



# EPA's Petroleum Brownfields Action Plan: One Year Later

October 2009

In October 2008, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published its *Petroleum Brownfields Action Plan: Promoting Revitalization And Sustainability* (Action Plan) prepared by the Office of Underground Storage Tanks (OUST) and the Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization (OBLR). The Action Plan listed four initiatives (subdivided into 17 specific actions) that would guide the Agency as it stepped up its efforts to foster the cleanup and reuse of petroleum-contaminated brownfield sites.

The Agency accomplished a great deal in the year since the Action Plan was published. A list of the accomplishments and ongoing activities is provided below. The Action Plan and other information on petroleum brownfields are available on EPA's petroleum brownfields Web site <http://www.epa.gov/oust/petroleumbrownfields>.



Old abandoned gas station site becomes new firehouse, Trenton, NJ



## Accomplishment Highlights

### During the last year, EPA:

- Updated and expanded its petroleum brownfields Web site.
- Coordinated with Smart Growth America to provide information on petroleum brownfields to community and other stakeholders at workshops and meetings.
- Published two new tools for brownfields practitioners: *Petroleum Brownfields: Selecting A Reuse Option* and *Petroleum Brownfields: Developing Inventories*.
- Developed a factsheet on petroleum sites and Brownfields grants for the use of tribes.
- Promoted targeted geographic support, better known as the "corridor" approach, to redeveloping several petroleum brownfield sites in a defined area.
- Began working with HUD and DOT to identify and coordinate on cross-agency redevelopment projects.
- Initiated a study of public policies related to petroleum brownfields revitalization.
- Began participation in a project in Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York City, to demonstrate how to integrate smart growth, green building, and other sustainability concepts into neighborhood revitalization.
- Selected an Oregon site as an EPA Sustainability Pilot and delivered technical assistance in sustainably redeveloping a former gas station into a community center.
- Joined an effort to promote the use of petroleum-contaminated land for renewable energy projects.

*Details on these activities below.*

## Initiative 1:

### Better Communication And Outreach To Petroleum Brownfield Stakeholders



**New Tool!**

#### EPA Updated And Expanded Its Petroleum Brownfields Web Site

OUST completely reorganized and greatly expanded its petroleum brownfields Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/oust/petroleumbrownfields>. The Web site is dedicated to explaining how to clean up and reuse petroleum brownfields, where to find needed assistance and resources to do so, and examples of successful projects to illustrate how the reuse of sites can revitalize communities. OUST added more links to "how to" guides and technical and financial resources. It also added a large new section titled "Success Stories" that includes dozens of links to petroleum brownfields examples by state and city and by reuse option (commercial/business, housing, public, and environmental/recreational). Another new section, Opportunities For Small Businesses, highlights the utility of the relatively smaller petroleum brownfield sites for small businesses. OUST (Underground Storage Tank Program) and OBLR (Brownfields Program) worked together to identify documents, tools, and resources that could be cross-referenced on each program's Web site.



### **Initiative 1:**

#### **Better Communication And Outreach To Petroleum Brownfield Stakeholders (continued)**

##### **OUST And Smart Growth America Coordinate On Petroleum Brownfields Outreach**

OUST is coordinating with EPA's Smart Growth program and supporting work with a variety of groups interested in promoting the reuse of petroleum brownfields along Smart Growth principles. OUST is partnering with Smart Growth America, a coalition of groups working to improve the ways we plan and build towns, cities, and metro areas, to raise awareness of the reuse opportunities presented by abandoned petroleum sites. Smart Growth America is integrating petroleum brownfields information and resources into its Vacant Properties Campaign, coordinating workshops for planners, and working with local areas and states to increase the awareness of the reuse opportunities presented by old abandoned petroleum sites.

##### **OBLR And OUST Champion The Reuse Of Petroleum Brownfields At Conferences, Meetings, And Workshops**

Representatives of both OBLR and OUST have provided information and conducted conference sessions and meetings for petroleum brownfields stakeholders at the national, state, tribal, and local levels. OBLR and OUST provided materials and conducted informative sessions on petroleum brownfields at the 2009 National Tanks Conference and at the 2009 Tribal/EPA Underground Storage Tanks Meeting, among others. Representatives of both programs participate in the national Brownfields Conference.

### **Initiative 2:**

#### **Provide Support To State, Tribal, And Local Governments**



**New Tool!**

##### **EPA Published *Petroleum Brownfields: Selecting A Reuse Option***

This new publication is a tool that state, tribal, and local public officials, communities, developers, and nonprofit organizations can use to envision the wide array of options they have for reusing petroleum-contaminated sites. It contains numerous brief descriptions of brownfields projects where petroleum-contaminated sites were successfully cleaned up and reused. Reuse examples are organized into five categories: Commercial, Public, Residential, Greenspace, and Mixed-use. OUST published *Petroleum Brownfields: Selecting A Reuse Option* in October 2009, and it is available on EPA's petroleum brownfields Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/oust/pubs/pbfreuseoption.htm>.

**New Tool!**

##### **EPA Published *Petroleum Brownfields: Developing Inventories***

OUST published *Petroleum Brownfields: Developing Inventories* in June 2009 to help states, tribes, local officials, EPA Brownfields grants recipients, and others develop an inventory of petroleum-contaminated brownfields. While it describes all the steps and considerations in creating an inventory of sites from scratch, it also contains a "best practices" section that will help users improve their current inventories. The publication includes links to examples of petroleum brownfields inventories. The guide was developed by drawing upon the experience of EPA's Brownfields Program and of successful petroleum brownfields inventory projects used in rural, suburban, and urban settings. Creating a list of petroleum-contaminated sites is often a key first step in developing a petroleum brownfields revitalization program. The publication is available at <http://www.epa.gov/oust/pubs/pbfdevelopinventories.pdf>.

##### **EPA Published Information On Revitalizing Petroleum Brownfields For Tribes**

OBLR and OUST developed a factsheet titled "Revitalization In Indian Country: Petroleum Brownfields" that was published in March 2009. The factsheet provides information on applying for and using EPA Brownfields grants for petroleum sites. It also contains brief descriptions of successful petroleum brownfield projects in Indian Country. The factsheet was provided to tribal representatives at national and tribal meetings and is available on EPA's Web site at [http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/state\\_tribal/tribal.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/state_tribal/tribal.pdf).

## ***Initiative 2:***

### **Provide Support To State, Tribal, And Local Governments (*continued*)**

#### **TAB Grants Assist Local Communities With Petroleum Brownfields**

Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities (TAB) grants provide geographically-based technical assistance and training to communities and other stakeholders on brownfields issues with the goal of increasing the community's understanding and involvement in brownfield cleanup and revitalization. TAB grantees have provided assistance to over a dozen communities for 17 sites, some of them affected by petroleum. Assistance has included help in preparing grant proposals, performing site inventories, reviewing historical information, assisting with the design of the investigation/sampling/field analysis, and cleanup and redevelopment planning. For more information on TAB grants, see [http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/tools/tab\\_bifold.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/tools/tab_bifold.pdf)

#### **EPA Promotes Targeted Geographic Support ("Corridors")**

OUST has worked with several EPA Regions and states during the last year to foster projects that will demonstrate what can be accomplished when coordinated remediation and revitalization efforts by several public and private entities are applied to a defined geographic area, such as to a transportation route or "corridor." The intent is to focus attention and resources on an area with several petroleum-contaminated sites to demonstrate what can be accomplished with coordinated local, state, and federal public and private resources and efforts. Examples of petroleum brownfields "corridors" underway across the country are:

Alabama, along its US 80 Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail -

<http://www.adem.state.al.us/PressReleases/2009/ADEMNationalHistoricTrail.pdf>

Arizona, as a complement to its ongoing Route 66 Partnership Initiative -

[http://www.neiwpc.org/lustline/lustline\\_pdf/lustline\\_53.pdf](http://www.neiwpc.org/lustline/lustline_pdf/lustline_53.pdf)

California, as a component of EPA Region 9's Highway 99 Corridor Community Assistance Outreach efforts—[http://www.greatvalley.org/pub\\_documents/2005\\_1\\_10\\_17\\_0\\_23\\_99\\_guide\\_edited.pdf](http://www.greatvalley.org/pub_documents/2005_1_10_17_0_23_99_guide_edited.pdf)

Colorado, as a complement to its Historic Revitalization Initiative -

<http://www.coloradobrownfieldsfoundation.org/HistoricByways.html>

Florida, as a tool to enhance its Tamiami Trail (US Highway 41) revitalization project -

<http://www.epa.gov/region4/landrevitalization/tamiमितrailfinalfact7009.pdf>

EPA Region 7's Historic Highways Initiative (involves all four states), which identified 215 abandoned, underutilized service station sites. Sites are primarily aligned along sections of Route 66 (Missouri and Kansas) and Lincoln Highway (Iowa and Nebraska) -

[http://www.epa.gov/region07/historic\\_highways.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region07/historic_highways.htm)

Washington State's Tacoma Way petroleum revitalization corridor -

[http://www.neiwpc.org/neiwpc\\_docs/ustlust\\_shows/j\\_ryan\\_kellogg\\_2.pdf](http://www.neiwpc.org/neiwpc_docs/ustlust_shows/j_ryan_kellogg_2.pdf)

An article prepared by OUST highlighting the opportunities of the corridors-based implementation approach on the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail was published in the fall 2009 issue of the newsletter of the Planning and the Black Community Division of the American Planning Association.

#### **EPA, HUD, And DOT To Cooperate On Redevelopment Projects**

EPA, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) recently announced their intention to identify five pilot sites across the country where they will work together to provide technical assistance to promote community redevelopment. Identified sites will have a convergence of a formerly contaminated site, transportation elements, and the potential for affordable housing development. The agencies are currently collecting information on suggested sites. One of the activities of the EPA, HUD, and DOT partnership is to look at cross-agency barriers to redevelopment in disadvantaged communities.

### **Initiative 3:**

## **Explore Policies To Facilitate Increased Petroleum Site Revitalization**



### **EPA Is Studying Public Policies Related To Petroleum Brownfields Revitalization**

OUST and the EPA Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation (OPEI) have a cooperative agreement with the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) to study and analyze local and state statutes, regulations, and policies that either impede or foster the revitalization of petroleum brownfield sites. ELI's report titled "Stimulating Community Health and Wealth: The Opportunities Presented by Petroleum Brownfield and Vacant Property Development" discusses policies that affect petroleum brownfield sites; the article will appear in the ECOS Green Report for November.

### **Integrating Smart Growth And "Green" Concepts In The Neighborhood: Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York City**

OUST and EPA's Smart Growth Program are pursuing a study and collaborative effort to offer mechanisms (e.g. policies, strategies, and tools) that can be used by the Bedford-Stuyvesant (Bed-Stuy) neighborhood of New York to create more energy efficient buildings and green jobs that achieve better environmental and community outcomes through use of smart growth and green building approaches.

One area of focus will be on site redevelopment and revitalization. There are a variety of underutilized sites throughout the Bed-Stuy community and at least three large-scale commercial thoroughfares that have redevelopment potential. As with many commercial corridors (which often include sites that are difficult to redevelop--irregular parcels, potential petroleum contamination, multiple owners, multiple ownership structures, and incompatible zoning), collaborative community planning and the creation of strategic public policies offer the best chance for quality redevelopment. EPA will provide assistance for these types of activities. This will be done through a policy review and design workshop process to be held in the Bed-Stuy neighborhood of Brooklyn.

After the project is complete, a final report outlining the policy recommendations and workshop results will provide smart growth design and development policy options, standards, and criteria for affordable green housing, transportation, and green street options, as well as conceptual drawings that localities can use to implement green building techniques and foster green jobs. As a result, the Bed-Stuy community will have a mechanism to achieve better environmental and community outcomes, New York City will have a model for achieving these goals throughout the city, and EPA will have a model for incorporating smart growth and green building approaches into community redevelopment and revitalization efforts.

### **Initiative 4:**

## **Forge Partnerships To Promote Investment In And the Sustainable Reuse Of Petroleum Sites**



### **EPA Created A Sustainability And Petroleum Brownfields Web Site**

OUST included a section on sustainability and petroleum brownfields on its new petroleum brownfields Web site; see <http://www.epa.gov/oust/petroleumbrownfields/pbsustain.htm>. Examples of petroleum brownfield projects that incorporated sustainability features appear on the page. This is a dynamic topic, so more information will be added to this Web site over time. The Web site complements and links to EPA's more in-depth Web sites on sustainability (<http://www.epa.gov/Sustainability/basicinfo.htm>) and green remediation (<http://www.clu-in.org/greenremediation/>).

### **EPA Sustainability Pilot To Showcase Reuse Of A Former Gas Station**

In 2008, EPA selected the Tabor Commons project in Portland, Oregon, as one of 16 Brownfields Sustainability Pilots. Oregon Tradeswomen, a nonprofit and Brownfields Job Training grant recipient, is redeveloping a gas station into a community center and using the project as a training ground and model for other green redevelopment projects. The City of Portland, the State of Oregon, and EPA are providing

**Initiative 4:**

**Forge Partnerships To Promote Investment In And the Sustainable Reuse Of Petroleum Sites (continued)**

cleanup assistance to address underground storage tanks and contaminated soil. The Tabor Commons project will analyze ways to apply green building principles and incorporate sustainable redevelopment into the planning, design, and implementation of the project. For more information, see [http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/sustain\\_plts/factsheets/tabor\\_spfs.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/sustain_plts/factsheets/tabor_spfs.pdf).

**EPA Projects To Promote Renewable Energy Development On Petroleum-Contaminated Lands**

The EPA Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) launched the Re-Powering America's Land: Renewable Energy on Contaminated Land and Mine Sites program in September 2008. Through an interagency agreement between EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), DOE's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) will provide technical and economic analysis support to EPA Regions on the feasibility of siting renewable energy projects at a number of contaminated lands and abandoned mine sites across the country. These projects will demonstrate the feasibility and utility of reusing contaminated sites for renewable energy sources. OUST is pursuing a scoping study in conjunction with DOE to assess the feasibility of siting alternative fuel stations at old abandoned gas station sites. This project would explore the technical and locational requirements associated with alternative fuel stations and the opportunities for introducing renewable energy resources into the development of these stations.

**EPA's Petroleum Brownfields Web Site Highlights "Opportunities For Small Businesses"**

EPA's petroleum brownfields Web site <http://www.epa.gov/oust/petroleumbrownfields> includes a section that highlights aspects of petroleum brownfield sites that may be of particular interest and utility to small businesses, such as the existence of infrastructure and the proximity to busy thoroughfares. The Web site also includes numerous success stories of petroleum brownfield projects that resulted in new small businesses.

**See EPA's New Revitalization Tools!**

For more information on petroleum brownfields, visit EPA's petroleum brownfields Web site:



[www.epa.gov/oust/petroleumbrownfields](http://www.epa.gov/oust/petroleumbrownfields)

