



# Transportation and Brownfields

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

**EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative** is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

## OVERVIEW

On June 9, 1998, President Clinton signed the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), a more than \$200 billion successor to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). TEA-21 takes on the challenge of making transportation a more positive force for cleaner, safer and healthier communities by continuing the integration of transportation projects with environmental and community revitalization goals.

TEA-21 and transportation play a key role in brownfields cleanup and redevelopment for several reasons. First, redeveloped brownfields need good transportation access. Second, given the central location of many urban brownfields, they present good opportunities for locating transportation facilities. Third, brownfields redevelopment often uses and improves existing transportation infrastructure and services, eliminating the need for new transportation projects. Fourth, partnerships between federal, state and local transportation, economic development and environmental interests can leverage additional funding resources for transportation-related brownfields redevelopment.

## NEW DOT POLICY ON BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT

On April 22, 1998 (Earth Day) Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Slater announced a new policy that encourages state and local transportation officials to pay for the cleanup of environmental contamination that lies in the path or on the site of a transportation project. DOT is advising its field offices, states and local transportation officials about brownfields opportunities, providing technical and coordination assistance to state and local transportation planners, and sharing the good news about brownfields-related transportation success stories. Together with TEA-21, the new DOT policy will contribute to the reuse of abandoned and blighted land, conservation of open space, better transportation, improved communities and greater economic vitality.

## ACCESSING TRANSPORTATION FUNDS

Under TEA-21, all projects have to go through a transportation planning process. This process provides state and local officials with the flexibility to fund the transportation-related brownfields projects that make the most sense for a community. TEA-21 requires that metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) develop fiscally constrained long-range regional transportation plans and short-term transportation improvement programs through an open process that is accountable to people and communities. Five of the

seven mandatory planning factors fit well with the goals of the Brownfields Initiative and can provide support for the consideration of brownfields projects, including:

- supporting the economic vitality of metropolitan areas;
- increasing the accessibility and mobility options available to people and freight;
- protecting and enhancing the environment, promoting energy conservation and improving the quality of life;
- enhancing the integration and connectivity of the transportation system for people and freight; and
- emphasizing the preservation of the existing transportation system.

The comprehensive, integrated planning goals of TEA-21 can be powerful tools to support brownfields projects, but the tools can only be accessed by working with state and local transportation planners to ensure that brownfields projects are included in the decision-making process.

#### **TEA-21 FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR BROWNFIELDS PROJECTS**

TEA-21 includes several programs that can be used for brownfields-related transportation projects. Some of the most important opportunities include:

*Surface Transportation Program (STP)* provides flexible funding for projects on any federal-aid highway, including bridges, transit projects, bus facilities, environmental restoration, and pollution abatement.

*Transit Program* funds have increased slightly under TEA-21 and can be used for new transit systems or additions to existing ones.

*Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)* funds are earmarked for use in non-attainment areas and can be projects that help reduce air pollution or for environmentally sensitive transportation projects.

*Transportation Enhancement Program* and the new *Transit Enhancements Program* can encourage a variety of activities that promote community revitalization and foster local economic development

including historic preservation, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, tourist facilities, and other benefits to communities.

*Transportation, Community and System Preservation (TCSP) Pilots* is a new, innovative program that provides competitive grants to communities to address the complex links between land use, transportation and quality of life issues.

*Rail Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program* provides loans for the rehabilitation of rail sites.

#### **TRANSPORTATION AND BROWNFIELDS SUCCESS STORIES**

*Lowell, Massachusetts*, a Brownfields Showcase Community, recently completed an extension of the Merrimack Riverwalk with \$9.2 million in assistance from the Federal Highway Administration through its Public Lands Highway Program and the Transportation Enhancement Program. The Western Canal Walkway extension provides pedestrian and bicycle access to downtown and the city's National Heritage Park, serving tourists and the local community without adding congestion to local highways.

The community of *Fruitvale in Oakland, California* has galvanized and developed a major intermodal transfer station on a former brownfield. More than \$5 million in Federal Highway Administration grants were received from the ISTEA and Livable Communities Programs for community planning, a child development facility, the intermodal bus station and a pedestrian plaza, as well as an assortment of contributions from local agencies and the private sector. Operated by the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), the station has attracted desperately needed commercial activity to the mainly Latino and African-American community, and has provided transport connections to jobs and opportunities in the greater Bay Area.

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

For more information on transportation and TEA-21, contact DOT at (202) 366-4416.

For more information on the Brownfields Initiative, contact EPA at (202) 260-4039, or visit the Brownfields web site at "[www.epa.gov/brownfields/](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/)"