

EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Union County, NJ

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

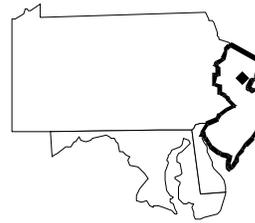
EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that 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 has selected Union County for a Brownfields Pilot. Union County is located in northeast New Jersey, and while it is the second smallest county in the state, it is also the sixth most populous with nearly one-half million residents. Over the last four decades, rising energy and labor costs and inflationary increases led manufacturers to move overseas and to other parts of the country. The result was the closure of key rail facilities and manufacturing operations, which have, in turn, become brownfields sites. These brownfields (an estimated 78) are particularly concentrated along the Raritan Valley Line—a cross-county rail corridor running through nine communities and connecting the county's eastern and western borders. Additionally, while the country's booming economy has generated 11 million new jobs, Union County has lost 34,000 jobs.

The Pilot will target the communities of Plainfield and Hillside, both state Urban Enterprise Zones where the poverty levels are 12.2 percent and 6 percent and unemployment is 9 percent and 6.6 percent, respectively. Approximately 60 percent of the communities' residents are minority. The Pilot is a key element of the county's Overall Economic Development Plan—a federal designation from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Union County, NJ

Date of Announcement:
May 2000

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot plans to conduct environmental assessments on six brownfields along the Raritan Valley Line in the cities of Plainfield and Hillside to facilitate their cleanup and redevelopment.

Contacts:

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Regional Brownfields Team
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(212) 637-4314

Visit the EPA Region 2 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/r02earth/superfnd/brownfld/bfmainpg.htm>

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

The goal of the Union County Pilot is to establish a public/private partnership guided by a Brownfields Community Advisory Committee and a Coordinating Committee that works to facilitate the redevelopment of brownfields sites to revitalize the county's economy. The Pilot will focus on assessing 6 of the 33 brownfields in the communities of Hillside and Plainfield.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting an area-wide environmental characterization of Raritan Valley Line brownfields;
- Prioritizing brownfields sites for assessment;
- Performing environmental assessments on six sites—three in Hillside and three in Plainfield;
- Convening the Brownfields Community Advisory Committee to maximize community input to the entire redevelopment process;
- Forming a Coordinating Committee to oversee Pilot activities;
- Establishing a community-driven environmental justice plan as a part of a larger community involvement plan; and
- Developing a cleanup plan.

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