

Helping Kids Learn In A Pollution Free Environment

What Is Community And Land Revitalization?

EPA's Land Revitalization Program fosters strong partnerships with communities to address environmental issues, promote sustainable redevelopment, and encourage public involvement in area-wide planning, to enhance economic development, create green jobs, and maximize the efficiency of site cleanup efforts. Technical assistance and tools assist communities in transforming their previously contaminated sites into sustainable redevelopment projects. The program documents and shares these projects to encourage other communities to revitalize their sites. [The Land Revitalization Program brochure](#) describes how land revitalization approaches can help communities.

Land revitalization is the sustainable redevelopment of abandoned properties. The program encourages communities and land owners to reuse and redevelop land that was previously contaminated and turn it into public parks, restored wetlands, and new businesses. Revitalizing an area cleans up a community to make it safer, greener, and offers more jobs to its residents. These [fact sheets](#) describe various approaches to land revitalization.

EPA's Land Revitalization Program promotes the integration of sustainable reuse considerations into all cleanup and redevelopment decisions. Whether a property is an abandoned industrial facility, a waste disposal area, a former gas station, or a Superfund site, the Land Revitalization Initiative turns these places into productive, sustainable, and welcoming environments.

Land Revitalization Programs at EPA

[Brownfields Program](#) is designed to empower communities to work together to clean up and sustainably reuse Brownfields sites or areas.

[Superfund Redevelopment](#) ensures that every Superfund site has the tools necessary to return the country's most hazardous sites to productive use.

[Underground Storage Tanks](#) supports the cleanup and reuse of abandoned properties that were contaminated with petroleum from underground storage tanks.

[Cleanups at Federal Facilities](#) works with other federal entities to facilitate faster, more effective, and less costly cleanup and reuse of federal facilities.

[Resource Conservation and Recovery Act \(RCRA\) Brownfields](#) helps facilities in need of corrective action to locate opportunities for reuse.

[Brownfields and Land Revitalization Technology Support Center](#) provides support to states, grantees, and EPA staff. It also includes the [Directory of Technical Assistance for Land Revitalization](#).

Why is revitalizing contaminated property and formerly contaminated property a good idea? Often times contaminated sites and properties are in advantageous locations that are accessible to infrastructure and close to people, which make them good candidates for revitalization projects. Past activities and potential environmental issues at many sites are already well documented, which minimizes future surprises regarding unknown or undiscovered contamination issues.

EPA has informational, financial, legal, and technical revitalization tools to assist you in redeveloping your site or property. In addition, some federal, state and local government agencies offer incentives such as grants or loans to encourage development of contaminated and formerly contaminated properties.



SMART GROWTH AND SCHOOL SITING

Where and how schools are built profoundly affect the communities they serve. Over the next few decades, thousands of schools around the country will be built and renovated. While a first-rate education in a safe facility must always be the primary consideration when making school spending decisions, a growing number of communities are using these investments to meet multiple goals — educational, health, environmental, economic, social, and fiscal.

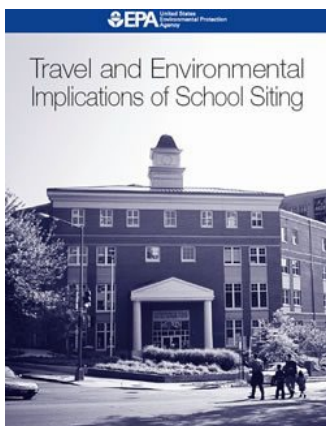
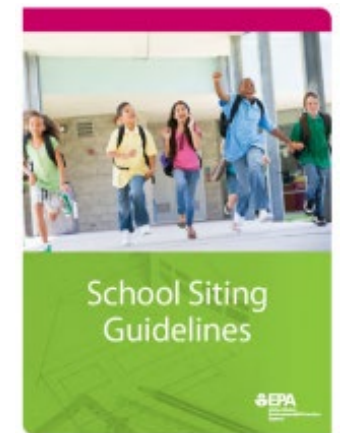
Investments in schools both respond to and influence growth. Many communities that are reevaluating their growth patterns are also assessing how and where they spend their education dollars. The boom in school construction offers an opportunity to improve the quality of schools and communities together, by applying the [principles of smart growth](#) to educational facility planning.

- Smart growth strategies include:
- Conserving resources and land.
- Offering choices in housing, transportation, shopping, recreation, and jobs.
- Encouraging community collaboration.
- Fostering distinctive, attractive neighborhoods.

A school's location affects student safety, community health, and the environment. A school that is safe and easy for students, teachers, parents, and other community members to reach on foot or by bicycle helps reduce air pollution from automobile use, protecting community health. Building schools compactly and in the neighborhoods they serve minimizes the amount of paved surface they create, which can help protect water quality by reducing polluted runoff.

Community decisions to site schools and make other investments influence housing and transportation choices, neighborhood vitality, economic development, the cost of providing local services, environmental quality, and overall community health and well-being.

The strong connections between school location and community development suggest the importance of coordinating school siting with other community decisions. However, in many communities, these decision-making processes are disconnected.



Improved coordination between school and local government agencies can result in:

- More efficient land use patterns and transportation systems to provide environmental and health benefits.
- More efficient use of taxpayer dollars.
- Better learning environments and educational outcomes.
- EPA developed the *Smart School Siting Tool* under its [Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program](#) to help school agencies and other local government agencies work together to better align school siting and other community development decisions. The tool includes:
 - A [User Guide \(PDF\)](#) (33 pp, 826 K) that explains the links between school siting and community impacts and describes how to use the tool.
- The [Assessment & Planning Workbook, version 1.1 \(Excel\)](#) (9 pp, 2 MB), which helps a community understand how well its school siting process is coordinated with land use and other community planning processes.
- The [Site Comparison Workbook, version 1.1 \(Excel\)](#) (13 pp, 866 K), which helps a community evaluate and compare candidate sites for a new or renovated school.

SMART GROWTH AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Smart growth approaches to development can help address long-standing environmental, health, and economic disparities in low-income, minority, and tribal communities. These communities face an array of challenges, including proximity to polluting facilities, barriers to participating in decision-making processes, disproportionate levels of chronic disease, neighborhood disinvestment, and poor or no access to jobs and services. Many of these challenges are related to how communities and regions are planned and built.

Smart growth approaches support:

- Cleaning up and reinvesting in existing neighborhoods.
- Providing housing choices for people of all income levels, household sizes, and stages of life.
- Offering transportation options that are affordable, reduce air pollution and associated health impacts, and give residents who do not drive more mobility.
- Improving access to jobs and services by creating development that is walkable and transit-accessible.



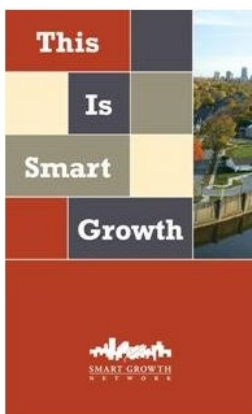
Low-income, minority, tribal, and overburdened communities across the country are using these strategies, along with environmental justice and equitable development approaches, to design and build healthy, sustainable, and inclusive neighborhoods.

EPA defines environmental justice as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies."

"Fair treatment" means that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, or commercial operations and policies. EPA and environmental justice organizations have expanded the concept of fair treatment to consider not only how burdens are distributed, but also how environmental and health benefits are shared. In other words, all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status, should have the opportunity to enjoy the positive outcomes of environmentally related decisions and actions, such as cleaner air and water, improved health, and economic vitality.

"Meaningful involvement" means that the public should have opportunities to participate in decisions that could affect their environment and their health, their contributions should be taken into account by regulatory agencies, and decision-makers should seek and facilitate the engagement of those potentially affected by their decisions.

Equitable development draws on both environmental justice and smart growth and generally refers to a range of approaches for creating communities and regions where residents of all incomes, races, and ethnicities participate in and benefit from decisions that shape the places where they live.



- Equitable development emphasizes that all residents should be protected from environmental hazards and enjoy access to environmental, health, economic, and social necessities such as clean air and water, adequate infrastructure, and job opportunities.
- To achieve this, equitable development approaches usually integrate people-focused strategies (efforts that support community residents) with place-focused strategies (efforts that stabilize and improve the neighborhood environment).
- Equitable development typically calls for a regional perspective to reduce health and economic inequalities among localities and improve outcomes for low-income communities while building healthy metropolitan regions.

What is equitable development? In summary, quality of life outcomes, such as affordable housing, quality education, living wage employment, healthy environments, and transportation are equitably experienced by the people currently living and working in a neighborhood, as well as for new people moving in.



URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

National Reach, Local Results

- 15 federal agencies

- More than 28 non governmental organization partners
- 20 partnership locations.

Since its formation in 2010, the Urban Waters (UW) Program has achieved notable successes across the U.S. to revitalize American waterways and the communities that surround them. These include urban, rural, and suburban communities in

watersheds. Through 20 Urban Waters Partnerships and hundreds of community improvement projects, the program is helping revitalize waterways from the intensely urban Passaic and Los Angeles Rivers to the agricultural and mining communities around the Meramec and Big Rivers of Missouri.

Urban Waters projects are developed through the collaborative work of federal agencies, state and local governments, academia, foundations, and non-governmental partners. Federal support is provided through direct funding at <http://www.urbanwaters.gov>, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration grants (through contractor, small grant, and interagency award processes), management of national program operations, and extensive information sharing via the Urban Waters Learning Network (UWLN). While the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of the Interior, and United States Department of Agriculture-Forest Service have provided most of this direct funding and staff support for a majority of the partnerships, many other Federal Partner agencies have supported projects in partnership locations through separately-funded programs and staff work. The UW Program has focused these efforts in a specific set of partnership locations to increase collaboration, foster innovation, and leverage resources. The UW Program has dedicated resources to these locations and has also developed tools and resources that can be used by any location in the country, such as the UWLN resources on and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration grants. <https://urbanwaterslearningnetwork.org/>.

The successes of the UW Program to date have generated strong interest in expanding the program to other localities nationwide. However, there is broad recognition that federal support for new local partnerships is limited by the resource capacity of the federal partners. Given the finite and somewhat uncertain nature of federal resources available to support the UW Program in the coming years, and the parallel desire to further the UW mission and goals on a national scale, it is timely to consider innovative new strategies to sustain the program in 2020 and beyond. A key objective of this program has been to serve underserved and economically-distressed communities. All 20 partnership locations have implemented projects to help realize this part of the mission. Many examples of projects that combine urban waters and environmental justice objectives can be found at <http://www.urbanwaters.gov> and <http://www.urbanwaterslearningnetwork.org>.

EPA and the Urban Waters Federal Partnership are proud to co-sponsor the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grants Program. This program seeks to develop community capacity by providing modest assistance to diverse local partnerships for river, wetland, riparian, forest and coastal restoration, and wildlife conservation. Water monitoring, stormwater management, source water protection, urban tree canopy restoration, and projects designed to prevent trash from entering waterways are just some of the types of projects that are awarded grants.

The grants are administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program which supports projects that develop community stewardship of natural resources and address water quality issues. Support for the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program is provided by the Wildlife Habitat Council, and major funding by EPA, USDA-Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, FedEx, Shell Oil Company, Southern Company and BNSF Railway.

Since 1999, the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program has supported more than a thousand projects, with more than \$13.4 million in federal funds, \$11.6 million in private and corporate contributions, and \$81 million in matching funds at the local level. EPA has partnered with NFWF since the inception of the program, supporting community-based conservation and partnerships across the United States and its territories. More information on the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grants Program at <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/five-star-and-urban-waters-restoration-grant-program>.



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Protecting human health
and the environment.



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ODDS AND ENDS

Upcoming Newsletter

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Cleanups in your
Community

In our next issue, the September 2023 Region 6 Healthy Schools Newsletter will highlight the following:

- Children's Health Month and National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week
- Pollution Prevention Week
- National Reuse Day and America Recycles Week

Healthy Schools is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 - South Central in Dallas, Texas. Region 6 includes the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas as well as 66 Tribes. For general information about Healthy Schools, to provide feedback on this newsletter, or to be added or removed from the distribution list, please contact Cathy Gilmore, Senior Environmental Employee (SEE) for Healthy Schools at Gilmore.cathy@epa.gov.

We would love your feedback on this newsletter or suggestions for future topics. Please email EPA at Gilmore.cathy@epa.gov.

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