

EPA Brownfields Supplemental Assistance

Kalamazoo, MI

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 Kalamazoo supplemental assistance for its Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot and additional funding for assessments at brownfields properties to be used for greenspace purposes. Kalamazoo (population 81,000) has 28 state-designated environmental hazardous waste sites, 49 leaking underground storage tank sites, and three Superfund sites. In addition the Kalamazoo River has been neglected, with past industrial waste discharges leaving the river unsightly and odorous. Five percent of the city's taxable property (about 450 acres) are brownfields located in older neighborhoods where 64 percent of the city's minority population live. More than 30 percent of the population in these neighborhoods live below the poverty level, and the unemployment rate is 16 percent.

Without adequate resources to address brownfields, new development has migrated to greenfields—causing the loss of jobs, a reduced tax base, and a strain on local resources due to urban sprawl. Through its Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative, Kalamazoo is rebuilding its tax base, addressing the problem of blighted and contaminated properties, and ensuring that neighborhood goals and quality-of-life issues are an integral part of the redevelopment process.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Kalamazoo, Michigan

Date of Announcement:
March 2000

Amount: \$150,000
Greenspace: \$50,000

Profile: The Pilot will target more than a dozen priority brownfields, most of which are located along the waterfront or within Renaissance Zones.

Contacts:

City of Kalamazoo
(616) 337-8044

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 5
(312) 886-1960

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

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

The Pilot will use the supplemental assistance at priority sites for which cleanup and redevelopment can improve environmental and human health protection, enhance the tax base, create new jobs in distressed neighborhoods, and bolster the overall vitality of the affected neighborhoods. Most of the brownfields are city-owned, and many of them are located along the waterfront or within Renaissance Zones. The Pilot will continue to work with affected citizens, informing and involving them in developing reuse visions for the priority brownfields.

The Pilot will use the greenspace funding to target waterfront properties that are included in the city's Waterfront Redevelopment Plan, which seeks to develop greenways along the entire length of the Kalamazoo River to reestablish the community's connection with the river. That plan provides for development of public greenspace, trails, and canoe launches along portions of the Kalamazoo River within the city limits.

To accomplish these objectives, the Pilot plans to:

- Conduct environmental assessments and/or cleanup planning and design at approximately 13 priority brownfields;
- Facilitate community involvement and input to the brownfield reuse plans;
- Identify other resources to fill financing gaps; and
- Conduct assessments at five waterfront sites to characterize the nature and extent of contamination and to design appropriate cleanup plans.

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