

# Brownfields Redevelopment

A COMPENDIUM OF CASE STUDIES, VOLUME I



RECLAIMING LAND, REVITALIZING COMMUNITIES





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Cover Photo: Submitted by the City of St. Louis, MO and Balke Browne Associates – The Saint Louis Commerce Center, in various stages of decontamination and redevelopment, currently provides thousands of new jobs in 487,000 square feet of downtown office, distribution and warehousing space. The site, formerly composed of mixed industrial uses, had experienced years of neglect as population centers tended toward suburban areas.

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# INTRODUCTION

This book is a small compilation of brownfield redevelopment success stories throughout the nation. The case studies included in this booklet are based on cities' voluntary responses to a series of questions from our annual brownfields questionnaire regarding their experiences with redeveloping brownfield properties.

Cities included information about the site history, the type of contamination present, how they financed the project, what types of redevelopment occurred, and what lessons they learned from the project.

While there is not a single recipe for successful brownfields redevelopment, these cases exhibit two common themes. First, cities are most successful if they are able to utilize a variety of private and public resources, including private investment and government programs at the local, state and federal levels. Second, through brownfields redevelopment, cities can reap significant environmental and economic benefits through site improvements, job creation and new commercial, industrial and residential opportunities.

We wish to thank all of the cities and their staff for working on this project and to encourage other cities to participate in future editions. If you have a success story that you would like to share, please contact Judy Sheahan or Ted Fischer of the Conference staff at 202-293-7330.

We hope you enjoy these case studies.



# CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE, NM

**Mayor Martin J. Chavez**

## **Project Summary**

Built in the early twentieth century, Albuquerque's historic high school is among the City's most significant landmarks. From the 1970s, when the school district relocated, until the mid-1990s, the buildings stood dormant, in danger of falling into disuse and disrepair. In 1996, the City intervened, purchased four buildings, and launched the redevelopment process.

Environmental remediation staff removed asbestos from the site, and the City is constructing parking facilities. The buildings will now be refashioned as loft apartments, office spaces, and a restaurant.

## **Previous Use**

Albuquerque's historic high school campus is among the City's most beloved places. Constructed between 1914 and 1940, the school graduated thousands of students and served as Albuquerque's only high school until 1940. Its five buildings are designated City Landmarks and appear in the State Register of Cultural Properties and the National Register of Historic Places. The school forms part of a historic zoning area managed by the Albuquerque Landmarks and Urban Conservation Commission.

In the 1970s, the high school moved from this site to a newer facility. The campus stood nearly vacant for 25 years. Several developers attempted to find new functions for the buildings and raised community hopes that the campus could be preserved. However, no single developer succeeded until the City launched this project by acquiring campus grounds (7.26 acres) and four of five school buildings in 1996.

## **Remediation and Redevelopment**

After purchasing campus property, the City published a request for proposals for redevelopment. The property had no liens; clear title allowed the project to move forward smoothly. Albuquerque selected Paradigm & Co. as the developer and finalized an agreement with the company on project deadlines and financial arrangements in 1999.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), in a study performed under the USEPA Brownfields Program, determined that the site's friable asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) required abatement before renovation could begin. Samples from the site's buildings, floor tiles, boiler

**HISTORIC ALBUQUERQUE HIGH SCHOOL**

tanks, pipe joints, pipe insulation, roofs, and acoustic soundproofing materials contained an estimated total of 92,000 square feet plus an additional 6,275 linear feet of ACMs. Potential disturbance of asbestos fibers posed a health risk for site workers, a risk exacerbated by several broken windows through which fibers could drift.

Two buildings required asbestos remediation. All buildings showed signs of water damage and needed roof replacements. Remediation staff demolished two non-historic buildings, parts of the interior of the historic buildings, and exterior infrastructure, such as curbs and sidewalks. The project team was also concerned that an old underground heating tank might require abatement, but a geophysical investigation undertaken through the Brownfields Program revealed that the tank had already been removed.

The school's transformation is nearly complete. Former classroom and administration buildings are now loft apartments. The school gymnasium will also become a loft apartment building; the developer plans to complete this renovation by 2005. The former library building will become office space. The fifth building has remained in private ownership, and a developer has recently submitted plans to build a restaurant in the ground floor and residential units on the second and third levels. The City-owned campus grounds and the parking structure will soon be finished.

### **Financing**

Costs of this project included:

- \$2,000 to fund the geophysical survey for underground storage tanks.
- \$14,000 to support the USACE survey for airborne asbestos.

- \$75,000 to remediate two campus buildings.

The New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code grants municipalities authority to create a Metropolitan Redevelopment (MR) Fund. Revenue generated through the tax increment method of financing must be deposited in the MR fund. The MR Fund was the source of acquisition funds for these properties.

Twelve million dollars of this project's funding came from public investments. Private lending institutions and the historic tax credit equity investment contributed the remaining approximately \$22 million. Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments were performed at this site prior to the award of USEPA Brownfield Program funding. Specific funding from USEPA Region 6 supported the underground storage tanks survey and the USACE asbestos survey.

Albuquerque and Bernalillo County are joint recipients of a \$1 million USEPA Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund. The U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration also awarded the City \$1 million to cover public infrastructure improvement costs related to this project.

### **Administrative Process**

As defined in the development agreement, the City role in this project is not only financial: the City must ensure that the project meets the requirements of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan. Other City roles include tracking financial commitments, attending construction meetings, and troubleshooting internal City involvement such as utility and planning issues.

Albuquerque Development Services, a redevelopment agency that is part of the City Planning Department, coordinates Albuquerque's Brownfields Program. Redevelopment requires a substantial amount of communication and coordination with other City departments and agencies. Each project can become a vehicle for educating other departments and agencies about brownfields.

The City has needed to actively engage the public in this project. When Albuquerque designated a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, the State Metropolitan Redevelopment Act required the City to publish a public notice and hold a hearing for local property owners. Citizen advocacy for saving this site was extremely strong, and the community continues to be active in the redevelopment activities for this site and the surrounding area. This project has become catalyst for other local redevelopment activities.

### **Lessons Learned**

Perhaps the single most crucial factor in such a complex, expensive restoration project is broad-based community support, which translates into political support, which, in turn, helps the city obtain financial support for administrative processes and planning.

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# CITY OF BATON ROUGE, LA

**Mayor Bobby Simpson**

## **Project Summary**

The North Boulevard Improvements Project is the Baton Rouge Brownfields Program's most publicly recognized success. Baton Rouge has converted an aging, blighted section of the city into a pedestrian-friendly downtown corridor.

## **Previous Use**

The North Boulevard, in the heart of Baton Rouge's Brownfield Target Area, was a classic example of an older urban area whose commerce collapsed as the downtown population shifted to newer, more suburban parts of the city. Buildings deteriorated, and the site developed a reputation for crime and pollution.

## **Remediation, Redevelopment, and Financing**

A grant for \$200,000 from the USEPA Assessment Demonstration Pilot Grant launched this project in October 2000. Project design called for the City-Parish to purchase lots that fronted on North Boulevard. The city identified 10 brownfield lots along the Boulevard and several other properties containing underground storage tanks that required removal. The Baton Rouge Brownfields Program con-

tributed \$20,000 in grant funding to support the Department of Public Works' environmental assessments. The Planning Commission has recently received a \$90,000 USTfields Grant, \$80,000 of which will fund the lab work and disposal fees needed to cleanup underground storage tanks.

## **Administrative Process and Lessons Learned**

The City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge Planning Commission administers the Brownfields Program. North Boulevard was part of a City-Parish project. The City's resources were available to support unfunded brownfields redevelopment issues such as demolitions and land acquisition. The coordination of several City-Parish agencies made possible the end result: a revitalized, pedestrian-friendly, aesthetically pleasing corridor into downtown. With the support of USEPA grant funds, environmental planning has been recognized as a necessary means to achieve a comprehensive planning goal.

The project sets an ideal example for the Baton Rouge Community and for other cities seeking to counteract urban sprawl with infill development

**NORTH BOULEVARD  
IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**

and downtown revitalization. The project demonstrates how federal funds can be used in conjunction with city funding to achieve a larger revitalization goal.

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# CITY OF DEARBORN, MI

## Mayor Michael A. Guido

### Project Summary

In 1996, the City of Dearborn launched a redevelopment project at the former Sharon Steel annealing and pickling facility, a degraded site in an otherwise valuable residential neighborhood. After removing asbestos, petroleum, PCBs, and other environmental contaminants from the site, the City has re-zoned the property for residential development, and a K-8 school has been built on the site.

### Previous Use

For 57 years, the Sharon Steel site was a steel annealing and pickling facility. In 1989, the Sharon Steel Corporation filed for bankruptcy and abandoned the site. The property's three buildings, totaling 148,000 square feet, were already in disrepair. When the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for Western Pennsylvania leased out the property for trucking and storage, the site deteriorated further and became an eyesore for the surrounding community.

### Remediation and Redevelopment

In 1996, Dearborn helped form the Downriver Area Brownfield Consortium, a regional association of 10 cities. The Consortium obtained funding to perform environmental assessments on contaminated sites within

member communities, including the former Sharon Steel site.

Assessment of the Sharon site found several on-site contamination sources—flooring and transformers containing PCBs, asbestos roofing and pipe wrap, heavy metals, and five underground storage tanks containing petroleum compounds. The assessment results allowed Dearborn to evaluate the feasibility of redevelopment and determine the cleanup costs.

Because of its location, the City considered the site ideal for single-family housing. Dearborn sought funding from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's (MDEQ) Site Reclamation Grant Program to support environmental remediation and demolition costs. The MDEQ participated in initial project discussions.

The City's groundwork on the project sparked developers' interest. Northwind Developments, LLC purchased the property at an auction held by the Bankruptcy Court. Northwind agreed to develop the site for residential use, and the City pledged to provide technical assistance and facilitate Northwind's application for an MDEQ Site Reclamation Grant.

## SHARON STEEL FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT

## Financing and Administrative Process

The City and Northwind obtained funding from the following sources:

- t The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, which provided a \$740,000 grant and a \$294,925 loan.

- t The Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program, which has been amended to allow project infrastructure costs to be reimbursed.

The City's original grant application to MDEQ requested \$1 million. However, MDEQ's policy was to fund only commercial, and not residential, development projects. In January 2000, MDEQ indicated it could fund the project at \$293,000, the cost to remediate the site to an industrial standard only.

Dearborn maintained that high demand for residential property justified extra public investment. Creating housing on the Sharon site would dramatically raise the property value, resulting in increased property tax revenues. MDEQ reconsidered, and in June 2000, approved a \$740,600 grant and a \$294,925 loan to facilitate the project.

Demolition and remediation of the site, which began in July 2000, uncovered additional contaminated soil that escaped notice during initial assessments. Under the City's direction, an environmental consultant provided new cost estimates for remediation—\$270,000. After reviewing budgets and project status, the project team determined that remediation costs to complete the project would be \$260,000.

The City discussed the need for additional funding with MDEQ and prepared a formal application requesting \$259,400, an amount that would bring the MDEQ project contribution

to \$1 million. MDEQ approved additional funding in January 2001.

The City and Northwind renegotiated their agreements to factor in additional work and funding. In May 2001, the last load of contaminated soil was trucked off-site.

One financing issue remains unresolved. Via the TIF program, the City planned to capture taxes resulting from the boost in property values and use these revenues to repay project loans. However, the school system has taken the Sharon site by eminent domain. The school system and City are now involved in legal negotiations to determine which party is responsible for loan repayment.

### Lessons Learned

Without public investment, this site would not have been economically feasible to redevelop. As a result of the City's proactive involvement, the site is ready for new development.

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# CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE, NC

## Mayor Marshall Pitts, Jr.

### Project Summary

The Airborne and Special Operations Museum (ASOM) represents a stunning success for downtown revitalization in Fayetteville. The ASOM project revived a deteriorated section of downtown by creating a high-profile museum surrounded by gardens and open space. Public contributions and federal, state, local, and foundation grants funded the multimillion dollar redevelopment. The museum has attracted 500,000 visitors, who provide an increase in downtown commerce and revenues.

### Previous Use

Thirty-six poorly maintained buildings in various stages of disrepair formerly stood on the current museum site in downtown Fayetteville, adjacent to the main North-South Amtrak rail line. Over the previous 50 years, the site's occupants included the Fayetteville Observer newspaper, bars and nightclubs, small retail and commercial businesses, gas stations, vehicle repair businesses, taxi cab stations, homeless shelters run by religious groups, and a church.

### Remediation and Redevelopment

The Fayetteville Chamber of

Commerce and Fort Bragg first discussed the project in the early 1980s. Their intent was to create a world-class museum that would honor the elite military associated with Special Forces Operations. Fayetteville, home to both the 82nd Airborne and the Special Forces, seemed the most natural choice for the museum's location. The museum would be sited at Fort Bragg.

However, unexpected infrastructure costs and a decision by Fort Bragg to relocate halted these plans. The City of Fayetteville approached the ASOM Foundation Board about building the facility in downtown Fayetteville.

In 1997, a grant from the USEPA Brownfields Assessment Pilot program allowed Fayetteville to assess its downtown brownfields sites for their redevelopment potential. The City purchased property for the museum for \$2 million.

Approximately 25 of the newly acquired buildings on the site held a total of 3,000 cubic yards of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) in parts of the floors, ceilings, roofs, and walls. The site remediation

## THE AIRBORNE & SPECIAL OPERATIONS MUSEUM

crew tested these structures for contamination and developed abatement specifications for removing ACMs before demolishing the buildings. Site staff transported ACMs to a Subtitle D-regulated landfill via sealed trucks and PVC bags. Several buildings had small heating oil tanks, and two contained commercial-sized gasoline and diesel fuel tanks. Remediation staff also found four underground storage tanks. The project team excavated tanks and any contaminated soils around them, drained all tanks, and delivered them to a metals recycling facility. Petroleum-contaminated soils were treated through land application.

The 8.5-acre museum site includes a Memorial Garden and a parade area for troop formations and ceremonies. The museum building houses exhibits and displays, a theater and simulator, and historically accurate military equipment. Each year, the museum attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors who contribute an estimated \$60 million annually to the local economy.

The transformation of a blighted site to a high-profile museum has kindled new downtown commerce and redevelopment. Surrounding businesses have upgraded and refurbished their facilities. Plans for new mixed-use housing and additional retail and commercial businesses are in motion. Fayetteville is pushing forward with its winning redevelopment strategies. The City's "Renaissance Plan" now calls for a new \$5 million amphitheater project two blocks from the museum and a \$30 million Arts Complex, scenic pathways, and bike trails nearby.

## Financing

Financing has been this project's greatest challenge. The redevelopment could only move forward after the City committed to obtaining the properties through condemnation and

agreed to loan funds to the ASOM Foundation. Project funding included:

- A USEPA Brownfields Assessment Pilot Grant (\$200,000), which funded a planning study to inventory and assess redevelopment potential of brownfields sites.
- \$4 million in 1992 from the U.S. Congress.
- \$4 million from the North Carolina General Assembly.
- \$800,000 from Cumberland County.
- \$2 million from the City of Fayetteville to purchase the property.
- A \$3 million grant and \$4.5 million loan to the ASOM Foundation from the City of Fayetteville.
- Grants from the Perot Foundation, which contributed \$1 million, and several other private foundations.
- Donations by private citizens, businesses, and military associations.

The City of Fayetteville, Cumberland County, and the U.S. Army continue to provide annual funding for operating expenses and general maintenance.

## Administrative Process

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the State of North Carolina had approval authority over all permits associated with asbestos abatement and underground storage tank removal. Fayetteville utilized part of the USEPA Brownfields Pilot funding to conduct a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment on one of the properties that was obtained through the condemnation process. There was no need to use the State Voluntary Compliance Program or other USEPA Brownfields Initiatives.

Gaining public acceptance for the museum's downtown location has been a challenge. City Council meetings allowed local citizens to voice their concerns over the City's financial commitments to this project. A series of newspaper articles touted project benefits and helped win over public opinion. The ASOM Foundation Board spearheaded a community-wide funding drive, and local volunteers devoted thousands of hours to assist in fundraising.

## Lessons Learned

This project continues to generate success stories and acclaim. The museum provides a boost to local commerce and downtown redevelopment, and supports 17 paid employees and nearly 100 volunteers. The momentum created by the museum's success will fuel downtown improvements for years.

Community involvement has been key to accomplishing this project. The museum has heightened community pride and attracted over 500,000 visitors from all 50 states and 70 foreign countries.

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# CITY OF GAINESVILLE, FL

**Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan**

## **Project Summary**

The City of Gainesville is transforming a former rail yard and industrial area into a community park with walking paths, a restored historic train depot, playgrounds, an amphitheater, a skate park, and picnic facilities. Two constructed ponds within the park will filter pollutants from stormwater via natural processes.

## **Previous Use**

The Depot Regional Stormwater Park will occupy a former CSX Corporation freight and passenger rail yard and a wholesale bulk fuels facility that later became a retail gasoline filling station. Several former small industrial sites fall within the property, including a warehouse, mill, and box factory.

A coal gasification plant operated in the area from the 1880s until 1953 and discharged coal tar into the rail yard.

An abandoned rail corridor crosses one section of the site. The rest of the property is partially wooded and contains low-grade wetlands. The site has been idle since the late 1950s.

In December 2001, CSX sold a 25-acre parcel, including the rail corridor, to the City during a

lengthy negotiated sale. The city acquired the 12-acre Gas Depot by eminent domain in March 2002.

## **Remediation and Redevelopment**

With input from citizens, Gainesville created a new vision for the site: a 30-acre stormwater treatment park with two constructed ponds, rail trails, walking paths, a restored historic train depot, children's play areas, an amphitheater, a skate park, and picnic facilities.

The ponds will remove sediments, attenuate pollutants washed from City streets, and reduce stormwater flows. Plastic liners in the pond basins will prevent contaminants in surface water from moving into groundwater. An interceptor pipe will direct stormwater that currently flows into Sweetwater Branch to the new basins. The basins will drain into Sweetwater Branch, which feeds the Alachua Sink in Paynes Prairie State Preserve. Project staff will plant native vegetation in and around the ponds—bald cypress, Florida maples, soft rush, and spike rush.

Environmental Site Assessments to determine the impacts of coal tar and other site contaminants

**DEPOT REGIONAL STORMWATER PARK**

began prior to 1999. By 2001, the City had completed Phase I, II, and III Assessments. Since 2001, the City has conducted more detailed analyses of the project's impacts on groundwater.

Gainesville now awaits acceptance of a state-mandated Risk Assessment and Feasibility Study from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department. Once these agencies approve the study, the City can proceed with a Remedial Action Plan.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection completed cleanup of petroleum-affected soil on an adjoining parcel at the Gas Depot facility as part of the state's Petroleum Cleanup Program. Coal tar cleanup at the Park will finish in early 2006.

## Financing

Gainesville appropriated more than \$3 million for project land acquisitions, assessments, and design. The City-owned Gainesville Regional Utilities will commit between \$8 million and \$10 million to clean coal tar contamination. The former property owners have been released from liability and will not contribute to site cleanup.

The City is securing an additional \$12 million in state and federal grant monies to construct stormwater and park facilities. The City has already received two \$200,000 grants for assessment work, one from the USEPA and the second from the Florida Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development. Gainesville has also obtained voluntary cleanup tax credits through the Florida Brownfields Redevelopment

Program. These credits can be sold on the open market.

## Administrative Process

The City is actively involved in the Florida Brownfields Redevelopment Program. Gainesville has established a brownfield area under Section 376 Florida Statutes and executed two Brownfield Site Rehabilitation Agreements (BSRAs).

The City has primary leadership over this project. Gainesville Regional Utilities, the Public Works Department, and the Community Redevelopment Agency provide staffing for project management.

City staff work with the East Gainesville SPROUT (Success is People Renewing Our Under-utilized Terrain) Project Task Force, a citizen advisory committee formed by the City Commission in 1998 to develop project policy recommendations. The Task Force has participated in decisions ranging from land acquisition to remediation and design.

## Lessons Learned

Based on Gainesville's experience, a city involved in redevelopment should consider these factors:

- Projects often take longer and cost more to complete than initially anticipated.
- Public input into the redevelopment process is extremely valuable.
- Finding a dedicated and experienced staff team with relevant skills to manage the project is essential.
- The backing of citizens and local government policy makers should be obtained before initiating the project.
- Linking public benefits to physi-

cal improvement projects when defining the brownfield initiative can be an effective strategy.

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# CITY OF JACKSON, MS

## Mayor Harvey Johnson, Jr.

### Project Summary

Through the City of Jackson's brownfield initiatives, a dry cleaners property and a former landfill have been transformed into a new Festival Park and a police museum and substation.

### Previous Use

LeFleur's Landing, a 115-acre site on the Pearl River, was a landfill until environmental regulations shut down its operations twenty years ago. The site contains a former incineration and asphalt plant, repair/paint shop, and refueling station.

Simon's Dry Cleaners in the Historical Farish Street District has also been closed for more than twenty years.

Jackson owns the LeFleur's site and has a long-term lease with the Jackson Redevelopment Authority for use of the Dry Cleaners property.

### Remediation and Redevelopment

The Phase II Assessment for Simon's Dry Cleaners began in 2000 under the USEPA Brownfields Pilot Demonstration Program and was completed in 2002 under the oversight of the USEPA Brownfields Showcase Communities Project. The assessment work did not uncover

any contaminants associated with dry cleaning operations, but did find lead and asbestos, byproducts of the building's construction. Environmental staff removed and disposed of both contaminants under the watchful eye of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality. A ribbon-cutting ceremony in June this year marked the successful completion of the Simon's project and the opening of Jackson's new police substation, which houses the Bicycle Patrol, and a museum that honors the work of the local police department.

LeFleur's Landing is also nearing completion. The project team implemented Phase II Environmental Site Assessments in 2002 and 2003.

Contaminated soil from the station will be removed and land farmed this year. The property will be sealed with a three-foot cap prior to the beginning of redevelopment to prevent the release of contaminants into soil and groundwater.

The Conceptual Master Plan for the Festival Park at LeFleur's has been developed. Once construction documents are ready, the City will award a construction contract. Construction should begin two weeks after the contract award.

## LEFLEUR'S LANDING AND SIMON'S DRY CLEANERS

## Financing

Costs for Phase I and II

Environmental Site Assessments are \$125,000 and \$40,000 at Simon's and LeFleur's Landing respectively.

Remediation will cost \$2 million at LeFleur's Landing and \$1 million at the Simon's site.

Project funding comes from several sources:

- The Region 5 USEPA Office and the Army Corps of Engineers have collaborated to provide funds for Phase I and II Environmental Assessments at LeFleur's Landing.
- The Housing and Urban Development Economic Development Initiative has provided support for site architectural and engineering services and remediation activities.
- The USEPA provided \$2,000 in funding to the City to participate in the Voluntary Cleanup Program through the Brownfield Showcase Communities Project.
- The City has planned to finance remediation and administer the Mayor's Brownfields Initiative through general fund appropriations.

Jackson does not currently participate in revolving loan programs. The City, county, and state do not offer incentives for brownfields redevelopment.

## Administrative Process

Community input played a key role in the City's site selection. Festival planners, businesses, and other community stakeholders were vocal in urging the City to choose LeFleur's Landing for redevelopment as a Festival Park.

The Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative falls under the auspices of the Mayor's Brownfield Initiative.

The Mayor appointed a Director to oversee the brownfield redevelopment process in the City of Jackson.

Under the Brownfield Initiative, the City has recently formed a Brownfield Redevelopment Advisory Council (BRAC) to provide input into site identification, assessment, and redevelopment. BRAC also assists with outreach through community meetings and forums. Local stakeholders comprise BRAC—representatives from businesses, financial, medical, and educational institutions; faith-based organizations; economic development commissions and boards; non-profit organizations; neighborhood associations; and arts and cultural groups.

Site reclamation of the former Dry Cleaners is one step in a long-range plan to revitalize the Historical Farish Street District.

## Lessons Learned

To launch an effective brownfields initiative, one must communicate among federal, state, and local actors; facilitate thorough understanding of the redevelopment process among all involved; provide incentives for property owners; allow for community input; and secure adequate funding to support the redevelopment.

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# CITY OF LANSING, MI

## Mayor Tony Benavides

### Project Summary

The City of Lansing has chosen two sites for redevelopment: a former commercial property and a coal storage yard abandoned by a local power provider. The City will clean up the sites' soil and groundwater contaminants and build a parking facility.

### Previous Use

Both sites chosen for development lie in Lansing's downtown center. In the early 20th century, the site that is now the Triangle Property contained single-family residential housing. In 1921, commercial development began on the site. Occupants included a packinghouse, a blacksmith, a paint shop, and a commercial stable. From the early 1950s through the 1970s, filling stations, a dry cleaning business, auto service stations, auto sales businesses, a chrome-plating shop, warehouses, and vehicle parking stood on the site.

Through a Lansing Building Authority bond issue, the City acquired the parcels and merged them into a single property around 1990. The city maintained the site for surface parking for many years with the intent to redevelop it for more intensive uses.

The coal storage yard lies slightly north of the Triangle Property.

A local power provider abandoned the site, and over time, the unused piles of coal leached into soil and groundwater.

### Remediation and Redevelopment Stages

In 2000, Lansing distributed a nationwide Request for Qualifications & Proposals to redevelop the Triangle Property. The City's original plan for the site called for mixed-use development, including retail business, offices, and residences. The developers who won the City's contract, Granger Group of Lansing and Ferguson Development, went one step further: they proposed not only to convert the Triangle Property into a major office development (approximately 100,000 square feet), but also to redevelop the nearby former coal storage yard as an 80- to 100-unit luxury high-rise and town home complex.

The City is currently in the process of revising the Development Agreements. The State of Michigan is the targeted tenant for the Triangle site. The City expects the development of the coal storage yard to move forward before the Triangle site. Project staff hopes that revised agreements and a revised Brownfield Redevelopment Plan

## TRIANGLE PROPERTY & COAL STORAGE SITE

can be approved by the Lansing City Council and the Lansing Brownfield Redevelopment Authority Board prior to the end of 2004.

## Financing

Project finances come from several sources:

- The developers are seeking approximately \$50 million in private investment to fund construction and redevelopment at both sites.
- The City plans to issue bonds to finance the construction of a parking facility, with an estimated cost of \$15 million.
- Under the Brownfields Assessment Pilot program, the USEPA awarded approximately \$200,000 to the Lansing Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (LBRA) to identify 83 brownfield sites in the City and conduct site assessments. A portion of this grant has financed assessment at the Triangle Property and coal storage yard.
- The LBRA created a Brownfield Redevelopment Plan for these properties and will recapture the funds expended on assessment work via tax increment revenue generated from the redevelopment of the site. This money will then be placed in the LBRA's revolving fund for use on future projects.

Under the state brownfield plan, the developers are also eligible to apply to the State of Michigan for approximately \$5 million in tax credits against the Michigan Single Business Tax.

## Administrative Process

The Lansing Brownfield Redevelopment Authority oversees Lansing's brownfield redevelopment strategies and actively promotes the City's brownfield incentives. The

LBRA is housed within the City's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) office, which is managed by the City's Planning & Neighborhood Development Department. Mayor Tony Benavides holds a seat on the LBRA and EDC Board of Directors.

## Lessons Learned

The LBRA has achieved a number of successes, each very different in planning and implementation. LBRA's projects have been enormously valuable to the City in diversifying the community and attracting businesses. In general, the easiest projects have been those where the property owner will occupy the redeveloped space. Larger, more complex projects tend to take more time. The larger the project becomes, the harder it is to predict when development will take place.

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# CITY OF LEWISTON, ME

**Mayor Lionel C. Guay, Jr.**

## **Project Summary**

The City of Lewiston is modernizing the historic Bates Mill Complex, a former New England textiles mill that fell into disuse in the early twentieth century. Nearly \$40 million of public and private monies are supporting site assessment, remediation, and improvement.

## **Previous Use**

The Bates Mill Complex is a 1.2-million square foot cluster of more than a dozen buildings that dominate Lewiston's downtown architecture. When decline of the New England textile industry left most of the Complex unoccupied, property owners could not maintain their tax payments, and a tax lien was placed on the property.

To save a few remaining jobs at the Mill, the City acquired the complex in 1922. Since acquisition, the City has promoted redevelopment of the site for use by commercial, industrial, retail, recreational, and service sector businesses.

## **Remediation and Redevelopment Phase I and Phase II**

Environmental Site Assessments

revealed the presence of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, metals, PCBs, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), petroleum products, lead, and asbestos. After the Phase I Assessment, the USEPA removed PCBs, asbestos, and leaking storage drums under the Superfund program.

A local developer's interest in three of the mill buildings has galvanized the remediation process. USEPA guidelines required the City to produce an engineering evaluation/cost analysis prior to remediation. Remediation activities began in the fall of 2002 and are nearly complete. Only minor lead and asbestos abatement activities remain unfinished.

The developer now owns three Bates Mill buildings and is leasing space within them to other tenants. Lewiston will retain ownership of Mill Building No. 5, with the long-term goal of establishing a regional conference center there. The developer will soon take ownership of four additional buildings. The City is encouraging other developers to purchase the remaining buildings by providing zero-percent and low interest loans.

**BATES MILL COMPLEX**

## Financing

Support for this project has come from:

- The USEPA Superfund program, which carried out a \$387,000 site cleanup.
- A grant of \$275,000 from the USEPA Brownfields Assessment Program.
- A grant of \$500,000 from the USEPA for a Revolving Loan Fund pilot.
- A contribution of \$1.8 million from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration to support site improvements.
- An investment of nearly \$5.7 million by the Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant and Economic Development Initiative programs.
- A contribution of \$200,000 from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for construction of a parking garage through its Rural Enterprise Grant program.

To date, the City's investment totals over \$14 million, and private investment has contributed \$17 million.

The City carries liability insurance for site properties and requests contractors who work on site to obtain their own liability coverage.

## Administrative Process

The Bates Mill Project is a fundamental step in fulfilling Lewiston's Downtown Urban Master Plan and the goals and objectives of its Enterprise Community, recognized under the USDA Rural Community Empowerment Program.

The City of Lewiston serves as the overall project coordinator and has partnered with community groups

and public agencies to complete site assessment and remediation. The City also held stakeholder meetings to involve downtown businesses, citizens' groups, and neighborhood associations in the redevelopment process. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection and USEPA's Region 1 office have provided technical assistance. Through such partnerships, the Bates Mill project has built a network of organizations with the common goal of redevelopment and city revitalization.

The City created the Lewiston Mill Redevelopment Corporation (LMRC), an administrative council that aggressively pursues brownfields redevelopment, assists in appropriating project funds, and seeks creative ways to attract businesses. The LMRC hired a property manager to oversee project operations.

Bates Mill now houses manufacturing, wholesale distribution, educational, cultural, entertainment, high-tech, retail, and back-room operations centers. In 1992, the City successfully secured a major bank as a tenant. Since its launch, the redevelopment project has created more than 1,200 new jobs. On completion, the City estimates the project will have produced 5,000 jobs.

The project is renovating buildings from the inside out in order to retain as many of the existing structures as possible. The complex will combine nineteenth century architecture and solid construction with access to twenty-first century technology, financing, and opportunity.

## Lessons Learned

Generating revenues and creating activity at the Bates Mill Complex has been crucial to Lewiston's overall downtown revitalization plans. However, in future projects, the city would recommend creating better

loan packaging options, stronger underwriting standards, and developing a stronger plan for site uses before prematurely leasing to tenants.

A project of this size can generate enormous unanticipated costs. The City would certainly consider other projects of similar size, but in the future, Lewiston will be better prepared to handle unforeseen complexities.

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# CITY OF MOLINE, IL

## Mayor Stanley F. Leach

### Project Summary

The City of Moline is revitalizing Bass Street Landing, a riverfront brownfield site. Project staff has assessed the site's environmental contamination. When remediation is complete, the City will convert the site into commercial and residential developments and a public plaza.

### Previous Use

The Bass Street Landing site consists of several properties near the Mississippi River. Between 1899 and 1991, the site served a variety of residential, commercial, and industrial uses, and housed the Moline Cast Stone Company (1920 – 1949), the Aluminum Castings Company (1955 – 1960), Montgomery Elevator Parts Storage (1950s), a private garage, a scrap yard, a theater, a hardware shop, and a woodworking shop.

Most of the buildings on the site had been demolished when the City acquired the property in 1991. The City removed all remaining structures, except for two historic buildings that have been integrated into the redevelopment.

Remediation and Redevelopment of this site occurred simultaneously with an

expansion project at the adjacent Moline Water Plant in 2000 and 2001. Primary funding for Bass Street Landing came from Community Development Block Grant Funds from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

After Moline acquired the Bass Street Landing site, the City submitted a Remedial Objectives Report, outlining City development goals for the site following its remediation, to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA).

The IEPA approved a plan for a 2001 Site Investigation of both the water plant and Bass Street Landing. Project environmental assessment staff sampled groundwater and soil borings and conducted vapor monitoring to determine soil concentrations of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Moline hired consultant Missman Stanley & Associates to design a site-specific groundwater investigation plan.

On completion of the remediation, the city will provide the IEPA with a Remedial Action Completion Report that demonstrates the site's compliance with environmental requirements.

**BASS STREET LANDING REDEVELOPMENT**

Moline will develop the property for residential and commercial use. The project's centerpiece is a public plaza that will feature fountains, a seasonal ice rink, public space, and outdoor dining. Plaza construction will begin in late 2004.

### **Lessons Learned**

The Bass Street Landing

Redevelopment will produce significant benefits for Moline. The City's transformation of the site will dramatically increase property tax revenues. The project will revitalize the riverfront, promote local economic growth, and enhance the area's aesthetic character.

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# VILLAGE OF PALATINE, IL

**Mayor Rita L. Mullins**

## **Project Summary**

As part of its Downtown Revitalization Strategy, the Village of Palatine has converted vacant brownfield property into condominiums.

## **Previous Use**

Located in the northwest corner of Palatine's downtown planning area, the project site originally held a gasoline and service station and later contained a single-family house and dry cleaners shop. In 1999, the owners had left the properties vacant, abandoned, and in poor condition.

## **Remediation and Redevelopment**

In June 2000, Palatine's Downtown Land Use Guide recommended an overhaul for this site: redevelopment as condominiums. The Village encouraged local developers to acquire the property. Wellington Partners secured contracts to purchase the site in 2001 under the provision that the firm would acquire city zoning approvals. An agreement reached between Wellington and Palatine required the Village to cover environmental remediation costs, not to exceed \$400,000.

In September 2000, the development team won an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields

Redevelopment Grant to fund up to 70 percent of environmental assessment and remediation. Palatine hired the consulting firm Envirogen to manage the grant and to facilitate the site remediation.

In August 2001, Envirogen completed a Comprehensive Site Investigation Report. The assessment team found chlorinated solvents and various soil contaminants associated with dry cleaning and underground storage tank leakage. The redevelopment strategy planned to reuse parts of an original building foundation. Therefore, only some of the contaminated soil could be removed. Project engineers injected a hydrogen-releasing compound into soils remaining around the foundation. This compound accelerated breakdown of any lingering contaminants into chemicals that are less environmentally damaging. The team also installed a series of underground bulkheads meant to prevent site groundwater from carrying contaminants into water supplies and aquifers.

The Village of Palatine has now entirely remediated the site and built 43 condominium units, all of which are currently occupied. Phase II of this project will use state Underground Storage Tank

**WELLINGTON COURT CONDOMINIUMS**

funds to remediate a nearby former service station site.

## Financing

This development project was funded through:

- Private financing from Wellington Partners.
- The State of Illinois Brownfields Redevelopment Grant.
- The Village's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District.

The below-market rate sale of the property by its original owners also made the project more affordable.

## Administrative Process

The Community Development Department leads The Village of Palatine's brownfields redevelopment efforts with assistance from the Mayor's Administration and the Public Works Department. This interdepartmental team distributes information and identifies resources available for brownfields. The team reports directly to the Village Manager, and ultimately to the Village Council.

## Lessons Learned

Designating a redevelopment and remediation team early in the process has been key to this project's success. The Village created the TIF District and determined that remediation funds would be available. Palatine then identified a developer, created a development plan, and obtained grant funds. Once the project team was assembled, the redevelopment could progress quickly.

Several other strategies can strengthen a redevelopment project's efficacy:

- Thorough planning prior to environmental remediation can ensure the new use will begin on the site as soon as the remediation is completed.

- The individual site should be redeveloped as part of a larger overall strategy. Having a vision for redevelopment fosters better understanding and support from citizens and elected officials.
- Multiple funding sources, including state, local, and private support, can make a project more financially viable.

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# CITY OF ROME, NY

**Mayor James F. Brown**

## Project Summary

The City of Rome partnered with private landowners to redevelop a section of the former East Rome Business Park. The City demolished buildings containing asbestos, removed contaminated soils, and constructed a road allowing better access to the site.

## Previous Use

The Rome Tube Company first built a casting and pickling facility on the site in the late 1800s. In 1904, the Electric Wire Works (later Rome Wire Company) constructed a wire manufacturing plant on the site's northwest section. After 1920, the Rome Wire Company and its successor, General Cable, used the site for machining, stamping and drawing, plating, pickling, and coating wire materials with rubber, asbestos, and paints. General Cable abandoned the site in 1972. The local nonprofit Community Chest obtained title to the property, subdividing it among several owners. Until the late 1990s, a total of 17 different private landowners held sections of the site's 200 acres. However, the site remained relatively unused and undesirable until 1996. The majority of the site is paved and contains many abandoned buildings and facilities.

One fourth of the residents from neighborhoods surrounding the Park fall below the national poverty line. The unemployment rate of this area, 11 percent, is twice as high as Rome's overall rate.

## Remediation and Redevelopment

Through a public-private partnership with the site's 18 property owners, the City of Rome has launched a project to redevelop the former Business Park for commercial and light industrial use. The City chose this area for its accessibility, its existing utilities and infrastructure, its potential for use by neighboring industrial businesses seeking to expand, and because of concerns expressed by surrounding residential communities.

In 1996, the City forged the first partnership: Charles Gaetano, the owner of a 17-acre core parcel, allowed city staff to assess environmental contamination on his property. During the City's investigation, the owner subdivided the property into seven parcels and deeded one to the city. Gaetano has remediated the remaining parcels (14 acres) under the Voluntary Cleanup Program.

**FORMER GENERAL CABLE/EAST ROME  
BUSINESS PARK**

Following these successes, a second landowner donated 2.6 acres to the redevelopment project, and the City recently acquired an additional four-acre parcel. These properties, combined with the 17 acres that have already undergone cleanup, form a 23.6-acre core area that will be developed for commercial and light industrial use.

#### Phase II Environmental Site

Assessments on the core properties uncovered several forms of contamination. Process equipment, tanks, sumps, and drains contained petroleum products. Oil spills, elevated concentrations of heavy metals, coal tar, purified box waste, asbestos, and PCBs affected soils, buildings, and facilities aboveground. Chlorinated compounds had seeped into groundwater. Leaking storage tanks and spills had released coal tar and petroleum hydrocarbons belowground. To remove contaminants, environmental staff demolished buildings and foundations and removed subsurface utilities and contaminated soil. This environmental cleanup allowed the city to construct an access road and install new utilities on the site.

The City is now working with the other owners of the remaining 179 acres to redevelop the entire 200-acre former General Cable site as a modern business park.

### Financing and Administrative Process

The City of Rome sought financial support for the preparation of redevelopment plans, the construction of an improved access road, installation of upgraded utilities, and environmental assessment and remediation.

Financing came from:

- The City of Rome Community Development Block Grant: \$120,000 for the Redevelopment

Plan, \$52,916 for the Environmental Site Assessments on private property, and \$1 million for remediation on city property.

- The USEPA Brownfields Site Assessment Pilot Program: \$200,000 for the Environmental Site Assessments on city property.
- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act: \$332,234 for the Environmental Site Assessments and \$1.8 million for remediation of city property.
- The New York State Department of Transportation Industrial Access Program: \$939,118 for access road construction.
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Erie Canal Corridor Initiative: \$55,000 for access road construction.
- The New York State Empire State Development: \$180,000 grant and a \$120,000 loan to fund utilities installation.
- Donations of property by private landowners.

Other key stakeholders included the City of Rome Planning Department and the residential community surrounding the former General Cable, who first urged the city to address the blight created by the site's deteriorated structures.

### Lessons Learned

Several factors have been critical to this project's success:

- Addressing the concerns of local citizens and involving the public.
- Securing the cooperation of private landowners to gain access to the interior of the property.
- Upgrading existing utilities.

Liability insurance was also essential and was obtained via the 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act. The developer also received limited liability protection under the Voluntary Cleanup Program.

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# CITY OF SAINT LOUIS, MO

**Mayor Francis G. Slay**

## **Project Summary**

In 1992, St. Louis launched a 10-year initiative to convert 20 acres of degraded urban space and former industrial facilities into the St. Louis Commerce Center—a project that creates 487,000 square-feet of new downtown office, distribution, and warehousing space. The project's success has spurred community interest in downtown revitalization: millions of dollars have since been invested in additional downtown projects, creating thousands of new jobs.

## **Previous Use**

The site that is now The St. Louis Commerce Center, northwest of the downtown central business district, once sat in a vital part of the City's north commercial and industrial zone, an area that provided hundreds of well-paying jobs for the entire region. In the 1875 Pictorial History of the City, this area appears as a densely populated series of city blocks lined with row houses and dotted with churches. In the 1920s, factories began to replace these residential buildings.

Over the past half-century, the area's major businesses have included a large pharmaceutical company, an electroplating facility, a foundry, and automotive

repair shops. The site and its neighboring properties housed 14 junkyards, 11 dry-cleaning facilities, seven filling stations, and four large industrial facilities. However, when the St. Louis population followed the national trend of immigrating to the suburbs, many of these businesses relocated or closed. By the 1980s, when the city launched an aggressive redevelopment plan, the area had degenerated into an eyesore full of vacant lots, abandoned buildings, and isolated businesses.

## **Remediation and Redevelopment**

A 20-acre property was chosen as St. Louis's new Commerce Center site. The location allowed the construction of Class A light industrial space at a strategic point near the crossroads of four interstate highways and the downtown central business district.

Addressing state and federal standards and developer concerns regarding environmental cleanup has been a significant undertaking. The redevelopment team excavated more than 20 underground storage tanks and removed over 50,000 square feet of asbestos-containing materials, as well as mercury-containing light bulbs and light ballasts.

**WELLINGTON COURT CONDOMINIUMS**

Demolition debris from the implosion of one of the larger structures contained elevated levels of lead and was hauled off-site for disposal.

Historical activities on the site had contaminated soil and groundwater. Project staff removed roughly 20,000 tons of soil containing petroleum constituents, metals, benzene, and methylene chloride. Groundwater tested at the site also contained petroleum, benzene, and chlorinated solvents.

The state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) approved several innovative cleanup methods for this project's remediation process. Environmental staff has used engineering controls, such as capping, to reduce environmental risk and is implementing institutional controls, including restrictions on types of use allowed at the site. Environmental staff determined groundwater contaminants could be effectively reduced through natural chemical and ecosystem attenuation processes. The project team continues to monitor the effectiveness of these treatment strategies for areas of groundwater contamination. The DNR also allowed lead-contaminated soils to be treated with a fixative, which permitted their disposal classified as special waste rather than as hazardous waste.

## Financing

The following federal, state, and local incentives helped offset the financial risks of this project:

- A \$200,000 grant from the USEPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot Program funded early assessment of infrastructure and environmental conditions.
- The city Economic Development Authority (EDA) and the private developer received \$1 million in

transferable state tax credits through the State's Department of Economic Development Brownfields Redevelopment Program. This program provides state tax credits to reimburse up to 100 percent of eligible remediation costs, based on the projected generation of new jobs.

- Through a liability agreement, the City EDA set aside the sale proceeds from the land, with the funds earmarked for site remediation and development activities.

The environmental consultant and developer also negotiated a major cost-sharing liability arrangement.

## Administrative Process

A Citizen's Advisory Council and a local nonprofit organization ensured community involvement in the planning and environmental assessment phases of the St. Louis Commerce Center. These two organizations hosted 11 meetings over two years with neighborhood groups to discuss issues surrounding brownfields cleanup and redevelopment and to gather input on the Commerce Center project. Conducting community outreach early has been critical to this project's long-term effectiveness and has helped institutionalize brownfields redevelopment as a key economic development strategy in the City.

State and local multi-party partnerships contributed profoundly to the success of the redevelopment. The developer, the city's EDA, and the environmental consultant invited the state DNR to join a partnership early in the planning stages to determine environmental mitigation options. Risk-based cleanup standards were developed early in the process based on anticipated future use and development. A cleanup plan approved by

all the project partners was instrumental in determining the financial feasibility of the St. Louis Commerce Center. All cleanup activities were conducted under the direction of a variety of local and state agencies, including the City Air Pollution Control Agency (asbestos, lead, and demolition efforts), the state's Underground Storage Tank Program, and the state's Voluntary Cleanup Program (non-regulated tanks, soil, and groundwater issues). The DNR and the local Air Pollution Control Agency also jointly assisted the development team to address safety and public health concerns related to asbestos and lead paint that could arise during demolition of the site's buildings.

## Lessons Learned

Prior to the redevelopment, little was known about the site's environmental condition, and the perception of environmental risk deterred many potential developers and investors.

Neighborhoods surrounding the site have been trapped in an alarming state of poverty. Before the city stepped in, median annual income of local residents was \$9,700, and 60 percent of community members fell in a low-to-medium income bracket. Galvanizing economic growth in these neighborhoods is a high priority for the City, and this project represents an important first step. More than \$19 million in new capital has been invested at the St. Louis Commerce Center site to construct 487,000 square feet of new office, distribution, and warehousing space. The Center's success has sparked additional activity and investment: all of the properties adjacent to the center currently have plans for redevelopment. In addition to the tangible changes, the Center has engendered a spirit of renewal and community in

this neighborhood.

Many of the environmental and financial tools used in this project were termed “innovative” a few years ago but are now considered the norm for successful brownfield redevelopment. Until the cycle of decline for blighted areas is broken, innovative development tools will be needed. Those involved in promoting brownfields redevelopment hope that public incentives will pay for themselves through the creation of new jobs, increased tax bases, and future private sector investment and development.

Since the inception of the USEPA Brownfields Assessment Pilot and the subsequent redevelopment of the St. Louis Commerce Center, brownfields redevelopment throughout the City’s urban core has seen significant growth. The City EDA now owns more than 55 million square feet of abandoned property, including over 2,200 buildings. Throughout the City, nearly \$640 million in brownfields redevelopment projects are under way or in planning stages. These projects are expected to generate more than 5,550 jobs. Together, they demonstrate the effective use of innovative financial incentives, sound environmental analysis and cleanup tools, and the potential for positive impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. The St. Louis Commerce Center redevelopment is often described as the “birth” of the brownfields movement in the City.

This project was the first significant redevelopment of a large-scale abandoned industrial and commercial site in the City in several decades, and it has significantly changed local mindsets regarding “risky” development in the urban core. The St. Louis Commerce Center showcased effective environmental site cleanup and redevelopment by:

- Creating a model process to illus-

trate tools and means for executing brownfields projects.

- Developing stronger state legislation to assist brownfields redevelopment.
- Encouraging a new way of doing business in the city—a collaborative team approach involving private and public sectors.
- Providing lessons on effective use of the state’s Voluntary Cleanup Program.
- Providing an example of the magnitude of return on investment from brownfield sites.

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# CITY OF TALLAHASSEE, FL

## Mayor John Marks

### Project Summary

The City of Tallahassee is targeting a large former industrial corridor with a broad redevelopment strategy. Redevelopment staff has used state records and consultant research to determine environmental cleanup needs throughout the forty sites that make up the corridor. The Gaines Street Corridor will ultimately support a wide range of uses: commercial and office space, residential developments, urban green space, and multi-modal transportation.

### Previous Use

The Gaines Street Brownfield Area was Tallahassee's primary industrial corridor. Comprised of warehouses, stockyards, and petroleum product distributors, the area lies at the junction of several rail lines in the shadow of the Capital District and between two major state universities. The corridor is a mosaic of public and private ownership. A few properties have been abandoned due to contamination, mainly from petroleum.

Tallahassee is pursuing redevelopment throughout the entire corridor, rather than targeting selected properties for re-use.

**Remediation and Redevelopment**  
The City received an USEPA Brownfield Pilot Grant and listed the corridor as a brownfield

under Florida's state program. The City is promoting the area as a cornerstone of its downtown and central city redevelopment plans.

Redevelopment staff comprehensively reviewed all state records and records of several environmental consulting firms to determine site environmental remediation needs. A current and thorough re-mapping of the corridor's geo-hydrology permitted the City's consultants to identify those properties in greatest need of cleanup or further site-specific assessment.

Project staff found contamination requiring cleanup on about 40 of the 600 parcels in the corridor. Three specific parcels are being treated for contamination, primarily through removal and disposal of soil.

### Financing

Total costs for the three sites are estimated at \$700,000. The City has funded this project through the following mechanisms:

- \$455,000 in state and federal monies designated specifically for the brownfield assessment and remediation, including a \$200,000 USEPA Brownfield Pilot Grant.
- Additional state funds earmarked for redevelopment and urban infill.

**GAINES STREET BROWNFIELD AREA**

- Federal pass-thru funds to finance market studies and restoration of historic structures.
- Nearly \$117 million over the next decade in sales tax and highway funds for road reconstruction, stormwater, and greenway/open space improvements from local and state governments.

The City has established two Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs) to encourage public investment in the Gaines Street Corridor with the intent of reinvesting revenues from tax increment financing into the project. The City has provided incentives to investors such as permit fee waivers and exemption from traffic and stormwater concurrency.

### **Administrative Process**

The City's Planning Department has the lead role in brownfield redevelopment, but new roles are being identified for the Economic Development Department, which ordinarily is responsible for coordinating HUD and related grants. The Planning Department houses the environmental unit, manages the assessment and remediation processes, and oversees the staff of the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO coordinates activities with the state Department of Transportation. (Gaines Street is a state road.) The Planning Department also coordinates land use decision-making and rezoning of the area.

The Gaines Street Vitalization Committee, staffed by the Planning Department, has been critical to the overall redevelopment process. The committee represents state agencies, universities, business interests, property owners, and neighborhood associations, and reports to both the City Commission and the MPO. The Commission reviews all redevelopment issues before they are passed on to elected officials.

The Committee has been active for over seven years and was instrumental in crafting the process under which Tallahassee operates its redevelopment effort. The Committee serves as a model for other redevelopment initiatives in the City.

City outreach at the site has included direct notice to property owners, maintenance of a project website, a semi-annual newsletter, and regular meetings of a second committee representing the corridor's stakeholders: homeowners and private citizens, business owners, representatives from two universities, and the Chamber of Commerce. This committee has taken responsibility for promoting the sales tax extension that will pay for most of the infrastructure needs of the corridor.

### **Lessons Learned**

This project brought to light several important lessons for future redevelopment projects. First, it is important to target the properties that will ultimately generate the greatest return on investment. When the project began, several market studies showed that environmental risks and infrastructure deficiencies in the corridor (especially inadequate road capacity and stormwater treatment) had stymied reinvestment. As the project has moved forward, investors have more eagerly accepted these risks based on promising market forecasts. This corridor will eventually support roughly two thousand students and young professionals, many hundreds of full-time employees, and several hundred thousand square feet of commercial and office space.

Second, project staff found that larger corridors featuring numerous contaminated sites required a different methodology for assessment and site prioritization.

Additionally, the project required

analysis of hundreds of state cleanup program records, Sanborn maps dating to the 1890s, and Polk directories dating to the 1930s. The creation of a database and Geographic Information System (GIS) has been invaluable. Most local governments and environmental consultants now use GIS tools, even for mapping individual sites. This project covered over 450 total acres. Assessing relationships between remediation needs, development patterns, and objectives necessitated sophisticated mapping and analytical tools.

Finally, the establishment of an appropriate committee of stakeholders is critical to advancing redevelopment projects. This project has been strengthened by the dozens of committed citizens and stakeholder representatives who have shaped the process and guided numerous local government decisions.

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**NOTES**



