



National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

Richmond, VA

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 Richmond for a Brownfields Pilot. Richmond is considered the birthplace of industrial development in the South. In recent times, however, its older industrial areas and neighboring residential communities have experienced private disinvestment due to environmental risk, among other factors. The results of this disinvestment have included population loss, relatively high percentage of low-moderate income persons, loss of business and industry, and vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial properties.

In January 1993, approximately 5,800 acres of City land in South Richmond were designated by the Commonwealth of Virginia as a State Enterprise Zone. Several other neighborhoods in the East and North sectors of Richmond also meet the Commonwealth's "distress criteria" and include sizable amounts of commercial and industrial properties.

OBJECTIVES

The City of Richmond Office of Economic Development (OED) has focused on brownfields economic redevelopment for several years and has already generated business interest in using or developing sites in targeted areas of the City. The

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Richmond, Virginia

Date of Award:
September 1994

Amount: \$200,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets five sites located within the 5,800 acres of commercial and industrial properties that are throughout the State Enterprise Zones designated in the North and South sections of the City.

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

objective of the Federal support of the City's Brownfields Pilot project is to serve as a catalyst in moving the process of reclaiming vacant business sites forward. The City is initiating its Brownfields Pilot project through the "comprehensive community and human development" concept espoused by the Federal Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community program. The City is seeking to integrate private business investment and reuse of inner-city sites with solutions to crime, housing, education, and health.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Identified five brownfields for further study under the Pilot;
- Reviewed and conducted Phase I and II environmental site assessments at three sites;
- Entered into negotiations with business users at two sites; and
- Conducted pre-development assessments of specific sites to:
 - Isolate environmental mitigation alternatives and costs;
 - Evaluate commercial and industrial market reuse options and potential to inform planning for environmental response;
 - Compare brownfields projects to competing "greenfields" development options in the local marketplace to determine the feasibility of environmental response;
 - Determine financial shortfalls and mitigate barriers toward achieving brownfields redevelopment; and
 - Utilize existing and new financial incentives to stimulate brownfields assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment.

The Pilot is:

- Developing a site-specific property recycling strategy in partnership with current/future site owners and users, government regulatory agencies, and the City's development staff;

- Utilizing Richmond's Neighborhood Teams Process, a citizen empowerment program, to bring host residential communities into the reuse decision making process; and
- Developing and implementing a local program performance evaluation system.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

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

- Collaborating with a pharmaceutical company to make available a 5-acre parcel that is presently occupied by the City of Richmond's ambulance authority and emergency 911 services. Once this site is available, the pharmaceutical company will be able to expand and consolidate its research facility. Construction costs are estimated to be \$50 million and will employ approximately 200 construction workers. At its completion the site will retain 100 jobs and create 300 jobs over the next three years. The two displaced City service offices will probably be relocated at one of the other sites being addressed under the Pilot.
- OED has begun general discussions with EPA's Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Office and the National Association of Minority Contractors to discuss opportunities for environmental training programs for minority businesses located within the City of Richmond. The aim of these efforts is to facilitate the use of local minority services to perform some of the Pilot work.
- OED and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College finalized a curriculum for the community environmental training program for neighborhood residents of the South Enterprise Zone. The first workshop was held in May 1996.
- OED was awarded an EPA Environmental Justice grant in October 1996. This funding will expand the National Environmental Justice Training Foundation training program to include the North and East State Enterprise Zones.