

Achieving Healthy, Equitable, Walkable Schools: Lessons from Federal, State, and Local Guidelines

B. Suzi Ruhl, JD, MPH

Office of Environmental Justice

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EPA's Voluntary School Siting Guidelines (SSG)

- **Catalyst:** Response to Congress' Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007
- **Function:** evaluate environmental factors to make the best possible school siting decisions
 - Identify desirable environmental attributes
 - Evaluate potential locations
 - Conduct preliminary and comprehensive review

SSG: Importance to Communities

- Children are vulnerable to exposures
- Front end planning saves time and money
- Schools can serve as a catalyst to revitalize overburdened communities



SSG: Importance to Environmental Justice

Starting Point

- Minority and low income children face multiple environmental hazards near schools
- Risk increases from presence of other hazards (*poor nutrition, lack of access to health care and physical activity*)

Progress

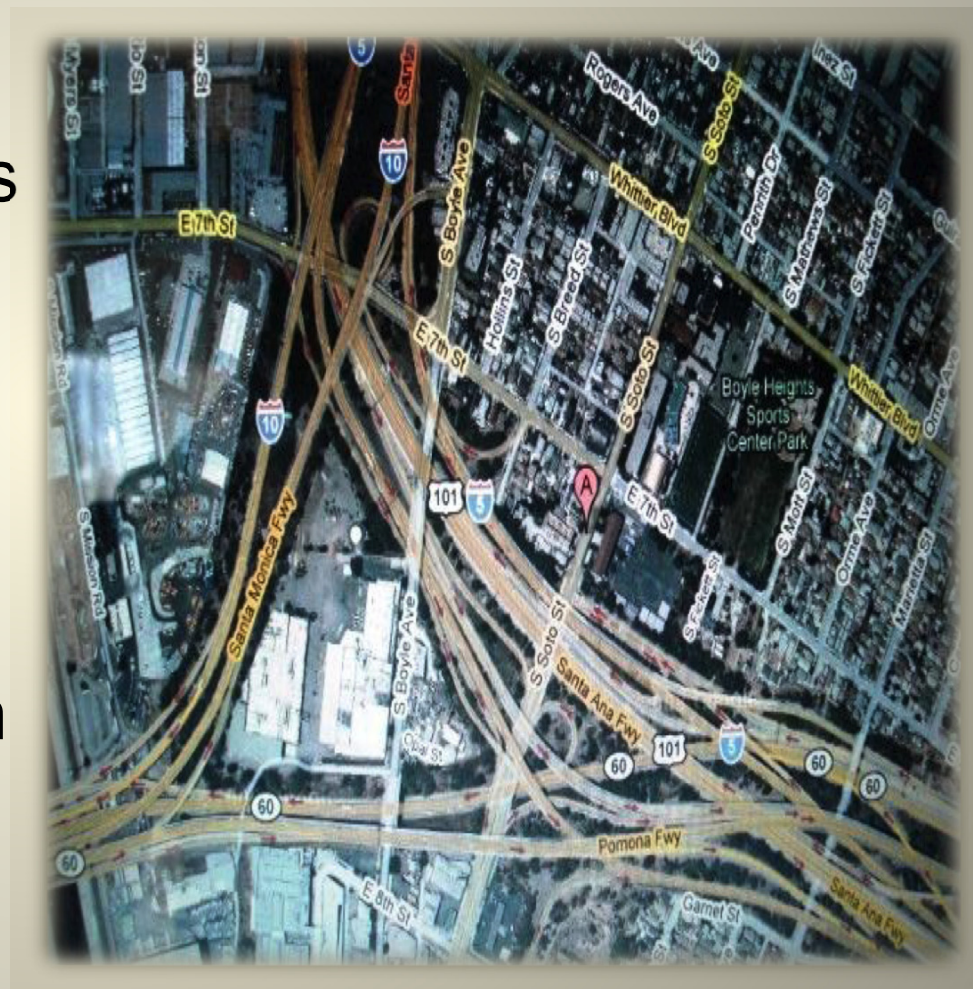
- Environmental health and safety of entire community, including disadvantaged and underserved populations
- Schools located in environments that contribute to the livability, sustainability, and public health of neighborhoods

Success

- ✓ School locations should promote healthy people and healthy behaviors
- ✓ School siting is a catalyst for revitalization of communities overburdened with pollution, disease, poverty and crime

Elements of the SSG: Advancing Healthy and Sustainable Communities

- Sustainability Measures
- On Site Contamination Remediation
- Off Site Pollution Response
- Meaningful Participation



On Site Contamination Remediation

Premise

- No exposure to contamination
- Clean up criteria to residential use
- Maintain Long Term Stewardship (LTS)



Practice

- Environmental Review Process:
 - Assessment
 - Remediation
 - LTS
- Potential environmental/ public health risks explanation
- Data sources on contamination

Off Site Pollution Response

Premise

- Seek to avoid sites that are either on or in close proximity to land uses with pollution
- All hazards are addressed prior to decision to acquire land or use location

Practice

- Screening for potential hazards
- Evaluating impacts of air pollution sources
- Mitigating exposures



Transparency and Meaningful Participation



Practice

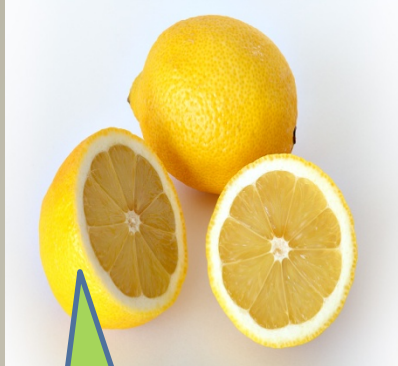
- Design/User Friendly
 - Quick Guide to Environmental Issues
 - Frequent Questions
 - Glossary/Links

- Key Elements
 - Communication plan
 - Accessible information
 - Technical assistance and training

Premise

- Essential prerequisite to effective site review and selection process
- Community engaged throughout process and fully informed
- If no sites without pollution are available, engage community to address contamination

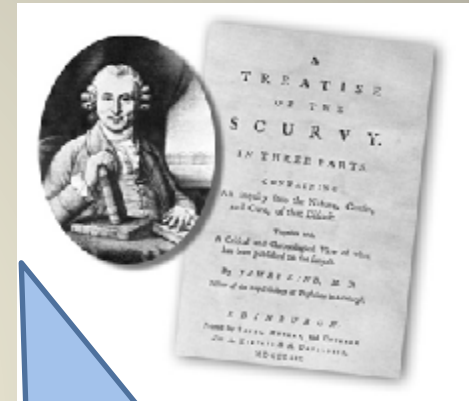
Transformative Framework for Healthy and Sustainable Communities



- On site contamination
- Off site contamination
- No sidewalks, playgrounds



- Principles of EJ
- Smart Growth



- ✓ Revitalize overburdened communities through school siting
- ✓ Address on-off site pollution
- ✓ Implement sustainability measures in disadvantaged neighborhoods

SSG: Main Sections

- Meaningful public involvement
- Environmental siting criteria considerations
- Environmental review process
- Evaluating impacts of nearby sources of air pollution
- Recommendations for states and tribes
- Quick guide to environmental issues