



Brownfields Showcase Community

Los Angeles, CA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

Brownfields are abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination. In May 1997, Vice President Gore announced a Brownfields National Partnership to bring together the resources of more than 15 federal agencies to address local cleanup and reuse issues in a more coordinated manner. This multi-agency partnership has pledged support to 16 "Brownfields Showcase Communities"—models demonstrating the benefits of collaborative activity on brownfields. The designated Brownfields Showcase Communities are distributed across the country and vary by size, resources, and community type. A wide range of support will be leveraged, depending on the particular needs of each Showcase Community.

BACKGROUND

The Brownfields National Partnership has selected the City of Los Angeles as a Brownfields Showcase Community. Los Angeles has thousands of vacant parcels and underused facilities along commercial and industrial corridors with suspected contamination. A study conducted by the city's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) found 344 potentially contaminated sites within a three-mile radius. Because these sites are located on industrially zoned property near major transportation routes, their economic potential is exceptional.

The city evaluated a list of candidate sites based on criteria such as anticipated public benefit, suspected contamination, likelihood of adequate resources for cleanup, and economic viability for development. Two initial properties were chosen, minority population suffers a poverty rate of 40%, and an unemployment rate of 18.4%. One site, located in East Los Angeles, is 20 acres of vacant, contaminated prop-

erty owned by the state, which has already spent \$8 million to remove 40,000 tons of contaminated soil. Additional contamination of heavy metals, pesticides, and other chemicals are preventing redevelopment. The 208-acre SCRIP site is composed of small industrial properties and surrounded by residential developments. Though occupied by 325 small businesses, the site is still blighted and underused. Several parcels are known to be contaminated, which is preventing business owners from securing financing for expansion and remodeling, and which is repelling new business from the area.

Community Profile



Los Angeles, California

The Los Angeles Brownfields Program created an interdepartmental team of city staff with federal support from EPA to identify sites and coordinate resources. Two case study sites have been identified, and \$8 million in state funding has been leveraged for cleanup.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

These two sites are included as part of a large-scale effort by the Los Angeles Brownfields Program to revitalize the inner city. Productive reuses for the city's brownfields include open space, new housing, and educational facilities, all with an emphasis on social and environmental equality. Highlights of Los Angeles' brownfields redevelopment efforts to date include:

- Commissioning a study to determine and compare the financial feasibility of multiple cleanup and redevelopment scenarios, for three “typical” brownfields sites. Among the study’s findings were indications that industrial development, while requiring the greatest public subsidy, would likely produce the most jobs and largest economic output;
- Receiving approval of a \$1 million U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to establish a brownfields revitalization fund;
- Receiving a grant from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to support environmental justice efforts and brownfields redevelopment;
- Being selected as a General Services Administration (GSA) brownfields project city, where federally owned properties and local programs are being layered in a geographic information system (GIS) to identify future brownfields opportunities;
- Recruiting several community groups in brownfields efforts, including the Mothers of East Los Angeles Santa Isabel (MELASI). Founded to oppose one site’s use as a prison, MELASI will now be involved in planning efforts for the site to ensure its use meets the community’s goals and needs; and
- Partnering with the Los Angeles Conservation Corps to facilitate a brownfields training program for at-risk youth.

SHOWCASE COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Los Angeles plans to use the Showcase Communities project to more effectively coordinate funding and other assistance from federal and state sources, which are already being leveraged to address brownfields. At the Prison site, the city is in the final stages of negotiating a two-year agreement with the state to assess the property and recruit a developer. The city is also partnering with the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority to conduct site assessments and cleanup activities at the Prison site. At the SCRIP site, the city is working with a community group, Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles, to develop a shopping center on a portion of the property.

Several other federal programs are also being leveraged to support brownfields redevelopment. Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funds have been used to support the city’s environmental justice program. Other federal partnerships include the Department of Energy’s “Rebuild America” and “Clean Cities” programs, which support economic development through resource efficiency and sustainable development. The lessons learned by Los Angeles’ brownfields program will be developed into recommendations to support the broader goals of fostering local economic development, creating local jobs, and improving the health and quality of life in inner city neighborhoods.

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For more information on the Brownfields Showcase Communities,
visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:

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