

**African American Community of
Southeast Rocky Mount, North Carolina**

An Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis
Final Report

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Executive Summary

During the fall of 2007 and spring of 2008, a team of five graduate students from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Public Health conducted an Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis (AOCD) of the community in Southeast Rocky Mount. AOCD is a component of the curriculum for graduate students in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education. Historically, the teaching team has been approached by community members seeking an assessment of their community. These community members then act as preceptors to student teams, introducing them to the community and aiding in our AOCD process. The process itself involves interacting with community members and service providers to systematically collect information about community strengths and challenges. The student team in Rocky Mount interviewed 19 service providers and 14 community members, conducted 2 focus groups and attended 12 community events. On April 12, the team hosted a community forum in Southeast Rocky Mount (SERM), at which findings were presented back to the community. Through break-out groups focused on discussing particular emerging themes, community members and service providers created action steps to address these themes. Hence, the AOCD process transformed from a diagnosis made by outsiders to a series of commitments by community participants to addressing their collective needs.

At the beginning of the AOCD process, the student team conducted a secondary data review to learn more about Southeast Rocky Mount's health, economics, crime and education status. The team then compared this data to that of the city of Rocky Mount, Edgecombe County and/or North Carolina depending upon the sources of data available. Rocky Mount is divided between two counties, Nash and Edgecombe, which at times affected the availability of data.

The team also collected primary data through interviews and focus groups, which were guided by a predetermined set of questions. These discussions with community members and service providers provided much richer qualitative information. Team members transcribed and coded this data to determine which themes occurred most frequently.

Identified strengths of the community included the people within the community and the history of a strong, thriving African American community in the area, among others. Meanwhile, challenges identified included: disparities between resources available in Nash County and Edgecombe County; lack of reliable public transportation; limited educational opportunities for youth and young adults; limited recreational and enrichment activities for youth; limited employment opportunities; dilapidated and sub-standard housing conditions; crime due to drugs and gang violence; and limited collaboration between community resources.

Through consideration of these strengths and challenges, along with the coded interview data, the student team developed a list of emerging themes. These themes were presented to the eight community members and service providers that made up the forum planning committee. These members helped select the final themes to be used at the April forum. The initial list included: Youth, Education, Employment, Transportation, Crime, Housing/Cost of living, Parenting, and Communication between existing community resources. These eight preliminary themes were then narrowed down to the final five themes that we presented at the community form. The final themes selected for presentation to the community were:

- Youth
- Employment
- Connecting Community Resources
- Crime
- Housing

Approximately 65 individuals attended the community forum. Overall, participants were enthusiastic and optimistic when discussing the selected themes. At the end of the day, action steps were created for each theme and individuals personally committed to completing those steps. A future date was set for the community members and service providers to meet, without the student team, so that the AOCD process could continue within and among the community.

Introduction

This report describes an Action Oriented Community Diagnosis (AOCD) that was conducted in the African-American community living in the southeast portion of Rocky Mount, North Carolina. The AOCD, or community assessment, was conducted by a team of five graduate students from the University of North Carolina (UNC) School of Public Health, between the months of October 2007 and April 2008. Three preceptors from within the community, along with the AOCD teaching team at UNC, supported the efforts of the team.

The decision to perform an AOCD in Southeast Rocky Mount was made jointly between students and faculty from UNC, and the preceptors from the community. The AOCD process is intended to identify a community's strengths, resources, and challenges. Information was collected by attending community meetings and events, and through 33 interviews and two focus groups. The community forum and this report represent the final steps of the assessment, and are meant to serve as the beginning of a long and successful effort between the community and service providers to improve the quality of life for people living in Southeast Rocky Mount.

Section I: Profile of the Community

This section provides an overview of Rocky Mount and Southeast Rocky Mount based on secondary data and team observations. A complete list of secondary data sources can be found in Appendix A.

History of Rocky Mount

Rocky Mount, named for the "rocky mound" on the north side of the Tar River, is located in the Coastal Plain region of North Carolina and straddles the borders of Nash and Edgecombe Counties.¹ For many years, the city was home to a major railroad hub, booming cotton and tobacco industries, and major manufacturers that all served to build and sustain the city's economy. Over the years, Rocky Mount has decreased its dependency on the railroad, experienced a marked decrease in the production of cotton and tobacco, and sent many manufacturing jobs out of the area.

Rocky Mount in the 1800s

Rocky Mount was officially established as part of the inauguration of a post office in 1816 near the Falls at the Tar River. Soon after, North Carolina's second cotton mill was built in Rocky Mount and brought considerable wealth and what historians called "peaceful progress" to the area.¹

In 1839, the "age of the railroad" made its mark in Rocky Mount when the tracks of the Wilmington-Weldon Railroad reached Rocky Mount from the South. The railroad established Rocky Mount as a point of departure for travelers from the North and South, and later expansion made the railroad a viable source of economic prosperity in the decades to come.

Once the seven-mile track of railroad was complete, the city relocated its economic base around the railroad depot, and in 1871, the dividing line between Edgecombe and Nash counties was relocated along the main track of the Wilmington-Weldon Railroad. The railroad established Rocky Mount as a point of departure for travelers from the North and South, and later expansion made the railroad a viable source of economic prosperity in the decades to come. In 1871, the majority of railroad activity and businesses were located on the Edgecombe County side of Rocky Mount. The Nash County side of Rocky Mount consisted mostly of residential areas and woodlands. Although the tracks became a demarcation of the boundaries between the two counties, over time they also became a symbol of political and economic division in the city, a problem that persists today.

The late 1800s brought the establishment of the first tobacco market to Rocky Mount. The tobacco market boosted the economy due to the influx of farmers and buyers, the warehousing income that remained in the community, and the associated plants that sprung up due to the market. This source of revenue continued well into the 20th century as Rocky Mount became one of the world's leading bright leaf tobacco markets.² The establishment of the tobacco market led to the establishment of the first bank as well as increased railroad business. The railroad in Rocky Mount soon became known as the Atlantic Coastline Railroad, the largest railroad in the southeast United States.²

Rocky Mount in the 1900s

A “population explosion” took place in Rocky Mount during the first decade of the 20th Century, which led to its establishment as a city in 1907. There were a number of “firsts” during this time, including the first public schools, the first library, the first telephone, the first daily newspaper, and the first modern hotel, The Ricks. The 1950s and 1960s brought significant educational opportunities to the city, including the opening of a new high school in 1958, the opening of Wesleyan College in 1960, and the opening of Edgecombe and Nash Community Colleges in 1968.³

History of the African American Community in Rocky Mount

Although there is no documented comprehensive history of African American communities in Rocky Mount, there is a rich oral history that has been passed down through the years and several significant events that exist for this community. Through narratives, the team learned that many African Americans lived in rural areas on the outskirts of the city for many years, with small pockets of African Americans residing within the city. Douglas Block, located near downtown Rocky Mount, was known as the cultural and economic hub for African Americans during the early and mid portions of the 20th century. This block included the historic Booker T. Washington Theatre, and other businesses and professional practices owned by African Americans.⁴ In 1962, the Rocky Mount Voters and Improvement League welcomed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who delivered a version of his famous “I Have a Dream” speech to an audience of more than 1,800 African Americans. This visit from Dr. King, Civil Rights boycotts, and demonstrations are examples of the political and civic engagement of African American residents during the 1950s and 1960s.⁵

The Demographic Divide of Rocky Mount Today

Today, the city of Rocky Mount is home to 55,984 people.⁶ The average age is 36.1 years, with 27.7% of the population under age 18 and 13% age 65 and over. The population is predominantly African American (56%).⁷ The city is approximately 36 square miles and is situated within two counties: Nash and Edgecombe. The demarcation between Nash County and Edgecombe County lies in downtown Rocky Mount, along the city’s Main Road and the Atlantic Coastline Railroad tracks. The city provides services such as utilities and policing and has created a city-wide school system.

Meanwhile, each county has retained responsibility for services such as departments of health and social services.

A Closer Look at Southeast Rocky Mount

Southeast Rocky Mount (SERM) is one of several “inner-city neighborhoods” within Rocky Mount. Located in Edgecombe County and east of the historic Atlantic Coastline railroad tracks, SERM has a total population of 4,390, or 7.3% of the city’s population.⁹ The population is predominantly African American (92.5%) and the average age is 32.7 years.⁹

The housing occupancy rates of Southeast Rocky Mount differ significantly from the average rates of North Carolina and Rocky Mount as a whole (Table 1). The vacancy rate of Southeast Rocky Mount is 13.5%, compared to North Carolina’s average of 11.1%. Although North Carolina has an average home-ownership rate of 61.6% among occupied units, only 39.8% of occupied units in Southeast Rocky Mount are owner-occupied. This differs from the overall rates of home ownership in Rocky Mount, where 49% of housing units in Rocky Mount are owner-occupied and 38.85% are occupied by renters.

Table 1. Housing Occupancy Rates of North Carolina and Southeast Rocky Mount

	North Carolina		Southeast Rocky Mount	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
Occupied Units	3,132,013	88.9%	1,442	86.5%
Owner-occupied	2,132,013	61.6%	574	39.8%
Renter-occupied	959,658	27.2%	868	60.2%
Vacant Units	391,931	11.1%	224	13.5%
Total Housing Units	3,523,944	100.0%	1,666	100.0%

Approximately 376 households (26.6% of the community) are below poverty, with 14.2% of these households consisting of families led by a female householder with no husband present⁹.

The Local Economy

The economy of Rocky Mount consists primarily of manufacturing, retail and service industry jobs (Table 2).

Table 2. Type of Economies in Rocky Mount

Economy Type	Percentage
Construction	11%
Healthcare	11%
Manufacturing	23%
Retail	18%
Services	15%
Other	22%

The three largest employers include Nash County-Rocky Mount Schools, Hospira Pharmaceutical Company, and Nash Health Care Systems (Table 3).

Table 3. Employment/Industry in Rocky Mount

Employer	Number of Employees
Consolidated Diesel Company	1,350
Edgecombe County Schools	1,100
Embarq	1,000
Hospira Pharmaceutical Company	2,300
Nash County-Rocky Mount schools	2,500
Nash Health Care Systems	1,800
QVC	1,000
RBC Centura	1,250

Education

The Nash-Rocky Mount Public School System (NRMPS) is comprised of 29 schools located in both Nash and Edgecombe Counties, encompassing the inner-city Rocky Mount and greater Nash County areas. The school system currently serves approximately 18,563 students, 10,150 of whom are African American, and employs approximately 1,246 teachers, amounting to a student/teacher ratio of 14.9.¹¹ The majority of African American school-age youth living in the Southeast Rocky Mount community attend James C. Braswell Elementary, D.S. Johnson Elementary, Nash Central Middle, G.R. Edwards Middle, Rocky Mount High and Nash Central High Schools.

School Performance

During the 2006-2007 school year, NRMPS did not achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), meeting only 50 of their 62 performance targets identified for the national No Child Left Behind Act

(NCLB).¹² AYP was not met by any of the six schools serving youth living in Southeast Rocky Mount. The three lowest performing subgroups on the ABC end-of-grade tests were African American students, students with limited English proficiency, and students with disabilities.¹²

Graduating Youth

NRMPS faced additional challenges in 2006-2007 in terms of graduating students. The district did not achieve its AYP graduation target; the percentage of students district-wide who graduated with a regular diploma in four years or less was 68.3, compared to 69.5 state-wide. In addition, at 949, NRMPS district scores ranked below both state (1,004) and national (1,017) scores.¹²

Further Education

Within the Southeast Rocky Mount community, the Bassett Center provides educational resources such as GED, basic reading, computer classes, and tutoring services.¹³ In addition, the Rocky Mount campus of Edgecombe Community College, located on the outskirts of the community, offers a wide variety of academic programs, as well as continuing education, distance learning, and workforce development programs.¹⁴

Health

The team relied on health data from Edgecombe County to inform the general health trends among residents in the Southeast Rocky Mount community. Edgecombe County residents experience exceptionally high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), teen pregnancies, and asthma (Table 4). The county has the 2nd highest rate of HIV in the state at 34.6 per 100,000 which is nearly 7.5 times greater than the state rate.¹⁵ Additionally, Edgecombe County has the highest rate of gonorrhea of any county in the state, with nearly four times the state rate.¹⁵ For minority cases of gonorrhea, Edgecombe County ranks second by a small margin (0.8 per 100,000).¹⁵ The county's rates of teen pregnancy and minority teen pregnancy are the 10th highest in the state.¹⁵ Although Edgecombe county ranks 9th in the state for rates of asthma, it climbs to 3rd place when analysis is limited to children ages 0-14.¹⁵

Table 4. Edgecombe County Health Ranks and Rates

Health Issue (Edgecombe County Rank)	Edgecombe County Rate (per 100,000)	North Carolina Rate (per 100,000)	Edgecombe Minority Rate (per 100,000)	North Carolina Minority Rate (per 100,000)
HIV (2 nd)	34.6	12.4	n/a	n/a
Gonorrhea (1 st)	721.1	182.0	1,165.9	585
Teen pregnancy (10 th)	53.5	36.1	63.8	51.3
Asthma (9 th)	218.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Asthma, ages 1-14 (3 rd)	372.0	n/a	n/a	n/a

In addition to the high county rates of STI's and asthma in Edgecombe County, certain racial health disparities are evident in mortality rates (Table 5). The extremely poor sexual health and high rates of asthma found in Edgecombe County are indicative of a need for increased preventive health care.

Table 5. Select 2002-2006 Edgecombe County Race-Specific Age-Adjusted Death Rates
(Standard = Year 2000 U.S. Population; Rates Per 100,000 Population)

Cause of Death	White Deaths	White Rate	Minority Deaths	Minority Rate	Overall Deaths	Overall Rate
Cerebrovascular Disease	125	89.5	165	123.2	290	106.4
Cancer, Breast	27	34.9	34	38.5	61	36.7
Diabetes Mellitus	30	20.9	57	41.3	87	31.2
Septicemia	22	15.6	25	17.5	47	16.9
Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis	26	18.5	46	34.2	72	26.3
Homicide	2	1.5	33	21.4	35	13.7
AIDS-related	4	3.6	27	17.4	31	11.7

In the years 2000-2002, causes of death in Edgecombe County occurred at a similar distribution to those in Nash County and throughout the state of North Carolina, with a few exceptions. Suicide occurred less frequently among all deaths in Edgecombe County, 7.2%, as compared to 10.4% in Nash County and 11% in North Carolina.¹⁶ Deaths due to injuries from motor vehicle crashes accounted for 25.9% of all deaths in Nash County, but only 14.5% and 17.1% of all deaths in Edgecombe County and the state of North Carolina respectively.¹⁶

Crime

From 1985 and 2006, the incidence of crime in Rocky Mount has fluctuated between 1985 and 2006, which may be partially attributed to an increase in the population from 44,501 to 57,756 during the same time period.^{17, 18} In 2006 there were 577 violent crimes, including 22 cases of rape, 12 murders/non-negligent manslaughters, and 5,617 total property crimes, including 1,696 burglaries, 386 motor vehicle thefts, and 11 acts of arson.^{17, 18} Violent crime rates peaked between 1990-95 (1,322 violent crimes per 100,000 persons) and have since declined to a rate of 999 per 100,000 persons.¹⁸ Property crimes, including burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft, have not seen a similar decline, although they did reach a high of 10,184 property crimes per 100,000 persons in 1994.¹⁸ In 2006, police reported 9,725 property crimes, indicating a slight resurgence in these types of crime with auto thefts having occurred at their highest rates ever reported (668 per 100,000 persons).¹⁸

Overview of Student Team Perspectives

Team members recorded their observations of SERM, as a component of primary data collection, in order to develop an outsiders' perspective of the community. The team recorded these in the form of field notes and discussed among insights among team members in order to synthesize each member's perspectives. Findings from analysis of these field notes are presented in this report as the "Student Team Perspective." In addition to this overview, the student team perspective has been incorporated into Section II, which reports specific AOCD findings in greater detail.

Environmental Conditions

After meeting the team's preceptors, the AOCD team's first introduction to SERM was through a "windshield" or driving tour, of the SERM area led by the preceptors. During the windshield tour, the team drove across the Atlantic Coastline Railroad tracks in downtown Rocky Mount and immediately noticed significant differences between the Edgecombe County side and Nash County sides of the city. The Edgecombe side, where SERM is located, seemed particularly run down and lacking in businesses. The team noticed there was only one grocery store easily accessible to SERM. The city's downtown was in close proximity to SERM, but team members commented on the empty and run down

appearance of this area, as well as the lack of places for people to get together. The preceptors explained that most businesses have moved to malls on the outskirts of town.

Team members noticed that some residential neighborhoods near SERM had large, well-kept houses, while in SERM itself, the houses were smaller, and often poorly-kept, vacant, or boarded up. The team saw several homes with either “For Sale” or “For Rent” signs in front and many of the homes had poorly maintained yards. Very few people were seen working on their homes or in their yards, which may have been due to the grey winter weather, but nonetheless added to a depressed appearance. Some houses were either recently demolished or planned for demolition by the City of Rocky Mount, as indicated by vacant lots with fresh rubble or comments by the preceptors.

One preceptor explained that the availability of jobs is a major concern for the community, but that it hadn’t always been. At one time, textiles, including cotton, and tobacco were major sources of jobs for African Americans in the area. Douglas Street in downtown Rocky Mount was a thriving black entrepreneurial center, with a dentist, doctor, drug store, and theater. Stokes Mortuary, located in Edgecombe County, was one of the first African American businesses in Rocky Mount, and the Planter’s Oil Mill was an economic base of the community. The oil mill closed down years ago and has since been torn down, and the Douglas Street area is in need of major renovations.

During the windshield tour, the area near Branch Street was described as a locus for crime. There is a convenience store, Food N’ Stuff, located in the area which preceptors claimed sells beer and cigarettes to people living in the community. Team members commented on the significant amount of graffiti on these buildings, adding to the perception that this is not a safe neighborhood to be in, especially when alone or at night. The preceptors informed the team that a number of shootings had occurred in the area and that drugs are a major problem. Team members speculated that the high crime rates likely stem from a combination of economic depression, a transient population of young adults who have dropped out of high school, and feelings of hopelessness.

Although some educational resources exist on the Edgecombe County side of Rocky Mount, such as Edgecombe Community College, Opportunities Industrialization Corporation (OIC), and the Down East Partnership for Children, members of the AOCD team noted that these organizations are located on the outskirts of the Southeast Rocky Mount community, and that access to these resources may pose a barrier and limit their usefulness.

One preceptor explained that public transportation in Rocky Mount is made available by the Tar River Transit, but few routes travel through Southeast Rocky Mount and the busses stop running in the late afternoon. She added that there is also no means of easy access to Tarboro, where many public services run by Edgecombe County are located. Oakwood shopping center, which is 5-6 blocks from SERM, is the closest opportunity for community members to shop for groceries. Team members observed that this could be difficult for individuals without cars – especially the elderly. Furthermore, the team observed at least one abandoned shopping cart a couple of blocks from Oakwood suggesting that community members may not have adequate access to public transportation.

Additional Team Observations

In order to become acquainted with the community and to meet community members, the AOCD team attended a number of events in the community, including an awards ceremony hosted at the Booker T Washington Center, a community leaders' meeting at City Hall, and church services (refer to Appendix L). The AOCD team continued to document personal observations about the SERM community after attending each of these events.

A close look at the team's field notes revealed concerns about the challenges faced by Southeast Rocky Mount community members. These include inadequate housing, unemployment, limited options for transportation, and a lack of activities for youth living in the community. However, team members also noted that community members seemed to censor themselves when answering interview questions or participating in casual conversations at community events. Although most individuals the team encountered seemed hard pressed to find substantial strengths within SERM, they also appeared reluctant to name specific challenges. For example, one team member noted that SERM

community members that she spoke with had no problem mentioning the disparities between Edgecombe and Nash counties, but few seemed comfortable discussing the racial disparities in any detail. It is possible that the education level of the students and the groups status as outsiders may have made some interviewees uncomfortable and less likely to be forthright.

Section II: Findings

This section describes the findings based upon a preliminary analysis of 19 service provider interviews, 14 community member interviews and 2 focus groups: one with youth under the age of 18 and the other with young men between the ages of 18 and 25. Standardized interviews were conducted with community members and service providers to identify the strengths, challenges, and needs of residents from Southeast Rocky Mount. Additionally, focus group guides were developed to guide the discussions with each of the groups to reveal similar information about the community. This section presents findings on the overarching community strengths, an overview of challenges, and detailed descriptions of the five most prominent themes that emerged. Each theme includes the perspectives of service providers, community members, and the student team. The following section, Section III, describes the action steps that were developed by participants at the community forum.

Community Strengths

The primary strength identified by both service providers and community members was the people that live in Southeast Rocky Mount. They described these people, in particular the older generation, as caring about their neighborhood. The existing community leaders of SERM were described as extremely dedicated and committed to improving their community. Both service providers and community members commented on previous experiences during which the community came together to achieve a common goal, such as a neighborhood beautification project and the creation of a neighborhood crime watch. Additionally, churches were identified as resources, with a handful specifically named as making concerted efforts to reach out and address the needs of the community. Finally, the long history of African Americans in Southeast Rocky Mount is a major strength of the community. The once thriving community of Douglas block was cited as an example

of African Americans working together to create a prosperous business area and several famous African Americans, like Thelonious Monk, were mentioned as having come from the area.

Overview of Challenges

The analysis of interviews and focus groups revealed several recurring topics of concern, many of which intertwined. With poverty as the root issue universally identified, the following areas emerged and were deemed both important and changeable:

- Youth (need for recreation, resources, positive entertainment, communication with elders/role models)
- Education (adult and youth needs, attitudes regarding education)
- Employment (lack of opportunities, underutilization of existing job-training resources, lack of education and transportation)
- Transportation (lack of reliable public transportation)
- Crime (gangs, violence, drugs)
- Community Communication (lack of cooperation between existing resources, poor outreach, general lack of awareness of available resources)
- Housing/Cost of Living (numerous vacant and dilapidated houses, unresponsive landlords, expensive utilities, property taxes)

The team presented this list of issues to the forum planning committee, who helped narrow it down to five that they deemed most important and changeable.

The following five themes and accompanying theme statements were selected to be addressed at the community forum on April 12, 2008. The themes were presented to forum participants prior to breaking out into five smaller groups, where the themes were discussed in depth.

Theme 1: Youth

Theme Statement

Community members, service providers and youths themselves recognize a lack of mentorship, educational enrichment and recreational opportunities for youth.

Community Member Perspectives

There is a lot of energy, but it's latent and undirected because there is a strength there but it is untapped. There are a lot of young people around and that can be a plus if we look at it as a plus. It would take some work.

- community member

Today's youth talk, they express their opinion as to what they think is right, what they think is wrong. I don't know if they're getting enough attention. If they're not getting the positive attention, they'll go where the attention is, and that may be some negative attention that promotes things that wouldn't be beneficial to the community.

- community member

A lot of things that happen in the community is because you want to belong, everybody wants that sense of belonging. If I can't belong at home, then I'm going to find someone that will take me in, i.e. a gang or whatever it may be. So we can produce an environment that you feel that you belong and you do belong, then you'll start seeing some change.

- community member

Every single community member expressed concern about the youth living in Southeast Rocky Mount. Concerns focused on the lack of educational and recreational opportunities, the growing gang activity, as well as the changes in family structure and the absence of parental involvement.

Participants from both the high school and young men focus groups expressed similar thoughts, including their frustration over the misunderstandings and negative attention surrounding youth in Rocky Mount, the lack of recreational opportunities, the lack of peer and adult mentors, as well as the lack of opportunities to showcase their talent.

Service Provider Perspectives

Most of the youth are hanging out on the streets. There's nothing for them to do.

- service provider

They're [youth] not really looking back and I don't think they [youth] can see what's ahead. It's kind of hard sometimes to see what's ahead when what's around you looks dismal.

- service provider

I've seen so many smart kids...they want to do the right thing, but they just get caught up in the environment...that's the biggest downfall I've seen in the community, and I don't know how to stop it.

- service provider

When asked, many service providers had a difficult time thinking of any resources or agencies that were available for youth in Southeast Rocky Mount. Although several after-school programs exist outside of the community, service providers mentioned barriers, such as the lack of transportation to

travel to and from programs and the fact that many programs are full and cannot accept any more participants. One service provider spoke of an after-school tutoring program within SERM that had once been successful but was cancelled due to lack of funding.

Student Team Perspectives

On several occasions, the team noticed a lack of participation from youth in community events. Throughout their time in Rocky Mount, team members noticed youth and young adults, mostly male, gathered in small groups outdoors. It seemed clear that organized recreation activities were extremely limited in SERM. Although Down East Partnership for Children was mentioned as a youth resource numerous times during interviews, agency representatives declined to be interviewed by the AOCD team, making it difficult to gain in-depth information about the services they provided. It appears that numerous resources and agencies are dedicated to promoting youth recreation and entertainment in Rocky Mount as a whole; however, few of these resources are readily available to youth living in SERM due to barriers, like the lack of readily available transportation.

Summary

Southeast Rocky Mount lacks a high school, recreation center, and other resources for youth. Many community members and service providers feel that this contributes to the burgeoning gang activity and violence in the neighborhood.

Theme 2: Employment

Theme Statement

Limited employment opportunities are a concern for Southeast Rocky Mount residents. Lack of jobs within the community, low education levels, and restricted public transportation contribute to this issue.

Community Member Perspectives

There are some educators here who work in the various school systems. There are people who work in the hospitals and nursing homes. Few have businesses. Mostly in fast-food restaurants and local places like that. I guess that's about it.

- community member

The baseline would be actually to acquire higher paying jobs and then all the other things would fall in to place. We have entirely too many people who don't seem to have enough food

or enough clothes. What stems from the lack of jobs? High school dropouts, lack of higher education., drugs and crime.

- community member

We can get jobs being custodians and menial jobs. But good jobs that pay enough money so that you actually support yourself and a family seem to elude us. That's the greatest one, because if you have the job that pays the money then you can do better with the upkeep of your home, clothes, put food on the table, and not worry about whether you're going to be able to pay your mortgage, or pay your rent this month. The baseline would be actually to acquire higher paying jobs and then all the other things would fall in to place.

- community member

Community members talked about the lack of jobs within Southeast Rocky Mount as well as Rocky Mount as a whole. According to community members, the lack of well-paying jobs impacts the community in numerous ways, such as difficulty in paying bills, the transient nature of younger SERM residents, and parents having to work multiple shifts which limit the involvement and supervision of their children. Younger community members also agreed that there is a lack of jobs in the community, and that the available jobs are not fulfilling in any way.

Service Provider Perspectives

... Some kind of job training... You might not have your GED, but if you get trained in this area, you might be able to find a job. We're not giving them options. How can we ask them to do something when we're not giving them solutions? They need options.

- service provider

When somebody works, they have money to do more with. Whether it be extracurricular activities with their children, or whether it be a means of affordable health insurance, whether it's just having food in the house before the month runs out.

- service provider

Whereas SERM used to be a thriving hub of agriculture and trade, the area fell into sharp economic decline when the nation started shifting towards a more industrial economy. Nash County took advantage of this shift early on, but Edgecombe County did not, resulting in a gross lack of businesses and job opportunities on the east side of Rocky Mount. The majority of service providers recognized that SERM residents must leave the community during the day in order to make a living. Southeast Rocky Mount itself houses very few employment options outside of daycare and limited retail. Aside from lack of employment opportunities, transportation barriers, and lack of qualifications,

some service providers also noted the difficulty in helping men and women with criminal records find employment.

Student Team Perspectives

The student team learned that major employers, including Atlantic Coastline and Hardee's, have recently relocated their headquarters outside of Rocky Mount. Furthermore, RBC Centura bank is in the process of relocating its administrative offices. Major employers remaining in the area include Stretchline Clothing Company, Consolidated Diesel, Hospira (Abbott Pharmaceuticals), the Rocky Mount school system, and City government. During the windshield tour, preceptors pointed towards buildings that used to house popular restaurants or gathering places for the African American community. Small businesses located in Southeast Rocky Mount, referred to by some as "mom and pop shops" were once thriving, but have since closed and are being replaced by corporate franchises, such as Rite Aid, McDonald's, Rent-A-Center, and Family Dollar.

Summary

The majority of Southeast Rocky Mount residents has a high school education at best, and suffers from a limited amount of job opportunities and job skills. This leads to increasing poverty and related issues like crime.

Theme 3: Connecting Community Resources

Theme Statement

In order to meet the needs of the Southeast Rocky Mount community, many believe that local groups and organizations must increase collaboration with one another, as well as improve their outreach to community members.

Community Member Perspectives

There is a level of detachment of certain churches in this community, which is something that has kind of been mentioned and talked about at certain association meetings. A weak link between the institutions that physically exist here and their relationship to the folks that are here.

- community member

So they might have an event at the church, do some kind of outreach but there is not open programming that community members would use on a consistent basis. They don't have any programs like that. I don't think that any churches in the area have programs like that.

- community member

The other issue is, too, when you get a group of people that the overall community isn't aware of, then it's almost a sense of jealousy that takes place, well they did it before I could do it, and so instead of me jumping on the band wagon to help it, I'm going to try to do all I can do to stop it, and pretty much be ignorant... to promoting growth."

- community member

Community members struggled to identify more than a handful of resources in the area, and many recognized that members of local churches could do more to appear invested in the area. However, a few residents mentioned local churches who are attempting to increase community outreach services. Community members expressed a desire to know more about existing resources, and thought the best ways to share information was by word-of-mouth, local flyering, church announcements, radio, and lastly, television.

Service Provider Perspectives

We're not knowing what each other is doing, and we're not getting a lot accomplished. I think collaboration is the key.

- service provider

Communication, networking, that's the start to get some other things going.

- service provider

You don't need grants to solve your problems. You can use what resources you have.

- service provider

Almost every service provider mentioned resources that are currently available within Southeast Rocky Mount, and many even offered creative suggestions about how these resources could complement one another to be more effective. However, very few could identify substantial efforts on behalf of local churches, non-profit organizations, or other local agencies to consistently work together to meet the needs of the community. In fact, a recurring observation when speaking to service providers was the reluctance of churches and nonprofits to collaborate. Pride, personal agendas and a desire for credit were listed as barriers to cooperation among the community's resources.

Student Team Perspectives

The team noticed an abundance of churches, nearly one on every street corner, throughout Southeast Rocky Mount, and commented on the potential positive impact a coalition of churches could bring to the community. Team members also observed that community leaders and other

involved community members were primarily older adults who are home-owners. It seemed that existing organizations have been unable to promote attendance among youth and younger adults. The lack of involvement between community organizations and this important segment of the population (youth and young adults) is a potential area in which collaboration would be particularly useful.

Summary

In order to meet the needs of the Southeast Rocky Mount community, many believe that the local resources must increase communication with one another and collaborate. Local resources also need to improve their communication with community members in order to ensure that they are aware of and able to access needed services.

Theme 4: Crime

Theme Statement

Despite increased police efforts, crime – primarily associated with gangs, drug use and violence – is a widely acknowledged issue in Southeast Rocky Mount.

Community Member Perspectives

There is a problem with crime, again that goes back to there are not a lot of things to do in Rocky Mount, so people decide to be mischievous, instead of doing something positive, because that's what their friends are doing. You can sit around and think of a thousand ways of getting by and doing something wrong... versus thinking of only maybe a hundred positive things.

- community member

I believe some of the community members are fearful. We've had a lot of break-ins in the past. While we haven't had a lot of killings, but there has been stealing. That's one of the serious things I see here.

- community member

The parks in the area, there is so much drug activity that people don't want to go there. One of the issues of this area is the drug activity.

- community member

All community members expressed concerns about increasing crime and violence. Both older and younger community members talked about the declining feeling of safety despite increased police efforts and neighborhood watches. Causes attributing to crime included lack of education, lack of recreational opportunities, and lack of well-paying jobs.

Service Provider Perspectives

My concern is that the gangs see money ... it's a business, it's an industry. They know how to make their industry work. While we're trying to figure out egos and partnerships, they've already carved out their territories. My concern is that by the time the folks wake up, this corporate evil will be so entrenched it will take miracles to overcome.

- service provider

We have a tremendous crime problem perpetuated by gangs which, in my opinion, is ultimately perpetuated by economic problems.

- service provider

Substance abuse, alcoholism, high crime, and young people and men not able to obtain employment primarily based on prior criminal activities during youth. It's difficult to get past that. What's happening is that young men are finding other ways to get by outside the system, mostly through crime.

- service provider

Service providers frequently mentioned crime when discussing other issues such as employment, education and youth. One unique perspective about employment issues was that many residents in SERM have difficulty finding a job due to their criminal records. A second concern focused on criminal activity among youth and the ineffectiveness of local juvenile correctional programs. Another concern was that the growing number of incarcerated men and women greatly impacts the structure of families in SERM, leaving many households with a single parent and many children without proper supervision and adequate mentoring and support.

Student Team Perspectives

Although numerous community members mentioned that parks existed in SERM, the student team noticed a lack of apparent community activity during the windshield tour and other trips to SERM. Individuals did not seem to be outside much. However, this could have been due to the winter season rather than a lack of perceived safety. When probed, community members and service providers admitted that they would feel uncomfortable allowing their children to play in the local parks unsupervised – citing gang presence and crime as factors deterring utilization of parks. Despite the numerous expressions of concern over crime, however, community members seem to agree that they continued to go about their daily business in the community unhindered. It should be noted that although crime was almost universally voiced as a point of concern among those interviewed,

secondary data did not reveal crime to be particularly worse in SERM than in other Rocky Mount neighborhoods.

Summary

Crime related to drug use and gang activity was a frequently expressed concern among SERM residents and local service providers. The city has attempted to address this concern by increasing police presence.

Theme 5: Housing

Theme Statement

Southeast Rocky Mount has a high number of dilapidated and vacant houses creating eyesores and havens for criminal activity. Most residents rent rather than own and landlords do not seem invested in the community

Community Member Perspectives

Right across from our house is a house that's boarded up. So, I have concerns about that because one, it's an eyesore and two, it's not serving any positive purpose whatsoever. So, I'm concerned about that.

- community member

When I first got there, there were already two houses missing. They'd just torn down another one. They've got a lot of houses just boarded up. It looks terrible. Then, there's just a big field across the street. Nothing there.

- community member

You have a lot of condemned houses that have been opened for five and 10 years and no one has moved in. So people sometimes gather and sit on the porches, if they can. I know at one time cars would park [at the homes] and people who didn't have a place to stay would go in and stay for a little while. And you're a little leery of that.

- community member

Community members of all ages discussed issues regarding housing, the cost of living, and the overall decline of the community's image. Residents expressed frustration due to the lack of upkeep from both homeowners and landlords. The cost of utilities was often described as costing several hundred per month, sometimes twice as much as the cost of rent. Residents attributed this to both poor housing conditions and the city government. The growing number of dilapidated and boarded up houses were described as an "eyesore" which many were afraid may contribute to the declining interest from landlords and potential homeowners and investors.

Service Provider Perspectives

As you get a lot of renters, you don't have stability in the community. You have a lot of slum lords that take advantage of those with poor credit.

- service provider

An interesting dynamic to me about SERM is that you have a few very large landlord properties, or few people who own a lot of houses. Those few people don't fix up the houses, and keep their houses in minimal condition. Just enough to charge a high enough rent and fix it up only enough just to stay above minimal housing codes.

- service provider

Once we've torn down, we need to rebuild. If we don't rebuild, it'll just be an open area for people to come and do some other negative stuff.

- service provider

Although most service providers that were interviewed do not live in Southeast Rocky Mount, issues surrounding housing were frequently discussed. Service providers repeatedly mentioned that very few landlords owned the majority of properties located in SERM. A few service providers explained that landlords in Rocky Mount often get away with the bare minimum upkeep of their properties, and that their failure to conduct background checks of tenants is an issue of concern as well. All agreed that SERM is an area that needs to be revitalized, although many were concerned about the lack of funding available from the city and county government for such revitalization.

Student Team Perspectives

The most immediately striking feature the student team noticed when first visiting SERM was the number of boarded up and dilapidated houses in the community. Interspersed with vacant lots, these buildings suggest a dismal future for the community. However, hope can exist in this community as abandoned buildings could be converted into new businesses, homes, or perhaps even community resources. Vacant lots could be beautified into gardens or playgrounds. Team members listened to numerous individuals express their concerns that the decrepit buildings are becoming easy havens for criminal activity. Still, this issue struck the team as one that was potentially more changeable than many of the other themes that arose through our research.

Summary

The number of abandoned and dilapidated houses in SERM poses challenges to community morale and may foster criminal activity. Abandoned buildings create havens for gang activity, drug use and vagrants. Additionally, increased home-ownership is viewed as a possible mechanism to encourage improvement of the community's appearance. Increased participation by landlords to maintain their properties may also help to alleviate some of the housing concerns among residents.

Section III: Community Forum & Action Steps

Introduction

Upon completion of data collection, the student team worked with a planning committee of local community members and service providers of Southeast Rocky Mount to organize a community forum, the final event in the team's AOCD process. The community forum took place on Saturday, April 12, 2008. At this forum, attendees participated in small group discussions focused on one of five key themes that were identified from interviews and focus groups. These themes, including key discussion points and action steps identified during the forum, will be discussed in further detail.

Planning the Community Forum

The forum planning process began in late February 2008 with the creation of a forum planning committee. The student team identified potential forum planning committee members by reviewing the list of community members and service providers who had expressed interest in serving on the committee either during an interview or at a community event. Student team members extended an initial verbal invitation, either in person or over the phone, followed by a formal written invitation and an additional verbal confirmation. At the end of this process, eight individuals were confirmed as members of the planning committee including three service providers, two community members, and the team's three preceptors. Members of the committee were of varying age, gender, and occupational experience. While the members' experience with community involvement varied, the majority were long-standing residents of the Southeast Rocky Mount community.

Four forum planning meetings were held during March and April at the Bassett Center, a local service agency in Southeast Rocky Mount.

First Planning Meeting

During the first meeting, two student team members provided an overview of the purpose and steps of the AOCD process, as well as the purpose of the community forum. The goal of the first meeting was to establish a committee consensus in the goals for the forum and the planning committee's role in planning the forum. The planning committee determined what time, date, and place would be ideal for the forum and generated a list of names of initial donors to be contacted.

Second Planning Meeting

At the second meeting, the planning committee confirmed the location and time of the forum, as well as the guest speaker. The location of the Edgecombe Community College was selected for its close proximity to the community. The forum agenda and strategies for advertisement were also discussed. One important decision was made to have community resources present at the forum to share information with attendees. Potential organizations were identified and committee members took ownership of contacting them to invite them to participate in the forum with information tables. During the second meeting the planning committee also selected the themes for small group discussions to be discussed during the forum. Two student team members presented nine key findings that emerged from the interviews and focus groups, and guided the committee members' selection of five themes using the Grid Analysis strategy (Appendix P). From these nine themes, five specific themes were chosen based on importance to the community, current need, feasibility, changeability, and potential impact on the community.

Third Planning Meeting

At the third meeting, the student team discussed the facilitation techniques that would be used to begin the discussion of the five identified themes and continued to work towards confirming all logistics of entertainment, transportation, donations advertisement, and childcare for the forum. In

addition, the title of the forum, “Lifting Our Collective Voices: The Southeast Rocky Mount Community Forum” was presented and confirmed.

Fourth Planning Meeting

A fourth meeting was held to review the program and to confirm and finalize logistics. The planning committee also debriefed guest speakers during this final meeting.

Funding the Community Forum

The forum was largely funded through generous donations from a variety of local businesses and organizations. Students solicited donations both in-person and through phone calls, raising monetary funds and in-kind contribution towards venue, advertisement, printing, food, decoration, and door prizes. Overall, the team raised approximately \$750 in monetary and in-kind donations, with Consolidated Diesel, Truth Tabernacle Ministries and the Rocky Mount Department of Human Relations being the major financial contributors

Advertising the Community Forum

The community forum was advertised through a variety of mediums including two media outlets, the Rocky Mount Telegram and local radio shows on WBOB, flyers, post cards, personal invitations, and personal phone calls from student team and planning committee members to community members and service providers. Flyers advertising the forum were posted throughout Southeast Rocky Mount and postcard invitations were sent to all residents within Southeast Rocky Mount. In addition, personal invitations were sent to each person who had been interviewed by the student team, as well as local church leaders and officials such as the mayor, city manager, and city council members. Invitations were followed with telephone calls made by student team members. Committee members also made phone calls to residents living within Southeast Rocky Mount and assisted team members as they went door-to-door to pass out over 1000 flyers to community residents.

Forum Participation

The community forum was held from 9:30am – 1:00pm on Saturday, April 12, 2008, at the Edgecombe Community College, Rocky Mount campus. The purpose of the forum was to bring

together community members and service providers to celebrate the strengths of the Southeast Rocky Mount community, work together to discuss concerns of the community, and generate concrete action steps to address the issues raised. Approximately 10 organizations and agencies participated in the community resources fair, and 65 people participated in the forum.

The opening session of the community forum began with remarks by Ms. Naeema Muhammad, a long-time community activist as well as one of the student team's preceptors. The student team gave a brief presentation to recognize the forum's planning committee and supporters, to provide a brief synopsis of AOCD, as well as to introduce the five themes that would be addressed during the hour-long small group discussions. Pastor James Bellamy, a student team preceptor and a service provider for Southeast Rocky Mount, provided entertainment by performing a well-known gospel song. Ms. Loretta Braswell, director of the Department of Human Relations for the City of Rocky Mount, introduced Reverend William Barber, III, as the keynote speaker (refer to Appendix Q). Following the opening session participants participated in one of five small group discussions. One student team member facilitated each small group discussion; each student team member presented the theme statement along with a trigger to facilitate discussion among participants.

After the small group discussions, forum participants had lunch served by Chick-Fil-A and had an opportunity to interact with other participants. The closing session included a brief presentation of each group's action steps by group representatives. Ms. Mary Warren then gave closing remarks and invited participants to attend a follow-up meeting on April 22, 2008 at 6:00 pm at Truth Tabernacle Ministries.

Discussion Summaries & Action Steps

Small Group Discussion about Youth

The small group discussion about youth included 25 forum attendees, including a mix of service providers, community members and youth. A member of the student team facilitated the discussion using the SHOWED technique; she read aloud a poem and asked participants a number of questions to solicit reactions to the poem in relation to issues about youth in Southeast Rocky Mount (refer to

Appendix R for trigger, questions, and description of SHOWED). The participants discussed various reasons for the existing issues regarding youth, including a disconnect between generations, a different family structure (single parent families versus traditional families), and a lack of jobs, positive role models, encouragement, family and social support, dialogue between youth and adults, and recreational activities. To address the needs of youth, participants decided that there has to be mentorship, educational enrichment, and recreational and social activities. Participants also noted the existing efforts that have been made to support youth in Southeast Rocky Mount, including the Boys and Girls Club, a Kids Café, the Opportunities Industrialization Center, and the Rocky Mount Youth Council.

In order to enhance existing efforts and implement new efforts towards reaching out to youth in Southeast Rocky Mount, the discussion participants identified four concrete action steps.

1. Support the Rocky Mount Youth Council in their meeting with the City Council
 - a. Contact group members with date and time information
2. Set up a meeting with the Board of Directors of local organizations to discuss issues of mentorship, educational enrichment and recreational activities.
 - a. Contact the following organizations: Boys and Girls Club, Downeast Partnership for Children, Rocky Mount OIC, and Bridging the Gap.
 - b. Set a clear agenda
3. Meet to discuss building a coalition of parents, churches, teachers, law enforcement, media, youth, city officials, RM Parks and Recreation, YMCA, and Big Brothers and Sisters that will help to improve communication among these groups about what is and is not being done regarding youth and to think about ways to address the lack of mentorship, educational enrichment, and recreational activities for youth in Southeast Rocky Mount and other neighborhoods.
4. Attend the Follow-up Meeting on Tuesday, April 22 at 6pm at the Bassett Center

Small Group Discussion about Housing

Six forum attendees participated in the small group discussion about housing, including two service providers. A member of the student team used the ORID technique and a photo of a boarded up house to guide the discussion (refer to Appendix U for trigger, questions and description about ORID). The photograph brought up many concerns and issues regarding housing in the Southeast

Rocky Mount community, including decreased property value, lack of community pride, and differences between properties of homeowners and landlords. Participants discussed the need for property owners and renters to take responsibility in managing yard work, pest and rodent control, and loans. Participants noted that renters are not invested in caring for the property and have an “it’s not mine” attitude. One important issue was the need to improve housing code enforcement; participants expressed concerns about existing codes being insufficient, the need to include community members when reviewing codes, and the need to educate both tenants and landlords about the codes. Other issues included increasing community pride to motivate neighbors to clean up their yards, promoting home ownership, and continuing to help tenants of older homes apply for free lead abatement.

The small group discussion led to three action steps:

1. Talk to leaders of the Southeast Rocky Mount Community Organization about organizing a meeting to raise tenant issues with landlords and the city council.
2. Talk to the city council about the idea of licensing for landlords.
3. Talk to leaders of the Southeast Rocky Mount Community Organization about coordinating community cleanup events with Keep America Beautiful. Involve kids and families by offering free food and additional recreational activities for youth. Consider collaborating with Department of Parks and Recreation to coordinate the events.

Small Group Discussion about Community Resources

The small group discussion about community resources included 11 forum attendees, including many service providers and a few community members. The student facilitator used a collection of pictures and the ORID technique to guide the discussion. Participants used the collection of pictures to reflect on the fragmented nature of existing community resources, as well as the overall lack of awareness among community members about the resources available. One participant emphasized the need for more resources and opportunities for senior citizens, and several participants suggested different resources and opportunities that are currently being offered to senior citizens. The entire group agreed that the fragmented nature of existing organizations and agencies was best described as “the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing.” The group brainstormed a list of

approximately 20 existing community resources, and concluded that there are actually quite a few resources for people living in Southeast Rocky Mount (refer to Appendix T for trigger, questions and description about ORID). Participants believed that both service providers and community members aren't aware of all of these resources; as a result participants identified two action steps.

1. Everyone should go back to their churches and other avenues to inform community members of existing resources and the need for a taskforce.
2. Create a task force of existing community resources.
 - a. A participant will contact dept. of Human Relations to set up a meeting and get the people involved
 - b. A participant will contact Rev. Walker of Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church to begin collaborating with faith based organizations
 - c. All group members will try to attend follow-up meeting on April 22, 6pm @ Bassett Center to continue discussion about task force, sort out details, and set agendas for meetings with Human Relations and Rev. Walker
 - d. The two group representatives will contact their respective groups and work together to connect the community resources/agencies with faith-based organizations
 - e. The Task force will create a resource directory
 - f. The Task force will establish a resource hotline

Small Group Discussion about Employment

Three forum attendees participated in the small group discussion about employment. The student facilitator used the ORID technique to guide the discussion (refer to Appendix S for trigger, questions and description about ORID). Participants linked the issue of employment back to education. Participants felt that because many parents work multiple jobs, they do not have time to spend helping children with homework or providing discipline. Also, many adults were not viewed as being motivated to invest in job training or education for themselves and children were described as “checking out”, or losing interest in their education, by middle school. Several needs were identified during the discussion, including the need for more tutors to provide one-on-one help to kids with homework, the need for increased parenting skills, and the need for help in getting parents more invested in their children's education and enrichment. Participants agreed that enhancing the

education of children in Southeast Rocky Mount would lead to a positive impact on employment issues in the community.

The small group identified two action steps:

1. Hold organized community events for both parents and children, including family movie nights with food, expanding outreach of school-related events, and hosting movie nights in local parks during the summer.
2. A participant will contact the city government about having family movie nights in parks and public places.

Small Group Discussion about Crime

Approximately 23 forum attendees participated in the small group discussion about crime. The student facilitator used the ORID technique and examples of local crime-related newspaper headlines to guide the discussion (refer to Appendix V for trigger, questions and description about ORID). Participants described how crime affects the whole community; everyone, including youth and senior citizens, deal with issues of crime and personal safety every day. Gangs are an ever-increasing presence in the community. Causes of crime included: poverty, lack of education, feelings of hopelessness, ineffective parenting, unemployment, lack of recreation for kids, and the high prices of everyday commodities. Participants expressed visions for change in the community, such as addressing child neglect and kids' involvement in gangs, implementing more police patrols, setting up more street lights in the community, increasing involvement from neighborhood groups, and publicizing positive messages about Southeast Rocky Mount.

The group identified six action steps to address crime in Southeast Rocky Mount:

1. Submit a positive media report on forum for publication in the Rocky Mount Telegram newspaper.
2. Contact existing grassroots organizations, resources, churches, and transportation in order to create a database resource for parents.
3. Contact fraternities, Bridging and Gap, and churches to inquire about obtaining male mentors for youth and to establish new Boy Scout groups.
4. Organize community seniors and police department to visit nightclubs to “take love” to the youth.

5. Contact the police department to expand police education programs in schools.
6. Contact Public Works to request more street lights in the community.

Evaluating the Forum

All participants at the community forum, including service providers, were asked to complete a brief evaluation form. Forms were distributed to participants following lunch and were collected at the end of the forum. A total of 48 completed evaluations were received. The data were entered into a spreadsheet to allow for tabulation of average scores or percentage of responses, depending upon the type of question (i.e. ranking vs. yes/no). The majority of participants generally agreed that the forum was helpful and informative. About one third of participants indicated that they had been interviewed by the team and about the same number said that they live in Southeast Rocky Mount. Further description of the results from the evaluations is included in Appendix X.

Section IV: Methods

The team utilized various methods in order to identify the strengths, challenges and needs of the Southeast Rocky Mount community, as well as to facilitate the development of action steps. The methods used to achieve these goals include defining the community, gaining entrée into the community, collecting background information, conducting interviews and focus groups, developing a community forum advisory board to identify discussion themes for the community forum, and hosting a community forum. Supplemental materials are provided in the appendices.

Defining the Community

Although the team originally started with a broad definition of the “African American community in Rocky Mount,” it was decided early in the process to focus specifically on SERM. The team’s preceptors were dedicated community members and service providers of SERM; thus it seemed reasonable to take advantage of their in-depth knowledge of the area as well as their connections within the community. Soon after our initial visit to SERM, the team saw many distinctions between SERM and the rest of Rocky Mount.

A report on the “State of the Inner City Neighborhoods” was commissioned in 2007 by the City of Rocky Mount to analyze the situations of inner-city neighborhoods in Rocky Mount and categorized these areas into four treatment groups: Protect, Stabilize, Revitalize, or Redevelop. This report evaluated parts of SERM as an area to “Revitalize”; in other words, the city considered SERM “an area that has had significant decline but still contains some assets.” Nearly half of the neighborhood was classified as “Redevelop,” defined as “an area that has extensive problems with few assets.” Bolstered by the report’s assessments, the team decided to focus the community assessment on Southeast Rocky Mount.

Gaining Entrée into the Community

Entering, or gaining entrée into the community was the first step taken by the student team in the assessment process. During this process, team members began to become acquainted with the community, with the goal of earning the trust and respect of its members. The team’s preceptors played an integral role in this introduction to the community. During October of 2007, an extensive windshield tour led by two preceptors and a service provider was conducted through the SERM community and into some neighboring areas in downtown Rocky Mount. Observations were conducted and field notes were recorded by team members regarding the physical attributes of the community, including its layout and geography, attributes of housing, businesses, and recreational facilities, as well as the social aspects of the community such as visible gatherings of residents at homes and public places. During the tour, team preceptors discussed the community history and related these facts to changes they had heard of, or experienced in various areas of the community.

After the tour, preceptors assisted team members in identifying upcoming community events in which team members could participate to continue relationship building within the community. During the fall and winter months of the assessment process, preceptors facilitated team member connections with service providers and community members who might be willing to share their perspectives on the SERM community through interviews.

Throughout the fall 2007 and winter 2008, the team attended a number of community activities and events (refer to Appendix L). These activities contributed not only to the team's efforts to gain entrée into the community, but in the identification of potential community members and service providers for direct participation in the assessment through interviews or attendance at the community forum.

Collecting Background Information

The assessment of the Southeast Rocky Mount community was supplemented and further informed by secondary data collected on SERM, as well as the greater Rocky Mount and Edgecombe County areas. Beginning in October 2007, this data was collected by team members using public records, websites, and other media resources. In order to build a comprehensive knowledge base, this data focused on a wide range of applicable topics including demographics, history, health, education, housing, and community resources. As interviews commenced and community strengths, challenges, and needs emerged, the team collected additional information on the history, education, crime, and health statistics pertaining to SERM, to further develop these themes. In addition, other sources of information, such as past community housing reports, were suggested to the team by preceptors, community members, and service providers (see Appendix A for a complete list of secondary data sources).

Documenting Team Observations

As previously noted, team members recorded their observations from the initial windshield tour and during subsequent participation in community events and activities. Observational data from each team member, in the form of field notes, were reviewed for recurring themes. Those themes noted most often were noted and documented as the team's perspectives on the community as outsiders, or individuals not living, working, or otherwise serving in the community.

Conducting Key Informant Interviews

In addition to observational data collection, team members conducted primary data collection in the form of 19 semi-structured interviews with service providers and African American SERM

community members, including key informants. Key informants are individuals who are particularly knowledgeable about the community, and who assisted the team with networking and understanding the culture of the community.

Based on input from team preceptors, past AOCD interview guides, and from themes collected through observational and secondary data sources, the student team created two interview guides: one each for one-on-one key informant interviews with service providers and community members. The guides included questions regarding the boundaries of the community, who lives in the community and what do they do for work and play, and strengths and challenges in the community. Both the community member and service provider interview guides were pilot-tested with preceptors for applicability to SERM community members and confirmed by the teaching team to be consistent with guidelines for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Applying the preceptors' feedback, the team made revisions to the interview guides and submitted the final versions to the teaching team for final approval. Along with approved interview guides, IRB requires approval of participant recruitment materials and consent forms to ensure ethical protection of participants.

Team members approached and invited community members to participate in the interviews during public events and through key informants. Team members also sought after area service providers who serve SERM community members. It was not a requirement, however, that the service provider have their place of business within the SERM community. They represented a wide range of organizations including public and private health providers, government, religion, education, law enforcement, and social services. Community member and service provider interviewees were identified in a similar fashion, through recommendations from preceptors, from secondary data sources, through connections at community events, and through the snowballing method in which interviewees recommend other potential interviewees.

The interview guides were structured to last approximately one-hour and designed for a two-person interviewing team. Prior to the start of each interview, the participant was given a brief

overview of the AOCD process. The consent form was reviewed with each participant, outlining their rights and protections as participants in the project, and verbal or written consent was obtained from each participant. One member of the interviewing team conducted the interview, while the other member took notes and asked follow-up questions, if needed. With the interviewee's permission, the interview was audio-taped and then transcribed for analysis purposes.

Conducting Focus Group Interviews

Because the student team lacked ties to the younger population in SERM, two focus groups were conducted to gain insight into the opinions and experiences of the younger generations living in SERM. These perspectives were especially helpful in providing a more complete picture of the concerns of all SERM residents.

The team worked with two service providers, both of whom regularly worked with youth and young adults, to coordinate and schedule two focus groups. The first focus group consisted of four high school students who meet regularly as part of a youth group. The second focus group consisted of eight young adult male community members, ages 18-25, who meet regularly to attend a GED class. For the youth focus group, the parents of the youth received an informational brochure and had the opportunity to decline their child's participation in the focus group.

The student team developed focus group guides for each group by first brainstorming questions that they wanted answered and then discussing which questions they thought were most pertinent to the AOCD process. Before using either guide, the student team asked their preceptors to look over the questions and to provide feedback on their relevance and appropriateness. Topics covered in the focus groups included schools, recreation, resources, and visions for the future.

The focus groups were held in the "natural setting," in which the participants regularly meet during the same time and at the same location. The team obtained oral consent from the youth focus group participants and written consent from the young men's focus group participants (refer to Appendices E-F).

Data Analysis & Selection of Themes

All interviews with key informants and focus group participants were transcribed by team members. During this transcription process, participant information was entered using code numbers rather than participant names to protect participant confidentiality. Keywords or themes that were mentioned more than once throughout the interviews were used to create a list of codes. Upon the completion of 33 key informant interviews and two focus groups, each transcript was coded using the text analysis software program, Atlas.ti. Two students divided the transcripts into thirds, each individually coding two-thirds of them using an agreed upon code book. The overlapping interviews that were coded by both students enabled them to efficiently compare coding strategies for inter-coder reliability. Refer to Appendix M for the code book.

Through observation of each code's frequency and knowledge gained from reading each transcript, the students that worked on the coding identified themes that emerged from the interviews. These eight themes were presented to the community forum planning committee, who were asked to discuss and prioritize based on importance and changeability. These prioritized themes were then selected to be presented at the community forum.

Influence of the Outsider's Perspective

Student team members may perceive the strengths, challenges, and needs of Southeast Rocky Mount differently than community members do. Team members conducted analyses of community observations with the intent to provide information to the community about how "outsiders" may view that community. It should be noted that, as outsiders, the student team attempted to document how their observations and past experiences have influenced their perspectives of the community. At the same time, insiders' perspectives alone would also result in a biased assessment of the community. Hence, collecting secondary data in conjunction with interviews from service providers was crucial in providing a multi-layer assessment, representative of both insider and outsider views combined.

Limitations and Challenges

While team members took measures to gain entrée into the community, it is recognized that the assessment process is approximately seven months long and, therefore, these time constraints made it difficult to gain exhaustive knowledge of the community. Furthermore, the team was limited to approximately four months to collect, analyze, and present primary data at the community forum.

Limitations of primary data collection include the possibility of social desirability bias. Interview and focus group participants may have responded in a way they believed would be most desirable, rather than offering their true opinions and perspectives. Team members attempted to address this limitation by building rapport with service providers and community members prior and during the interview process, as well as by reminding them that their interview would not be tied to their name and therefore would be completely confidential.

While secondary data collection was important in the development of an overall view of the Southeast Rocky Mount community, it should be noted that limitations existed in using these data. For some health and education-related data, for example, data were limited to county-wide statistics and could not be disaggregated for data specific to SERM. The team addressed this limitation by using community-level information when possible and by interviewing service providers that could provide community level information. Although team members made numerous visits to the community to gather observational data, observations were not able to be made at all times of the day due to time constraints.

Other limitations may have included differences in level of education, race, and ethnicity between the team and members of the community. Perhaps these differences limited the extent to which the team could identify with interviewees and focus group participants, and vice-versa.

Section V: Conclusion and Recommendations

The enthusiasm and participation of community members and service providers at the Southeast Rocky Mount community forum resulted in excellent action steps and a promising commitment to

future community building and improvement. The student team strongly applauds the action steps developed by participants at the forum. All of the themes addressed overlapped with one another, as housing is impacted by employment, which is heavily influenced by youth education, and so on. Consequently, the recommendations that are offered by the student team are not organized by theme, but rather listed and explained below as being universally relevant.

- With regards to rebuilding and/or refurbishing houses, it would be of great benefit to the community if this work was completed mostly by community members. The team suggest meeting with the city to discuss creating a policy of giving preference to local SERM contractors when considering investing city money into the community. Keeping the work within the community may lead to greater community pride and would definitely increase job availability. On a related note, if any vocational programs related to construction, plumbing, landscaping or other relevant fields exist for community members, these classes should be encouraged to work on projects within SERM. If they do not exist, it is suggested as an approach the city or community college could investigate providing.
- Youth expressed a desire for help with their homework within the community. Meanwhile, the team also spoke with a number of retired and seemingly educated elders. It occurred to team members that creating a network of tutors among the retired population would greatly benefit the youth and foster greater communication between generations.
- When discussing employment issues, many identified the importance of education. Also, many noted that youth are often not particularly invested in their education. It may be beneficial to encourage schools to invite professionals to speak in elementary school classes to help children recognize why subjects that seem irrelevant to them today are actually important. For example, a doctor could talk about the importance of science in understanding his/her job, a businessperson could explain the relevance of math, and a musician could explain the crucial nature of communication skills. The presence of successful professionals might inspire youth to see their own potential, as well as help motivate them to remain in school.
- In general, the greater communication there is between community members, the less space there is for crime and unwanted activities. We encourage the city and SERMCO to invest in more block parties and community events that focus on positive, fun community interaction aimed at attracting all ages.
- Community resources also need to improve their communication, both between agencies and with member of the community.

The individuals that the student team spoke with to inform this AOCD process all shared common concerns about the current state and future of Southeast Rocky Mount. Many of the issues they raised were supported by the secondary data that the student team researched. Although many individuals who were interviewed seemed overwhelmed by the community's challenges, the tone of the community forum was much more hopeful and encouraging. The active participation of community members and service providers at the community forum spoke to a high level of motivation within the community to work towards improving conditions in SERM. The AOCD process aims to provide information about a community's strengths and challenges and to facilitate progress towards shifting the balance of challenges to that of strengths. As long as the community can maintain the level of enthusiasm and motivation that was exhibited at the forum, the student team is confident that both community members and service providers of SERM can move forward to resolving its challenges. It is with sadness and yet great hope that the student team exits this community, having completed the AOCD process by transforming it from a diagnosis made by outsiders to a series of commitments by community participants to addressing their collective needs.

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Appendix B - Recruitment Consent Form



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Department of Health Behavior & Health Education

ROSENAU HALL
CAMPUS BOX 7440
CHAPEL HILL, NC 27599-7440

ROCKY MOUNT COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT TEAM

Recruitment Consent Form

A team of students from the UNC School of Public Health is conducting an assessment of the cultural, social, economic, and health experiences of the community in Southeast Rocky Mount. They would be interested in contacting you to participate in an interview for their project. If you agree to be contacted by the team, you will be given more information about the project and have the opportunity to decide if you wish to participate in it or not. I will not know whether you decide to participate or not. Regardless of your decision, any services you may utilize will not be affected in any way. If you have any questions about the project, you can contact our community assessment team or our faculty advisor:

Community Assessment Team

Sharrelle Barber
Allison George
Dustin Petersen
Jana Thompson
Janice Tzeng
(866) 610-8272 (toll-free)

Faculty Advisor

Eugenia Eng, DrPH
UNC School of Public Health
Department of Health Behavior and
Health Education
Campus Box 7440
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7440
(919) 966-3919, call collect if you wish

May I have permission to give your name and contact information to the team?

If you choose not to give your permission at this time, you may keep this form and contact the team directly at a later date, if you change your mind.

Agreement to Release Contact Information:

A. Please sign below denoting that the person listed above has given me their permission to release their name and contact information to the team of students conducting this project.

Signature of Contact Person (person asking for permission) Date

B. Please provide the name and contact information of the community member or service provider.

Printed Name of Community Member/Service Provider

Telephone Number

e-Mail Address

Appendix C - Community Member and Service Provider Consent Form



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Department of Health Behavior & Health Education

ROSENAU HALL
CAMPUS BOX 7440
CHAPEL HILL, NC 27599-7440

ROCKY MOUNT COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT TEAM

INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

“The African American community in Rocky Mount, NC”

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in an interview to help inform a community assessment project of the African American community in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. We are a team of five graduate students from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health, in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education.

What is the purpose of this project?

The community assessment project is a part of our graduate training. This means we will work with the African American community in Rocky Mount to identify its strengths, challenges, and future directions for promoting health and well-being. Our goal is to provide possible future direction to address community concerns. By participating in this interview, you are contributing to this process. The information we gather will be summarized and shared with the community in a written document. We will also present our results to the community at a public forum to be held in April, 2008. We will contact you in the near future to invite you to participate in this forum.

What will you be asked to do?

You have been identified as someone who could represent or share information about the African American community in Rocky Mount. The purpose of this interview is to discuss your thoughts, opinions, and experiences of living, working, and/or being part of the African American community in Rocky Mount. The questions will ask for your perspective on the physical surroundings, community life, strengths/assets, and challenges/areas for potential improvement for the African American community in Rocky Mount.

The interview is expected to last about an hour. We would like to take notes and tape record the interview because your input is important to us, and we want to make sure that we accurately record our discussion. You may refuse to answer any questions or request that we stop the tape recorder at any time during the interview. We will store the tapes and notes in a secure location in the School of Public Health. After we have finished using the tapes and notes for this project, the tapes and written documents will be destroyed.

What are your rights as a participant?

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate or not participate will not affect your relationship with UNC or any of its affiliated organizations.

How do we assure confidentiality?

Every effort will be taken to protect your identity. Your comments will remain confidential. No name or identifying characteristics will be matched with what you say today. We will report summaries of the comments made by community members, but we will not identify the names of the individuals we interview. Your name will not be identified in any report or publication of this project or its results. Also, you do not need to reveal your name today if you do not want to; you may use a made-up name if you wish.

What are the risks and benefits of your participation?

There is very little risk to you from participating in this project. All interview notes and recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet to which only team members will have access. While we will do everything we can to keep your information confidential, there is a slight chance that some of your answers could become publicly known. However, all efforts will be made to uphold strict confidentiality. While there are no direct benefits of your participation, the indirect benefits may include providing information to represent the strengths and needs of the African American community in Rocky Mount.

Are there any costs? Will you be paid?

There is no cost for participating, except the time you will spend in the interview and, if applicable, any travel costs to you in getting to this interview. You will not be reimbursed for your participation.

What if I have questions?

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact the team members: Sharrelle Barber, Allison George, Dustin Petersen, Jana Thompson, and Janice Tzeng.

UNC School of Public Health – Department of Health Behavior and Health Education
Campus Box 7440
UNC Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7440
Phone: 919-966-3919
Toll-free phone: 1-866-610-8272

You may also contact our faculty advisor, Eugenia Eng, DrPH, by phone (you may call collect), email, or regular mail.

UNC School of Public Health – Department of Health Behavior and Health Education
Campus Box 7440
UNC Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7440
Phone: 919-966-3909
Email: Eugenia_eng@unc.edu

Acknowledgement of Informed Consent

I, _____, understand my rights as a participant in this project. I agree to participate in the interview and to have the interview tape recorded.

Signature _____ **Date** _____



Appendix D - Parent/Guardian of Youth Consent Brochure

WHAT IS AOCD?

AOCD means Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis. AOCD is a research assessment designed to understand the cultural, social, economic, and health experiences of individuals who live in your community. The purpose is to better understand the experiences of members of your community, including youth. AOCD is a faculty-sponsored graduate student project.

WHAT IS A YOUTH FOCUS GROUP?

A youth focus group is a one-time meeting of 8-10 adolescents who will share their ideas and opinions about growing up or living in the Southeast Rocky Mount. Your child is invited to participate in a focus group because we want his/her ideas, experiences, and opinions about living in Southeast Rocky Mount, and to learn about issues adolescents face.

- Some example questions include:
- What are some things that young people like most about living in Southeast Rocky Mount?
 - What are the biggest challenges young people in your community face?

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?

You are being asked to give permission for the minor in your guardianship to participate in an AOCD Youth Focus Group. If you allow he/she to take part, your youth and other youth will participate in groups of 8-

10 for 60 minutes with moderators from the UNC School of Public Health. In a focus group, your child will have an opportunity to give their perspective of living in the Southeast Rocky Mount community.

If you decide to have your child take part in an AOCD youth focus group, you will be asked to sign this “informed consent” form. Signing this form means that you understand the purpose of the AOCD project and what your child will be asked to do during the focus group. Signing the form also means that you understand that your child can stop taking part in the focus group at any time you want him/her to.

WHAT WILL YOUR CHILD GET OUT OF BEING IN THIS PROJECT?

Your child will have an opportunity to share their thoughts about their experiences in the Southeast Rocky Mount community. Your child will not be paid for participating in the focus group, but refreshments will be provided during the session. There are no costs for participating in the project other than your child’s time spent during the focus group. Participation is completely voluntary.

WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THE FOCUS GROUP INFORMATION?

The focus groups will be held at local churches, schools, libraries, and other

community settings in Rocky Mount, but will be in private rooms to assure privacy and prevent others not participating in the group from overhearing the discussion. With your and your child’s permission, we will take notes and use a tape recorder during the focus group. Only members of our group will moderate the focus group and listen to tapes. Your child has the right to refuse to answer any question or stop the audio tape at any time. The notes and audiotapes will be stored in a locked cabinet at the School of Public Health and will be destroyed in May 2008 at the conclusion of the project.

Our team will summarize information that we have gathered from all focus groups as well as interviews throughout the community, and present our findings both written and verbally to your community at a community forum. All members of the Southeast Rocky Mount community will be invited to attend.

WILL OTHER PEOPLE KNOW THAT MY CHILD TOOK PART IN THE AOCD FOCUS GROUP?

No. Your child’s name will never be used in connection with his/her comments made in the focus group. Everything said in the group will remain confidential, and group members must agree to maintain that

confidentiality by not repeating to other people what we talked about.

DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE AOCD FOCUS GROUP?

No. Your child does not have to take part if he/she does not want to. Also, your child does not have to answer any of the questions asked during the focus group. Your child can stop taking part in the focus group whenever he/she wants to. Whether or not your child participates in the focus group will have no effect on services obtained in the community or any relationship with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THIS PROJECT?

There are few known risks of participating in this project. Your child may feel uncomfortable talking about what it is like as a kid in this community. Your child will be reminded that he/she is not required to discuss any issues that make him/her feel uncomfortable.

WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THIS PROJECT?

This is a student project conducted under the supervision of our faculty advisor Geni Eng. If you ever have questions about this project, please call Dr. Eng. You can call her office

at the UNC – School of Public Health. The number is 919-966-3909. You can also call collect if necessary. If you have any particular questions to the student team you can call us toll-free at 1-886-610-8272.

If you are interested in including your child in the AOCD Youth Focus Group, **please read the following agreement statement very carefully.** Then please sign and date this form and bring it to an AOCD Coordinator. You will get a copy of the form for your own records.

Agreement Statement:

If you agree to allow this child to participate in our youth focus group, please sign and date this form and have your child return it to _____ by _____.

By signing this consent form, I give permission allow my child to participate in an youth focus group that is a part of UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health’s Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis (AOCD) in Rocky Mount. I have read and understand the information presented in this consent form explaining the Rocky Mount ACOD and the youth focus group portion of this project. If I decide I do not want my child’s information to be used, I will tell you in writing.

(Child’s name, please print)

(Your signature and date)

Thank you!

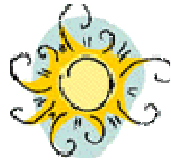
This focus group will take place at _____ on the date _____

Your child will have details explained to them prior to starting the focus group.



Can your child participate in the AOCD Youth Focus Group?

Appendix E - Youth Oral Consent Brochure



WHAT IS AOCD?

AOCD means Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis. The purpose of an AOCD is to learn more about the strengths and needs of the African American community in Southeast Rocky Mount. We hope to do this by talking to you and other people about the experiences of members of your community.

WHY ARE YOU PARTICIPATING IN AOCD?

We wish to hear your thoughts and opinions about what life is like for members of the African American community in Southeast Rocky Mount.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?

You will be asked to participate in an AOCD youth focus group. A youth focus group is a one-time meeting of 8-10 adolescents like you who will share their ideas and opinions about growing up or living in the Southeast Rocky Mount community. You are invited to participate in a focus group because we want to hear your ideas, experiences, and opinions about living in Southeast Rocky Mount, and to learn about issues adolescents face.

Some example questions include:

- What are some things that young people like most about living in Southeast Rocky Mount?
- What are the biggest challenge young people in your community face?

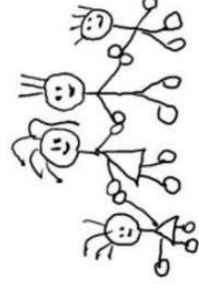
The focus group will take about 60 minutes of your time. If you agree to participate we will record everyone's responses on a piece of paper. Also, we would like to tape record the focus group to make sure we do not miss anything. Only members of our team will listen to the tapes. The tapes will be erased after our project is over. You can ask us to turn off the tape recorder at anytime.

WHAT WILL YOU GET OUT OF BEING IN THIS PROJECT?

You will have an opportunity to share your thoughts about your experiences in the Southeast Rocky Mount community. We hope that the information we learn will be used to improve services for you and members of your community. There are no costs for participating in the project other than your time spent during the focus group. You will not be paid to participate in the focus group, but refreshments will be provided during the session.

WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THE FOCUS GROUP INFORMATION?

Our team will summarize information that we have gathered from all focus groups as well as interviews throughout the community, and present our findings both written and verbally to your community at a community forum. All members of the Southeast Rocky Mount community will be invited to attend.



YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY AND CONFIDENTIAL.

You do not have to participate in this project. Whether or not you participate in the focus group will have no effect on services obtained in the community or any relationship with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

You have the right to refuse to answer any question or stop the audio tape at any time. You are free to stop participating in the project at any time, for any reason.

Any information that you provide will remain confidential. Your name will not be linked to any of your responses. We will only use your name and address, if you

provide it to us, to invite you to attend the community forum.

To protect your privacy, all of the information you provide will be stored only with an identification number, not with your name. Every effort will be taken to protect the identity of the participants in this study, and only members of our team or our faculty advisors will have access to the information you and others provide. However, there is no guarantee that the information cannot be gotten by legal process or court order.

To ensure confidentiality, everything said in the group will remain confidential, and you must agree to maintain that confidentiality by not repeating to other people what we talked about.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THIS PROJECT?

There are few known risks of participating in this project. You may feel uncomfortable talking about what it is like as a kid in this community. You will be reminded several times that you are not required to discuss any issues that make you feel uncomfortable.

WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THIS PROJECT? HOW CAN I CALL THEM?

This is a student project conducted under the supervision of our faculty advisor Dr. Geni

Eng. If you ever have questions about this project, please call Dr. Eng. You can call Dr. Eng at her office at the UNC – School of Public Health. The number is 919-966-3909. You can also call collect if necessary. If you have any particular questions to the student team you can call us toll-free at 1-886-610-8272.

If you are interested in participating in the AOCD Youth Focus Group, **please listen to the following agreement statement very carefully.** An AOCD team member will then ask if you are willing to participate in the AOCD Youth Focus Group.

AGREEMENT STATEMENT:

I give permission to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to use my interview information for the Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis.

Do you agree with the previous statement and are willing to participate in the focus group?

YES NO

(Focus group participant's name)

(Team member signature and date)

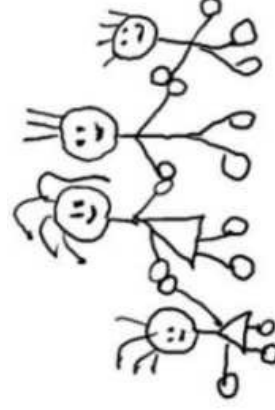
Thank you!



UNC
SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

Would you like to participate in an AOCD Youth Focus Group?

Verbal Consent for:
Youth who participate in an AOCD Focus Group



Appendix F - Young Adult Oral Consent Brochure

WHAT IS AOCD?

AOCD means Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis. AOCD is a research assessment designed to understand the cultural, social, economic, and health experiences of individuals who live in your community. AOCD is a faculty sponsored graduate student project.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in a 60 minute focus group, or discussion. We want to learn about your opinions and thoughts about the strengths and challenges of living in your community. There are no wrong answers. Your participation is limited to this one focus group, and you will not be contacted for further sessions.

WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THE FOCUS GROUP INFORMATION?

Our team will summarize information that we have gathered from all focus groups as well as interviews throughout the community, and present our findings both written and verbally to your community at a community forum. All members of the Southeast Rocky Mount community will be invited to attend.

your confidentiality and that of others, we will ask participants not to discuss the information shared in the focus group.

WHAT WILL YOU GET OUT OF BEING IN THIS PROJECT?

We hope that this information will help improve the health status of the Southeast Rocky Mount community. You will not be paid to participate in this focus group. However, refreshments will be provided during the focus group session.

WHAT WILL YOU RISK BY BEING IN THIS PROJECT?

The risk to you for participating is minimal. However, talking about life issues can sometimes be uncomfortable.

WILL THERE BE ANY COSTS?

The only costs for participating in this focus group are the time and expense for traveling to and from the discussion group and the time spent during the discussion group.



YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY AND CONFIDENTIAL

Participation is entirely voluntary, and you are not required to give your name or reveal any personal information. You may use a fictitious name if you wish. To respect

Information from this focus group will remain confidential. Any identifying information, such as age, sex, ethnicity, and number of years residing in your community, will only be used to describe the group and will not be linked to any particular thing that you or others say during the group discussion.

All notes and audiotapes containing your interview responses will be stored in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed in May 2008 at the conclusion of the project.

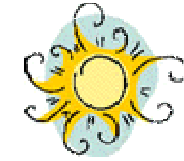
CAN YOU REFUSE OR STOP PARTICIPATION?

Taking part in this project is up to you.

You can choose not to answer any question or stop taking part in the focus group at any time. Not partaking in the focus group will have no effect on services obtained in the community or any relationship with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

TAPE-RECORDING

It is important to accurately record the information shared during these discussions. With your permission, I will tape-record the focus group. You have the right to stop the tape-recording at any time. The tapes will be recycled or destroyed after their use for this project is complete.



WHO ARE THE PEOPLE RUNNING THIS PROJECT?

AOCD is a student project and there is contact information available for both the student team and the faculty advisor. If you have any questions or concerns about this project or would like to receive information on the progress of the project, please feel free to contact, collect if you wish, the Rocky Mount AOCD student team at (919) 966-3919 or toll-free at 1-866-610-8272, or the faculty advisor, Eugenia Eng (919) 966-3909.

Agreement Statement:

By signing this consent form, I give permission to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to use my focus group information for the Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis.

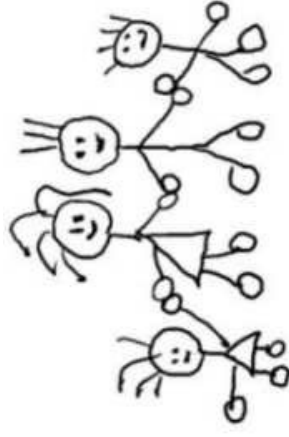
_____ (your signature and date)

_____ (team member signature and date)



Would you like to participate in an AOCD of your community?

Focus Group Consent Form for Community Members



Appendix G - Community Member Interview Guide

Community Member Interview Guide

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. We recognize that your time is valuable and we appreciate your participation. My name is _____ and I will be leading our interview today. This is _____, who will be taking notes and assisting me during the discussion. The purpose of today's interview is to learn about your thoughts and experiences as a member of the African American community living in southeast Rocky Mount. We are interested in hearing about your experiences and opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. Your unique experiences and input will strengthen our understanding of the community and we greatly value your insights. The interview will last approximately one hour. During the interview, we'd like to take notes and record our conversations using a tape recorder. Your input is important and we want to ensure that we accurately record all that you share with us. After we are finished using the tapes for class, they will be completely erased. Is this ok with you? Remember, you may choose not to answer a question, and you may stop the interview at any time. Also, your identity and your comments will remain confidential.

Do you have any questions at this time?

Okay, with your permission, we'll begin (**Turn on the tape recorder**)

"Today is ___(date)___, my name is ___(name)___ and I am speaking with ___(first name)___ to help inform our AOCD process..."

I'd first like to share a few *reminders* to keep in mind throughout the interview:

1. Please talk in a voice at least as loud as mine so the tape recorder can record all of our conversation.
2. We value your opinion, both positive and negative, and we hope you choose to express them during the interview
3. We are interested in your perspective as an African American person living in southeast Rocky Mount, so please keep that in mind during the interview.

a. Define the Community

1. How long have you lived in Rocky Mount?
2. (**show a map of RM**) On this map, please outline the area that you consider to be your community?
3. Does the area you outlined differ from the areas that you travel to regularly in Rocky Mount, for example for work, shopping, or other services?
4. Please describe the demographic breakdown for Southeast Rocky Mount. *What does this community look like in terms of age, race, education, and income?*
5. How does this compare with the city of Rocky Mount as a whole?

6. Please tell me a little bit about the history of Rocky Mount. Are there any stories about Rocky Mount that are particularly significant to you?

b. Life in the Community

1. What sorts of things do African Americans in southeast Rocky Mount do for a living?
2. What do people in southeast Rocky Mount do in their free time?
3. What kinds of recreational activities are available?
For children?
Teens?
Families?
Elderly?
4. What is the role of churches to people living in southeast Rocky Mount?
5. Are there other common or popular meeting places for people to get together?
6. Describe the political and civic involvement of people living in southeast Rocky Mount.

c. Assets/Challenges in the Community

1. What are some of the best things about living in southeast Rocky Mount?
2. What are the strengths of this community?
3. What resources, for example organizations or agencies, are available to you in southeast Rocky Mount?

PROMPT: *Where could you go for information about:*

- a. education
 - b. health
 - c. housing
 - d. job
 - e. transportation
 - f. businesses
 - g. other?
4. In your opinion, how helpful are these organizations in meeting your needs?
 5. How could these organizations and agencies improve their outreach to meet the needs of the community?
(PROMPT: *What's the best way for these organizations or agencies to share announcements or important information with you?)*
 6. What are some of the challenges faced by African Americans in southeast Rocky Mount?
 7. Of the challenges you mentioned, what do you think are the most important?

8. How can the strengths you identified in this community help address these challenges?
9. What additional resources do you think are needed?
10. Who are the key people that need to be at the table to make these changes?

d. Future of the Community

1. Where do you see the southeast Rocky Mount community in the next 10 years?
(PROMPT: *What do you think the community will look like in terms of demographics, social life, or resources that are available? Do you see yourself still living/working in this community ten years from now?*)

e. Recommended Individuals to Interview

1. Who else do you think we should speak with in order to further inform our understanding of this community?
 2. Would you be willing to ask this person/these people for permission for our team to contact them directly?
 3. Please tell us a little about this person/organization and why you think their input would be helpful to us.
- f. As I mentioned earlier, we are planning a community forum to share the results with the African American community in southeast Rocky Mount in the Spring. May we contact you at a later time to see if you are interested in helping us plan this forum?
- g. Is there any additional information about the African American Community in southeast Rocky Mount that you would like to share with us?

Thank you for your time. We sincerely appreciate your participation.

Appendix H - Service Provider Interview Guide

Service Provider Interview Guide

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. We recognize that your time is valuable and we appreciate your participation. My name is _____ and I will be leading our interview today. This is _____, who will be taking notes and assisting me during the discussion. The purpose of today's interview is to learn about you and your organization's role in the African American community in southeast Rocky Mount. We are interested in hearing about your experiences and opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. Your unique experiences and input will strengthen our understanding of the community and we greatly value your insights. The interview will last approximately one hour. During the interview, we'd like to take notes and record our conversations using a tape recorder. Your input is important and we want to ensure that we accurately record all that you share with us. After we are finished using the tapes for class, they will be completely erased. Is this ok with you? Remember, you may choose not to answer a question, and you may stop the interview at any time. Also, your identity and your comments will remain confidential.

Do you have any questions at this time?

Okay, with your permission, we'll begin (**Turn on the tape recorder**)

"Today is ___(date)___, my name is ___(name)___ and I am speaking with ___(first name)___ to help inform our AOCD process..."

I'd first like to share a few *reminders* to keep in mind throughout the interview:

4. Please talk in a voice that is at least as loud as mine, so the tape recorder can record all of our conversation.
5. We value your opinions, both positive and negative, and we hope you choose to express them during the interview
6. We are interested in your perspective as a service provider working in southeast Rocky Mount, so please keep that in mind during the interview.

h. Agency/Organization:

1. What is the name of the organization for which you work?
2. What is your position there?

i. **Overview of interview:** First I'd like to talk specifically about Rocky Mount (or Southeast Rocky Mount) just to get your general impression of the area, and then we'll talk more specifically about the role of your organization in the African American community in Rocky Mount.

j. Define the Community

7. Do you live in Rocky Mount?

[IF YES] How long have you lived in Rocky Mount?
[IF NO] Even though you don't live in Rocky Mount, I would like to hear about your impressions of the area.

8. **(Show a map of RM)** On this map, please outline the area that you consider to be Southeast Rocky Mount.
9. Please tell me about your impression of the demographic breakdown for Southeast Rocky Mount. (PROMPT: *What does this community look like in terms of age, race, education, and income?*)
10. Please tell me a little bit about the history of Rocky Mount. Are there any stories about Rocky Mount that are particularly significant to you?

k. Life in the Community

1. What sorts of things do African American community members in southeast Rocky Mount do for a living?
2. What do people in southeast Rocky Mount do in their free time?
3. What kinds of recreational activities are available?
Children?
Teens?
Families?
Elderly?
4. What is the role of churches to people living in southeast Rocky Mount?
5. Are there other common or popular meeting places for people to get together?
6. Describe the political and civic involvement of people living in southeast Rocky Mount.

l. Assets/Challenges in the Community

1. What are some of the best things about southeast Rocky Mount?
2. What are the strengths of this community?
3. What resources, for example organizations, agencies or public services, are available to residents of southeast Rocky Mount?
(PROMPT:)Where could someone go for information about:
 - h. education
 - i. health
 - j. housing
 - k. jobs
 - l. transportation
 - m. businesses
 - n. other?

4. What are some of the challenges faced by African Americans in southeast Rocky Mount?
5. Of the challenges you mentioned, what do you think are the most important?
6. You previously mentioned a few strengths of this community. How do you think the strengths you identified in this community can help address these challenges?
7. What additional resources do you think are needed?
8. Who are the key people that need to be at the table to make these changes?

m. Future of the Community

1. Where do you see the Southeast Rocky Mount community in the next 10 years?
(PROMPT: *What do you think the community will look like in terms of demographics, social life, and resources that are available? Do you see yourself still living/working in this community ten years from now?*)

n. Organization's Role in the Community. Now I'd like for us to switch gears and talk about you and your organization's role in Rocky Mount.

1. How long have you worked at _____ [name of organization]?
2. Can you please briefly describe your role within the organization?
3. Can you please tell me a little more about the organization and how it serves the African American community of Rocky Mount? (PROMPT: *How long has the organization been around? What is the purpose or mission of the organization? What groups/individuals does the organization intend to serve?*)
4. What are some of the services that your organization provides to the African American community in Rocky Mount? (PROMPT: *What kinds of services does your organization offer to groups/individuals living in Rocky Mount? Are there any services that are utilized more than others?*)
5. In your opinion, how successful do you consider your organization to be in meeting the needs of the African American community of Rocky Mount?
6. In what ways has your organization been successful in reaching out to your/this community? (PROMPT: *What has been the most successful way of reaching out to your community?*)
7. In what ways do you think your organization could improve in reaching out and meeting the needs of the community?
8. What partnerships or coalitions is your organization affiliated with, if any?
9. Thinking back to the past year or so, what are some of the organization's achievements that you are most proud of?

10. Thinking back to the past year or so, what are some of the challenges or obstacles you or your organization faced in trying to serve the African American community in Rocky Mount?
11. Is there anything you think your organization could do to improve the health and quality of life of African Americans living in Rocky Mount? (PROMPT: *What are future plans for health promotion in this area?*)
12. What other organizations do you know of that serve the African American community living in Rocky Mount? (PROMPT: *Have you and your organization ever partnered or worked with any of these organizations?*)

o. Recommended Individuals to Interview. We are almost at the end of the interview.

4. Who else do you think we should speak with to further inform our understanding of this community?
 5. If so, would you be willing to ask him/her/them for permission for our team to contact them directly?
 6. Please tell us a little about this person/organization and why you think their input would be helpful to us.
- p. As I mentioned earlier, we are planning a community forum to share the results with the African American community in southeast Rocky Mount in the spring. May we contact you at a later time to see if you are interested in helping us plan this forum?
- q. Is there any additional information about the African American Community in southeast Rocky Mount that you would like to share with us?

Thank you for your time. We sincerely appreciate your participation.

Appendix I - Youth Community Member Focus Group Guide

Youth Focus Group Discussion Moderator Guide

Thank you all for agreeing to participate in our focus group today. My name is _____ and I will be facilitating this focus group today. This is _____. (S)he will be taking notes as we discuss life in Southeast Rocky Mount. We realize that you are busy and have a lot of other things that you could do with your time, so we really appreciate your agreeing to be here. The purpose of this group is for us to get a feel for what it's like for you, as youth, to live in Southeast Rocky Mount. We are interested in your honest opinions, so please feel free to say what's on your mind. At the same time, it's important that we remain respectful of one another and encourage everyone to participate.

Before we begin, I want to remind you that we have brought a digital recorder to help us remember all that is discussed today. We ask that you do not discuss what you have heard in this room after the focus group is over. Please remember that you do not have to answer any question that you are uncomfortable with and that there are no right or wrong answers.

(Icebreaker/Introductions)

I'd like to begin by asking each of you to please introduce yourselves.

Please tell us your first name, age, (if youth are from outside SERM) what neighborhood you live in, where you go to school and one thing you like to do for fun. You can give us a pretend name if you would like.

(Warm-up questions)

1.

Thanks. I'd like to start our discussion by first asking you how each of you would describe Southeast Rocky Mount.

Probe: How would you define this area?

2. Do you feel that there is a sense of community here in Southeast Rocky Mount? What is the community like?

If no response, Probe – Do neighbors help each other out and get along well? Do you feel like people are connected?

If yes, Probe – What is the community like? How would you describe SERM as a community?

If no, Probe – What do you consider to be your community?

(In-depth questions)

1. What are some of the good things about living in SERM? Bad things?

2. How do you like your school?

a. Probe – Do you like where your school is? How do you like the climate/environment...how does it feel to be a student there? Do you think your

teachers respect you? Are there any differences between students from Nash and Edgecombe County?

3. How is where you live different? Does where you live compare from where you go to school?
 - a. Probes – attitudes, resources, activities, physical environment, etc?
4. Where do teenagers from Southeast Rocky Mount hang out?
 - a. Probe – What do they do there?
5. What sorts of things do you do for fun around here?
6. What kinds of resources are available for teens in Southeast Rocky Mount?
 - a. Probe - Where could you go if you had any questions or needed some help in anything?
7. Where do you see yourself in 5 year or 10 years?
 - a. Probe - Where will you be living? What will you be doing?
8. What kinds of resources are available for teens in Southeast Rocky Mount?

(Wrap-up questions)

9. If you were invited to have lunch with the mayor of Rocky Mount, what would you tell him?
10. If there was one thing that you could change about Rocky Mount, what would it be and why?

We are at the end of our discussion. (Turn to notetaker: Is there anything you'd like to ask the group?) Is there anything else that you'd like to share that we didn't already cover?

Thank you so much for joining us today. This has helped us out a lot and taught us a great deal about Southeast Rocky Mount.

Appendix J - Young Adult Community Member Focus Group Guide

Young Adult Focus Group Discussion Moderator Guide:

Hello. Thank you all for agreeing to participate in our focus group today. My name is _____ and I will be facilitating leading this focus group today. This is _____ and she will be taking notes and helping me during our discussion. We will be here for about 1 hour to talk to you about the benefits and challenges of living in Southeast Rocky Mount. Before we move on, I'd like to thank you all for taking the time to meet with us here today. We recognize that your time is valuable and appreciate your willingness to come together to share with us and discuss your unique experiences and thoughts about living in Southeast Rocky Mount. Your insights and opinions on this subject are important, so please say what's on your mind and what you think.

Before we begin, I want to remind you that we have brought a digital recorder to help us remember all that is discussed today. We ask that you do not discuss what you have heard in this room after the focus group is over. Please remember that you do not have to answer any question that you are uncomfortable with and that there are no right or wrong answers. At this time, we will hand out a focus group confidentiality statement. If you agree with the statement, please sign the form.

Introductions(Icebreaker/Introductions)

I'd like to begin by asking you to please introduce yourselves.

(Icebreaker) Please tell us your name, how long you've lived in Rocky Mount, and one word that you would use to describe Southeast Rocky Mount. If you are not from Southeast Rocky Mount, please tell us what neighborhood you are from. You can give us a pretend name if you would like.

Benefits and Challenges(Warm-up questions)

1. Thanks. I'd like to start our discussion by asking what is your overall view of Southeast Rocky Mount as a community? In other words, how would you describe Southeast Rocky Mount?

Probe: Do you feel a sense of community here in Southeast Rocky Mount?

Probe: How would you define this area?

(In-depth questions)

2. Please describe what that community looks or feels like to you.

3. Do you feel that people your age are invested in this community/neighborhood? If so, in what ways. If not, why do you think that this is the case?

4. How does SERM differ from the rest of Rocky Mount?

5. What do people in SERM do in their free time?

Probe: Where do people hang out? / Or where does this take place?

6. What are the strengths of SERM Mount?

7. What are some of the weaknesses/needs of this community/neighborhood?

8. How has Rocky Mount/SERM changed over the years that you have lived here?

(Wrap-up questions)

9. If you could offer any suggestions of what changes you would like to see in this neighborhood/community and what you think is needed to make those changes happen, what would those suggestions be?

10.

11. How has Rocky Mount/SERM changed over the years that you have lived here?

12. How do you think it will change over the next 5 or 10 years?

Additional Information

13. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience?

14. Questions from the note-taker?

We are at the end of our discussion. (Turn to notetaker: Is there anything you'd like to ask the group?) Is there anything else that we didn't cover that you'd like to share with the group?

Thank you very much for your time and participation. Your insights are extremely important to us.

(Extra questions)

15. How do you think it will change over the next 5 or 10 years?

Appendix K - Demographic Sheet

AOCD Rocky Mount Demographic Sheet

1. What year were you born? _____

2. Are you male or female?

Male Female

3. How would you describe your race or ethnicity? _____

Appendix L - Attendance at Community Events

List of Community Events AOCD – 2007-2008

Date	Event	Location	Town	Number of Team Members Attending
October 6, 2007	Windshield Tour	From Truth Tabernacle Ministries	Rocky Mount, (Southeast)	4
October 13, 2007	Windshield Tour	From Truth Tabernacle Ministries	Rocky Mount	1
October 20, 2007	Southeast Rocky Mount Community Organization (SERMCO) Awards and Recognition Banquet	Booker T. Washington Center	Rocky Mount	2
November 8, 2007	Meeting of Neighborhood Presidents	Rocky Mount City Hall	Rocky Mount	2
November 8, 2007	Southeast Rocky Mount Community Organization Meeting	Bassett Center	Rocky Mount, (Southeast)	4
December 2, 2007	Rocky Mount Holiday Parade	Rocky Mount	Rocky Mount	1
December 2, 2007	Reception for Mayor Turnage	Imperial Centre	Rocky Mount	1
February 2, 2008	Church Service	Truth Tabernacle Ministries	Rocky Mount	3
February 2, 2008	Church Service	Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church	Rocky Mount	2
February 14, 2008	SERMCO Meeting	Bassett Center	Rocky Mount	2
March 13, 2008	SERMCO Meeting	Bassett Center	Rocky Mount	2
March 13, 2008	Meeting of Neighborhood Presidents	Rocky Mount City Hall	Rocky Mount	2

Appendix M - Code Book

Preliminary Coding List (3/4/2008)

Assets: Positive aspects of the community and/or resources available within or to the community.

Challenges: Negative aspects of the community and/or barriers to positive change in the community

Church: Both positive and negative comments regarding church in any way that might impact the community

Civic/Political/Community: Civic involvement of the community and ways that political or civic actions impact the community

Community: comments that relate to the sense of community, activities or situations that impact the overall community, or other references that reflect upon the sense of community in Southeast Rocky Mount

Crime: References to criminal activity and possibly police response

Demographics: references related to demographics of the community, including but not limited to: race, income, education, age and other classifications of community members

Disparities between two counties: refers to specific references to observed or actual differences between Edgecombe County and Nash County.

Direct quotes: Directly transcribed quotes that may be useful in reports

Drugs/substances: largely a subset of both crime and health, references to the presence and/or use of alcohol or other substances

Education: Primarily related to formal education (public schools, college), this code may also contain references to GED programs and particular educational needs of the community such as education about resources

Health: References to specific diseases, medical resources and quality of life issues that are associated with physical and/or mental health

History: References to particular historical events that may explain or enhance understanding of current conditions in the community

Housing: References to the state of housing in the community, including structural conditions, affordability, home purchase, renting, and others.

Jobs: References to specific types of jobs available (or lacking) and their locations

Jobs/Employment/Income: References to general employment and financial issues facing the community

Key individuals: Any individuals, organizations or titles/positions that are mentioned as being important to creating change in the community

Needs: Specifically mentioned needs crucial to creating change in the community

Parks: Mostly a subset of recreation, parks specifically refers to parks and their relation to recreation in the community

Race: References to how race and race relations impact the historic or current state of the community

Recreation: Activities, facilities and/or other resources for social, physical or other forms of recreation within the community or for community members

Resources: Agencies, organizations and/or other resources available to the community or community members to facilitate positive change

Transportation: methods of getting from one place to another that are accessible to community members

Violence: Actions that threaten physical or emotional well-being on an interpersonal level

Youth: Issues facing individuals generally 24 and younger in the community, or how these individuals impact the community

Appendix N - Demographics of Interviewees and Focus Group Participants

Summary of Demographic Information (3/4/2008)

	Community Members	Service Providers
Total Number	24	19
Female	12	8
Male	12	11
Age		
16-20	9	
21-30	1	1
31-40		3
41-50	1	4
51-60	3	6
61-70	1	
71-80	2	
81+		
Unknown or missing	7	5
Race		
White or Caucasian	0	2
Black or African American	24	16
Asian American	0	1

Appendix O - Forum Evaluation Form

Thank you for participating in the community forum, we appreciate your feedback.
Please answer the following questions and return this form before leaving.

-Southeast Rocky Mount Community Assessment Team

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The presentation by the community assessment team was informative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The small group discussions were a good way to encourage conversation, share ideas, and create action steps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The reports after the small group discussions were informative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that this gathering has provided me with opportunities to become more involved in Southeast Rocky Mount	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that my voice was represented here today	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I plan to participate in following up on the action steps we created today	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Have you participated in a community forum before?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were you interviewed by the community assessment team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you live in Southeast Rocky Mount?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you plan to read the final report from the community assessment team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Direct mailing	Flyer	Radio	TV	Church	Word of mouth
How did you hear about the community forum? <i>please check all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____						

What were the best things about this forum? _____

What things would have made this forum better? _____

Other comments: _____

Appendix P - Description of Grid Analysis Strategy

The student team and D-5. Forum Planning Committee utilized the Grid Analysis Strategy to select five themes to be discussed during the forum. This strategy is a helpful technique for making a decision when numerous options are available and different factors must be considered. Below is a brief overview of the steps involved in using the Grid Analysis Strategy. More information about the strategy can be found at www.mindtools.com.

Step 1. Identify and lay out a list of options as rows on a table.

Step 2. Identify factors that must be considered, one factor per column on the table.

Step 3. Assign a “weight” for each factor to indicate its importance. For example, if there are five factors to be considered, 1 means the factor is least important and 5 means a factor is very important.

Step 4. For each option, discuss the option as it relates to each factor. Score each option from 0 (poor) to 5 (very good).

Step 5. Multiply each score from Step 4 by the “weight” assigned to each factor determined in Step 3.

Step 6. Add up the weighted scores to determine the overall score for each option. The overall score will represent the score of the option in consideration of all of the factors. The option(s) with the highest score(s) is the best option.

Appendix Q - Forum Presentation PowerPoint slides

Lifting Our Collective Voices

The Southeast Rocky Mount Community Forum

*"The PEOPLE are the STRENGTH of the
Community."*

Who are we?

Graduate students from the Health Behavior
and Health Education Department of the
UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health

Sharrelle Barber
Jana Thompson
Janice Tzeng
Allison George
Dustin Petersen



Thank You to Our Community Liaisons

- Ms. Mary Warren
- Ms. Naeema Muhammad
- Pastor James Bellamy
- And the rest of our forum planning committee:
 - Ms. Betty Stokes
 - Ms. Ruth Bullard
 - Ms. Loretta Braswell
 - Mr. Chris Battle
 - Mr. Reuben Blackwell



Additional Thanks To Our Donors and Contributors. . .

- Consolidated Diesel
- Chick-fil-A
- Truth Tabernacle Ministries
- Rocky Mount Human Relations
- Southern Bank
- Food Lion
- The Family Supermarket
- Piggly Wiggly
- Cherry's Tires
- Stop and Go Detail
- UEC Theatres
- Tire and Oil Express
- D&R Restaurant & Catering
- Ten Thousand Villages



. . .Our Community Fair Participants. . .

- RM Human Relations
- The Bassett Center
- RM Fire Department
- RM Police Department
- Bridging the Gap
- RM/Edgecombe CDC
- RM NAACP
- The Boys and Girls Club
- Southeast RM Community Organization
- RM Parks & Recreation
- RM OIC
- S.W.I.M.



. . .and our UNC Teaching Team

Professor Geni Eng
Kate Shirah
Joella Schiepan



What is an Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis (AOCD)?

A collaboration with a community to...

- Identify its strengths and challenges
- Engage community members and service providers in dialogue about our observations (a forum)
- Develop action steps so that the community can begin to address these issues



What does this have to do with public health?

The health of a community reflects the health of its members.



What have we been doing?

- Attending Community Events
- Interviewing Service Providers
- Interviewing Community Members
- Conducting Focus Groups



Our Findings Strengths

The people who care about and have a strong sense of pride for their community

The history of a strong, cohesive African American community



Our Findings Challenges

Disparities between resources available in Nash County and Edgecombe County

The lack of reliable public transportation

Limited educational opportunities for youth and young adults

Limited recreational and enrichment activities for youth

Limited employment opportunities

Dilapidated and sub-standard housing conditions

Crime due to drugs and gang violence

Limited collaboration between community resources



Themes

- Youth
- Employment
- Connecting Community Resources
- Crime
- Housing



Theme One: Youth

Community members, service providers and youth themselves recognize a lack of mentorship, educational enrichment and recreational opportunities for youth in Southeast Rocky Mount.



Theme Two: Employment

Limited employment opportunities are a concern for Southeast Rocky Mount residents. Lack of jobs within the community, low education levels, and restricted public transportation contribute to this issue.



Theme Three: Connecting Community Resources

In order to meet the needs of the Southeast Rocky Mount community, many believe that local groups and organizations must increase collaboration with one another, as well as improve their outreach to community members.



Theme Four: Crime

Despite increased police efforts, crime -- primarily associated with gangs, drug use and violence -- is a widely acknowledged issue in Southeast Rocky Mount.



Theme Five: Housing

Southeast Rocky Mount has a high number of dilapidated and vacant houses, creating eyesores and havens for criminal activity. Most residents rent rather than own, and landlords do not seem invested in the community.

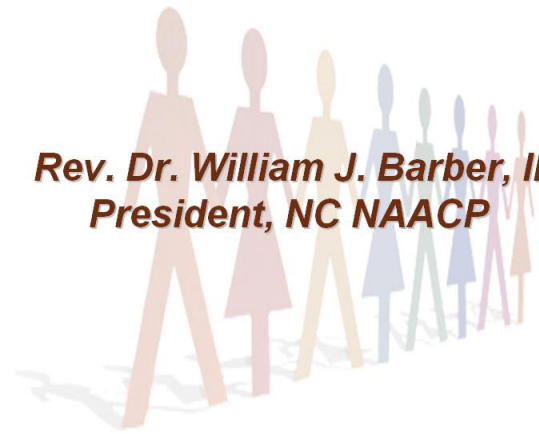


Purpose of this Forum

- Meet in smaller groups to discuss these themes in greater detail
- Identify action steps for each theme
- Transition ownership of this process to the community



*Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II
President, NC NAACP*



Action Steps



Closing Remarks

Ms. Mary Warren
President,
Southeast Rocky Mount Community Organization



Next Meeting to Follow up...

Please attend the Southeast Rocky Mount Community Organization meetings on the 2nd Thursday of Each Month

Forum Follow-up Meeting
Tuesday, April 22nd
at 6 p.m.
At the Bassett Center



Appendix R - Youth Discussion Group Trigger and Questions

TRIGGER

A Dream Deferred

-Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

QUESTIONS using SHOWED

SEE

As you listen to the lines of this poem written by Renaissance Poet, Langston Hughes, what do you hear in this poem and what images come to mind?

HAPPENING

Langston Hughes does not identify any particular group of people in this poem. If we make the youth of Southeast Rocky Mount the object of this poem how do you think they would feel about this situation?

OUR

Have you had personal experiences with having a dream deferred?

Have you known other people in your community who have experienced this?

Is this experience common among people living in Southeast Rocky Mount or Rocky Mount in general?

How do you feel about the dreams of the young people of Southeast Rocky Mount being deferred?

When you think about dreams being deferred, what problems are related to this?

WHY

Why is the situation for the youth the way it is? What are the natural, cultural, social, political and racial causes of this problem?

How does this impact your families and your community when this happens?

Who benefits when this happens?

Who loses?

Who is responsible for perpetuating this situation?

EVALUATION/EMPowerment

How have we contributed to the problems that we see among our youth?

How can we help to bring more opportunities, activities and developmental resources to the youth living in Southeast Rocky Mount and surrounding neighborhoods?

What are some of the reasons that we let the lack of opportunities, activities and resources persist?

What are some of the causes that this problem persists?

DO

Given what we see is going on and how we are a part of the problem and the solution, what can we do to address the issues concerning youth in our community?

Appendix S - Employment Discussion Group Trigger and Questions

TRIGGER



QUESTIONS using ORID

OBSERVATION

- What do you see in this cartoon?
- What images stand out for you?
- What words strike you in this image?

REFLECTION

- How do you feel when looking at this picture?
- What about the picture makes you feel that way?

INTERPRETIVE

- What do you think the people in the cartoon are feeling?
- What does the image remind you of? Any particular stories or experiences?
- How does this cartoon relate to your daily life?
- What are the root causes of this situation?
- Why is this important?
- How do your neighbors view this issue?

DECISION-MAKING/ACTION

- How has the community tried to address this issue? What have you learned from those attempts?
- How can we do something to change this issue?
- What are the key issues that need to be addressed?
- How can you be involved in addressing them?
- What would help you accomplish this?
- What are some of the reasons that people in the community haven't tried to change these issues?
- How can you encourage them to be involved?
- (Does incarceration contribute to joblessness?)

Appendix T - Community Resources Discussion Group Trigger and Questions

TRIGGER



QUESTIONS using ORID

OBJECTIVE

What are some of the images that stand out to you the most?
What words jump out to you?

REFLECTIVE

What do you think about when you look at these images?
What about these images make you feel/think that way?

INTERPRETIVE

Bringing this back to the theme of our discussion, how do these images relate to this community?

- What do these images have to do with the theme of our discussion?
- What do these images have to do with community resources?

What are the resources that are available to people living in SERM?

- This includes neighborhood groups, agencies and organizations?
- Thinking outside the box, what assets and resources do we already have to meet the needs of SERM? (Doesn't have to be all in SERM)
- What kinds of coalitions or collaborations currently exist?

When we talk about community resources for people living in this community, what are some of the key issues that need to be addressed?

How important are these issues (community resources) to you and your family?

DECISIONAL

What are some of the ways that we are successfully addressing these issues?

What are some of the barriers that prevent us from solving these issues (working together/reaching out to the community)?

What has been done before? What has worked and what do we know doesn't work?

What can we do to change or improve some of the things we've just talked about?

- What could we do differently this time?
- What will it take to get people to collaborate?
- How can different organizations help each other out?

Which of these are the most important?

What steps do we need to take to complete this action?

How can you be more involved in making sure these actions actually happen?

Appendix U - Housing Discussion Group Trigger and Questions

TRIGGER



QUESTIONS using ORID

OBSERVATION

What do you see in this photograph?

What images stand out for you?

REFLECTION

How do you feel when looking at this picture?

What about the picture makes you feel that way?

INTERPRETIVE

What do you think the people living in this community are feeling?

What does the image remind you of? Any particular stories or experiences?

How does this photograph relate to your neighborhood?

DECISION-MAKING/ACTION

How can we do something to change this issue?

What are the key issues that need to be addressed?

How can you be involved in addressing them?

What would help you accomplish this?

Appendix V - Crime Discussion Group Trigger and Questions

TRIGGER

Gangs in East Rocky Mount, Police Investigate Teen's Murder: Family friend fears retaliation

Thursday, Apr 03, 2008 - Eyewitness News 9

'Street Engagement Team' Battles Rocky Mount's Crime

WRAL.com - Posted: Sep. 5, 2007

Rocky Mount had 14 homicides in 2007

<http://www.wral.com/news/local/story/2586985/>

Rocky Mount's Crime Crackdown Is Working

WRAL.com - Posted: Mar. 17, 2008

Man Charged in Edgecombe County Fatal Shooting

WRAL.com, NC - Mar 21, 2008

QUESTIONS using ORID

OBSERVATION

What are some of the words or phrases that stand out to you the most in these news headlines?

REFLECTION

How do you feel when you read these news headlines?

What about the headlines make you feel that way?

What did these headlines make you think about?

When we talk about crime in Southeast Rocky Mount, how does that make you feel?

What do you think about when we talk about crime in Southeast Rocky Mount?

INTERPRETIVE

What issues do these headlines bring up for you?

Are there any particular stories or experiences you have that relate to crime in this community?

How do these headlines or crime in Southeast Rocky Mount relate to your life?

In what way is the issue of crime important to you?

In what ways does crime affect your community as a whole?

What are some of the main causes of crime in this community?

In what ways would you like to see crime change over time?

DECISION-MAKING/ACTION

Let's review some of the things that we have just talked about.

How can we do something to change this issue?

What are the key issues that need to be addressed?

How can you be involved in addressing them?

What would help you accomplish this?

What are some of the reasons that people in the community haven't tried to change these issues?

Appendix W - Description of ORID and SHOWED facilitation techniques

The team members used one of two facilitation techniques to guide small group discussions at the community forum. Below is a brief overview of the two methods, ORID and SHOWED.

ORID

ORID is a facilitation technique for guiding action-oriented group discussions. ORID is an acronym whose letters represent the different steps in facilitating the discussion: Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Decisional. The first step of method is to use a trigger to begin the discussion. A trigger could be any number of things, such as a photograph, a quote, a video clip, or a poem. After presenting the trigger, the discussion leader will ask participants a set of questions related to the trigger, usually in the following sequence: *what is happening in the trigger, why is it happening, and what can be done about it*. Example ORID questions are listed below.

O (Objective): What do you see in this picture (or other trigger)? What about this picture stands out to you?

R (Reflective): What was your first response in seeing this picture?

I (Interpretive): What is this picture about? How does this relate to (topic of small group discussion)?

D (Decisional/Action): What change is needed? What can we do about these issues?

SHOWED

SHOWED is another facilitation technique that is useful for guiding action-oriented discussions. This method is particularly useful in addressing root causes of issues that may not have been discussed before or fully understood. SHOWED also stands for different steps in the discussion process: See, Happening, Our, Why, Evaluation, and Do. Example SHOWED questions are listed below.

S (See): What do you see in this picture (or other trigger)?

H (Happening): What is happening in this picture?

O (Our): How does this relate to our lives?

W (Why): What are some of the things that are causing this?

E (Evaluation): How are we a part of the problem? Analysis

D (Do): What can we do about this?

Appendix X - Evaluation of the Community Forum

Forty-eight participants completed the evaluation for the community forum. On average, participants strongly agreed with the first 6 questions, suggesting that the forum was helpful and informative. The average scores for these questions were between 1.2-1.4, whereas 1=strongly agree and 4=strongly disagree.

With regard to the next 3 questions, 67% of respondents said that they had previously participated in a community forum, 35% said that they were interviewed by the community assessment team, and 31% said that they live in Southeast Rocky Mount.

Participants were also asked to indicate how they had heard about the forum. Available responses included: direct mailing (19%), flyer (23%), radio (4%), TV (2%), church (15%), word of mouth (65%). No response to this question was indicated on one evaluation (2%) and multiple evaluations indicated more than one way in which the respondent heard about the forum.

Two open-ended questions and a space for additional comments were included as part of the evaluation. Responses to the first question, *What were the best things about this forum?* generally suggested that participants felt that the forum was informative and effectively fostered discussion between community members and service providers. Other responses mentioned the opportunity to talk about crime and issues affecting youth. Here are some examples from the responses to this question:

This forum brought people with common goals together to work on bettering our communities.

The sense of respect, camaraderie, ownership

Bringing people and community partners together for commonality

To know that others have the same concerns as I do

Responses to the second open-ended question, *What things would have made this forum better?* included a desire for more time, increased participation from residents, including youth, and better attendance from city and county officials.

Comments from participants included at the end of the evaluation indicated that they were thankful for the opportunity to participate in the forum, that they enjoyed it, and they hope to continue working to improve the community. The comments included the following:

I was truly blessed by this forum, it has enlightened me a lot concerning the things of this city. Now I have a starting point as to where to start.

I wish we could get more people in our communities to come out to more forums of this kind, if only for more information.

I'm very glad that I came, it was just wonderful

Don't want it to stop here

This was a good thing for the community, but the most important people were not present, the families who represent Southeast Rocky Mount (e.g. young, uneducated, teen parent, young grandparents). We who attended know where to get what we need, they do not.

We need to get to work

My hopes for today are that it will extend beyond today and will be shared with all of our communities and leaders. I know we can make a big change in our city

Appendix Y - Text of Article in the Rocky Mount Telegram Newspaper

Southeast Rocky Mount forum looks for answers

By Mike Hixenbaugh
Rocky Mount Telegram

Sunday, April 13, 2008

Odessa Harris doesn't want to fear walking down her street in Southeast Rocky Mount anymore. She doesn't want the children and teens who live near her to grow up in poverty.

Harris wants everyone in her city – regardless of race and where they live – to have a fair shot. She wants so much for Southeast Rocky Mount.

And so do her neighbors.

"That's what we're here for," Harris said in a room full of concerned residents Saturday. "We can change things in this community."

More than 100 residents from the southeast part of the city gathered Saturday at the Rocky Mount campus of Edgecombe Community College with the hopes of igniting that change.

During the last few months, a team of five graduate students from the school of public health at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill launched a study into the problems plaguing the southeast part of town.

On Saturday, the students, who worked closely with community members, presented their findings to residents and offered them a forum to discuss potential solutions to help close the disparity between the Edgecombe County side of Rocky Mount and the Nash County side.

"There are those of us who ride around the community and see all sorts of problems," community activist Naeema Muhammad said. "And we ask, 'What is wrong with Edgecombe County?' Then we cross the tracks into Nash County and it's like night and day. I'm here to tell you we can change this."

Through community interviews and empirical research, the students identified the five core issues that haunt Southeast Rocky Mount. They included weak youth opportunities, lack of employment, crime, inadequate housing and untapped community resources.

Crime issues – the persistence of gangs and drug abuse in particular – weighed heavy on the minds of most of those in attendance.

Pointing to the recent gang-related slaying of a 16-year-old boy, a number of elderly residents admitted they no longer feel safe walking down the street or sitting out on porches.

Several suggestions – such as offering parenting courses, increasing police visibility and interacting with troubled youth – were made with the hopes of reducing the threat of crime.

Ward 3 Councilman Lamont Wiggins said he was glad to see so many suggestions for change. Then he asked residents to take the next step.

"We gotta stop talking about the what," Wiggins said. "We've gotta start talking about the who and the how."

Rocky Mount Police Chief John Manley offered insight during the meeting into problems the department faces – such as limited funding – and also charged local media to do its part. Manley complained that the Telegram primarily reports negative stories, which he said, tears down the community's morale.

"There are so many good things going on right now," Manley said. "But they just want to report junk. Trust me. They call around all day looking for junk."

After the dialogue was finished, the team of students marked down actions that can be taken to help revitalize the community. The information will be published in a full report in July.

"It has been so moving to work among this community and to work among these people," UNC graduate student Sharrell Barber said, wiping tears from her eyes. "Indeed, this community will be rebuilt."

In a keynote address, Barber's father, the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, president of the North Carolina chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, charged the group of residents not to give up hope.

"We can do this," Barber said, his voice raising as members of the crowd began shouting amen.

"We've already come up from a people who overcame 250 years of slavery. ... Surely we can make it now. Surely we can rebuild our communities."