

## D. Link Brownfields Funding with Planning

### Strategic Action

Tie state funding for brownfields cleanup and redevelopment to land-use planning by encouraging consistency with up-to-date comprehensive plans as a condition for brownfields funding, particularly in metropolitan and other urbanized areas.

### Rationale

Great Lakes states' efforts to wed cleanup and economic development programs have been an important and positive step toward a more comprehensive approach to brownfields redevelopment. However, Great Lakes jurisdictions at all levels have been less successful when it comes to integrating brownfields redevelopment into a more comprehensive approach to land-use planning and development.

Great Lakes states can learn from New Jersey and Oregon by linking brownfields cleanup and redevelopment funding to a strategic growth plan that has a strong urban revitalization/urban development component. Encouraging consistency of brownfields activities with comprehensive plans as part of brownfields funding may also promote comprehensive plan review and updating, a needed activity in many areas. This will also ensure that brownfields cleanup and redevelopment does not compromise a community's ability to carry out its master plan or vision of growth and development in the future (e.g., by converting a commercial operation into residential, which might require a higher level of cleanup). Though tying state brownfields funding with comprehensive plans may be viewed as an encumbrance to brownfields redevelopment, it will ultimately result in brownfields redevelopment that is well-planned to serve the short and long-term needs of the community.

### Progress to Date in Indiana

The Indiana Finance Authority [formerly the Indiana Development Finance Authority (IDFA)] administers the Indiana Brownfields Program, which offers financial, technical, legal and educational assistance to encourage the redevelopment of brownfields. Financial assistance is offered in the forms of grants, low-interest loans and tax credits to encourage an eligible entity to redevelop a brownfield property. Applicants who apply for brownfields funding are asked to provide information about their comprehensive plans and planning efforts and to describe how the brownfield redevelopment project fits in with that overall plan. Although having a comprehensive plan is not a requirement to receive funding, those applicants that do have a plan and that have a redevelopment project that fits into the overall community plan receive additional consideration during the scoring process. Having a reuse plan for individual sites is, however, part of threshold criteria for grant awards.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provides important seed funding for assessment (including planning activities), cleanup, revolving loan fund, and job training to help Indiana communities launch their redevelopment programs and perform initial site assessments at priority brownfields. These grants assist communities in developing the local expertise, knowledge and credibility to leverage the other public and private resources needed for successful revitalization. At this time, there is no state funding specifically for planning activities.

### Best Practices in Other States

Most of the Great Lakes states do not explicitly link state brownfields funding to local land use planning. However, New York State offers assistance to communities to develop area-wide plans for brownfield redevelopment and community revitalization.

New York State's Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program (BOA) is designed to assist communities to foster redevelopment and return dormant and blighted land into productive and catalytic areas while restoring environment quality. This program provides municipalities and community-based organizations with resources to address local brownfields providing area-wide brownfield redevelopment planning, access to expert environmental and economic analysis, and environmental site assessment for strategic redevelopment parcels. The goal is to work in partnership with local communities to develop and realize a community vision for brownfield development.

One of the program benefits is the development of a community-based revitalization plan and implementation strategy that spurs investment in distressed areas by establishing clear priorities for redevelopment and other actions for community renewal and improved quality of life. The plan provides a proactive and systematic way to address brownfields and to return them to productive use.

New Jersey and Oregon require local planning for state brownfields funds. For the state of New Jersey, no grant may be awarded from the Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund (HDSRF) unless the municipality, county or redevelopment entity has adopted a comprehensive plan for the development or redevelopment of contaminated, or potentially contaminated property, or can demonstrate to the NJ Economic Redevelopment Authority that a realistic opportunity exists that the property will be developed or redeveloped within three years from the completion of the remediation. In Oregon, applicants for state brownfields funds must show that the proposed use of redevelopment property is consistent with the local land use plan.

### Implementation Options

Following are possible approaches which could be pursued to promote the linkage of state funding to land use planning. These ideas will be discussed during one of the breakout sessions at the Coastal Connections Land Use Roundtable.

- D1. Link local funding to updated local plans. Local development authorities should develop local funding sources for brownfields (e.g., such as tax increment financing, or real estate transfer fees) and make the funding eligible for communities, or regions that have an updated (less than 5 years old) comprehensive or strategic growth plan in place.
- D2. Make local planning consistency a state funding eligibility criterion. Through state agency rule, policy or guidance change, make consistency with local comprehensive plans an eligibility criterion for state grants, loans and other brownfields redevelopment incentives.
- D3. NIRPC strategic planning for economic development. Establish a project to define the NIRPC role in economic development and to identify the strengths/assets of organizations involved in economic development in northwest Indiana and explore opportunities for enhanced public/private partnerships that can link brownfields funding with broader planning and economic development initiatives. NIRPC and the Northwest Indiana FORUM will work together to further define the role of the partners, develop goals and strategies and identify funding opportunities for brownfield redevelopment and other sustainable regional economic development projects.

### Key Web Resources

UNLOCKING BROWNFIELDS: Keys to Community Revitalization  
<http://www.resourcesaver.com/file/toolmanager/CustomO93C337F65023.pdf>

Indiana Brownfields Program

[www.brownfields.in.gov](http://www.brownfields.in.gov)

<http://www.in.gov/ifa/business/>