



# National Brownfields Assessment Pilot *Cook County, IL*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

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, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots 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.

## OVERVIEW

EPA has selected Cook County, in partnership with the City of Harvey, as a Brownfields Pilot. The concentration of former industrial facilities that are known or suspected to be contaminated, as well as the presence of landfills, have combined to create blighted areas in Harvey. These areas are characterized by deteriorating housing and infrastructure. In addition, a number of the properties are tax delinquent, resulting in declining tax revenues and increasing municipal tax rates to fund basic municipal services. The city is struggling to revitalize its industrial and commercial base, improve housing, and repair its aging infrastructure. Seeking an innovative way to combat these problems, the city joined four neighboring suburban Chicago communities (Dixmoor, Ford Heights, Phoenix, and Robbins) to form the South Suburban Enterprise Communities (SSEC), which is dedicated to the economic redevelopment of the area. The SSEC was designated a federal Enterprise Community in 1995.

The pilot site was selected by the SSEC. It is the former Wyman-Gordon manufacturing facility, a 39-acre parcel, in Harvey. The facility is one of many known or suspected brownfields identified during a survey conducted in 1991. Although developers have expressed some interest in brownfields, such as the

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



Cook County, Illinois

**Date of Award:**  
April 1997

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Site Profile:** The pilot site is a former crankshaft manufacturing facility occupying approximately 39 acres in the City of Harvey.

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

Wyman-Gordon manufacturing facility, redevelopment within the SSEC has not occurred because of concerns about contamination, liability, and unknown remediation costs.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Cook County's goals are to expand its economic base, bring in new businesses, and create new jobs. Redeveloping brownfields is a critical step toward achieving these goals. The objectives of the pilot are to conduct a site assessment of the Wyman-Gordon manufacturing facility, involve the community and other stakeholders in redevelopment planning, and begin planning efforts to leverage funds for cleanup through partnerships with developers and investors.

## **ACTIVITIES**

Activities planned as part of this pilot include:

- Completing a site assessment of the pilot site;
- Implementing community outreach and education programs to involve the community and other stakeholders in redevelopment planning;
- Planning outreach activities for cleanup and redevelopment, including efforts to leverage redevelopment incentive programs (e.g., the Cook County No Cash Bid Program, the Tax Increment Financing District Program, and tax incentives offered through state and federal enterprise zone programs); and
- Working with community colleges and employment training organizations to link redevelopment of brownfields with job training and business opportunities.

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