

EPA Brownfields Supplemental Assistance

East Palo Alto, CA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

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. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs 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 awarded the City of East Palo Alto supplemental assistance for its Brownfields Assessment Pilot. East Palo Alto has an ethnically diverse population of approximately 25,000 residents within a 2.5-square-mile area. According to the 1990 Census, community residents are 86 percent minority, including African Americans, Latinos, Pacific Islanders, and Asians. Incorporated in 1983, the city inherited an area with inadequate infrastructure, low sales and property tax revenues, no central business district, and the 130-acre Ravenswood Industrial Area (RIA). The RIA overlooks wetlands and the San Francisco Bay and is located near technology-based Silicon Valley, making it an attractive location for local industries. Redevelopment in the RIA, however, has been hampered by the perception of widespread contamination. The RIA Brownfields Stakeholders Group met over a period of nine months, making a series of overarching recommendations regarding redevelopment of the area.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



East Palo Alto, California

Date of Announcement:
March 2000

Amount: \$100,000

Profile: The Pilot will target two adjacent sites at the mouth of the Ravenswood Industrial Area for assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment into a community-oriented service center.

Contacts:

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Visit the EPA Region 9 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region09/waste/brown/index.html>

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

OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

East Palo Alto's objective is to continue efforts to revitalize the RIA. Through the supplemental assistance Pilot, the city will target two sites—the People's Plaza site and a city-owned property—that sit adjacent to one another at the entrance to the RIA. Because of their location, East Palo Alto plans to use these sites as flagship projects to set the image, tone, and character of future development in the area. The city hopes that redevelopment plans for these sites—a Family Resource Center and a possible health clinic—will bring the RIA into the “community fold,” changing perception about the area and encouraging community relationships with the adjacent San Francisco Bay and wetlands. The supplemental grant will provide the city with the resources it needs to conduct assessments on these properties and to develop site-specific land use plans that will facilitate cleanup decisions and optimize site reuse.

To accomplish these objectives, the Pilot plans to:

- Conduct site assessments to determine the nature and extent of contamination at the two targeted sites; and
- Develop cleanup and site-specific land use plans in conjunction with one another.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.