



4 LOCAL LAND USE PLANNING & ZONING GUIDE

PURPOSE

Land use impacts can include exposure to hazardous waste incinerators, petrochemical refineries, lead smelters, solid waste landfills, and disposal sites. Land use impacts can also be linked to lead in home drinking water pipes, pesticides in fields, and stormwater overflows with toxic contaminants. The mere permitting of polluting facilities can lead to long-term exposure of surrounding communities. It is not only inequitable for communities of color and lower-income communities to bear the burden of exposure, but it is also an ongoing public health concern that requires local and state governments to act.

There are several ways communities can influence and address environmental justice concerns related to zoning and land-use planning. It should be primarily used to address and encourage community participation and encourage a comprehensive look at land use planning to promote environmental justice.

This guide is intended to encourage community participation and provide a set of resources for local community members and leaders to use to address land use-related environmental injustices in their communities in the face of climate change.

LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Zoning and land use planning are tools that can help protect communities from pollution. Locally unwanted land uses (LULUs) were the foundation for the environmental justice movement. Zoning has

significant implications for shaping the environment of a community because it defines where sources of pollution and other potentially noxious uses can legally be sited.

HOW IS ZONING RELATED TO WATER POLLUTION?

WACCAMAW RIVER,
SOUTH CAROLINA / MAC
STONE

Land use and water resources are undeniably linked. The type of land use and the intensity of the use will have a strong influence on the quality and quantity of water resources.

More intensively developed areas have a greater level of impervious

surfaces, including roads, parking lots, sidewalks, rooftops, etc. than low-intensity areas. This section of the toolkit provides avenues for engagement and participation to further environmental justice advocacy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. BOLSTER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Meaningful involvement and participation of communities of color and low-income communities in the decision-making process are critical to ensure fair and equitable use of land. Direct community participation in local decision-making reflects a fundamental principle of American democracy. Community participation

in today's land use decision making can counter well-resourced, private interests otherwise favored by the process. Clear public participation processes can empower communities of color and low-income communities to counter the prevailing power imbalance that has been embedded in community planning for centuries.

2. ENCOURAGE "CUMULATIVE IMPACTS" LANGUAGE

Cumulative impacts result when the effects of a land use decision are compounded by previous land use decisions and their negative impacts on a community. It is the combination of these effects, and any resulting environmental degradation, that

should be the focus of cumulative impact analysis. The concept of cumulative impacts considers all disturbances since cumulative impacts result in the compounding of the effects of all actions over time.

3. ENCOURAGE EQUITABLE ZONING POLICIES

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) published a study on various zoning policies that cities across the United States have implemented. The study outlines various strategies and policy directives that mitigate environmental injustices through the use of zoning.

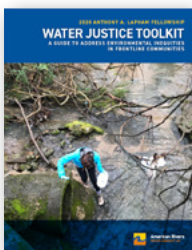
The strategies NRDC identified include:

- **Bans on unwanted land uses**
- **General Environmental Justice Policies**
- **Reviews**
- **Proactive Planning**
- **Targeting Existing Land Uses**
- **Public Health Codes and Policies**

4. PARTICIPATION IN ZONING HEARINGS

Successful and equitable participation in zoning hearings is dependent on how entities prepare and engage in meetings, and how community members effectively participate in the decision-making process.

This section provides recommendations for community members and individuals on how to effectively prepare for and participate in a zoning hearing.



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