

# Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Project Fact Sheet



## *Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Chicopee, MA*

### EPA Brownfields Program

EPA's Brownfields Program empowers states, communities, and other stakeholders to work together to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield site is real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. In 2002, the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act was passed to help states and communities around the country clean up and revitalize brownfields sites. Under this law, EPA provides financial assistance to eligible applicants to assess and clean up brownfield sites.

### Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Program

EPA is piloting an area-wide planning approach to community brownfield challenges, which recognizes that revitalization of the area surrounding the brownfield site(s) is just as critical to the successful reuse of the property as assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of an individual site. The pilot program will help further community-based partnership efforts within underserved or economically disadvantaged neighborhoods by confronting local environmental and public health challenges related to brownfields, while creating a planning framework to advance economic development and job creation.

### Pilot Project Description

EPA has selected the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) as a Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Program recipient. PVPC is focusing this project on downtown Chicopee's West End neighborhood. With a population of 2,025, this area was once home to major manufacturers of textiles, munitions, and shoes, and supported a thriving working-class neighborhood. Today, many former industrial and commercial sites in the area are contaminated and underused. Over 28 percent of the community lives below the poverty level. The city-wide unemployment rate is over 12 percent. Known brownfields cover 20 to 25 percent of West End's land area, presenting a challenge to

### Pilot Program Description



EPA is awarding approximately \$4 million in total across 23 recipients. Recipients will each receive up to approximately \$175,000 in EPA cooperative agreement and/or direct technical assistance. Assistance will help recipients initiate development of an area-wide plan and identify next steps and resources needed to implement the plan.

### Contacts

For additional information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields Web site (<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>).

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The information presented in this fact sheet comes from the project proposal; EPA cannot attest to the accuracy of this information. The cooperative agreement and/or direct technical assistance have not yet been negotiated. Activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.

revitalization efforts. The city has developed a Downtown Revitalization Plan that incorporates the community's vision for revitalizing the downtown area, including the West End. The area-wide plan will focus on sustainable approaches to brownfields redevelopment, including the use of alternative energy generators, reuse of current infrastructure, and creation of greenspace. Development of the plan is expected to facilitate community involvement in brownfields assessment and cleanup by generating site-specific reuse plans for brownfield sites, as well as next steps and resources needed to implement the reuse plans.