

Brownfields Redevelopment & Community Empowerment

The Equitable Brownfields Redevelopment event introduced practical tools and strategies that brownfield community leaders, advocates, practitioners, and residents can use to prevent displacement and expand communities' opportunities for wealth-building, health and well-being, environmental justice, and ultimately, empowerment through equitable redevelopment practices. The strategies outlined in this discussion guide are based on some of [UPROSE](#) and the [A. Philip Randolph Institute San Francisco \(APRISF\)](#)'s creative approaches to pivot, envision, plan, and operationalize a transition toward a more just and sustainable future in partnership with the communities they serve.



“We have to make sure that solutions are front-line led and that they are created and operationalized by those who are most impacted. It is not something that is just necessary for environmental justice – it is something that climate justice demands.”

- Elizabeth Yeampierre

Tools & Strategies for Community Empowerment & Engagement

Partner with small, local vendors and businesses for all activities involved in the remediation and redevelopment of local brownfields to support jobs and build wealth within the community. For the India Basin Waterfront Park project, APRISF created a bid package for the park's construction work that prioritized a Best Value (BV) criteria rather than the lowest possible bid. [The India Basin Waterfront Park BV contract includes](#) a supplemental questionnaire that allows the city to prioritize local vendors likely to create workforce development pathways, not just for this job but also in the long term. The BV questionnaire asks about experience and approach in working with local business enterprise contractors, local workforce, and community benefits programs.

Provide training and professional development opportunities through the cleanup and redevelopment of local brownfields, and support workforce transition needs to be based on the future use of the site.

An important element of the India Basin Waterfront Park redevelopment project was to engage with other local organizations that had received a [Brownfields Job Training Grant](#) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. APRISF has partnered with the city's Office of Economic and Workforce Development's [CityBuild program](#) for over 12 years and collaborated with City College and labor unions to implement that

program. It has been one of the most successful pathways for the community to get information, training, and access high-quality career opportunities.

Empower front-line-led solutions through early, meaningful, and consistent community participation. Grassroots initiatives organized by the community place residents at the forefront of brownfield reuse. These initiatives can include holding charrettes and workshops at convenient times and in accessible gathering places within neighborhoods, and compensating participating community members for their time and expertise. Public surveys can also amplify community participation and input in the planning, preparation, and post-remediation steps of brownfield redevelopment projects. Equity audits and continued collaboration of different stakeholders and community members post-clean up helps ensure that residents have the power in guiding the future of their communities. To develop the India Basin Equitable Development Plan (EDP), APRISF organized a community-led Leadership Committee including local folks with a diverse range of backgrounds and roles within the community. A fundamental goal of the [EDP Leadership Committee](#) was to help local folks connect how this redevelopment project will impact the larger social, economic, health, and environmental issues that plague their community; and to collaborate on community-led strategies to leverage the India Basin Waterfront redevelopment project to advance their shared, long-term goals.

Discussion Questions

- 1 How can our community partner with local government and community organizations to develop an inclusive planning process that accommodates residents' limited time and capacity?
- 2 What strategies should we explore to steer future housing and economic development? How can we implement these strategies while balancing public and private interests?
- 3 What steps can our community take to build the local economy to support solutions to the issues that have put residents in harm's way because of a long history of environmental racism and injustice?

Other Resources



[Greening Without Gentrification: Learning from Parks-Related Anti-Displacement Strategies Nationwide](#) by Alessandro Rigolon

[NYC's Searchable Property Environmental E-Database \(SPEED\) Mapping Portal](#), a great example of knowledge-sharing practices for brownfield communities

Background and contact information on [U.S. EPA's Technical Assistance to Brownfields \(TAB\) providers](#)

Background and contact information on [U.S. EPA's technical assistance through Groundwork USA](#) to support equitable development in brownfield projects

[Sunset Park BOA Pre-Nomination Study](#), UPROSE's proposed brownfield redevelopment process for Sunset Parks' industrial waterfront site