The Brownfields Challenge:
A Survey of Environmental Justice and Community Participation Initiatives
Among Ten National Brownfield Pilot Projects

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Preface

It is a pleasure to present you with this report of the 1998 Science, Engineering & Technology (SET) Services Program. The report is designed to provide the Delaware General Assembly and the citizens of this state with an analysis of the challenges and opportunities that accompany Delaware’s efforts to integrate community participation and environmental justice into brownfields redevelopment.

This report reviews existing brownfields-related programs currently being conducted by Delaware’s Department of Natural Resources (DNREC) and the City of Wilmington. It also examines case studies of the community participation and environmental justice activities of ten Environmental Protection Agency-designated National Brownfields Pilot Projects and suggests how Delaware can learn from their experiences.

The recommendations advanced in this report are the result of the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy’s (CEEP) in-depth analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of those 10 National Brownfields Pilot Projects with respect to community participation and environmental justice. CEEP staff also conducted interviews and solicited information from several experts throughout the country to benefit from their ideas and suggestions regarding community participation and environmental justice related to brownfields redevelopment.

CEEP received valuable assistance in preparing this report from a number of public and private organizations, including Delaware’s Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), the City of Wilmington’s Office of Planning, the Urban Environmental Center, the Environmental Protection Agency’s Region III Office, and the EPA’s Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. A special thanks is owed to the members of these organizations.

I hope that this report will be useful to you in your discussions and deliberations on community participation and environmental justice concerns as related to brownfields.

John Byrne
Director
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Among Ten National Brownfield Pilot Projects

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Executive Summary

Central to policy efforts to realize sustainable urban development is resolution of the problem of brownfields—the restoration of environmentally contaminated properties that have been abandoned and may now pose ecological and human health threats, often to communities of color and low to moderate incomes. Researchers have reported for more than a decade on the persistence of this problem:

- In a landmark study in 1987, the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice established a clear link between race, income, and the siting of hazardous and toxic waste facilities. It found that commercial hazardous waste facilities had the greatest probability of being situated near communities predominantly composed of racial and ethnic minorities (UCC, 1987).
- A National Law Journal article reported in 1992 that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took 20% longer to place abandoned and hazardous toxic waste sites in minority communities on the national priorities list than it took to list similar facilities situated elsewhere. It also found that polluters of those neighborhoods paid fines 45% lower than polluters of white communities (Lavelle and Coyle, 1992).
- A 1994 National Wildlife Fund report reviewed 64 major cases of environmental threats to public health, covering issues of pesticide exposure, workplace hazards, air and water pollution, solid and toxic wastes, lead poisoning, trash incineration, and sewage disposal. It found that low income or minority communities were at greatest risk in all but one of the cases examined (NWF, 1994).
- In a 1995 study, the Center for Policy Alternatives estimated that minorities are 47% more likely than whites to live near a toxic waste facility and 170% more likely to live in areas with multiple toxic facilities (Kratch et al, 1995).

The federal government has acknowledged the importance of brownfields redevelopment in urban revitalization efforts. The Brownfields National Partnership Action Agenda and a Brownfields Tax Incentive were created in 1997, and the EPA has several initiatives underway to tackle brownfield issues. One of the EPA’s most significant efforts is the National and Regional Brownfields Pilot Projects Program which focuses on the interconnection between brownfields redevelopment, environmental justice, and urban revitalization. Since 1994, the program has provided $24 million in seed money to over 228 communities. In addition, the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) Program, established in 1994, includes efforts to address the problem, stressing community-based planning as an essential ingredient.
## Definitions of Important Terms

**Sustainable Development:** Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Brownfields:** Abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

**Environmental Justice:** Fair treatment for people of all races, cultures, and incomes in the enactment and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

**Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities:** A Presidential initiative designed to afford communities new opportunities for growth and revitalization. The framework of the EZ/EC program is embodied in four key principles: Economic Opportunity, Sustainable Community Development, Community-Based Partnerships, and a Strategic Vision for Change.

**Urban Revitalization:** A bottom-up process that proceeds from a community-based vision of its needs and aspirations. It seeks to build capacity, create partnerships and mobilize resources to make the vision a reality.

**Sustainable Community Planning:** Within local communities, a coherent vision for achieving healthy and sustainable communities can be found. Brownfields and other community revitalization efforts should recognize and reflect community goals and develop multifaceted and community-based plans to address economic, social and environmental concerns in a sustainable manner.

The EPA and the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) have identified community involvement as a key to meeting environmental justice and urban revitalization goals in the context of brownfields redevelopment. As a consequence, EPA’s National and Regional Brownfields Pilot Project Program gives special emphasis to community participation mechanisms and environmental justice concerns in its program awards.

### The State of Brownfields In Delaware

Brownfields redevelopment is an important challenge for the State of Delaware. As the principal center of economic and industrial activity, Wilmington has the bulk of the State’s brownfields located within its borders. Historically, industrial development in Delaware has been concentrated in the greater Wilmington area and has largely affected the eastern and southern portions of the city through which the Brandywine and Christiana Rivers flow. Recent studies conducted by Delaware’s Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) indicate that most industrial properties located along these rivers are contaminated.

Current land use estimates indicate that approximately 1,750 acres, or 24% of Wilmington’s useable land area, are likely to be environmentally contaminated and must address by jurisdiction, environmental concerns in their redevelopment. Within Wilmington’s 16 square mile area, major contaminated areas include Cherry Island, East Seventh Street Peninsula, the Port of Wilmington vicinity, South Madison Street, Bell Alley, Browntown, and Todds Lane.
The lands which contain a high incidence of brownfields all share a common history. They were long-time hosts to polluting industries that have since shut down or moved on as environmental codes in the state have become stricter—leaving behind unresolved contamination problems. DNREC studies reveal that extensive areas of soil, sediment, and water contamination from chemicals and metals exist in Wilmington’s brownfields (DNREC, Workplan for Field Activities for BellAlley/South Wilmington Environmental Assessment, 1995). These chemicals and metals can pose risks to human health.

As a consequence, Wilmington’s resident population of approximately 74,000 face disproportionate environmental risks. The concentration of brownfields in Wilmington also imposes a heavy economic burden because it serves as a barrier to the optimum use of 24% of its land for tax-generating revenue and employment. The inability to fully convert this land into reusable and economically viable property limits economic opportunities, investment and long-term employment available to City residents.

In addition to degrading the City’s environment, exposing residents to environmental and health risks and limiting economic opportunities in Wilmington, the high incidence of brownfields is a contributing factor to the phenomenon of urban sprawl. It has encouraged the migration of both industries and residents seeking to avoid the multiple problems associated with the economic and environmental consequences of brownfields. These factors shift economic activity away from the City and towards the development of suburban areas. In this manner, environmental degradation associated with sprawl is expanded to areas beyond Wilmington.

**Brownfields, Environmental Justice and Urban Revitalization in Delaware**

Brownfields in Wilmington display strong links between economic, environmental, and social problems. Many of the brownfield areas are within or adjacent to neighborhoods characterized by high levels of economic hardship and are among a predominantly minority population.

DNREC’s environmental assessments have established that there are many contaminated areas in the City that expose their residents and those that live near them to environmental and health risks. Public health workers have confirmed that these areas are unhealthy and that the worst areas of environmental pollution are those that comprise Wilmington’s Enterprise Community (City of Wilmington, Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative, 1996). In addition, according to 1990 Census data:

- A high level of minority residents reside in or adjacent to brownfield areas located in the City. In many brownfield areas, minority residents represent over 70% of the population;
- Most neighborhoods that are located in or adjacent to brownfield areas in the City have poverty rates of nearly 20% and some areas report poverty rates above 35%; and
- Most communities that are in or adjacent to brownfield areas in the City have populations in which the percentage of children exceeds 15% and some exceed 20% (this is particularly significant to environmental and health issues since children are among the most susceptible to the risks associated with brownfields).
A 1996 study of Wilmington’s Enterprise Community conducted by the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy (CEEP) and the Center for Community Development and Family Policy (CCDFP) at the University of Delaware further exhibits these links. Focus group interviews and survey research conducted in Wilmington’s Southbridge neighborhood found that both community leaders and residents believe that their neighborhood is subject to serious environmental problems which are detrimental to the health of residents. Efforts on the part of community leaders and residents to address these environmental concerns and the impact of polluting industries in the area have been unsuccessful. Leaders and residents alike explain the lack of success to environmental injustices embedded in policy and economic activity.

Overall, Delaware’s brownfield situation underscores the need for policies that promote environmentally sensitive redevelopment which targets benefits to affected communities. This can ensure that environmental, health, economic, and social considerations are accounted for in a comprehensive and fair manner.

**Efforts to Redevelop Delaware’s Brownfields**

In response to brownfields concerns, both the State of Delaware and more recently the City of Wilmington have initiated legislative and programmatic efforts designed to promote brownfields redevelopment.

The State’s brownfield activities are administered by the Site Investigation and Restoration Branch (SIRB) and have been primarily directed toward site assessment and redevelopment (interview with Karl Kalbacher, Program Manager I, Superfund Branch, Division of Air and Waste Management, DNREC, May 12, 1998). The goal has been to encourage redevelopment through cooperation rather than confrontation. DNREC’s Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) and Delaware’s Brownfields Assistance Program have been the driving forces behind this strategy.

Overall, Wilmington’s brownfields efforts have sought to integrate redevelopment opportunities within a community context to ensure that the benefits of brownfields activities are realized by affected communities. The City is currently in the early stages of implementing its Brownfields Work Plan, but it is evident that coordination of information and environmental justice concerns are already viewed as significant elements of successful brownfields redevelopment.
### Delaware Brownfields-Related Legislation and Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation/Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous Substance Cleanup Act of 1990</td>
<td>First legislation in the state to address the remediation of hazardous/toxic waste sites in Delaware. Designed to provide a workable process for effective and timely cleanup of contaminated facilities and areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSCA Amendment of 1995 Creating a Voluntary Cleanup Program</td>
<td>Amendment to 1990 legislation that makes it attractive for parties to enter into voluntary cleanup agreements with DNREC by limiting liability concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of Delaware’s Brownfields Assistance Program</td>
<td>State program which provides incentives for developers and investors to recycle brownfields. They include a funding pool for site investigations and tax incentives for cleanup and redevelopment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Enterprise Community Designation in Wilmington by HUD</td>
<td>Wilmington’s strategic plan focuses on themes that highlight the need for brownfields redevelopment. The sections on economic development and supportive communities discuss the resolution of cleanup issues and redevelopment activities to alleviate environmental degradation, make the community environmentally healthier, and provide needed economic opportunities to residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Brownfields Pilot Program Designation in Wilmington by EPA</td>
<td>Wilmington’s National Brownfields Pilot Program focuses on areas within the Enterprise Community. Its objectives are to create an inventory of brownfields sites, increase neighborhood capacity to participate in the brownfields process, and conduct outreach activities to educate site owners, developers, and investors about brownfields redevelopment incentives.</td>
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### Community Participation and Environmental Justice Efforts

At the state-level, making provision for community participation in the brownfields redevelopment process falls to DNREC. Community participation is called for in DNREC’s Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with EPA, which states that affected citizens and nearby property owners (in addition to other actors) “must be informed and given meaningful opportunities for involvement in the decision-making process during the investigation and cleanup of the site” (EPA and DNREC, *Environmental Partnership Agreement*, 1997). Public participation in DNREC’s Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) is also emphasized as a provision of Delaware’s Hazardous Substance Cleanup Act.

“There is a need to involve the community-at-large in the planning and project development process. Current participation is selective and sporadic. The goal of ensuring environmental justice by empowering, educating, and protecting the community is best achieved through shared knowledge. The confrontational, adversarial situations that arise in the community occur because knowledge is restricted to a select few…our intention is to intimately involve our communities in development projects at an early stage, and to facilitate their development in legislation to provide a mandated review process” (City of Wilmington, *Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative*, 1996: 8).
(HSCA) of 1990. After the VCP has informed the public of cleanup plans for a property, communities are given a period of 20 days to comment. According to DNREC, VCP parties are encouraged to take an active role in informing the public of plans and actions regarding brownfields properties. DNREC has also recently entered into an MOA with the City of Wilmington to enhance communication lines regarding brownfields properties. Finally, DNREC has begun to examine how the agency can better integrate environmental justice concerns into its existing activities. It has appointed an environmental justice coordinator and established an advisory committee to encourage all of its branches to consider how environmental justice can be pursued as an agency-wide goal and incorporated into its policies and programs.

Wilmington’s Department of Planning has responsibility for coordinating brownfields cleanup and redevelopment activities, including community participation, at the city level. The Brownfields Assessment Coordinator is responsible for administering the Pilot Project. In addition, the City’s Emergency Management Coordinator, who is responsible for public health and safety issues, is leading Wilmington’s efforts to integrate environmental justice concerns into the City’s policies and programs. The City’s Enterprise Community, through its creation of community input mechanisms in the decision-making process, also serves the purpose of promoting active community involvement in the brownfields redevelopment process.

To promote community participation and environmental justice in the Pilot Project, a significant portion of Wilmington’s grant has been allocated to the Urban Environmental Center (UEC). The UEC is the City’s community-based partner and is developing programs to inform, involve, and empower the residents of brownfield areas in the redevelopment process. UEC was awarded an Environmental Justice Grant from EPA in 1998 to expand its activities in this domain. The Center for Energy and Environmental Policy (CEEP) of the University of Delaware provides technical assistance to the UEC to help it to develop environmental justice plans and to build community awareness about brownfields and sustainable development alternatives.

Comparison of Community Participation in Brownfields Pilot Projects

When EPA began its Brownfields Pilot Project Program, its purpose was to learn from states and localities, struggling with brownfields issues of their own, about different models to address the problems of cleanup and redevelopment in an environmentally just and sustainable manner. The knowledge gained from these pilots can provide a foundation of experience for Delaware to consider as it continues to implement its brownfields projects and programs.

Ten sites were selected for this report to capture for Delaware a “best practices” understanding of how other jurisdictions are involving communities in the brownfields redevelopment process. The following EPA-awarded brownfields pilot projects were studied in-depth: Baltimore, MD; Bridgeport, CT; Burlington, VT; Charlotte, NC; Cleveland, OH; Kansas City, KS and MO; New Orleans, LA; Northampton County/Cape Charles, VA; Portland, OR; and Trenton, NJ. These pilot projects were analyzed along seven key criteria: Inclusiveness of Community Involvement; Diversity of Mechanisms for Community Involvement; Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement; Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment; Emphasis Given to
Recommendations for Delaware’s Brownfields

Environmentally just and sustainable development can be achieved through meaningfully integrating community participation and environmental justice in Delaware’s brownfields redevelopment process. New policies, processes, and procedures are needed to fully realize these goals. Through our analysis of Delaware’s current brownfields programs and policies, as well as community participation and environmental justice efforts, and an in-depth analysis of the experiences of ten pilot projects, we are able to offer the following recommendations.

- Develop a statement of goals to integrate community participation and environmental justice concerns into Delaware’s brownfields redevelopment process. This would reaffirm Delaware’s commitment to environmentally just and sustainable development and provide a common context for action amongst stakeholders.

- Build awareness at the community level throughout Delaware by developing a state-wide program to inform, involve, and empower the residents of brownfield areas in the redevelopment process.

- Coordinate community participation and environmental justice efforts across State and City government agencies.

- Enhance communications between government, private interests and the community to supply community residents and organizations with needed technical, health, cleanup and redevelopment information while recognizing the valuable knowledge of environmental and social problems that those groups possess.

- Operationalize meaningful community participation and environmental justice efforts through permitting, licensing, and statutes.

- Institutionalize environmental justice goals by establishing state-level institutional responsibilities to provide advice, recommendations, and evaluations on State policy and programs needed in this area.

- Create a State-supported fund to assist communities in building capacity and awareness to address issues of brownfields redevelopment, environmental justice and sustainable development.
I. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to examine community participation efforts in ten Environmental Protection Agency-designated National Brownfield Pilot Projects and provide recommendations to the Delaware General Assembly for community involvement in Delaware's efforts to decontaminate and redevelop brownfields in the State. The recommendations are based on our findings regarding "best practices" to stimulate community participation at the ten National Brownfield Pilot Projects researched for this report. The selection of the ten sites was made in consultation with EPA program staff and was limited to those sites that had been awarded funds at least one year prior to the launching of this study. The City of Wilmington is currently in the early stages of implementing a National Brownfield Pilot Project (and a federal Enterprise Community program). With this in mind, it is an important time to learn from the experiences of other National Brownfields Pilot Project Programs that have been successful in promoting community involvement.

The cooperation and advice of the Department of Planning of the City of Wilmington, the Site Investigation and Restoration Branch (SIRB) of the State of Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), and the Environmental Protection Agency's Region III Office are much appreciated. The Center for Energy and Environmental Policy is solely responsible for the findings and recommendations of the the report.
II. Overview

A question that confronts American society at the end of the twentieth century is how to provide needed economic opportunities while, at the same time, avoiding the environmental degradation and social inequity that have often accompanied past models of development. This question is relevant to all levels of society, but one policy focus concerns efforts to address urban decay in a meaningful manner through a policy of “sustainable development” that recognizes the interconnection between economic, environmental, and social issues.

Central to national policy efforts to realize sustainable urban development is resolution of the problem of brownfields—the restoration of environmentally contaminated properties that have been abandoned and may now pose ecological and human health threats, often to communities of color and those of low to moderate incomes. Brownfields are the consequence of many interrelated problems, including urban sprawl, environmental degradation, residential segregation, disinvestment, and persistent socioeconomic, racial, and class divisions.

In a landmark study in 1987, the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice established a clear link between race, income, and the siting of hazardous waste and toxic waste facilities. It found that commercial hazardous waste facilities had the greatest chance of being situated near communities predominantly composed of racial and ethnic minorities (UCC, 1987). The National Law Journal reported in 1992 that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took 20% longer to place abandoned hazardous and toxic waste sites in minority communities on the national priorities list than it took to list similar facilities situated elsewhere. It also found that polluters of those neighborhoods paid fines 45% lower than polluters of white communities (Lavelle and Coyle, 1992).

In 1992 EPA concluded that people of color and low-income communities experience disproportionately high exposure to toxic pollutants throughout the U.S (EPA 1992). A 1994 National Wildlife Fund report reviewed 64 major cases of environmental threats to public health, covering issues of pesticide exposure, workplace hazards, air and water pollution, solid and toxic waste, lead poisoning, trash incineration, and sewage disposal. It found that low-income or minority communities were at greatest risk in all but one of the cases examined (NWF, 1994). Finally, in a 1995 study, the Center for Policy Alternatives estimated that minorities are 47% more likely than whites to live near a toxic waste facility and 170% more likely to live in areas with multiple toxic facilities (Kratch et al., 1995).
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<td>A Presidential initiative designed to afford communities new opportunities for growth and revitalization. The framework of the EZ/EC program is embodied in four key principles: Economic Opportunity, Sustainable Community Development, Community-Based Partnerships, and a Strategic Vision for Change.</td>
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<td>Within local communities, a coherent vision for achieving healthy and sustainable communities can be found. Brownfields and other community revitalization efforts should recognize and reflect community goals and develop multifaceted and community-based plans to address economic, social and environmental concerns in a sustainable manner.</td>
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The federal government has acknowledged the importance of brownfield redevelopment in overall urban revitalization efforts. The Brownfields National Partnership Action Agenda and a Brownfield Tax Incentive were created in 1997, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has several initiatives underway to tackle brownfield issues. One of EPA's most significant efforts is the National and Regional Brownfields Pilot Projects Program which focuses on the interconnection between brownfields redevelopment, environmental justice, and urban revitalization. Since 1994, the program has provided $24 million in seed money to over 228 communities. The Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) Program, established in 1994, also includes efforts to address the problem, stressing community-based planning as an essential ingredient.

The EPA and its National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) have identified community involvement as a key to meeting environmental justice and urban revitalization goals in the context of brownfields redevelopment. As a consequence, the EPA's National and Regional Brownfields Pilot Project Program gives special emphasis to community participation mechanisms and environmental justice concerns. In this regard, the EPA program and the EZ/EC initiative
represent complimentary efforts to build sustainable communities by recognizing the link between social, environmental, and economic problems.

Brownfields redevelopment is an important challenge for the State of Delaware, and this is especially true for its largest city. Wilmington has approximately 1,750 acres of vacant, abandoned, under-used, and/or contaminated brownfields (Figure 1). These properties comprise over one-fourth of all land in the city and represent a major limit on tax revenue generation and job creation in the City (City of Wilmington Brownfields Initiative Application, 1996).

The issue of brownfields in Wilmington is closely tied to issues of race and income. Communities adjacent to brownfields are largely communities of color made up of low to moderate income families experiencing unemployment and poverty rates higher than the state and national averages. According to 1990 census data, poverty rates in these communities are the highest in the state: ranging from 12 to 66 percent with unemployment rates ranging from 6 to 20 percent (Wilmington, DE Enterprise Community Strategic Plan Summary, 1994).

Analysis of brownfields locations in Wilmington shows that local residents also face a disproportionate level of environmental risk. Research conducted for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) reveals that residents of the city’s Southbridge area face disproportionate levels of soil and groundwater pollution (DNREC, 1995: 5). Public health workers have confirmed that Southbridge, which contains Wilmington’s Enterprise Community, is one of the most contaminated areas in the state and region (Wilmington Brownfields Initiative Application, 1996).

In recent years, Delaware has made efforts to address its brownfield situation. In 1995, both houses of the Delaware General Assembly passed legislation to provide incentives for the business community to purchase, clean-up and redevelop abandoned industrial sites. In addition, DNREC has also adopted a successful Voluntary Cleanup Program that encourages voluntary agreements for the purpose of recycling brownfield sites.

In April 1997, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded Wilmington a National Brownfields Pilot Project, with funding for site assessment, identification, remediation planning and design (it does not provide funds for actual cleanup activities). In its brownfields pilot application, the City highlighted the role of community participation to ensure environmental justice in the pursuit of urban revitalization.
III. Community Participation and Brownfields Redevelopment: The Evolution of National Policy

The concept of “brownfields” emerged from efforts to address contaminated urban properties. A major concern that confronted these efforts was environmental liability related to abandoned commercial and industrial properties. The term “brownfields” was introduced by the Northeast/Midwest Institute to describe this problem (NEJAC, 1996). From a narrow standpoint, EPA's National and Regional Brownfields Pilot Project Program represents an attempt to focus on ways of removing the impediments to investment that challenge prospective developers and lenders, while also meeting the Agency's environmental justice objectives. The specific elements of an effective and acceptable solution to the brownfields problem, however, raises issues that go well beyond those of environmental liability.

In recognition of these broader concerns, EPA’s National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) has identified environmental justice as a key factor to be addressed in brownfield redevelopment. In turn, the role of community participation has been underscored in achieving environmental justice and brownfields redevelopment. NEJAC’s Public Dialogues on Urban Revitalization and Brownfields: Envisioning Healthy and Sustainable Communities (1996) spells out the Agency's idea of the linkages between urban revitalization, environmental justice and community participation.

All stakeholders involved in the dialogues sponsored by the EPA and NEJAC—from grassroots representatives to business interests—affirmed the importance of community involvement, not simply as an ideal, but as a concrete action, identifying community-based environmental planning, education and organization as important means to environmentally and socially sustainable urban revitalization. Stakeholders urged the EPA, local governments and the business community to recognize the value of active community participation and the relevance of community knowledge in building sustainable communities.

NEJAC’s Public Participation and Accountability Subcommittee also published The Model Plan For Public Participation (1996) to provide direction on how EPA can promote public participation in decisions that affect human health and the environment. “The Model Plan” embraces two guiding principles: first that public participation should be encouraged in all aspects of environmental decision-making (with all stakeholders seen as equal partners); and

“If there is any hope of revitalizing our urban communities, we have to begin with revitalizing the participation of the citizenry. We know that apathy is rampant, especially in economically disadvantaged communities. But for us to make sustainable communities, we must take the time to cut through the apathy. It will take time because people of color and low income communities are not just disenfranchised economically; we are disenfranchised psychologically because we have witnessed a history of being locked out of the decision-making process.” (Connie Tucker of the Southern Organizing Committee for Social and Economic Justice, Atlanta, GA, as quoted in the NEJAC Public Dialogues, 1996: 20)
second that the decision-making process must respect the concerns of all parties while clearly articulating goals, expectations and limitations (NEJAC’s Model Plan, 1996: 2).

In April 1998, the EPA reaffirmed its commitment to public participation with the designation of sixteen “showcase” communities under the Brownfields Showcase Communities Program. The new program is a natural outgrowth of the National and Regional Brownfields Pilot Projects. It acts in conjunction with the Brownfields National Partnership, which brings together the resources of more than 15 agencies to aid brownfield redevelopment efforts in a coordinated manner. The program represents an important opportunity to stimulate community participation in urban revitalization. Its goal of linking governmental and business sector action with community-based institutions to produce sustainable communities may lead to enhanced coordination of environmental and urban policies.

By promoting community participation in the brownfields redevelopment process, the goals of environmental justice and urban revitalization can be pursued in a complimentary manner, avoiding past tendencies to compartmentalize environmental and urban policy responses—with the needless bureaucratic conflicts that ensued.

A. Environmental Justice and Brownfields

The issue of environmental justice has its roots in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. It began initially with minority community challenges to the repeated siting of toxic waste facilities in minority (African-, Hispanic- and Native-American) neighborhoods. A celebrated case in this regard was the 1982 North Carolina decision to build a toxic waste landfill in a predominantly low income and minority community in Warren County. Civil rights and environmental activists collaborated in a number of demonstrations questioning the location of the facility. This sparked studies to examine the spatial relationship between polluting industries/waste disposal sites and the racial and income configuration of the surrounding areas.

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) conducted a study of EPA’s Region IV "to determine the correlation between the location of hazardous waste landfills and the racial and economic status of the surrounding communities." The GAO report found that three of every four landfills in Region IV were located near overwhelmingly minority communities (GAO, 1983). Studies released by the United Church of...

In the wake of community criticism and research findings, the EPA has taken several efforts to foster a more just and equitable approach to environmental problems. The EPA acknowledges environmental justice as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental law, regulations and policies” (EPA, 1992). Fair treatment has been operationalized as the protection of all communities from disproportionate environmental risks resulting from industrial, municipal and public sector decisions. In July 1993, the Agency established the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council to advise EPA on all matters related to environmental justice issues. NEJAC is comprised of stakeholders representing community, environmental and non-governmental organizations, state and local governments, academia, and industry.

Perhaps the most important federal action in this area was President Clinton’s issuance of Executive Order 12898, on February 11, 1994. Entitled “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” it requires each federal agency to “make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low income populations.” President Clinton stated that “all communities and persons across this nation should live in a safe and healthful environment” (Executive Order 12898, 1994).

Brownfield redevelopment is a key challenge to national efforts to achieve environmental justice. For this reason, all EPA brownfield initiatives (including its National Pilot, Regional Pilot, and Showcase Community Programs) require grant awardees to include an environmental justice component in their proposal. Awardees must explain how minority, low income, and other disadvantaged populations in impacted areas will participate in and contribute to brownfields revitalization. They must also describe how their plans will assist these populations to “benefit environmentally and economically” from the assessment, cleanup, and reuse of brownfields.

“The existence of degraded and hazardous physical environments in people of color, low-income, indigenous peoples, and otherwise disenfranchised communities is apparent and indisputable. The physical elements of such environments, in part or in whole, have contributed to human disease and illness, negative psycho-social impact, economic disincentive, infrastructure decay, and overall community disintegration.” (NEJAC, 1996)
B. Urban Revitalization and Brownfields

Approximately 450,000 to 500,000 brownfields are in urban areas, presenting both significant challenges to current patterns of industrial development and unique opportunities to redirect development along a more sustainable path. Yet brownfield redevelopment too often focused in the past on the economic factors of short-term investment and job growth. Environmental and human health concerns were only addressed to the extent that they contributed to economic value. This method of redeveloping brownfields is problematic since it puts at risk mainly low-income, minority communities who must bear the health and environmental costs of brownfields until a profitable redevelopment opportunity is found.

Past efforts to address urban decay by focusing on incentives for business investment and job creation largely failed. The needs of the community were often neglected and the new jobs and investments rarely benefited the residents of those areas. Moreover, this development strategy largely ignored the environmental needs and risks of the communities. The failures of past redevelopment efforts led EPA, along with the Department of Housing and Urban development (HUD), to seek a new “direction.” In NEJAC’s [*Public Dialogues*](1996), industry and government jointly affirmed the importance of an empowered community in realizing a new, environmentally-sensitive urban redevelopment strategy.

Matching community–based planning efforts with adequate financial resources is an important element in urban revitalization. Where developers have a particular project or proposal in mind for the purposes of investment, they need to involve communities early in the planning process so that the design and implementation of redevelopment activities are consistent with community economic, environmental, social, and cultural goals. In other cases, communities have designed their own well-defined visions for redevelopment and need to find investors to finance their projects. Regulators can help facilitate both of these processes.

“I heard a lot of discussion about involvement and partnership…but I suggest taking it one step farther. The community actually has to take charge. It seems to me that if you look at the environmental justice movement, it started with an awakening—a realization that there was a lot of pollution that was victimizing the people there. The second stage was a kind of reaction stage where people said ‘don’t put it here’…I suggest that it’s time now for communities to actually take charge to create a vision of what they want for their communities, to work with their local government, to make it competitive for somebody to invest in that kind of business in that location.” (Richard Morrison of the Bank of America as quoted in the *NEJAC Public Dialogues*, 1996: 44).
This underscores the role of strategic planning initiatives involving all stakeholders. While past efforts of urban redevelopment did not recognize this need, the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community Initiative maintains strategic planning and community participation as its central focus. The EZ/EC Initiative is designed to empower people and communities in areas characterized as having pervasive poverty, unemployment, and general distress conditions. Former Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Henry Cisneros, whose agency administers the program, stated that “our challenge is to provide opportunity to all Americans. We all believe that the best strategy for community empowerment is a community-driven comprehensive approach which coordinates economic, physical, environmental, community, and human needs” (The President’s Community Enterprise Board, 1993: 4).

Brownfield revitalization is a major focus of the EZ/EC Initiative. According to current HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo, “brownfields often sit as prime real estate in the heart of Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. In their day, these brownfields were the engines of America’s greatness. Today they can be a vessel for America's urban renewal—if we work together” (HUD Press Release No. 98-122, 1998).

The EPA’s new “Brownfields Showcase Communities” serve as a testament to the integral relationship between brownfields, empowerment zones/enterprise communities, community participation and urban revitalization. Of the 16 showcase communities that have been designated for the program, three are in empowerment zones and eight are in enterprise communities. As such, showcase communities represent important opportunities to promote meaningful community participation in brownfields efforts.

C. Building Sustainable Communities

President Clinton created the President's Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD) in June 1993 by Executive Order 12852 to advise the President on sustainable development initiatives, recognize outstanding achievements in sustainable development throughout the U.S., and develop new approaches to integrate economic, environmental and equity issues.
In Sustainable America: A New Consensus for Prosperity, Opportunity, and a Healthy Environment for the Future (1996), the PCSD identified communities as the building blocks of sustainable development. The PCSD recognized that sustainable development can easily remain theoretical and divorced from reality unless it is linked to people's everyday lives and seen as relevant to the fundamental needs of jobs, clean air and water, education, etc. From this perspective it is essential that development is planned within the context of communities and their needs and goals.

To highlight the importance of communities, the PCSD established a Sustainable Communities Task Force to explore the obstacles and opportunities for sustainable development at the community level. The task force noted that in sustainable communities, people are well-informed and actively involved in making community decisions that benefit future as well as present generations. Sustainable communities are based on an understanding that successful, long-term, environmentally-sensitive solutions require the structuring of partnerships between regulators, business interests and residents. Such partnerships need to be representative of all sectors of the community if local planning and decisions are to effectively reflect the full range of community concerns and preferences.

Table 2: National Goals Toward Sustainable Development

| Health and Environment: Ensure that every person enjoys the benefits of clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment at home, at work, and at play. |
| Economic Prosperity: Sustain a healthy U.S. economy that grows sufficiently to create meaningful jobs, reduce poverty, and provide opportunities for a high quality of life for all. |
| Equity: Ensure that all Americans are afforded justice and have the opportunity to achieve economic, environmental, and social well-being. |
| Conservation of Nature: Use, conserve and protect natural resources---land, air, water, and biodiversity---in ways that ensure long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits for ourselves and future generations. |
| Stewardship: Create a widely held ethic of stewardship that strongly encourages individuals, institutions, and corporations to take full responsibility for the economic, environmental, and social consequences of their actions. |
| Sustainable Communities: Encourage people to work together to create healthy communities where natural and historic resources are preserved, jobs are available, sprawl is contained, neighborhoods are secure, education is lifelong, transportation and health care are accessible, and all citizens have opportunities to improve the quality of their lives. |
| Civic Engagement: Create full opportunity for citizens, businesses, and communities to participate in and influence the natural resource, environmental, and economic decisions that affect them. |

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987: 43).

“Sustainable development is economic growth that will benefit present and future generations without detrimentally affecting the resources or biological systems of the planet.” (President’s Executive Order No. 12852).

The PCSD highlighted the role of community-driven planning: “The Council believes that one of the best ways to strengthen communities is to ensure that people have greater power over and responsibility for the decisions that shape their communities…a fundamental component of implementing sustainable development locally is having people come together to identify a community’s needs and then work towards collaborative solutions” (PCSD, 1996: 87).

The PCSD report contains a number of recommendations to create structures that would involve a broader range of interests in shaping community visions of a sustainable future. According to the PCSD, long-term success of a sustainable development policy depends on ensuring the opportunity for all residents of a community to participate in the decision-making process, even those people who have been historically underrepresented. Only in this manner can decisions be made more fairly, conflict mitigated, and the problem of civic disengagement so common in society be remedied. In sum, community participation is judged by the PCSD to be an essential element in building sustainable communities.

“Creating a better future depends, in part, on the knowledge and involvement of citizens and on a decision-making process that embraces and encourages differing perspectives of those affected by government policy. Steps toward a more sustainable future include developing community-driven strategic planning and collaborative regional planning; improving community and building design; decreasing sprawl, and creating strong diversified economies while increasing jobs and other opportunities.” (PCSD, 1996: 83)
IV. Comparison of Community Participation in Brownfields Pilot Projects

In 1994, the EPA began awarding funding to National and Regional Brownfields Pilot Projects. The purpose of the brownfields pilots was to provide different models that states and localities, struggling with brownfields issues of their own, could learn from. This section examines ten brownfields pilot projects that represent the range of efforts made to date in the program to address the need for community participation. The knowledge gained from these pilot projects can provide a foundation of experience for Delaware to consider as it continues to implement its brownfields projects and programs, especially in Wilmington.

From among the 64 National Pilots that had been designated as of 1997, over 30 were screened by the staff of the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy (CEEP) with respect to community involvement. Ten sites from those 30 were selected for the purposes of this review. They are: Baltimore, MD; Bridgeport, CT; Burlington VT; Charlotte, NC; Cleveland, OH; Kansas City, KS and MO; New Orleans, LA; Northampton County/Cape Charles, VA; Portland, OR; and Trenton, NJ. These sites are graphically displayed in Figure 2. Four of these brownfield sites (Baltimore, Kansas City, Portland, and Trenton) have recently been named by the EPA as Brownfields Showcase Communities.

The ten pilot projects under review were analyzed along seven key criteria: Inclusiveness of Community Involvement, Diversity of Mechanisms for Community Involvement, Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement, Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment, Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice, Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships, and Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities. Table 3 describes these criteria in greater detail.

The key criteria used to guide this report were arrived at after a comprehensive review of materials relating to community involvement, environmental justice, and urban revitalization supplied by the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the President’s Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
Figure 2: Selected National Brownfield Pilot Projects

- Portland, OR
- Burlington, VT
- Bridgeport, CT
- Trenton, NJ
- Baltimore, MD
- Cape Charles, VA
- Charlotte, NC
- Kansas City, MO/KS
- New Orleans, LA
In particular, NEJAC and EPA’s *Public Dialogues on Urban Revitalization and Brownfields: Envisioning Healthy and Sustainable Communities* (1995), NEJAC’s *The Model Plan for Public Participation* (1996), PCSD’s *Sustainable America: A New Consensus for Prosperity, Opportunity, and a Healthy Environment for the Future* (1996) and the original legislation and application requirements regarding national brownfields pilots projects and federal empowerment zones/enterprise communities were especially useful in directing research.

### Table 3: Criteria Used to Guide Pilot Project Reviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Inclusiveness of Community Involvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- How inclusively was the pilot community defined?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Did it include those most affected?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Based on the definition of community used in the pilot, was it inclusive in social, economic, and environmental terms?</td>
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<tr>
<th>2. Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Were efforts made to involve and build upon the environmental and social knowledge of existing community groups?</td>
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<td>- Were efforts made to respond to community-designated needs for information and access to it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Did efforts include typically underrepresented groups and organizations?</td>
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<td>- What traditional or innovative outreach efforts were used?</td>
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<tr>
<th>3. Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement</th>
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<tr>
<td>- What obstacles were identified?</td>
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<td>- Were community groups canvassed to learn about obstacles?</td>
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<td>- What efforts were made to work with community groups to overcome obstacles?</td>
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<tr>
<th>4. Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- How were the needs/views of communities taken into account in needs assessment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- In what concrete ways did community perspectives affect the proceedings or outcomes?</td>
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<tr>
<th>5. Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Were environmental justice concerns taken into account? How?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Are there environmental justice programs or offices at the state and/or local levels?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Were connections attempted/made between environmental justice groups and the pilot?</td>
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<tr>
<th>6. Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Were efforts made to promote sustainable community/industry partnerships?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What mechanisms were used for this purpose?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- List an example, if available, of a successful sustainable development partnership.</td>
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<tr>
<th>7. Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- What were the overall strengths of the pilot project with particular reference to efforts of building sustainable communities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- List some of the sustainable community-related achievements of the pilot project.</td>
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<tr>
<th>8. Lessons for Delaware</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- With respect to community participation, environmental justice and urban revitalization, what are the most important lessons that the pilot’s experience holds for Delaware.</td>
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Priority questions were constructed for each key criterion (see above) and organized in a survey format. The survey was distributed to three different organizational levels for each of the brownfields pilot projects in question: the EPA Regional Office with jurisdiction; the local office...
administering the award; and community members that were involved in the brownfields pilot projects. Survey responses were supplemented by supporting documents obtained from those administering the pilot projects. In addition, the initial survey responses were followed up with telephone interviews.

Table 4 summarizes our findings by key criterion for the ten brownfields pilot projects. The remainder of this section provides an in-depth discussion of the individual pilot projects and CEEP’s findings. Although the different programs represent specific responses to the unique circumstances that confronts each local project, analysis of their collective experiences can be useful to communities in Delaware, and to our State and local governments, as parties continue to evaluate appropriate ways to address our State’s brownfield issues. The lessons that are offered on how to foster community participation to build sustainable communities are especially worthwhile.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pilot Project</th>
<th>Inclusiveness of Community Involvement</th>
<th>Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement</th>
<th>Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement</th>
<th>Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment</th>
<th>Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice</th>
<th>Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships</th>
<th>Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities</th>
<th>Lessons for Delaware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>-Baltimore Brownfields Council representation -EZ Networks</td>
<td>-Initial community distrust and disinterest -Lack of time and resources</td>
<td>Reactive Involvement</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-Revolving Loan and Grant Program -Establishment of MD VCP in 1997 -Showcase Community</td>
<td>-EZ linkages to enhance CP and leverage funds -Broad CP w/ site specific role for affected communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeport, CT</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-CLEAN Task Force representation -Community Action Groups (CAGs) -Training and Education Summit</td>
<td>-Lack of community awareness/knowledge -Decreasing levels of CP over time</td>
<td>Reactive Involvement</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-205 site inventory -Assessment and reuse strategies for six sites -Limited Liability Corp. -Groundworks Trust</td>
<td>-Education Partnerships -Adequate feedback loops -Use of EC participatory template and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington, VT</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-Task Force Advisory Committee representation -Neighborhood Planning Assemblies (NPAs) -EC Networks</td>
<td>-Community distrust over lack of control -Lack of funds for remediation and redevelopment</td>
<td>Reactive Involvement</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-Resolution of past contentious EJ issues -Meaningful engagement of affected communities</td>
<td>-EC linkages to promote partnerships -Education Partnerships -Redevelopment in a neighborhood context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-Site Selection Team representation -Community meetings w/ democratic proceedings -Inventive CP promotion mechanisms</td>
<td>-Initial community distrust and disinterest -Lack of funds for remediation and redevelopment</td>
<td>Proactive Involvement</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-Award-winning CP promotion mechanisms -Establishment of NC Brownfields Reuse Act of 1997</td>
<td>-Educating stakeholders -Value of innovative promotion mechanisms -Role of meetings facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>-Community Strategies Team w/ advisory role -Website/GIS system -Partnership w/ Cuyahoga Community College</td>
<td>-Initial community distrust and disinterest -Private site ownership -CP mechanisms were inadequate</td>
<td>Reactive Involvement</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>-Creation of 181 jobs and new revenue sources -Website/GIS system -Establishment of OH VCP in 1994</td>
<td>-CP needs to be actively promoted at the outset -Access and training must be provided for computer based CP systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Program</td>
<td>Inclusiveness of Community Involvement</td>
<td>Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement</td>
<td>Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement</td>
<td>Inclusion of Community Perspectives on Needs Assessment</td>
<td>Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice</td>
<td>Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships</td>
<td>Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities</td>
<td>Lessons for Delaware</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-Kansas City Brownfield Initiative representation -Meetings in affected areas -Existing social networks</td>
<td>-Lack of city/staff personnel -Initial community distrust and disinterest</td>
<td>Proactive Involvement</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-Strong commitment to communications -Community-mapping strategy at outset -Showcase Community</td>
<td>-Value of maintaining open communications -Building new CP networks -Need for formal EJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans, LA</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-Brownfields Consortium Group w/ a majority of Community-elected and EJ representatives -11 city-wide meetings</td>
<td>-Lack of funds for remediation and redevelopment</td>
<td>Proactive Involvement</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate (ongoing)</td>
<td>-Unique participatory model w/ community and EJ majority -EPA praise as a model for CP</td>
<td>-Use of community-based knowledge -Value of a democratic decision-making process -Instilling industry confidence w/ strong CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton, VA</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-Sustainable Development Task Force representation -Community workshops to design and later review eco-industrial park and brownfields efforts</td>
<td>-Lack of funds for remediation and redevelopment</td>
<td>Proactive Involvement</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-Community-driven action strategy -Leveraging success -Eco-park designation -NEJAC and EPA praise for CP and EJ</td>
<td>-Value of meaningful CP in program success -CP as a vehicle for EJ -Leveraging funding and instilling industry confidence w/ strong CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>-Brownfields Roundtable representation -Meeting w/ neighborhood association members -Brownfields Online website</td>
<td>-Narrow interpretation of community -CP mechanisms were inadequate</td>
<td>Reactive Involvement</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate (ongoing)</td>
<td>-CP and EJ increased as the project evolved -Strong commitment to overall sustainable development strategy -Showcase Community</td>
<td>-Value of strong initial commitment to CP/EJ -Need for constructive feedback mechanisms -Linking redevelopment to community benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trenton, NJ</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-Brownfield Enviro Solutions for Trenton Committee representation -Isles Inc. conducted education workshops -Community meetings</td>
<td>-Lack of community organizational skills and awareness</td>
<td>Proactive Involvement</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-Permanent citywide brownfields agenda -Leadership training for community -Showcase Community -Strong communications</td>
<td>-Value of citywide brownfields dialogue -Educating stakeholders -Education Partnerships -Balancing reuse options amongst stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A. Baltimore, Maryland

Baltimore was awarded an EPA national brownfields designation in September 1995. The pilot project targets brownfields sites located within Baltimore’s Federal Empowerment Zone. The award provides the city with $200,000 to begin assessment activities, involving diverse stakeholders, in the overall brownfields revitalization process.

In March 1998, Baltimore was chosen as one of the sixteen model EPA “Showcase Communities.” Its selection was largely due to the success it had previously shown in building collaborative relationships to foster brownfields redevelopment. Baltimore will receive an additional $1.5 million and the combined resources of over 15 federal agencies will be provided to address local cleanup and reuse issues in the city.

Background

Baltimore’s rich history as an industrial manufacturing center changed dramatically from the 1970s to the 1990s. During that time, the city lost over 50% of its manufacturing jobs. Present indicators of distress include an unemployment rate of 10.6% and a poverty rate of 21.9%. These hardships have particularly affected minority residents of the city, who comprise about 50% of Baltimore’s population. The city’s socioeconomic problems are mirrored environmentally with the presence of a large number of brownfields.

As manufacturing has declined in Baltimore, the city has been left with abandoned and in some cases, contaminated, former industrial sites. The city estimates that 3,500 to 5,300 acres of land zoned for manufacturing may have environmental problems. These areas threaten public health and contamination/liability concerns associated with them inhibit revitalization. The stigma of being a “brownfield” zone especially hampers economic revitalization efforts in Baltimore’s federal Empowerment Zone since approximately 40% of Baltimore’s potential brownfield sites are located within the overwhelmingly minority-populated EZ.

Overall, Baltimore has sought to link its brownfields pilot with its EZ efforts to promote revitalization of the city’s urban core. This strategy acknowledges the interconnection between socioeconomic conditions, public health, and environmental degradation issues that the city faces. Specifically, it has attempted to:

- encourage urban economic revitalization while promoting environmental awareness and protection, especially of the Chesapeake basin/watershed area;
- advance efficient land-use patterns and thereby reduce the land and water pollution which can result from urban sprawl; and
- provide long-term economic opportunities for the city’s lower-income communities through redevelopment of the EZ’s brownfield sites.

Inclusiveness of Community Involvement

The Planning Department administers the brownfields project by actively engaging the community in the redevelopment process. "Community" was not defined on a site-specific basis initially, but in a broader manner that involved all stakeholders including neighborhood groups. The department found that this broader definition of community was beneficial to including all stakeholders in a meaningful dialogue. Using this definition, the Baltimore Brownfields Council was established as both an advisory group and a community outreach provider.

The Council consists of a wide spectrum of different interests in the brownfields process, including several local community organizations, developers and planners, the Baltimore Urban
League, Jubilee Baltimore, the Council for Economic and Business Opportunity, the Community Environmental Partnership, and other government, private and nonprofit organizations involved in brownfields redevelopment. All groups involved on the Council advise the city on planning policies and brownfields redevelopment. The Council also advances community involvement by providing environmental and financing information for stakeholders. Overall, the city has sought to foster a dynamic process of community involvement that includes local residents, government officials and regulators, and business interests.

**Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement**

The Brownfields Council is intended to involve a wide range of community interests in the brownfields process. All regular meetings are open to the general public and are held at varying times (day and night) to convenience those who might want to attend. Issues are usually decided on a consensus basis in which community members are allowed a chance to participate and voice their opinions. When views differ, decisions are decided on a majority basis. Community participation also takes place on a site-specific basis.

In keeping with Maryland state law, potential developers must advertise and submit redevelopment plans in newspapers and major publications. When community members respond to these plans, additional site-specific meetings take place to allow for general public comment regarding reuse options. In order to facilitate active community participation in the brownfields process, the Brownfields Council also:

- publishes and distributes via targeted mail a newsletter on brownfields that is sent to community organizations, businesses, government regulatory and economic development offices, and environmental groups;
- sends outreach personnel to different groups (ranging from community organizations to the state Chamber of Commerce) to conduct live presentations on the environmental, economic, and social issues associated with redevelopment; and
- builds on the existing networks of community participation which Baltimore’s federal Empowerment Zone has already successfully used.

**Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement**

The major obstacles to community involvement identified in Baltimore are a lack of time and adequate resources. Initial community distrust and disinterest due to past top-down redevelopment initiatives must be overcome to meaningfully engage the community in the brownfields process. Building trust and awareness, and maintaining these qualities throughout brownfield efforts, however, requires a substantial amount of time and resources (in both money and personnel). In order to deal with time and resource constraints, the Baltimore Pilot Project has tied its efforts to those of the city’s federal Empowerment Zone.

Efforts were made at the outset of the Pilot Project to build on the successful community networks that had been instituted during the establishment of the Empowerment Zone. Since trust and communications had already been established with community groups, awareness of brownfields issues was made easier. Moreover, the city has partnered its resources with the EZ to create a $3 million revolving loan and grant program for brownfields revitalization. This is crucial to community involvement because it provides resources for remediation and redevelopment activities. Such activities represent concrete results that communities can see and maintains community involvement and trust for the long-term.
Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment

The community groups contacted by CEEP staff at individual pilot project sites felt their interests and needs were taken into consideration and dove-tailed well with the overall brownfield efforts. For example, the South East Community Organization (SECO), a non-profit organization, has used the brownfields pilot program to advance development efforts it began several years ago. SECO spent three years prior to the brownfields pilot program involving the community in the economic planning process of attempting to create a “green” business park at a former incinerator site. A local foundation funded SECO’s educational efforts and, as a result of the brownfields process, the company which owned the land donated it to the community.

Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice

All parties involved in the brownfields Pilot Project that were interviewed by CEEP staff were unaware of any overall environmental justice plan in Maryland. Although no formal environmental justice plan exists in Baltimore’s program, community groups and city administrators felt that environmental justice had been promoted. The diversity of the Brownfields Advisory Council, the broad definition of community used, and the parallel efforts of the Empowerment Zone were cited as fostering attention to environmental justice issues in the brownfields process. Moreover, the reuse options ultimately selected (such as the aforementioned SECO example) testify to the inclusion of environmental justice considerations.

In December 1996, the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) held one of its annual meetings in Baltimore. Coinciding with the administration of the city’s brownfields pilot project, NEJAC’s presence reinforced the importance of environmental justice in brownfields redevelopment.

Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships

Partnerships between business and lending interests and the affected communities have been actively encouraged through Brownfields Advisory Council meetings and site visits since the outset. The City’s Brownfields Industrial Re-development Council also provides a mechanism for community/industry partnerships to develop. In addition, the community/industry partnerships were promoted through 2 symposia held on brownfield redevelopment. Over 200 people from communities and business participated in the symposia. As an outreach to developers, the City also provides a listing of environmental consultants to those looking to redevelop brownfield sites. The City also uses the financial resources of the Empowerment Zone to attract industry interest in brownfield redevelopment.

The overall success of Baltimore’s broad strategy for community/industry partnership involvement is reflected in the City’s diverse and substantial accomplishments. In the SECO example, a partnership between a private developer and the community allowed the community to gain control of a 19 acre former incinerator site. The community is now initiating a job creation project on that site. In the case of the ASARCO smelting site, $11.5 million of both private and public funds has been leveraged to remediate and redevelop port-related waterfront warehouse space. Construction and renovation of the 750,000 square foot complex has created over 200 short-term jobs and, when completed, the warehouse is expected to provide full-time employment for almost 200 people. Beyond the economic and employment benefits of such redevelopment efforts, Baltimore is using brownfields as a tool to attract less environmentally harmful industries to guide the City's future. In this way, the long-term goal of sustainable development is served.
Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities

Overall, Baltimore has had success in coordinating its brownfield efforts with the City’s EZ. Its strategy has built on EZ program experiences and has also incorporated the financial resources and incentives of the EZ to promote brownfields redevelopment. An integral part of that plan has been the inclusion of community in a broad sense of the term on both a program-wide and site-specific scale. The Advisory Council, along with the Industrial Re-development Council, have fostered development partnerships to inventory vacant and underused industrial properties. This effort has resulted in the assessment of over 30 brownfield sites. A revolving loan and grant program has also been set up for remediation and redevelopment purposes. Redevelopment activities have created much needed short-term and long-term jobs for low-income residents while improving environmental quality. Efforts by the EPA’s Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Office and the National Association of Minority Contractors to initiate environmental training programs to ensure the long-term environmental health of communities within and adjacent to the brownfields sites are currently underway.

Baltimore’s brownfield Pilot Project provided the leverage for the enactment of Maryland’s Voluntary Cleanup Program in January 1997 to handle the liability, assessment, and remediation issues surrounding brownfields in an effective manner. Baltimore also hosted a NEJAC meeting in December 1996 in which the city’s success in incorporating environmental justice into brownfields redevelopment were highlighted in tours of pilot project sites.

Lessons for Delaware

Baltimore has been selected by the EPA as a national brownfields “Showcase Community” on the basis of its strengths and achievements in brownfields revitalization. As such, its experiences offer lessons that can be helpful to Delaware. These include:

- The importance of defining community at the outset on a broad level to encourage many groups to become involved in planning and redevelopment activities;
- The subsequent role of site-specific community involvement in the brownfields process to account for the needs and goals of those communities most affected;
- The need to allocate adequate resources to community participation to solve the obstacles of a lack of time and personnel to promote community involvement;
- The value of showing concrete examples of remediation and redevelopment in order to maintain community participation throughout the brownfields process; and
- The use of the EZ program and its resources to overcome obstacles to community participation in revitalizing brownfields.

B. Bridgeport, Connecticut

The EPA selected the city of Bridgeport as one of the original national brownfields pilot designees in September 1994. The pilot project focuses on under-utilized, vacant and/or abandoned properties within the city's industrial corridor (this area also included the city's federal Enterprise Community). The $200,000 in grant funds are to be used to conduct an assessment of brownfields sites, encourage cleanup and redevelopment activities, and empower community-based groups in the brownfields process.

Background
Bridgeport's history as an industrial center dates back to the early 1800s. Due to recent economic dislocations, Bridgeport is Connecticut's most economically, fiscally, and demographically distressed city. Overall, approximately 50 percent of the city's manufacturing base has been lost over the last decade. Unemployment within the industrial corridors of Bridgeport has risen steadily and is significantly higher than the city-wide rate. Moreover, the communities surrounding the brownfield sites have a 17 percent poverty rate and per capita income in those areas is only 60 percent of the state average.

Environmental degradation has contributed to this situation. The presence and/or perception of environmentally contaminated land has caused many businesses to leave the center-city for the suburbs. As a result, greenfields in the suburbs have been developed while several hundred acres of prime real estate located at the heart of Connecticut's largest city have remained underused, abandoned, and/or vacant. Likewise, the presence of environmental contamination endangers the health and quality of life of those communities living within the industrial corridors of Bridgeport.

Bridgeport's Brownfields Pilot Project represents a part of a greater effort to revitalize the inner-city. In 1995, the city was designated a federal Enterprise Community and has highlighted the redevelopment of brownfields as an integral part of its overall revitalization efforts. Bridgeport officials believe that redevelopment of brownfields can improve environmental conditions, create new jobs, increase local economic growth and the city's tax base, and raise property values in the city. Overall, the goals of the Bridgeport Pilot Project have been to:

- conduct studies of the brownfields situation and prioritize assessment on a limited number of sites (4 to 6);
- encourage the cleanup and productive reuse of brownfields by building on partnerships between various stakeholders;
- create a model brownfields process that other cities around the nation can use to address their own brownfields problems;
- empower community-based organizations to meaningfully participate in the brownfields process; and
- improve the overall environmental and public health character of the City, thereby allowing it to pursue long-term sustainable development.

**Inclusiveness of Community Involvement**

As one of the pioneering pilot projects, Bridgeport was given little direction with respect to the amount of community participation required for such an undertaking. Nonetheless, the City sought to make the brownfields process as inclusive as possible from the outset through the active participation of stakeholders. The Community Linkage for Environmental Action Now (CLEAN) Task Force, comprised of representatives from business, banking, environmental, and community groups was established for this purpose. Working in conjunction with various City departments and agencies, Connecticut's Department of Environmental Protection and Economic Development and CLEAN have categorized and prioritized the cleanup and redevelopment of six brownfield sites within the City.

Redevelopment and re-use strategies have also been formulated for these six sites. The participation of the impacted communities (those that lie adjacent to the brownfield sites) has been facilitated through Community Action Groups (CAGs). Overall, CAGs have been very active in redevelopment discussions and the City has given them considerable attention in policy
formulation. Bridgeport has also sought special measures to ensure the inclusion of local residents and businesses in brownfield redevelopment efforts.

**Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement**

Efforts to involve the community in Bridgeport’s revitalization endeavor are not new. In general the City’s Enterprise Community has provided the basic template for the brownfields process. Elements of the strategic plan (including economic and community development) prepared by the City for the EC have become an integral part of its brownfields strategy. This strategy involves including the community at the outset through the promotion of aggressive community participation efforts.

CLEAN has provided a mechanism for a broad community perspective, as have CAGs and Community Action Councils which have focused their efforts on involvement of the affected communities including opportunities to affect the brownfields process. In addition to holding meetings at important decision-making junctures in the brownfields process, Bridgeport has:

- organized and distributed an educational brochure on the brownfields program in order to promote community involvement;
- held a city-wide “Environmental Job Training and Education Summit” to encourage community involvement and education in the brownfields pilot project while increasing awareness of opportunities in the environmental field; and
- coordinated an educational program with the Housatonic Community and Technical College that offered environmental science courses that can contribute to the city’s redevelopment efforts.

**Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement**

The major obstacle to community involvement occurred at the start of the pilot project when a lack of knowledge and awareness limited community participation in the brownfields process. Bridgeport engaged in a number of outreach efforts to overcome this obstacle. As a result, the community is able to participate in the decision-making process and efforts are being made to educate the affected communities.

Bridgeport also encountered obstacles tied to subsequent stages of implementing the pilot project. This revolved around decreasing levels of community participation and an over-focusing on inventory activities. In particular, participation by environmental and community groups diminished. This may have been because the City seemed to concern itself with inventory activities at the expense of remediation and redevelopment. If a community does not see results in demonstration programs, it often hesitates to continue its involvement. In order to demonstrate progress, Bridgeport tapped the financial resources of its Enterprise Community to continue the momentum for remediation and redevelopment once the pilot project funds were expended. Bridgeport was also pledged $2 million from Connecticut to assist in these activities.

**Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment**

Bridgeport provided a variety of avenues through which the community’s needs could be taken into account. The CLEAN Task Force was initially configured to allow different stakeholders (including community interests) to voice their interests and have a say in the decision-making process. It was consulted to elicit the views of the community at important junctures in the brownfields process. Existing Community Action Groups (CAGs) and Community Action
Councils also played an important role. They allowed communities to play a part in redevelopment strategies and reuse options at the individual site level. In this manner, Bridgeport relied on pre-existing community organizations and helped create a new one to ensure that the needs of the community would be a factor in revitalization efforts.

**Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice**

Although Bridgeport's pilot project did not contain formal mechanisms to address environmental justice issues, all parties interviewed by CEEP staff expressed confidence that such concerns are being addressed. In particular, the City’s Brownfields Coordinator has vigorously reached out to community groups for advice on environmental justice questions. Environmental and community representatives are included on the CLEAN Task Force and community interests (through CAGs) have been represented in redevelopment planning for specific brownfields. Bridgeport’s officials believe that the best way to ensure that environmental justice issues are considered is to give the community a strong voice in the brownfields process.

Environmental justice efforts have also been promoted in Bridgeport by EPA and the National Parks Service. These agencies formulated an agreement that makes Bridgeport a pilot for the Groundwork Trusts Program. The Groundwork Trusts Program helps local communities purchase and remediate brownfield sites for parks and recreational use. Bridgeport’s Enterprise Community has contributed $200,000 for this purpose.

**Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships**

Bridgeport has been very successful at promoting partnerships among the community and industry/business interests. This is because the City has made efforts to match community skills to those needed for active participation in cleanup and redevelopment efforts with industry/business interests. The Housatonic Community and Technical College coordinated with the City to offer environmental and planning courses that could train residents and students to assist in redevelopment efforts. In addition, it has held a summit to showcase job opportunities in redevelopment efforts for those within affected communities. The Enterprise Community has also allocated over $200,000 for brownfields-related job training programs.

The city began its partnership strategy by encouraging the different groups to take an active role in the brownfields process from the outset. Bridgeport leaders also made sure that redevelopment efforts at individual brownfield sites promoted community involvement and participation in partnerships as well. Local businesses, some looking to expand, were encouraged to remain in Bridgeport. Owners and managers were invited to express their needs in redevelopment talks. Industry/business interests have also been provided financial incentives to redevelop brownfield sites. These included brownfield and Enterprise Community tax credits. The City has also established a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) to finance assessment, remediation, and reuse efforts for small businesses. In addition, the City has hosted an Investor’s Forum to highlight redevelopment opportunities in the six prioritized sites.

In all of these efforts, Bridgeport has sought to attract new industries and promote expansion of existing businesses that are consistent with a "greener" economic base. In this way the City is moving towards the long-term goal of sustainable development.

**Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities**

The major strengths of the Bridgeport Pilot Project stem from it substantial efforts to promote community involvement and forge brownfield efforts with broader Enterprise Community
objectives to revitalize the City and achieve an environmentally sustainable future. Building on the community participation strategy of the EC, Bridgeport created the CLEAN Task Force to supply all stakeholders (including community and environmental interests) with an opportunity to express their views in the brownfields redevelopment process. CAGs also played a significant role in shaping redevelopment strategies at the individual site level. Overall, these efforts were aided by the objectives and resources of the EC.

As a result of its brownfield activities, Bridgeport has established an inventory of 205 brownfield sites. It has conducted site assessment activities and prepared redevelopment strategies for six of the highest priority sites. It has also attempted to encourage redevelopment efforts through the promotion of partnerships between community and industry/business interests. Finally, Bridgeport’s Pilot Project has served as a catalyst for a number of other activities. To date, these activities include, among others, participation in the Groundwork Trusts program, the formation of the Limited Liability Corporation and the on-going promotion of a community-based brownfields job training program.

Lessons for Delaware

Bridgeport is one of the first cities to implement a national brownfields pilot project. As such, it is an innovator in promoting community participation and in creating mechanisms for community involvement. From this perspective, Bridgeport’s experience holds valuable lessons for Delaware. Among the helpful lessons that can be learned from Bridgeport are:

- The value of creating new, broad-scale community networks while also relying on existing community networks to promote community involvement;
- The advantage of forming partnerships with educational institutions to promote community/industry partnerships and to facilitate job creation for residents in relation to brownfields redevelopment;
- How a city can use its Enterprise Community’s community development and participation plan as a template in initiating brownfields efforts; and
- The importance of using the objectives and financial resources of an Enterprise Community to highlight brownfields revitalization.

C. Burlington, Vermont

The City of Burlington was awarded a national brownfields designation by EPA in September 1996. The pilot project targets 40 acres of land located within a three-mile area of Burlington’s central business district. The EPA cooperative agreement provides $200,000 of funding to promote an integrative approach to brownfields revitalization, including site assessment, environmental cleanup, and community involvement in the process.

Background

Burlington (estimated population of 39,000) is one of the poorest cities in Vermont. High poverty levels in the City are linked to a large number of abandoned and polluted commercial and industrial sites located in the City’s central business district. Prior to launching an EPA-supported brownfields program, the City had identified 17 such sites (that number is currently estimated to be 23) within a 40-acre section of central Burlington. With only one unpolluted site available for development, Burlington’s brownfield situation presents a major obstacle for urban revitalization. For example, the largest brownfield is hindering highway construction that would link the rest of the City with Burlington’s waterfront district. Burlington has also received a federal Enterprise...
Community (EC) designation to aid in its revitalization efforts. Most of the brownfields are located directly in or adjacent to disadvantaged communities: nine of the sites are in the Old North End Enterprise Community.

Burlington’s Brownfield Pilot Project represents an integral part of the City’s overall goal of building sustainable communities. In recognition of this, the City has promoted a comprehensive brownfields program that builds on past community development efforts. The program is designed to include a high level of citizen and community participation and provide a model for other small cities confronted with brownfields. The City has taken an integrated approach to revitalization that combines ecological zoning strategies, pollution prevention measures, and sustainable redevelopment options to promote economic growth and environmental stewardship simultaneously. Specifically, the Burlington Brownfield Pilot Project has attempted to:

- identify brownfield sites and assess their levels of contamination;
- engage affected neighborhoods in all stages of the brownfields redevelopment process through education and outreach programs;
- develop partnerships and commitments amongst the various interests involved, especially private interests and the affected communities to attract environmentally and economically beneficial industries; and
- integrate remediation and redevelopment activities into a replicable process

Inclusiveness of Community Involvement

A primary objective of the Burlington pilot is to ensure that all relevant stakeholders meaningfully participate in the brownfields redevelopment process. The City believes that only such involvement can generate the support, commitment, and partnerships necessary to make revitalization that is compatible with sustainable development a reality. On a broad scale, the City sought at the outset to engage a wide variety of interests through the establishment of a community task force. The task force worked in conjunction with nonprofit groups, City departments, and community interests to create a community involvement strategy that built upon existing social and cultural networks. The task force included a wide variety of groups, including the Lake Champlain Science Center, the Burlington Community Land Trust, Greater Burlington, and the Industrial Corporation.

Burlington has especially sought to involve those who reside in or near brownfield areas. In 1997, project-specific communications focused on the Old North End section of Burlington (in which the Enterprise Community resides). A community involvement strategy was implemented to integrate community participation with other groups, including the Conservation Committee, the Electric Commission and the Eco-Park Steering Committee. In 1998, Burlington has begun to work with individual Neighborhood Planning Assemblies (NPA’s) to form a committee to foster increased levels of public involvement. The pilot is also coordinating its community involvement strategies with the EC and educational institutions.

Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement

Burlington has built on the social and community networks that already existed in the City to promote public participation in the brownfields redevelopment process. This includes having neighborhood representatives serve on an advisory committee. Open public meetings are also held at key decision points. In establishing the public participation process, community
representatives were asked to identify appropriate means of public involvement. The City plans to hold more meetings within affected communities that will involve Neighborhood Planning Assemblies. These events will focus on consideration of future reuse options of brownfield sites for areas like the Manhattan Landfill.

Several methods have been used to facilitate outreach efforts and engage the affected communities in brownfields decision-making. The City has used newsletters, information packages, public forums such as town meetings, site visits, and offers of technical support and training to reach area residents, developers and other interested parties. In particular, outreach efforts coordinated with other groups have been noteworthy:

- Maintenance of regular contact with the local media has led to a number of stories being published regarding the pilot;
- Partnership with the Enterprise Community located within the Old North End has aided in community involvement efforts; and
- The University of Vermont and local high schools have been enlisted to help in efforts to educate area residents about brownfields and community organization.

**Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement**

The major obstacles to the Burlington pilot project revolve around private ownership of sites, initial feelings of distrust, and a lack of financing for actual remediation and revitalization activities. Promoting community participation was initially complicated by the community's lack of control over the disposition of privately held sites. The community believed that the past actions and decisions of site owners, developers, and regulators, had not taken their views into account. For example, the Manhattan Drive Landfill has been a source of contention between the city and area residents for years. In order to rectify these feelings of distrust and possible displacement of residents, Burlington sought to incorporate the views of the community from the outset. It has placed community representatives on the community task force, given priority to those sites located in low-income areas, and is currently working with Neighborhood Planning Assemblies concerning reuse options.

The ongoing obstacle to long-term community participation and pilot success is the absence of remediation and revitalization funds. Burlington's award of a pilot project does not provide funding for these efforts. Such funding is needed so that the community can be reassured that their participation is actually having an impact. Without concrete evidence that community involvement is linked to redevelopment, area residents may become disillusioned with the brownfields redevelopment process. Burlington has offered financial incentives to attract private redevelopment efforts and has linked its brownfield pilot project with its Enterprise Community, in an attempt to demonstrate progress.

**Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment**

Burlington took the needs of the community into account by engaging affected communities and stakeholders in the brownfields redevelopment process. The community task force included representatives of the community (through an advisory committee) as well as nonprofit groups and city departments. Educational organizations were enlisted to educate the community on brownfields issues and the redevelopment process. In establishing the public participation process, community representatives were also influential in deciding on the appropriate modes of public involvement. Finally, open public meetings were, and continue to be, held at all key
decision points and Neighborhood Planning Assemblies have been continuously involved in the redevelopment process.

**Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice**

Neither the City of Burlington nor the State of Vermont has an environmental justice plan. The Burlington Pilot Project did not contain any formal mechanisms to ensure environmental justice. Based on interviews conducted by CEEP staff, however, it is clear that participants feel that the pilot has provided a catalyst for the incorporation and deliberation of environmental justice issues. The promotion and inclusion of meaningful community participation has led to resolutions regarding environmental issues in matters pertaining to the McNeil Generating Plant, Pine Street, and Urban Reserve sites. Currently, the pilot is resolving issues concerning the future of the Manhattan Drive Landfill. The City and area residents have debated this matter in the past. Burlington believes that including communities in the brownfields redevelopment process allows environmental justice concerns to be incorporated into long-term urban revitalization plans. For example, sites located in or near low-income communities have been given priority in redevelopment efforts.

**Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships**

Burlington believed at the outset that the promotion of community/industry partnerships would be a major factor in the success of its brownfield redevelopment plans. In the first year, it designed the community task force to encourage partnerships by bringing together diverse groups from the private, government, and community sectors. Overall, the goal has been to facilitate the revitalization of brownfield sites to meet both community and viable business interests. Burlington hopes that these relationships, established in the first year, can help to forge partnerships in the second year of the program. It plans to use and build on the partnerships that proved successful in the Enterprise Community as well. For example, the Burlington Community Land Trust and Co-op Housing Federation are working together to make home ownership more available through revolving loan funds and payment reductions in the Old North End (where many of the brownfields are located).

The City has also attempted to make brownfield sites more attractive to developers and business interests through financial incentives which include municipal funding and tax credits (state, enterprise community, and brownfields). Improvements in communication with interested developers may also be a key factor in the success of the City's brownfields efforts. The City has emphasized reliable and timely environmental information, including information on liability issues, for business and community interests. In all of its efforts, the City has emphasized the need for environmentally sensitive development, an essential feature if Burlington is to realize its goal of sustainable community development.

**Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities**

One of the major strengths of the Burlington Pilot Project has been the incorporation of meaningful community involvement in brownfields decision-making. The City has relied on the expertise of different actors, including community, non-profit, and educational institutions, to identify appropriate avenues of participation and to provide education and outreach to those communities most affected. Burlington hopes that this aggressive engagement of affected communities can provide the basis for successful, sustainable-oriented community/industry
partnerships in the future. It has attempted to provide reliable information to both developers/industry and community interests to encourage those efforts.

The resolution of past issues that have been highly contentious (such as the McNiel Generating Plant, Pine Street, the Urban Reserve and now the Manhattan Drive Landfill) demonstrate the high degree of meaningful community participation which has occurred. The Burlington pilot has also served as a catalyst for examining brownfield issues in the Riverside Eco-Park---a 430-acre eco-industrial park.

Lessons for Delaware

As a whole, the Burlington Pilot provides a good example of promoting meaningful community involvement in the brownfields redevelopment process. A number of lessons for Delaware can be identified, including:

- The value of building on pre-existing social institutions and community networks to encourage community participation;
- The role of community participation in addressing environmental justice conflicts and other long-standing land-use controversies;
- The importance of tying Enterprise Community activities with a brownfield pilot project, so that each program can learn from one another, and resources can be combined to advance sustainable urban revitalization; and
- The value of partnerships with educational institutions which can promote outreach, increase awareness and build community capacity in relation to brownfields decision-making.
D. Charlotte, North Carolina

Charlotte was awarded an EPA national brownfields award in October 1996. The project pilot targets the redevelopment of brownfields in the Wilmore neighborhood and the South End business district. The $200,000 award was to help property owners identify environmental problems, create a cleanup plan, work with regulators, and facilitate community participation.

Background

The brownfields area focused on is adjacent to the Wilmore neighborhood and the South End business district. These areas are predominantly minority (mostly African-American) and comprise Charlotte’s early industrial sites, dating back to the 1800s. The city recognizes brownfield redevelopment as an important part of urban revitalization. This is especially the case for those areas, such as South End-Wilmore, that are showing signs of severe economic distress and physical deterioration. Prior to receiving its award, Charlotte had leveraged $1.5 million for physical improvements in the South End-Wilmore area. This helped subsidize the private redevelopment of several sites, converting them into retail, entertainment and residential uses. The completion of the new Convention Center and the Panther Stadium has also attracted new businesses to the area. Despite these efforts, a number of unimproved brownfield sites remain throughout the pilot project area.

Charlotte’s goal is to remake brownfields into environmentally-safe and productive properties that can create jobs for its citizens, contribute to the City’s tax base, and provide needed community services. To facilitate these objectives, the city has attempted to:

- establish specific guidelines for selecting sites and determining appropriate cleanup levels through community consensus;
- develop a framework to educate lenders on managing the environmental risk involved with brownfields redevelopment; and
- identify potential regulatory barriers through partnerships with lenders, universities, and legal institutions.

Inclusiveness of Community Involvement

The Charlotte Economic Development Office has pursued a broad-based approach to community participation by creating a comprehensive selection team to choose sites. The selection team consists of representatives from the South End Development Corporation, the Wilmore Neighborhood Association, the West Enterprise Community, the Dilworth Community Development Corporation, the Sierra Club, the real estate industry, the banking industry, and environmental engineering interests to provide technical expertise. All decisions made by the selection team are arrived at on a consensual basis to ensure cooperation and equity among the different interests. The group was fashioned to represent city-wide interests as well as those of the impacted communities.

In addition to the selection team, the city has made other efforts to highlight the specific needs and concerns of the South End-Wilmore community. The Economic Development Office and the selection team met initially with community leaders to set up a series of meetings designed to involve the community in a public dialogue regarding brownfields revitalization. This process involved residents and owners of businesses located in the community. Through these meetings and a reliance on community groups, Charlotte has managed to foster continuous community involvement and avoid “we vs. them” feelings.
Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement

The South End–Wilmore pilot project community meetings have been held at times and at a place (a local church) chosen by community residents. Efforts have been made to ensure that the meetings are accessible to all members of the community (for example: day care and translator services are provided). To promote consistency, the Economic Development Office briefs community leaders at the completion of each and every meeting pertaining to the project. In the three meetings which have already been held, attendance has ranged from 50-130 participants. Throughout the course of the project a democratic decision-making process has been used. Land-use maps have also been used to identify areas for redevelopment and to review different land-reuse options.

The first meeting provided an overview of the brownfields process and fielded questions from the community. The second meeting focused on defining levels of risk and contamination. Community participants were presented with information on the environmental and liability issues associated with specific sites. In this manner, experts were able to inform and engage the community in detailed questions regarding specific sites. The third meeting informed participants of the decisions that had been reached by the selection team based on their input. Overall, the meetings have been considered a success by all parties involved, largely due to the creative mechanisms used by the city to promote participation. These mechanisms included:

- the production of a segment on the brownfields pilot project for a public access television show which discussed the impact of brownfields redevelopment on Charlotte and announced the first community meeting;
- the creation of a brownfields project logo as a community outreach tool that was placed on all items used to publicize community meetings;
- the creation of communications materials for community meetings that won an award from the City-County Marketing and Communications Association; and
- the involvement of the youth of the community in distributing invitations, door hangers and post cards to residents regarding meetings.

Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement

Initial obstacles involved the disinterest of some members of the community, community distrust towards regulators and developers, and absence of funding for actual remediation and revitalization activities. The Economic Development Office used a number of innovative outreach tools to facilitate community interest and involvement. Disinterest was also closely related to initial community distrust. At first, the predominantly African-American South End-Wilmore community harbored a sense of paranoia regarding the pilot project. Residents felt that the project was going to push them outside of the community and only serve the interests of the city and developers.

To address this concern, the Economic Development Office selected an African-American woman who had worked in concert with the community on other projects, to facilitate community meetings. This helped establish a level of comfort with community residents. In addition, the city felt that the makeup of the selection team, including representatives from the community, would alleviate such anxieties. In lieu of public funds for cleanup and revitalization, the city also constructed a marketing plan to generate investor interest. The Regulatory/Financial Committee and City hosted a bankers forum to identify banking issues associated with brownfields.
redevelopment. The forum hoped to build on the previous success Charlotte had in leveraging $1.5 million for improvements in the community.

**Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment**

All parties felt that the needs and concerns of the community were taken into account in the decision-making process. From the initial invitations, community participation in the first meeting, the selection of an experienced facilitator the community was familiar with, and the actual outcome of brownfields process, the community played a vital role. All of the issues and decisions discussed at community meetings were decided on a majority vote of the attendees. Moreover, all of the decisions made by the brownfields selection team, which included community representatives, required a majority vote as well. As a result of the community’s involvement, six sites were selected for grant assistance. This outcome targets more sites than the project was originally intended to focus on.

**Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice**

The Charlotte brownfields program contained no formal mechanisms to ensure environmental justice. This is in keeping with an absence of an overall environmental justice plan or administering agency in North Carolina. The participants involved in the pilot project, however, felt that the design of the brownfields selection team and the high degree of involvement on the part of the impacted community alleviated environmental justice concerns. The brownfields selection team included community representatives from the South End-Wilmore area. In an effort to account for environmental justice issues, it also included a representative from the Sierra Club among its membership. Finally, all parties agreed that the education and involvement of the community, particularly in articulating its needs and goals, significantly enhanced the consideration of environmental justice issues.

**Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships**

Charlotte’s Economic Development Office believed at the outset that fostering community/industry partnerships was necessary to make brownfields redevelopment an integral part of urban revitalization. They hoped that successful partnerships could provide models that would be invaluable to other areas of the city in the future. Although no set redevelopment plans have been announced within Charlotte, six sites have been chosen for the purposes of redevelopment. The impacted community and business/lending interests played significant roles in the selection of those sites. The city hopes that the lines of communication and cooperation established at this early stage of site selection will carry over to brownfields redevelopment and reuse option reviews as well.

The city has also attempted to promote investor and lending interest in the impacted community by providing information and financial incentives for redevelopment. The city completed a survey of the vacant and available sites within the pilot project area for all interests involved. The city and the Regulatory/Financial Committee also hosted a bankers conference identifying banking issues related to brownfields redevelopment. The conference, attended by representatives of nine banks, focused on proving how investment in brownfields was a “positive investment,” for both impacted communities and lending interests. The conference also highlighted the financial tools that investors and developers could utilize in brownfields redevelopment (such state tax incentives and federal brownfields tax incentives). Overall, Charlotte has attempted to
promote environmentally friendly redevelopment to ensure the City moves towards the goals of sustainable community development.

**Pilots Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities**

The main strengths of Charlotte’s pilot project flow from its innovative methods for involving the community and the democratic decision-making process it implemented among stakeholders. The communications materials designed to advertise meetings and promote participation has even won an award. Efforts were made to educate the community on the development process and include the community’s youth. The brownfields site selection team was also comprised of representatives from community groups and other interests. The decision-making process the team employed was democratic: all members’ opinions and decisions were equally valued.

As a result of the momentum generated by the Charlotte brownfields pilot project, North Carolina adopted the Brownfields Reuse Act on October 1, 1997. This law encourages the development and renovation of contaminated properties throughout North Carolina. It allows the North Carolina Department of Environmental Health and Natural Resources (DEHNR) to enter into brownfields agreements concerning liability with prospective purchasers and developers. This act, which the brownfields site selection committee helped fashion, is noteworthy in that it represents North Carolina’s first state law regarding brownfields. On October 20, 1997, DEHNR announced that the redevelopment of six properties in South End-Wilmore would be the first agreements entered into under the new law.

**Lessons for Delaware**

The Charlotte pilot project is an excellent example of promoting community participation in the brownfields redevelopment process. As such, Charlotte’s brownfields program provides Delaware with some valuable lessons. Primary among them are:

- The importance of educating all stakeholders (community interests, developers and investors) to ensure participation and the clear articulation of needs and goals;
- The value that innovative communications techniques (such as logos and the role of area youth) can play in promoting community participation;
- How a democratic decisions-making process can help facilitate community participation and foster community partnerships with developers and investors; and
- How successful brownfields models can help promote statewide strategies for redevelopment.
E. Cleveland, Ohio

The EPA selected Cleveland as its first national brownfields pilot designee in September 1993. Under the direction of the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CPC), the pilot project focused on the North Birmingham Industrial Redevelopment Project area, a 900-acre planning zone one mile north of the city center. The $200,000 award was for initial assessment and the incorporation of community needs and expectations into future cleanup and redevelopment decisions.

Background

One of the unfortunate byproducts of Ohio’s rich industrial heritage has been the proliferation of a large number of contaminated industrial/commercial sites throughout the state. This is especially true in metropolitan centers such as Cleveland. The presence of brownfields within Cleveland has negatively impacted the city, residents who live in or adjacent to those areas, and the environment. Economic growth and development have also suffered in the City as development has moved to greenfields. Valuable land has sat idle for years because of fears regarding liability and cleanup costs that scare off potential developers, businesses, and banks. This has reduced economic opportunities within the city, particularly for those residents who live in/adjacent to the brownfield sites.

Simultaneously, the brownfields represent an urgent environmental and health threat to residents. Those living in or adjacent to these areas have historically suffered disproportionate environmental exposure compared to other people. Cleveland has also received a federal Supplemental Empowerment Zone (SEZ) designation to advance its revitalization efforts. Of the three sites originally selected for the pilot project, one (the Mid-Town Corridor site) lies within the area of the SEZ.

CPC’s brownfield pilot project attempted to involve a wide range of stakeholders in redevelopment efforts by providing them with opportunities to voice their needs, concerns, and possible solutions to complex issues. Specifically, CPC’s objectives were to:

- coordinate cleanup decisions with future reuse options to maximize economic benefits while minimizing pollution risks;
- ensure that all decisions regarding cleanup and redevelopment are in accordance with the needs and goals of the community;
- develop mechanisms to allow minorities and economically disadvantaged communities to actively participate in brownfield efforts.

Inclusiveness of Community Involvement

CPC attempted to rely on input and assistance from a wide range of actors—lending institutions, developers, regulators, and the community to ensure a coordinated approach to brownfields redevelopment. It established a Community Strategies Team to advise it on issues relating to community participation. The Community Strategies Team consisted of members from a diverse range of groups including business interests, attorneys, regulators, and community leaders. The CPC also relied on the connections of an environmental group called “EarthDAY Coalition” which had a number of members that lived in or adjacent to the designated pilot project sites.

Community was defined for the purposes of the pilot project as the “immediate neighborhood” of each site (those located within a quarter of a mile range) and civic organizations which were concerned about the brownfields issue such as churches and neighborhood
development corporations. CPC also used census–based data to identify property owners within the immediate neighborhood range. Efforts were made to alert all of these stakeholders about the brownfields process and how they could become involved.

Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement

CPC built on existing social networks to promote community participation. PTA groups, church groups, and local nonprofit organizations (the Neighborhood Development Corporation and the Knights of Columbus among others) were contacted. An information packet was sent describing the pilot project and how people could participate in the process through the Communities Strategies Team and by requesting that private contractors hold public meetings regarding specific pilot project sites.

CPC also sent information to local residents in the form of newsletters sent through a neighborhood development corporation which served as a clearinghouse of information. Phone calls were made to alert residents and two conferences were held on brownfields in the city (one in 1992 and one in 1994). Government officials, regulators, developer/industry interests, attorneys, non-profit and university representatives, and some residents participated in the conferences. Through these efforts, CPC identified the biggest concerns of the community as job creation and health issues.

Other mechanisms, including efforts to work with the Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C), were also employed to raise citizen awareness and increase opportunities for community involvement. Among them were:

- a website/GIS system was developed to provide individuals with up-to-date and accurate information on the brownfields project and CPC cooperated with a public library to allow local people access to the library’s computer facilities;
- Tri-C and the City conducted outreach activities designed to provide communities with information regarding brownfields and environmental justice issues; and
- Tri-C and the City have developed a high school curriculum on environmental issues to encourage interest and awareness on the part of students.

Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement

Several obstacles hindered community involvement efforts in Cleveland's brownfields process. Chief among them were community disinterest, the private nature of projects, and inadequate participatory mechanisms. Community disinterest and indifference were constant challenges in brownfields outreach efforts. Since residents living in the affected communities had historically been confronted with environmental hazards and limited economic opportunities, some were reluctant to believe the pilot projects could benefit them. Moreover, experiences with past redevelopment efforts that were implemented in a top-down manner made many residents cynical about community involvement efforts.

The private nature of projects also limited community involvement. Owners of private sites did not have to actively engage the community in the brownfields process. Public meetings regarding specific sites could be held at the request of the community, but no such request was ever made by any local residents. Since no special efforts were made to ensure community inclusion in the brownfields process, community involvement at the affected community level was not much of a factor.
CPC's participatory mechanisms to encourage community involvement were not that effective either. For example, the website/GIS system developed by CPC was not used by residents. Though community disinterest factored into this, limited access to computer facilities, a lack of basic computer skills, and the inability to understand technical information (such as GIS) served as obstacles to those that wished to learn. CPC later held training sessions to make the community more proficient in using the website.

**Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment**

Although some of the needs and wishes of the community were taken into account in the Cleveland pilot project, the communities role was not as comprehensive or as inclusive as it could have been. Many residents thought that the project would be beneficial to the community because they pledged to remediate and redevelop sites while simultaneously creating new jobs. While mechanisms were put in place to allow the community to express their needs, objectives, and concerns in the brownfields process, community interests were not satisfied with CPC's promotion efforts.

Some thought that CPC had not done enough to raise public awareness regarding the brownfields project. The policy they put forth was incoherent at times and the staff in charge of brownfield efforts changed frequently. In addition, the strategy adopted by the CPC was different than the one suggested by the Community Strategy Subcommittee. The information offered to residents reflects this: it was often technical and incomprehensible to residents. For example, a manual for public understanding of the brownfields was a technical report.

**Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice**

The Cleveland pilot project did not contain any formal mechanisms to ensure that environmental justice concerns were taken into account. Some felt that the inclusion of the environmental group EarthDAY Coalition in an advisory capacity helped promote environmental justice in the brownfields process. Some community representatives, however, felt that environmental justice issues suffered because it was not that heavily promoted amongst affected communities. The limited participation of affected residents and an overall lack of oversight with respect to environmental justice issues were concerns. In general, CPC targeted health issues as a major issue and considered the cleanup of polluted sites a success for the affected communities.

**Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships**

CPC believed that establishing links so that industry and community interests matched was necessary for effective redevelopment efforts. Under the direction of the Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C), a community/business task force was established to ensure the participation of a wide range of stakeholders. In addition to partnerships, the task force concentrated its efforts on providing the type of trained workforce needed to assess, cleanup, and redevelop contaminated properties. Minority residents living within the affected communities were targeted for training that could support brownfield redevelopment efforts.

A number of financial incentives/tools were also available to industry/developer interests for brownfields redevelopment. The Cuyahoga County Council developed a revolving loan fund for site assessments that will be used as a model for Ohio. The state’s Voluntary Cleanup Program has resolved many contentious redevelopment issues. The website/GIS system also helped CPC market local properties for redevelopment among industry/developer interests. Finally, the financial resources and tax incentives of the federal Supplemental Empowerment Zone (SEZ) has
helped those sites located within its boundaries. In all of these efforts, Cleveland has sought to promote environmentally sensitive redevelopment options, to ensure that City moves in a more sustainable direction in the future.

Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities

Given its selection as the first EPA brownfields pilot project, Cleveland’s experiences regarding community involvement are noteworthy. Through building on existing social networks, creating a diverse Communities Strategies Team, developing the website/GIS system and alerting the community to how they could ask for public meetings of private developers, CPC established and highlighted mechanisms for community involvement. It learned, however, that promotion of community involvement is a critical aspect of ensuring that those mechanisms are actively used. Fortunately, other brownfields projects in Ohio that have followed Cleveland’s, have targeted the promotion of community involvement.

Overall, Cleveland selected three general sites for redevelopment and conducted initial phase site assessments on each site. Phase II sites assessments have also been made and Cleveland is now seeing some of the results of its brownfield efforts. One of the sites, the Sunar Hausman property, has become a successful demonstration site. Over $4 million has been leveraged for needed environmental cleanup and property improvements. The site is now home to several new and diverse businesses which provide over 181 new jobs and income and revenue generation of over $1 million per year.

As a result of the pilot project, Ohio passed a Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) in June of 1994 that allows voluntary cleanup and reuse of contaminated properties. The VCP promotes partnerships among government and developers on cleanup and reuse issues. The new program ties lender liability to cleanup so that owners/developers have clear guidelines regarding their responsibilities. The VCP program has contributed to brownfield redevelopment efforts in Ohio.

Lessons For Delaware

As the first EPA brownfield pilot project, Cleveland’s experiences regarding community involvement can be especially useful to Delaware. Some of the valuable lessons that can be taken from the Cleveland pilot project are:

- How supplying community participation mechanisms, in and of themselves, does not guarantee that community involvement will occur;
- The need for community participation to be actively and sincerely promoted among pilot project administrators to ensure meaningful community involvement;
- The importance of providing community residents with access and training for participatory mechanisms such as internet sites to be useful; and
- The links that exist between community participation and environmental justice.
F. Kansas City, Kansas and Missouri

Greater Kansas City was awarded an EPA national brownfield designation in September 1996. EPA’s agreement with Kansas City was to provide $200,000 in funding to target up to six sites within the downtown Central Industrial District (CID) for assessment. In March of 1998, Greater Kansas City was awarded a brownfields “showcase community” designation to expand the Kansas City Brownfields Initiative (KCBI) group’s brownfields efforts. As a result, Kansas City will receive an additional $2.5 million to further its brownfield efforts.

Background

Kansas City’s bi-state Central Industrial District (CID) is the oldest industrial sector in the City. It has been subject to intensive rail activity that has led to a number of real and perceived environmental problems. The CID area coincides with a federal Enhanced Enterprise Community (EEC) which has a population of 49,000, among which 79% are minority. Within the EEC, the poverty rate is approximately 39%, unemployment rates are 17%, and per capita income has fallen in recent decades.

The purpose of the Kansas City Brownfields Initiative (KCBI) group is to demonstrate how two cities and states can join together to resolve their brownfields issues by working in partnership with one another. The initial plan was to identify the best candidate sites within the CID and develop a model process that could be applied to other sites. This process included building on existing community networks of communication and providing financial tools for addressing brownfields issues.

“The focus of Kansas City’s brownfields effort is to show that economic redevelopment of environmentally contaminated sites in the bi-state CID is both environmentally and economically achievable” (KCBI Mission Statement, 1997). Efforts have been made to integrate developers/investment interests with the environmental justice communities most affected by brownfields redevelopment projects. KCBI has attempted to:

- conduct inventories of properties located within the CID, including the neighborhoods of the West Side and Armourdale;
- engage the residential and business community in the decision-making process;
- integrate community issues, clean-up requirements, and development and lending interests in the brownfields process at prospective sites; and
- ensure the involvement and consideration of those communities impacted by the prospective sites.

Inclusiveness of Community Involvement

The Kansas City Brownfields Initiative (KCBI) is a multi-stakeholder association composed of representatives from the federal, state and city governments, industry groups, non-profits and community organizations. The definition of community centers on the neighborhoods located within the CID including the West Side and Armourdale for the purposes of the brownfields pilot project. Representatives of several community organizations located within these neighborhoods are members of the steering committee for the KCBI. They are made full steering committee members at their request. Although KCBI has not officially set any specific project sites, conscious efforts have been made to solicit the opinions of all members, especially
the community representatives. Thus far, all issues have been decided on a consensual basis and there has been no community opposition to any decisions made.

In its efforts to include the community, KCBI has mapped out the neighborhoods within the Central Industrial District. For example, the West Side community consists of approximately 5,000 people, among which over 70% are minority (mostly Hispanic) and low-income. The community is well-knit and has a strong history of religious and community organizations. This existing community organizational base has proven important in outreach activities within the neighborhood.

**Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement**

KCBI has built on existing social and cultural networks in promoting community involvement. It coordinates community outreach efforts with the Metropolitan Energy Center, a non-profit which has won pollution prevention and environmental justice grants from the EPA to conduct sustainable community planning projects. It has also used the networks of Bridging the Gap, the West Side Housing Organization, the Concerned Citizens of Armourdale, and the Guadalupe Center to facilitate community involvement.

Although no permanent information access procedures have been institutionalized (they will be forthcoming as the project matures), a clearinghouse for brownfields information is maintained for the entire city and its residents in the office of the Brownfields Coordinator. Information meetings have also been held in the primary affected community, the West Side. The concept of brownfields has been explained and community representatives have been encouraged to participate in the process of identifying and redeveloping brownfields properties at the meetings. Using the community’s information network has included:

- holding meetings within walking distance of most of the West Side with places and times suggested by the community representatives who sit on the KCBI;
- having the West Side Housing Organization distribute bilingual flyers door-to-door and verbally inform those who were unable to read of meetings;
- placing public notices and inserts in two local Spanish newspapers; and
- having community leaders inform residents of meetings (since word-of-mouth was considered the best source of communication).

**Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement**

The greatest obstacles cited by all parties was the lack of staff personnel dedicated to the brownfields project (the KCBI is staffed by one person—the Brownfields Coordinator) and an initial sense of apathy and distrust in the community which hampered communications and education. Community representatives pointed out that community reluctance to participate was due to top-down planning decisions which had negatively impacted their neighborhoods in the past. This created an overall sense of apathy because community members did not think that their involvement would make a meaningful difference. KCBI has attempted to overcome this obstacle through an overall plan to increase community involvement and institutionalize a permanent brownfields redevelopment program.

Reliance on pre-existing community groups within the neighborhoods has also alleviated some of the short-term community reluctance to participation. In addition, KCBI has focused its projects strategically, selecting at least one pilot from the Armourdale and West Side neighborhoods. It hopes to provide tangible examples of the economic and social benefits that can
come from community involvement in the brownfields process to lend credibility to future efforts to involve the community. Finally, KCBI is integrating brownfields redevelopment into a long-term regional plan—the Forging Our Comprehensive Urban Strategy (FOCUS) plan—to further inspire community participation into urban revitalization.

**Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment**

KCBI’s Brownfields Coordinator believes that the needs and goals of the community have helped shape both the overall makeup and direction of KCBI in important ways. Community representatives agreed that KCBI has done everything possible to take the community’s views into account given their limited time and personnel. The community has played a large role in defining the scope of the project, suggesting pilot project sites in the Central Industrial District, and in offering possible reuse options for those sites.

**Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice**

The Greater Kansas City pilot project does not contain any formal environmental justice components. This is because neither of the states or localities involved in the project have a set and recognized environmental program or office in place. It is thought that the presence of the Metropolitan Energy Center on the steering committee of the KCBI can help ensure that environmental justice issues are accounted for. The Metropolitan Energy Center has received an EPA grant to facilitate environmental justice through sustainable community planning within the CID. It has also received another EPA grant to promote sustainable community planning within the CID (including pollution prevention activities and environmental mapping).

All stakeholders also felt that the makeup of KCBI’s steering committee and the efforts of the Brownfields Coordinator in encouraging community involvement would also allow for the inclusion of environmental justice issues. Many stakeholders, including the Metropolitan Energy Center, felt that environmental justice concerns need to be institutionalized in the process by having a designated office to deal with those issues.

**Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships**

KCBI was designed to help promote partnerships between business interests, lenders, and the community through having representatives of all of the different groups sit as members of the steering committee. This makeup was intended to help build communication between the groups when reuse issues and options are later discussed. Although no official projects have been initiated, KCBI is currently involved in preliminary discussions for projects in Armourdale and the West Side where community/industry partnerships will play a prominent role. KCBI has stressed a policy in which brownfields reuse must provide benefits to the community to be successful. The industrial core that has lost jobs, residents, and income should be the first to benefit from the rebirth of industry.

Thus far, KCBI has focused its efforts on supplying a number of attractive tools for industry and investor interests within the pilot project area. The project area coincides with Kansas City’s federally designated Enhanced Enterprise Community (EEC) and as such offers significant federal tax incentives. Aside from the federal brownfield tax incentives, the CID can also use state enterprise zone tax credits, historic preservation tax credits, Missouri’s Brownfield Redevelopment Program, and the economic development arm of two local governments. KCBI has tried to promote community/industry partnerships by combining financial tools to attract less
environmentally harmful industries. This can ensure that the City progresses towards an environmentally sustainable future.

**Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities**

The major strength of the Kansas City pilot project has revolved around its commitment to communications among stakeholders. It has built on the existing relationships within the community by relying on social and cultural organizations with strong neighborhood ties to help promote community involvement. Simultaneously, it has created KCBI to further facilitate communications among all of the stakeholders involved while administering the pilot project. In this manner, Kansas City has struck an exemplary balance of using old-local networks while building a new-comprehensive one to facilitate the interests of the broad community as well as those most affected by brownfields revitalization efforts. The inclusion of existing community organizations on the new KCBI serves as a testament to this.

Kansas City has also followed this strategy with respect to providing incentives to promote redevelopment as well. As the combination of old and new communicating networks facilitated community participation and communication, the combination of existing economic tools and organizations and the inclusion of new incentives hopes to promote greater industry and investor interest in reuse.

**Lessons for Delaware**

Though in an early stage of brownfields revitalization, the Greater Kansas City pilot project has been recognized for its achievements and promise by being designated a federal brownfields “showcase community.” As such, Kansas City’s experience can provide Delaware with a several valuable lessons. Among them are:

- Use of community-mapping to get a better understanding of residents, identify community networks, facilitate community participation and thus determine the needs and goals of residents;
- The importance of using existing social and cultural community networks to help establish credibility within the community and foster community trust;
- The importance of also building new networks to take into account the views of the various the stakeholders;
- The integration of the old and new networks to help promote community participation;
- The need for formalized environmental justice components and local/state programs to guarantee environmental justice considerations.
G. New Orleans, Louisiana

New Orleans was awarded an EPA national brownfield designation in September 1995. The EPA cooperative agreement with New Orleans was to provide $200,000 in funding towards the establishment and maintenance of a brownfields site inventory, and the inclusion of community involvement in such activities.

Background

New Orleans is located at one end of a chemical corridor through which high volumes of hazardous materials are transported. The City has a significant number of brownfields, many of which are located in minority communities (over 65% of New Orleans’ population is African-American). Prior to the pilot project, New Orleans had never conducted a comprehensive inventory of its brownfields sites. Accordingly, lenders and developers had little information in examining brownfields as investment opportunities. Instead, they had often invested in the surrounding suburbs, taking economic opportunities away from the city while developing greenfield areas.

The dual goals of the New Orleans pilot project were to establish an inventory of brownfields within the city to serve as a blueprint for economic revitalization and to improve the environmental quality of socio-economically disadvantaged communities. This is in keeping with the two visions of the New Orleans brownfields revitalization plan: to foster alliances with neighborhood groups who wished to replace brownfields with greenspace and environmentally friendly businesses, and to provide incentives for business interests to not only to remain in the city but to expand their operations.

The Mayor’s Office of Environmental Affairs (OEA) stated that “rather than viewing Brownfields revitalization as an arena where a choice must be made between business interests or neighborhood concerns, the New Orleans project seeks to provide a forum for helping both of these constituencies achieve their goals.” (OEA Annual Report, 1996).” The OEA constructed a unique community participation model that was central to achieving the following objectives:

- the identification of the brownfields sites in New Orleans;
- the creation of a specific criteria for ranking sites;
- the development of a basic cleanup process for priority sites; and
- the generation of revitalization strategies that support pre-existing city efforts.

Inclusiveness of Community Involvement

The OEA established the New Orleans Brownfields Consortium Group to go beyond community involvement and begin to stress comprehensive community-based planning. The rationale that guided the New Orleans pilot project was that citizens should not only be a part of the process from the beginning, but that residents of all neighborhoods should select whom they wanted to represent them on the Brownfields Consortium. The City also thought that the project could capitalize on citizen’s unique knowledge of brownfields in their neighborhoods. This was especially the case since the City did not have full knowledge of all the brownfields within its domain. To facilitate grassroots involvement and this broad definition of community, the OEA created a model of community participation in the decision-making process that has gained national recognition for its innovativeness and effectiveness.

A 37 member Brownfields Consortium Group was established to address brownfields issues. The consortium comprised three basic interest groups---economic development experts (9
members), technical experts (8 members), and community representatives. Community representatives consisted of both citizen delegates (18 members) and environmental justice experts (2 members). The consortium was purposely designed so that citizen delegates and environmental justice experts would represent a majority relative to other interests. This guaranteed that they would not be overwhelmed by alliances between economic and technical experts and provided them a meaningful role in community-based planning.

**Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement**

In order to select citizen delegates to the Brownfields Consortium Group, 11 town meetings were held across the city from January 1996 to May 1996. Meeting sites were selected based on 1990 census information and citizen input collected from a survey. Each meeting site represented approximately 20 census tracts. Overall 150 citizens took part in the 11 town meetings, and 167 sites were identified as possible brownfields.

Aside from the unique design of the Brownfields Consortium Group, special community outreach efforts were made to ensure that the town meetings were inclusive of neighborhood residents and their views. This was particularly the case since New Orleans needed citizen information to identify brownfields in communities. Before meetings, outreach efforts were made through the mass media, letter writing, phone calls, and focus groups. Specifically:

- Outreach field personnel had personal correspondence and meetings with representatives of various philanthropic groups and community organizations (churches, schools, etc.);
- 1,228 targeted letters were sent to various citizens asking them to attend brownfield town meetings in their neighborhoods;
- Public notices were placed in a city newspaper, *The Times Picayune*, before each meeting; and
- OEA staff wrote and designed a brochure and a flyer on the project for public distribution.

**Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement**

Everyone involved in the Brownfields Consortium agreed that there were few problems in getting the community involved. Perhaps the most challenging obstacle—which not only threatened community involvement but the overall success of the New Orleans brownfield project—was the absence of funding for actual remediation and revitalization activities. The lack of funding can have a negative impact on community involvement if people believe that their participation will be meaningless in the long run.

During the initial town and consortium meetings, OEA tried to anticipate this potential problem in the brownfields redevelopment process by identifying the limits involved with the project. Discussion of limits were designed to avoid raising any unnecessarily high expectations and to allow citizens to have informed decisions regarding their continued participation in the project. Community involvement was also promoted by having citizen delegates have a prominent role in selecting sites for revitalization and in creating specific site re-use options.

**Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment**

The community believed that their needs were taken into account during the pilot project. This goes back to the original construction of the Brownfields Consortium: citizen delegates and
environmental justice experts made up a majority of the group. Citizen delegates were elected based on the population of communities throughout the city in a democratic fashion. In addition, all issues and decisions that had to be made required a majority vote of all the members of the Brownfields Consortium. This guaranteed that the community not only had a “seat at the table” so to speak, but that its interests and views were meaningful. In this sense, the Brownfields Consortium was very much a community-driven organization.

**Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice**

There were no formal components of environmental justice in the New Orleans pilot project. Nevertheless, all parties involved felt that the original design of the Brownfields Consortium allowed environmental justice issues to enter into the proceedings. In addition to the 18 citizen delegates members who sat on the Brownfields Consortium, the panel also included two environmental justice experts---from the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund and the Xavier Deep South Center for Environmental Justice. The respective representatives of these organizations both stated that environmental justice concerns were not only taken into account, they became a major focus of the Consortium.

Both representatives agreed that the key to empowering environmental justice concerns in Brownfields Consortium decisions was the initial identification and invitation of stakeholders. Getting environmental justice and community representatives in on the ground floor and getting them to represent the majority of the consortium was imperative. Only through operationalizing and institutionalizing community participation could the Brownfields Consortium’s actions be viewed as consistent with environmental justice and urban revitalization concerns, not just in terms of economic redevelopment.

**Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships**

The OEA and the members of the Brownfields Consortium felt that placing community and industry/lending interests together at the outset would provide a basis for strong partnerships in the future. This has proven beneficial in the second year of the pilot project. Overall, the City has promoted a partnership model that has tried to match community revitalization interests with industry/investment needs. Sites were chosen in part based on community interest in reusing them. At the initial town meetings citizens discussed their revitalization ideas concerning brownfields. These ideas were later incorporated into the Brownfields Consortium through the citizen delegates.

Since selecting nine sites for revitalization, New Orleans has constructed an innovative marketing plan to spur investor interest. The marketing plan includes in-depth information about each individual site in question, the surrounding community’s revitalization ideas (taken from the initial town meetings and from citizen delegates) and incentives that different levels of government can offer to encourage revitalization efforts. The City chose to promote this strong partnership model and endorse community-based planning efforts to show lenders and investors that they have the full support of citizens surrounding the brownfield sites. It views that support as a critical element in gaining investor and industry confidence in revitalization efforts.

Another significant factor in trying to tie together community/industry and investor interests has been the designation of sites that are connected to various tax relief incentives. Out of the 10 sites that were originally selected by the Brownfields Consortium, a subset were located either in State Historic Districts, State Enterprise Zones, the Federal Enterprise Community in New Orleans, or various combinations of the three. In this manner, efforts to promote Brownfields
revitalization and community/industry and investor partnerships have attempted to build on existing relationships and several tax incentives that New Orleans has to offer. In all of these efforts, New Orleans has sought to emphasize environmentally sensitive redevelopment that can lead to a more sustainable future for the City and its residents.

Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities

The major strength of the New Orleans pilot project is the unique citizen participation model that it has employed to facilitate decisions on brownfields. Citizen delegates (who collectively represent all areas and are democratically elected in 11 town meetings) and environmental experts comprise the majority of the Brownfields Consortium. They represent 20 members on the Brownfields Consortium, as opposed to 17 members with economic and technical backgrounds. Moreover, the consortium makes its decisions through a democratic process. This ensures that citizen interests have to be taken into account and that community-based planning efforts are a factor in decision-making. As a result, community representatives have stated that issues of environmental justice and urban revitalization have taken precedence over issues of economic redevelopment.

The city of New Orleans and its Office of Environmental Affairs have been repeatedly recognized for pioneering efforts in community involvement. The EPA has often asked OEA officials to attend brownfield conferences to discuss the innovativeness of the New Orleans Pilot Project program.

Lessons for Delaware

Overall, the experience of the New Orleans pilot project contains a number of significant lessons to help Delaware promote community involvement in brownfields projects. In particular, the design of the Brownfields Consortium is an excellent example of how the knowledge and needs of the community can be meaningful factors in the enactment of a successful brownfields revitalization plan. Other lessons learned are:

- The importance of community involvement at the outset and throughout the process;
- The role of citizen knowledge in strengthening initial designation of brownfields and in marketing them;
- How to instill investor/industry confidence in revitalization through community-based planning efforts;
- The significance of democratic proceedings (to move beyond symbolic methods of citizen participation) on brownfield issues in promoting a high degree of community involvement;
H. Northampton County/Cape Charles, VA

The County of Northampton received a national brownfields designation in September 1995. The pilot project targeted a 155 acre narrow strip of land between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean which contained a former municipal dump, a railyard, and abandoned industrial operations. Northampton had already been selected by the President’s Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD) in August of 1994 as a demonstration pilot to create an eco-industrial park. The $200,000 national brownfields award was intended to help with assessment, redevelopment strategies, and community participation associated with the construction of the Port of Cape Charles Sustainable Technologies Industrial Park.

Background

Northampton County is located at the southern tip of the Delmarva peninsula, occupying the Southern half of Virginia’s eastern shore. A slender landmass suspended between the Atlantic and the Chesapeake, it is bounded by 225 miles of shoreline enclosing some 134,000 acres of prime cropland, saltmarsh and forest. Amidst these rich but delicate environmental surroundings, many of the County’s 13,000 residents suffer economic hardship. Northampton is the most impoverished of the 136 counties in Virginia. Many residents are either unemployed, underemployed, or working for minimum wage in part-time jobs. According to 1990 census data, 27% of all county residents live in poverty (compared to 10.2% statewide) and 30% earn less than $10,000. Much of this poverty is concentrated in the African-American population, which comprises 47% of the County.

Northampton’s high concentration of poverty is tied to a declining population and steep job losses in its dominant industries. More than 1500 jobs were lost from 1990 to 1995 due to seafood and vegetable process plant closings, manual farm labor disappearing, and a lack of seafood resources. In response, the county adopted a Sustainable Development Initiative and appointed a Sustainable Development Task Force in September 1993 to provide the leadership for “concerted action to capitalize on and protect Northampton’s world-class natural, cultural and human assets for the ongoing benefits of all citizens” (Sustainable Development Action Strategy, 1994).

The PCSD recognized the County’s commitment to sustainable development by selecting it as a national eco-industrial park demonstration site. The site chosen, however, contained hazardous substances that threatened public health and marine life and had to be dealt with before the park could be redeveloped. Northampton’s brownfield efforts have sought to:

- assess the extent and type of hazardous contamination on the site,
- design a remediation strategy that would enable development of the park to progress in a timely manner; and
- continue to meaningfully involve the community in the County’s greater sustainable development efforts.

Inclusiveness of Community Involvement

Northampton’s sustainable development action strategy was created by the residents of the County. The community charged the Sustainable Development Task Force with providing the leadership for the formulation and the implementation of that strategy. Appointed by the County’s supervisors, the Task Force encompasses the complete range of Northampton’s people, including economic, human, and environmental interests as well as government, agriculture, seafood,
tourism, and community representatives. It reflects the diverse multi-cultural makeup of the County and has made special efforts to include minority and low-income groups. Over 60 community groups and churches have been involved in its efforts.

Northampton’s commitment to include a wide range of interests in brownfields redevelopment is an outgrowth of the county’s sustainable development action strategy. That strategy centers around three interdependent objectives: to create sustainable industries; to protect and enhance the assets on which those industries and the people of Northampton rely; and to actively involve the entire community in those efforts. One of the major goals of the Task Force has been to build consensus for the goals of the sustainable development action strategy. It has worked in partnership with a number of community groups from Northampton to ensure that their views are central to that strategy.

Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement

The County began formulating its action strategy with a community-wide sustainable development workshop held in November 1993 at Kiptopeke Elementary school. Residents were actively encouraged to attend and over 200 people from the County participated at the meeting. The workshop involved participants in determining the strategies that the community wished to pursue in achieving and sustaining a healthy economy and a high quality of life. The main goal of the workshop was to generate consensus among the different interests for a program of action that would ensure a sustainable economic future.

Community members shared their visions for the future of Northampton and actions to achieve that vision. They also worked in smaller groups to articulate the specific assets, liabilities, opportunities, and threats that had to be considered in achieving that vision. The groups completed their work by outlining actions aimed at developing sustainable industries while protecting the assets on which those industries and the County’s population would rely. The ideas and action plan created at the workshop are the basis for the sustainable development action strategy which has guided brownfields efforts in Northampton.

Overall, Northampton has relied on active community participation to ensure its efforts are community-driven. Residents have been involved in workshops, field trips, presentations, and community discussions. For example, interaction and participation has taken place at:

- an initial community project workshop attended by over 200 people to initiate the design and development of the eco-industrial park;
- a “Community Design Workshop and Charette” attended by more than 150 local citizens who participated along with professional designers, property owners and investors to create a master plan for the park; and
- a citizens review workshop to evaluate and revise detailed drafts of the master plan and the zoning laws associated with brownfields redevelopment.

Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement

Initially there were few obstacles in securing meaningful community involvement. This was largely because community residents were successfully encouraged to participate in the vision and idea stage of the sustainable development action strategy. By having community residents articulate and recognize the assets and liabilities inherent to development in Northampton, the County avoided problems of high expectations on the part of residents. The community workshops also identified the major obstacle to maintaining active community participation: a lack of funds
for assessment and redevelopment activities. Northampton recognized that if it could not obtain the funds necessary to start the process of redevelopment, community interest would soon drop off.

The County and its administrators were able to implement an action strategy to overcome funding shortcomings. Central to that strategy was leveraging funds from a variety of government actors. Northampton’s designation as an eco-industrial park by the PCSD was followed by a grant from the Virginia Coastal Program/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to fund a master design plan for the park. The EPA awarded the County a national brownfields designation soon thereafter to help in the assessment of the park site. In this manner, administrative efforts, particularly those of the County’s Director of Sustainable Development have been instrumental in securing funds to make the community’s vision a reality and thus ensure continued, meaningful community participation.

**Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment**

The Northampton sustainable development action strategy is a direct expression of the community’s collective response to the inter-related problems of environmental degradation and economic hardship. It was designed as a means of ensuring a more prosperous and hopeful future (economically, environmentally, and socially) for the entire community. Northampton has created a community-driven vision, by grounding the sustainable development action strategy on the perspectives, needs, and goals of the County’s residents. This ensures that Northampton’s plan of action is owned by and for the benefit of its residents.

**Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice**

Although the Northampton brownfields pilot project did not contain any formal environmental justice mechanisms, environmental justice concerns were addressed. Participants felt that the makeup of the Task Force, the high level of community participation, and the community commitment to sustainable economic development for all coincided with environmental justice principles. The plan of action adopted by Northampton to redevelop the brownfields site also includes restoration of wetlands areas, and the provision of a nature trail, and environmental education facility and a tertiary sewage treatment center.

**Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships**

Northampton has done an excellent job of fostering partnerships between community residents and sustainable industry interests. The keys to this success have been the County’s ability to leverage funding and the high level of community participation involved in the sustainable development action strategy. Northampton has made itself an attractive location for businesses based on its national designation as an eco-industrial park and its success in obtaining funding for that goal. Overall, the County managed to secure over $1,000,000 in funding from different agencies (including the US Department of Agriculture, the Economic Development Administration, and the EPA) to conduct site assessment activities and establish the infrastructure for Phase I of the eco-industrial park. Just recently the County managed to pass a $2.5 million bond to pay for additional lands and expand the construction of the park.

In concert with it funding success, community residents determined the appropriate types of industries that would operate within their county. A consensus was reached at the outset that only sustainable industries that sought to benefit Northampton as a whole would be conducive to redevelopment efforts. Presently two industries have committed to the park. Energy Recovery Inc. has signed a seven-year lease with the park to use it as a base of operations to manufacture
desalinization equipment. Solar Building System Inc. has already established a temporary solar factory within the County until it moves into the Park. Both of these environmentally sensitive industries are committed to hiring County residents and their visions for a sustainable future mirror that of Northampton.

**Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities**

The main strength of Northampton's sustainable development action strategy has been its commitment to meaningful community participation. County residents were encouraged at the outset to attend and actively participate in all phases of the revitalization effort. Initially, this helped build consensus amongst the diverse interests on a vision for Northampton's future. The makeup of the Sustainable Development Task Force and the extensive community involvement in the design, zoning, and identification of appropriate industries for the eco-industrial park all reinforced this commitment. Overall, the County's participatory approach has managed to forge a consensus that has proven very successful in achieving its goals.

In recognition of its community-driven model of revitalization, Northampton was awarded an eco-industrial park and brownfield designation. It successfully used those achievements to leverage other funds to conduct Phase I and Phase II site assessments and design and begin construction. The County has also managed to attract businesses with similar sustainable development interests as its community. As a testament to these accomplishments, both the President's Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD) and EPA's National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) have acknowledged Northampton as an exemplary model of integrating sustainable development, community participation and environmental justice principles into revitalization efforts.

**Lessons for Delaware**

Northampton is one of the most successful examples of using a participatory approach to brownfields revitalization. The County’s experience can be invaluable Delaware. In particular, Northampton’s experience displays:

- The important role that active community participation at the outset and throughout the revitalization process can have in the overall success of a program;
- How community participation can help in addressing and acting on environmental justice concerns;
- The value of a strong community-driven revitalization approach in leveraging the funding necessary to begin the process of revitalization;
- How to instill investor/industry confidence and commitment in a development strategy that is owned and for the benefit of the community; and
- The importance of incorporating brownfield efforts into a broader strategy of overall revitalization.

**Portland, Oregon**

Portland was awarded an EPA national brownfields award in March 1996. The pilot project is concerned with abandoned and/or underused properties located within Portland’s Enterprise Community, the state Enterprise Zone, and along its waterfront. The $200,000 grant award was to be used to conduct assessments and contemplate reuse options for sites while involving the affected communities in the brownfields redevelopment process.
In March 1998, Portland was also selected as a brownfields "showcase community." As such, the city will receive an additional $1.1 million and benefit from the coordination of over 16 different federal agencies in expanding its brownfields revitalization efforts.

**Background**

Portland is Oregon's oldest and largest industrial, shipping, and commercial center. Due to historical patterns of development, the City has the highest concentration of brownfields properties in the State. Portland estimates that 484 sites have confirmed contamination while another 600 sites are suspected of having contamination. Those that live within or adjacent to these brownfields areas experience disproportionate levels of environmental pollution and also suffer economically. The City's federal Enterprise Community (which is surrounded by and contains many brownfields) has unemployment and poverty rates of 10.4% and 35% respectively. These numbers are significantly higher than the State averages for each.

The threat of contamination and potential liability problems has hampered redevelopment activities within the City and shifted development to suburban greenfields: expanding environmental problems while reducing economic opportunities for City residents. Portland’s pilot project targets the City’s federal EC and examines redevelopment strategy designed to create economic growth and opportunities for City residents while improving and protecting the environment, especially the Willamette river.

Redevelopment of the urban waterfront can promote productive land use and provide needed economic opportunities for low-income residents while reducing the land and water pollution associated with urban sprawl. To accomplish this, the City has begun to:

- conduct site assessments of the brownfields within the EC;
- identify the incentives and disincentives that can effectively promote or inhibit redevelopment within those areas; and
- educate and include affected communities in the redevelopment process.

**Inclusiveness of Community Component**

Portland’s Brownfield Initiative group enacted an initial Brownfields Public Involvement Plan (BPIP) to “develop a strong public involvement program that increases community awareness of project goals, brownfield issues, and provides opportunity for participation in all stages of the brownfields initiative” (City of Portland, 1996). The BPIP was also designed to identify stakeholders to participate in “Brownfields Roundtable” sessions held by the City. Stakeholders included in the initial sessions were hand-picked members from business, real estate, banking, community, environmental, and regulatory interests that the Portland Brownfields Initiative group considered experienced and knowledgeable.

Although the pilot project is different than many others in that it does address specific sites, efforts were also made to include potential impacted communities by involving neighborhood associations from the federal EC, state EZ, and riverfront areas.

**Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement**

The Portland Brownfields Initiative built on existing social and networks to encourage community involvement. The Brownfields Roundtables represented the primary vehicle of community participation. Between 15 to 20 stakeholders were invited to attend each of the four daytime sessions which were held during a two-day period (December 9-10, 1996). Community
organization, environmental advocate, and other community leaders were included among stakeholders. Each Roundtable session focused on identifying community needs, concerns, goals, and overall obstacles to brownfields redevelopment. Sessions were facilitated by professionals who had been brought in from outside Portland.

An additional meeting was also set specifically for neighborhood association members and others who had not been able to attend the daytime sessions. The information and input gathered from the Brownfields Roundtables was later summarized by Portland’s Brownfield Initiative group to form the foundation of the Portland Brownfields Action Plan.

In addition to the Brownfields Roundtables, a number of other mechanisms were put in place to promote community participation. Among them were:

- the development of a website, “Brownfields Online,” that provides access to all working documents related to Portland’s brownfield pilot project and provides links to other project pilot homepages and the EPA’s brownfields homepage;
- the use of community input sessions comprised of community stakeholders from the federal EC, the state EZ, and along the waterfront to review and comment on brownfield actions plans; and
- the creation of a brownfields curriculum to increase community and youth awareness of brownfields initiatives and their role in the redevelopment process.

**Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement**

Several obstacles hindered community participation at the early stages of the brownfields redevelopment process. Primary among these impediments were a narrow interpretation of the “community” and inadequate participatory mechanisms. As originally designed, Portland’s Brownfields Initiative did not meaningfully include members of potential affected communities. Although a few community organization and neighborhood association members were selected to participate in the Brownfields Roundtables, many local leaders and environmental justice advocates felt that those members were not representative of affected communities. Moreover, leaders and advocates felt that the community did not have any control over the general direction or resources involved in the project.

Participatory mechanisms were reflective of this lack of community involvement. No permanent community advisory group was established nor were there any general public meetings held at the outset. Community leaders and environmental justice advocates criticized the Brownfields Roundtables as being elitist and questioned the use of outside facilitators to direct the proceedings. They argued for greater community involvement and funding to raise community awareness and promote environmental justice.

The City of Portland responded to these criticisms in an impressive manner. The Portland Brownfields Initiative overcame these initial obstacles by becoming more receptive to community participation. As the pilot project progressed, it included more opinions and involvement from community leaders and members, as well as environmental justice advocates.

**Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment**

The communities’ role was not as strong or inclusive as it could have been during the initial design and implementation stages of Portland’s pilot project. The Portland Brownfields Initiative pledged a safer environment while creating economic opportunities for the residents of affected communities—without including members of those communities in the project proposal.
In effect, community needs were not initially defined by the affected communities. Community interests were also not satisfied with the mechanisms provided to promote participation throughout the brownfields redevelopment process.

Despite project pilot claims and intentions, community interests questioned the Portland Brownfields Initiative’s commitment to meaningful community involvement. The pilot project group later became more amendable to community concerns, however, and community participation increased substantially. This is directly reflected in Portland’s “showcase community” proposal. Whereas there was little community input in the initial brownfields pilot proposal, community concerns, needs and goals played a more prominent role in the showcase community proposal.

**Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice**

The Portland Brownfields Initiative did not contain any formal mechanisms to ensure that environmental justice considerations were taken into account. Despite initial pilot project pledges to environmentally sensitive redevelopment, community leaders and environmental justice advocates expressed reservations about environmental justice issues. As the pilot project evolved, however, more environmental justice considerations were included and the base of environmental justice communities providing input was expanded. The inclusion of Portland’s Urban League was particularly noteworthy. The Urban League of Portland had previously received grants from EPA to conduct environmental justice and education activities designed to empower residents in the North/Northeast regions of the City.

**Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships**

The Portland Brownfields Initiative sought to promote sustainable community/industry partnerships as part of its overall plan to manage growth effectively in Portland. The City’s “2040 Growth Strategy” was designed to anticipate a population increase of 500,000 by 2015. The redevelopment of brownfields into environmentally sensitive economic opportunities for city residents is an important part of that strategy. Mixed-use redevelopment efforts have improved environmental quality, created new jobs and housing units, and increased the tax base while preventing urban sprawl.

Portland has used a wide range of economic incentives to attract, encourage, and leverage urban revitalization within targeted communities. Federal and State tax incentives have been used to further revitalization efforts. The Portland Brownfields Initiative has also sought coordinate its activities with other brownfields related programs such as Portland’s federal Enterprise Community and Oregon’s State Empowerment Zone. Coordination with Oregon’s Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and its Voluntary Cleanup Program have been especially helpful in facilitating revitalization.

The City has also partnered with the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Transportation (DOT) on an urban-based rail system, the “Streetcar Project.” In addition redevelopment is taking place in the South Waterfront Redevelopment Area, where a former home to a power station, lumber mills, and scrap yards is being redeveloped into commercial, office, and residential facilities. These examples indicate Portland’s commitment to an environmentally sustainable future.
Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities

Through establishing the Brownfields Roundtables, creating the “Brownfields Online” website, and involving neighborhood association members, the Portland Brownfields Initiative provided mechanisms for community participation. Feedback from community leaders and environmental justice advocates, however, pointed out the inadequacy of these mechanisms for meaningful involvement of the affected communities. As a result, Portland expanded its community involvement activities to the extent that community participation and environmental justice concerns became a major strength of the project. Moreover, other brownfields initiatives in Oregon that have followed Portland’s project, such as the showcase community, have actively promoted community involvement at the outset.

Portland’s overall commitment to achieving sustainable development, in part, through the redevelopment of brownfields is also noteworthy. It has focused on protecting and enhancing environmental conditions while creating economic opportunities for City residents. As part of the 2040 Growth Strategy, Portland has integrated the brownfields pilot project with several other programs. Among them are the federal Enterprise Community, the State Empowerment Zone, and Oregon’s Department of Environmental Quality’s (DEQ) Voluntary Cleanup Program. As a result of its commitment and achievements, Portland was awarded a showcase community designation by the EPA in March 1998.

Lessons for Delaware

Portland’s pilot project offers some important experiences in integrating community participation in the brownfields revitalization process. As such, the Portland Brownfields Initiative provides Delaware with some important lessons. These include:

- The importance of having community participation in the initial design and early implementation stages of the brownfields redevelopment process;
- The value of soliciting and constructively reacting to the feedback that community leaders and environmental justice advocates offer;
- How brownfields redevelopment can be successfully integrated into an overall plan to build sustainable community development;
- The importance of linking brownfields redevelopment to environmental and economic benefits for the affected communities; and
- The use of a website to help facilitate the brownfields redevelopment process.
J. Trenton, New Jersey

The City of Trenton was awarded a national brownfields designation by EPA in September 1995. The $200,000 award was targeted for the completion of remedial action plans, legal research, community outreach, and marketing of brownfields sites.

In March of 1998, EPA selected Trenton as one of the sixteen brownfields "showcase communities." This was due, in part, to the City’s innovative and successful approach to involving the community in its brownfields redevelopment process. Trenton was awarded an additional $2.1 million for expanded brownfields revitalization.

Background

Trenton was a prominent manufacturing center in the late 1800s. As its manufacturing sector declined in the mid-1900s, the City was left with a host of abandoned industrial sites. Today, several of those vacant and abandoned sites remain. Many of these environmentally threatening sites are located in predominantly poor neighborhoods which are comprised of minority communities (48% African-American and 14% Latinos).

Trenton’s ultimate objective is to become a green, equitable and sustainable community. Brownfields revitalization is central to this objective. Protective brownfields revitalization in Trenton means focusing on long-term goals that address quality of life issues, rather than merely promoting short-term industrial and commercial goals. The City believes that in order to facilitate brownfields revitalization, it needs to create a positive core that will enhance the character of the neighborhoods and areas surrounding the brownfields sites. Trenton has created a unique brownfields dialogue that has been central in achieving the following objectives:

- the identification of brownfields sites and their reuse potential within the context of a larger neighborhood and a city-wide economic strategy;
- the integration of environmental, technical, marketing, and financial resources to develop a comprehensive strategy of site assessment, cleanup, and reuse; and
- the inclusion of low-income and minority residents in the brownfields redevelopment process through community training, education and outreach.

Inclusiveness of Community Involvement

Trenton believes that long-term redevelopment of brownfields sites requires the active support and participation of the entire City, especially those in impacted communities. As a result, Trenton has successfully formed the Brownfields Environmental Solutions for Trenton (BEST) Advisory Committee to facilitate these goals. BEST is comprised of a diversity of stakeholders in the City and is mandated to perform a number of tasks, among them: examine state legislation and recent public policy changes relating to brownfields; review the city's manufacturing sector (including its products and commodities); advise the city and its partners on redevelopment, remediation, and legislative issues; and create an action document and strategy for future brownfield redevelopment.

In addition, Trenton has focused on the communities within the impacted areas. Through the course of its initial proceedings, the various members of the BEST committee identified community participation and meaningful involvement of those most affected as critical to the City’s brownfields revitalization plan. To promote this, a representative from each of Trenton’s brownfields pilot project sites sits on the committee. These representatives are normally community leaders from the impacted neighborhoods.
Diversity of Mechanisms Used for Community Involvement

In addition to their representation on the BEST Advisory Committee, communities have been involved in the brownfields process through their neighborhood associations. Existing community networks were originally tapped to facilitate community discussion regarding brownfields. In the absence of community associations, community outreach and education efforts paved the way to the formation of new organizations. Through the use of these organizations, communities have been better able to articulate their views---such as promoting desirable property uses in their neighborhoods (more open and green spaces).

In reaching out to neighborhoods, Trenton has relied heavily on the services of Isles, Inc., a non-profit community development organization with an excellent background of community involvement in the city (Isles, Inc., has received grants from the EPA to engage in pollution prevention education with low-income and minority communities in Trenton). Isles, Inc., in turn, has sought the help of other non-profit groups, educational institutions, civic groups, and churches to engage in community outreach. As a result of these efforts, brownfields has become a hot topic of discussion at the community level. Outreach efforts have included:

- the use of numerous flyers, informational pamphlets and fact sheets;
- the joint-publication (between the Trenton and Isles, Inc.) of a quarterly newsletter, *Trenton on Site News*, which informs residents of the environmental issues, site histories, and redevelopment plans in neighborhoods where project sites are located; and
- the insertion of the newsletter into the *Trenton Times*, which is delivered to all subscribers within the city limits.

Efforts to Identify Obstacles to Community Involvement

Both Isles, Inc. and Trenton's Department of Housing and Development identified organizational skills of the community residents as one of the main impediments to effective community involvement. Although residents were very interested in the information they were provided with, they did not have the skills necessary to work together meaningfully as a collective community (such as networking skills). If unaddressed, this situation may have eventually produced apathy among residents who felt that their individual views were not being clearly articulated by a larger group.

In order to remedy this initial weakness, the city of Trenton, in partnership with the New Jersey Institute of Technology and Rutgers University, designed and implemented a course that focused on building the capacity of citizens to address brownfields issues from a grassroots level. Many residents have attended seminars and conferences to expand their knowledge and skills regarding the brownfields revitalization process. In recognition of the success of these educational programs, some residents were invited by President Clinton and Vice President Gore to hear a major policy address on state of the environment and brownfields at Farleigh Dickenson University in 1996.

Inclusion of Community Perspectives in Needs Assessment

Overall, the involvement of community residents and the inclusion of their views in the process of remediation, planning and redevelopment is the hallmark of the Trenton project. Community needs and interests were originally included in the overall brownfields revitalization strategy through BEST. In addition, Isles, Inc. conducted neighborhood surveys assessing the attitudes and concerns of residents regarding the brownfields sites. Development processes were
later discussed at community level meetings and neighborhood consultations. Through existing community organizations and newly formed associations, residents were also able to propose alternative uses of project sites. In this manner, community input had a definite influence on overall brownfield revitalization plans and specific project site reuse options.

**Emphasis Given to Environmental Justice**

Neither the State of New Jersey nor the City of Trenton has a formal environmental justice plan to guide its policies with respect to brownfields issues. There is, however, a state Environmental Rights Act which enables citizens in environmentally impacted areas to sue in the event that developers and regulators initiate no action to clean polluted sites. Despite the lack of an overall environmental justice plan, all parties thought that environmental justice issues had been accounted for. According to the director of Isles, Inc., environmental justice issues emerged as a hot topic of debate during discussions about the brownfields revitalization process even though there had been no real connection between environmental justice concerns and brownfields issues at the outset of the project.

In particular, the issue came up in discussions between BEST members and impacted community residents about the allocation of resources for cleanup. A number of brownfields in Trenton are located in predominantly low-income neighborhoods that are not very attractive to business interests and developers despite incentives. Substantial public financial support is needed to clean these areas and revitalize them. Thus far, Trenton has been able to strike a balance between private sector development of the most attractive areas while providing public subsidies to rebuild less attractive low-income community sites around the needs of individual neighborhoods (such as housing and retail space for small, neighborhood businesses).

**Promotion of Sustainable Community/Industry Partnerships**

BEST facilitated community/industry partnerships through its makeup. The interaction of community, industry and investor representatives as stakeholders in BEST provided the different groups with a forum to better understand each others needs, visions, and expectations. This ensured the long-term sustainability of brownfields revitalization efforts in Trenton. At the local level, businesses also attended community meetings and consultations. In some meetings, they provided technical assistance to the community regarding reuse options and locations.

BEST has also promoted community/industry partnerships by building on existing financial incentives. In addition to the federal brownfields tax incentives, New Jersey State Enterprise Zone (UEZ) status, the Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund pilot project, and New Jersey’s Voluntary Cleanup Program have been instrumental in allowing Trenton to leverage funds. The City has already remediated and redeveloped more than 30 brownfields sites covering nearly 100 acres. One of these properties has leveraged an estimated $90 million to construct a new shopping center and office complex, creating more than 400 jobs. The committee is advertising brownfields sites in Urban Land Magazine. Finally, the partnership is also promoted through the Eco-Industrial Roundtable Discussion group for the Eco-Industrial program in Trenton and the surrounding region. In all of these activities, Trenton has sought to promote redevelopment that is environmentally sensitive to remain conducive with the City’s ultimate goal of building green, equitable and sustainable communities.

**Pilot Strengths and Achievements in Building Sustainable Communities**
The primary strength of Trenton’s pilot project has been its innovative and successful approach to involving the community. Community organizing efforts strengthened existing community organizations and created new organizations in communities that lacked them. These community organizations continuously articulated the needs and goals of the community in the brownfields process through their representation in the city-wide BEST committee.

In a dynamic partnership with the City, BEST has provided a long-term vision of a permanent brownfields program. Through this partnership, the City has attracted a wide array of developers to redevelop brownfields sites, including private and nonprofit housing developers, private developers of industrial and commercial facilities, as well as nonprofit and public sector entities creating recreational facilities, open/green spaces, and community institutions.

The participation of academic institutions in educating community residents in Trenton is also noteworthy. In partnership with New Jersey Institute of Technology and Rutgers University, the City has designed and implemented a course that focuses on building the capacity of community residents from a grassroots level. The Leadership Environmental Training Seminar (LETS) program has been developed to educate participants in leadership development, the brownfields process (including regulatory, technical, neighborhood planning); and other issues that may affect their neighborhoods.

**Lessons for Delaware**

In recognition of its strengths and achievements, Trenton has been designated one of only sixteen brownfields “showcase communities.” As such, Trenton’s experience offers insights that may be helpful to Delaware. Among those valuable insights are:

- The importance of creating avenues of city-wide brownfields dialogue that place a high value on community participation;
- The successful strategy of building on pre-existing community organizations and simultaneously creating new organizations where they did not already exist as part of an overall effort to promote community participation;
- Improving lines of communications between the community, the city, and industry/investor interests can greatly enhance the opportunities for brownfields revitalization;
- The value of educating the community about each individual site’s environmental risks and reuse options; and
- The value of establishing partnerships with educational institutions to create programs that focus on building the capacity of community residents.
V. Delaware’s Brownfields: Status and Experiences

This section examines the state of brownfields in Delaware and the efforts that have been made to promote their redevelopment. Urban revitalization concerns and community involvement efforts are integral aspects of successful brownfields redevelopment. Because many of Delaware’s brownfields are in the City of Wilmington, the report focuses on activities in the State’s largest metropolitan area. The potential for community participation as part of an overall plan to promote environmental justice in Wilmington’s ongoing urban revitalization efforts is described.

In general, Delaware’s brownfields experience resembles that of other states. Brownfield areas are concentrated in the City of Wilmington—which was the industrial center of the State. Brownfields in Wilmington are areas in which general environmental degradation and increased levels of risk to human health coexist with high poverty and unemployment rates among a predominantly non-white population (please see the figures included in this section). Recently, the State and the City have begun efforts to redevelop brownfields while taking into account community concerns. The extent to which these efforts can initiate active community participation and promote environmental justice in urban revitalization, however, is still largely unknown. By learning from the experiences of other EPA National Brownfields Pilot Projects, Delaware and Wilmington can improve their ongoing efforts to redevelop brownfields in a manner that is responsive and fair to communities.

A. The State of Brownfields in Delaware

Delaware’s current brownfields situation is a direct outcome of its industrial legacy. Industrial development began during the 1800s and was centered along the Brandywine and Christiana Rivers. Historically, industrial development in Delaware has been concentrated in the greater Wilmington area and has largely affected the eastern and southern portions of the city through which the rivers flow. Recent studies conducted by Delaware’s Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) indicate that most of the industrial properties located along these rivers are contaminated.

As the main center of economic and industrial activity in Delaware, Wilmington has experienced the brunt of environmental degradation. Current land use estimates indicate that approximately 1,750 acres of Wilmington’s useable land area are likely to be environmentally contaminated. This means that 24% of the City’s land area are brownfields and must confront environmental concerns in their redevelopment. Within Wilmington’s 16 square mile area, major contaminated areas include Cherry Island, East Seventh Street Peninsula, the Port of Wilmington vicinity, South Madison Street, Bell Alley, Browntown, and Todds Lane. Figure 1 displays the areas that have been designated as brownfields in the City.

The areas which contain a high incidence of brownfields all share a common history. They have been long time hosts to polluting industries that have shut down or moved on as environmental codes in the State have become stricter—leaving behind unresolved contamination problems. DNREC studies to date have examined surface and subsurface soil and sediment samples, as well as surface and groundwater samples. These studies reveal that extensive areas of soil, sediment, and water contamination exist in Wilmington's brownfields. The primary chemicals of concern are
lead and petroleum compounds, along with hot-spot areas of PAHs, PCBs, and heavy metals such as arsenic and mercury (DNREC, Workplan for Field Activities for Bell Alley/South Wilmington Environmental Assessment, 1995). These chemicals and metals pose risks to human health.

In this regard, Wilmington’s resident population of approximately 74,000 face disproportionate environmental risks. No other population of comparable size lives adjacent to environmental risks of this kind. The concentration of brownfields in Wilmington also imposes a heavy economic burden because it results in a barrier to unrestricted use of 24% of the City’s land. This impediment towards fully using the land as economically viable property limits economic opportunities (investment and long-term employment) available to the City's residents. This is a significant concern, given Wilmington’s socioeconomic makeup. Although Wilmington is situated in New Castle County, which is the most prosperous part of the State, and has benefited economically from its location (Bailey, A “Competitive Advantages” Analysis of the Wilmington, DE Economy, 1990-1995, 1999), it is still home to the largest concentration of poverty in Delaware.

The socioeconomic conditions which confront Wilmington's residents indicates the interrelation between brownfields and economic hardship. Nearly all of the communities that lie in or adjacent to brownfield areas in Wilmington are made up of predominantly low-to-moderate income and minority individuals and families that experience poverty and unemployment rates that are higher than both the State and City average. According to the latest census data, poverty rates in these communities range between 12 and 66 percent, while unemployment rates range between 6 and 20 percent. Overall, 30 percent of all families located in or adjacent to brownfield areas in Wilmington and 43 percent of all female–headed households residing near these contaminated properties live in poverty (City of Wilmington, Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative, 1996).

Finally, it is important to note that the brownfields situation which Wilmington and its residents face has significant affects for the State of Delaware as a whole. The presence of brownfields in Wilmington is also a contributing factor to the phenomenon of urban sprawl of both residents and industry. The high incidence of brownfields in Wilmington degrades the environment in the City and exposes its residents to disproportionate levels of environmental and health risks. It contributes to the migration of people and businesses from Wilmington who may to seek to avoid the economic and environmental consequences of brownfields. These factors combine to shift economic activity away from brownfields redevelopment in the City and towards the development of suburban areas. In this manner, environmental degradation associated with sprawl is expanded to areas beyond Wilmington.
B. Brownfields, Environmental Justice and Urban Revitalization in Delaware

The situation confronting Delaware and Wilmington mirrors that of many other states and cities: brownfields in Wilmington display strong links between social, environmental, and economic problems. Many of the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area that are either in or adjacent to brownfields areas are characterized by high levels of environmental pollution and high levels of economic hardship among a predominantly minority population.

Analysis of brownfield locations in Wilmington shows that local residents face a disproportionate amount of environmental risk. DNREC environmental assessments have established that there are many contaminated areas located in the City. These areas subject their residents and those who live near them to numerous potential environmental hazards. Public health workers have confirmed that these areas are unhealthy and that the worst areas of environmental pollution are those that comprise Wilmington’s Enterprise Community (City of Wilmington, Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative, 1996).

The issue of brownfields and the environmental and health hazard problems associated with them are closely tied to issues of race and income. Figure 3 indicates that a high level of minority residents reside in or adjacent to the brownfield areas located throughout the City. Indeed, in many brownfield areas minority resident comprise over 70 percent of the population.1 Figure 4 also shows a strong relationship between brownfields and high levels of poverty. According to 1990 census data, most neighborhoods that are located in or adjacent to brownfield areas in the City have poverty rates of nearly 20 percent and some areas report poverty rates above 35 percent.

Figure 5 maps the percentage of children under the age of seven that comprise communities located in or adjacent to brownfield areas in the City. An analysis of children and brownfields is particularly significant to environmental and health issues, since children are among the most susceptible to environmental health risks associated with brownfields. Figure 5 indicates that most communities that are in or adjacent to brownfield areas in Wilmington have populations in which the percentage of children under the age of seven exceeds 15 percent. In some of these areas, children under the age of seven make up at least 20 percent of the community.

All of these risk indicators are combined in Figure 6 which shows a strong relationship between brownfield areas and the presence of high proportions of minority residents (over 40 percent), high poverty rates (over 18 percent), and high percentages of children under the age of seven (over 15 percent). A few areas located along the Christiana and Brandywine Rivers that have been designated as brownfields do not possess these socioeconomic indicators. But that is because these areas are industrial rather than residential areas. That is, they do not contain many residents and therefore would not be revealed as having high levels of minorities, poverty rates, or children.

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1 All maps in this section use 1990 census data as the basis for their statistics and geographical information system (GIS) methods of mapping. The maps were provided by Delaware’s Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and designed by Karissa H. Hendershot.
A 1996 study of environmental justice in Wilmington’s Enterprise Community conducted by the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy (CEEP) and the Center for Community Development and Family Policy (CCDFP) at the University of Delaware further exhibits these links. CEEP and CCDFP’s study of the Southbridge neighborhood located in the Enterprise Community reveals that the area is marked by a number of conditions that predisposes it to environmental justice concerns.

Many of the polluting industries which were in the Southbridge community have shut down or left the inner city due to stricter environmental regulations. They have left behind areas in need of environmental cleanup and, as a consequence, have reduced economic opportunities available to the community. As the neighborhood’s white and higher income residents have left Wilmington for the suburbs, minority and low income residents have become the predominant residents of Southbridge. According to the 1990 census, of the 662 households in Southbridge, 94 percent were minority (with 92 percent being African-American). The unemployment rate for the area was almost 17 percent and the poverty rate over 41 percent. These numbers are especially high, considering that Wilmington had unemployment and poverty rates of 7.1 percent and 18 percent overall, respectively (CEEP, Environmental Justice in Wilmington’s Enterprise Community, 1996).

Focus group interviews and survey research conducted in Southbridge found that both community leaders and residents feel that their neighborhood is subject to environmental problems. In focus group interviews, community leaders expressed concerns that the health of local residents is being affected by exposure to pollution in Southbridge. Although they have attempted to address the impacts of polluting industries in the area and guard against the continued migration of so-called “dirty” industries into the area, community leaders conclude that these efforts have been unsuccessful. Overall, community leaders believe that Southbridge is disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards for a variety of historical, racial, and economic reasons.

A survey of 95 households located in Southbridge reveals similar feelings among the communities' residents. Many local residents are aware of the existence of environmental problems in their community. Several individuals have brought environmental concerns to the attention of government, business and/or community officials with varying results. Approximately 66% of survey respondents feel that Southbridge receives a disproportionate share of environmentally hazardous facilities. Moreover, the survey indicates that although residents recognize environmental problems and health-related effects associated with them, employment and economic concerns are also major issues within the community.

Overall, examination of Delaware's brownfields situation underscores the need for policies that promote environmentally sensitive redevelopment which targets benefits to the affected communities. This is necessary to ensure that environmental, health, economic, and social considerations are accounted for in a comprehensive and fair manner.
C. Efforts to Redevelop Delaware’s Brownfields

In response to brownfield concerns, both the State and more recently the City of Wilmington have initiated legislative and programmatic efforts designed to promote brownfields redevelopment. These efforts are similar to those undertaken by other states and cities, including attempts to encourage community participation as a vehicle for ensuring that environmental justice issues are addressed. Table 5 provides a brief overview of these efforts to date.

1. State Brownfield Efforts

The Delaware Hazardous Substance Cleanup Act (HSCA) was enacted by the Delaware General Assembly in July 1990. It was the first state legislation to directly address remediation of sites contaminated by hazardous and toxic substances. The main intent of HCSA is to provide for the timely containment and removal of hazardous substances and elimination and/or minimization of risks to public health, welfare, and the environment associated with such substances. When responsible parties can be identified, HSCA gives DNREC authority to enforce cleanup activities at the expense of the responsible party. The Act also provides for a fund that can be used to clean up facilities where viable responsible parties cannot be identified.

DNREC adopted and developed the final regulations for HCSA by April 1994. These regulations establish the administrative procedures and standards to identify, investigate, and clean up facilities where a release of hazardous/toxic substances has occurred or is imminent. Both public and privately owned facilities within the State are subject to regulation. HCSA provides a process of governmental oversight so that effective and prompt cleanup of contaminated facilities takes place to protect public health, welfare, and the environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Delaware Brownfields-Related Legislation and Programs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hazardous Substance Cleanup Act of 1990:</strong> First legislation in the state to address the remediation of hazardous/toxic waste sites in Delaware. Designed to provide a workable process for effective and timely cleanup of contaminated facilities and areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HSCA Amendment of 1995 Creating a Voluntary Cleanup Program:</strong> Amendment to 1990 legislation that makes it attractive for parties to enter into voluntary cleanup agreements with DNREC by limiting liability concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Establishment of Delaware’s Brownfields Assistance Program:</strong> State program which provides incentives for developers and investors to recycle brownfields. They include a funding pool for site investigations and tax incentives for cleanup and redevelopment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Enterprise Community Designation in Wilmington by HUD:</strong> Wilmington’s strategic plan focuses on themes that highlight the need for brownfields redevelopment. The sections on economic development and supportive communities discuss the resolution of cleanup issues and redevelopment activities to alleviate environmental degradation, make the community environmentally healthier, and provide needed economic opportunities to residents.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The HCSA framework proved to be limited in its overall effectiveness, however, due to liability fears on the part of site owners and potential developers. Like the federal Superfund Program, the original HCSA was an enforcement program that used the threat of penalties to bring parties into compliance with the remediation process. While this was effective in many cases, strict regulatory provisions and the threat of penalties could cause some parties to delay and/or not address site contamination problems. Liability concerns, including the high potential cost of remediation activities, could serve as an impediment to program participation.

In July 1995, the Delaware General Assembly addressed these concerns by amending HCSA. The 1995 HCSA Amendment addresses liability concerns of prospective purchasers and developers who undertake the cleanup of contaminated properties with DNREC oversight, provides streamlined cleanup agreements, and creates greater flexibility to facilitate the cleanup of sites. The new legislation created DNREC’s Voluntary Cleanup Program and signals a movement from an enforcement/penalty-based program to a voluntary/incentive-based approach to brownfields remediation and redevelopment.

Delaware has recognized, however, that alleviating developer and industry fears through the VCP program and limited liability is not enough. Site acquisition, cleanup and redevelopment activities are costly and can still constrain an effective brownfields redevelopment process. In order to attract more parties to enter into voluntary agreements with DNREC for recycling brownfield sites, the Delaware Brownfields Assistance Program also provides investors and developers a number of financial incentives to meet the challenge of redevelopment. These incentives include a funding pool for site investigations and tax incentives for cleanup and redevelopment.

The funding pool for site investigations has been established under the administration of the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO) to help developers and investors offset some of the costs associated with environmental site investigations. Under the Brownfields Assistance Program, matching funds are available to conduct site investigations on properties that have “the ability to maintain, expand or diversify business or industry within the State and/or maintain or increase the State tax base” (DNREC, An Introduction to Delaware’s Voluntary Cleanup and Brownfield Programs, 1998). Matching funds are provided on a dollar-for-dollar (50 percent) basis up to a maximum contribution of $25,000 per site investigation.

Tax incentives for cleanup and redevelopment activities were also established in 1995 and are administered by Delaware’s Department of Finance/Division of Revenue. Corporate tax credits are available for anyone that invests $200,000 or more in a brownfields area and has hired at least 5 qualified people (blue-collar jobs) in any taxable year beginning in January 1985. The New Employee Tax Credit is equal to $650-$900 per new employee and the Capital Investment Tax Credit is equal to $650-$900 per $100,000 unit of investment. In addition, there is a Gross Receipts Tax Credit which begins at 100 percent for the first five years and falls to zero at the end of ten years (DNREC, 1998).
Delaware is also in the process of establishing the Hazardous Substance Site Cleanup Loan Program (HSSCLP) under the administration of DNREC’s Site Investigation and Restoration Branch (SIRB). Funded by the Delaware Water Pollution Control State Revolving Fund, the HSSLCP (also known as the Brownfield Loan Program) will provide money for work directly related to improving, restoring or protecting groundwater, surface water or sediment quality. It is intended to restore areas where potentially responsible parties are unable to find commercial financing to comply with state laws. HSSCLP will provide from $10,000 to $250,000 at a low interest rate (which cannot exceed 3%). SIRB will forward loan applications to DEDO for review under the program (DNREC, 1998).

DNREC’s Site Investigation and Restoration Branch (which is responsible for all brownfield-related issues within the department) has designed a website at http://sirb.awm.dnrec.state.de.us to disseminate information on and better facilitate the brownfields redevelopment process. The website provides an overview of Delaware’s various brownfields programs. It discusses the Voluntary Cleanup Program, the loan programs and incentives that exist for brownfields, and rules, regulations, guidelines, and remediation standards regarding brownfield sites. The website also provides a link to the Environmental Protection Agency’s Brownfields Initiatives homepage.

In general, the State’s brownfield activities, as administered by the Site Investigation and Restoration Branch (SIRB), have been primarily directed toward site assessment and redevelopment (interview with Karl Kalbacher, Program Manager I, Superfund Branch, Division of Air and Waste Management, DNREC, May 12, 1998). The goal has been to encourage brownfields redevelopment through cooperation rather than confrontation. DNREC’s Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) and Delaware’s Brownfields Assistance Program have been the driving forces behind this strategy. The State has reached a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that provides purchasers and owners who clean up properties with the assurance that EPA will not initiate federal cleanup penalties against them. The MOA recognizes Delaware's ongoing efforts in brownfields redevelopment activities and is one of only 11 in the United States.

DNREC’s SIRB has conducted Preliminary Assessment Phase I activities on a number of sites, many of which are located in Wilmington. Phase II Assessments have also been completed in certain areas and DNREC will examine additional areas in the future. Currently, 37 sites are under investigation as part of the VCP, and cleanup has been completed at 20 sites. All of these sites will eventually be put to beneficial use so that the VCP program will not only address environmental problems but also create economic opportunities within the State.

2. City Brownfield Efforts

a. Enterprise Community Designation

In December 1994, the City of Wilmington was awarded a Federal Enterprise Community designation under the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community(EZ/EC) Initiative. As an EC, Wilmington received federal funds and access to EC-specific tax-exempt bond financing. Overall, the EC/EZ program represents the United States government’s most comprehensive effort to address problems in the nation’s urban centers. It was designed to provide these areas with real opportunities for growth and revitalization through the empowerment of people and communities.
Administered by HUD for urban communities, the EZ/EC program supports local plans that integrate economic, physical, environmental, community, and human development. The federal EZ/EC initiative bases its integrated development approach on broad participation by all segments of the community. The residents of distressed areas themselves are the most important stakeholders of revitalization in the EZ/EC program.

The Wilmington Enterprise Community (EC) contains the poorest neighborhoods in the City and the adjoining downtown core, as well as the major industrial and port areas. It comprises a population of 20,986 residents and encompasses 12 census tracts and 5.7 square miles. The EC includes 40 percent of the City's area, 28 percent of its residents, three of Wilmington's seven neighborhoods and parts of two others (City/State Task Force, Enterprise Community Strategic Plan Summary, 1994).

A joint State-City EC Task Force has produced a vision for Wilmington in 2004 that emphasizes economic development and environmental improvement. By combining economic, environmental, and community goals, Wilmington has followed the federal lead of promoting sustainable communities. Wilmington’s strategic plan focuses on themes that highlight the need for brownfields redevelopment.

Providing economic opportunities means attracting new industries and expanding existing ones. Economic development in the EC is hindered, however, by the presence of a large number of brownfields. Many of these areas are described as having excellent development prospects but have suffered due to environmental degradation in the past. Creating sustainable communities also means addressing the issues of environmental degradation and the physical health of residents in the community. For these reasons, the City is pursuing a development path that links community involvement, environmental improvement and economic development as integral elements of the area’s future.

b. National Brownfields Assessment Pilot Designation

In April 1997, Wilmington was awarded a National Brownfields Assessment Pilot designation under EPA’s Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative. Wilmington has received funds for site assessment, identification and remediation planning (the award does not provide funds for actual cleanup activities), and for community involvement in the redevelopment of its brownfields. Wilmington’s Brownfields Pilot Project commits the City to Site Identification, Outreach/Community Involvement, High Level Coordination of Cleanup Planning and Response Implementation, Development of Creative Financing Solutions, and Private Sector Outreach/Linkage activities. Table 6 gives a brief summary of specific actions being undertaken by Wilmington’s Pilot Project.

Coordination of cleanup and redevelopment efforts has begun with the creation of a position in the Mayor’s Office under the direction of the Senior Economic Advisor. A major function of this position is to construct a comprehensive database of brownfield properties within the City. The City has pledged to work with DNREC in pursuing this goal. From that database, a list of priority sites with excellent development opportunities will be assembled.
Table 6: Objectives of Wilmington’s Brownfields Pilot Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Site Identification:</td>
<td>Create a user-friendly cleanup and redevelopment planning database that identifies and inventories all commercial/industrial sites where contamination may be an issue of concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Outreach/Community Involvement:</td>
<td>Institute a neighborhood-based capacity to participate in development negotiations by funding a local community environmental organization to build awareness among affected communities and assist their members to engage in redevelopment decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. High Level Coordination of Cleanup Planning and Response Implementation:</td>
<td>Appoint a Brownfields Coordinator position in the Mayor’s Office, under the direction of the Senior Economic Advisor, to coordinate environmental cleanup and redevelopment efforts on the local level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Development of Creative Financing Solutions:</td>
<td>Establish a low-interest revolving loan fund with $1,000,000 in Community Reinvestment Act funding for brownfields cleanup and remediation activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Private Sector Outreach/Linkage:</td>
<td>Produce and disseminate a document that catalogs available brownfields redevelopment incentives for owners, developers, and potential investors.</td>
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City of Wilmington, Brownfields Work Plan (1996).

Wilmington’s Brownfields Work Plan also commits the City to assessment financing and the use of remediation loan mechanisms to aid redevelopment efforts. Currently, DEDO’s Brownfields Assistance program provides matching funds for site assessment activities up to $25,000. Similarly, the SIRB’s Hazardous Substance Site Cleanup Loan Program will provide money for remediation activities up to $250,000 at an interest rate which will not exceed 3%. The City intends to produce a brownfields brochure for business and community interests to promote brownfields redevelopment activities. A Brownfields Conference will also be held at the end of the two-year pilot program to plan for the next phase of brownfield-related activities.

In recognition of the interconnection of brownfields, environmental justice and urban revitalization issues, the Work Plan charges the City with establishing an environmental justice plan. The key to this plan will be the provision of brownfield community education programs for those neighborhoods in proximity to brownfield sites in Wilmington. These programs will be conducted under the direction of the Urban Environmental Center (UEC), a local nonprofit organization located in Wilmington’s EC and adjacent to several brownfields. The UEC has initiated an environmental education and outreach program targeted at specific sites identified by the City for redevelopment in the near future.

One component of the environmental justice plan is to involve local minority residents and disadvantaged businesses in the economic opportunities that result from redevelopment activities. The Wilmington Employment Commission is developing programs so that local residents and businesses may gain employment and contracts from work that results from brownfields redevelopment. Programs include training opportunities in conjunction with Delaware-Technical Community College for hazardous materials handling, lead paint removal, etc. The City has also pledged to work with its community-based stakeholders to develop legislation that institutionalizes pro-active community involvement in brownfields redevelopment activities.
Overall, Wilmington’s brownfields efforts have sought to integrate redevelopment opportunities within a community context to ensure that the benefits of brownfield activities are realized by the affected communities. The City is currently in the early stages of implementing its Brownfields Work Plan, but it is evident that coordination of information and environmental justice concerns are already viewed as keys to brownfields redevelopment. Wilmington has also continued to seek funding from the federal government regarding brownfield activities. In 1998, Wilmington applied for designation as a “showcase community.” Although the City was not among the 16 urban communities selected for the award, additional funds were provided for Wilmington to continue its brownfield efforts.

D. Community Participation and Environmental Justice Efforts

On March 10, 1998, Delaware held a workshop on brownfields sponsored by the State's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), and Tetra Tech (environmental consultants). At the conference, the Mayor of the City of Wilmington stressed the need for a comprehensive brownfields policy that includes community participation as a key part of its focus. This section reviews State and City efforts to incorporate community participation and environmental justice concerns into brownfields redevelopment efforts. By doing so, it addresses the potential of current efforts to play a role in the creation of sustainable communities.

1. State-Level Efforts

At the state level, community participation concerns in the brownfields redevelopment process fall under the responsibilities of DNREC’s Site Investigation and Restoration Branch (SIRB), which is responsible for administering Delaware’s brownfields programs. State-level programming for community participation is called for in DNREC’s Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with EPA, Part II Section F.3.a, which states that “a wide range of agencies and groups, including cities, counties, affected citizens, nearby property owners, environmental groups, government officials and the media, must be informed and given meaningful opportunities for involvement in the decision-making process during the investigation and cleanup of the site” (EPA and DNREC, Environmental Partnership Agreement, 1997).

Public participation in DNREC’s Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) is also emphasized in Delaware’s Hazardous Substance Cleanup Act (HSCA) of 1990. After an environmental site investigation and study of remedial alternatives has been completed, the VCP is to inform the public of cleanup plans for the property. The public is informed through announcements in local newspapers and communities are given a minimum of 20 days to comment on property cleanup plans. During that time, communities can request a hearing to review the cleanup plans (DNREC, 1997).
According to DNREC, VCP parties are encouraged to take an active role in informing the public of their plans and actions regarding brownfield properties.

Recently, DNREC has begun to examine how the agency can better integrate environmental justice concerns into its existing activities. DNREC has appointed an environmental justice coordinator and established an advisory committee to encourage all of its branches to consider how environmental justice can be pursued as an agency-wide goal and incorporated into its policies and programs. DNREC has also recently entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the City of Wilmington to enhance communication on brownfields properties.

2. City of Wilmington Efforts

Wilmington's Department of Planning has responsibility for coordinating brownfields cleanup and redevelopment activities, including community participation, at the city level. The Brownfields Assessment Coordinator is responsible for administering the Pilot Project. In addition, the City's Emergency Management Coordinator, who is responsible for public health and safety issues, is leading Wilmington’s efforts to integrate environmental justice concerns into its policies and programs.

An Environmental Action Team headed by the Emergency Management Coordinator has been established that includes the Department of Planning’s Brownfields Assessment Coordinator and Community Development Planner, the Environmental Compliance Manager from the Department of Public Works, and a representative from the City Solicitor’s Office.

Overall, Wilmington’s actions are intended to promote community participation in City environmental initiatives by creating local government resources to assist in their involvement. The City’s Enterprise Community complements these efforts by emphasizing community input in the decision-making process. The main vehicles of input have been the seven Neighborhood Planning Councils (NPCs) that comprise Wilmington. The NPCs play an important role in formulating and implementing Wilmington’s strategic plan. This accords with the first principle of that plan: “Full participation and active involvement of the community in all aspects of development and implementation of the EC plan” (City/State Task Force, 1994: 3).

Similarly, community participation is a central focus of the City’s Brownfields Pilot Project. In its application, Wilmington noted that “there is a need to involve the community-at-large in the planning and project development process. Current participation is selective and sporadic. The goal of ensuring environmental justice by empowering, educating, and protecting the community is best achieved through shared knowledge. The confrontational, adversarial situations that arise in the community occur because knowledge is restricted to a select few…Our intention is to intimately involve our communities in development projects at an early stage, and to facilitate their development in legislation to establish a mandated review process” (City of Wilmington, Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative, 1996: 8).

In order to promote community participation and environmental justice concerns, a significant portion of Wilmington’s Pilot Project grant has been allocated to “enhance an existing, environmentally focused, community-based organization’s ability to conduct community involvement and education activities related to environmental justice and brownfield project
reviews.” The Urban Environmental Center (UEC) is the City’s community-based partner and is developing programs to inform, involve, and empower the residents of brownfield areas in the redevelopment process. This can ensure that environmental justice and urban revitalization concerns are central to Wilmington’s brownfields efforts. To assist in those activities, UEC was awarded a 1998 Environmental Justice Grant from the EPA. The Center for Energy and Environmental Policy, of the University of Delaware, provides technical assistance to UEC and supports the joint efforts of the City of Wilmington and UEC to develop an environmental justice plan.

E. Community Participation Potential In Brownfields Redevelopment

Delaware’s experience with brownfields indicates that its redevelopment efforts need to recognize the important links between redevelopment and issues of environmental justice and urban revitalization. Examination of the state of brownfields in Wilmington according to 1990 Census data reveals that environmental degradation and disproportionate levels of health risks coexist at brownfields sites with high poverty and unemployment rates among predominantly non-white communities that live in or adjacent to them.

A study of the Southbridge neighborhood located in Wilmington’s Enterprise Community (EC) suggests that the community is marked by a number of conditions that predisposes it to environmental justice concerns. Both community leaders and area residents believe that their neighborhoods are subject to serious environmental problems that affect human health. Attempts by the community to address the impacts of polluting industries and the migration of so-called “dirty” industries into their neighborhoods have been met with largely unsuccessful results.

In order to address interrelated economic, environmental, health, and social concerns, both the State of Delaware and the City of Wilmington have initiated efforts to redevelop brownfields that include community involvement mechanisms. Brownfields redevelopment efforts have been administered by DNREC’s Site Investigation and Restoration Branch (SIRB) for the State and by Wilmington’s Department of Planning for the City.

Through the use of the Voluntary Cleanup Program and the Delaware Brownfields Assistance Program, the State’s activities have been primarily directed towards assessment and redevelopment. Promotion of cooperative redevelopment has been instrumental to cleanup and redevelopment at a number of brownfields sites. DNREC has also recently sought to incorporate environmental justice concerns into its existing programs and policies.

The City of Wilmington has recognized community involvement as an integral part of the redevelopment process in both its Enterprise Community and its National Brownfields Pilot Project. Neighborhood Planning Councils and the Urban Environmental Center have been enlisted in the programs, respectively, to help promote community education and participation in the redevelopment process. Under the direction of the Emergency Management Coordinator, the City has also started to integrate environmental justice into programs and policies.
Overall, community participation potential in brownfields redevelopment appears to be substantial. In particular, Wilmington’s National Brownfields Pilot Project provides a strategy and commitment to community participation that can result in environmentally sensitive redevelopment for the benefit of the affected communities. Meaningful community participation can ensure that environmental, health, economic and social goals are achieved in a comprehensive manner.
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

To realize its environmental, social, and economic goals, Delaware’s brownfields redevelopment program needs active communities to be a part of the design and implementation process. Meeting the twin objectives of environmental justice and urban revitalization hinge upon this involvement. CEEP’s examination of National Brownfields Pilot Projects reveals that community participation has been judged essential by all stakeholders to the pursuit of just and sustainable development.

Do State and City brownfields redevelopment plans and programs provide mechanisms for community participation? The brownfield initiatives that are being implemented by the State and City suggest that community participation issues are being taken into account. In particular, Wilmington’s Brownfields Pilot Project indicates that the City has committed itself to community involvement in brownfields redevelopment. Moreover, both the State and City have begun to integrate environmental justice concerns into their programs and policies. But the extent to which these efforts will be effective in initiating meaningful community participation and promoting environmental justice is still largely unknown. CEEP’s research of National Brownfields Pilot Projects found that there can be a number of obstacles to meaningful community participation in brownfields redevelopment.

What are the obstacles to meaningful community participation? What actions can the State and City take to address them, thereby ensuring that community-based environmental, health, economic and social goals are integrated in brownfields redevelopment? Before answering these important questions, a brief overview of CEEP’s overall findings from its survey of programs around the country is given. These findings are then used to guide CEEP’s recommendations on breaking down the barriers to community participation.

Overview of Pilot Research Findings

Examination of the individual National Brownfields Pilot Projects found that since community participation and environmental justice directives from EPA were not specific and federal oversight and evaluation was incomplete, the degree of citizen involvement varied from pilot to pilot. A continuum was constructed to capture the degree of involvement—from reactive to proactive community participation. In the reactive cases, decisions concerning brownfields redevelopment were made largely among government and business partners, with communities included in largely an advisory role. In the pro-active cases, communities were involved continuously from the start of the pilot project. The key to pro-active participation was found to be the resource and educational support and explicit institutional recognition given to community involvement in the redevelopment process.

The difference in capacity to address environmental justice and overall urban revitalization issues was predictable: those projects with a pro-active community participation component proved to be better equipped than their reactive counterparts. Pro-active community participation was the key to successfully promoting environmentally just and sustainable development. This finding underscores the importance of pro-active community involvement in brownfields programs.

In many of the pilots examined for this report, residents of affected communities were initially unaware of how they could articulate their views in the brownfields redevelopment process. If the
aims of the EPA and the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) regarding environmental justice and urban revitalization in brownfields are to be effectively met, it is clear that awareness-building must be included as an important part of the brownfields planning process.

In many of the pilots, community involvement was initially limited by distrust on the part of community members towards program administrators, regulators and development interests. This distrust was the result of previous policies that had paid little attention to the needs, concerns and goals of communities as defined by their members. One key aspect to securing the initial trust and involvement of communities was the sharing of knowledge and visions between program administrators, regulators and community members. In order to move from confrontation to collaboration, administrators and regulators need to make sincere efforts to communicate with communities and recognize the significance of community knowledge, concerns and goals in the redevelopment process.

Some of the pilots also experienced difficulty in sustaining community involvement throughout the brownfields redevelopment process. Community participation, regardless of how successfully implemented it might initially be, will have little lasting value if the affected community does not see concrete results from its involvement. In order to attract community participation throughout the brownfields process and maintain community trust, pilot projects need to deliver remediation and reuse plans that are actively endorsed by the affected communities.

Those pilots that were most successful in delivering remediation and reuse plans actively endorsed by communities were ones that allowed communities an influential role in the decision-making process on brownfields redevelopment. Pilots which sought to operationalize community participation and ensure environmental justice by providing mechanisms for community input in the brownfields process were the most successful. Such institutional recognition of and support for community participation was key to maintaining community interest in brownfields redevelopment issues. This reveals the significance of operationalizing community involvement and environmental justice in brownfields programs through statutes, policies and regulations.

Finally, our survey reveals that community-focused resource and educational support is needed for community participation and environmental justice to move from abstract ideas to concrete realities. In order to realize just and sustainable development, community participation needs to be supported in specific ways. Community organizations need staff who focus on these issues and educational and research support so that residents can be informed about the often complex aspects of brownfields redevelopment. Providing communities with a seat at the table is not enough: actions need to be taken to reaffirm long-term and meaningful community participation in which the needs, concerns and goals of the community, as defined by the community, play a central role in the brownfields redevelopment process.
Recommendations

1. Need for a Statement of Goals

CEEPs findings indicate that integrating community participation and environmental justice concerns into Delaware’s brownfields redevelopment process is an essential element of building sustainable communities. The keys to successfully integrating those elements lies in achieving the following linked program goals:

- Building awareness of community participation and environmental justice in the brownfields redevelopment process at the community level;
- Coordinating community participation and environmental justice efforts across government agencies and between different levels of government;
- Enhancing communication and information dissemination regarding brownfields between government actors, private interests, and community residents;
- Operationalizing community participation and environmental justice through the brownfields redevelopment decision-making process;
- Institutionalizing community participation and environmental justice through the creation of a State Office of Environmental Justice or other environmental actor; and
- Providing the resource means necessary to continue efforts to build capacity and awareness among community resident and organizations.

A statement of such goals reaffirms Delaware’s commitment to environmentally just and sustainable development and provides a common context for action amongst stakeholders.

2. Development of Specific Policies, Processes, and Procedures

In order to actualize these interlocking goals, new supporting policies, processes and procedures will need to be put in place.

a. Building awareness at the community level throughout Delaware

Currently, the Urban Environmental Center is Wilmington’s community-based partner in the National Brownfields Pilot Project. As such, it is developing and implementing programs to inform, involve, and empower the residents of brownfield areas in the redevelopment process. Although UECs activities are crucial to building sustainable communities, they are limited in scope.

UEC and the City’s activities concentrate efforts among a limited number of sites and communities. A broader city-wide effort at building awareness of and empowerment in the brownfields redevelopment process at the community level is needed. Ultimately, a statewide process will also be needed. In order to bring about city-and state-wide awareness and participation Delaware needs to develop and support a Brownfields Community Awareness Program. The program could build from the UEC model and attempt to expand its efforts across Delaware. Recommendations for a state-wide program include:
o Use of media outlets (television, newspaper and radio) to generate interest in the brownfields redevelopment process;
o Establish educational and public participation workshops geared towards the concerns, needs, and goals of citizens;
o Rely on nonprofit organizations such as the UEC to enhance educational and participation capabilities;
o Develop and disseminate brochures and fact sheets on community participation, environmental justice, and the brownfields process.

b. Coordination of efforts across State and City government agencies

1) Establish a Memorandum of Agreement between State and City government agencies

State and City agencies need to coordinate their community participation and environmental justice efforts. Different missions and goals can often lead to inconsistent and overlapping policies and procedures. Establishing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among the State and City agencies involved in the brownfields redevelopment process that develops common community participation and environmental justice goals can alleviate these difficulties. It can also serve as a template for coordination between the State and other levels of government throughout Delaware.

2) Establish data collection, information sharing, and protocols between relevant agencies

Recently, the State’s Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and the City of Wilmington entered into an MOA regarding the sharing of information. Information sharing and the designation of information responsibilities can substantially eliminate duplicative efforts and free resources to increase the scope of information available. In this manner they can enhance the effectiveness of the brownfields redevelopment process.

3) Create a forum for coordination, conflict resolution and consensus

Coordination of these efforts, the inevitable conflicts that will arise, and forming consensus among different agencies and levels of government is essential. This may require the creation of an advisory commission to define specific goals and implementation plans towards achieving those goals. Task Forces have been successfully used in other jurisdictions for these express purposes. They can serve as models for Delaware.

c. Enhanced communications between government, private interests and community residents

To promote community participation and environmental justice, enhanced communications between community residents, government actors, and private interests will be needed. Access to technical, health, cleanup, and redevelopment information needs to be available to community residents and organizations in a user-friendly format. In addition, community residents possess the knowledge of neighborhood environmental and social problems that is essential to the pursuit of just and sustainable development. This knowledge needs to be recognized and documented as part of the redevelopment process.
Recommendations for enhancing communications include:

1) **Establish cleanup and redevelopment roundtables**

If community residents are only consulted during the latter stages of the brownfields redevelopment process, the valuable knowledge that members may have can be lost. Forums involving community residents with government and industry actors can maintain community input throughout the redevelopment process. Information, goals, and visions can be exchanged and communications with community residents can be made more effective.

2) **Create an Internet resource on brownfields for community use**

A free electronic network can be developed to serve the needs of organizations and individuals working on brownfields issues. It should provide valuable services that could significantly enhance communications among community organizations and residents on environmental justice, sustainable development and other environmentally relevant dimensions. The internet resource should offer electronic mail, world wide web use, a commons/discussion section, and a data bank of information. These services could help community residents stay in contact with one another, keep abreast of the latest developments, and learn from the experiences of other communities. DiamondNet, an online community network for Delaware organizations maintained by the Center for Community Development and Family Policy of the University of Delaware, could provide the platform for creating a community-focused electronic resource to address brownfields and related environmental concerns. Community groups and individual residents often do not have the financial resources necessary to take advantage of electronic resources. To overcome this impediment, library computers can be used and computing sites can be established in communities with computers provided through donations from both educational institutions and the business community in Delaware.

3) **Improve electronic resources provided by government actors**

Government actors need to make their information and data regarding brownfields and brownfield-related issues available to the community through electronic resources. For example, currently DNREC’s SIRB has designed a website at [http://sirb.awm.dnrec.state.de.us](http://sirb.awm.dnrec.state.de.us) to disseminate information on and better facilitate the brownfields redevelopment process. Although the website is a valuable resource for information, community groups and individual residents have not been able to use it due to access impediments. DNREC should consider the development of interactive workshops to learn from communities the information they seek and the problems encountered in obtaining it. It can then revise its website to be responsive to community needs and to provide training to community groups on how to use their system.

d. **Operationalize efforts through permitting, licensing, and statutes**

In order to promote pro-active community participation, community members must have more than an advisory role in the brownfields redevelopment process. The operationalization of community participation and environmental justice efforts through permitting, licensing, and statutes is an essential ingredient toward the overall goal of having the community meaningfully participate in the decision-making process. Planning, zoning and licensing issues must be made subject to
community review. Having communities involved in these processes is essential to building sustainable communities.

e. Institutionalize efforts by establishing state-level responsibility for the pursuit of environmental justice goals

In order to advise, provide policy recommendations, and set and evaluate steps to meet state-wide goals of environmental justice that should accompany brownfields redevelopment in Delaware’s future, a state-level institutional responsibility needs to be defined. A number of states (California, Florida, Texas and Wisconsin among them) have created environmental justice commissions whose purpose is to evaluate the degree of environmental inequity in their states and propose changes in environmental policy to reduce it. Other mechanisms such as state offices of environmental justice, inter-agency committees, and executive advisors are used in different jurisdictions to address this need. The State of Delaware should consider the creation of an institutional actor with clear lines of responsibility to prioritize environmental justice concerns and ensure that the future will be an environmentally just and sustainable one built on pro-active community involvement.

f. Establishment of a state-supported fund for capacity- and awareness-building efforts by community organizations

For communities to play an active role in brownfields redevelopment and, more broadly, to contribute to goals of environmental justice and sustainable development, targeted resources will be needed. Community organizations will need to train their own staff and initiate campaigns to make their constituencies aware of the range of environmental issues that must be resolved if we are to build just and sustainable communities for the future. Because such activities offer Delaware-wide benefits and because their execution is directly tied to State policy and regulation in the environmental field, financial support for pro-active community involvement should be provided by the State of Delaware. Such financial support will need to be coordinated with other State programs such as the Brownfields Assistance and Voluntary Cleanup Programs.
Text References


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