

Building Cultural Competence

East Side Revitalization Project

Presented by Ronnie Bush and Sarah Malpass

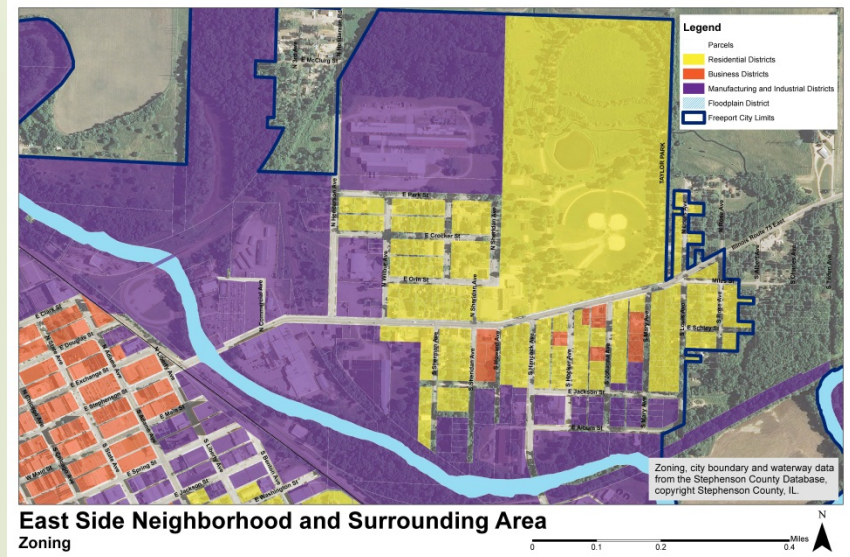
City of Freeport

- Located in northwestern Illinois
- Location of one of the historic Lincoln-Douglas debates
- Population: 25,638
- Median family income: \$35,589



East Side Neighborhood

- Quality of life impacted by:
 - Flooding
 - Dilapidated housing
 - Limited neighborhood oriented amenities
- Strained relationship with the City limits effectiveness of revitalization discussions



Flood Impacts and Regulation

- Pecatonica River experiences frequent flooding
- Disrupts neighborhood life in several city neighborhoods
- FEMA is responsible for designation of floodway areas
- City is responsible for enforcement of floodway regulations related to permitting of construction and improvements





Top Left: Flooding (ca. 1914-1940), source: <http://www.robertbike.com/wienand-photo-album/>;
Bottom Left: Flooding (2013), source: <http://www.journalstandard.com>

Disproportionate Impact of FEMA Regulations

- FEMA Regulations
- Disproportionate Impacts
- Declining home values and housing quality

Engaging with SRI and Brownfields

- In 2011, the City met with the Region 5 Reuse Coordinator to discuss the CMC Heartland site.
- The City identified the opportunity
- SRI identified funding
- Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Project

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Project Purpose and Goals

Purpose: Connect site reuse with area-wide revitalization for an environmental justice community

Community Goals:

- Reduce flood impacts
- Reduce impacts of floodway regulations

Planning Process

- Needs Assessment
- Building Cultural Competence Training
- Neighborhood Revitalization Workshop
- Green and Grey Infrastructure Workshop
- Preparing for Conversations with FEMA
- Final Report



East Side Stakeholders Meeting



Tutty's Crossing Coalition Meeting

Building Cultural Competence

- Includes discussion of:
 - Culture
 - Stereotypes
 - The Vicious Circle
 - New Outcomes
- Addresses long-standing tensions
- Building trust and understanding.
- Creating a shared context for moving forward

Responses



“I didn’t realize how committed City workers are to improving living conditions on the East Side.”

“Let’s host another training and include elected officials, Housing Authority board members and more neighborhood residents!”

“I liked how the training helped us think about things we already know about culture and gave us tools to start improving our relationships ...”

“I want to invite you all [city staff] to come to my family’s barbecue this weekend. Just come on in! We’ll be in the backyard!”

Bringing It All Together

EAST SIDE REVITALIZATION

Reducing the Impacts of Flooding and Floodway Regulations
Freeport, IL

DECEMBER 2013



INTRODUCTION

EPA's Superfund Redevelopment Initiative (SRI) and EPA Region 5 sponsored a reuse planning process for the CMC Heartland Site and other contaminated properties in the East Side neighborhood of Freeport, Illinois. The project connects site reuse with area-wide neighborhood revitalization for this environmental justice community. This report summarizes outcomes from a 12-month community planning process, including considerations for reducing the impacts of flooding and floodway regulations on the East Side Neighborhood.

COMMUNITY GOALS

Neighborhood stakeholders identified two primary goals for this planning effort to set the stage for neighborhood revitalization:

- Reduce flood impacts.
- Reduce impacts of floodway regulations.

Additional neighborhood revitalization goals are documented on the back page of this report.

HOW DO FLOODING AND FLOODWAY REGULATIONS IMPACT THE EAST SIDE?

The East Side is an African-American neighborhood located in the floodway of the Pecatonica River. Residents of the East Side share a strong sense of community and deep affection for the neighborhood. Many families have lived in the neighborhood for generations. Long-time residents remember a time when the neighborhood supported quality housing and thriving businesses with neighborhood-oriented amenities.

The neighborhood's economic vitality and housing quality have been impacted negatively over time by the neighborhood's location in the floodway. Residents contend with recurring major and minor flood events, and are subject to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and State of Illinois floodway regulations, which limit improvements on structures located in a floodway. These regulations, which were not in place when the neighborhood was built, make it challenging to improve and expand both housing and neighborhood businesses. Over time, housing quality has severely declined and most commercial businesses have vacated the neighborhood.

Today, the community suffers from a lack of access to basic amenities, goods and services, and transportation options. Improving infrastructure, identifying strategies to reduce the disproportionate impacts of floodway regulations, and providing assistance for home repairs that may otherwise be cost-prohibitive could significantly improve the quality of life for East Side residents. These changes could also lay a foundation for addressing additional neighborhood revitalization goals.

ADDENDUM: FLOOD IMPACT REDUCTION

Green infrastructure strategies for reducing flood impacts on the East Side

1 FOR NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS with sidewalks and large street area

For neighborhood areas that have:

- Sidewalks on both sides of street
- Large area between road and sidewalk



Potential Strategy: Planted Swales

Ample area between roads and sidewalk provide space to construct bioswales between streets and sidewalks to collect rainwater from streets and hold it until flooding subsides.

Notes

Planted swales can be planted with lawn or planted to look like a garden. The photographs below show different types of swales, from simple grassy swales to perennial plantings that provide seasonal color.

- **Maintenance:** Residents would like the City to have a maintenance plan in place for new plantings.
- **Aesthetic qualities:** Residents would prefer swales planted to look like a garden. If maintenance funding is a challenge, residents would prefer grassy swales that are consistently maintained.
- **Community:** Neighborhood residents would like to be involved in planning, planting and maintaining these features. Planting and maintenance offer opportunities for apprenticeships and jobs for residents.

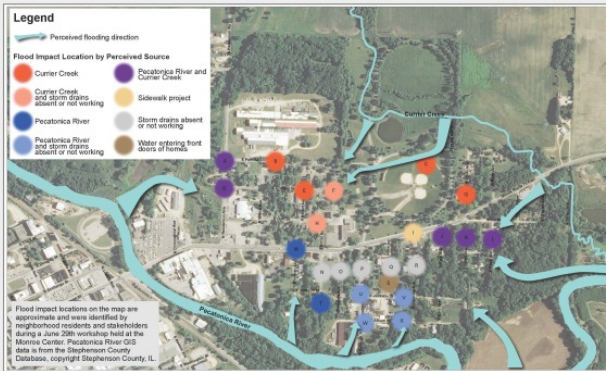
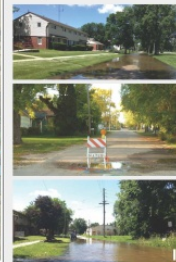


Figure 1: Neighborhood Flood Experience

This map documents the location and perceived source of flooding, as shared by neighborhood residents at a series of public meetings held during the summer of 2013. The map is not a technical analysis but instead captures the experience of local residents.



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A-1



Building Cultural Competence: Q&A

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