

SITES GUIDING PRINCIPLES



These principles informed the development of specific and measurable criteria for site sustainability, and can also be applied to the land design and development process.

Do no harm. Make no changes to the site that will degrade the surrounding environment. Promote sustainable design projects on sites where previous disturbance or development presents an opportunity to regenerate ecosystem services through sustainable design.

Apply the precautionary principle. Be cautious in making decisions that could threaten human and environmental health. Some actions can cause irreversible damage. Examine a full range of alternatives (including no action), and be open to contributions from all potentially affected parties.

Design with nature and culture. Create and implement designs that are responsive to economic, environmental, and cultural conditions and to the local, regional, and global context.

Use a decision-making hierarchy of preservation, conservation, and regeneration. Maximize the benefit of ecosystem services by preserving existing environmental features, conserving resources in a sustainable manner, and regenerating lost or damaged ecosystem services

Provide regenerative systems as intergenerational equity. Provide future generations with a sustainable environment supported by regenerative systems and endowed with regenerative resources.

Support a living process. Continuously re-evaluate assumptions and values, and adapt to demographic and environmental change.

Use a systems thinking approach. Understand and value the relationships in an ecosystem. Use an approach that reflects and sustains ecosystem services and re-establishes the integral and essential relationship between natural processes and human activity.

Use a collaborative and ethical approach. Encourage direct and open communication among colleagues, clients, manufacturers, and users to link long-term sustainability with ethical responsibility.

Maintain integrity in leadership and research. Implement transparent and participatory leadership; develop research with technical rigor; and communicate new findings in a clear, consistent, and timely manner.

Foster environmental stewardship. In all aspects of land development and management, foster an ethic of environmental stewardship—an understanding that responsible management of healthy ecosystems improves the quality of life for present and future generations.