



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 5.

Agenda Date: 2/15/2016

In Control: Neighborhoods and Livability Committee

DEPARTMENT: Center City Development & Operations Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: John Jacks

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT: Brownfield Redevelopment Policy

SUMMARY:

This is a briefing on the proposed Brownfield Redevelopment Policy to assist with identification, assessment, cleanup, and development of sites with potential environmental contamination. The City's Brownfield Redevelopment Program aims to revitalize inner city communities, achieve economic development goals, improve human and environmental health, and stimulate infill development.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A brownfield is a property on which expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the possibility of environmental contamination. These sites are usually abandoned, vacant, or underutilized properties. Examples can include abandoned gas stations, dry cleaning facilities, junkyards, old car dealerships, abandoned factories, and other potentially contaminated properties. Brownfield sites present unique development challenges that require a creative and multifaceted approach to address.

The City has been involved in brownfield assessment and redevelopment efforts over the past two decades through various programs and funding sources including grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded in 1999 and 2004 to assess potential brownfield sites in San Antonio. More recent activities include the following:

- **2011:** City Council allocated funding in the FY2012 Budget to the Center City Development Office (CCDO) for a Senior Planner position and directed staff to create a Brownfields Program for the City of San Antonio.
- **2012:** CCDO hired a Senior Planner in March to develop the City's Brownfields Program, to guide assessment and cleanup of brownfield sites for redevelopment, and to secure grant funding.

- **2013-2014:** Council allocated \$300,000 from the General Fund through the Inner City Incentive Fund for environmental site assessments and other brownfields activities - \$200,000 from fiscal year 2013 and \$100,000 from fiscal year 2014. This provided an initial investment in the early growth of the Brownfields Program. Staff continued to apply for grants as a sustainable source of program funding.
- **2014:** Through a partnership between Metro Health and CCDO, the City of San Antonio was awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Federal Center for Disease Control Brownfield Initiative. \$100,000 of the grant was used to conduct outreach and planning efforts in eight inner-city neighborhoods. The remaining \$50,000 was used to conduct environmental site assessments on six inner-city properties.
- **2015:** The EPA awarded the City of San Antonio a Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant of \$400,000 over 3 years to conduct environmental site assessments on properties with potential contamination from hazardous materials and/or petroleum. The Brownfields Program was also allocated \$500,000 through the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) over 5 years to provide financial assistance for cleanup on sites with known environmental contamination being considered for redevelopment. Both EPA and CDBG funds were made available on October 1, 2015.

Program Accomplishments to Date

- Identification of and outreach to over 380 potential brownfield property owners
- 25 sites assisted
- \$3.1 million in added ad valorem tax value
- \$117 million in planned private investment
- 570 planned housing units
- Development of Brownfields Redevelopment Policy
- Provided assistance in developing a City of San Antonio Municipal Setting Designation (MSD) Program

ISSUE:

As brownfield sites remain abandoned and unmarketable, they increase inner city blight, decrease property values, hurt local economies, and can threaten community and human health and the environment. CCDO works to remove barriers to redevelopment within the Center City, and the redevelopment of brownfield sites is a key component of this effort. With the infusion of new funding, an official policy and program guidelines are necessary to guide brownfields activities and communicate the public benefits and necessity of a Brownfield Redevelopment Policy. They also better position the City of San Antonio to secure future grant funding for brownfields activities.

The proposed policy outlines the City's commitment to identify, assess, clean-up, and redevelop brownfield sites, and details the public benefits of such activities. The policy also presents the policy goals, strategic approach, implementation plan, and measures to gauge program performance. The Program Guidelines are an attachment to the policy and outline the types of assistance available, project eligibility, and the application process and considerations. Prior to requesting City Council approval of the Brownfield Redevelopment Policy, staff will solicit feedback from public and private stakeholders on the proposed Brownfield Redevelopment Program Guidelines. Any future amendments to the guidelines will be brought before the appropriate City Council committee.

ALTERNATIVES:

Approval of the Brownfield Redevelopment Policy will establish the City's commitment to the redevelopment of brownfield sites, provide a standard for which to conduct brownfields activities, and provide a strategic framework from which to continue developing and growing the program. The fully developed program will be an added tool to achieve San Antonio's larger Center City development goals and further demonstrate the City's commitment to brownfields redevelopment and revitalizing our established neighborhoods.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this item.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed Brownfield Redevelopment Policy by the Neighborhoods and Livability Committee and referral to City Council for adoption. Prior to returning to City Council for action, staff will solicit feedback from public and private stakeholders on the guidelines.