



Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Pilot

City of El Paso, TX

BACKGROUND

El Paso (population 564,000) is the fifth largest city in Texas and is located in west Texas on the border of Mexico. The downtown business district and nearby neighborhoods have suffered steady economic declines since the 1960s. The decline, common to many cities in the country, has resulted in the loss of thousands of manufacturing jobs in El Paso and the abandonment of manufacturing facilities throughout the city. Many sites in the area are abandoned or underused properties associated with former industrial, railroad, or other uses with suspected contamination. El Paso is one of the poorest urban areas in the country, with a 7% unemployment rate, a 34% poverty rate, and a 77% minority population. Downtown El Paso lies within a federal Empowerment Zone and a state Enterprise Zone.

El Paso cannot afford to continue stretching public infrastructure further from the city's center. In response to urban sprawl, the city and the El Paso Empowerment Zone Corporation have entered into a partnership to create the El Paso Brownfields Redevelopment Project. The El Paso Brownfields Redevelopment Project is one of a number of strategies developed by the city and its many community partners to promote infill development and encourage revitalization of the historic economic, cultural, and residential center of the community.

BCRLF OBJECTIVES

The goal of the El Paso Brownfields Redevelopment Project Pilot is to return brownfields in high-priority areas of the city to productive use through identification and assessment of potential brownfields and the appropriate cleanup and redevelopment of these sites.

The BCRLF Pilot will focus on the El Paso Empowerment Zone, which includes downtown El Paso and the central

PILOT SNAPSHOT



City of El Paso, TX

Date of Announcement:
May 2002

Amount: \$1,000,000

BCRLF Target Area:
El Paso Empowerment Zone

Contacts:

El Paso Department of Economic Development (915) 541-4680	Region 6 Brownfields Coordinator (214) 665-6688
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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:
www.epa.gov/brownfields

core of the city, referred to as El Corazón de El Paso (the Heart of El Paso). BCRLF Pilot funds will be used in conjunction with the El Paso City/County MultiBank Revolving Loan Fund, a successful cooperative venture between local government and a six-bank consortium to address the capital access needs of small businesses. Potential borrowers are expected to include small and

medium sized businesses, nonprofit community developers, and local government agencies.

FUND STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

The City of El Paso is the cooperative agreement recipient and will serve as the lead agency and site manager. The El Paso Department of Public Works will serve as the site manager. The El Paso Department of Economic Development will serve as the fund manager.

LEVERAGING OTHER RESOURCES

The BCRLF will provide needed funds to leverage investments by private developers, especially small and medium-sized businesses, interested in being part of the downtown revitalization. The city is creating two tax increment finance districts to support redevelopment efforts in the target communities. Redevelopment projects will benefit from a variety of incentives and tax abatements provided through the federal Empowerment Zone, state Enterprise Zone, and city Tax Abatement Policy.

Use of BCRLF Pilot funds must be in accordance with CERCLA, and all CERCLA restrictions on use of funding also apply to BCRLF funds.