

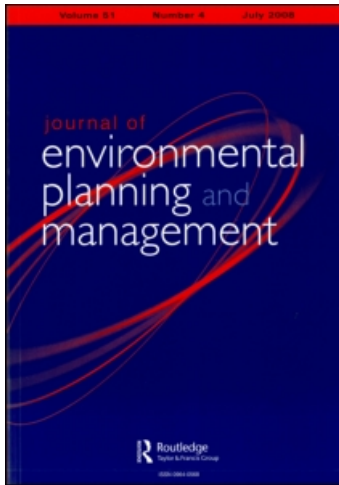
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Journal of Environmental Planning and Management

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713429786>

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Online Publication Date: 01 September 2008

To cite this Article Gallagher, Deborah Rigling and Jackson, Sarah E.(2008)'Promoting community involvement at brownfields sites in socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods',Journal of Environmental Planning and Management,51:5,615 — 630

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/09640560802210971

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09640560802210971>

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Promoting community involvement at brownfields sites in socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods

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(Received June 2007; final version received January 2008)

Brownfields programmes provide environmental justice to distressed communities by applying private sector remediation and real estate expertise to abandoned and contaminated properties. This study examines how brownfields developers and community support organisations operating in socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods work to increase awareness of projects in the community, build trust between stakeholders and create mechanisms for community members to participate in brownfields decision making. Analysis of case study data from brownfields sites in four US cities shows that developers and non-governmental organisations can play important roles in fashioning redevelopment outcomes which benefit both developers and communities. When standard required outreach efforts are combined with non-traditional community involvement mechanisms, the result is often long-term support for redevelopment projects.

Keywords: brownfields; public participation; environmental justice; stakeholders; VCP

1. Introduction

In 1979 the US Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response Cleanup and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Superfund programme was created to leverage public and private resources to clean up tens of thousands of hazardous waste sites (Church and Nakamura 1993) which existed across the country. Although many sites were remediated, Superfund, with its complicated technical requirements and legal procedures, began to struggle (Simons 1998). Community leaders and policy makers sought an alternative to clean up the remaining abandoned sites, overwhelmingly located in poor neighbourhoods, which prevented cities from undertaking redevelopment projects (Hird 1993).

The quest to clean up the remaining sites led to the creation of brownfields programmes: site remediation and redevelopment strategies focused on revitalising declining neighbourhoods. These programmes are critical components of environmental justice initiatives implemented to improve the environmental health of the poor communities which host a disproportionate share of polluting industries (Bullard 1994).

Brownfields developers bring real estate redevelopment and site remediation expertise to poor neighbourhoods (Wernstedt *et al.* 2006). They apply capital to purchase properties for remediation and redevelopment (Meyer and Lyons 2000). Developers also work to

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engender community support for their projects (Solitare 2005) by gathering and disseminating information on projects and reporting on redevelopment plans at formal public hearings. Community support agencies, with first-hand knowledge of community concerns and leadership structures, aid developers in these efforts. Developers recognise the risks associated with extending project timelines and promising what may not be delivered. Both developers and community support agencies face challenges in reconciling neighbourhood expectations with practical redevelopment outcomes. They must balance time and resources spent creating meaningful participation opportunities with those spent propelling projects forward. Successful brownfields redevelopment outcomes are contingent on reaching an effective balance between these two objectives.

Researchers and practitioners have long considered how to productively involve community members in public decision making. Arnstein (1969) described an eight-rung 'ladder of participation', categorising participation activities according to usefulness in empowering citizens. Under this framework, tools such as press releases and public hearings sit on lower rungs labelled 'non-participation' and 'tokenism', while tools such as delegated decision making are more favourable. Beierle (2002) discovered that when citizen stakeholder views are incorporated into decisions through the use of processes such as advisory committees, trust is increased and decision quality improves. Expectations of fairness play a role; if participants are treated fairly and provided adequate opportunities to participate in discussions, community involvement can be positive (Webler and Tuler 2000). However, barriers to citizen participation exist, including lack of administrative resources and inability to create processes and employ techniques adapted to community members' work schedules, education and experience (King *et al.* 1998).

This exploratory study builds on past research into community involvement in public decision making in two ways. First, it considers community involvement practices in brownfields redevelopment settings as vehicles to promote environmental justice goals in socio-economically disadvantaged communities. Second, rather than focusing on public sector actors whose first responsibility lies in the realm of public participation, it considers the roles of brownfields developers and community support organisations. In jointly considering these issues, tradeoffs between a focus on community involvement versus straightforward redevelopment without enhanced participation are viewed.

2. Brownfields redevelopment

As many as 500,000 brownfields exist in communities in the US (Lee and Seago 2002). Although brownfields exist in some suburban communities, most are located in depressed rural and urban neighbourhoods (Greenberg *et al.* 2000), primarily populated by minority and low-income residents (Heberle and Wernstedt 2006). Because brownfields redevelopment is often employed in poor communities of colour it is an important tool in addressing environmental justice concerns that arise when disadvantaged community members suffer disproportionately from environmental contamination (Freeland 2004).

Local, state and federal government agencies all play important roles in brownfields redevelopment. The federal government's role is primarily one of providing states with funds to operate brownfields and voluntary clean up programmes, granting communities funds for redevelopment and providing incentives for developers to work in these communities. For example, in the early 1990s the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established the Brownfields Assessment Pilot Programme to provide grants to communities for assessing and remediating brownfields. In 2002 the federal Small Business Relief and Brownfields Revitalisation Act was enacted to provide incentives such as limited liability for private

and public sector developers to reclaim brownfields. While neither of these initiatives mandate public participation, communities whose grant applications include public participation plans are more likely to receive funding (Greenberg and Issa 2005).

US states took the lead in encouraging brownfields reclamation through public/private partnerships (Bartsch and Dorfman 2000). State brownfields programmes, often called voluntary clean up programmes (VCPs), offer developers incentives, such as simplified clean up requirements and liability protection, limited government oversight and loans and grants from redevelopment funds. Most state brownfields programmes incorporate procedures for public participation, community training and outreach education. Although most declare a commitment to promoting community involvement, the 50 state brownfields programmes vary widely in terms of public participation tools required. For example, some states offer only public record, others offer public meetings on brownfields decisions, and still others provide communities with participation assistance grants (USEPA 2005).

Finally, local governments support brownfields redevelopment in various ways. Economic development agencies recruit developers. Local planning authorities may trade entitlements, such as zoning changes from low density to high or from industrial to residential, for a developer's commitment to remediate. Tax increment financing may be provided to developers demonstrating commensurate public benefit. Public participation is generally a requirement of local planning; citizens may attend public hearings about redevelopment plans and requisite zoning changes. However, local government efforts to promote community involvement in brownfields decision making are dependent on the availability of resources and are thus wide ranging (Bartsch 2003).

3. Socio-economically disadvantaged communities

Policy makers assert that if traditional public participation tools such as opportunities for notice and comment and public meetings are properly employed, citizens are provided with adequate opportunities for involvement in environmental decision making (Fiorino 2000). However, when brownfields redevelopment is deployed in impoverished or underserved communities within larger cities, traditional tools such as public meetings and hearings may not be sufficient to assure neighbours that sites are safely remediated and that redevelopment plans incorporate acceptable land uses and address community redevelopment goals. Many residents in socio-economically disadvantaged communities live below the poverty line, housing stocks are in decline, abandoned properties dot the landscape and crime rates are higher than the norm (Small and Newman 2001). Brownfields programmes are designed to address these important public policy issues by providing safer, cleaner neighbourhoods and improved job opportunities. However, when residents work multiple jobs, lack knowledge of and trust in traditional public participation procedures and may not be fluent in English, enhanced community involvement processes may be required to provide environmental justice.

Researchers studying participation processes have shown that involvement frameworks such as advisory committees and mediated negotiations build trust, educate and produce decisions that are more acceptable to citizens (Beierle and Cayford 2002). In disadvantaged neighbourhoods a level of trust between brownfields redevelopment partners and neighbours may not exist and care must be taken to build bridges and provide translation services and process education (Greenberg and Lewis 2000). However, developers are not often willing to undertake such efforts. For example, Wernstedt and colleagues (2006) found that developers consider moderate public participation requirements such as public hearings disincentives to undertake brownfields redevelopment.

While cities possess resources for formal public participation, such as public hearings at city hall, those resources may not be sufficient to engage community members in poor neighbourhoods. Convening multiple small-scale public meetings in the neighbourhood at weekends or in the evenings or door-to-door campaigns may be required to address challenges such as non-traditional work schedules (King *et al.* 1998). Developers working on brownfields remediation and redevelopment in disadvantaged neighbourhoods must garner support for their projects. In the face of public sector resource gaps, developers, assisted by community support organisations, step in to manage public participation processes.

4. Methods

This study of the roles that developers and non-governmental organisations play in promoting disadvantaged community involvement is part of a larger project that examined the impact of state-level brownfields programme public participation mechanisms. This section describes the methodology for the larger study. The following section describes the specific methodology used to develop case studies of community involvement in practice at socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

The present research on state-level public participation tools began by classifying each of the 50 state brownfields or VCP programmes according to the suite of public participation tools required, as shown in Table 1, below.

Low-level participation tool states were classified as those that employed only the public record as a public participation tool. In these states, community members must read the state public record to learn about details of brownfields redevelopment efforts. Medium-level participation tool states were those that employed public record in addition to public notice and comment, public meetings and/or public hearings. Residents in these states may scan local newspapers for public notices about brownfields redevelopment

Table 1. State brownfields programme public participation tools.

States (USEPA region)	Low-level tools (public record)	Medium-level tools (+notice, comment, meetings/hearings)	High-level tools (+community grants)
Region 1	Maine, New Hampshire	Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont	
Region 2	Puerto Rico	New Jersey	New York
Region 3		Delaware, Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia	Pennsylvania
Region 4		Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee	
Region 5	Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin	Indiana	Michigan, Minnesota
Region 6	Texas	Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico	
Region 7	Nebraska	Iowa, Kansas, Missouri	
Region 8		Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming	
Region 9		Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada	
Region 10		Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington	

activities and are provided with opportunities to comment in writing on proposed redevelopment plans, or attend public informational meetings or formal public hearings. Finally, high-level states were those that employed all the tools of low-level and medium-level participation states but increased opportunities for involvement by offering communities participation grants. Such grants provide funds for community organisations to hire experts to review technical information. The study sought to examine a sample of sites in each category.

Using this classification scheme, states were selected to examine in detail. With a goal of developing case studies in four states, the study selected one low-level participation tools state, two medium-level states and one high-level state. The final case study selection frame encompassed the states of Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Texas. Both North Carolina and Florida, medium-level participation tools states, asked developers to employ a public record and notice, comment, meetings or hearings, as appropriate to site conditions and neighbourhood concerns. Pennsylvania's brownfields programme, which was considered high-level, strived to incorporate notice, comment and meetings along with community public participation grants, if funding was available. Texas, a low-level participation tools state, only required developers to submit a public record of brownfields decision making.

The study sought to develop detailed case studies of three brownfields sites in each selected state. GIS tools were used to identify potential sites and aid in selection. Case study sites in small or medium-sized cities were chosen in neighbourhoods where more than 30% of citizens lived within 150% of poverty level. Small sites between 1.2 and 6 hectares in size were chosen. Each had moderate contamination due to spillage in soils or tainted building materials. Initially, sites were sought with private sector redevelopers or with a partnership between private and public sector organisations. However, private sector developers are wary of redeveloping small sites in socio-economically disadvantaged communities, preferring to avoid these communities entirely or to work in them only when large-scale redevelopment is possible (Robertson 1999). Therefore, the final case study frame included sites in which developers were public sector organisations, community development organisations or quasi-public agencies.

A formal case study methodology guided data collection (Yin 1994). A visit was made to each site and multiple sources of data were used, such as participant interviews, press releases, photographs, environmental reports and newspaper articles to inform case study development. Community members, both those active in neighbourhood politics and long-time residents, non-governmental organisation staff, state, county and local community brownfields programme staff and developers were interviewed using a guided, open-ended interview process (Weiss 1994). Local government officials provided background information on site history and neighbourhood characteristics. Questions addressed interviewees' perceptions of the site before and after clean up, their interactions with community members, government officials, community support agency representatives and developers and their involvement in and satisfaction with public participation processes. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and transcripts and print materials were incorporated into a qualitative database.

5. Case studies: community involvement in practice

This study considers the roles developers and non-governmental organisations play in designing and implementing community involvement programmes to promote environmental justice and redevelopment outcomes. It draws on a subset of case studies from the

larger study described above: Austin, Texas; Asheville, North Carolina; Tampa, Florida and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In Asheville and Lancaster the federal government (EPA) provided funds for environmental assessment activities, but was not involved in public participation efforts.

Three criteria were used to select the subset of case studies considered here. First, one site was sought to examine in each of the framework states. Second, sites were chosen in which state agency representatives played a limited role in orchestrating community involvement. This made it possible to examine cases in which developers and non-governmental organisations played a primary role. Finally, sites were examined in which a community involvement campaign had been deployed. Table 2, below, summarises the case study sites and neighbourhood characteristics.

5.1. *Saltillo redevelopment district, Austin, Texas: transportation-oriented development*

For many years, developers and Austin city officials ignored East Austin. Segregationist policies in the 1930s had forced minority residents and the poor to relocate to the city's east side. Industry interwove with the area's residences and schools. After the city was transected by the completion of interstate highway IH-35, disadvantaged citizens were further isolated and neglected. A lack of investment in infrastructure and proper maintenance left East Austin blighted and decaying, leading to crime and poverty.

Although development interest in the area had been increasing steadily since 1990, property values exploded in the early 2000s, making it difficult for families to remain in their neighbourhoods (Schwartz 2004). Developers are eager to capitalise on East Austin's investment potential, but community members worry about neighbours losing their homes, noting that 90% of the foreclosures in the city occur in East Austin.

Initiated in the mid-1990s, East Austin's Saltillo District Redevelopment project¹ is poised to become one of East Austin's most significant revitalisation efforts. Owned by Capital Metro, the local public transportation authority, the 4.5-hectare Saltillo District site sits within walking distance of downtown. Bisected by a rail line and flanked by a coffee shop, loading docks, vacant lots and housing, the site contains rented artists' studios and Plaza Saltillo, a small plaza built by Capital Metro and currently maintained and operated by the City's parks and recreation department.

Table 2. Case study summary.

Site	Site characteristics
Austin, Texas: Saltillo Redevelopment District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developer is quasi-public agency ● Original site is abandoned rail right-of-way ● Will be mixed-use transit-oriented-development
Tampa, Florida: Centro Place Apartments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developer is community development corporation ● Original site was historic hospital ● Redeveloped to affordable senior housing
Asheville, North Carolina: Historic Cotton Mill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developer is non-profit organization ● Original site is neglected riverfront neighbourhood ● Redevelopment goal is mixed-use development
Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Roberto Clemente Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developer is community development corporation ● Original site was poorly maintained greenspace ● Redeveloped to community park

Early in the planning process, Capital Metro and the City of Austin, motivated by a desire to pass a city-wide commuter rail referendum, concluded that citizens should be full partners in planning the Saltillo District from the earliest stage. Capital Metro, the site owner and developer, convened a nine-member community advisory group (CAG) that included six appointed community representatives, a member of the bicycling community, an independent developer and a state representative. Community representatives on the CAG were residents of the neighbourhood who were leaders of non-profit organisations, homeowners, business owners and community activists.

Meeting over the course of a two-year period, the CAG helped choose the consultant design team, participated in discussions with the city and Capital Metro and provided recommendations to the Capital Metro Board of Directors, the project's final decision makers. Capital Metro and the city also hosted two open house meetings in the immediate community; conducted focus groups aimed at a broader cross-section of Austin's residents and hired a public participation specialist to work with the design team.

In spite of these efforts, the CAG rejected the developer's master plan and provided their own set of recommendations to the Board. They expressed frustration with a lengthy formal participation process during which time concerns about rising housing prices and gentrification were amplified. They wanted more affordable housing and more multi-bedroom units to accommodate families and asked the city to obtain feedback on their proposal from a consultant who was hired to prepare an updated market analysis of the neighbourhood.

The Austin site illustrates the difficulties inherent in balancing community involvement goals with redevelopment goals and the risks that developers face in committing significant resources to engage the community. The project has been put on hold. The city is analysing the financial feasibility of the CAG's alternative recommendations and Capital Metro is conducting meetings with citizens, business leaders, church leaders and others to develop a consensus for this project. It is hoped that this new community involvement approach will reshape the Saltillo Redevelopment District's master plan and reinvigorate the redevelopment process.

5.2. *Historic cotton mill, Asheville, North Carolina: revitalising a riverfront*

The city of Asheville, North Carolina, offers many environmental, artistic and cultural resources. Recently, an increasing number of visitors and retirees have decided to make Asheville a seasonal base, fuelling a booming second home market (Price 2006). This has occurred while older neighbourhoods have languished, particularly former industrial lands along the French Broad River, where for over 20 years community groups have been conducting planning and visioning exercises for the city's riverfront (*Asheville Citizen-Times* 2007). One of the groups, RiverLink, a non-profit organisation, has been educating the public about water quality and economic revitalisation issues and spearheading comprehensive planning efforts.

The River Arts District neighbourhood, which abuts the French Broad River, is home to artists, young professionals and some of the city's poorest residents. Transients also seek shelter in the neighbourhood's abandoned areas. In 1993 RiverLink purchased a dilapidated and contaminated but culturally relevant former cotton mill. Although the mill was largely destroyed by arsonists in 1995, it remains sit prominently within the District. The cotton mill property covers less than 3 acres, but community leaders believe that it is one of the most important parcels of land in the city's riverfront revitalisation effort. The North Carolina Brownfields Programme is providing technical assistance for

the site's remediation and a release of liability to future owners. Once remediation activities have been completed, RiverLink plans to redevelop the site.

RiverLink has worked to broadly engage and educate the public in Asheville about planning efforts by holding monthly 'salons', meet-and-greet activities where various topics are presented and hosting creative functions such as imaginary yacht club events. Staff members create a 12-page newspaper insert every 6 months that reaches over 160,000 people. The organisation also organises opportunities for citizens to participate in planning and visioning activities.

However, despite RiverLink's activities, some residents are dissatisfied with the organisation's public participation efforts. Some community members report that until recently they knew little about brownfields and were unable to share ideas and concerns concerning the cotton mill's redevelopment. This struggle regarding the quality of communication has been going on for almost 10 years. Asheville's Land of Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) is now assisting RiverLink with public awareness activities. LOSRC has issued press releases about the site, features photos of the cotton mill on its website and convened a city-wide brownfields advisory group of regional stakeholders such as bankers, real estate professionals, environmental consultants and property owners.

Since building on the cotton mill site has not yet begun, the developer has an opportunity to improve public participation by focusing on the cotton mill and ensuring that neighbours are involved, while meeting key redevelopment timelines. Despite concerns about missed opportunities, participants stress the site's potential. LSORC's Holly Bullman sums up hopes for the site: "I think that the cotton mill offers us that chance to kind of connect the past to the present and give people both an environmental education and historical education about our region, too".

5.3. *Centro Place apartments, Tampa, Florida: affordable senior housing*

Situated in the rapidly growing city of Tampa, Florida, the VM Ybor neighbourhood is a densely populated and tight-knit community. It is poorer than the rest of Tampa, with almost half of its residents living below the poverty level (Hillsborough Community Atlas 2005). Many current residents are descendants of Afro-Cuban and Spanish immigrants who came to work in the nearby cigar factories of the Ybor City.

After 1928 neighbourhood residents were cared for in the Centro Asturiano Hospital, a 144-bed privately-owned facility supported by membership dues and philanthropic contributions (Long 1965). The hospital eventually became obsolete and was abandoned, going bankrupt in 1991. Five years later its buildings were partially demolished and the site was fenced by the City of Tampa. The 2.8-hectare site languished for over a decade. Squatters lived in makeshift housing, drug deals were conducted and illegal dumpers deposited waste and abandoned cars on the former hospital grounds. Clean up posed environmental challenges from buildings insulated with asbestos and underground storage tanks. Medical waste and a leaking transformer were also present.

In the late 1990s The Home Association, a private skilled nursing and long-term care facility adjacent to the hospital, began seeking help to address these problems. In 2001 the Bank of America's Community Development Corporation partnered with the Association to redevelop the abandoned facility. As the partners began their work, neighbours were hesitant to take seriously the overtures of a developer, yet excited about the prospect of renewal. To allay their concerns Bank of America staff led community involvement efforts while the City of Tampa administered redevelopment procedures and Florida Department of Environmental Protection staff provided environmental technical assistance as needed.

Initially, the city's public participation requirements, public hearings and notice, were fulfilled with little response from the community. Roxanne Amoroso, Vice President for Community Development Banking at Bank of America, then went beyond the required formal hearings. She walked through the neighbourhood, knocked on doors and sat with people in their living rooms. She worked closely with neighbourhood leaders, some who were initially angry, defensive and distrustful. Neighbours who had long ties to the neighbourhood were wary of 'newcomers' taking over and rivalries between these groups were exposed as each struggled to compete for the outcomes they desired. Residents were distrustful of city government that had ignored the property. Many had lost hope that anything would ever be done at the site.

In addition to informal discussions, many regularly-scheduled meetings were held in the neighbourhood. Neighbours were provided time to air their concerns, but the focus of meetings was on efficiently addressing redevelopment decisions. By adhering to a strict deadline and being honest with neighbours about clean up and redevelopment efforts, Ms. Amoroso earned their trust. Trust was crucial as the developer guided the process to its final outcome and avoided costly delays, which while in keeping with residents' desires for elderly housing, exhibited some controversial attributes, such as a three-storey profile and an entrance on a residential street.

5.4. Roberto Clemente Park, Lancaster, Pennsylvania: community recreation

When redevelopment began in 1998, Lancaster, Pennsylvania's South Duke Street neighbourhood had been in transition and decline for several decades. Historically an African American community, recent years saw the arrival of many Latino immigrants (US Census 2000). In the 1970s the 1.4-hectare site, which formerly housed an umbrella handle manufacturer, dry cleaning establishment and scrap yard, was redeveloped to public greenspace. Old row homes were torn down and debris was buried beneath the new park, located in the centre of the neighbourhood. By the late 1990s, Roberto Clemente Park was a poorly maintained ball field. A gathering place for drug activity and crime, the park was a nuisance for the neighbourhood where one-third of the residents lived in poverty (Lancaster County Planning Commission 2005).

The Lancaster County Planning Commission worked with the Inner City Group, the park's non-profit redeveloper and community development corporation (CDC), to rebuild Roberto Clemente Park. The Inner City Group's community involvement process began with the hiring of a team of consultants to prepare plans for the park's redevelopment. Next they conducted focus groups and business meetings followed by a series of three public meetings where plans were shared with the community. Inner City Group director Jane Thomas recognised that an extensive process was necessary because tension had been brewing beneath the surface in the neighbourhood. When park redevelopment planning efforts began, conflict erupted. Thomas explains:

Everything changed after our second public meeting when everybody came out thinking that we had all these plans for the neighbourhood without consulting them and that's when it was just very, very ugly ... and so we said, 'okay, alright we'll throw this all out. If you sit down with us we'll arrange meetings and we'll talk about this and you let us know what needs to happen'.

The Inner City Group regrouped and formed the South Duke Street Neighbourhood Task Force to advise the consultants. Neighbours were encouraged to speak openly about concerns and find common ground. Participants recognised that what were thought to be

racial tensions were concerns about the ways in which the park had historically been used and abused. After a lengthy process, the community and consultants settled on a plan that most residents supported.

The redeveloped Roberto Clemente Park has since received national recognition as an exemplary brownfields project. Tax records show that property values in the surrounding areas have increased, and therefore small business owners have benefited from increased equity in their properties and additional projects to improve the Duke Street Corridor are underway.

6. Community involvement processes and redevelopment outcomes

This study considered a link between the implementation of community involvement processes in socio-economically disadvantaged communities and brownfields redevelopment outcomes. In interviewing a variety of people involved in brownfields projects in distressed neighbourhoods in four US cities – Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Asheville, North Carolina; Tampa, Florida and Austin, Texas – it was found that when appropriate public participation tools were employed to engage neighbours in addressing difficult redevelopment issues in partnership with developers and community support organisations, support for project outcomes increased. Conversely, when community members were ignored or faced incomplete or inauthentic public participation planning processes, or when inadequate tools such as large formal public hearings were relied upon by developers, delays were confronted and brownfields redevelopment did not proceed smoothly.

In Lancaster, Pennsylvania, a crime-ridden and seldom-used ballfield was transformed into a park supported and maintained by the community. The transformation occurred in part due to the commitment of significant resources to designing, redesigning and implementing mechanisms for a wide array of community members to be involved in decision making. Initially, conflicts erupted when disparate groups within the community gathered in large public meetings to discuss project goals. However, when approaches were modified to include small focus group meetings and community members were asked to serve on a special task force, tensions between ethnic groups were reduced and support increased. While modifications caused delays in project completion, community leaders see the networks created by the enhanced community involvement processes as a resource to be drawn upon to confront additional challenges.

People didn't get everything they wanted but everybody got something they could live with. And that was the goal of all of this. And people did. It was consensus-building and compromise. I think people trust us now and we work real hard on making sure everything that we do is really what the community wants done. (Developer)

This community gets along fairly well because a lot of bridges have been built along the way . . . And I think those skills, whatever was learned there, those skills are transferred into the ball field . . . And now we're going to be able to transfer this into anything else we want. (Community organiser)

In Tampa, Florida, similar tensions between sectors of the community existed. Rivalries between groups initially flared as each group's vision for the neighbourhood was advocated to the developer. Individual meetings with community members in their houses combined with a series of required formal meetings and presentations served to allay these conflicts. Outreach efforts were critical to obtaining widespread community support for an outcome that was not initially embraced by neighbours sceptical of any organisation's

ability to address their concerns. The resultant Centro Place apartment building now serves both its residents and the surrounding community by offering community rooms where neighbours may gather. The creation of much needed elderly housing in an aesthetically pleasing building spurred additional redevelopment, diminished blight and helped neighbours to once again be proud of their community.

We think that what we've done is create something that is sustainable. We're happy with the end product. We think it's a good-looking, market-rate end product. It seems to be well-received by the community. I would say it's successful. I would say it's a successful redevelopment. (Developer)

I think we did a good job of restoring it and there are some artifacts from the old hospital building. There are pictures from the old hospital building inside. It's really beautiful ... People drive by there and can't believe it's an affordable housing complex. (Local business owner)

The experience of developers and community members in Asheville, North Carolina at the Historic Cotton Mill site shows the impact of an unsuitable community involvement programme. Despite being provided much information about redevelopment projects and goals, community members did not feel listened to. Newspaper inserts and creative social events such as imaginary yacht club parties did not reach important community members who did not read the paper or were unable to attend such events. While the developer recognised the challenges of working within a socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhood, important concerns were missed.

The most important thing to me is that we create an urban fabric in this neighbourhood ... the temptation for your riverfront is to use it as seldom visited recreational use. (Community member)

My goal is always for smaller projects just where an individual is pursuing their vision within a greater goal rather than a big player coming in and dictating to the neighbourhood. (Community member)

Finally, in Austin, Texas, the community involvement tools initially employed – regularly scheduled advisory group meetings and focus group input – were insufficient to build community support for such a large-scale and long-term project, the remediation and redevelopment of an under-utilised railway corridor. Participation processes dependent on a series of formal meetings, were not sufficiently flexible to enable developers to account for changes in advisory group members' views of the project that reflected changing community needs. In addition, gaps between regularly scheduled formal meetings contributed to a lack of continuity in community involvement efforts. During these gaps concern about new issues grew, such as the need for the project to provide subsidised housing in the neighbourhood. Participants had limited opportunities to raise new issues and frustration with the process ensued. The result was diminished potential for widespread community support of the proposed project.

This project has taken too long ... much too long. And even the committee members I think sometimes forgot what they agreed to previously and then at the very end they finally decided, some of them finally decided to start attending, and began bringing in new issues, ideas, to the table which had not been discussed before. (Consultant)

It seemed like ... they already had their plan, they were going through an exercise which we thought it was a real model that we were working on but in reality they were ... having another plan that they were being steered to. (Community member)

As the experiences of community members, developers and community support organisations in Tampa, Asheville, Austin and Lancaster show, community involvement processes affect redevelopment outcomes. In these four cases a variety of participation tools, ranging from formal public meetings to focus groups to one-on-one meetings in community members' living rooms, were used. In Lancaster and Tampa visible changes were made to the project based on citizen input to the decision-making process. For example, original plans to provide night lighting were abandoned at Roberto Clemente Park because of neighbours' concerns about nighttime activities. The height of the Centro Place apartment buildings was reduced from four storeys to three to address community desires that the building fit in with the existing one-storey bungalows surrounding the apartments. Conversely, in Austin and Asheville redevelopment is proceeding slowly due in part to mistakes in implementing public participation processes.

Actions such as those taken in Tampa and Lancaster helped community members feel that their concerns were being taken seriously by the developer and that their involvement was meaningful. The willingness of the developer to modify plans led to citizens' willingness to compromise on other critical issues. For example, in Tampa, a late dispute over access to the proposed apartment complex arose, with neighbours preferring access on a particular street, and developers insisting that would not be possible. The developer was able to capitalise on the community's good will and access remained as proposed. Even in Austin, where tensions between some community members and the developer ran high, other citizens have shown a willingness to continue to work with the developer because of a sense that a positive dialogue had been initiated surrounding the difficult issue of affordable housing. Finally, the developer of Asheville's riverfront neighbourhood is actively redesigning public participation efforts to focus on the real needs of the community, acknowledging, "We just do a lot of stuff . . . to engage the community. Sometimes I wonder if we do too much stuff".

In summary, community involvement efforts in Lancaster and Tampa were effective in ensuring that remediation and redevelopment outcomes not only improved the neighbourhood landscape, but were also embraced by the community. In Lancaster, in particular, a flexible and adaptive community involvement process benefited all involved.

In contrast, developers and community support agencies in Austin and Asheville were unable to design and implement effective community involvement programmes. In Austin a reliance on a rigid, predetermined involvement scheme and discontinuity within the process may have been the project proponents' downfall. However, lessons were learned and the project continues with plans to use improved processes for incorporating community members' ideas and garnering public support. Many community members remain hopeful that an improved redevelopment project will be implemented, as does the developer, who is now mounting a door-to-door campaign much like the approach used successfully in Tampa. Similarly, in Asheville lessons from past efforts will be applied to implement a redesigned programme using more appropriate participation tools.

We found that if you want participation you have to go to them . . . You can't necessarily think you're going to reach people with . . . an article or a TV interview or a radio interview. I mean there are days when . . . you just need to go knock on the door. (Asheville developer)

7. Developer and community support organisation roles

The deployment of public participation programmes designed to involve socio-economically disadvantaged community members in brownfields redevelopment occurs against a

backdrop of local and state government resource gaps. State brownfields programme public participation requirements and support resources vary widely. Some states, such as Pennsylvania, may dedicate resources such as grants to community groups seeking to be involved in redevelopment decisions. Others, such as Texas simply require notice of redevelopment activities in the seldom-read state register. Local government resources dedicated to community involvement efforts vary widely as well. The most commonly employed local public participation tool, formal hearings at city hall, is insufficient to reach struggling and disenfranchised citizens in distressed neighbourhoods. Asheville's cotton mill developer explains the response to required city and state notice requirements: "Well we didn't get one comment about the cotton mill". In view of this situation developers and community support organisations play significant roles in the implementation of community involvement processes during brownfields remediation and redevelopment.

The cases described in this study show that successful developer actions were designed to increase awareness of projects in the community, build trust between stakeholders, create pathways for communication and most importantly, create mechanisms for community members to participate in decision making. Each of these activities was designed with a focus on building support for and increasing buy-in of final redevelopment outcomes – outcomes which served both community needs and developer financial goals.

Actions which served to increase awareness of the project in the community included meeting community members in their homes, churches or schools; providing detailed presentations at formal meetings and training community ambassadors who would serve as project representatives. In Tampa this was most evident as the developer's representative rarely worked from a formal office, but rather met with community members in their homes and gathering places to share information about project goals and later, progress of remediation and redevelopment activities.

... quite honestly, the people that come to those [formal] meetings are just the tip of the iceberg of who you need to be reaching out to because largely the people that you want to hear from, they don't go to those kind of meetings. You meet them through others. You walk the neighbourhood. You go knock on doors. You typically get to know one person in the neighbourhood who introduces you to others in the neighbourhood and it goes on from there and after awhile you're very well known in the neighbourhood. (Developer)

In some communities developers and community support agency representatives worked to obtain the trust of a wide variety of stakeholders by meeting with them in groups or one-on-one and listening to their concerns. For example, in Lancaster, after a disastrous public meeting both community support agency and developer representatives took time to regroup and meet with community members, hear their grievances and empower them to formally advise the redevelopment efforts. A consulting firm with expertise in recreational development was called in to provide the perspective of an objective third party. This effort successfully redirected group energies toward compromise on seemingly intractable issues.

... the community meetings were unpleasant, really unpleasant – highly insulting to groups of people, but we went through it and nobody died. Then we used the professional consultants to really base our decisions on. When you inject into the process some professional engineering and design people and they say, 'this is what you can do and this is what you can't do' does kind of solve the issue ... I think there's a feeling ... that people felt that it was a fair process. People were listened to. (Community activist)

In Tampa, reluctant neighbours' trust was gained as developer representatives went door-to-door to develop personal relationships. In time, rival groups were meeting together with project managers to develop a consensus vision for the project. Residual group tensions remained, but the level of trust established between the developers and the groups was sufficient to guide the project to fruition.

Unfortunately, in Austin the lengthy formal community advisory group process sapped members' enthusiasm. But city officials and the developer set up a series of focus groups with representatives of various neighbourhood perspectives to reinvigorate the process. Although the process eventually stalled after the focus group initiative, lines of communication between the developer and community members remained open.

I personally think that Capital Metro does want to meet the needs of the community. [Some members] of the advisory group don't think that they are . . . I want to be more positive and I want to think that we will be given the opportunity. (Community member)

In an effort to create awareness and build trust, successful developers and community support agencies created multiple pathways for communication and used a variety of mechanisms for community input into decision making. These pathways provided mechanisms for authentic involvement of frequently overlooked disadvantaged community members in fashioning a better future for their communities. The mechanisms provided a new source of social capital for the communities – networks of concerned citizens who may call upon each other to confront future challenges together. In both Tampa and Lancaster, the project outcome – the rebuilt community space – became a gathering place where neighbours could undertake this work together.

Finally, developers and community support organisations played roles in generating enthusiasm for the project, managing conflicts and maintaining project momentum. These roles are significant as developers seek civic entitlements such as zoning changes which are often required for successful outcomes. The community's enthusiasm for a redevelopment project, built upon an authentic and successful involvement process, can protect projects from undesirable delays and sustain momentum. This is seen in stark contrast with the Tampa and Austin projects, as Centro Place was completed within the developer's hoped-for time frame, and the Saltillo Corridor project is currently on hiatus.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

This study shows how community involvement mechanisms may be designed to promote both environmental justice and brownfields redevelopment outcomes. Conversely, as in Austin, Texas, the study has shown that community involvement programmes may impede the progress of redevelopment. The results show how participation campaigns can reduce developers' transaction costs and pave the way for future redevelopment efforts. Transaction costs are reduced when community support for entitlements such as zoning changes, as required in Tampa to build a three-storey housing complex, is readily provided at formal public hearings. Developers and community support organisations that understand the link between reduced transaction costs and community support recognise the risks inherent in implementing community involvement processes which lack opportunities for interaction focused on incorporating community goals and addressing conflicts. When community members enthusiastically support a project they are more likely to attend a formal public meeting to provide support for developer needs such as zoning changes.

Successful brownfields redevelopment projects appropriately manage risks by balancing time and resources spent on creating authentic community involvement processes with resources spent on ensuring that critical project objectives and timelines are met. Communities hosting successful redevelopment projects understand that future redevelopment efforts will be supported through the creation of new networks of community members focused on rebuilding community infrastructure. By designing and implementing community involvement processes which reach a significant cross-section of the community by relying upon a variety of public participation tools, developers both build housing complexes and community parks and connections between community members that can be relied upon to address other issues of concern. For example, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, neighbours, community support agency staff and county government representatives view the newly created networks as a resource to draw upon in taking on redevelopment of additional brownfields. In addition to obtaining support for redevelopment projects, developers who partner with disadvantaged communities to promote community involvement in brownfields decision making help to create new community resources which may be applied to future challenges.

This study has shown that brownfields developers and community support organisations working to promote environmental justice goals in socio-economically disadvantaged communities are more successful when they employ community involvement processes that go beyond formal meeting and hearing arrangements. Successful developers in these communities confront resource tradeoffs when designing and implementing programmes, acknowledging that additional resources may be required and project delays may occur as issues such as reluctance to participate in traditional democratic public participation processes or tensions between rival groups are addressed. Those implementing community involvement processes in distressed communities learn to adapt initial processes and use different tools to reach out to community members as conflicts and unforeseen issues arise. The research shows that when flexible and comprehensive public participation programmes are implemented, benefits are widely distributed. Developers and community support organisations reach successful redevelopment outcomes. Community members gain revitalised neighbourhoods and reinvigorated social networks.

Note

1. The Saltillo project is not technically a brownfield. The site owner, Capital Metro, has not embarked on a formal process to have it declared as such. For the purposes of this study the site is labelled a brownfield because it exhibits the relevant characteristics described above.

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