



National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

Knoxville, TN

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

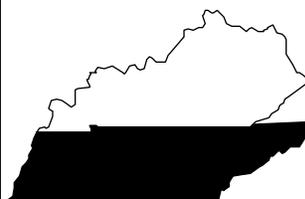
EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that 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.

BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Knoxville for a Brownfields Pilot. In the Fall of 1992, the City of Knoxville's Department of Economic Development requested assistance from the Tennessee Valley Authority in evaluating the feasibility of alternatives for the redevelopment of Knoxville's Center City Business Park. The study area comprises 566 acres in the center of the City, including many acres of abandoned or under used commercial and industrial property. Approximately 150 acres have been identified as potentially suitable for redevelopment.

Over the past two years, citizens, businesses and community groups, local and State economic development organizations, and academic institutions have assisted the City and the Tennessee Valley Authority in the formulation and development of the Knoxville Center City Business Park Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative. The Brownfields Pilot funds are being used to move forward with their redevelopment plan. Successful assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of this critical area not only has the potential to affect the economic well-being of a large segment of inner-city residents, but also to have a significant impact on the quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Knoxville, Tennessee

Date of Award:
September 1995

Amount: \$200,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets 566 acres in the center of Knoxville, 150 of which have been identified as potentially suitable for redevelopment.

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

OBJECTIVES

Through this brownfields effort, Knoxville will reestablish the inner city as the vibrant center of Knoxville by joining residents, community agencies, and the private sector in a coordinated partnership to revitalize the area. The Pilot plans to accomplish this by planning to develop a portion of the Center City Business Park with a “green” theme including attracting businesses in the recycling, reuse, and manufacturing industries. The strategy includes identifying and assessing environmental contamination, exploring options for businesses to redevelop vacant properties, and working with lenders to provide low interest loans to environmentally friendly companies. The strategy will be developed through an ongoing dialogue between the private sector and local, State, and Federal regulatory agencies on brownfields issues, including establishing criteria to determine when a property is “clean” and what types of use can be permitted on contaminated sites.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Prioritized different areas within the target area, Center City, for ongoing work;
- Set up the Knoxville Brownfields World Wide Web Homepage (<http://www.korrnet.org/Knoxville/brownfields.html>). This site includes information on the study area, development events, and links to other resources, including the City’s and EPA’s homepage; and
- Conducted a neighborhood tour of West View to identify concerns of the community as related to brownfields sites and design issues. The findings were brought to the redevelopment team for incorporation in a design team concept.

The Pilot is:

- Investigating sites that are believed to be contaminated, and determining the most appropriate and cost-effective methods of remediation;
- Expanding and improving the City’s community involvement plan by developing a community outreach program on Brownfields;

- Developing a redevelopment plan that includes a land acquisition, assemblage, relocation, and clearance program for the City Center area;
- Developing programs to identify ways to assist prospective purchasers with environmental and legal issues, identifying additional funding sources for redevelopment, and attracting private investment in the brownfields study area;
- Meeting with current property owners, realtors, prospective buyers, and lending institutions to determine how to expedite environmental revitalization; and
- Developing an implementation plan to identify ways to ensure that the cleanup activities do not aggravate existing environmental threats and to determine the potentially responsible parties.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Knoxville Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- Local educational institutions and community development groups are working together to develop a skilled workforce within neighboring inner-city communities as an employment base for current and future businesses in the project area.
- East Tennessee Design Center and the University of Tennessee are developing design guidelines for the Center City area. The Urban Site Design class from the University of Tennessee’s Graduate Planning program is focusing on Center City redevelopment to produce a coordinated approach to development through the use of Urban Site design criteria.
- The City is receiving assistance from the Tennessee Valley Authority to assess the feasibility of a small business incubator in the Center City area.
- Working with the business community on the identification of specific property needs to encourage relocation in the brownfields areas.