

## **CSA #11 – Downtown/Montrose/River Oaks Executive Summary**

### **Demographics:**

The Downtown/Montrose/River Oaks CSA is a predominantly Anglo area located in the heart of Houston. Over 60% of the population is Anglo, about 20% is Hispanic, and the rest of the population is made up of smaller proportions of African-Americans and Asians. The total per capita income is about twice that of Greater Houston and, the median home value is 2.5 times that of the entire city. The area is much better educated than Houston as a whole. More than half of adults have a college degree, and just less than 15% of the adult population has not completed high school. More than 20% of adults have a graduate or professional degree. Most households consist of married couples without children; however, about 9% of families with children are headed by single mothers.

### **Satisfaction levels:**

Compared to the rest of Houston, the residents of the Downtown/Montrose/River Oaks area reported mixed levels of satisfaction with their lives. 59% of residents reported a great deal of satisfaction with their neighborhoods (second highest in the city), 69% reported high levels of satisfaction with their families (third lowest in the city), and 95% reported high levels of satisfaction with their friends (fourth highest in the city). 36% of adults successfully manage the demands of their careers and families, and 48% of residents reported being happy with their lives as a whole.

### **Spiritual Condition:**

Residents of CSA #11 are arguably the least spiritually active in the entire city. 15% of residents attend church weekly (least in the city), and 30% of residents never attend church (most in the city). When having problems, 29% would be likely to see a religious counselor, and 21% would seek help in a place of worship. However, the community is much more spiritually aware than these statistics might indicate. 52% of residents are likely to read the Bible or other inspired literature when they have problems. Likewise, 69% of residents pray when they have problems, an interesting statistic considering that only 26% of residents have no doubts about the existence of God.

### **Interviews with Key Leaders in the Downtown/Montrose/River Oaks CSA:**

Key leaders pointed to the richly diverse population, cultural facilities, revitalized downtown, and numerous social services as positive attributes about the community. Most of the problems that interviewees spoke of were related to diversity as well: high cost of living, and a large economic disparity brings conflict to the CSA. Leaders lauded the Church for the myriad strong community based programs that address the social needs of those within the community. However, interviewees criticized the Church for providing “simple charity” that doesn’t address the root of social problems, and for being more concerned with doctrinal differences than effective collaboration. Interviewees also pointed to a lack of acceptance of all residents within the community by the Church. Leaders commented that congregations could help to solve problems by becoming more visible within the community, and by collaborating together with community development initiatives.

