



Brownfields Showcase Community

State of Rhode Island/Providence

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 State of Rhode Island/Providence as a Brownfields Showcase Community. Rhode Island's Woonasquatucket River Greenway project is an urban revitalization effort to restore greenspace and stimulate economic investment along the river. Two sites located within the Greenway project are targeted by the EPA Brownfields Pilot, which is managed by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). The first, the six-acre Riverside Mills site, lies at the heart of one of the most distressed neighborhoods in Providence, where 35% of families live in poverty. In 1989, a fire destroyed all but one office building on the property. The site has also been plagued by illegal dumping.

The second site, the nine-acre Lincoln Lace and Braid property, is adjacent to residential neighborhoods and

the 18-acre Merino Park, which closed ten years ago. Nearly 50% of neighboring residents are impoverished. Contamination on this property has spread to the river, and cleanup of the site is necessary to ensure that no further toxins are released into the water.

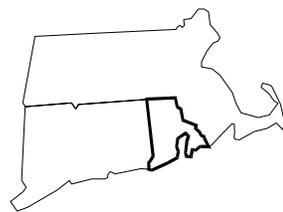
Restoring these two sites is also essential to the economic recovery of their adjacent neighborhoods.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In 1996, RIDEM received a \$200,000 Brownfields Pilot grant from EPA to identify brownfields in the redevelopment area, and to conduct assessments at selected sites. Approximately \$7.3 million has been leveraged for the design and development of the project, which has a total estimate of \$10 million. Highlights of the Greenway Project's redevelopment efforts include:

- Matching the EPA Pilot grant with \$210,000 in state funding;

Community Profile



State of Rhode Island/
Providence

Rhode Island's Greenway Project plans to restore greenspace and stimulate economic reinvestment along the Woonasquatucket River Corridor. \$4.3 million has been leveraged from the City of Providence and the state for this project, which will create a 4.4-mile greenway and bike path along the river.

- Identifying 15 brownfields sites within the Greenway Project area;
- Completing environmental assessments at both the Riverside Mills and Lincoln Lace and Braid sites;
- Completing a cleanup evaluation report for the Riverside Mills site (cleanup costs are estimated at \$1.4 million), and drafting a second report for the Lincoln Lace and Braid property (cleanup costs are estimated at \$1 million);
- Receiving a \$3 million commitment from the City of Providence for the Greenway Project;
- Removing all of the solid waste found on the Riverside Mills site, and demolishing and removing all of the abandoned structures on the Lincoln Lace and Braid property;
- Securing \$1.3 million from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to design and construct a bicycle path that will traverse both sites and link the project area to Waterplace Park;
- Receiving a \$3 million commitment from Providence's mayor and city council, for park and greenspace improvements; and
- Conducting outreach efforts to schools and community centers, enabling more than 300 students to tour the entire Woonasquatucket River Watershed area.

SHOWCASE COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Rhode Island plans to use the Showcase Communities project to support the state's plan to return the Riverside Mills and Lincoln Lace and Braid sites to beneficial use, revitalize distressed areas along the river, and restore pride and well-being to disadvantaged neighborhoods. The cleanup and redevelopment of these two priority sites will likely lead to additional cleanup and redevelopment, while generating interest from private developers that will lead to new employment opportunities. The Greenway Project plans to create a 28,000 square-foot parcel on the Riverside Mills site, as well as a 43,000 square-foot parcel for commercial and/or light industrial development. This site could eventually create up to 100 new jobs. Ultimately, this ecosystem-based project will restore wetlands and greenspaces, and create a new, 4.4-mile greenway along the Woonasquatucket River.

Contacts

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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>