

# REVITALIZATION ALONG HISTORIC HIGHWAYS

There are about 200,000 brownfields with petroleum contamination issues across the U.S. Abandoned gas stations and other petroleum-impacted properties typically are small and widely dispersed sites throughout communities. These properties present unique challenges that often require tailored approaches to overcome the economic and environmental conditions that limit their cleanup and revitalization.

In 2008, EPA adopted a Petroleum Brownfields Action Plan that lists four initiatives and 17 specific actions that promote the Agency's enhanced commitment to the cleanup and reuse of petroleum brownfields. EPA's petroleum brownfields program is jointly managed by the Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization, which oversees the Brownfields program, and the Office of Underground Storage Tanks, which promotes the cleanup of leaking underground storage tank sites.

Under the Petroleum Brownfields Action Plan, EPA supports targeted projects to redevelop petroleum brownfields in defined geographic areas or corridors. These corridor initiatives focus on economic development areas, environmental justice communities, and other areas of special need that would benefit from enhanced revitalization of petroleum brownfields. EPA provides technical assistance to help with site identification, assessment, cleanup, redevelopment planning, community outreach, or other

## NEW ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS

EPA's land revitalization initiatives are producing significant environmental benefits and helping to transform communities into more sustainable and livable places. The strategy of encouraging market-driven redevelopment of brownfields and other contaminated sites for economic reuse is proving to be a successful approach at many sites. However, challenging real estate markets and economic realities can leave some formerly contaminated properties unused, possibly for a long time. New approaches are needed to revitalize these sites and protect human health and the environment.

EPA's Land Revitalization Team is working with communities, states, other federal agencies, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector to develop and test new approaches that recognize valuable reuse alternatives for formerly contaminated properties. Building green infrastructure to help manage stormwater runoff and floods, promoting safe soil management to support urban agriculture, and siting renewable energy on contaminated sites can bring environmental, ecological, and social benefits to communities. Unlocking the potential value of these underused properties often requires creativity and close collaboration with many public and private partners. These projects can help stabilize communities and spur economic development.

needs identified by the communities and organizations impacted by these sites.

Several of these corridor projects focus on revitalization along historic highways that once were vibrant transportation arteries. Current corridor projects span the country, from the Tamiami Trail (US Highway 41) in Florida and the Historic Voting Rights Trail in Alabama, through the nation's mid-section along the old Lincoln Highway and Route 66, to California's Highway 99 and Washington's Tacoma Way petroleum brownfields revitalization corridor.

The goal is to inventory petroleum brownfields and bring new life to these abandoned properties. EPA headquarters and Regional offices are partnering with states and federal and private-sector partners to ensure that redevelopment and reuse of these sites is realized. These projects demonstrate what can be accomplished when coordinated remediation and revitalization efforts by public and private partners are applied to a defined geographic area, such as a transportation route or corridor.

## PLANNING FOR REVITALIZATION OF PETROLEUM BROWNFIELDS ALONG THE SELMA TO MONTGOMERY NATIONAL HISTORIC VOTING RIGHTS TRAIL

Since 2009, EPA and Alabama's Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) have engaged local communities in planning for revitalization of numerous former gas stations and petroleum-contaminated brownfields along the Selma to

Montgomery National Historic Voting Rights Trail in Alabama. The 54-mile trail commemorates events, people, and the route of the 1965 Voting Rights March. It begins in Selma and continues along U.S. Highway 80 to the State Capitol in Montgomery.

Many active and former gasoline stations along the trail have the potential to cause contamination from petroleum releases. The goal of the Historic Voting Rights Trail project is to assess, clean up, and implement community revitalization plans for these sites that

are consistent with community needs and national historic site goals. EPA Region 4 provided 18 Targeted Brownfields Assessments for sites along the trail. In 2010, EPA awarded a Brownfields petroleum assessment grant to ADEM to continue assessment of former industrial and commercial sites along the trail. Developing green jobs also is an important part of the effort.

Community engagement is at the heart of this project. Combining community desires with leveraged federal and state resources, ADEM and EPA are facilitating community-based revitalization, environmental benefits, and economic development activities along the trail. Since spring 2010, EPA, ADEM, and other federal partners (including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service,

Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Agriculture, Federal Highway Administration, the U.S. Geological Survey, and Maxwell Air Force Base) have been meeting with local communities to offer technical assistance and share information. With funding from EPA's Land Revitalization program, Region 4 and ADEM conducted outreach meetings to gather input from community groups on their visions for redevelopment and revitalization in Hayneville, West Montgomery, Selma, and Selmont.

In fall 2010, EPA sponsored a sustainability conference in Selma that brought together representatives from ten federal agencies and stakeholders from many of the communities along the trail. These sessions were a positive experience that allowed citizens to work together with local, state, and

federal agencies to identify recycling programs, reuse options, and plans for the affected communities. Stakeholders continue to work together on other development projects in many communities, including improvements to water resources, transportation, and education.



*Rendering of proposed Civil Rights Museum in Hayneville, AL*

## AREA-WIDE PLANNING FOR REVITALIZATION OF ABANDONED GAS STATION AND NEARBY BROWNFIELDS OGDEN, IOWA

EPA, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), is providing redevelopment planning support to the City of Ogden for revitalization of its downtown, including three centrally located properties and the abandoned gas station that sits at the gateway to downtown.

With funding from the Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization, EPA's assistance supports the preparation of a market analysis and needs study, development of a project web portal, and conducting a design charrette to engage the community in planning for reuse of the sites. EPA also provided training on the brownfields assessment and cleanup process and on how to promote expanded partnerships with other state and federal agencies.

The project began a few years ago with EPA Region 7's Historic Highways Initiative, which includes the identification of abandoned gas stations. The initiative focuses on identifying barriers to redevelopment of abandoned gas stations along the former Route 66 in Missouri and Kansas, and along the former Lincoln Highway in Iowa and Nebraska. Region 7 currently is working with a number of communities, including Ogden, under its Historic Highways Initiative.

In Ogden, the city purchased vacant properties from current owners. This gave the city greater control over planning for downtown redevelopment. Ownership also enabled the city to receive additional support from IDNR for assessment and cleanup work on each of the brownfield properties. Once the properties were assessed and cleaned up, the city demol-

ished the three vacant buildings and graded the sites for redevelopment.

Using support from EPA's Land Revitalization Program, the city sought community input on property reuse and an overall vision for the revitalization of downtown Ogden. As a result, city leaders will move forward to ensure downtown Ogden meets the needs of the community and becomes a destination for those in the area.

EPA delivered its recommendations to the city in December 2010. EPA's report to the city includes redevelopment concepts based on market data, community needs, and site conditions. City officials will be able to use these products to move forward with marketing new business opportunities and promoting the revitalization of downtown Ogden.

### MORE INFORMATION:

EPA's Petroleum Brownfields Action Plan: <http://www.epa.gov/oust/pubs/petrobfactionplan2year.pdf>

EPA Land Revitalization Program: <http://www.epa.gov/landrevitalization/>

United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

Office of Solid Waste and  
Emergency Response  
(5105T)

EPA 560-F-11-018  
April 2011  
[www.epa.gov/brownfields/](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/)