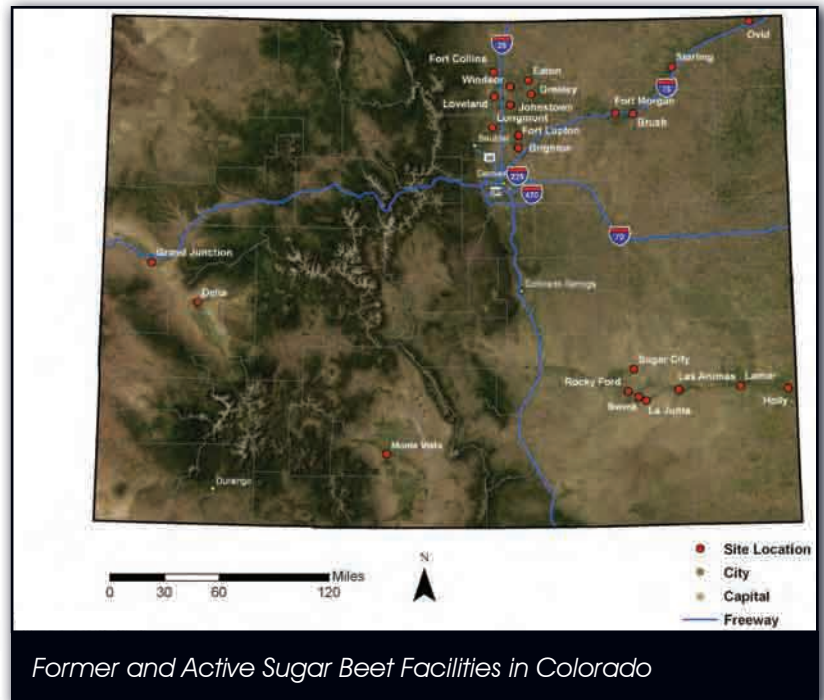


# Revitalization of Former Sugar Beet Factories, Colorado

One of the early drivers of agro-industrial growth in the West was sugar beet planting and processing. The first sugar beet factory in Colorado was built in 1899. By the mid-1930s, Colorado had the largest number of beet sugar factories in the United States. Today, only one of the state's 22 sugar beet factories, the one in Fort Morgan, remains open. The rest are closed or have ceased operations. The sites are located in rural to semi-rural areas and tend to be large. The decline of the sugar beet processing industry left a legacy of environmental and redevelopment challenges at these sites in high plains communities.

In 2009, EPA's Land Revitalization Program provided funding to the Colorado Brownfields Foundation to implement a project addressing the legacy of sugar beet processing in Colorado. This included conducting stakeholder outreach to

research redevelopment opportunities and potential options to address health, aesthetic, and environmental challenges. The project includes developing an inventory of sugar beet processing facilities in Colorado and collecting data associated with these facilities and their communities. Although contamination issues include asbestos and various waste streams, the primary emphasis of the project is on lime waste that is stored in large piles, often several stories high and covering tens of acres.



Stakeholder meetings were held with four communities—Greeley, Longmont, Eaton, and Fort Morgan. The meetings sought to identify common redevelopment goals and obstacles among stakeholder communities, technical issues associated with redevelopment, and a final meeting to identify needs for further study.

To assist the Foundation, EPA tasked a Technical Assistance Team to collect information and inventory active and former sugar beet processing facilities in the state. The team conducted topic-specific research on three towns with sugar beet processing facilities—Fort Morgan, Ovid, and Sterling. The team also collected information to support the development of a business model that evaluated parameters relevant to redevelopment of abandoned sugar beet factories, including location, population, utility and transportation access, water reuse options,

and economic setting. The focus of the model is on reuse opportunities that may have advantages to prospective new business employers, as well as alternatives for the reuse of existing lime waste.

The stakeholder meetings and team activities identified significant opportunities for the redevelopment of sugar beet factory properties. To promote cleanup and removal of lime waste, the project assembled a list of reuse opportunities in cooperation with private industry stakeholders interested in recycling lime waste. The site inventory identified factory locations with redevelopment advantages, such as proximity to riparian corridors and downtown locations, existing transportation, and utility infrastructure. The proximity to downtowns and the significant size of these industrial sites may allow redevelopment opportunities that promote walkable communities and provide workforce housing for industrial concerns that may locate on nearby redeveloped sites.

In partnership with state and federal partners, the Colorado Brownfields Foundation project formulated a strategy to inform the market of reuse possibilities and sugar beet factory sites for redevelopment. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs is partnering with a coalition of communities impacted by sugar beet factory closure or operations to secure additional funding to continue the effort that was initiated by the Foundation and EPA's Land Revitalization Program, built upon lessons learned in this initial effort and test strategies suggested by the effort.