



Local Brownfields Redevelopment Leaders: Success Stories & Lessons Learned

Part 2

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City of Prairie du Chien

Brownfields 101 Redevelopment Resources for Local Governments

Brownfields

Contamination is often one of many factors obstructing redevelopment.

- **Multiple parcels/multiple owners.**
- **Demolition costs and site preparation costs (aging infrastructure).**
- **Access.**
- **Floodplain.**
- **Historic and cultural resources.**
- **Proximity to other blighted sites or perceived “non-compatible” uses.**

Assessment and remediation, however, can be the opportunity to overcome the other barriers.

Planning to Implementation

Contaminated sites are an opportunity to facilitate this shift.

Attitude Shift From

“You won’t see that site cleaned up and developed in my lifetime”

To

“Why aren’t you moving faster?”

Gateway #1

Challenges

- **Blighted, underutilized property.**
- **Multiple property owners and multiple uses.**
- **Abutting a rail line carrying 40-60 trains a day.**
- **Multiple relocations.**
- **Abutting future roundabout site.**

Opportunities

- **Gateway to the historic downtown.**
- **Strong traffic counts.**
- **Interested developer.**
- **Partnership with the Department of Commerce.**

Gateway #1

After



Gateway #1

After



Gateway # 1

Lessons Learned

- **There will be surprises.**
- **One project may lead to multiple projects (one contaminated site to another).**
- **Projects can be opportunities to test new ideas (design and preservation ordinance).**
- **Need to stay on message, be focussed, be patient.**

Wood Treating Site

Challenges

- **Copper, Chromium, Arsenic and ???.**
- **Costs.**
- **Gateway #1 Project's Timetable driving this project's timetable.**

Opportunities

- **Redevelopment Authority taking the lead (purchasing the property through blight).**
- **Large parcel (13 acres).**
- **Chance to use an ER TID.**
- **Interested developer.**
- **Partnership with the Department of Natural Resources (SAG, Ready for Reuse Grants & Loan).**
- **Opportunity to use Voluntary Party Liability Exemption.**

Wood Treating Site

After



Wood Treating Site

Lessons Learned

- **Each party involved has a different perspective and goals (WDNR, consultant, city, developer) – get them all to at least to speak the same language.**
- **Everyone wants to be the “winner.”**
- **Strong development agreements are essential.**
- **Engage WDNR staff in all phases of the project – they can save the project a lot of headaches.**

Lessons Learned

- **Keep repeating the message.**
- **Comprehensive does not mean chaotic.**
- **Bring unbearable firepower to the smallest target possible.**
- **Don't divide your forces.**
- **Always put creativity before capital.**
- **State agencies are partners not punching bags.**
In working to address contaminated sites, the City has used SAGs, Ready for Reuse grants and loans, WAMs, PECFA, etc. WDNR support and funding will help leverage other funding.
- **Project manuals are essential.**

Lessons Learned

- **Public participation is critical both to generate information but also to know the opposition.**
- **Don't let perfection get in the way of excellence and don't make best the enemy of better.**
- **WDNR staff were always available to discuss potential projects.**
- **Engage/inform other divisions and agencies in the project early on – DOT, WEDC, State Historical Society, etc. – they can solve a lot problems especially if you are short-staffed.**
- **Development has a way of skewing time – either you are at a dead run or standing still.**



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