

Who makes up the Omaha Brownfields Coalition?



METROPOLITAN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



For more information:

If you have questions about a property or the project, go to www.mapacog.org/environmental/current_projects or contact:

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The Omaha Brownfields Coalition Grant is funded through a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This allows that services are provided free of charge. Work completed through the grant program must be coordinated with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) and EPA.

Consultant:

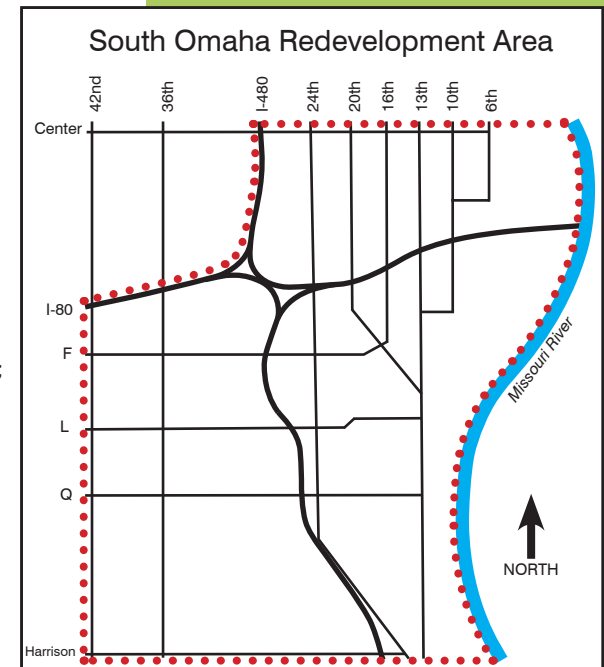


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Omaha Brownfields Coalition Grant

Hheavy industrial development in Omaha initially flourished on the west bank of the Missouri River via transcontinental railway, barge and trucking infrastructure; livestock slaughter and meat processing; grain storage and processing; agricultural chemical and nutrient formulation and distribution; steel fabrication and lead reprocessing. In time however, new industries such as medical, insurance and banking opted for westward development out of the historical industrial core. While the early industrial development led to growth and prosperity in the community, each sector left a substantial legacy of environmental impairments in older, inner-city portions of the community such as South Omaha.

What remains of these early commercial and industrial sites are sometimes abandoned, idled, or underused because business expansion or site redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. Today these sites are known as brownfields. Developers find it easier to build on undeveloped land rather than face unknown costs and liability issues of redeveloping a brownfield. The Omaha Brownfields Coalition Grant is focused on helping business owners, land owners and developers address these



environmental issues so that new jobs and greenspace can be created in the project area.

Participation in the project includes:

- Conducting historical and regulatory research and interviews to understand history of the property and the likelihood of contamination (Phase I environmental site assessment);
- Conducting soil, ground water, and/or building material sampling to confirm whether contamination exists, and if so, to what extent (Phase II environmental site assessment); and
- Redevelopment and cleanup planning.

What are the benefits?

- **Services are provided free of charge.** The grant pays the entire cost of the assessment(s) and redevelopment and cleanup planning as long as funding is available and the site meets overall project goals.
- **Site conditions are better understood.** The perception of environmental contamination can be a substantial barrier to site redevelopment. Almost all potential buyers, lending institutions, and investors require that an environmental assessment be conducted. Assessments provide a better understanding of site conditions, helping to dispel the perception of contamination or verifying its extent, how it can be addressed and remediation cost, if applicable.
- **Potential Outcomes:** increased local tax base, facilitated job growth, use of existing infrastructure, takes development pressure off undeveloped land, improves and protects the environment, and helps to spur redevelopment.



How do I participate?

Participation is strictly voluntary. Project site should fall within or near the outlined South Omaha project area. If you are interested in the program, contact MAPA or Benesch (see contact information on back panel) for more information on the next steps.

What should I expect?

If you are interested, the potential assessment site is reviewed by coalition members. The coalition will consider the following:

- Site location (to verify that it is within the project area);
- Redevelopment potential, especially those with a willing developer or redevelopment plan; and
- if the site addresses local or regional needs or plans.

Once site approval is given by EPA, the property owner will meet with the consultant to complete the environmental assessment. Copies of both draft and final documents are available to owners and prospective developers. Assessment and sampling will not interrupt normal business operations. After reviewing the completed Phase I, owners and the coalition will, as warranted, consider the decision to move forward with Phase II.

How long does the process take?

Because we are coordinating with EPA and NDEQ, the assessment process can take longer than those funded privately. We advise owners to expect the process to take 3-4 months from the time an agreement is signed to the completion of a Phase I assessment report. The time for completion of Phase II assessments followed by redevelopment and cleanup planning depends on the degree of investigation needed. Phase II assessments are expected to take 4-7 months.

Are there risks from involving my property in the program?

A property is either clean or contaminated. If contamination is present, the risk and liability already exist for the property owner. Participation in the program will not increase this risk or liability. Existing state and federal regulations require responsible parties (including owners of contaminated properties) to clean sites to meet standards related to the level of property use. Even if a site is sold, the previous owners could still be responsible for clean-up costs, even if they did not cause or contribute to the contamination. Conducting environmental site assessments does not alter liability associated with contamination,

however it may help an owner or prospective developer understand if risk exists and how to address it. Participation in the program does bring the potential for contamination to the attention of state and federal agencies. Generally, the Federal Government does not pursue property cleanup unless there is an on-going release of contamination or the site is defined as a federal Superfund site. Superfund-eligible sites are not able to participate in this program.



What about cleanup?

Very few sites go to cleanup, if necessary, the following are possible funding sources: The main funding source for cleanup grants is EPA. The coalition, or other entity, would need to apply for this EPA funding on behalf of a property owner. NDEQ would facilitate property eligibility into their voluntary cleanup program (VCP) for contaminated sites.