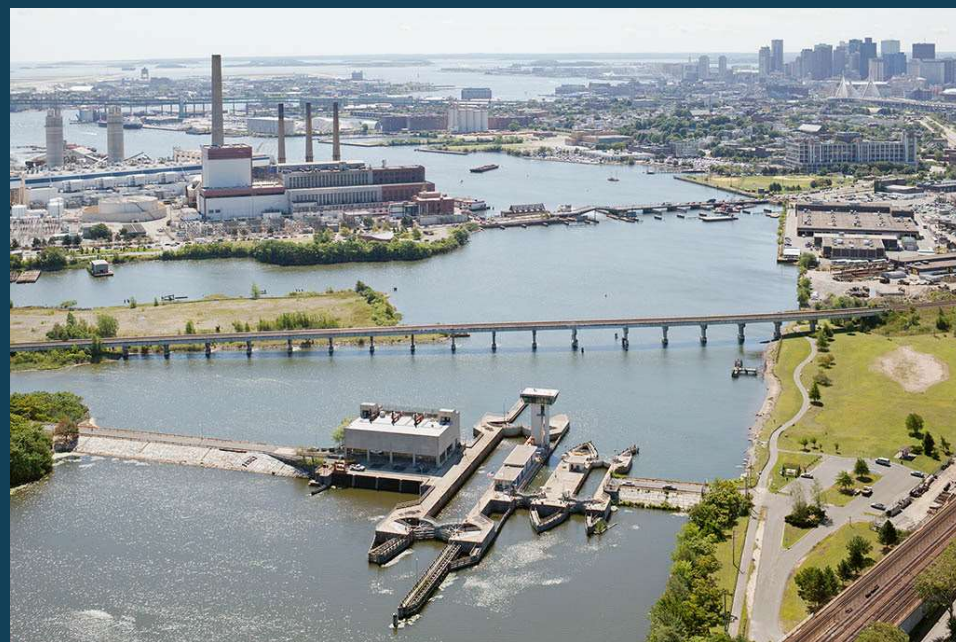


# Advancing Equity Through Brownfields Redevelopment

Mystic Steering Committee  
September 12, 2019



# What we'll cover today...

- Overview of Groundwork USA and our technical assistance offerings on brownfields
- The need for equity in the brownfields redevelopment process



## About Groundwork USA



Our mission is to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement, and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships that empower people, businesses, and organizations to promote environmental, economic, and social well-being.



# Brownfields Projects Across the Groundwork USA Network

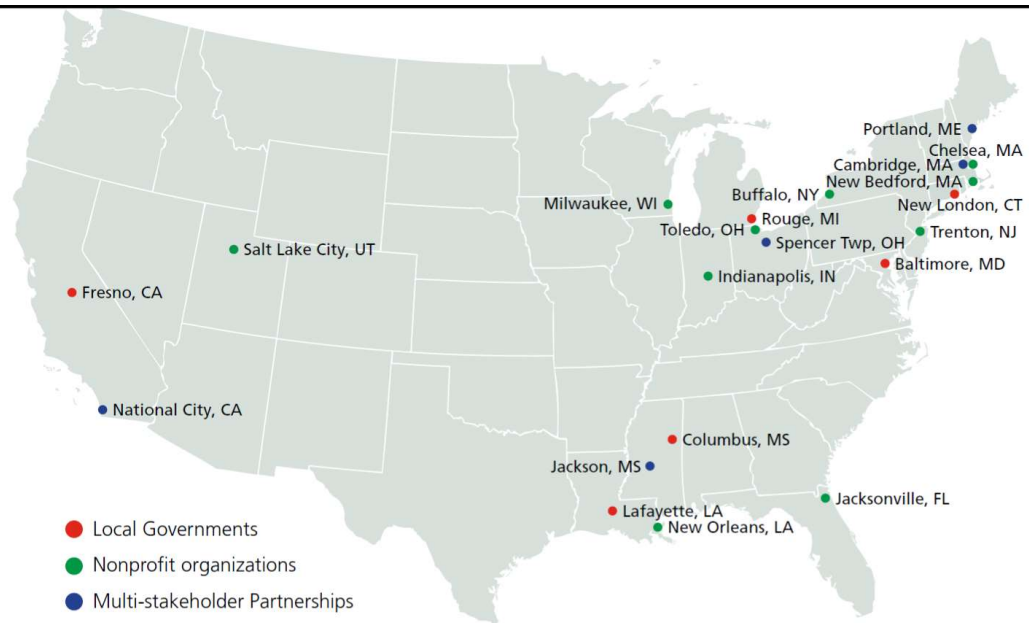
2016


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





## Our Technical Assistance services include...

- **Testing feasibility of “implementation strategies”** (projects, programs, partnerships) identified in brownfield area wide planning processes
- Designing and sequencing **inclusive methods for engaging an array of local people** in brownfield transformation projects
- **Coaching grassroots and municipal leaders** in developing productive, cross-sector coalitions, and shaping (re)development projects to benefit all citizens

## Our approach aims to...

- Correct historic and systemic disparities
- Engage local stakeholders meaningfully in project planning, prioritization and implementation over time
- Achieve environmental justice
- Encourage more equitable development planning, processes and outcomes





## Who is affected by brownfields?

**Environmental Justice (EJ)** populations are burdened disproportionately by brownfields:

- People of color
- Youth, elderly
- Low/moderate-income neighborhoods
- Areas of concentrated poverty

## What is “equitable development”?

- Everyone should benefit from (re)development, investment (including EJ communities)
- Inclusive, collaborative planning
- Meaningful community engagement
- Local residents valued as neighborhood experts
- Community defines “benefits”
- Mutual accountability to realizing those benefits
- Finding common ground (i.e., balancing community vision, developer and financing needs, regulatory environment)
- Building, honoring trust and relationships long-term
- No “finish line” – ongoing partnerships/collaboration





# Best Practices for Meaningful Community Engagement

*Tips for Engaging Historically “Hard to Reach” Populations in Visioning and Planning*

---

The wider the variety of world views and lived experiences that inform a community visioning or planning process, the more likely it is that the built project or resulting plan will address the needs and opportunities of even the most vulnerable or most marginalized person in the community.

Meaningful community engagement can take shape in a variety of ways and requires time and flexibility. Building trusting relationships with people—and finding a variety of ways to enable their connection to a project, a process, or a group of people—requires sustained effort. Here are some tips to help strengthen the interpersonal connections across your community:

## **Identify who it is that you find “hard to reach.”**

- Why do you define this particular population this way?
- How can this information guide your planning and outreach efforts?

## **Put yourself in other people’s shoes.**

- What factors (besides meeting content) would guarantee your attendance?
- How might you eliminate common barriers to showing up?\*



# Breaking Down Barriers to Community Engagement and Participation

*Deconstructing Technical Jargon + Acronyms*

The Groundwork USA team developed this tool for community-building practitioners in brownfield-affected communities who seek best practices for engaging local stakeholders in visioning, planning, and implementation efforts.

Most citizens are completely unfamiliar with industry-specific terminology, planning jargon, and governmental acronyms. To set an inclusive tone with any community engagement effort and to help build trusting relationships with community members, it is critically important to take intentional steps to eliminate language-based barriers. Our field observations have shown that teams whose members seek to proactively remove language obstacles tend to see more robust and sustained patterns of participation and engagement among their intended stakeholders over time.

What do we mean by “language-based barriers”? These are easy-to-overcome obstacles to certain stakeholders’ participation that may be presented by:

- A stakeholder’s preferred spoken language differing from the language in which a community engagement meeting is conducted
- Limited English language literacy
- Presence of highly technical or industry-specific terminology, jargon, or acronyms

Community organizers we interviewed to create this tool repeatedly asserted the value of demonstrating to community members an understanding of the ways that language can make people feel—whether included and valued, excluded and unwelcome, or somewhere in between. Choosing to use (or not use) inclusive language and methods of communicating can have a significant impact on the depth, frequency, and duration of each stakeholder’s involvement in your planning or visioning process.



## Brownfield-to-Park Transformation



Dr. Nina Scarito Park, Lawrence, MA



## Questions?

Groundwork USA Equitable Development / Brownfields Planning Resources:

<https://groundworkusa.org/ta-services/equitable-development-brownfields-planning/>

Contact [adi@groundworkusa.org](mailto:adi@groundworkusa.org) for more details on technical assistance.

