Community Development Done Right:
Putting Environmental Justice and Equity into Action

Jalisa Gilmore and John Valinch
Managers of Equity and Resilience Programs, Groundwork USA
September 21, 2022
Meet the Team!

Jalisa Gilmore
Manager of Equity & Resilience Programs
Jalisa@groundworkusa.org

John Valinch
Manager of Equity & Resilience Programs
John@groundworkusa.org

Cate Mingoya-LaFortune
National Director of Climate Resilience & Land Use
Cate@groundworkusa.org
Workshop Agenda

1. Groundwork USA Overview
2. Workshop Objectives
3. Contextualizing Environmental Justice & Equitable Development
4. Resource Overview
5. Questions and Closing
Changing Places, Changing Lives, Changing Systems
## Workshop Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gain</th>
<th>Appreciate</th>
<th>Identify</th>
<th>Apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain an understanding of environmental justice and equitable development</td>
<td>Appreciate the importance of centering equity and justice</td>
<td>Identify equitable development in action</td>
<td>Apply concepts and tools to center equity and justice in your work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Environmental Justice and Equitable Development: Key Questions

• What is environmental justice?

• What do we mean when we say equitable development?

• Why does any of this matter?
Environmental (In)Justice
Environmental (In)Justice
Why Does This All Matter?

- History shapes the current conditions of our neighborhoods and environment.
- People shape history.
- Together, we can build a brighter, equitable, and racially-just future through equitable land reuse and community development work.
Environmental justice (EJ) is 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.
Expanding the Federal Definition

Massachusetts context:
- Median annual household income is at or below 65% of the statewide median income; or
- 25% of the residents are minority; or
- 25% of the residents are foreign born; or
- 25% of the residents are lacking English language proficiency.
Justice40: A Historic Commitment to Environmental Justice

- At least 40% of federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution.

- Climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure.

- “All Justice40 covered programs are required to engage in stakeholder consultation and ensure that community stakeholders are meaningfully involved in determining program benefits.”

Source: Justice40.com
Brownfields: Impact, Legacy, & Relevance

The EPA defines Brownfields 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.”
Brownfields: Impacts and Action

Impacts

- Reinforces cycles of disinvestment in marginalized communities
  - Perpetuates vacancy, illegal dumping, and other activity
- Detracts from quality of life and health
- Maintains and compounds historical harm

Action

- Assessment (testing)
- Remediation (cleanup)
- Interim use (holding pattern)
- Land Reuse (revitalization)
Equitable Development: Guiding Questions

1. Who should be at the table?
2. How do you get stakeholders to come to the table?
3. How will you keep the community involved for the long haul?
Equitable Development Principles

- Center the Community
- Develop Diverse Partnerships
- Inclusive Participation
- Recognize and Value Local Knowledge
Center the Community

Prioritize, uplift, and include residents at each step of the process.
Develop Diverse Partnerships

Build unlikely cross-sector partnerships and coalitions to develop a common vision and an action plan for achieving it as a coalition.
Inclusive Participation

Meet People Where They’re At

Ditch the idea that a single community meeting format will get you the participation you need!
Recognize and Value Local Knowledge

Neighborhood residents are experts within their communities. Honor this knowledge by incorporating it into your work!
Additional Takeaway

Minimize Barriers!
Equitable Development in Action Group Activity:

- Watch the video!

- Look out for examples of equitable development

- Identify equitable development principle through a group poll
Environmental Justice & Equity in Action
Unity Park - Richmond, California

- Eight-block linear park along the Richmond Greenway
- Beautiful and much-needed green space for the community
- Driven over six years by a coalition of nonprofits called Friends of the Richmond Greenway
Equitable Development in Action Group Activity:

• Watch the video!

• Look out for examples of equitable development

• Identify equitable development principle through a group poll
Identifying Equitable Development Principles in Action

“Inclusive Participation

- Provide multiple and varied points of entry for participation. Ditch the idea that a single community meeting format will get you the participation you need—be creative and use all of the physical, social, structural, and digital tools that are at your disposal.

“Minimize Barriers

- Anticipate, address, and minimize barriers to participation—and think broadly about what those barriers might be: access to childcare, physical barriers, language barriers, etc.

“We did video’s, we did community meetings, we had presentations at planning commissions, we involved our green team in doing some door-to-door canvassing”
Identifying Equitable Development Principles in Action

“When residents showed a particular interest or had a particular skillset they were brought on to the formal design team. So our design team had 57 community residents who had never been involved in building a park before. And so we paid people prevailing wage for their ideas for a park that was going to land right in their backyard.”

Recognize & Value Local Knowledge

- Value local residents as neighborhood experts (and compensate them accordingly).
Identifying Equitable Development Principles in Action

“Here you have a collaboration between the City of Richmond, contractors, 17 non-profit organizations and community members. Not everyone has the same agenda or priorities.”

Build Diverse Partnerships
- Build unlikely cross-sector partnerships and coalitions to develop a common vision and an action plan for achieving it as a coalition.

Develop Local Relationships
- Seek out and develop relationships with residents and constituencies.
Identifying Equitable Development Principles in Action

“We get a chance to be heard out here and really get a chance to tell our own story.”

“We’re really getting community input at the ground level. That’s a new way of operating for municipality that’d we’d like to see modeled throughout the country.”

**Center the Community**

- Everyone benefits from land development, re-use initiatives, and investments when local communities define those benefits for themselves and their surrounding neighborhoods, and, together, hold municipal leaders, developers, and residents mutually accountable for realizing those benefits.
Okay, Now What?

Complete Equitable Development in Action Worksheet!

• 3 page interactive worksheet
• 12 Equitable Development Principles with descriptions
• Black & white version available for printing
**In Summary**

1. Collaborative, community-led projects like Unity Park are driving healthy transformation in Richmond and beyond.

2. Follow the lead of the most vulnerable and disproportionately impacted

3. We all have a role in shaping the future of inclusive, healthy, and environmentally-just communities.
Groundwork USA
Brownfields Resources & Offerings

MORE INFORMATION AT:
HTTPS://GROUNDWORKUSA.ORG/TA-SERVICES/

VISUAL RESOURCE LIBRARY
Tools, guides, podcasts, graphic novels, templates, and case studies to support your work!

WORKSHOPS & TRAININGS
Series of free workshops & trainings to build capacity to meet your equitable development goals.

DIRECT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
Free one-on-one customized strategy, tools, and peer support for your brownfield project.
Questions?
Please submit any questions or comments to Jalisa@GroundworkUSA.org and John@GroundworkUSA.org