



National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

Elmira, NY

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 the City of Elmira as a Brownfields Pilot. Since 1970, Elmira has lost more than 10,000 manufacturing jobs as industrial employers abandoned urban brownfields sites. These job losses have resulted in a decreased population, increased neighborhood disinvestment and visual blight, increased numbers of vacant sites, and a growing percentage of tax-exempt property. Although the city has implemented economic recovery measures, little redevelopment of brownfields has occurred. Environmental assessment and cleanup are required before new jobs can be created at under-used or vacant sites.

Elmira has acquired a number of industrial properties, totaling about 50 acres, through abandonment and foreclosure. Eight of these properties, which range in size from 2.4 to 19 acres, have been selected for consideration as potential brownfields redevelopment sites for the pilot. Past land use of the pilot properties (including railway, dry cleaning, and foundry operations) indicate the potential for contamination. Redevelopment efforts are expected to be facilitated by tax and non-tax incentives and other innovative financing tools offered through the city's status as a state Economic Development Zone. For example, Elmira will examine the feasibility of funding a stop-loss insurance program to cover private remediation costs in excess of cleanup estimates.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Elmira, New York

Date of Award:
April 1997

Amount: \$200,000

Site Profile: The pilot will target potentially contaminated industrial or commercial sites.

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

OBJECTIVES

Elmira's objective is to assess, plan for cleanup, and redevelop brownfields sites within the city. Successful revitalization of brownfields sites is anticipated to result in increased employment, restored property tax revenues, and improved quality of life in affected neighborhoods. Objectives for the pilot are to complete preliminary site assessments at up to six sites and detailed assessments at up to four sites.

ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this pilot include:

- Selecting a focused number of brownfields sites by a technical advisory team composed of representatives of the Chemung County Health Department, local and state environmental and economic development agencies, and potential development firms;
- Conducting preliminary environmental assessments at the selected brownfields;
- Obtaining technical advice from environmental and legal consultants, as needed; and
- Planning for cleanup under the State Voluntary Cleanup Program.

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