COURSE DESCRIPTION
Students study how patterns of land use have changed over time and the ways in which present-day land use are not sustainable. They learn about options for green building site use and selection, and how site and landscape design can maximize natural benefits. Finally, they examine the ways in which sustainable sites safeguard the surrounding environment, conserve resources, and promote healthy living and working spaces. The hands-on audit brings students outdoors to photograph key areas of their school site. They study various aspects of the site (i.e. amount of impervious surface) to make recommendations to improve stormwater management, transportation policies, passive heating and cooling capabilities, and more.

Lesson 1: Past to Present
In this lesson, students investigate a variety of land use maps in order to understand how we interact with landscapes. Students analyze how these land uses have changed over time, as well as the impacts of these changes.

Lesson 2: Changes in Perspectives; Changes in Behaviors
In this lesson, students research historical figures who played significant roles in creating environmental change in the United States. Students participate in a press conference by either acting as a historical figure, public relations agent, or reporter.

Lesson 3: Rethinking Land Use
In this lesson, students examine smart growth case studies and then apply their knowledge to plan smart growth strategies for their community.

Lesson 4: Site Survey
In this lesson, students are introduced to major aspects of sustainable sites and then study these aspects in their school site. Students take photos and notes for the site and analyze the evidence they collect.

Lesson 5: Creating Beneficial Landscapes
In this lesson, students explore different sustainable landscaping techniques. Students then apply one of these strategies by designing their own sustainable landscape feature for their school.

Lesson 6: Working With Stormwater
In this lesson, students investigate different methods of stormwater management and propose how to implement them while touring the school grounds.
Lesson 7: Building to Save Energy

In this lesson students learn about passive solar design techniques that optimize heat gain in a building. They apply these techniques in an experiment where they redesign a model building. Students monitor their experiment over several days to determine its effectiveness.

Lesson 8: Rooftop Design Competition

In this lesson, students participate in a rooftop design competition in order to learn how people can make more sustainable choices. They explore sustainable alternatives to traditional rooftop materials and incorporate those into an original design.

Lesson 9: Maintaining Your Site Sustainably

In this lesson, students examine the use of chemicals in site management and their ecological impacts. Students analyze specific site management issues and determine the most sustainable solutions.

Lesson 10: School Site Audit

In this lesson, students learn how to measure distances by pacing. They then apply this understanding to conducting a thorough site audit that considers site management, stormwater, building orientation, landscaping, and transportation.

Lesson 11: School Site Audit - Recommendations

In this lesson, students compile and analyze their site audit research. Then, using their understanding of sustainable site design and their site audit results, students brainstorm and compose their recommendations.