
RECLAIMING BROWNFIELDS:

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GROUNDWORK USA NETWORK

SPRING 2017



..... CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Highlighted Projects	
Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek	2
Groundwork Milwaukee	4
Groundwork Hudson Valley	6
Brownfields Area-Wide Planning	7
Groundwork Indianapolis	8
Groundwork Lawrence	9
Groundwork Denver	10
Groundwork Atlanta	11
Tools to Support Brownfield-Affected Communities	12
Brownfields Projects Across the Groundwork USA Network	14
Conclusion	17

.....

INTRODUCTION

Parks and play spaces. Greenways for walking and biking. Community gardens. Restored habitat and waterways. Green infrastructure for stormwater management. These are the kinds of assets healthy communities need and want, and that Groundwork USA helps create. Across the country, Groundwork USA and our network of local affiliates, or "Trusts," help communities grappling with poverty, disinvestment, and the legacies of industrial pollution become cleaner, greener, healthier places to live. Through brownfields redevelopment and land reuse projects, Groundwork Trusts engage local residents every step of the way, from pre-development through construction and ongoing stewardship and maintenance. Utilizing environmental justice and equitable development strategies, Groundwork Trusts help communities realize their vision and ensure that redevelopment projects make neighborhoods healthier and safer places to live, work, and play.

The Groundwork USA network is rooted in a visionary partnership between two federal agencies. With support from the US EPA Brownfields and Land Revitalization Program and the National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, Groundwork USA and its network leverage significant public, private, and philanthropic resources to help long-marginalized

neighborhoods improve their environmental, economic, and social conditions, thereby enhancing residents' health and quality of life. By working with neighborhoods to reclaim brownfields for community benefit, Groundwork Trusts make their federal agency partners' missions more visible on the ground and more relevant to local residents' day-to-day lives.

In recent years, Groundwork USA has expanded our capacity to support the brownfields work of our growing network of Trusts and promote exchange of best practices among them. Groundwork USA also runs a Brownfields Technical Assistance Program focused on ensuring equitable development and environmental justice outcomes in brownfield-affected communities throughout the US. This technical assistance is customized to local needs and takes many forms, such as coaching grassroots leaders to partner with local government on brownfield-to-park projects, or designing and delivering creative community engagement strategies that involve oft-marginalized populations in brownfield reuse planning.

Highlighted below are some of the most exciting examples of Groundwork-driven brownfield planning and reuse work that helps revitalize communities across the country.

What is a Brownfield?

In January 2002, Congress amended federal environmental laws by defining, for the first time, a brownfield site as "... real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." Under this broad definition, a "brownfield" can refer to large former industrial sites with serious chemical and hazardous substances in their land or groundwater, to the corner gas station with oil pollution, to vacant or derelict properties whose past uses are unknown or where contamination with chemicals or toxins is suspected.



EPA and Groundwork Hudson Valley community planning session for Putnam RailTrail, Yonkers, NY. Photo: Groundwork Hudson Valley

Reclaiming Brownfields for Healthy People and Healthy Rivers

GROUNDWORK CINCINNATI-MILL CREEK

Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek is driving assessment and reuse of blighted vacant land along Mill Creek, Cincinnati's hometown river. This landscape-scale transformation provides multiple environmental, public health, economic, transportation, and social benefits for Lower Mill Creek watershed neighborhoods. But before Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek came on the scene, things weren't always this "up and coming" for the creek and its neighborhoods.

Twenty years ago, the national river conservation organization American Rivers designated Mill Creek as the most endangered urban river in North America. There were frequent fish kills, and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency discouraged human contact with the water due to high levels of untreated sanitary sewage.

Brownfield properties were ubiquitous within the Mill Creek riverine/riparian corridor. Problems included demolition debris, decaying parking lots, illegal dumping, leaking landfills, overgrown invasive weeds, and suspected contamination from over 100 years of industrial and commercial uses. Ten-foot-high fences topped with barbed wire were erected to prevent contact with the stream, but people living in neighborhoods along Mill Creek were already reluctant to go near the water because conditions were so bad.

In 1994, a small nonprofit named Mill Creek Restoration Project (MCRP) made a commitment against long odds to bring Mill Creek back to life. MCRP initially focused on Mill Creek and adjacent land, restoring aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat, planting trees, and stabilizing stream banks to prevent erosion and filter urban stormwater runoff. Between 1997 and 1999, MCRP lead an intensive community-based planning process, meeting with over 100 stakeholder groups, including people most impacted by the problems, and collaborating with local partners and the National Park Service (NPS)

BEFORE



AFTER



*Before and after scenes along the Mill Creek Greenway Trail, Cincinnati, OH.
Photo: Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek*

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program to craft the multi-objective Mill Creek Watershed Greenway Master Plan.

People living in neighborhoods along the river expressed support for a cleaner, greener creek, but also wanted to see positive ripple effects accompany the cleanup in the form of jobs and job training. Parents saw the physical hazards around Mill Creek—structurally unsound abandoned buildings and properties littered with jagged glass, metal, and barbed wire—as a threat to their children's physical safety and a limit on their future. Neighborhood residents

wanted safe places for walking, outdoor exercise, and recreation, and better access to area parks, workplaces, schools, medical facilities, full-service grocery stores, and other retail centers.

In 2009, under contract with the City of Cincinnati, MCRP began work on the multi-purpose Mill Creek Greenway Trail. It became increasingly clear that in addition to environmental improvements, the Mill Creek Trail could be a vehicle for providing alternative transportation and achieving public health benefits in Lower Mill Creek neighborhoods faced with environmental

GROUNDWORK CINCINNATI-MILL CREEK

justice issues. The Cincinnati Health Department has been a key partner in helping to shape the Mill Creek Healthy People/Healthy River Strategy, highlighting connections between high rates of childhood obesity for children and adults in low-income neighborhoods and the lack of basic pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Neighborhood leaders and local government officials have also come to see brownfield reclamation and the Mill Creek Greenway Program as future drivers of economic development in addition to providing critically needed public greenspace, healthy habitat, edible gardens, public art, and hike and bike trails.

In tandem and complementary to these Mill Creek efforts, under a 2004 Consent Decree, the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati launched a major capital program to prevent and reduce combined sewer overflows to Mill Creek and its tributary streams. This work is helping to

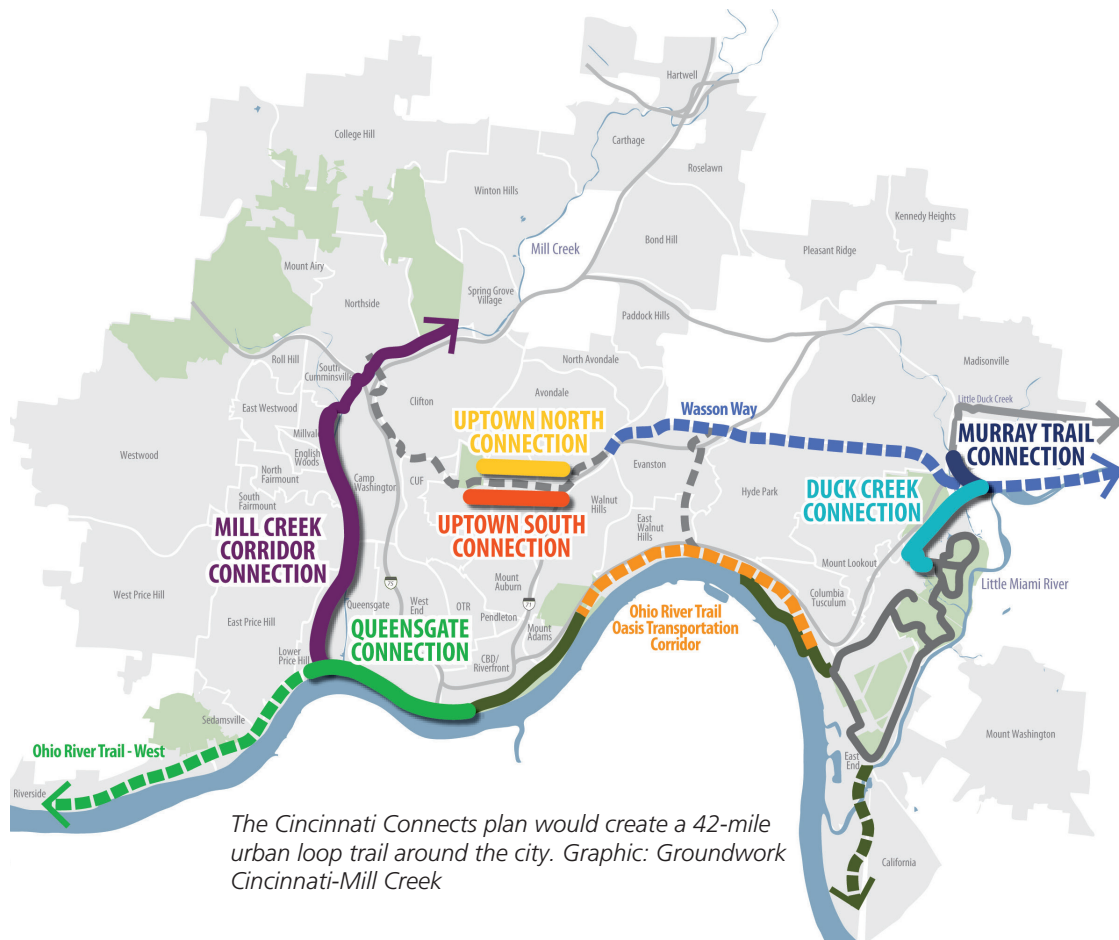
improve water quality and reduce threats to public health.

In 2012, following a feasibility study and extensive action planning, MCRP became Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek. Since then, with technical and financial support from the US EPA and NPS, the Trust has continued greenway and trail work and added brownfield curriculum to its year-round environmental education programming for middle and senior high school students. It has also created a Green Jobs Site that provides teens with paying jobs, environmental leadership coaching, and hands-on service learning in their community. The Green Team youth help to maintain the trail, edible gardens, and restoration projects on recycled brownfield sites.

To date, almost five miles of the Mill Creek Greenway Trail have been completed, and Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek is currently involved in planning, public

engagement, and preliminary engineering for the fifth phase of the trail, to be constructed adjacent to a brownfield site, a closed solid waste landfill. The Winton Hills Community Council, a major partner in this trail phase, is leading a pedestrian access, mobility, and connectivity study for the Winton Hills neighborhood.

Finally, in 2015, Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek led a planning process with 16 public and private partners to develop the Cincinnati Connects Plan, which calls for completing the Mill Creek Greenway Trail and connecting it to a proposed 42-mile urban loop trail that will run through at least 32 neighborhoods. The envisioned Cincinnati Connects Trail will provide greater access and connectivity for economically distressed neighborhoods and will require a robust brownfield assessment and reclamation strategy to acquire properties for the trail.



The Cincinnati Connects plan would create a 42-mile urban loop trail around the city. Graphic: Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek

Reclaiming Brownfields for Food Security, Creative Placemaking, and Workforce Development

GROUNDWORK MILWAUKEE

For over a decade, the Milwaukee Urban Gardens (MUG) program of Groundwork Milwaukee has worked with community residents to transform vacant and underutilized city-owned lots into community gardens, pocket parks, art installations, orchards, outdoor classroom and meeting spaces, memorials to victims of neighborhood gun violence, and much more. To date, MUG has established more than 100 community garden spaces in over 20 Milwaukee neighborhoods, including some of the poorest areas in the city. All but three gardens are located on sites suspected to contain high levels of background contamination stemming from illegal dumping, structure fires, or other unsanctioned post-residential uses.

MUG gardens are organized and run by neighborhood residents of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds. They dramatically improve residents' quality of life and strengthen neighborhood bonds. The goals of MUG are as varied as the community groups they represent, and include:

- ▶ Promoting food and economic security by ensuring access to land for growing healthy food that residents harvest, consume, and sell;
- ▶ Bringing neighbors together through positive activity on safe, communal space;

- ▶ Building strong community bonds through partnerships between residents, local nonprofits, schools, and businesses;
- ▶ Beautifying neighborhoods through creative green placemaking and art installations;
- ▶ Providing outdoor education, recreation, and meeting space for all age groups.

As Groundwork Milwaukee's Antoine Carter explains, "Formalizing these vacant lots as community gardens affirms and provides vital infrastructure for longtime residents who value fresh vegetables, but for a variety of historic and systemic reasons haven't had much opportunity to provide input on a project in their neighborhood and have it actually be followed, or a safe, dedicated space to grow."

Through its MUG program, Groundwork Milwaukee has built strong relationships with partners that include the City's Department

of City Development, its Department of Neighborhood Services, and HOME GR/OWN, Mayor Tom Barrett's urban agriculture program. MUG is a triple win for the City, Groundwork, and the residents it serves, yielding great bang for the buck and numerous healthy community benefits. Capping existing soil in place and building raised beds is a safe and relatively inexpensive way to minimize exposure to background soil conditions while creating healthy community assets. An added bonus is the harvesting of rainwater to

support food cultivation on these garden sites, using stormwater that would otherwise feed into storm drains.

Because Milwaukee is home to hundreds of vacant and tax-delinquent properties suspected of contamination, Groundwork Milwaukee has begun to deepen its capacity to plan and manage brownfield "brick and mortar" redevelopment projects that would also leverage opportunities for job training and workforce development. Groundwork Milwaukee is currently in talks with the City's Redevelopment Authority to identify brownfield parcels whose cleanup and reuse would benefit "weak market" neighborhoods, and is working with Groundwork USA's Brownfields Technical Assistance team to develop a strategy for evaluating and selecting a subset of the city's many brownfields sites to prioritize for redevelopment and an array of exciting new uses.



Groundwork Milwaukee Green Team youth mulching urban garden.
Photo: Groundwork Milwaukee

Formalizing these vacant lots as community gardens affirms and provides vital infrastructure for longtime residents who value fresh vegetables, but for a variety of historic and systemic reasons haven't had much opportunity to provide input on a project in their neighborhood and have it actually be followed, or a safe, dedicated space to grow.

—Antoine Carter, Director of Community Development and Outreach, Groundwork Milwaukee

Reclaiming Brownfields for Urban Food Production

Urban food production offers significant opportunities to increase access to fresh produce, improve community health, and provide ecological benefits. But cities may have histories of contamination. Groundwork USA has produced the following resources to help communities understand and minimize the risks that may come with gardening in the urban environment. You can find them at <http://groundworkusa.org/ta-services/equidev-brownfields-planning/resources/>

Knowing your Soil

Background on land uses and their associated contaminants; resources for researching a site's history and testing soils for potentially harmful substances

Best Practices for Food Production in Areas Suspected of Contamination

Explores best practices for minimizing exposure to both on-site and off-site contaminants; meat, milk, and egg production in urban settings; and special considerations of vulnerable populations and communities experiencing environmental justice issues.

Brownfield to Community Asset: Best Practices for Reclaiming Brownfield Sites for Urban Agriculture & Greening Reuse

Groundwork USA's presentation to the American Community Gardening Association's 2016 national conference

Literature Review on Contamination and Urban Food Production

Conducted for Groundwork USA by Rebecca Harnik



Green Team youth tending crops at Groundwork Somerville's South Street Farm, built on two formerly barren, paved parking lots. Photo: Groundwork Somerville

Using Brownfield Restoration to Spur Downtown Revitalization

GROUNDWORK HUDSON VALLEY

Brownfield projects can act as catalysts in revitalizing downtown business and neighborhood districts and, in some instances, drive major economic development in long-challenged cities. The Saw Mill River Daylighting project, initiated and championed by Groundwork Hudson Valley, included brownfield assessment and mitigation, design and construction of a new waterfront park, and river habitat enhancements in downtown Yonkers, New York. The City of Yonkers credits the new Saw Mill River Park, a seven-year project completed in 2012, with spurring significant downtown investment and redevelopment. Since 2012, downtown Yonkers has seen a \$7 million technology firm renovation which created 180 new jobs, a \$43 million historic renovation of five buildings, and construction of an apartment tower and mixed-use complex to replace abandoned buildings that ran along one side of the park. Together, these projects have dramatically changed the look and feel of downtown Yonkers.

Having a nonprofit partner like Groundwork Hudson Valley deeply involved in community engagement and the environmental details of the Saw Mill River Daylighting was a boon for the city. Local foundation funding supported Groundwork's leadership of a larger planning effort. Critical multi-year funding from EPA sustained the community engagement process in the design phase, develop-



Daylighted Saw Mill River, Yonkers, NY. Photo: Groundwork Hudson Valley

ment of a habitat plan, and management of on-the-ground work with the City's Downtown and Waterfront Development Office, the design and engineering team, and the construction team. While Groundwork forged these partnerships initially, this effort grew into a multi-year, cross-sector collaboration involving local businesses, numerous community partners, and state and federal agencies. This coalition has since taken on related and ambitious community revitalization work further upstream in areas adjacent to downtown.

With the first stage of the daylighting project completed, the City has moved ahead

with Daylighting Phase II—Mill Street, and Daylighting Phase III—Chicken Island. While relatively modest in scope, these two projects equal significantly more than the sum of their parts. Taken together, they bring attention to the history of covering rivers, amazement that nature can respond quickly to daylight, interest in where the river still runs underground, and enjoyment of the rushing sound of water in a previously “dry” environment. Groundwork has also used brownfield transformation and daylighting project work as a catalyst for engaging area youth and residents in long-term stewardship of these beautiful new additions to the downtown area.



Yonkers' Getty Square, as seen from Van der Donck Park. Photo: Donna Davis, Groundwork Hudson Valley

Brownfields Area-Wide Planning: Revitalizing Whole Neighborhoods

GROUNDWORK INDIANAPOLIS AND GROUNDWORK LAWRENCE

The US EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning (AWP) program helps revitalize communities in which multiple brownfields threaten public health, undermine quality of life, and limit economic, environmental, and social well-being. Communities can use AWP funds to develop strategies to assess, clean up, and redevelop contaminated properties and adjacent areas; identify community priorities for near- and long-term revitalization; evaluate an area's market potential and needed infrastructure improvements; and leverage public and private sector investments to foster community renewal. Groundwork Indianapolis ("Indy") and Groundwork Lawrence are working in neighborhoods touched by brownfields area-wide planning, although each is engaged in different stages of the process.

Taking an area-wide planning approach rather than focusing on individual parcels

allows communities to envision the ripple effect that can be achieved across a neighborhood and its surroundings through cleanup and reuse of multiple brownfield sites. The "brick and mortar" needs of an area, such as housing, grocery stores, and recreational open spaces, are typically evident and quickly find an obvious home in a redevelopment plan. More complex opportunities that local constituents often identify in AWP processes are "connective tissue" concerns—namely those programs and linkages that take time and partnerships to piece together and deliver, but that help oft-marginalized people more fully participate in a wave of prosperity that comes from new investment. Groundwork Trusts typically tackle these issues by developing and delivering environmental and human development-oriented programming—for example, job training, youth development, or river cleanup—in the near term, while

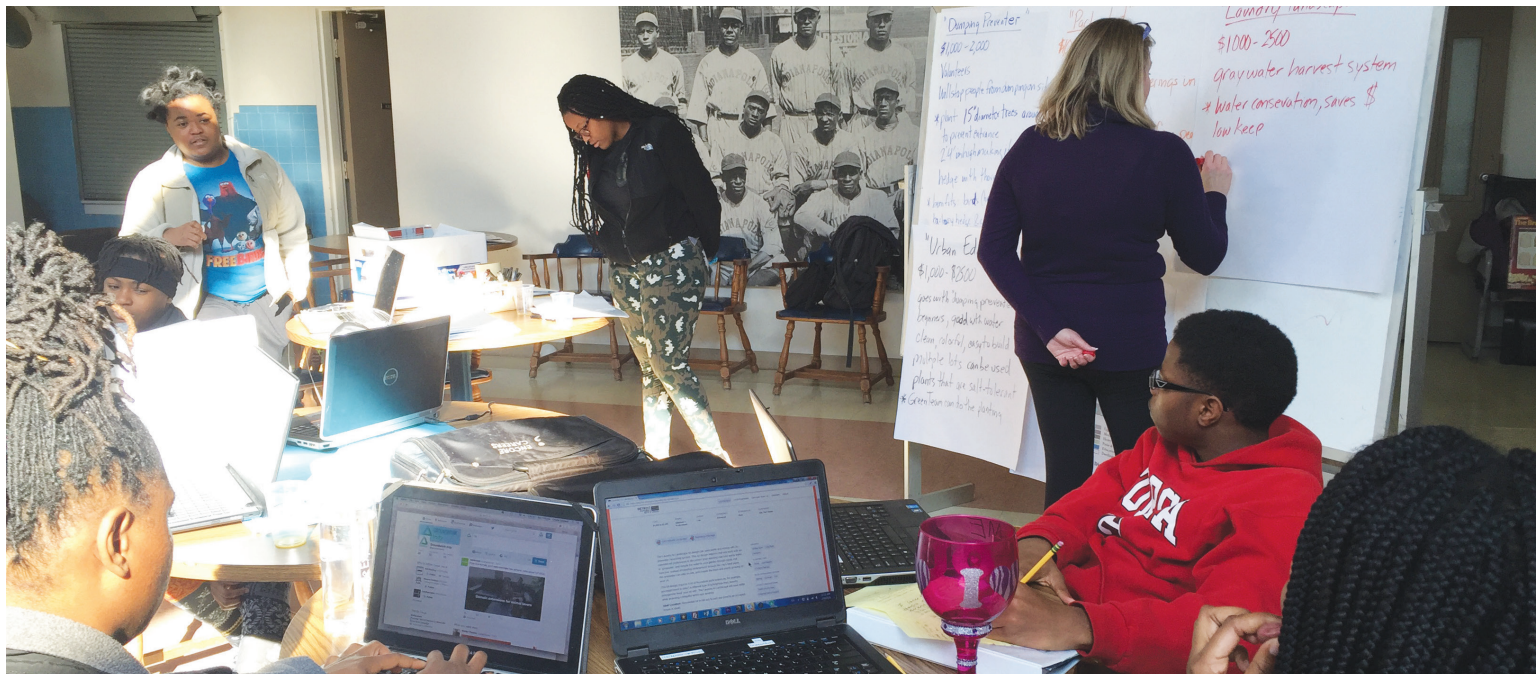
supporting local government, developers, and stakeholders to ensure brownfield redevelopment projects advance from abstract concept to community-informed design development to financing and shovel-readiness.

Tackling intertwined challenges such as unemployment, transportation access, youth educational attainment, and walking and biking conditions in "weak market" communities, where new investment has been lacking for decades, requires planning through collaboration across multiple sectors. Groundwork Indy and Groundwork Lawrence have been supporting an area-wide planning approach to bring together a cross-section of stakeholders to make sense of near-term and long-range opportunities.



Above: Groundwork Indy Green Team members documenting conditions at former Carrier-Bryant manufacturing facility.
Photo: Groundwork Indy

Left: Community members, design team, and city officials tour the Lawrence Manchester Railroad Corridor site, May 25, 2016.
Photo: Groundwork Lawrence



Groundwork Indy Green Team explores interim use ideas for Northwest Area brownfields area-wide planning process.
Photo: Groundwork Indy

Activating Brownfield Sites, Envisioning New Possibilities

GROUNDWORK INDY

In Indianapolis, Groundwork Indy has become a key implementation stakeholder following completion of the brownfields AWP for the city's Northwest Area (NWA), a collection of predominantly low-income, African American neighborhoods located two miles northwest of downtown. Nearly forty percent of properties in the NWA are either vacant or brownfields, and while their cleanup and reuse are key to the community's future, any one of them could well require a 10- to 20-year timeframe given their size, complexity of brownfield conditions, weak market economics surrounding them, and/or the financing required to make them "shovel-ready."

The Northwest Area Progress and Redevelopment Plan identifies a need to engage in both direct program work and behind-the-scenes pre-development project strategies in parallel. Groundwork Indy plays a critical role on both fronts: helping residents identify and prioritize what they'd like to see happen on brownfield sites, then coordinating with partner organizations, property owners, and both public and private stakeholders to plant seeds and deliver programming that will bring the community's vision to fruition. This work can take decades—and often does. As planning and implementation proceed, Groundwork Trusts continue to "activate" vacant and brownfield sites by helping area residents experience sites in different ways and see beyond current conditions to envision new possibilities for their future. By engaging communities in long-term redevelopment planning in parallel with programming, Groundwork Trusts help return life to brownfield sites that can also spin off near-term benefits.

Specifically, Groundwork Indy has been doing this near-term engagement work while continuing behind-the-scenes work with City Hall, private developers, and other stakeholders, who are working to ensure that "catalyst" brownfield sites—like the 19-acre former Carrier-Bryant manufacturing facility in the heart of the NWA—are primed and ready for investment and construction. For example, while the site has undergone both Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, the City has been seeking developers and investors to take the next step. To bolster those recruitment efforts while providing a hands-on teachable moment, Groundwork Indy's Green Team youth development program members researched interim uses for the site that could be implemented while permanent redevelopment planning continues.

Near another large brownfield cluster, where three overgrown and littered waterways flow through the area, Groundwork Indy is taking an iterative, action-oriented approach to advance the community's vision for a waterfront pedestrian path. By engaging youth workers in clearing invasive plants and holding cleanup events along the Central Canal Corridor, Groundwork Indy seeks to improve pedestrian safety and attract attention to the canal, with the goal of bringing the Canal Corridor back into the life of the community as a greenway and walking/biking trail with nearby commercial investments stimulating economic activity. In future seasons, Groundwork Indy will organize high-profile community events, such as job fairs, along the MLK Avenue corridor, a once-vibrant but now blighted and largely vacant retail area, to demonstrate the area's assets and potential to be redeveloped as a vibrant Main Street for the NWA.

Stimulating Economic Development Through Connectivity

GROUNDWORK LAWRENCE

Lawrence, Massachusetts, is one of the poorest cities in the state and home to the largest Latino population in New England. Since 1999, Groundwork Lawrence has been at the forefront of creating stable, sustainable neighborhoods and helping Lawrence residents improve their health and quality of life. For over 15 years, Groundwork Lawrence served as the catalyst and project manager for the award-winning Spicket River Greenway, a transformative 3.5-mile-long “emerald bracelet” of green spaces and walking paths that winds through some of the city’s poorest neighborhoods and connects ten community parks built or rehabilitated by Groundwork Lawrence and its partners on formerly vacant or contaminated lands.

In 2015, the City of Lawrence was awarded EPA funds to develop an AWP and strategy for revitalizing the Lawrence Manchester Railroad Corridor (LMRC), over 14 acres of former rail yards and industrial sites along a 1.5-mile-long abandoned railroad bed adjacent to a commercial corridor and connected to the Spicket River Greenway. Due to its long history of collaboration with Groundwork Lawrence on the greenway and other brownfields redevelopment projects, the City partnered with Groundwork Lawrence to lead the steering committee and serve as the LMRC plan project manager. With its proven track record as a trusted community convener, able to engage residents, youth, nonprofits, government agencies, and businesses in project planning and implementation, Groundwork Lawrence will ensure the work is informed by all sectors of the community.

The LMRC represents a significant opportunity to create a linear park and multi-use path that will serve as the southern anchor of 30 miles of converted rail trail stretching from Lawrence to Manchester, New Hampshire. Within Lawrence, the LMRC will serve as a major bike and pedestrian corridor for both leisure and commuter uses while enhancing more riverfront open space. Redevelopment of the LMRC will populate this now concealed and neglected area, thereby curbing illegal dumping and crime. It will also reduce the community’s exposure to suspected environmental contaminants; provide safer connectivity for residents to schools, businesses, restaurants, health clinics, and grocery stores; reclaim accessible green space; and create new recreational opportunities in an underserved area.

Beyond its potential to create healthier neighborhoods for Lawrence residents, the project aligns with the City’s broader economic development and job creation goals. By reclaiming the corridor with active uses and encouraging local and regional connectivity, the LMRC project can unlock the economic value of underutilized commercial parcels along the corridor. The goal is to create a local and regional destination that will appeal to visitors and commuters from both local neighborhoods and nearby communities—fostering commercial activity, attracting new business investments, and enabling existing businesses to better represent themselves to their customers.



Conceptual drawing of new gateway park along redeveloped regional rail corridor in Lawrence, MA. Image: Groundwork Lawrence

Groundwork Lawrence is a go-to partner that has persisted for nearly two decades. Together, we’ve converted brownfields into parks and public spaces that drive social and economic progress. Neighborhood by neighborhood, we’ve delivered long-term rewards for the residents of Lawrence.

—Mayor Daniel Rivera, Lawrence, MA

“Staying Power” in Action: Developing Platte Farm Open Space

GROUNDWORK DENVER

Platte Farm Open Space is Groundwork Denver's resident-led, 5.5-acre brown-field-to-park transformation project in Globeville, just north of downtown. Once home to several smelting operations and the Slavic and Eastern European immigrants who worked in them, Globeville today is a predominantly low-income Latino neighborhood, rich with immigrant history and culture, but saddled with a toxic industrial legacy that includes at least two Superfund sites and six brownfield properties.

Some contaminated soil has been remediated, but Globeville remains a residential island with minimal park space, surrounded by heavy industry on all sides and bisected by two interstates. In 2006, to help counter persistent illegal dumping, drug dealing, and general neglect, residents and the Globeville Civic Association #1 enlisted the help of Groundwork Denver to facilitate the visioning, planning, fundraising, and implementation required to integrate much-needed green and recreational space into the neighborhood.

Led and designed by Globeville residents, the project is a prime example of equitable development in action. Groundwork Denver has led project management, and has become a trusted liaison between residents, property owners, and the City of Denver's Department of Parks and Recreation. Resident steering committee members work as project managers alongside Groundwork staff, helping make critical design decisions, create funding requests, and select consultants for the project team.

For over a decade, Groundwork Denver has worked alongside residents to keep alive the vision of Platte Farm Open Space, collecting hundreds of signatures from neighbors, businesses, and schools in support of the project. Landscape architects managed by Groundwork Denver have helped transfer the neighborhood's vision onto paper. Environmental consultants and surveyors retained by the Trust have conducted brownfields due diligence on the cluster of parcels comprising the space.



Denver's Platte Farm Open Space site plan. Image: Groundwork Denver

Currently, a landscape design team is preparing construction documents and cost estimates for the project's first phase, which will involve securing the site perimeter to prevent vehicular drive-throughs and illegal dumping; restoring the site's native short-grass prairie habitat; and installing a natural play space, benches, picnic tables, and paved walking and biking trails with entry markers and signage.

Persistence and “staying power,” as Groundwork practitioners like to say, is critical to ensuring inclusion of residents often missing from land-use planning processes and bringing to completion projects that will positively impact quality of life and health in

the context of disproportionate exposure to brownfields. Groundwork Denver's decade-long leadership has been crucial to driving the project to reality—soon the City will initiate construction that transforms the site into a park. Groundwork Denver will maintain the site until the prairie is established, at which point Platte Farm Open Space will be transferred to Denver's citywide park system. The Trust hopes to break ground by the end of 2017, demonstrating how sustained collaboration across sectors—grassroots community groups, nonprofits, and municipal government—can align community and municipal visions and realize outcomes that meet multiple bottom lines.

Reclaiming our Past by Planning Our Future

GROUNDWORK ATLANTA

Along the Chattahoochee River in northwest Atlanta, Georgia sits one of the city's largest remaining pieces of developable, publicly accessible riverfront property. Like local residents, Groundwork Atlanta's leaders see need for broad-scale, grassroots neighborhood organizing around this property, located amid multiple brownfield sites on the Upper West Side, a lower-income, low-density landscape that has suffered "benign neglect" and lagging investment for decades. Residents have historically been under-engaged in local land use planning and decision-making. Broad-based engagement will be pivotal to realizing an ambitious long-range vision for returning this riverfront parcel to a green landscape.

The 75-acre parcel once housed the Chattahoochee Brick Company, which at the turn of the 20th century produced an estimated 200,000 bricks a day through the forced labor of African American prisoners. In his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Slavery by Another Name*, Douglas Blackmon details the infamous post-Civil War convict leasing system, by which thousands of African Americans were arrested and detained, then "rented out" to industries across the South. Prisoners labored and died under torturous conditions, their remains interred on the property to this day.



Forced laborers at the Chattahoochee Brick Company site in Atlanta. Photo: Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center

Georgia ended the shameful convict leasing system in 1908, and Chattahoochee Brick closed and was replaced by a more modern brick-making facility that operated into the 1980s. Today the property sits empty, currently being explored for reuse by an energy company seeking to build a fuel terminal and rail distribution center. Eliminating industrial uses on the site is as important to neighborhood stakeholders as naming the site's ignoble history and honoring those who made the bricks that were used to rebuild post-Civil War Atlanta. Support for the site's redevelopment as a publicly accessible amenity—whether riverfront park, walking and biking trails, retail or open air entertainment venue, memorial to the men

and women forced to labor on this site, or some combination thereof—is strong.

As one of its first projects, the newly established Groundwork Atlanta is working with the City and local stakeholders to build cross-sector partnerships and coalitions that will collaborate to make this riverfront vision a reality. While accomplishing that will likely take a decade or more, robust support for a community-oriented reuse vision among local residents and business owners indicates that, with an embedded, collaborative organization like Groundwork Atlanta to champion the community vision and investment, an ambitious brownfield transformation can be achieved.



◀ Groundwork Atlanta Board member Donna Stephens.
Photo and quote: Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

My big focus right now is working to see that the vacant Chattahoochee Brick site does not become an industry endangering the Chattahoochee and people who live nearby. Instead, it should be a memorial for the people who died there, and a special place where my neighbors can experience nature.

—Donna Stephens, Groundwork Atlanta
Board member and northwest Atlanta resident

Supporting Brownfield-Affected Communities Through Tools and Technical Assistance

GROUNDWORK USA

Groundwork USA advances and supports the brownfield revitalization work of the national network of Groundwork Trusts by helping de-mystify the process and promoting exchange of best practices. We also run a Brownfields Technical Assistance (TA) Program that serves brownfield-affected communities throughout the US, with a focus on ensuring equitable development and environmental justice outcomes. Groundwork USA's TA services are tailored to the specific needs, aspirations, and opportunities presented by a given community's practitioners. Some Groundwork Trusts are direct clients of our brownfields TA services, while the entire Groundwork network benefits from the approach and methodologies we're developing.

Below are descriptions of tools we're currently creating to support practitioners that are reclaiming brownfields for community benefit. These tools will be made available during 2017 at <http://groundworkusa.org/ta-services/equidev-brownfields-planning/resources/>.

PREPARING COMMUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Leading more inclusive and equitable (re)development planning requires building will among community members, nonprofit practitioners and institutions, and municipal staff as well as fostering cross-sector collaboration and a shared vision in advance of embarking on the development process. These annotated tools present field-tested methods for stakeholders and local government officials to undertake shared leadership of development planning that is informed by diverse perspectives and life experiences.

Mapping a Community's Assets: Outlines an interactive process that guides a community to recognize its physical, economic, and human assets and use them to leverage new opportunities, minimize duplicative efforts among multiple stakeholders, promote collaboration and partnerships, and address gaps where necessary. The endeavor can help community stakeholders develop shared leadership across sectors, drive multi-year campaigns, and attract new resources.

Reaching Beyond "Familiar Faces" for Meaningful Community Engagement: Provides guidance for planning practitioners who wish to engage populations who don't typically participate in traditional-format planning meetings or public forums. Asserts core values of inclusion and relevance and offers practical steps for designing an inclusive community engagement process that gathers input from oft-marginalized residents by meeting them where they are.

Deconstructing Technical Language and Concepts in Community Planning: Offers planning practitioners and public officials concrete exercises and best practices to use in guiding community stakeholders through a planning process that involves acronyms, industry terminology, or technical concepts such as inclusionary zoning, brownfield assessment data, or market analysis. Illuminating such terms and ideas sets an inclusive tone and invites discussion and shared ownership of decision making.

NAVIGATING THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Designed to orient less experienced practitioners and laypeople to the on-the-ground realities of private, non-profit, and public sector development, Groundwork USA's Development Process Map illuminates the steps in the brick-and-mortar development process, exploring facets including market, site, design, construction, finance, and project management. Presented as a dynamic, annotated flow, this graphical tool will orient municipal, nonprofit,

and community newcomers alike to the overall development process. With this knowledge, less experienced practitioners will gain insight into where and when it is most advantageous to participate and pursue equitable development outcomes through inclusionary zoning implementation, community benefit agreements, linkages between job training and placements, job creation, and local hiring agreements.

SEQUENCING A BROWNFIELD-TO-PARK PROJECT

Redeveloping a brownfield into a community park can be especially difficult. These projects don't typically "pencil out" in terms of financial return on investment, yet they are pivotal to quality of life, health, and creating a context for community economic development in neighborhoods dealing with environmental justice issues.

This annotated guide walks practitioners through the basic phases and considerations involved in any brownfield-to-park project, from establishing a community's re-use vision and the intricacies of an iterative design process through the many stages of planning, financing, construction, operations, and long-term maintenance.

Sequencing a Brownfield-to-Park Project: An Annotated Guide



Brownfields Projects Across the Groundwork USA Network

2016

Number of ACRES of brownfields or derelict land Groundwork Trusts reclaimed and/or improved in 2016 alone:

184

Number of ACRES of brownfields or derelict land Groundwork Trusts reclaimed and/or improved since 2000:

734

In 2016, Trusts across the Groundwork network have been active in planning, implementing, and organizing for brownfields redevelopment. All Groundwork Trusts work closely with city, state, and federal government and related agencies, businesses, and nonprofit and community partners at every stage of their brownfield work. Due to space constraints, we are unable to list the many partners that Groundwork Trusts team up with across the country, but we are grateful for their collaboration and support.

Here is a sampling of some of the brownfield reuse work that Groundwork Trusts have been involved with in 2016.

Groundwork Atlanta

- To ensure community benefit, Groundwork Atlanta is working with consultants, community members, and local government to assess the environmental impacts of a proposed 10.5-million-gallon fuel/rail/truck terminal on the site of the former Chattahoochee Brick Company. Groundwork Atlanta continues to work with its partners to put together a community-friendly, economically viable, public-private brownfield redevelopment plan for this property.

Groundwork Bridgeport

- The City of Bridgeport's waterfront includes several brownfield sites. As part of the ongoing waterfront redevelopment planning process, Groundwork Bridgeport invited and convened residents to share their ideas for the future of the city's 24 miles of waterfront.

Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek

- Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek (GWC) completed planning, public engagement, and preliminary engineering for Phase 5A of the Mill Creek Greenway Trail to be constructed adjacent to a closed landfill. The project focuses on pedestrian mobility in an underserved community facing environmental justice issues, and is part of an overall pedestrian mobility/conductivity study for the neighborhood.
- GWC provides technical assistance and mentorship for the South Cumminsville's community garden, which is located on a remediated brownfield. GWC has assisted with plantings and soil remediation and continues to mentor the community garden director, a past GWC Green Team member.

Groundwork DC

- East Capitol Urban Farm is located on a 3.5-acre vacant lot—a former public housing site—in Washington, DC's Ward 7. The farm is designed to promote urban agriculture; improve food access and nutrition through a community-centered farmers market; offer nutrition education, youth engagement, and community gardening; and create opportunities for entrepreneurship. Working with many partners, including selected federal agencies in the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, Groundwork DC facilitated local community outreach to Ward 7 residents and active youth engagement through its Green Team program.

Groundwork Denver

- For over a decade, Groundwork Denver has facilitated the visioning, planning, and fundraising process for turning a 5.5-acre brownfield site called Platte Farm Open Space into a much-needed green and recreational space with walking and biking trails for Denver's Globeville neighborhood. This resident-led project will help solve multiple urban challenges including crime, nature deficit, and stormwater issues. Phase I construction documents and city approval will be completed in 2017.

Groundwork Elizabeth

- GW Elizabeth (GWE) is an active member of the Elizabethport Brownfield Development Area committee (overseen by the Elizabeth Development Company), through which it has facilitated the conversion of one vacant lot into a temporary parking lot for PSE&G, and lined up another one-acre property for open space development, situated next to a market-value housing complex that went bust in 2008 during the financial crisis.

- GWE worked with the City of Elizabeth, New Jersey, to remediate a small, contaminated firehouse property located in the Elizabeth Avenue section of the city. The development of this property has stalled due to disagreement over the need for open space vs. high-value taxable properties (“ratables”).
- GWE continues to work with City and other partners on the Elizabeth River Trail extension into two more phases: one from Bridge Street to the Routes 1 & 9 overpass (2 acres), and another, from Routes 1 & 9 to the end of Mattano Park, a county park.

Groundwork Hudson Valley

- For the past four years, Groundwork Hudson Valley (GWHV) has been working with the City of Yonkers to create an urban trail for walking, running, and bicycling along a branch of the abandoned Putnam Railroad. This “RailTrail” will eventually stretch from New York City’s Van Cortlandt Park to the downtown Yonkers’ waterfront, reinvigorating the neighborhoods that declined after the “Old Put” stopped running. The first phase of the RailTrail, soon to break ground, will feature a new playground and enhanced green spaces and involves about four acres. With the full Yonkers Greenway as the final goal for Groundwork Hudson Valley and the City, there remain another five acres in the planning phase for sections of the trail south and north of Phase I.
- The Buena Vista Community Garden is quarter-acre brownfield site developed as a community garden with engaged citizen-farmers. Since 2013, GWHV has run food security programs there with Yonkers residents.
- The Walnut Street Community Garden is a 0.3-acre brownfield site redeveloped by GWHV with neighborhood gardeners. This is GWHV’s eighth year working with the Walnut Street Community Garden.

Groundwork Indianapolis

- Groundwork Indianapolis (“Indy”) works on an abandoned rail corridor by making improvements such as removing overgrown vegetation and invasive plants. This work is part of Groundwork Indy’s early-stage activation strategy to improve the access and safety of pedestrians using the corridor, which will become a paved rail/trail in about five years.
- Groundwork Indy participated in the Brownfields Area-Wide Planning process for the Northwest Area of Indianapolis, which focused on the 19-acre Carrier-Bryant brownfield site.
- The Groundwork Indy office is located on a former brownfield site that is now being actively used through the installation of an urban farm.



“Groundworkers for the S-Line” ride the rails-to-trails multi-use path that Groundwork Jacksonville is helping to revitalize and redevelop. Photo: Groundwork Jacksonville

Groundwork Jacksonville

- Groundwork Jacksonville (GW Jax) is working with the City of Jacksonville and several community partners to help redevelop, revitalize, and provide better accessibility and wayfinding for the S-Line Rail Trail, a 4.8-mile urban rails-to-trails multi-use path that connects several Jacksonville neighborhoods. The S-Line Rail Trail is one segment of the Emerald Necklace, a 14-mile series of urban greenways and waterways that encompasses Jacksonville’s urban core and links outlying areas of Jacksonville, spurring additional revitalization efforts.
- GW Jax is partnering with the City of Jacksonville and other partners to remediate and revitalize Hogans Creek and its adjacent greenway. Once complete, the 2.5-mile Hogans Creek Greenway will be brought back to ecological health as a community space for all to enjoy.
- GW Jax is exploring the possible remediation and re-use of the Clark property, a contaminated property that lies adjacent to Hogans Creek and the S-Line Rail Trail and is currently slated for possible remediation. The City of Jacksonville received an EPA brownfields assessment grant for phase I and phase II assessments of the Clark property.
- GW Jax, in partnership with Operation New Hope, built and maintains a 0.1-acre vacant lot turned community garden space in Jacksonville’s Eastside community.

Groundwork Lawrence

- Groundwork Lawrence (GWL) partnered with the City of Lawrence to draft a grant proposal to EPA’s Brownfields Assessment program. GWL also provided outreach and support to the City with the close out of its existing assessment program.
- GWL provided project management and community engagement support to the City of Lawrence on its EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning process.
- Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund: GWL is supporting the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission by providing community engagement and project development efforts, with a focus on the cities of Haverhill and Lawrence.
- GWL continues to manage the Ferrous Site, a 5-acre park developed by GWL on the site of a former brownfield and opened in 2016, and is also developing curriculum and interpretive signage for the park.
- GWL is supporting the City of Lawrence with the management of a project to expand Manchester Street Park and develop a parking lot for La Fruteria, a locally owned Latino grocery store. This includes guiding acquisition, assessment, design, and construction.
- GWL is providing remedial planning and community engagement services to support early planning efforts by the City of Lawrence to clean up the Tombarello Site, a publicly owned brownfield. Community members have significant concerns about site contamination and the preferred land use for the parcel.
- Building on previous efforts to remediate high lead levels, GWL continues to improve a community garden (Luis’ Garden /Tree Nursery) by adding water service and fencing. These improvements were funded through GWL’s partnership with the State’s Greening the Gateway Cities program, which focuses on increasing urban tree canopy. GWL is using part of the garden as a tree nursery for the planting project.

Groundwork Milwaukee

- ▶ Groundwork Milwaukee (GWM) maintains over 100 community gardens located throughout the city on formerly vacant or underutilized city-owned lots. In its work with community members, GWM focuses on food security and green infrastructure programs. GWM also combines a workforce development training program with the creation and maintenance of these gardens.

Groundwork Rhode Island

- ▶ Groundwork Rhode Island (GWRI) organized planning meetings and convened local residents and members of the school community to provide input on the design for a public park along Mashapaug Pond. The park will be located on the remediated Gorham Silver brownfield site next to the school and athletic fields that were recently built there. GWRI is also the lead community partner seeking funding, with the Providence Parks Department, to fully finance the park's construction.
- ▶ Through its GroundCorp landscaping employment program, GWRI converted a vacant parcel in South Rhode Island into a raised-bed community garden.

Groundwork Richmond

- ▶ Working with the City of Richmond and Friends of the Richmond Greenway, GW Richmond (GWR) was instrumental in facilitating pre-planning and design of Unity Park, an eight-block park along the Richmond Greenway where GWR will install community gardens, playgrounds, a sports field, and a community plaza. GWR now sits on the transition team responsible for moving to the construction phase, with groundbreaking set for spring 2017.
- ▶ At Richmond's 42nd Street pocket park, GWR has installed murals, planted trees, maintained the site, and engaged community members. GWR is the primary developer and partners with the City, neighborhood council, and local businesses.
- ▶ GWR is in the process of officially adopting Carlson Meadow, a thoroughfare along the Richmond Greenway where GWR will build a bio-swale and other amenities. The project is in the planning phase and will break ground in April 2017.

Groundwork RVA

- ▶ On a small but highly visible location in a residential neighborhood, Groundwork Richmond Virginia (GWRVA) turned a quarter-acre blighted and vacant lot into the North 25th Street Pocket Park. GWRVA's Armstrong High School Green Team youth worked with Storefront for Community Design on design ideas, and then presented three design concepts at a community-wide meeting, where Richmond's mayor and a district council member provided feedback. After working with the property owner and interviewing user groups about their use of the site, the Green Team youth installed the final North 25th Street Pocket Park plan.
- ▶ GWRVA stewards the five-acre Bellemeade Park through landscape maintenance and regular litter pick-up.
- ▶ Farmstrong is a formerly blighted two-acre site that GWRVA helped clean, clear, and turn into a working urban agriculture site.

Groundwork Somerville

- ▶ Groundwork Somerville (GWS) coordinates school garden classrooms at 10 different elementary schools, many of which are located on previously vacant and abandoned lots. GWS' work involves education and engagement of youth, parents, and teachers, as well as regular rehab and ongoing maintenance of the gardens.
- ▶ GWS is part of an ongoing planning process for the underutilized Draw 7 Park in Somerville, built on a former brownfield site.
- ▶ Working with key partners and community members, GWS leads the planning process to improve design and programming in the underutilized Blessing of the Bay Boathouse Park, built on a former brownfield.
- ▶ As lead administrator, GWS works to align various stakeholders and partners to complete the Northern Strand Community Trail, a regional trail through Lynn, Massachusetts coordinated by Bike to the Sea.
- ▶ In 2011, GWS's Green Team and community volunteers completed the transformation of two barren, paved parking lots into Somerville's first urban farm. The second phase of development of South Street Farm was completed in 2015, and GWS continues to help maintain it. South Street Farm produce is sold at the Somerville Mobile Farmers Market, donated to local food pantries, and used by the GWS Green Team for special events and healthy eating workshops.



Groundwork RVA Green Team and community members in the completed North 25th Street Pocket Park, built on a formerly blighted vacant lot. Photo: Groundwork RVA

CONCLUSION

Groundwork USA approaches brownfields reuse as a long-term economic development strategy for underserved communities. Whether environmental contamination is real or perceived, because brownfields are often clustered in “weak market” neighborhoods faced with environmental justice issues, they stymie new investment and redevelopment, perpetuating poverty and economic decline. Groundwork USA and its Trusts view community-driven brownfield and vacant land reuse projects as levers that can increase access to opportunity and promote shared prosperity. The Groundwork network leverages significant public, private, and philanthropic resources for brownfields

redevelopment projects that help strengthen communities and enhance residents’ health and quality of life.

As conveners and strategists, Groundwork Trusts help connect residents, municipal government, businesses, and developers to identify a common vision and strategy for enhancing their environment, promoting community pride, and building wealth. Groundwork Trusts seek to provide multiple entry points, such as jobs, job training, and youth development opportunities, through which local residents can become long-term citizen-stewards of their community and its natural resources.

Groundwork USA and its network are committed to ensuring that community members are key partners in shaping brownfields redevelopment projects that benefit neighborhoods and long-time residents. Because these kinds of efforts often take many years, Groundwork Trusts are embedded in communities for the long haul, working to help realize a shared vision of healthy, economically robust neighborhoods with access to jobs, safe transportation options, and health-promoting green space and recreation opportunities.



At a meeting convened by Groundwork Bridgeport, local residents share their ideas for the future of the city's 24 miles of waterfront. Photo: Groundwork Bridgeport

CONTACT

GROUNDWORK USA
Stephen Burrington | Executive Director
22 Main Street
Yonkers, NY 10701
Phone: 914-375-2151
www.groundworkusa.org

