

Public Health Brownfield Indicators research project (Updated November, 2013)

Project Partners: Minnesota Brownfields, Minnesota Department of Health, Kansas State University

Project Timeframe: 2013-15

Project Objectives: *To improve understanding of the connection between public health indicators and brownfield reuse/redevelopment. The project will help identify relevant data gaps in this field, and should help demonstrate the potential significance and extent of benefits to public health resulting from brownfield cleanup and redevelopment.*

Project Activities

1. Identify, collect and summary existing national background research on HIs and brownfields to provide contextual background.
2. Identify and describe how existing indicators are used to track Health Impacts and change in Health Impacts associated with an activity or change (i.e., a policy decision, redevelopment, etc)
3. Catalogue the indicators that have been used for various brownfield-related Health Impact Assessments elsewhere in the U.S.
4. From findings in #3, create an indicator list of the most useful brownfield-related HIs that may be applicable in a large percentage of situations.
5. Write a report including findings from Steps 1-4. See Report Abstract below.
6. MDH pilots the draft Indicator list and draft report to Duluth Western Area Point HIA in 2014.
7. Refine and revise draft indicator list and report based on findings from Duluth HIA.
8. Add revised indicator list to MDH website.
9. Joint MDH-MB educational event to release revised indicator list and report.

Minnesota Brownfields Health Indicator Project - Abstract

Brownfields are properties in which the use, reuse or redevelopment is complicated by the presence (real or perceived) of contamination by hazardous substances. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the process of screening, scoping, assessment, recommendations, reporting, and monitoring/evaluation to “determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population,” while also proposing managing and monitoring techniques of the effects (National Research Council). As brownfields often raise issues of community health, the planning and remediation should involve taking into account the specific health-related issues they present. Both the HIA and brownfield redevelopment processes aim to improve or protect the health of surrounding communities, seek community involvement, and involve several stakeholders in the private and public sector. Due to the connection between public health and brownfield redevelopment, the goal of this project was to identify health indicators that are most relevant to brownfield redevelopment in Minnesota in order to create a brownfield tool for sites across the state, as well as a more general blueprint for facilitating future processes. This study contains a review of current brownfield HIAs, non-brownfield HIAs, and other scholarly articles relating to the subject. Indicators within HIAs as they pertain to brownfields were categorized into health indicator groups and built environment groups to be viewed from either a public health or planning perspective. Health and the built environment are very much intertwined, and while brownfields present many health

risks and community obstacles, they also provide opportunity to impact public health in a positive way through effective land use planning.

Possible activities following the project

- Explore potential for findings to support collection of follow-up data (i.e. Central Corridor post-construction).