

SUSTAINABLE LAND LAB

FROM VACANT TO VITAL

The Sustainable Land Lab is a living laboratory of strategies for creatively reusing vacant land. The goal of the initiative is to draw on the creativity of thinkers and doers in the St. Louis region to propose and then test innovative ideas for the use of vacant land. The Sustainable Land Lab is a joint effort of Washington University in St. Louis and the City of St. Louis.



WHAT IS THE SUSTAINABLE LAND LAB?

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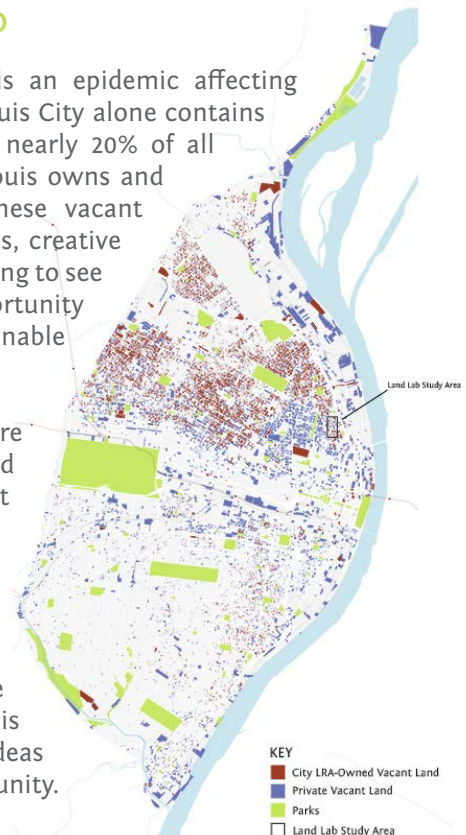
Currently, five demonstration projects are implementing integrated strategies for transforming vacant land into assets that advance sustainability in the community. The five projects in this first phase of the Sustainable Land Lab are located in the Old North St. Louis neighborhood just north of Downtown St. Louis.

The Sustainable Land Lab was initiated through a public competition launched in November 2012, as part of the Sustainable Cities Conference, hosted by Washington University in partnership with the City of St. Louis. The competition winners, chosen from 48 submitting teams, received \$5,000 in seed money and a two-year land lease with which to implement their proposals.

RETHINKING VACANT LAND

The overabundance of vacant land is an epidemic affecting many of America's legacy cities. St. Louis City alone contains approximately 20,000 vacant parcels; nearly 20% of all property in the city. The City of St. Louis owns and manages approximately 10,000 of these vacant parcels. In the face of these challenges, creative thinkers across the country are beginning to see vacant land in a new light: as an opportunity to craft today's cities into the sustainable urban environments of the future.

Civic leaders and residents alike are designing and testing both interim and longterm strategies for using vacant land to manage storm water, to generate revenue, to improve public health, to contribute to community vitality, and to shape today's cities with increasingly sustainable urban development patterns. The Sustainable Land Lab seeks to contribute to this movement by generating and testing ideas that reframe vacant land as an opportunity.



SUSTAINABLE LAND LAB PROJECTS

The projects in the first phase of the Sustainable Land Lab are all located near the Crown Square development in Old North St. Louis. Make a trip to the neighborhood to visit all the sites and to see how activating vacant land can contribute to broader neighborhood revitalization.



MIGHTY MISSISSIPPIANS

With an approach rooted in this regional history, the Mighty Mississippians are dedicated to re-imagining their vacant lot as an asset for learning and sustainability. To promote community and cultivation, the team has created a demonstration garden with native plants, and a platform for educational, celebratory and exploratory cultural programs.



SUNFLOWER+ PROJECT STL

Sunflower+ Project STL is studying the viability, affordability, and potential for remediating previously-developed urban lots through the cultivation of sunflowers and winter wheat. In addition to their aesthetic value, these hyper-accumulators have been shown to extract lead and other contaminants contained in previously developed urban soils.



CHESS POCKET PARK

The Chess Pocket Park seeks to contribute to community sustainability by developing of a small, outdoor chess play area. Woven into the neighborhood's commercial core, the Chess Pocket Park will include several permanent chess tables, benches, and native plantings that create a positive, education-oriented gathering place in the community.



THE BISTRO BOX

The Bistro Box team's vision is to transform a set of surplus shipping containers into a non-profit restaurant industry incubator and community gathering space. This entity, the Box, will offer classes and other services to the local culinary industry, including chefs, restaurant managers, servers and cooking staff.



HUB: HYBRID URBAN BIOSCAPES

HUB is a nectaring garden that provides ecological support to productive landscapes in Old North St. Louis. The project offers two landscapes, each with unique benefits: hardscapes built with concrete pavers support recreational and leisure activity; and perennial plantings of native or adaptive nectaring plants that support pollinators in the neighborhood.

STAY IN TOUCH

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If you have a question or would like to get involved, contact Phil Valko, Director of Sustainability at Washington University in St. Louis at sustainablelandlab.wustl.edu.



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