

Mabel Davis Skate Park Austin, TX

**BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT SUCCESS STORY
AUGUST 2006**

With the help of U.S. EPA Region 6, the City of Austin has added a beautiful park, pool, and skatepark to its ever-growing list of recreational resources. The new brownfield development is called Mabel Davis Park. It is located on a closed landfill that operated during the 1950s and was redeveloped into a park in the early 1970s. However, due to the continued use as an illegal landfill —think: dumping of automobile batteries and pesticides— caused the park to be partially closed until further remediation. Plans to remediate the park began in late fall 2004 and the park reopened in the summer 2005. Additions to the park include a skate park for local skate-borders. There are several areas in the community that are crowded with old dilapidated businesses and in need of green space. Therefore, the City and neighborhood have implemented green space reuses and Green Building strategies. The City of Austin, ABRO has partner with the Austin Travis County Health Department to analyze health statistics and report long-term findings (www.ci.austin.tx.us/census/faqs.htm). ABRO monitors the data to set benchmarks and generate reports on patterns of human health in the target areas. The City has continued to work with EPA, TCEQ and the City/County Health Department to ensure the protection of human health and the environment and to ensure the consideration of public health issues during the cleanup and the redevelopment processes. One method of quality control is the required permits for cleanup and development that are necessary prior to any activities.



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The City of Austin has committed ABRO resources to include: staff, budget, office, website, and technical assistance and expertise from staff citywide and environmental survey/studies. The assessment activities supplemented other incentives that the City is currently using including Brownfields, Smart Growth, Green Building, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and other funding resources to complete funding gaps to ensure project success. A Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan was awarded to eligible property owners interested in site remediation and reuse. On October 4, 2004, City Council Members Raul Alvarez and Danny Thomas presented a plan for improving what many residents consider the most neglected part of the city where the boundaries overlap the proposed twenty-four square mile Brownfield Assessment Community-Wide grant. The vision included new businesses and homes with a blend of new and old residents.

The initiative with assistance from the EPA Brownfields Team created an economic revitalization zone within a 15 square mile community area that includes the Target Communities. The City is planning to spur development in this community by offering tax refunds to new businesses while working to retain the area's older residents and the unique character of the area. Mabel Davis is the first step in the successful completion of this plan. Under the plan, developers of mixed-use and commercial projects would receive tax refunds based on the number of square feet in the project or the number of new jobs they create for East Austin residents.

Bravo, City of Austin. Here's to Mabel Davis Park.