



National Brownfields Assessment Pilot *Sacramento, CA*

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 Sacramento for a Brownfields Pilot. Sacramento, a city of 370,000 people, has experienced growth in the past decade that far outpaces that of other California cities of similar size. Nevertheless, significant amounts of land within Sacramento's developed urban areas remain underutilized because of contamination. Sacramento is home to at least two brownfields that are former railyards listed as California State Superfund sites. Sacramento's recent growth has bypassed these brownfields properties and is leading to the development of prime agricultural land in surrounding areas.

OBJECTIVES

The Sacramento Pilot focuses on developing strategies for brownfields redevelopment that involve the community in making land use decisions to guide the approach to cleanup. The Pilot is also working to forge new relationships among various local and State governmental agencies to improve the efficiency of the post-cleanup process. The lessons learned from this Pilot will be documented to provide guidance that will be shared nationally with local governments on how to facilitate cleanup and redevelopment, and how to initiate similar dialogues in other areas.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Sacramento, California

Date of Award:
September 1995

Amount: \$200,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets four major brownfields sites — two are railyards and two are former military bases.

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

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Developed a draft final Environmental Oversight Program (EOP) manual that details conditions related to hazardous materials that must be satisfied at each step of the City's land use permitting process, and provides protocols for construction activities given the brownfields site's prior contamination;
- Established, in conjunction with the California Department of Toxics Substances Control, an Environmental Oversight Authority that will oversee all aspects of brownfields redevelopment activities to ensure that the requirements of the EOP are satisfied; and
- Prepared a draft guideline for brownfields redevelopment that describes issues faced by local governments when considering redevelopment of a major brownfields site, the way those issues were addressed by the City, and other possible solutions. The guidelines include maintaining local control over land use, enforcing institutional controls, addressing liability concerns, and protecting public health throughout the development process.

The Pilot is:

- Developing a cooperative process among the Federal or State cleanup agencies, the local government, and the community that incorporates local land use objectives at the commencement of the cleanup planning process; and
- Preparing a "redevelopment guideline" that describes issues faced by local governments when considering redevelopment of a major brownfields site, the solutions chosen by Sacramento, and other possible solutions.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

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

- Facilitating new approaches to cleanup and intergovernmental cooperation among local, State, and Federal agencies to lead the cleanup and redevelopment of the 240-acre Southern Pacific Railyard and 100-acre Union Pacific Railyard sites. Thirty-seven acres of the Southern Pacific property have already been cleaned up and the first building is under construction.
- Creating a streamlined process for post-remediation redevelopment that incorporates the enforcement of institutional control in the City's regular land use permitting process, including amendments to the City's mapping, zoning, and building permit ordinances and conditions.