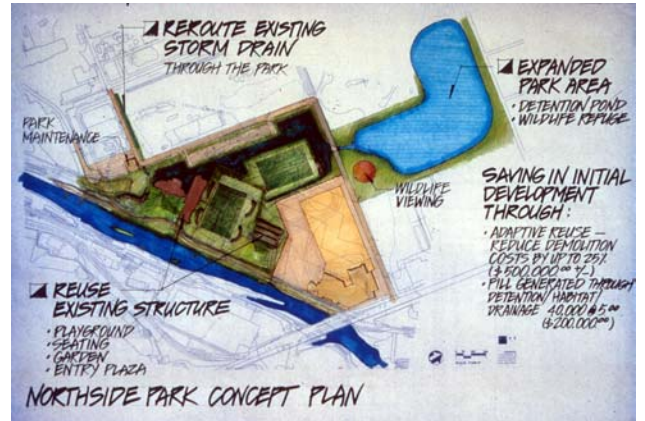




A PUBLICATION OF ICMA'S BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM



Co-location: Facilitating Revitalization Beyond Brownfields Boundaries





ABOUT ICMA

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is the professional and educational association of more than 8,000 appointed executive administrators serving local governments. Members manage cities, counties, towns, townships, boroughs, regional councils, and other local governments in the United States and throughout the world with populations ranging from a few thousand to several million people.

Founded in 1914, ICMA pursues the mission of enhancing the quality of local government through professional management. Its members turn to ICMA for information, research, and technical assistance on many issues of special interest. ICMA's management assistance includes a wide range of publications, training programs, research, information, and training services.

ICMA's Research and Development Department seeks to enhance the quality of local government management through information sharing, technical assistance, research, and partnership building among concerned stakeholders. The Research and Development Department has been studying the role that local government can play in a variety of brownfields issues through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Cooperative Agreement No. CR-R-82870801. The opinions expressed in this report are solely those of ICMA, and do not necessarily reflect the views of EPA. Other ICMA publications made possible by this and prior cooperative agreements with the EPA include:

Coordinating Brownfields Redevelopment and Local Housing Initiatives

Getting the Job Done: Strategies and Lessons Learned in Facilitating Brownfields Job Training

Beyond Fences: Brownfields and the Challenges of Land Use Controls

Brownfields Redevelopment: A Guidebook for Local Governments and Communities

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Old Wastewater Treatment Plant, Denver, Colorado

Northside Park Concept Plan as designed by Wenk Associates, Denver, Colorado

Northside Park, Denver, Colorado

Wastewater treatment plant infrastructure creates unique urban sculpture at
Northside Park, Denver, Colorado

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Co-location is a revitalization strategy that links the redevelopment of brownfields with nearby or adjacent properties that—like brownfields—can be a challenge to redevelop. Whereas brownfields redevelopment can occur on a site-by-site basis, a co-location approach considers how other challenging-to-redevelop properties, such as Superfund sites or vacant properties, can be revitalized in tandem with brownfields efforts. Brownfields redevelopment involves a complex process of securing and coordinating resources, and, as such, the concept of linking brownfields to another type of revitalization effort might seem daunting. However, while a co-location approach to redevelopment is not without its challenges, it can be strategic and yield benefits not possible with a site-by-site approach.

Why Co-location?

A co-location approach to redevelopment can be strategic—for bringing resources to bear and marketing sites in need of revitalization—and, in some cases, is a practical necessity. A site-by-site approach to development could make some brownfields difficult to market and could restrict the site's potential for redevelopment. For example, a brownfields that is co-located to a Superfund site or vacant property will likely face more development challenges than one where nearby or adjacent properties are in good condition. Impediments to investment could include the real and perceived value of the brownfields property (even after being redeveloped) because of its proximity to other distressed properties, as well as the real or perceived contamination of nearby properties. In some cases, redevelopment might be slow or might not happen at all because of the conglomeration of distressed sites and the concentration of blight. A co-location approach to redevelopment can address these challenges because nearby sites can be assessed, remediated, or redeveloped in tandem so that the condition of one property does not negatively impact the potential of another.

A co-location approach to redevelopment can actually help secure resources that might not be attainable with a site-by-site approach. Ideally, brownfields practitioners would have the resources needed to revitalize an entire area or more than one property at a time. Limited resources, however, are a given. But when sites are redeveloped in tandem, development resources for one particular type of site (e.g., brownfields, vacant property, or a Superfund site) could be used in conjunction with the resources of another. These combined resources can be leveraged to create a package of tools and programs that could make revitalization of areas with several distressed properties more enticing or cost-effective for a prospective purchaser or developer.

Coordinated redevelopment of co-located properties could also improve the efficiency and practicality of funding for infrastructure improvements, such as new roads or public transportation service. For example, one new redevelopment might not warrant a new bus stop, but the redevelopment of two or more co-located sites could create a critical mass of people or activity that would make transit access reasonable. Moreover, road, sewer, and streetscape improvement projects to support redevelopment activities could gain higher priority or justification for funding when the improvements serve several revitalized sites.

Coordinating local programs around an area in need of revitalization, rather than on individual sites scattered throughout a jurisdiction, demonstrates a local government's commitment to encourage revitalization, which may give developers confidence to invest. If it is clear that the local government is committed to investing in the neighborhood, then prospective developers may be more willing to follow suit. In addition, if the different types of sites in need of redevelopment come with their own set of local incentives, developers could be enticed to invest in a project where they will have a wide range of tools to employ.

Developers may be encouraged by co-location because local government efforts to link development of nearby properties can ensure that the land reuses complement one another. A developer may have a particular vision for the reuse of a property, but may still be concerned that co-located sites not in his/her control may be redeveloped to a use

that is either undesirable or incompatible to his/her proposed enterprise. Likewise, one site in the area may be so large or daunting, such as a Superfund site, that it sets a precedent for the type of reuse that would be appropriate for that area—even if alternate land reuses might be more desirable to the developer or community. By establishing plans to foster consistent development among multiple sites, the local government may be able to override the influence that one large site may have on determining the land reuses for a particular area.

Co-location Project Profiles

This report features examples of local governments that, in coordination with community and federal government partners, have undertaken co-location redevelopment. Data and information for this report were collected through personal interviews with stakeholders involved in co-location redevelopment projects and through literature reviews. Project profiles from Denver and Indianapolis exemplify the benefits that co-location can yield, as well as indicate some strategies, best practices, and lessons learned that other local governments can adopt.

Fall Creek Place

In an approximately 59-acre area of Indianapolis, Indiana, brownfields redevelopment was hindered by more than the usual concerns, such as those related to liability. For the most part, the area consisted of mostly vacant property; the structures that did exist were in decay, and the neighbor-

hood was crime-ridden. The condition of the 26-block neighborhood that had come to be known as “Dodge City” made brownfields undesirable sites for redevelopment. Addressing brownfields in the neighborhood could not be successful without addressing the vacant properties and the social and aesthetic conditions.

A revitalization project brought new life to the neighborhood, which is now known as Fall Creek Place. Development of vacant properties created a need and opportunity to address co-located brownfields. A co-location approach was essential: without addressing the vacant properties, long-standing brownfields sites would not have gained new reuse potential and marketability, and with the brownfields in place, the Fall Creek Place development plan could not be fully implemented and could detract from the redevelopment’s success.

Northside Park

Pollution from ASARCO’s Globe Plant smelting facility contaminated the Globeville neighborhood in northeast Denver, including a former wastewater treatment plant owned by the city. Redevelopment of the former wastewater treatment plant hinged on the resolution of a natural resources damage lawsuit by the state of Colorado against ASARCO. Without resolution of the lawsuit, remediation of the contamination from the Globe Plant could not be addressed.

After a settlement was reached, it was necessary for the city and its redevelopment project partners to coordinate their brownfields efforts along the timetable of

ASARCO’s remedial actions under Superfund. Cooperation among the project partners and linking various aspects of the redevelopment project in a way that leveraged opportunities for advancing the project with every success were critical to transforming the wastewater treatment plant into Northside Park.

Shattuck Superfund Site and Redevelopment Area

The Shattuck Superfund Site and Redevelopment Area comprises approximately 12 acres in south Denver’s Overland Community. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 8 Superfund Program is cleaning the site, which was once a radium processing plant. Shattuck was one of the primary properties that contributed to the area’s industrial image. The known contamination at Shattuck has also constrained the redevelopment potential of brownfields and other properties in the vicinity.

With the cleanup of Shattuck underway, a visioning process has identified reuse opportunities for the site and some nearby vacant, idle, and underutilized properties. Evaluating redevelopment potential for Shattuck in tandem with co-located brownfields and other sites available for redevelopment is likely to improve the marketability of the area as a whole and foster sustainable development over the long term.

Cross Community Coalition Site

The Cross Community Coalition site is a half-acre residentially zoned property lo-

cated within the Vasquez Boulevard/ Interstate 70 (VB/I-70) Superfund site. EPA included the Cross Community Coalition site within the Superfund boundary because the level of contamination found on surrounding properties exceeded the Superfund threshold for a residentially zoned property. However, the Cross Community Coalition site was slated for commercial redevelopment, and the contamination levels on the surrounding sites did not meet the threshold levels for Superfund designation for commercial property. As such, it appeared as if the Cross Community Coalition site could be addressed as a brownfields redevelopment if rezoned to be consistent with the site's intended reuse. Redeveloping the site as a brownfields would enable the Cross Community Coalition to begin construction of the family center sooner than if under the timeline of the VB/I-70 cleanup. Various stakeholders in the Superfund and brownfields processes participated in an effort to test the Cross Community Coalition site and delineate it from the VB/I-70 site.

The Future of Co-location

The strategies and benefits of co-location are consistent with what could be future decision-making factors for prioritizing sites for funding. In July 2003, EPA selected 10 sites for Superfund cleanups and delayed the cleanup of 10 others. There was not enough money to fund cleanup at all 20 sites. While the primary deciding factor was the relative health risks posed by each site, EPA officials had to consider additional factors to make their funding decisions. One of

these factors included development potential, which gives new weight to economic development in the site-selection process.¹ When EPA announced the selections, it recognized that cleanups at some sites will yield added benefits, such as creating jobs, improving the property value of land near remediated and redeveloped Superfund sites, and revitalizing entire neighborhoods.

Even though this example is one of Superfund and federal decision-making, other decision makers in the environmental and redevelopment field may adopt a similar approach when prioritizing any kind of distressed property for resources (if, that is, decision makers are not thinking along those lines already). In this way, it may become increasingly strategic for brownfields practitioners to take a co-location approach to redevelopment because of the advantage that co-location benefits can yield in securing resources . ●

Endnotes

¹ Heilprin, John. "Ten toxic waste sites are chosen for Superfund cleanups, 10 others are delayed." (July 17, 2003). Retrieved July 21, 2003 from http://www.enn.com/news/2003-07-17/s_6645.asp.