

**LAUNCHING:**

# ADVANCING EQUITY IN LAND REUSE PLANNING AND VISIONING:

*A Practical Guide to Engaging and Activating  
Community Voices*

WITH GROUNDWORK USA AND  
THE CENTER FOR CREATIVE  
LAND RECYCLING



# CCLR

- EPA Technical Assistance to Brownfields Provider
- Focus on building community capacity for land reuse
- Assistance with funding identification + procurement



# GROUNDWORK USA

- National network of 20+ place-based organizations
- Focus on transforming the built environment through community partnerships and engagement
- Building healthy, green, just, and resilient communities

Free Technical Assistance:  
Land Reuse,  
Environmental Justice,  
and Equity



# NONPROFIT BROWNFIELD TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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**Nationwide technical assistance  
program to support nonprofits**

- **Free one-on-one technical assistance**
- **Webinars and workshops designed for nonprofits and community organizations**
- **Resource Hub with best practices, case studies, videos, and more for every stage of your project**



Thank you to the EPA's Office Of Brownfields and Land Revitalization for providing grant funding to support Groundwork USA's brownfields and equitable development technical assistance program.

# URBAN WATERS LEARNING NETWORK

## LEARNING SERIES – FROM SILOS TO SYNERGY: INTEGRATING LAND AND WATER PROGRAMS FOR HOLISTIC ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

- Land, air, and water systems are deeply **interconnected** – and our approach to healing past harms and creating a more just future needs to be as well.
- **Silos to Synergy series**, is designed to help land and water equity practitioners think beyond traditional program silos



**UWLN is a peer-to-peer network of people and organizations working to conserve, restore and revitalize America's urban waterways, supporting our members' work through tools, training, mentoring and financial assistance.**

# TODAY'S AGENDA

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1. Land Recycling
2. Equity in Land Reuse & Case Study Discussion
3. Introducing the Equity Guide
4. Q & A Discussion
5. Interactive Workshop on Land Reuse First Steps
6. Close



# TODAY'S PRESENTERS

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**Genea Foster**

(they/them)

Director of Climate  
Resilience and Land Use at  
Groundwork USA



**Jalisa Gilmore**

(she/her)

Senior Manager of EJ  
Programs at  
Groundwork USA



**Devyn  
Rainwater**

(she/they)

Sr Program Associate at  
The Center for Creative  
Land Recycling (CCLR)



**Tanner Yess**

(he/him)

Chief Youth and  
Workforce Officer at  
Groundwork USA

# THE EQUITY GUIDE TEAM:

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**Genea Foster**

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Director of Climate  
Resilience and Land Use at  
Groundwork USA



**Jalisa Gilmore**

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Senior Manager of EJ  
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**Norman  
Wright**

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Consultant at the Center  
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(CCLR)

# WHAT IS LAND RECYCLING?

The redevelopment and reuse of abandoned, contaminated and underutilized land (brownfields).

**Environmental Injustice:** Disproportionate burden of brownfields in disadvantaged, low-income communities.



## Brownfield:

A vacant/underutilized property with potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant, complicating reuse.

SF Bay Area, CA



# SAW MILL RIVER DAYLIGHTING

YONKERS, NY



# FERROUS URBAN WILD

LAWRENCE, MA

GROUNDWORK LAWRENCE



# WHAT IS EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT?

“...an approach for meeting the needs of underserved communities through policies and programs that reduce disparities while fostering places that are healthy and vibrant.” - EPA



What does  
Environmental  
Justice mean to  
you?

# WHY DO EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Equitable development  
promotes fairness and justice.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT



Cincinnati, OH  
Groundwork Ohio River Valley

# WHY DO EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Equitable development is an opportunity to advance people-centered solutions that meet multiple community goals/needs.



Lawrence, MA

Groundwork Lawrence

COMMUNITY BENEFIT

# WHY DO EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Building local relationships  
supports the success of future  
projects in the neighborhood and  
municipality.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT



Milwaukee, WI  
Groundwork Milwaukee

CASE STUDY:  
GROUNDWORK  
OHIO RIVER VALLEY

What priorities and/or needs did you identify with your community?

How did you design your project to directly address these issues?









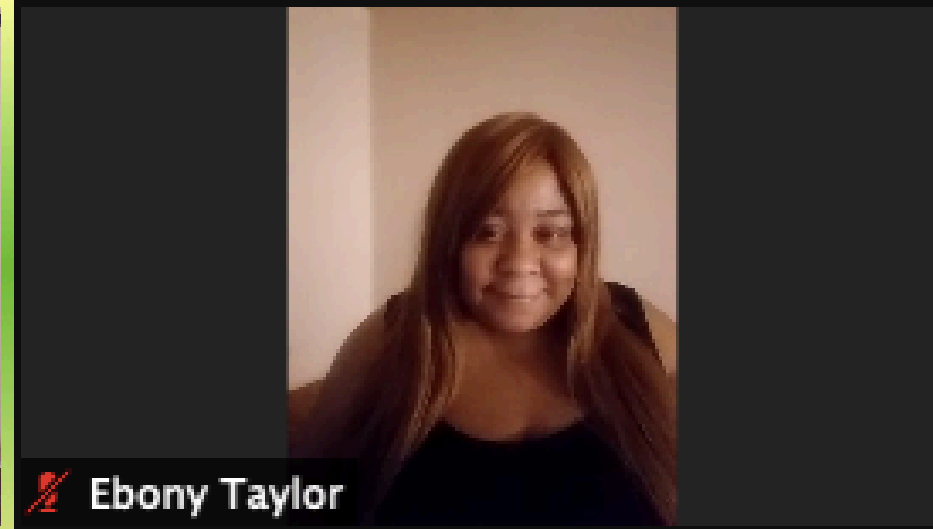




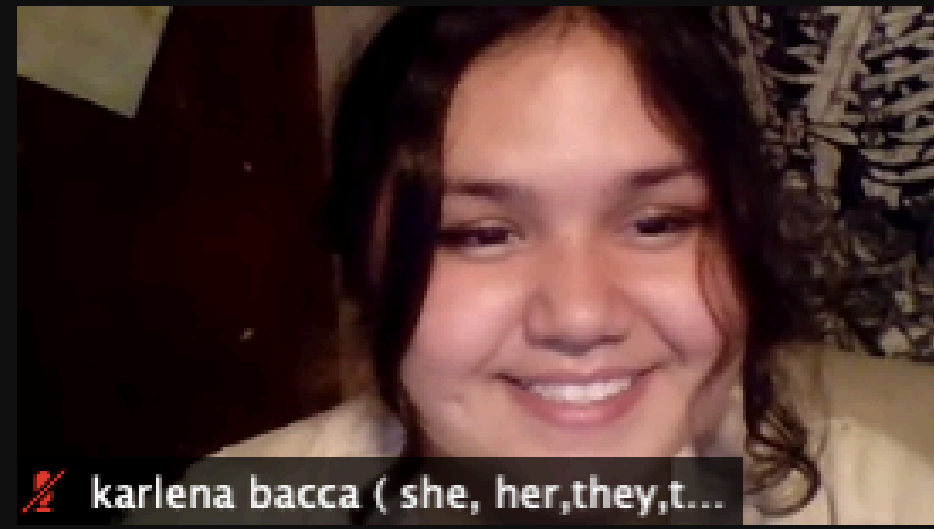
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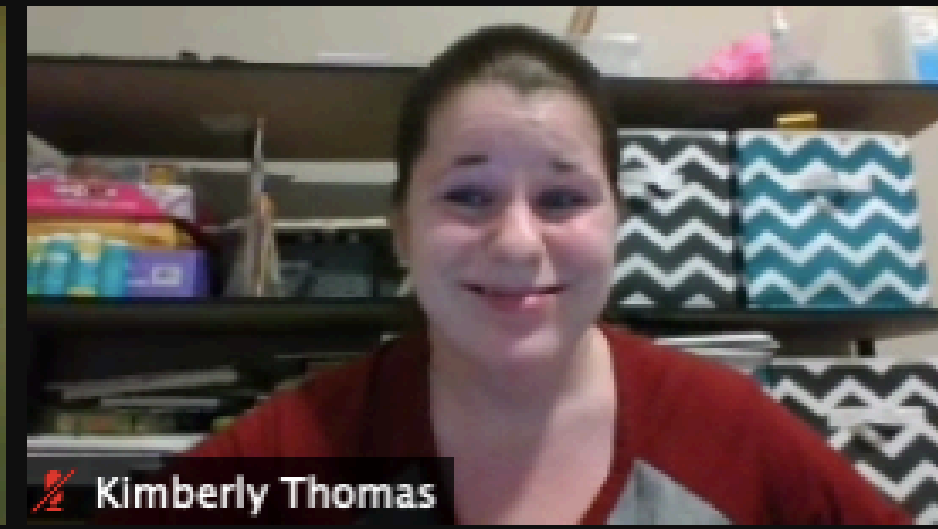
Rashida Manuel



Sophie Revis



Carla Walker



Kimberly Thomas



Mohagany



Marisha Davis



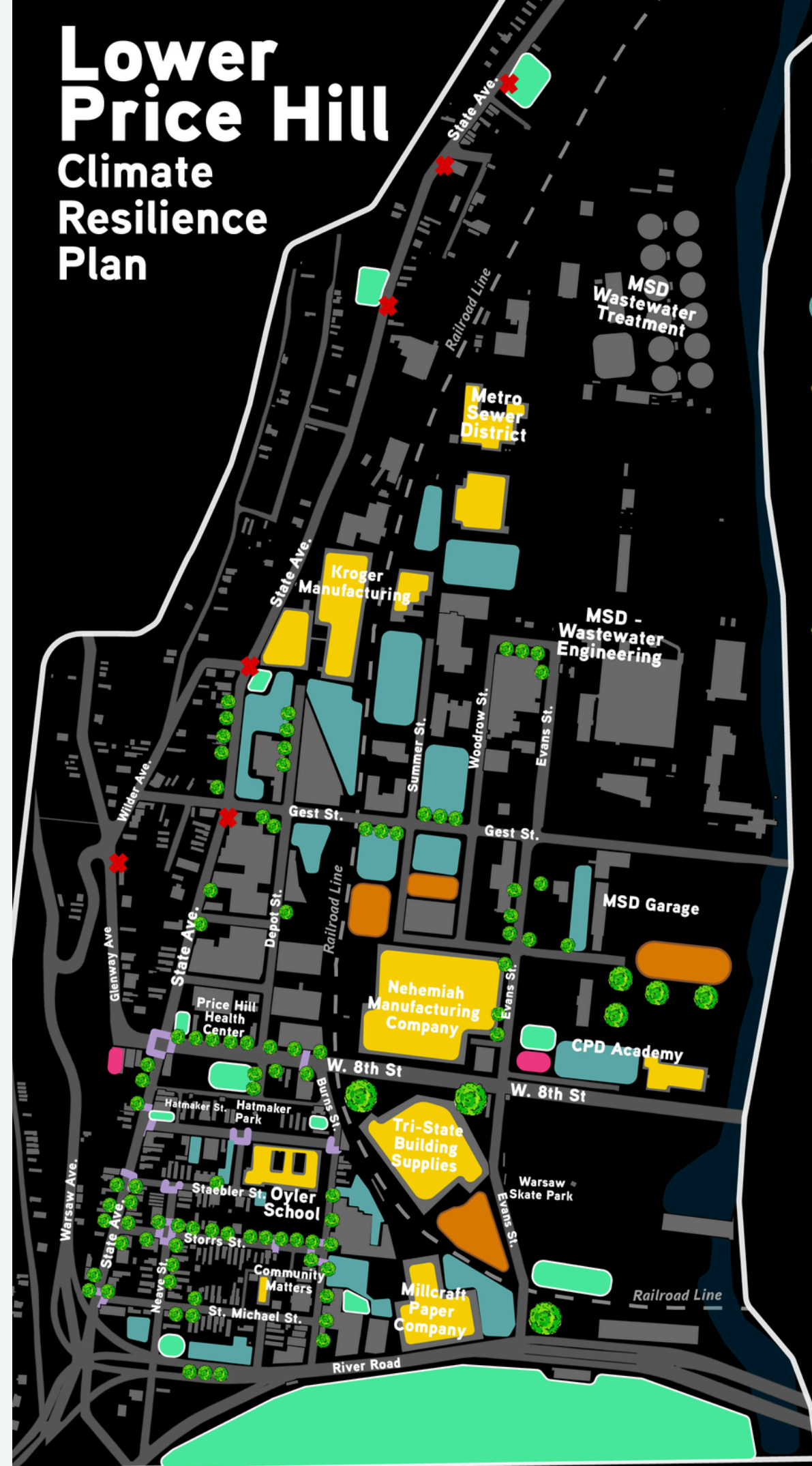
Oliver Kroner



Jaeydah Edwards

# Lower Price Hill

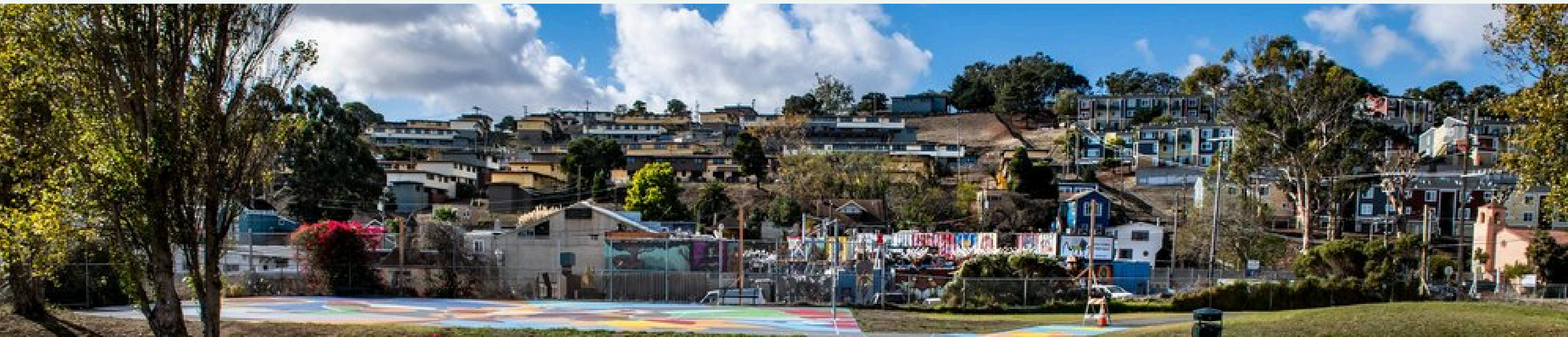
## Climate Resilience Plan



-  Community Cooling Center
-  Community Greenspace
-  Community Garden or Farm
-  Green Parking Lot
-  Green Roof
-  Asphalt Sealant Crosswalk
-  Cooling Bus Stop
-  Proposed Street Trees

# OUR MISSION

To define and promote equitable development practices and principles within brownfield reuse planning and implementation, which has tremendous potential to address health, social, environmental, and economic inequalities.



# PHASES OF A BROWNFIELD PROJECT

Apply the Principles of Equitable Development to each step in the Brownfields reuse process.



1

Establish a team and engage stakeholders and community experts.

2

Develop Inventory and select property that can meet community needs.

3

Reuse Assessment and Due Diligence to identify and evaluate features of a property

4

Reuse Planning and Visioning to consider all analysis and develop reuse plan

5

Implementation: Strategy, Cleanup, Reuse. Make the plan a reality with funding, cleanup, and reuse.

# PRINCIPLES OF EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

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1. Share Leadership & Decision-Making Power
2. Learn & Acknowledge History of Racial and Social Injustices
3. Recognize & Value Local Knowledge
4. Meet People Where They Are At
5. Build Intentional Partnerships



Oakland, CA



CASE STUDY:  
GROUNDWORK  
OHIO RIVER VALLEY

Which equitable principles show up in your project?

Can you describe the strategies you used to include equity in your work?













# ADVANCING EQUITY IN LAND REUSE PLANNING AND VISIONING

A Practical Guide to  
Engaging and Activating  
Community Voices



**Advancing  
Equity in Land  
Reuse Planning  
and Visioning:**  
A Practical Guide to  
Engaging and Activating  
Community Voices

Groundwork USA &  
Center for Creative  
Land Recycling

Are you a non-profit, community group, or local government interested in brownfield cleanup and land reuse? This guide provides strategies, tools, and resources for advancing environmental justice and equity in land reuse projects.

GROUNDWORK  
USA

CENTER FOR CREATIVE  
LAND RECYCLING  
RECLAIM. CONNECT. TRANSFORM.



# Understand the process → Identify your strategy

## Phase 5

### Phase 5: Reuse Implementation: Strategy, Cleanup, and Reuse

In this phase the project progresses from identifying funding sources and evaluating risks to completing the environmental investigation and cleanup, transferring ownership of the property (if applicable), and implementing the reuse scenarios developed under the Reuse Plan (Phase 4).

Some of the tasks and deliverables that may be part of this phase include:

- **Brownfields Investment Package:** the development of a document or package (can be a website) used to explain the reuse potential of a property in a way that attracts capital and resources. This package can also help communities understand the challenges that need to be overcome for the successful implementation of a project.
- **Resource Roadmap:** after the costs of a project are estimated, the resource roadmap identifies potential funding sources to implement the actions that need to occur at the property.
- **Environmental Investigation, Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives, and Cleanup Plan:** the completion of an environmental investigation, selection of a cleanup alternative and development of a cleanup plan to remediate the property and protect human health and the environment.
- **Property Disposition:** the development of an approach to transfer ownership in a way that provides value to the current and future owner.

#### What is the objective of this phase?

The Reuse Implementation will ultimately produce a series of reports that provide information for the acquisition of resources and the implementation of the Reuse Plan. It also provides the opportunity for the community to better understand the obstacles that need to be overcome for the reuse project to succeed.

The ultimate objective of this phase is threefold: to clean up the selected property in a manner that is protective of human health and the environment; to reuse the property in a manner that is consistent with community needs; and to responsibly transfer a property (if applicable).

#### Equitable Development Goals

- Create a task force composed of community members and stakeholders to help keep up momentum during this phase. Task forces can guide the brownfields revitalization effort, help the community better understand the complexity of land reuse challenges, such as funding and cleanup, keep track of milestones, and hold members accountable for their tasks.
- Work closely with a community liaison selected by the community itself to ensure resources and materials are accessible and successful. The community liaison and broader community should have access to technical assistance to help them understand the cleanup process and its regulatory requirements.
- Consider ways to utilize the site (keep track of zoning laws) during the interim period leading up to final construction to keep community members engaged. For example, a site with a large, unused parking lot could become a community garden built on raised planting beds, or the exterior walls of a vacant structure could be repurposed for murals and art displays. The possibilities for interim use of brownfields are broad and can create quick, positive change to keep a community involved.

## Phase 5

### Actions to Support Equitable Development ✓



#### Share Leadership and Decision-Making Power

- Support the community in the establishment of a task force. Check out the [Brownfield Opportunity Area \(BOA\) working groups structure in Philmont, NY](#).
- Host an [open house](#) for the community to talk one-on-one with regulators, environmental consultants, and community leaders to better understand the cleanup process and where they can comment and participate.
- Provide educational opportunities, like webinars and written materials, that explain the implications of the cleanup, including long-term commitments to institutional controls, selection of cleanup standards, and cleanup alternatives.
- Maintain an updated website providing information on the progress of the site activities, delays, or changes; and offer avenues to ask questions (like a chat, email, or contact number). Make sure the information is accessible to all.
- Benchmark the process and keep everyone informed. Create a timeline that holds project teams accountable and allows residents to monitor progress and spot any possible delays as they occur. Report performance and progress regularly to all participants.



#### Learn and Acknowledge the History of Racial and Social Injustices

- Conduct an internal anti-displacement assessment of your project and create a plan to mitigate the risk of displacement during and after cleanup and development.
  - Inform residents about the potential positive and negative environmental, economic, and social impacts that clean up and construction will have on their community in the short and long term.
  - Educate yourself and your team on displacement and gentrification using this [toolkit from the University of Minnesota](#).
  - Protect existing residents from displacement by monitoring the effect your project will have on the affordability of housing and services in the community.
  - Involve resident and tenant associations in the development of your reuse plan to protect existing residents.



#### Recognize and Value Local Knowledge

- Support a community liaison that can communicate the cleanup process components. Technical assistance is also available to assist the community liaison.
- Conduct a public hearing to obtain feedback on the details of the final studies, permit applications, and construction schedules. Respond to all comments submitted by the community in a timely manner.



#### Meet People Where They Are At

- Attend already established community events (farmers' markets, fairs, etc.) with fliers and information to disseminate in multiple languages to ensure everyone is aware of upcoming construction activities.

## Phase 2: Develop Brownfields Inventory and Site Selection

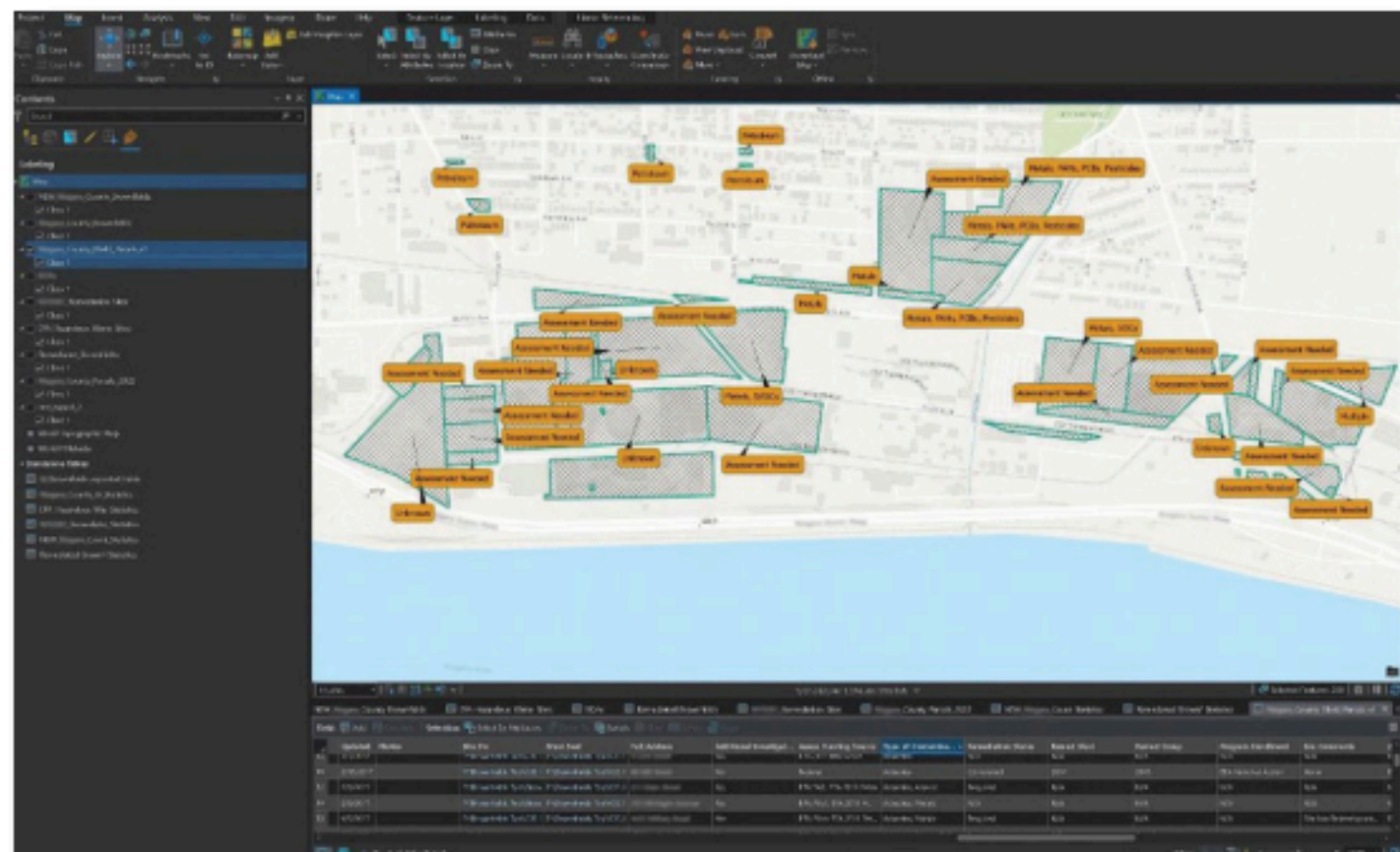
During this phase, the project team develops an inventory of underutilized, abandoned, and vacant properties within a selected area (city, downtown, neighborhood, city block, etc.). The resulting brownfields inventory will provide an array of properties to be prioritized for potential reuse as resources become available.

### What is the objective of this phase?

To select a property for reuse that can be used to meet community needs and priorities, avoids displacement, promotes economic growth, and has environmental challenges that can be resolved. Some examples of community priorities include public health, food justice, workforce development, affordable housing, and access to recreation.

### Equitable Development Goals

- Shift decision-making power to the community by engaging residents in site selection.
- Gather resident input to understand potential sites. Residents know the area best so their input is key to the success of the reuse project.
- Help communities visualize the potential benefits of a land reuse project by using available prioritization tools and resources that consider community needs and the potential expansion of services within the neighborhood (including affordable housing, grocery stores, and medical services, among others).
- Identify a target area that presents the worst of all conditions while still containing brownfield-eligible qualities. A successful project will utilize a target area that reflects the greatest community needs and meets a realistic project budget and scope.



Example interface of a graphical brownfield inventory

## Actions to Support Equitable Development ✓



### Share Leadership and Decision-Making Power

- Provide opportunities for the community to learn about the properties, such as public meetings, fact sheets, and websites developed specifically for that purpose.
- Set up a community meeting or workshop to demonstrate tools like the [Community Reuse Property Prioritization Tool](#).



### Learn and Acknowledge the History of Racial and Social Injustices

- Using community knowledge and practitioner research, create an inventory of unmet community needs in the public realm. Within the public realm, common gaps include a lack of sidewalks, bike lanes, streetlights, stormwater facilities, internet service, fire protection, emergency response, and transit. Once the target area is defined, locate and catalog every missing service and amenity.
- Create an inventory of neglected properties in the private realm. Not all neglected properties are brownfields but any instance of neglect should be recognized. Locate and catalog each vacant and derelict building, every pile of trash, junk, and debris.



### Recognize and Value Local Knowledge

- Conduct surveys to obtain feedback from the community regarding properties that have reuse potential. Compensate survey participants accordingly to recognize their experience, time, and labor through incentives (gift cards, thank-you gifts, raffles, etc.) or financial compensation.
- Enable community members to actively participate in identifying and addressing environmental issues in their neighborhoods through a resident-led brownfield inventory process.



### Meet People Where They Are At

- Host informational events in the community:
  - Host workshops to provide opportunities to learn about brownfields and solicit community input on brownfields in the area, and/or host a participatory exercise, like a [charrette](#).
  - Host site/neighborhood tours and encourage community members to point out the vacant sites in their area. Use tours as opportunities for community bonding by including a theme, such as an art walk.
  - Set up interactive tables at community events, such as farmer's markets and local fairs.
- Prepare all information in a transparent, multilingual report that is accessible to community members.



### Build Intentional Partnerships

- Engage local elected officials and ensure there is adequate political support for equitable land reuse. Elected representatives are important stakeholders and are accountable to constituents in ways that are unmatched by any other participant.

### Resources

- For more examples on how to conduct a workshop and community meeting:
  - ▶ Look through [the Guide to Community Driven Transit Oriented Development](#).
  - ▶ Check out Groundwork USA's [Community Meetings for Busy People](#) worksheet, which can be completed in 15 minutes.
- Get started on a resident-led brownfield inventory, with [Groundwork USA's Neighborhood Brownfield Inventory Toolkit: Unlocking Free Mapping Software](#).

QUESTIONS?

# WORKSHOP



# PHASE 1 OUTCOMES

- Get to know the local community context
- Identify key stakeholders to engage in the planning process
- Establish a resident-led project team
- Identify community priorities

# TAKING ACTION TO PROMOTE EQUITY IN LAND REUSE



# BREAK OUT GROUPS



# WE ALL HAVE A ROLE IN BUILDING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY JUST FUTURE





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