



Smart Growth, Environmental Justice and Equitable Development: Finding the Connections

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Presentation Outline

- What is Environmental Justice
- Evolving Understanding of Environmental Justice
- Lessons for Smart Growth
- Next Steps



What is Environmental Justice

- Disproportionate environmental and health impacts on minority, low-income and tribal populations (EO 12898)
- Fair treatment and meaningful involvement in environmental decision-making (EPA)
- Distribution of environmental harms and benefits
- Healthy and sustainable communities for all people



Evolving Understanding of Environmental Justice - I

- Grassroots Activism
 - Warren County, NC sparked national upsurge
 - “We speak for ourselves”
- Identifying disproportionate impacts
 - Waste sites, toxics, air quality, water
 - Transportation, housing, green space



Evolving Understanding of Environmental Justice - II

- Planning and land Use
 - Houston (Bean v. SW Waste Management)
 - Barrio Logan
- Multiple and Cumulative Impacts
 - Local impacts - physical and social
 - Strong health focus
 - Participatory action research



Evolving Understanding of Environmental Justice - III

- Integration in regulations and public policy
 - Regulatory Development
 - Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice, Partnership for Sustainable Communities
- Comprehensive strategies
 - Green Zones (CEJA), Brownfield Area Wide Planning
- Displacement and Gentrification



Lessons

- Authentic leaders and processes
- Enrich planning process with local assessment tools
 - Community and health impact assessments
- Approaches which build community power, character, and resilience, and avoid displacement



Linking EJ and Smart Growth

- “For far too long, environmental justice and smart growth have been viewed as separate, yet communities across the US are showing that they are complimentary. Bringing them together can help community-based organizations, local planners, and other decision-makers achieve healthy and sustainable communities for all Americans-regardless of race, ethnicity or economic status.”

Lisa Garcia,
Senior Advisor to the Administrator on
Environmental Justice, EPA



Next Steps

- Affirm successes in overburdened communities; Make sure we celebrate their stories.
- Identify ways in which EJ and Smart Growth can work together
 - Comment on the Draft Report
 - Participate in Listening Session on Report