

Community willingness to participate in voluntary buyouts in Galena Park, TX

BACKGROUND

- Galena Park, TX**
 Texas is ranked 1st in the U.S. based on variety and frequency of natural disasters. More uniquely, Galena Park is an environmental justice (EJ) community and home to a vast amount of industry. Galena Park was also the site of the 2019 ITC Petrochemical Fire, which burned for 4 days, releasing toxic chemicals in the air. Houston holistically ranks 1st in the nation for toxic chemicals in the air, including benzene, mercury, 1-3 butadiene, and formaldehyde.
- Previous Research**
 Previous research of the Houston Metropolitan Statistical Area has shown a significant reduction in mental composite scores correlated to repeat hazard exposures (both natural and anthropogenic) and a reduction in physical composite scores correlated with repeat chemical exposures.
- Previous Buyout Programs**
 Harris County currently has a successful Home Buyout Program specifically related to flooding, indicating a willingness of people in the study area to relocate for their safety. Several other buyout programs have seen success, including Corpus Christi's Environmental Justice Housing Fund, which focuses on movement away from heavily industrialized areas, and the Post-Hurricane Sandy Buyouts in New York.

GOALS

The goal of this project is to conduct a survey to determine the willingness of those living in Galena Park to participate in a voluntary buyout program, if established, with particular emphasis on a buyout of those living closest to the industry. If well received, the land between industry and residents can be reclaimed and converted into a green space that could substantially reduce exposure risk from industry.

Using previous studies, such as Koslov et al (2021), as a guideline, we plan to determine the community's willingness to relocate and reasons why people would be unwilling to relocate.

IMPORTANCE

Previous efforts to address inequitable exposure faced by vulnerable EJ communities have failed, and there is a need for new, culturally competent approaches. EJ is an Urban Planning issue as much as it is a Public Health issue. Equitable Development is a new approach that addresses issues while providing a voice to communities. Hearing a community's needs and constantly engaging are necessary for successful efforts.

Additionally, this survey may lead to the development and implementation of new programs that may reduce health outcomes related with proximity to industrial exposure, both mental and physical.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to the others working on this project:
 Dr. Garrett Sansom, Dr. Galen Newman, Dr. Benika Dixon, Ruby Hernandez, and Jacquita Johnson.

References:

- American Institute of Architects (2021). Equitable Development Frameworks: An introduction & comparison for architects. Retrieved December 5, 2022, from https://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/2021-10_AIA-Equitable-Development-Framework-Comparison-1.pdf
- Koslov, L., Merdjanoff, A., Sulakshana, E., & Klinenberg, E. (2021). When rebuilding no longer means recovery: the stress of staying put after Hurricane Sandy. *Climatic Change*, 165(3), 59
- Sansom, G., Fawkes, L., Boerlin, E., Sansom, L., Thompson, C., Glanzer, A., Losa, L., & Dixon, B. (2022) *Assessing Self-Rated Physical Health Scores Following Repeat Exposure to Anthropogenic and Natural Hazards in Houston, TX*. [Manuscript submitted for publication]. Environmental and Occupational Health, Texas A&M University School of Public Health.
- Sansom, G., Thompson, C., Sansom, L., Fawkes, L., & Boerlin, E. (2022) Compounding impacts of hazard exposures on mental health in Houston, TX. *Nat Hazards* 111, 2809-2818
- Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (n.d.) Advocacy. t.e.j.a.s. Retrieved December 5, 2022, from <https://www.tejasbarrios.org/advocacy>



View my 2-minute presentation:
tx.ag/VRS23losa



Vote for my project,
 Losa, L. M. at
tx.ag/VoteVRS

