

Portfields: Revitalizing Port Communities



What is Portfields? “Portfields” is a federal interagency project that focuses on the redevelopment of brownfields in port and harbor areas, with emphasis on development of environmentally sound port facilities. Brownfields are properties where the redevelopment may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of contamination. Maritime trade is expected to double by 2020, exerting further pressure on already highly developed coastal areas. Redeveloping brownfields in port areas can facilitate improved marine transportation while providing environmental, economic, and social benefits.



Federal Partnerships in Action

A Brownfields Federal Partnership program was created in 1996 and includes more than 20 agencies committed to work together to assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. Through the Brownfields Federal Partnership Action Agenda, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) committed to lead the Portfields project. Seven other federal agencies—Environmental Protection Agency, Economic Development Administration, Maritime Administration, Department of Labor, Army Corps of Engineers, Department of the Interior, Department of Housing and Urban Development—are committed to working with NOAA on Portfields. Each partner brings its own specialized expertise to the table and contributes to the overall goal of revitalizing port communities.

Portfields Pilot Ports

Portfields is an opportunity for federal agencies to partner with port communities to help redevelop brownfields and revitalize waterfront areas, improve marine transportation systems, and protect and restore coastal resources. The Portfields federal agencies will work in close partnership to provide targeted resources to assist the three ports designated as Portfields Pilot Ports.

New Bedford, Massachusetts – The Port of New Bedford will use its Portfields designation to focus cooperative efforts on projects identified in the state-approved New Bedford/Fairhaven Harbor Plan, including navigational dredging of sediments; waterside brownfields remediation and reuse; habitat restoration; pier and bulkhead enhancements; and the creation of public access points on the harbor.

Port of Tampa, Florida – The Port of Tampa owns a number of underutilized brownfields properties located within an estuary of national significance, and adjacent to economically disadvantaged areas of the community. Tampa will use their Portfields designation to capitalize on opportunities to identify funding sources and technical assistance to enhance redevelopment and improve the economic productivity and social conditions in and around the Port.

Port of Bellingham, Washington – The Port of Bellingham has recently been engaged in a coordinated effort of economic revitalization and environmental restoration within Bellingham Bay. The Port’s sustainable waterfront stewardship approach is focused on meeting future transportation needs, economic revitalization, and restoration of marine habitat, and they plan to use the Portfields designation to facilitate implementation of projects identified through their comprehensive planning effort.

Portfields Commitments

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

- NOAA will continue to lead the interagency Portfields effort, which includes hosting interagency meetings and coordinating the implementation of Portfields.
- NOAA will sponsor and facilitate local kick-off meetings in Tampa, New Bedford, and Bellingham. The kick-off meetings will bring together the Portfields Federal agencies, the port, and other stakeholders to identify the ports goals and needs; match the Federal agencies’ capabilities and resources to the port’s needs; and develop an action plan.
- NOAA will provide \$90,000 to support the implementation of the Portfields pilots.
- NOAA will provide technical expertise, tools and services to the pilot ports based on the pilot’s needs. This includes risk assessment, cost-effective cleanup strategies, habitat restoration, planning, and environmental permit review.
- NOAA, in partnership with state coastal management programs, will identify opportunities to support Portfields pilots through implementation of the Coastal Zone Management Act. Eligible activities may include community and waterfront revitalization planning, coastal resource protection and enhancement of public access.

Economic Development Administration

- EDA will share research, analytical tools and methods to support cluster-based development and other competitiveness enhancing economic development approaches at the three designated Portfields pilot ports.
- EDA's Brownfields Coordinator, EDA Regional Office staff and others, will participate in interagency workgroups and local kick-off meetings (availability and resources permitting) as implementation of the Portfields Initiative begins over the next year.
- EDA's appropriate Regional Office will pro-actively seek investment proposals from the three newly designated port communities. Successful investments must be locally generated and consistent with EDA statutory eligibility criteria and investment policy guidelines. Such investments could include financial assistance for economic development planning, market feasibility analysis, and port and other marine transportation system related infrastructure improvements.
- To every extent possible (availability and resources permitting), EDA staff will be accessible to consult on planning, economic redevelopment, and other financial aspects of Portfields redevelopment.

Environmental Protection Agency

- EPA's appropriate Regional Office will coordinate with the three newly designated port communities to determine assessment needs and will provide available targeted brownfields assessments at each of the designated Portfields pilot ports based on the specific needs of that Port.
- To every extent possible, EPA will work with the three designated Portfields pilot ports to coordinate information concerning EPA funding opportunities.
- EPA's Brownfields Regional Coordinator, Regional Office staff and others, will participate in interagency workgroups and local kick-off meetings (availability and resources permitting) as implementation of the Portfields Initiative begins over the next year.
- EPA will provide technical support to assist in assessment and cleanup of any Brownfields site at the three designated Portfields pilot ports.
- The Port Sector Liaison in the EPA Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation will provide or help find technical assistance within or outside EPA, including but not limited to assistance on the development of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) for new or existing port facilities.

U.S. Department of Labor

- The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the U.S. Department of Labor will notify State and Local Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop Career Service Centers of the potential for economic redevelopment opportunities available for the three Portfields pilot ports.

- ETA, through Federal, Regional, and/or local personnel, will participate in interagency workgroups and local kick-off events at these three Portfields pilot ports.
- ETA will continue to be represented at the Federal Agency level and on the Portfields Steering Committee.
- ETA will continue to offer consultation for local groups (focusing initially on the three pilot ports) regarding potential partnerships with the Publicly Funded Workforce Investment System.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- USACE will use its existing authorities to protect, restore and manage the nation's water resources and to provide engineering and technical services in ways that seek balance and synergy among human development activities and natural systems.
- USACE will foster productive partnerships and collaborative approaches for the purpose of sharing planning, scientific and other analytical tools, and consult on engineering or project inquiries from the Portfields pilots.
- USACE's Brownfields Coordinator and others, will participate in interagency workgroups and local kick-off meetings (availability and resources permitting) as implementation of the Portfields Initiative begins over the next year.

Maritime Administration

- MARAD will assist other federal partners in the redevelopment of Brownfields through the Portfields project by working with various marine industry stakeholders in identifying transportation needs.
- MARAD will provide technical expertise and support to the Portfields project. This technical expertise consists of: (1) Hosting interagency meetings with marine industry leaders; (2) Distributing information on Portfields showcase projects and best management practices to the Marine Transportation System National Advisory Committee (MTSNAC); and, (3) Seeking to provide funding in support of future Portfields projects.
- MARAD will work with AAPA and other trade groups to identify potential future Portfields projects.
- MARAD will assist other federal partners in creating a federal agency brochure of "Showcase Portfields Projects" for the maritime community.

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) has prepared a report summarizing past port brownfields redevelopment efforts (<http://www.icma.org>).

For More Information Contact:

David Holst, NOAA
Office of Response and Restoration
(301) 713-2989, x161
david.holst@noaa.gov

LaKisha Odom, EPA
Office of Brownfields Cleanup and
Redevelopment
(202) 566-2772
odom.lakisha@epa.gov

