



# Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

## Laredo, TX

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, 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. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; 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 programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans 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 selected the City of Laredo for a Brownfields Pilot. Laredo is the hub of international freight movement between the United States and the Republic of Mexico. The area's predominantly Hispanic population is ranked among the poorest in the nation. The city's industries and land uses remained virtually unregulated until the 1980s, resulting in many environmental abuses that the city has had limited knowledge of and scant resources to effectively address.

The city's Pilot work plan originally planned to help investigate, cleanup, and redevelop the Paso del Indio, a 100-acre city-owned property that lies between downtown Laredo and the Rio Grande River. In February 1996, the city, with the assistance of EPA Region 6 and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, investigated the Paso del Indio property. This investigation indicated that the property was not contaminated. Based on this finding, the city has refocused the Pilot efforts to inventory and assess potential brownfields sites, with special emphasis on sites along the riverfront.

## PILOT SNAPSHOT



Laredo, Texas

**Date of Announcement:**  
September 1995

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Profile:** The Pilot targets properties within the City of Laredo, with special emphasis on waterfront sites.

### Contacts:

City of Laredo  
(210) 791-7441

U.S. EPA - Region 6  
(214) 665-6780

Visit the EPA Region 6 Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/bfpages/sfbfhome.htm>

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

The objectives of the Pilot are to help create a green corridor between the U.S. - Mexican border on the Rio Grande and facilitate commercial development. The reuse of selected brownfields is expected to spur economic redevelopment on the riverfront and increase interest in environmental cleanup, crime prevention, and improvement of the Rio Grande's water quality.

The involvement and active participation of area stakeholders, including financial institutions, downtown businesses, hospitality and tourism operations, adjacent residential neighborhoods, the railroads, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Customs Service, International Boundary and Water Commissions, and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, will be key to accomplishing these objectives.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

*The Pilot has:*

- Completed an inventory of 13 properties and targeted 10 of these.

*The Pilot is:*

- Conducting outreach to current property owners, realtors, prospective buyers, and lending institutions to educate them about the city's brownfields effort, with the objective of expediting environmental revitalization;
- Conducting further public meetings to disseminate information and gain public input for the brownfields process;
- Developing a Pilot-wide comprehensive plan for adaptive reuse, emphasizing employment, long-term environmental education, and environmental justice to moderate- and low-income residents; and
- Planning site history documentation, cleanup plan development, and categorical listings of potential uses and users for the Los Altos del Rio site.

## LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Laredo Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities, including the following:

- EPA and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission support the city's program by conducting sampling and analysis activities.