

COMMUNITY HEALTH THROUGH BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT: *A Community Listening Session to Shape Your Neighborhood Vision*

A summary report of key findings of a listening session held on September 18, 2008, Ragan Park, East Tampa

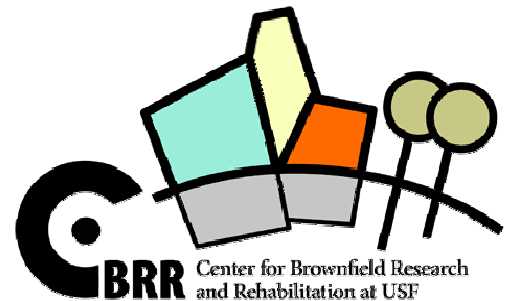


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Introduction

Brownfields are vacant lots, abandoned gas stations, under-utilized warehouses, former factories and other eyesores that may reduce the environmental, economic and health well-being of your community. Brownfields redevelopment helps restore sites to productive and beneficial use through site assessment and cleanup, redevelopment and reuse, and long-term management and stewardship. Through its East Tampa Brownfields Assessment and Redevelopment Program, the City of Tampa is conducting a Public Health Monitoring Project. This project provides important opportunities to strengthen public health assets through brownfields redevelopment. Substantiation of community needs can be translated to support the benefits and needs for health clinics, community gardens, parks and recreational areas, and pharmacies. Tools include mapping of site characteristics, examination vital statistics and health challenges, and monitoring of health and environment.

The City of Tampa's East Tampa Brownfields Assessment and Redevelopment Program is made possible in part by a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency. The Public Health Monitoring Project is being lead by the Lorna Alston, East Tampa Urban Development Division, City of Tampa; Miles Ballogg, TBE, Inc., Dr. Robert Brinkmann, Center for Brownfield Research and Rehabilitation at USF, Patrick Barnes [need organization], and B. Suzi Ruhl, JD, MPH. These individuals comprise the Public Health Monitoring Team.

Background

On September 18th, a Community Listening Session was held at the Community Center at Ragan Park for community based organizations, health care providers and associations, non-profit groups, faith based organizations, local businesses and others who support neighborhood and community revitalization. The purpose of the listening session was to

- introduce the East Tampa *Brownfields Public Health Monitoring Project*
- listen and learn from the community about their environmental and health challenges and resources
- identify next steps to improve public health through brownfields redevelopment

The listening session was divided into two parts. The first part provided an overview of brownfields redevelopment, highlighted successful community based brownfields redevelopment projects, and explained the public health monitoring project. The powerpoint presentations on these topics are provided as Appendix A. The second part involved a group exercise designed to gain insights from the community about their health concerns, environmental challenges and brownfields redevelopment interests. Ultimately, the Community Listening Session sought to engage the public from the East Tampa area in efforts to plan and implement the public health monitoring project of the City's East Tampa Brownfields Program.

To secure community involvement, notice was provided through general announcements, and personal invitations. Invitations were sent to members of the East Tampa Community Revitalization Partnership, Local Health Providers, and Government Officials. Further, the listening session was announced at the [The East Tampa Revitalization Partnership and various subcommittee meetings, church meetings, etc.] Finally, announcements were made in the Florida Sentinel Bulletin and the Tampa Tribute. A total of 17 individuals attended the session. An agenda and the questionnaire are in Appendix B and C.

Results of the Group Exercise

The Group Exercise involved a carefully designed program that involved a facilitated response to specific questions. The questions were initially determined by the Public Health Monitoring Project Team. The questions were then given to Brinkmann's graduate environmental science and policy capstone course for review and evaluation. Based on this consultation, the list of questions was finalized.

During the Community Listening Session, Robert Brinkmann (USF) and seven graduate students (Angela Anderson, Joshua Berger, Seth Carleson, Andrew Gatewood, Nathan Miller, Leslie North, and Monetta Wilson) from Brinkmann's environmental science and policy capstone course facilitated the discussion of the questions at three break-out tables. Seventeen attendees were present and each table had 4-7 participants.

The results of the Group Exercise discussion of the questions are provided below, by table followed by a summary of the responses. This report concludes with recommendations and suggestions for future work.

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Question 1: What are the major health concerns of the residents in East Tampa?

Table 1

- Breathing problems (asthma) as a result of (presumed) contaminated air
- Chronic disease (heart disease and high blood pressure)
- Lack of awareness of available health resources
- Not enough health resources
- Access to resources, particularly for cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases
- Poor respect/service given to clients at clinic, leading to decreased use
- Limited facilities for all income levels (e.g. labs and special care facilities)
- Lack of sustained contact (consistent programs throughout the year)
- Lack of advocacy; residents do not have forum to express health concerns
- Depression and mental health; cultural barriers for seeking mental health assistance, stress management
- Outreach and education for informed decision making
- How brownfields affect management of chronic illnesses

Table 2

- High Blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Insurance coverage
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- HIV/AIDS
- Health awareness
- Prevention
- Cancer
- Large population of smokers
- Diet
- Birth Defects
- Education on health issues

Table 3

- Obesity
- Lead poisoning
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Lack of education
- Health impacts

Summary. The group identified key health issues in the community. Especially noted by two or more groups were asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. However, common issues within African American communities were also noted including lead poisoning, cancer, smoking, birth defects, HIV/AIDS, and mental health. All groups also pointed out the need for better awareness or education on health issues. One group also mentioned the need for greater health access and better services at health clinics and health fairs.

Question 2: How are these health concerns currently addressed within the community?

Table 1

- Community based organizations (after school, CDC, etc)
- Need for asset mapping, utilization, communication to combine resources and network

Table 2

- Health fairs address some but not all issues
- Not enough outreach to community, long waits for services

Table 3

- Long wait times at clinics early in the morning
- Need more clinics
- Health insurance problems
- Transportation to clinics

Summary. Table one identified one way that health concerns are currently addressed within the community—through community based organizations. Table two identified health fairs as a way that health concerns are addressed. However, each group identified problems with how health concerns are addressed within the community: need for asset mapping, communication, more health fairs and clinics, long wait time at clinics, and health insurance problems. It is evident from question 1 and 2 that while there are many health issues in the community, there is a perception that they are not adequately addressed by existing services.

Question 3: What environmental challenges exist in East Tampa?

Table 1

- Lack of awareness/knowledge of environmental issues
- More listening sessions to get community involved with the issue
- The need for community engagement by fostering the development of community groups and grass roots organizations through marketing and organized events
- Storm water flooding
- Wildlife (particularly snakes and alligators) comes out when it floods
- Too many unsightly water retention ponds
- Lockhard, Young elementary, and others next to ditches that flood
- Concern about ditches for smell, airborne contaminants
- Awareness of dangers
- Asthma
- Lack of awareness of the fate of pollutants removed during cleanup

Table 2

- Industry
- Dense population
- Air quality
- Soil pollution
- Groundwater polluted with chemicals
- Costs of ridding lead paint
- Chemicals from port

Table 3

- Ground pollution (car lots, lead, mechanics, gas stations)
- Education
- Lack of green space
- Cleaning up abandoned cars, litter
- Noise pollution

Summary. A variety of responses were elicited from this question. However, it is evident that most of the respondents see air, water, and soil pollution as issues within different contexts. For example, Table 1 pointed out the problem with storm water flooding, but thought there were too many water retention ponds. Table 2 noted issues with air quality, soil pollution, and ground water pollution. Two groups

noted that education or lack of awareness were issues. Interestingly, one group noted that wildlife in the city was a problem during heavy rainfall events. Another group noted issues with lead paint and chemicals from the port.

Question 4: How are these environmental challenges currently addressed within the community?

Table 1

- Some construction
- Referral for removing wildlife
- Need community advocacy
- Removal of tanks
- Access to medical assistance for cardiovascular, pulmonary diseases, management effect of brownfields

Table 2

- New investors
- Not addressed
- New legislation

Table 3

- Employment/job training
- Water retention ponds
- Environmental police

Summary. A variety of responses were obtained from Question 4. Many of the responses referred to particular issues. For example, removal of tanks was noted as a clean up response as was referral for removing wildlife (Table 1). However, some general responses were obtained as well such as employment and job training, investors, access to medical assistance, and the presence of environmental police. One group felt that environmental concerns were not addressed effectively.

Question 5: Which of the following issues do you think are problems in East Tampa?
1) community involvement (e.g. government decision making, community service);
2) employment and job training; and,
3) other social justice issues.
Why?

Table 1

- Community Engagement
- Networking of community groups, particularly churches
- Level of concern of community members
- Decisions made without community input
- Community services not done to the level as other areas (e.g. Lutz vs. East Tampa)
- Community deficiencies are addressed more quickly in other Tampa communities

Table 2

- All of the above (i.e. community involvement, employment and job training, and other social issues)
- Studied too much
- Apathy
- Lack of trust

Table 3

- Employment and Job Training
- Information and education
- Unhealthy built environment/dumping

Summary. Table 1 believed that community engagement was the biggest problem in East Tampa. They felt that there should be more networking of community groups, that some decisions were made without community input, that community services were not done to the level as in other areas, and that there was concern about community engagement within individual community members. Table 2 believed that all of the issues were a problem and that the community was studied too much, that there was apathy in the community, and a lack of trust. Table 3 believed that employment and job training were the biggest issues and that there needs to be more information and education in the community.

Question 6: How are the issues you identified in Question 5 addressed in the community?

Table 1

- Through community organizations (e.g. revitalization partnerships)
- Priority of the mayor
- Not overnight, time consuming
- Churches (over 100)
- Needs assessment (led to CDC of Tampa)
- Need for readily available resource so residents know what is available (e.g. welcome to East Tampa booklet)

Table 2

- Ran out of time

Table 3

- Abandoned cars—environmental police
- Monthly meetings
- Education
- Free clinic

Summary. Table 1 believed that the community engagement issue is addressed in the community through common organizations, by the mayor’s prioritization, by the churches, through visioning work (needs assessment). Unfortunately, Table 2 ran out of time. Table 3 believed that the employment and job training is assisted through the work of the environmental police, through monthly meetings, through education, and through a free clinic.

Recommendations and Future Work

Based on the information provided by attendees during the listening session, it is evident that there are key issues within the community.

1. It is perceived that there are basic problems with health common in many urban African American Communities such as high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, HIV/AIDS, asthma, birth defects, and lead poisoning. *Any health monitoring plan should consider these issues.*
2. It is also clear that there is a general sense that there is a lack of health care or health services in the East Tampa community. Thus, there is opportunity to *consider the development of health care services a priority in the redevelopment of brownfields* in the East Tampa community.
3. Several environmental issues were raised including air, water, and soil pollution and local problems such as storm water flooding and animal nuisances. It is also clear that there are not many sources of environmental education or information within the East Tampa Community. It is recommended that *greater focus be placed on developing an information stream on environmental data and information in East Tampa and that brownfields environmental data be readily available to the public.*
4. It is evident that community engagement, job training, employment, and other social justice issues are perceived to be a problem in the East Tampa community. *Focus should be placed on using brownfields as a way to engage the community, develop job training and employment, and alleviate social justice concerns.*

5. *A survey including the questions provided to the participants at the Listening Session will be developed and distributed to the East Tampa community.*

Continued Engagement of the Community

At the end of the meeting, the participants provided recommendations on measures to maintain communication regarding the East Tampa Brownfields Program and the Public Health Monitoring Project. This included distribution of the report on the evening's listening session and avenues how to keep the conversation going on health, environment, social justice, and brownfields. The participants believed that the following avenues for dissemination of information would be useful:

- Website
- Radio 1150 AM
- Churches (particularly through their health and wellness ministries)
- Train the trainers
- Round table discussion with experts
- Meetings with specific neighborhood groups
- Meetings with health care professionals

Conclusion

The City of Tampa's East Tampa Brownfields Assessment and Redevelopment Program is committed to the revitalization of the East Tampa community through brownfields redevelopment. It recognizes community involvement as a fundamental element of success. The Public Health Monitoring Project provides an important vehicle to develop a plan that will promote community health through brownfields redevelopment. Ultimately, the results obtained from the Community Listening Session provide a sound foundation to achieve this goal.

Appendices

Agenda for the meeting
Questionnaire

**COMMUNITY HEALTH THROUGH BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT:
A Community Listening Session to Shape Your Neighborhood Vision**
September 18, 2008, 6:30-8pm

6:00 **Light Refreshments**
Sponsored by TBE

6:30 **Welcome and Introductions**
*Ed Johnson, Manager, East Tampa Urban Development Division,
City of Tampa*

6:35 **Overview of the Community Listening Session**
Suzi Ruhl, J.D., M.P.H., Environmental Law Institute

6:40 **Achieving Environmental, Health, Social and Economic Justice
in East Tampa: An Introduction to Community Health,
Environmental, Social and Job Benefits from Brownfields
Redevelopment**

Moderator: Bob Brinkmann, PhD, Chair and Professor,
Department of Geography, University of South Florida

- Basics on Brownfields and the East Tampa Brownfields Program
*Lorna A. Alston, Economic Development Specialist, East Tampa
Urban Development Division,
City of Tampa*
- Local Brownfields and Public Health Success Story
Miles Ballogg, TBE Group, Inc.
- Worker and Job Training
Patrick Barnes, Esq., BFA Environmental
- Public Health Monitoring and Mapping
Suzi Ruhl
- Q & A

7:10 **Community Participation**
Moderator: Bob Brinkmann

- Work group exercises
- Group reporting
- Plenary questions

8:00 **Next Steps, Closing & Adjournment**
Lorna Alston

COMMUNITY HEALTH THROUGH BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT:

A Community Listening Session to Shape Your Neighborhood Vision

September 18, 2008, 6:30-8pm

Instructions:

Participants will work together at each table to answer the following questions. The groups should spend 5-7 minutes responding to each topic. Each group should select a reporter who will present findings to the entire audience.

East Tampa is a vibrant community with many assets including its people, its institutions, its location, and its environment. However, it also has many brownfields that can contribute to lower property values and that can lead to some health problems. The series of questions below are intended to get input on the concerns of residents on the topic of community health, environment, social justice, community involvement, and job training. The results will be used to develop a health monitoring plan for East Tampa and will assist in making decisions about brownfields redevelopment in the future.

Topic: Community Health

Question 1: What are the major health concerns of the residents in East Tampa?

Question 2: How are these health concerns currently addressed within the community?

Topic: Environment

Question 3: What environmental challenges exist in East Tampa?

Question 4: How are these environmental challenges currently addressed within the community?

Topic: Community Involvement, Job Training, and other Social Justice Issues

Question 5: Which of the following issues do you think are problems in East Tampa?

- 1) community involvement (e.g. government decision making, community service);
- 2) employment and job training; and,
- 3) other social justice issues.

Why?

Question 6: How are the issues you identified in Question 5 addressed in the community?

Topic: Brownfields Redevelopment

Question 7: How would you like brownfields redevelopment to address any of your concerns associated with health, environment, social justice, community involvement, and/or job training in East Tampa?

Question 8: What type of end use would you like to see when the brownfield sites in East Tampa are cleaned up and redeveloped?

Plenary Questions:

Instructions: After the groups have reported their findings and recommendations, the following questions will be posed to the entire audience:

Question 9: What information would help you better understand brownfields redevelopment in East Tampa and how you can participate in the redevelopment? Example prompt: location of brownfields sites, data on specific diseases

Question 10: How can the results of tonight's work and future work on brownfields be provided to you in the most useful manner? Example prompt: web site, maps, fact sheets,

Question 11: What next steps do you suggest? Example prompt: workshop, facilitated dialogue/roundtable discussions

Question 12: Are there others who are not here who should be involved?

Parting Activity:

Instructions to the Audience:

If you know of specific areas in your community that you believe may be a brownfields, please identify it on the maps placed at the back of the room.