



# In Greenville, SC, Coordinating Resources from two EPA Programs Maximizes Their Effectiveness and Results

## Coordinated Cleanup Approach

**T**he City of Greenville, South Carolina (population 56,002) is located in the state's Piedmont region, in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The city features a rich diversity of living environments and neighborhoods. In a single decade (1992-2002), Greenville was home to more than \$160 million in new residential construction, and an additional \$100 million in renovations to older neighborhoods. The city has a thriving downtown that has been nationally recognized as a 'state-of-the-art' community in which to live. In addition to being Greenville's business core, the downtown offers a variety of unique shops, restaurants, art galleries, museums, public parks, and entertainment facilities, and has seen a boom in new housing development as a result of its appeal.

The economic growth and prosperity experienced by Greenville's downtown has yet to flow over into the city's West Greenville corridor. Located approximately 1.2 miles from downtown, West Greenville is a 230-acre neighborhood best conceptualized as five distinct, but related, subdistricts. Approximately 40 percent of families in West Greenville live at or below the poverty level, and the area's unemployment rate is 12 percent. Minorities, primarily African-Americans, make up 66 percent of residents. The area has been plagued by rising crime rates, dilapidated and limited affordable housing, and antiquated infrastructure. The neighborhood has a disproportionate number of brownfields—mostly large, abandoned or underutilized industrial facilities. Gas stations, dry cleaning facilities, railroad properties, and other commercial and industrial sites line the corridor. Perceived or known environmental contamination of these properties has impeded the area's development.

To address contaminated areas of the West Greenville neighborhood, the city combined resources from multiple EPA Programs, using one grant to fund administrative costs while another enabled environmental assessments. The resulting findings have already allowed two major redevelopment projects to proceed—offering critical new housing and care for the area's homeless, providing a new community center with a wealth of new activities for West Greenville residents, creating new jobs, and revitalizing the local economy.

In partnership with Greenville County and Clemson University, the City of Greenville developed a comprehensive revitalization plan for West Greenville, identifying the intersection of Birnie and South Hudson

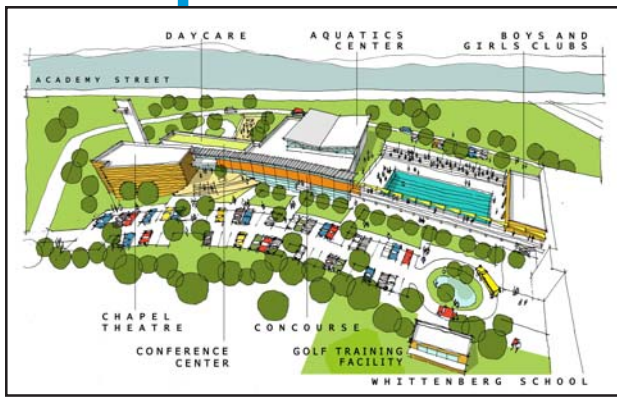


*Reedy Place, a facility for the homeless in Greenville, SC, opened in October 2006.*

## JUST THE FACTS:

- Environmental concerns were inhibiting critical redevelopment plans for five properties located in the West Greenville, SC Neighborhood.
- The City of Greenville, SC coordinated resources from multiple EPA cleanup and land revitalization initiatives to address the environmental concerns plaguing the West Greenville Neighborhood properties.
- No Further Action (NFA) letters were issued to West Greenville property owners by The South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control.
- To date, two major redevelopment projects have proceeded on former USTField sites:
  - **Reedy Place**, a \$1.3 million dollar HOME for the chronically homeless, constructed in the West Greenville Neighborhood, opened its doors in October 2006.
  - A \$67 million **Ray and Joan Kroc Community Center** is being constructed to serve the residents of the West Greenville Neighborhood.

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Artist's rendering of the future site of the Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Community Center.

Streets as having particular redevelopment potential. Research indicated that the plan's targeted area had been host to gas stations, auto service, and other facilities that stored petroleum as early as 1913, though the area's last gas station closed in the 1980s.

To start addressing the environmental and economic concerns identified in the West Greenville neighborhood, the city conducted multiple environmental assessments on brownfields properties with funding from a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Assessment grant awarded in 2000. To remedy the environmental concerns caused by the area's underground petroleum storage tanks, EPA awarded the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control \$100,000 under the Agency's USTfields Program in July 2002. The state used a portion of a \$808,999 EPA Brownfields

Section 128(a) State and Tribal grant awarded to South Carolina in 2003 to handle the associated administrative and grant management expenses, allowing 100 percent of USTfields funding to be used for assessment costs. This coordinating of resources, and the state's efficiency in securing and working with assessment contractors, ultimately allowed the USTfields grant to assess twice the number of properties originally estimated—including a number of additional UST sites in West Greenville.

On West Greenville's targeted sites, ground-penetrating radar assessments and other environmental investigations were completed in 2004 and 2005. Though one property required the removal of more than 340 gallons of petroleum waste, the majority of targeted properties required no cleanup—resulting in No Further Action Letters issued by the state to the property owners.

The removal of contamination uncertainties on these properties, and assurances of freedom from liability, made all the difference. One of these sites was purchased by the Upstate Homeless Coalition, which subsequently constructed "Reedy Place," a \$1.3 million facility for the homeless that leveraged approximately 70 jobs through construction and redevelopment. The project involved a collaboration among the Upstate Homeless Coalition of SC, the SC Department of Mental Health, the Greenville Mental Health Center, the Phoenix Center (a locally-based substance abuse clinic), community churches, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, state housing programs, and the City of Greenville. Reedy Place opened its doors in October 2006, providing the first safe haven for the chronically homeless not only in Greenville, but in all of South Carolina.

The vast majority of those who seek refuge at Reedy Place are mentally ill. As described by Mike Chesser, Director of the Upstate Homeless Coalition, "[Reedy Place] is a housing-first model; once people are stabilized in housing they are more open and able to work on stabilizing their mental illness and the problems associated with that illness." The facility is within walking distance of Greenville Mental Health Center, allowing residents to take advantage of those services as well. "Officials from other South Carolina cities have inquired about our experience, the design of the building and our program," Chesser added, "and are now exploring the possibility of replicating the program in their cities."



A vacant service station building in Greenville, SC, future site of the Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Community Center.

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Another of the USTfields grant-assessed properties was purchased by the Salvation Army of Greenville for construction of the new, \$67 million Ray and Joan Kroc Community Center. Located in multiple cities, Kroc Community Centers are known for their community accessibility, outreach to disadvantaged residents and their families, and their high-quality facilities and programs including education, fitness, arts and worship. Greenville's 90,000-square-foot Kroc Community Center has helped to leverage more than 200 jobs and strengthened the economical and social viability of the West Greenville neighborhood and surrounding communities. The Center offers traditional Salvation Army resources as well as meeting other community needs, including a state-of-the-art golf-training academy for use by the local Boys and Girls' Club; a 16-court tennis complex with lighted facilities and a stadium-style center court; and an aquatics center that provides water safety, health and fitness, medical rehabilitation, and special-needs programs. The Center uses income generated from memberships and court fees to offset program costs and promote the Center's availability to disadvantaged areas of the city. According to G. Frances Hines, Director of Development for The Salvation Army in Greenville, "The center's design and programs were determined by the residents for the residents and will serve current and future residents for years to come."

A new elementary school, A. J. Wittenberg, is being constructed adjacent to the Kroc Community Center, as part of a mutually-beneficial arrangement between the Center and the school. Center members will have access to state-of-the-art computer labs at the school, while students will have full access to the Center. A groundbreaking ceremony for the Center was held in November 2006, and all of the facility's additional amenities will be completed in 2010.

The transformation of contaminated properties in West Greenville, and the economic resurgence of surrounding areas, exemplifies the goals of EPA's Land Revitalization Initiative. The West Greenville properties targeted through USTFields and Brownfields 128(a) funding not only have had their contamination issues removed, but are being reused at tremendous benefit to local residents—providing critical housing and care, and a wealth of recreational and educational opportunities. Residents and community leaders can attest to the resulting increase in community pride, and a newfound hopefulness that future generations will be able to enjoy West Greenville's burgeoning resources.

As in Greenville, EPA programs dedicated to land revitalization are also being used to assess and clean up contaminated properties across the nation. By removing perceived or real barriers to redevelopment, communities just like West Greenville are becoming inviting, supportive and safe places for residents to live and raise their children. For more information on EPA's Brownfields Program visit: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>. For more information on other EPA land revitalization programs visit: <http://www.epa.gov/landrevitalization/index.htm>.

## **CONTACTS:**

For more information contact  
U.S. EPA REGION 4  
(404) 562-9900

Visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>