



Partnering for Progress— Los Angeles' Showcase Community

M Los Angeles, CA

MOED, EAD, CRA CDD, EPA, EDA, COE, HUD—the list of brownfields partners for the City of Los Angeles reads like an economic redevelopment alphabet soup. With its Showcase Community designation, the city has created a Brownfields Team that includes members from the Mayor's Office of Economic Development (MOED), the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), the Community Development Department (CDD), the City Council's Chief Legislative Analyst Office, and other departments and agencies as needed. Federal partners include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Army Corps of Engineers (COE), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Other partnerships exist with community organizations and state agencies to test brownfields restoration strategies, and the city has established a \$4.45 million Brownfields Revitalization Fund (BRF) that can be used for assessment, acquisition, cleanup, and community involvement activities. Efforts are underway at three demonstration sites, one of which is close to a multimillion-dollar development agreement.

Showcase Communities are selected by the Brownfields National Partnership to demonstrate that through cooperation, federal, state, local, and private efforts can be concentrated around brownfields to restore these sites, stimulate economic development, and revitalize communities. Showcase Communities serve as models for broad-based cooperative efforts to support locally based initiatives. Showcases receive up to \$400,000 from EPA for both environmental assessments and to support the loan of a federal employee to the Showcase for up to three years. Showcase Communities receive additional financial and technical support from the Partnership's more than 20 federal partners, depending on the community need and program eligibility.

In Los Angeles, the goal of these partnerships is to develop effective strategies to enable cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields throughout the city, particularly in disadvantaged communities. In addition to a variety of other technical assistance opportunities, the city has identified three demonstration sites at which these strategies are being implemented:

- *Former Crown Coach Site.* This 20-acre vacant, contaminated parcel was originally occupied by 11 industrial buildings with operations ranging from food processing to product assembly. The state purchased the site to construct a prison, but the plan was abandoned due to community opposition. The state removed 40,000 tons of contaminated soil, but additional contamination had not been adequately characterized until recently. The state signed a voluntary cleanup agreement allowing the city to conduct a site-wide cleanup investigation and feasibility study and remove contaminated

JUST THE FACTS:

- One vacant 20-acre parcel is scheduled for redevelopment into more than one million square feet of industrial and retail space that will create 2,600 jobs and leverage \$80 million.
- Preliminary site investigations have been performed on a 208-acre area located in South Central Los Angeles, currently occupied by 325 small industrial businesses and many vacant sites.
- The city used \$350,000 from its Brownfields Revitalization Fund to create a database of parcel information and develop a cleanup and marketing plan for a former industrial park.

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soil. These assessments found some metal contamination as well as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in the top five to ten feet of soil. Soil below 30 feet also had some volatile organic compound (VOC) contamination. The city and the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority removed approximately 3,000 tons of contaminated soil from the upper layer. Cleanup of the soil's lower layers is estimated at up to \$3.3 million. But as part of the voluntary cleanup agreement, the state issued a closure letter allowing development to proceed on the site's upper layer. Following an request for proposals process, a review team selected a redevelopment proposal from Alameda Produce Market, Inc. for more than one million square feet of industrial and retail space that will create 2,600 jobs and leverage \$80 million.

- *Goodyear Industrial Tract Site.* This 208-acre area located in South Central Los Angeles is occupied by 325 small industrial businesses and many vacant sites, and is surrounded by residential properties. Several parcels are already known to be contaminated through past uses, and the presence of railroad tracks used for bulk loading and unloading of chemical compounds makes additional soil contamination likely. The city has received \$2.4 million from EDA to fence the Goodyear site, monitor access, clean up abandoned rail spurs, rebuild infrastructure, and provide businesses the support they need to expand and address contamination-related issues. Los Angeles provided \$300,000 from the city's Brownfields Revitalization Fund. HUD awarded a \$12.1 million Brownfields Economic Development Initiative grant and loan package to assist two business expansions and the development of a full-service shopping center on environmentally impaired properties within the tract. EPA Region 9 performed a preliminary investigation and did not find any evidence of a hazardous substance release. However, the past uses of this site suggest the need for further study.
- *Wilmington Industrial Park Site.* Located on 232 acres of land just north of the East Basin of the Los Angeles Harbor, this blighted site consists of an incompatible and unhealthy mix of industrial buildings, residential dwellings, storage tanks, junkyards, debris, and dilapidated streets and alleyways. An existing city redevelopment effort has made infrastructure improvements and enabled the completion of nearly 30 new mixed-use developments. The city received \$225,000 in funding from EDA that was matched by a \$225,000 HUD Community Development Block Grant. The city added \$350,000 from its Brownfields Revitalization Fund, and used this funding for activities such as creating a database of parcel information, identifying the scope and costs of soil cleanup, and providing economic development and marketing studies to identify appropriate reuses for the area.

Another site addressed under the Showcase Community program is the former Damson Oil site on Venice Beach. This property is now owned by the city. The site's former owners paid the city \$800,000 for cleanup expenses prior to going bankrupt, but these funds were not enough to complete the task. California's Department of Recreation and Parks is currently attempting to finish cleanup and eventually create a recreational skating rink on the property.

Providing the surrounding community with job training and employment opportunities is also an important part of Showcase Community efforts. Jointly administered by EPA and the National Institute for Environmental Health Services (NIEHS), the Brownfields Minority Worker Training Program provides worker health and safety education to young minority adults and promotes job placement in brownfields construction and cleanup activities. The first two years of this program in Los Angeles were funded partially by NIEHS and EPA at a cost of approximately \$400,000. In July 2000, the program received an additional five years of NIEHS funding at \$135,000 per year. That same year, the city applied for and received a \$100,000 EPA Brownfields Job Training and Development Demonstration Pilot grant. Under this grant, the city collaborated with the Los Angeles Conservation Corps to provide training to 26 students in hazardous waste operations, innovative environmental technologies, and lead and asbestos abatement. To date, 14 students have been employed after graduation, with more expected to be placed in environmental jobs.

CONTACTS:

For more information on EPA's Showcase Communities, contact Tony Raia of OSWER's Office of Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment at (202) 566-2758

Or visit EPA's Brownfields Web site at:

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