



CITY OF GARDENA

BROWNFIELDS PILOT PROJECT

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Brownfields Pilot Project News

Why Should We Redevelop Brownfields?



GARDENA BROWNFIELDS

LEGEND

- Underutilized
- Nursery land
- Empty buildings
- Vacant property
- Other

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Historically in the process of trying to save money Brownfields projects have gotten lost in the shuffle. It is a natural occurrence, when one feels the threat of terrorism it is easy to say that homeland security is far more important than Brownfields remediation and redevelopment. Environmental projects like Brownfields mitigation and/or remediation are as important and critical a part of an overall economic development strategy. Here are some of the reasons why:

The EPA define Brownfields as, *“Abandoned, idled, or underused industrial and commercial facilities or properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination.”*

Redevelopment of Brownfields extremely important, especially to a city like Gardena, because they pose a potential health hazard and also stand as obstacles to the implementation of new services. They offer the possibility of eliminating blight, and spurring economic redevelopment in the community.

Brownfields are sites that can be redeveloped resulting in the creation of additional jobs and the increase sales tax revenue, and property tax revenues. If the site remains idle then the City misses an opportunity to increase the public and private services to the City. To this end, Brownfields are perceived as a double-edged sword. On one edge it appears there is a barrier to development, and on the other you have a potential danger to the environment and public health.

The City of Gardena we see a City with a rich multicultural history. It was

once a thriving part of the thriving aerospace industry. With reductions in spending during the 1980s and 90s the number of aerospace companies in Southern California diminished drastically.

When these plants closed they left a legacy of that rich manufacturing history. While panic is not a requisite, the problems that face the City should not be overlooked. Gardena is a city looking to a future filled with opportunity. If we take this opportunity to clean our land and increase our available real estate, we will create the prospect of increasing the quality of life, education, and services within Gardena. In addition, we will rise as a model to other cities on how cities can efficiently and effectively remediate pollution and make economic redevelopment easier to accomplish.

For additional questions about the project, call (310) 217-6101.



Environmental Justice: Part II

The inequitable distribution of Brownfields

The Industrial revolution had a significant impact on the American economy. In the late 19th Century, industrialization transformed the young United States from a predominantly agrarian economy, small despite its physical size, to a large economic powerhouse that would come to shape the way the world looked and did business in the 20th Century.

To say that this change and growth has come without a price would be negligent.

As the 21st Century began it became clear that environmental issues were becoming increasingly a problem. The environment affects the health and economic well-being of residents near the degradation in increasing proportions.

One need only drive through the lower income and predominantly minority neighborhoods of Los Angeles County or any other major metropolitan area in the United States to see that entire neighborhoods bear the scars of this rapid growth. For the most part this growth occurred with little planning and little investigation about the repercussions of this rapid growth.

One of the most important aspects of environmental protection and economic redevelopment is to institute a policy of Environmental Justice. For too long corporations have been allowed to amass great profits on the backs of lower and middle-income communities. A disproportionate percentage of the Brownfields in Los Angeles County lie in one of these communities, Gardena.

It is clearly the goal of the Gardena Brownfields Pilot Project is help correct the historical injustice visited upon some neighborhoods in the City. The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit was held October 24-27, 1991 in

Washington DC. At that time there was a declaration made that laid out the basic tenets of Environmental Justice. The group:

- Affirmed the extreme importance of ecology and ecological unity
- Demanded that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all people
- Mandated the ethical, equal and balanced use of resources to promote sustainable development
- Called for universal protection from exposure to toxic substances that threaten clean air, water and earth
- Demanded fundamental rights to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination for all communities
- Required all polluters be held accountable for the environmental degradation under the law
- Affirmed the rights of communities to be intimately involved in planning and development of environmentally related projects
- Required safe and healthy work environment for all employees without being forced to weigh an unsafe work environment against unemployment
- Called for full protection of the rights of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages
- Considered government acts of environmental injustice as violations of international human rights law
- Confirmed the sovereignty of native peoples
- Demanded urban and rural ecological policies that rebuild our cities while honoring cultural integrity.
- Called for expansion of environmental education programs
- Called for conservation on an individual basis.

You are probably asking yourself;



what can I do about environmental injustice? The answer is simple. **GET INVOLVED!** Be involved in community projects that affect the health and safety of your family and your neighbors. Be mindful of your surroundings. If something looks like it could be an environmental hazard, report it to city officials, the fire department or public works. Make your opinions known to policy makers, business owners and local government officials. The best way to ensure that the civil and environmental rights of the lower classes and minorities are never violated again is to ensure that absolutely no one's rights are violated, and that no projects which place undue burden on the eco-system are undertaken without great analysis of the repercussions.

If you have any questions about the Brownfields Pilot Project, you can contact Peter Einhorn, Brownfields Intern at 310-217-6101 or via e-mail at peinhorn@ci.gardena.ca.us

A Financial Reference Guide For Economic Redevelopment of Vacant Properties:

One way to help lessen the issue of Brownfields in Gardena is for local business owners (commercial and industrial) to take proactive steps in cleaning up contamination on their properties. This would lessen the burden on government to undertake these projects and to turn their focus to other important social and infrastructure issues. Unfortunately this could also place financial burden on the business community. To offset this potential financial burden there are several sources in the public and private sector that can assist business owners with development of vacant land that may have environmental issues.

Several banks offer investment capital programs in economic development projects. In some cases the aid comes in the form of low interest loan programs. In other projects they will provide direct investment in projects aimed at economic development of low/medium income communities or assistance to minority owned businesses. For further information check the local branch office of banks in your neighborhood. They will be able to provide further details on the programs their bank offers.

An example, without endorsing the program, Bank of America has several programs which seek to invest in projects that promote economic development. Some of the programs provide funding for community development projects:

Community Development Venture Fund Investments

Provide capital to:

- Small, minority or women-owned or managed companies.
- Companies located in low- and moderate-income areas.
- **Community Development Financial Institutions** –invest in for-profit and non-profit institutions that provide financial services to underserved communities.

More information can be found at:

<http://www.bankofamerica.com/community>

The Small Business Administration (SBA):

A public organization dedicated to providing the small business community with information and guaranteed loans for, among other things, Economic Development projects.

Information on SBA in general can be found by calling **818-552-3210** or surfing to: <http://www.sba.gov>

To find information on the Los Angeles SBA specifically the link is: <http://www.sba.gov/ca/la/index5.html>

Los Angeles Economic Development Council:

LAEDC is a local agency dedicated to helping businesses in the LA region with projects. They offer many free business assistance services ranging from helping businesses identify potential public funding sources, to educating them about economic incentives that are available. This organization is an important information source for businesses. The can be contacted at **1-800-639-4357**. Additional information can be accessed at: <http://www.laedc.org>

Small Business Development Center:

The SBDC at El Camino College is dedicated to businesses specifically in Southwest Los Angeles County. They aid businesses with the process of applying for the *Pre-Qualified Loan Program*. These loans can be used for any number of purposes including the cleanup of Brownfields. The can be contacted at **310-787-6466** or via the World Wide Web: <http://www.elcaminocollege.org/commandv/sbdc/0017.htm>

The U.S. Department of Commerce: Economic Development Administration:

EDA is an agency which assists with the redevelopment of land for business purposes. Their particular focus is on economically distressed areas and communities, which are under performing based on the potential of the community. EDA has a very detailed web site. It is an excellent resource to anyone undertaking a redevelopment project for any purpose. The site not only outlines the programs that EDA offers but also provides links to other agencies, that also offer

economic development assistance programs.

For further information please reference the web site at: <http://www.osec.doc.gov/eda/>

State of California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC):

DTSC offers programs to business and organization that wish to clean up Brownfields for economic redevelopment purposes. Available on their website is a brief overview of the *Brownfields Initiative*, a collaboration between multiple state agencies. With the elimination of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal-EPA), other agencies will need to pick up the slack in the program. The *Brownfields Initiative's* goal is to promote reuse of environmentally damaged properties through active efforts to clean these sites. The program offers, in addition to funding options, legal protection for the current property owner for past contamination committed before the ownership transfer occurred. The Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP), is one of the initiatives put forward. The focus is on restoring low risk properties to usable standards. DTSC's web site can be accessed at:

<http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Brownfields/index.html>

These are just a few of the resources available to business leaders in the region. In coming issues we will update this list with further available resources. In addition, should you have any questions feel free to contact our office at 310-217-6101.



Sustainable Development And Smart Growth:

How to preserve resources and improve quality of life

Sustainable Development seeks to use resources in the most efficient manner possible. This is at the center of the argument for Brownfields remediation. Sustainability is commonly understood to mean: *meeting our present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

Sustainability should play a large role in factoring the costs and benefits of Brownfields redevelopment. The ultimate goal is to reuse already existing land and prevent further development on land that can be maintained for parks or other open or green space.

The buzzword for this type of spreading development without reusing old idle land is *sprawl*. Central in realizing these goals is the clean up of old pollution and prevention of further contamination. Sustainable redevelopment seeks to make our community a better place to live and do business in. This will translate to more jobs, more services and more retail businesses.

Sustainable redevelopment would result in the cleanup of many of the cities Brownfield sites. This will not only aid the economy of the community but also make this a healthier environment to

raise children and grandchildren. In the process we will be able to economically develop without placing unnecessary stress on the land, air, and water. In fact, a potential new industry and new source of jobs lies in the industry of environmental clean up and management. We will be able to clean up old pollution spots and not burdening future generations with cleaning up a mess that we create in the present.

Sustainable Communities are becoming more common throughout Southern California. In addition to the benefits to the economy and environment of undertaking this project, the City will stand out as taking a first step towards improving the way of life, health and safety, and economic well being for its citizens. Gardena will stand as a role model for our neighbors in other communities as they undertake similar change.

Smart growth refers to the concerns over current development patterns in cities across the country. Specifically it refers to controlling sprawl within American cities. New growth, in this manner, is not in the best interests of cities of Los Angeles County. Growth is important to the continued vitality of communities but not at the expense of abandoning what is already built (water pipes, power lines, telephone, etc.)

This practice will harm the Gardena community because we will lose people who move out to these new communities in San Bernardino or Riverside Counties. These communities place an unnecessary burden on our natural resources such as water (to compensate for the arid climate) and energy to run air conditioners (in the sweltering summer heat).

The remaining cities in the center are left blighted and impoverished, becoming sites of high crime, low incomes, and little cultural value. The overall appeal of the region is decreased because attractions become more spread out, and more effort and energy is required to sustain them.

Emphasizing *smart growth* is a key to controlling *sprawl*, which ultimately leads to waste resources. Through a strong and effective redevelopment plan we can ensure that Gardena remains a first rate community to live, play and conduct business.