204, according to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), had a total teaching staff of 64 (51 professional and 13 educational aids). Assuming that the staff has stayed constant, the FISD would employ about 84 percent of the employees working in that particular industry, if indeed all the people live and work in Fort Hancock. Public administration is also another important employer as it represents 1 out of 10 workers.

The main employers who had offices in the area, in addition to local government, are Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), the Border Patrol, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC); but, according to the LQ this sector is under-specialized with respect to the state of Texas. Although construction and transportation and warehousing have a relative minor role in the local employment, they play an important role in the economic base of the area.

The LQ is calculated based on employment data and it does not distinguish between place of work and residence. It is assumed that place of work and residence are the same; therefore, the conclusions regarding what constitute the economic base can be misleading. It was stated previously that, it is peculiar that almost a quarter of the population work in manufacturing, yet, there is a lack of employers specializing in secondary activities. Table V-3 gives clues to solve this puzzle by providing information about flows of labor based on the place of work and residence.

Table V-3: Commuting Flows

| Fort Hancock CDP, Texas		
Total	**453**	**Percent**
Worked in state of residence	441	97.4%
Worked in county of residence	241	53.2%
Worked outside county of residence	200	44.2%
Worked outside state of residence	12	2.6%
Worked in an MSA/PMSA	**212**	**46.8%**
Lives in El Paso works in Hudspeth Co. TX	127	-------

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to Table V-3, in 2000 the total employed labor force in Fort Hancock CDP is equal to 453 people and, from those, 53 percent are intra-county employees. A considerable proportion (44%) of the labor force commutes to work outside the county of residence. Almost half (47%) of the labor force commutes to work to a metropolitan statistical area (MSA). Gravity models employed in transportation have found consistently that the number of trips decline with distance. So given the fact that the El Paso is the closest (40 miles) MSA to Fort Hancock it would be safe to assume that all those from Fort Hancock that work in a MSA (47%) work in El Paso. In summary, Fort Hancock can be characterized as a community which depends on the primary activities of agriculture, public sector employment, and income derived from commuters working in El Paso, which is the closest larger metropolitan urban area with a population close to 600,000 according to the 2000 Census.

The above discussion gives a static picture. To draw any conclusions regarding employment trends, Figure V-1 shows the trends and identifies which industries have expanded and which have declined in the past 20 years. The trends shown here are at the county level; but, nevertheless they can be representative of Fort Hancock because of the relative share of Fort Hancock to Hudspeth County.

Figure V-1 shows that the agriculture activities have declined (50.5%) substantially. During the last two decades (1980-2000) in that particular employment sector has had a reduction of over half from 410 to 203 employees. This sector is the only one that shows a clear declining trend.

On the opposite side, there are other industries that show important growth. Manufacturing experienced a substantial increase from 1990 to 2000. The number of employees in this sector grew almost five fold (4.5) during this decade from 26 to 116. Another industry that has expanded consistently is public administration where employment grew 56 percent. The remainder of the industries show an up and down trend; in the majority of the cases, employment increased during the 1980-1990 decade and then declined in the 1990-2000 decade.

Figure V-1: Employment Trends by Industry (1980-2000)

Hudspeth County Industry
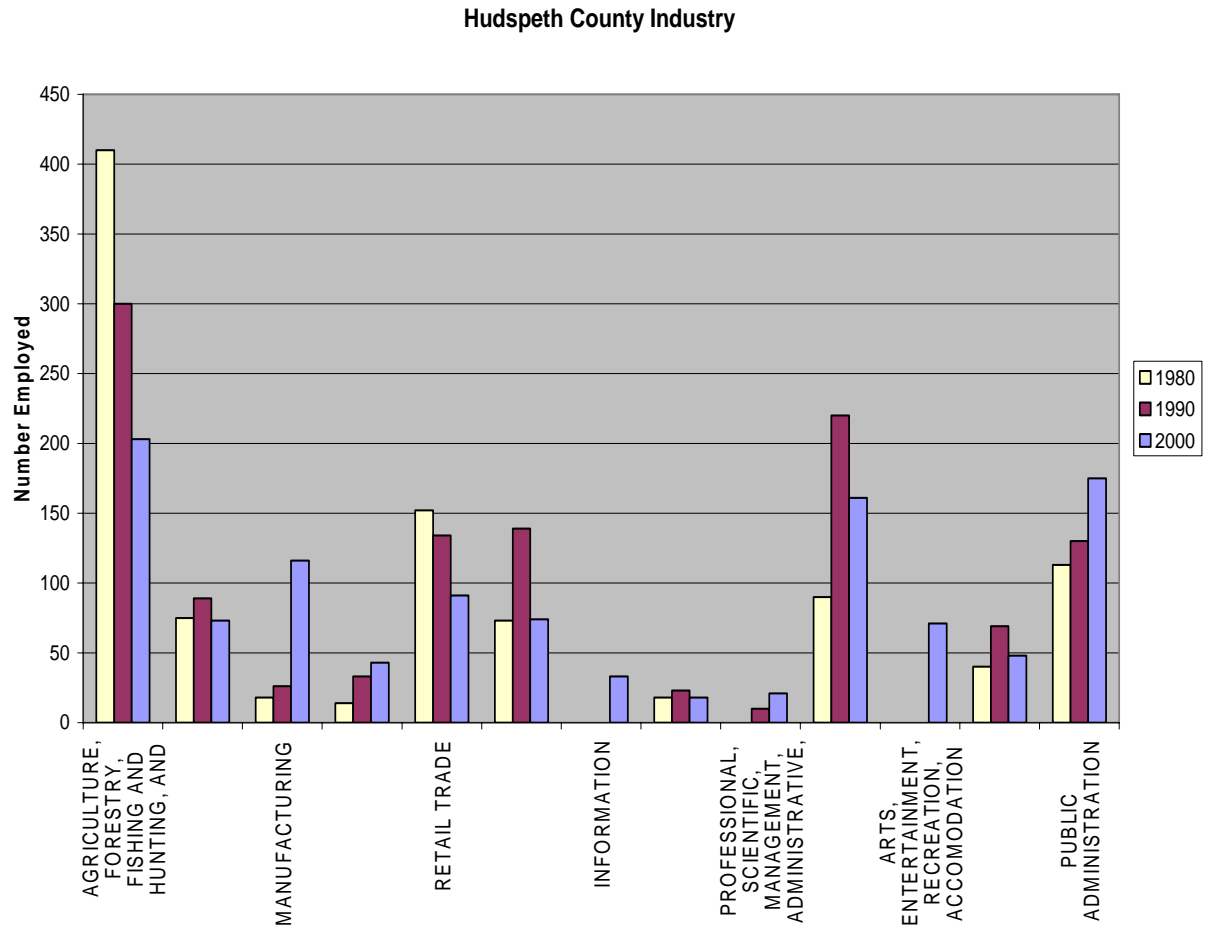
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As a final note, over the next 10 years, Fort Hancock may see 8 percent of its current population leaving the workforce as a result of reaching retirement age. This may be countered, however, by the 20 percent of the current population that may enter the workforce over that same time period.

The above trends corroborate what was stated in the demographic section. Fort Hancock may see an increase in the demand of services for its older population (health care), educational services for the youth, and the need to generate more jobs to help stop its population from migrating.

Education

The assets that a community holds are what determine its well-being. The assets of a community can be divided into two broad categories--physical and human. The physical assets include the land that the community controls and how it develops the

land. Buildings are other assets that benefit the community not only in the form of property tax; but, these can be used to produce goods. Roads, sewer treatment plants, water pipes, etc. are also physical assets. The residents of the community constitute the city's human assets; the quality of the human assets will make a substantial difference in the well-being of community or city.

It is said that the American economy has made the transition from a modern to a post-modern economy. This transition implies that wealth generation does not depend on the production of tangible goods (e.g. cars) but intangible goods and services. Ideas and knowledge are the driving forces, instead of machines and equipment, in the post-modern economy. The post-modern or post-industrial society depends on its human capital to generate wealth. Educational attainment of the population is the best indicator of human capital of a community, as well as how a community will be incorporated into the post-industrial economy driven by knowledge and ideas. It is important to emphasize that designing a public policy that focuses on human capital requires a long-term commitment to pupils and schools.

Table V-4 Educational Attainment (2000)

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	TEXAS	FORT HANCOCK
POPULATION > 25 YEARS OLD	12,790,893	938
No schooling completed	2.63%	10.66%
11th grade or less	18.08%	55.76%
12th grade no diploma	3.64%	4.05%
High school graduate (includes equivalence)	24.84%	13.54%
Some college no degree	22.35%	7.68%
Associate degree	5.23%	0.75%
Bachelor's degree	15.61%	4.69%
Master's degree	5.16%	1.81%
Professional school degree	1.65%	0.64%
Doctorate degree	0.82%	0.43%
	100.00%	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table V-4 and Figure V-2 show Fort Hancock and Texas' educational attainment. Again, Texas is used as a benchmark to help make judgments regarding the level of human capital. As such, benchmarking can be helpful to establish certain goals or standards to be achieved through public policy.

Figure V-2: Educational Attainment
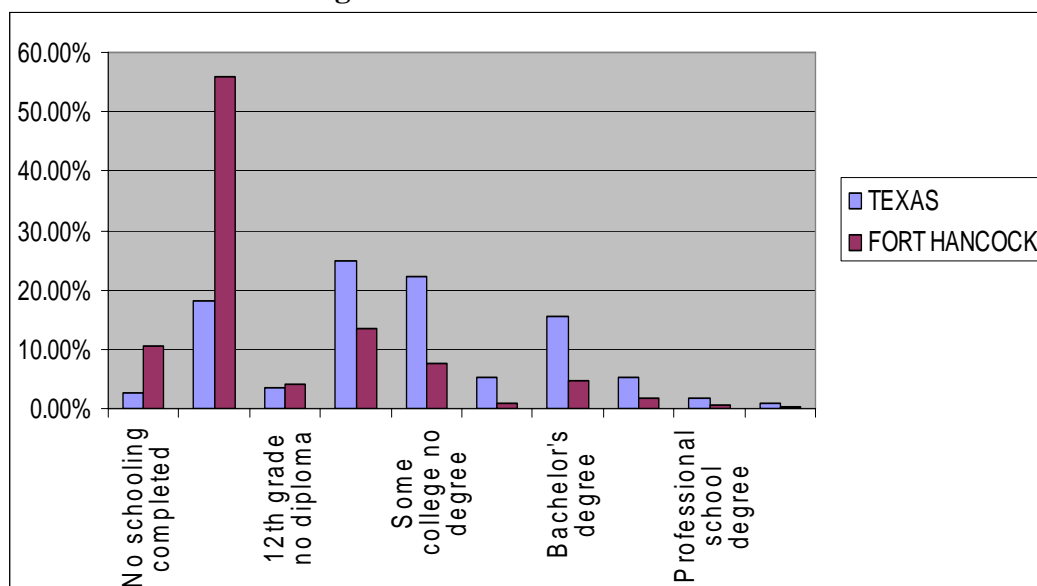
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table V-4 and Figure V-2 shows a great challenge ahead in the new post-industrial economy. Fort Hancock exceeds the State of Texas in all the negative indicators and lags behind in all the positive indicators. The population that lacks any formal education is 4 times greater in Fort Hancock than in Texas. The number of high school dropouts (11th grade or less) in Fort Hancock is 3 times that of the State. The ratio of the population with high school diploma or equivalent is 1 to 2 with respect to the State. The ratio of those with a bachelor degree is 3, meaning that for every 1 person with a bachelor degree in Fort Hancock there are 3 in the State. Similar results are obtained when other degrees are taken into consideration.

The differences get worse when ethnicity is taken into account in Fort Hancock. According to Census 2000, the ratio between Hispanics and whites with 25 years of age and over, who had obtained bachelor's degrees or higher was 2; in other words, for every 1 Hispanic with a bachelor degree or higher there are 2 whites. About 18 percent of Hispanics 25 years of age and over had a high school diploma and/or some college, but no degree. The figure for white, non-Hispanics was 40 percent. Nearly 80 percent of Hispanics are high school dropouts compared to 18 percent for white, non-Hispanics.

Income

The above analysis shows that Fort Hancock lags behind in almost every indicator of human capital. Academics agree that educational attainment is the best predictor of income levels. Hence, the outcome of a labor force with poor educational attainment will be reflected in their income levels.

Table V-5 and Figure V-3 corroborate the assertion that educational attainment is the best predictor of income levels. Figure V-3 shows that Fort Hancock has a larger percentage of families at lower income levels when compared with Texas. The trend is reverse at the highest income levels where the proportion favors the State. As a matter of fact, the proportion of families whose income is less than $10,000 is 3 times larger than Texas; whereas, the proportion of families whose earnings exceeds $100,000 is about half of the State. Furthermore, the median family income in Fort Hancock is only 40 percent; whereas, the *per capita* income is only 36 percent of that of the State.

Table V-5: Income Levels (2000)

| INCOME IN 1999 (families) | PERCENT | | RATIO |
	TEXAS	FORT HANCOCK	
less than $10,000	7.00	23.40	3.34
10,000 TO $14,999	5.30	11.30	2.13
$15,000 TO $24,999	12.30	31.00	2.52
$25,000 TO $34,999	12.80	12.90	1.01
$35,000 TO $49,999	16.80	9.90	0.59
$50,000 TO 74,999	20.50	7.10	0.35
$75,000 TO $99,999	11.30	0.70	0.06
$100,000 TO $149,999	8.80	3.70	0.42
$150,000 TO $199,999	2.50	0.00	0.00
$200,000 OR MORE	2.70	0.00	0.00
Median Family Income (dollars)	$ 45,861	$18,560	0.40
Per capita income (dollars)	$ 19,617	$ 7,037	0.36

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Disaggregating Fort Hancock information to compare income levels of the different ethnic groups it was found that in the Fort Hancock CCD, no household of Hispanic origin had an income greater than $49,999 in 1989. This changed somewhat in 1999, as there were 27 Hispanic households with income greater than $49,999.

Median incomes showed great disparities between Hispanic householders and white, non-Hispanic householders. The median household income in 1999 for households with white, non-Hispanic householders was almost 91 percent greater than those of a household with a Hispanic householder. The median income for families with a white, non-Hispanic householder was 184 percent greater than the median income for a family with a Hispanic householder. There was also a disparity in per capita incomes. Per capita income of white, non-Hispanics was $18,538, nearly 3 times as much as that of Hispanics, $5,724.

**Figure V-3: Income Level Comparisons (Percent)**
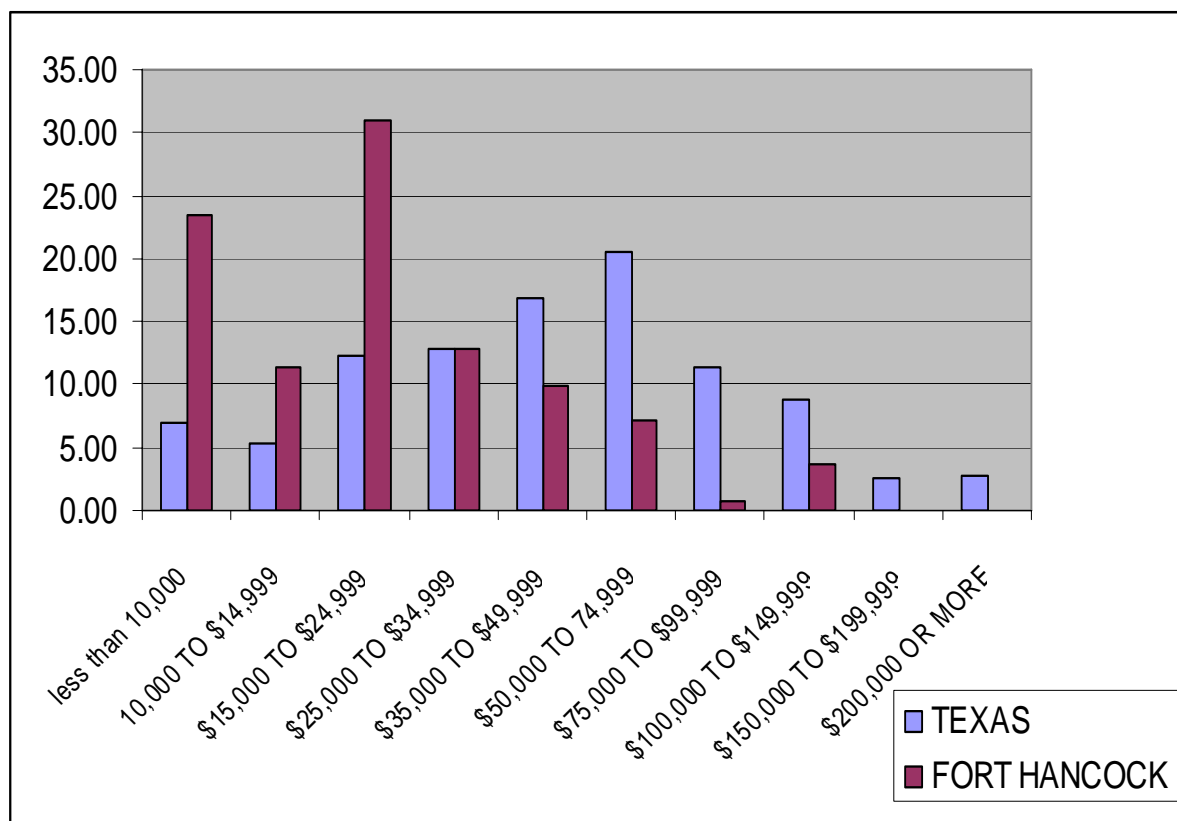
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

A critique of the income level approach in measuring the well-being of a community is that it does not take into consideration the cost of living; therefore, in some instances, some communities appear to be poorer than they actually are. In other words, it may be that the median family income in Fort Hancock purchases more goods and services when the actual cost of living is taken into account.

Poverty is determined by comparing pretax cash income with the poverty threshold, which adjusts for family size and composition. Therefore, other indicators, such as poverty level are used to give a more accurate picture. In 2003, according to the official measure, 12.5 percent of the total U.S. population lived in poverty. Texas is in tandem with the U.S. levels of poverty; but, the percent of families below poverty levels in Fort Hancock is almost 4 times larger and about 3 times for individuals living below the poverty level (see Figure V-4).

Figure V-4: Poverty Level Indicators
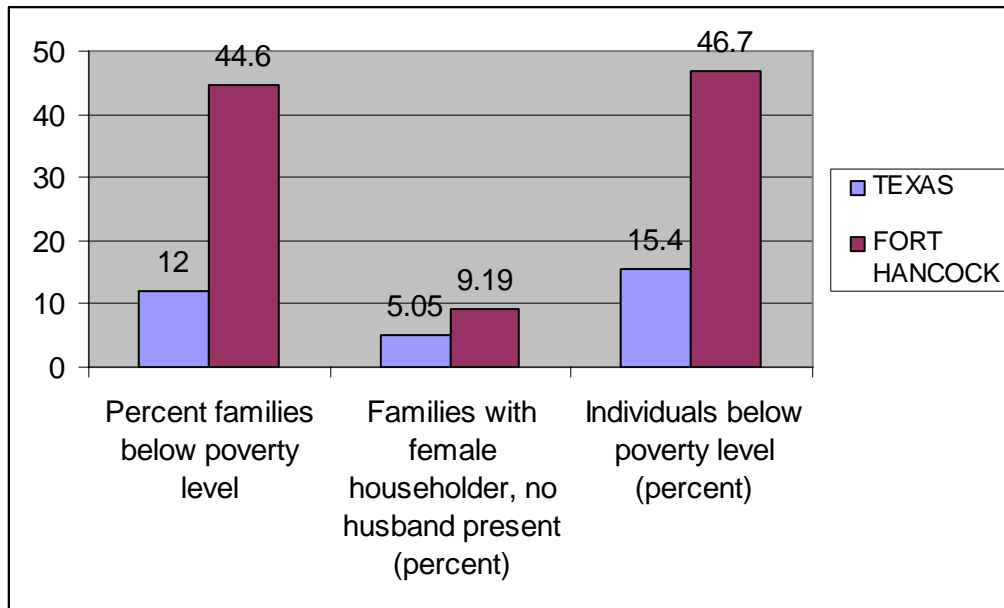
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

In conclusion, Fort Hancock faces great challenges in the future to improve their standards of living. Among the main challenges are to:

- Attract new industries that will counteract the decline of agriculture.

- Create jobs with higher value added.

- Improve the skills of labor force by providing vocational training.

- Improve education levels.

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