



ROCKLAND P.L.U.S.

PLANNING LAND USE
WITH STUDENTS



A unique program for high school students from across the county provided by Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University, Keep Rockland Beautiful, and Rockland Conservation & Service Corps, St. Thomas Aquinas College, Rockland Economic Development Corporation

“ I love P.L.U.S. because it represents the real-world application of everything students are learning in school. P.L.U.S. is powerful because students who participate better understand how everything is connected – this is not always clear to students during a school day because of the way we compartmentalize learning. ”

**-- Tom Mullane
Teacher, Pearl River HS**

Since 2005, Rockland P.L.U.S. has provided high school students throughout Rockland County with a special hands-on educational experience planning for sustainable development in their own communities. Youth learn how they can be a part of shaping the future with a balance of Social Connections, Economic Opportunity and Environmental Sensitivity (S.E.E.). Along the way they learn about a host of career opportunities, while discovering their own leadership skills and potential.

Each year, high school youth enrolled in Environmental Science and Public Policy classes in school districts throughout the county participate in Rockland P.L.U.S. Many then take part in the program’s culminating symposium where they work collaboratively with peers to envision and map out redevelopment for a local site. They are guided by 40+ professional mentors with backgrounds in everything from municipal planning to engineering to LEED design.

3 CLASSROOM WORKSHOPS @ EACH SCHOOL

Rockland P.L.U.S. begins with three classroom workshops held in participating high schools and conducted by Educators from Keep Rockland Beautiful and Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University. These workshops engage students in discussions on the features of a healthy, livable community for all ages and stages of life. They consider their future and how changes in climate might affect Rockland's resources. Students are introduced to sustainable planning concepts, exploring the impact that land-use has on the environment, quality of life, local economy and community fabric.

The focus then turns to envisioning and mapping out a local site for redevelopment, with consideration of the full range of its potential impacts and implications. Students incorporate specific examples of 'green' building design and infrastructure in their plans.

SYMPOSIUM @ St. Thomas Aquinas College

Participants then present their plans during a full-day symposium, exchanging ideas and gathering feedback from 40+ professional mentors who come from a wide variety of backgrounds and have all grappled with the issues facing sustainable planning.

A break-out session in the afternoon mixes students from different schools into groups charged with re-envisioning a local site. Applying some of their newly acquired concepts, they present their ideas to an audience of their peers to round out the day.

Rockland P.L.U.S. builds bridges between schools, groups and communities by mixing students from different school districts together and providing a structure for the students to share perspectives on community issues.

CURRICULUM ONLINE

The program's curriculum materials and resources are made available to teachers and students on the Rockland P.L.U.S. website <http://www.ldeo.columbia.edu/plus/>.



"I enjoyed being able to bounce ideas off of my mentors and peers to create an out of the box plan that could actually be created someday."

– Student, Tappan Zee High School

"It feels good that I can take part in planning something that benefits my community." – Student, Nanuet High School

"I really like learning from real professionals." – Student, Suffern HS

"It was inspiring to watch the students get engaged and work through complex challenges municipalities face with increasing populations and the need for green innovative solutions to transportation obstacles."

– John Behan, Mentor / Behan Planning & Design



Students focus on green and community-enhancing features as they redesign a local site

Presentations are then made to 40+ local professionals who act as mentors at Symposium



Groups made with a mix of local schools present new plans at the end of the day

ROCKLAND P.L.U.S. is offered free of charge to all schools

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