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Environmental
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Solid Waste
and Emergency
Response (5105)

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www.epa.gov/brownfields/



EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

LaPorte, IN

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, and safely clean up brownfields to promote their sustainable reuse. Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years, with additional funding provided for greenspace) to test assessment models and facilitate coordinated assessment and cleanup efforts at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels; and job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years) to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund program (each funded up to \$1,000,000 over five years) to provide financial assistance for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of LaPorte for a Brownfields Assessment Pilot. The city also was selected to receive additional funding for assessments at brownfields properties to be used for greenspace purposes. LaPorte (population 21,515) is 40 minutes from South Bend and an hour from Chicago in the center of LaPorte County in northwest Indiana. The city plans to redevelop five parcels encompassing more than 100 acres and two abandoned railroad rights-of-way.

Over the past four years, the city has struggled to redevelop the targeted properties, which form a barrier of brownfields that separate formerly cohesive neighborhoods from the rest of the city and has lowered the values of nearby homes. The per capita income of residents in the two neighborhoods surrounding the redevelopment area is nearly 25 percent lower than that of the city-wide population, and the median home value is approximately 17 percent lower than home values in the rest of the city.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



LaPorte, Indiana

Date of Announcement:
April 2001

Amount: \$200,000

Greenspace: \$50,000

Profile: The city seeks to assess five parcels encompassing more than 100 acres and two abandoned railroad rights-of-way as part of a plan to return these properties to active use and help revitalize two neighborhoods that have been negatively affected by brownfields.

Contacts:

City of LaPorte
(219) 362-8260

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 5
(312) 886-7576

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

OBJECTIVES

Through this Pilot project, the city plans to complete subsurface investigations, conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments, and identify cleanup design options for these sites. The city also will conduct public outreach to gain community input regarding property redevelopment options. LaPorte anticipates potential redevelopment of the former landfill and portions of the target parcels as greenspace for passive recreational use along an existing park and nearby lake. The greenspace also would serve as an integral part of a new housing development near the city's old central business district. Affordable family housing, commercial businesses, and improved transportation opportunities (including pedestrian and bicycling trails) are potential end uses for these properties.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments of the five properties;
- Preparing an initial environmental conditions report based on assessment results to use in further planning and to identify preliminary cleanup options;
- Organizing neighborhood workshops and undertaking a city-wide design charrette to draft a conceptual plan for redevelopment of the project area;
- Completing a final redevelopment plan.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.