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Superfund Reuse: Planning for the Future

SUPERFUND REDEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Overview of Superfund Redevelopment

What is the Superfund Redevelopment Initiative (SRI)?

EPA has set a national goal of returning formerly contaminated lands to long-term sustainable and productive reuse. In 1999, EPA launched the Superfund Redevelopment Initiative. SRI is a nationally coordinated program to offer guidance, tools and services to help communities overcome obstacles to reuse at Superfund sites. Since its inception, SRI has helped communities reclaim thousands of acres of formerly contaminated land for commercial, industrial, residential, recreational and ecological uses. Today, there are more than 500 Superfund sites in new and continued use.

Why plan for Superfund reuse?

Planning for reuse at Superfund sites provides multiple benefits:

- Community revitalization including jobs, retail amenities and housing;
- Recreation and open space including sports fields, parks, habitat and trails;
- Site stewardship including long-term remedy protectiveness; and
- Reduction in stigma associated with a formerly contaminated site.

How does reuse planning fit with the cleanup process?

Pre-remedy

Planning for the future use of a site during the remedy process can ensure the remedy selected will support the desired future use. A reasonable anticipated future land use can inform the base line risk assessment, the remedy selection and remedy design, as well as the phasing of clean up.

Post-remedy

Once cleanup is complete at a Superfund Site, either recently, or many years ago, reuse planning can ensure that the desired new use for the site is consistent with the cleanup remedy, particularly if remedy components remain in place at the site. Reuse planning at this phase can also assist in removing unnecessary barriers to reuse.

How can a community obtain free reuse planning services?

Each year, SRI sets aside a limited number of resources to provide in-kind reuse planning services through the assistance of a national contractor with expertise in the reuse of contaminated sites. In addition, EPA regions may also be able to provide resources. The program does not provide funding for environmental assessment, cleanup or redevelopment. Contact your local Region's Reuse Coordinator for more information.



What are Regional Seeds?

Regional seeds are resources provided by the Superfund Redevelopment Initiative (SRI) to communities at the request of EPA Region staff.

Regional seeds provide an important catalyst for communities to begin the process of returning a Superfund site to productive reuse.

Many sites that have reuse potential are vacant and abandoned due to a lack of knowledge about the remedy components, the range of potential safe future uses and the key steps and players needed to transform a site into reuse.

The seed concept provides an initial investment to bring the right stakeholders to the table, clarify remedy constraints, and outline suitable reuse options for the local community to pursue.

Once the reuse planning process gains momentum, communities can leverage the initial regional seed investment with local resources to continue the process of transforming the Superfund site into productive reuse.

For more information on the SRI program see the website at:

www.epa.gov/superfund/programs/recycle

Reuse Planning Services

The Situation Assessment

Purpose: Gather preliminary information to determine initial site reuse potential and scope further reuse planning assistance if deemed valuable.

Activities: Typically includes visiting the site and community; convening the key players including EPA, the State, tribes, the local government, the site owner and community representatives; stakeholder interviews to determine reuse goals and considerations; and preliminary review of site documents and planning documents.

Outcome: A situation assessment report that outlines preliminary reuse considerations and recommendations for additional reuse planning activities.

A Reuse Assessment

Purpose: Determine a range of suitable potential future uses for the site to inform the clean up process and local planning efforts.

Activities: Typically includes refining future use goals in discussion with the site owner, local government and community; conducting an analysis of the site and surrounding neighborhood to evaluate the suitability of potential future uses; integrating the reuse goals and site analysis into a reuse framework that outlines a range of potential suitable uses; and sharing with stakeholders for review and input.

Outcome: A final report summarizing reuse goals, the site analysis, a reuse framework, remedy considerations and recommended next steps.

A Reuse Plan

Purpose: Outline specific locations and uses for the site based on additional stakeholder discussion and analysis.

Activities: This phase may include developing several scenarios for consideration, or outlining more detailed considerations for a single scenario for stakeholder review discussion and refinement.

Outcome: A final report summarizes reuse goals, the site analysis, the reuse plan or scenarios, remedy and reuse considerations and recommended next steps.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is an integral part of each phase of the reuse planning process and can range in scope from contacting key stakeholders, forming and facilitating an advisory committee or hosting a public open house to gather stakeholder input.

Implementation Tools

EPA offers wide range of additional tools to help communities return sites to productive use. These tools include: videos, case studies, technical reports, comfort letters, and environmental status reports called Ready for Reuse Determinations.



Benefits of Reuse Planning

Reuse planning can provide multiple benefits including:

- Improve relations among stakeholders by identifying common goals, clarifying responsibilities and establishing productive partnerships;
- Ensure the protectiveness of the site by evaluating the compatibility of the desired future use with the remedy;
- Foster long-term stewardship of the site by resolving ownership and maintenance responsibilities, and building an invested community;
- Reduce site stigma by informing community members of the site's status and potential and removing potential barriers to reuse;
- Potentially reduce costs by tailoring remedy design and maintenance to fit long-term stewardship goals; and
- Provide jobs, recreational facilities, retail or other community amenities.

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