



# From the Ashes, New Homes Rise in Fort Wayne Neighborhood



## FORTWAYNE, IN

**W**ith the help of a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Assessment Pilot grant, a former oil pump manufacturing and warehouse site in Fort Wayne, Indiana, has been assessed, more than \$1.5 million in funding has been leveraged from the city and state for cleanup and restoration of the site, and plans are moving forward for a 10-home residential development called Phoenix Place and a 20-home development on an adjacent parcel.

The City of Fort Wayne was awarded EPA's Brownfields Assessment Pilot grant in August 1998, which provided funding for the hiring of the city's Brownfields Redevelopment Manager. The Pilot also funded \$27,500 worth of environmental assessments of the Bowser Pump site—a 12.5-acre property divided into three parcels within one of the most economically distressed areas in the state. As a result of the Pilot's assessments, approximately 3,200 cubic yards of contaminated soil were excavated, removed from one of the parcels, and disposed of. This parcel, Parcel B, was a storage site for 600,000 tires that had caught fire and burned for three days in 1997, forcing the evacuation of more than 1,000 neighborhood residents and the adjacent Fort Wayne Police Department. The city spent nearly \$350,000 to demolish the remaining charred and unsafe buildings, and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) removed the remaining tires from the site. Parcel B has undergone multiple environmental assessments with the assistance of the EPA Brownfields Pilot, and has since been cleared for residential use by IDEM's Brownfields Program. A \$300,000 grant from the Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Economic Development Initiative (EDI) will finance installation of a new public infrastructure that will support construction of 20 new homes on the site.

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## JUST THE FACTS:

- The Brownfields Pilot funded \$27,500 worth of environmental assessments of the Bowser Pump site—a 12.5-acre property within one of the most economically distressed areas in the state.
- The city spent nearly \$350,000 to demolish the site's charred and unsafe buildings, and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management removed tires from a tire storage site.
- A \$300,000 grant from HUD's Economic Development Initiative (EDI) will finance installation of a new public infrastructure that will support construction of 20 new homes on the site.

*Additional projects proposed for the area include a \$5 million, 40,000-square-foot neighborhood commercial retail center; a neighborhood learning center; and a "Head Start" school—all serviced by a new public transportation hub. Total investment is estimated at more than \$10 million.*

In addition to EPA Brownfields Pilot and EDI funding, the city received a State of Indiana \$500,000 low-interest loan to be used toward brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. In the spring and summer of 1999, approximately \$300,000 of that loan was used to complete the demolition of Bowser Pump site subsurface structures as well as the removal and disposal of 16 underground storage tanks (USTs) containing non-hazardous solvents, fuel oil, and diesel fuel. Another \$200,000 in city funding was spent on site preparation, including installation of utilities, drainage, sewers, roads, curbs, sidewalks, lights, and trees for the expansion of Fisher Street, which runs in front of the site. This infrastructure project, completed in December 1999, is enabling development of a 2.25-acre portion of the Bowser Pump property (Parcel C) into Phoenix Place, a new 10-unit residential development. The city will pay back the \$500,000 loan using a county economic development income tax that captures six-tenths of one percent on income from people who live or work in the county.

The development contract for Phoenix Place has been awarded to the Greater Progressive Housing Community Development Corporation (CDC), which represents 7,500 residents in the area. The city gave the land to the CDC, which will sell the 1,700- to 2,300-square-foot houses at a cost of \$90,000 to \$125,000. Owners will also receive a five-year residential property tax abatement on their new homes. The first model home was completed in early 2000, and three additional homes are nearly complete.

Redevelopment progress on the Bowser site has spurred other neighborhood improvement projects. In the summer of 2000, a nearby city park received \$50,000 from the state for improvements to its basketball courts, playground equipment, landscaping, and handicap accessibility.

Additional projects proposed within the nearby Hanna Creighton neighborhood include a \$5 million, 40,000-square-foot neighborhood commercial retail center located three blocks from the Bowser site and a neighborhood learning center that includes a new branch library, Urban League office and community center, and a "Head Start" school—all serviced by a new public transportation hub. Total investment in this project is estimated at more than \$10 million.

## **CONTACTS:**

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



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