A Community-engaged approach to understanding environmental health priorities in urban and rural Alabama

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INTRODUCTION

River of Life: A history of the partnership

METHODS

Figure 1. Flow diagram of community-engagement activities related to establishing environmental health priorities

RESULTS

ABANDONED HOUSES/OVERGROWN LOTS: BIRMINGHAM, AL

• Yes, these are still most important environmental health priorities (69.6%).
• My concerns about abandoned houses/overgrown lots are related to: crime—drugs, sexual assault, vandalism, break-ins (41.5%).
• Responsibility for resolving this lies with: Local government: City, Mayor, City Councilor (46.2%).
• In place of torn down houses, I'd want to see: New houses by Habitat for Humanity (60.9%).
• I can personally: Go to City Council Meetings (33.3%) or Neighborhood Meetings (29.2%)
• I want community leaders to go to City Council meetings and report back at Neighborhood meetings (42.9%)
• I'd like to see state/local officials: Devote more work crews to tearing down abandoned houses, mowing overgrown lots, and towing abandoned cars (42.4%)

Summary of Workshop Results:
Both Communities:
1. Participants want more frequent studies in their communities with more participants involved.
2. Participants want to hear the results of the studies and questionnaires. They suggest mailing results and having more community meetings.
3. Participants from Birmingham and West Central AL identified roads needing repair, dumping and garbage, and safety related to reducing crime and drugs as additional environmental priorities, beyond abandoned housing and drinking water, respectively.
4. All participants expressed a desire for more programs for children.

Next Steps:
• Create a collective graphic from all the groups’ River of Life and potentially hang in a public building
• Dissemination of results to community members and publication to scientific community
• Community Advisory Board (CAB) meetings and workshops to implement strategies identified and build community capacity
• Spring 2019 grant writing

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