



Brownfields Program Achievements Linked to Early Success

Brownfields Program

In 1993, EPA established the Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative, a pilot program through which local governments could apply for federal funds to inventory and assess brownfields and create the partnerships necessary to address barriers to reuse. Through the Initiative, EPA awarded its first Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot Award to Cuyahoga County, Ohio, in 1993. In 1994, EPA awarded Brownfields Assessment Pilots to Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Richmond, Virginia. The success of these early pilots is demonstrated through the Program’s expansion; EPA has since awarded 880 assessment grants totaling more than \$225 million, 202 revolving loan fund grants totaling \$186.7 million, and 238 cleanup grants totaling \$42.7 million. On average, EPA has found that every public dollar spent on brownfields leverages \$2.50 in private investment and every acre of brownfields reused saves 4.5 acres of greenspace.

While these impressive figures offer one measure of EPA’s Brownfields Program success, the stories of communities that have demonstrated economic revitalization, improved institutional capacity, and strengthened redevelopment processes also illustrate the wide-reaching impact of brownfields restoration. For Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Bridgeport, Connecticut; and Richmond, Virginia—the first recipients of EPA Brownfields funding—the benefits are measurable and lasting.

Cuyahoga County, Ohio: Continuous Redevelopment Achievements
Cuyahoga County has long been associated with industrialization and now has more than 40,000 acres designated at a higher risk for environmental contamination. Today, the county has an estimated inventory of 1,800 brownfields covering more than 4,600 acres. By 2015, Cuyahoga County will become the first fully developed county in Ohio, leaving no alternative but redevelopment of its brownfields.

Recognizing the need to assess, clean up, and redevelop brownfields to improve the economic climate within Cuyahoga County, EPA awarded the first ever Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot to the County in 1993. Targeting three brownfields, the Pilot award proved very effective. One property, the Sunar Hauserman project, leveraged \$4.2 million in public and private funds for environmental cleanup and property improvements. The site became a home for several new businesses that provided 181 jobs and generated more than \$1 million in annual revenue.

The Pilot allowed the Cuyahoga County Department of Development to demonstrate concrete results associated with brownfields cleanups, such as increased tax revenue and the redevelopment of blighted property, to local officials. In response, the Board of County

continued ►►



The Ballpark at Harbor Yard, formerly the Jenkins Valve site, in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

JUST THE FACTS:

- Since the Brownfields Program’s inception, EPA has awarded 880 assessment grants totaling more than \$225 million, 202 revolving loan fund grants totaling \$186.7 million, and 238 cleanup grants totaling \$42.7 million.
- On average, EPA has found that every public dollar spent on brownfields leverages \$2.50 in private investment and every acre of brownfields reused saves 4.5 acres of pristine greenspace.
- As of July 2006, EPA Brownfields grants had leveraged approximately \$8.5 billion in additional assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment funding from the public and private sectors, and leveraged more than 39,000 jobs.

“The best part of receiving EPA funding is that we clean up contaminated property, redevelop it for productive use, and put it back on the tax rolls... [Bridgeport has advanced] light years beyond where it was 13 years ago [in its ability to address brownfields]”.

—Richard McHugh,
Senior Economic Development Associate
City of Bridgeport, Connecticut

Commissioners issued a \$15 million bond establishing the Brownfield Redevelopment Fund. The Fund combines funding from the original bond with local, state, and federal sources to assess and clean up brownfields. Up to 45 percent of the funding can be designated as a forgivable loan to level the playing field to make development on brownfields cost competitive with untouched greenfields.

Cuyahoga County received one Revolving Loan Fund Pilot and four grants from EPA between 1997 and 2006. The County has evaluated, refined, and shared its brownfields redevelopment strategies, becoming a mentor to communities seeking similar results. After extending the 45 percent forgiveness provision of its Brownfield Redevelopment Fund to private entities, the County saw the number of brownfields projects that received funding double between 2004 and 2005 and maintain that higher level in 2006. Tracey Nichols, the County's Assistant Director for Economic Development, explains, "It is critically important to reevaluate and evolve our program, as well as have access to funding, to guide companies through the brownfields redevelopment process."

From 1993 to 2006, funding leveraged from EPA grants totaled \$8.45 million in Cuyahoga County. With an increase in property values of \$15.5 million and annual property taxes of \$563,000 attributed to brownfields cleanups between 1993 and 2006, Cuyahoga County has demonstrated marked and continuous achievements in brownfields redevelopment.

Bridgeport, Connecticut: Growing Institutional Capacity

Between 1984 and 1994, Bridgeport lost approximately 50 percent of its manufacturing base, and industrial employment has dropped steadily in each of the last three decades. Many businesses abandoned the city, leaving behind hundreds of acres that remained unused due to the presence or threat of contamination.

To assist Bridgeport with overcoming its legacy of contaminated land, EPA awarded the city a Brownfields Assessment Pilot in 1994. Through this Pilot and subsequent efforts, the city established an inventory of more than 200 brownfields. For one of these sites, the Jenkins Valve property, the city leveraged \$14 million from private, city, and state sources to clean up and redevelop the site into the Ballpark at Harbor Yard, a 5,500-seat ballpark for the Bridgeport Bluefish independent league baseball team. The property is now a welcoming gateway to the city, replacing a former eyesore. Through this project alone, the city leveraged 361 jobs, 68 of which are permanent.

Bridgeport has also received supplemental assistance funding from EPA, a Revolving Loan Fund Pilot, and six Brownfields grants; two additional grants were announced in 2006. In total, EPA funding has helped to leverage more than 500 jobs and \$73 million for cleanup and redevelopment. Bridgeport has significantly refined its institutional capacity to redevelop brownfields, resulting in faster and more targeted cleanup efforts, as well as helping to make Bridgeport a front-runner in brownfields cleanup in New England. The City of Bridgeport was one of the first in the nation to seek local input and involve multiple stakeholders in the redevelopment process, to revitalize whole communities rather than parcels of land. Richard McHugh, a Bridgeport Senior Economic Development Associate, credits EPA with helping Bridgeport "advance light-years beyond where it was 13 years ago" in its ability to tackle brownfields development projects. "The best part of receiving EPA funding," he explains, "is that we clean up contaminated property, redevelop it for productive use, and put it back on the tax rolls."

Richmond, Virginia: Leader in Outreach, Process, and Collaboration

Richmond, Virginia, has experienced disinvestment and decline in its older industrial areas and neighboring communities, leaving vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial properties behind. Richmond's Real Estate Services Office estimates that there are 16 large and nearly 100 smaller brownfields, encompassing 190 acres in the city. In 2005, the Office projected that the redevelopment of these properties could result in approximately \$100 million in tax revenues and 1,000 new full-time jobs.

In 1994, EPA selected the City of Richmond as a National Brownfields Assessment Pilot recipient. The Pilot focused on developing a means to inventory and market its brownfields and identify and mitigate financial barriers to redevelopment. These initial efforts were realized when the City of Richmond performed 15 Phase I site assessments as well as 7 Phase II and specialized site assessments under the umbrella of a 1997 Brownfields Pilot Site Assessment Grant. An additional four Phase I assessments were

continued ►►

performed under a 2004 Brownfields Site Assessment Grant for Petroleum sites. These assessments have provided Richmond with a growing inventory of site information on the City's brownfields properties.

The City of Richmond has also become a state leader in petroleum-related brownfields redevelopment following its receipt of a 2004 EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant for petroleum. The resulting process became the model for the Virginia Petroleum Storage Tank Fund Reimbursement Guidance Manual, providing uniform guidance to state regional offices. Andrew Kreider, an EPA Brownfields Project Officer, describes Richmond's process leadership as a testament to EPA Pilots: "Richmond built up its system and is now leading other grantees throughout Virginia."

Richmond, under the leadership of Mayor L. Douglas Wilder, has further streamlined its overall brownfields redevelopment process by capitalizing on its inventory of assessed sites and using a layered incentive package. The city is able to redevelop more brownfields each year by "talking with businesses early in the redevelopment process and providing benefits that cannot be found at greenfield sites," explains Lisbeth Coker, of the Richmond Department of Economic Development. Overall, Richmond's brownfields restoration efforts have leveraged more than \$77 million and 300 jobs. EPA's support has allowed the city to develop outreach, process, and collaboration strengths that will continue to lead Richmond and other Virginia cities to successful brownfields redevelopment.

CONTACTS:

Formaenifomationcontact
U.S. EPA-REGION 1 -(617) 573-5770
U.S. EPA-REGION 3 -(215) 597-9800
U.S. EPA-REGION 5 -(312) 353-8510

Visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

Progress Made Within the Brownfields Program

Since its inception in 1995, EPA's Brownfields Program has grown into a proven, results-oriented program that has changed the way contaminated property is perceived, addressed, and managed. As of July 2006, EPA funding had leveraged approximately \$8.5 billion in additional funding and more than 39,000 jobs. Through the 2002 passage of the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields

Revitalization Act, known as the Brownfields Law, many of the policies tested through the Program's Pilot projects were passed into law. In addition to increasing authorized funding for Brownfields Grants to \$250 million annually, the Law expanded the definition of brownfields to include mine-scarred lands and properties contaminated by controlled substances, as well as the entities, activities, and properties eligible for funding—including lower-risk, petroleum-contaminated sites.

Between 2002 and 2004, the Brownfields Program established sector-based initiatives to focus on Portfields, mine-scarred lands, Railfields, USTfields (underground storage tanks), and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Brownfields prevention. By focusing on similar types of sites within each sector, these initiatives are enabling EPA to promote brownfields cleanup in economically critical sectors, facilitate information sharing, and speed redevelopment of these properties. Sector-based initiatives replicate the type of long-term success seen in early Pilot communities, leveraging existing networks, institutional capacity, and proven process improvements. These initiatives help promote sustainable community capacity to redevelop brownfields, which is a key factor to achieving lasting brownfields redevelopment efforts.

EPA's Brownfields Program will continue to be a significant component of the local brownfield redevelopment process because of its ability to leverage measurable and significant benefits. With its proven history of success and the passage of the Brownfields Law, the Program has reduced or eliminated many barriers to redevelopment, and more organizations are willing to address brownfields than ever before. Since 1995, the Program has leveraged the cleanup of nearly 600 brownfields across the country.

With a growing national focus on revitalization, brownfields redevelopment has become an important tool for cities to return idle or underused property to productive use. In particular, historically industrial cities that have endured long-term economic decline in recent decades are funding new opportunities in brownfields redevelopment. As early grant recipients Cuyahoga County, Bridgeport, and Richmond demonstrate, EPA funding has been a critical component to developing self-sustaining local programs that can change a city's legacy of industrial contamination from a hindrance into an opportunity for economic revitalization. For more information on EPA's Brownfields Program, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>.