

A New Purpose for Old Railyards

Creating attainable housing opportunities in Duluth, Minnesota



Project Summary

Community: Duluth, Minnesota

Technical Assistance: Site Design/Economic Analysis

Former Use: Railroad industry

Future Use: Attainable/affordable housing

The Irving and Fairmount neighborhoods in Duluth, MN were established over 100 years ago in conjunction with the booming railroad industry. The area today, however, is dominated by an aging housing stock that has seen little modern investment.

In 2017, the City used an U.S. EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning grant to develop the Irving and Fairmount Brownfields Revitalization Plan (IFBRP). The plan focused on the redevelopment opportunities for five catalyst brownfield sites, including the former Duluth, Winnipeg, and Pacific (DW&P) railyard site. The City's goals are to provide affordable housing, improve public health and better connect the neighborhoods to the rest of Duluth. The IFBRP envisions connecting the neighborhoods to the vibrant Spirit Valley commercial district to achieve these goals.

The Community's Challenge

Given the long history of residential use in the Irving and Fairmount neighborhoods, the City needed a housing analysis based on existing land use and current market conditions to understand the economic viability of attainable housing alternatives.

EPA's Land Revitalization Technical Assistance

In 2018, EPA's Land Revitalization program provided contractor technical assistance to help the City identify key challenges and opportunities to support affordable housing alternatives in the Irving and Fairmount neighborhoods. Review of current environmental conditions and the state of

the local housing market were part of the analysis. The project team formulated conceptual design alternatives for three sites, including the former DW&P railyard site, and suggested next steps.

EPA's technical assistance will enable the Irving and Fairmount neighborhoods to provide attainable housing and build upon their community amenities, nearby parks and commercial district access to attract a new wave of residents.



Preferred Design Alternative with 615 housing units

For more information, contact Rosita Clarke, EPA Region 5 Brownfields Program, at clarke.rosita@epa.gov