

Brownfield Projects Moving Forward

After receiving their EPA Brownfields Grant, the City developed a plan of action and hired an environmental consultant to help them carry out the goals of their plan. The overarching goal is to locate available properties within the city that qualify under grant requirements as Brownfields, and perform the necessary environmental investigations needed to prepare them for future redevelopment. A companion goal is to focus on downtown sites outside the flood zone that can be turned into beneficial community assets.

Working closely with the City Administrator, the consultant presented a list of suitable sites to the Public Works Committee at a public meeting held in January 2013. At that meeting, the Committee went through a process to choose which sites they wanted to see investigated, cleaned up (if required), and eventually redeveloped. Two of those sites are now being assessed and will likely be redeveloped in the near future.

The two sites are described below.

Vernonia's EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant

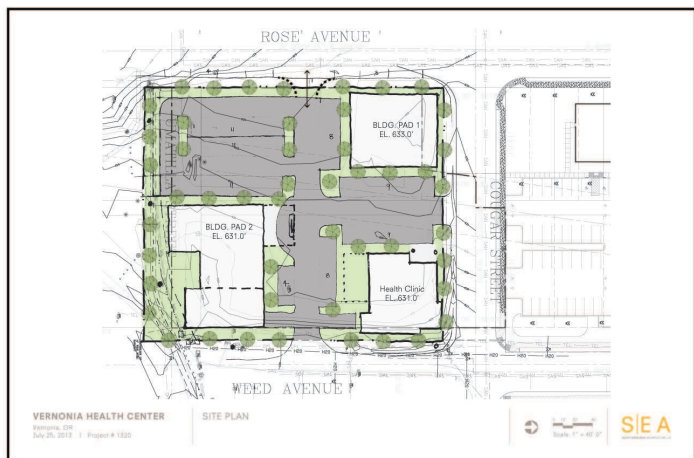
In May 2012, the City of Vernonia received a grant from the EPA to assess Brownfield sites within the city.

Brownfields are sites that are not desirable for purchase and redevelopment due to real or perceived environmental contamination. EPA grants are given so that these sites' environmental conditions can be determined, with the goal of removing uncertainty about contamination, making the properties more attractive for redevelopment. Since the program began, the EPA has helped put 52,000 Brownfields back into productive use.



Rose Avenue Project

Planned Development Will Bring New Life to Downtown Blocks



Architect's drawing of the proposed project

The Rose Avenue Project is the name given to the proposed development for the vacant block south of the Western Oregon Electric Cooperative. Plans call for a community health center, the location of additional critical social service organizations and a small retail/commercial building. Historically, the block was the location of a bulk fuel facility and a truck repair shop. A rail line used to run north-south through the site. The area south of the vacant block along the Nehalem River that contains the Banks-Vernonia Trail will also be part of the project. That area will be improved and remain as public green space.

Before the site can be redeveloped, the city's consultant needs to perform several investigations to make sure no contamination still exists. In fact, Phase I Environmental Site Assess-

ments (ESAs) have already been done on the properties within the Project area. Phase I ESAs are investigations into the history of a property to determine if historical activities at the sites may have left behind contamination. If contamination is suspected, a Phase II investigation takes place with samples of soil and groundwater collected to see if contamination is present.

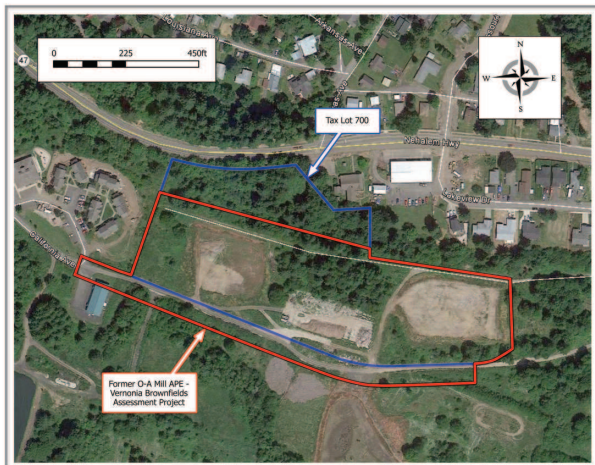
The southeast corner of the vacant block, where the bulk fuel terminal was located, has already received a clean bill of health, called a No Further Action (NFA) Determination, from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). A Phase II investigation is planned for the remainder of the block. The area south of the vacant block appears to be in good shape with no contamination suspected.

California Avenue Project at the Former Oregon-American Mill Site

Light Industrial Business Park Planned

A light industrial park is planned for the property on the unimproved section of California Avenue that contains the foundation of the mill's former planing mill. A Phase I ESA has already been conducted that indicated the need for a Phase II. The Phase II investigation will likely take place later this fall.

The site is ultimately being enrolled in the Oregon Industrial Land Certification Program whose goal is creating an inventory of highly marketable, project-ready industrial sites throughout the state. Part of that enrollment process is assuring that the site is environmentally unimpaired. Enrollment in the program will make the site eligible for additional funding through other programs. Infrastructure improvements planned for the site include paving California Avenue from Bridge Street to the site. The planning of these improvements is partly being funded by the Infrastructure Financing Authority, a state program that assists communities in building infrastructure capacity that address public safety and helps attract, retain and expand businesses. The Oregon Department of Transportation will then assist in building the new road.



Aerial view of the project site

Additional Activities under the Brownfields Grant

Complying with Grant Requirements: Historic Preservation and Endangered Species



Collecting environmental samples with a drill rig

Because the investigations of these projects are funded under a Brownfields Grant from the federal government, the work is subject to additional requirements. If historic properties or threatened and endangered species may be impacted by the assessment of a site, the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act or the Endangered Species Act (ESA) may apply, respectively. In order to comply with these requirements, the City and its consultant have filed a report with the EPA that determined no adverse effects under the ESA. However, because of the historic nature of the mill site and the historic presence of Native Americans in the Vernonia area, care must be taken so that any cultural artifacts or historic resources are not adversely affected. An archeologist has been retained by the consultant to oversee ground-disturbing activities like that pictured (left) who will then follow up with a determination of potential effects to any significant historic resources that may be encountered.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE PROJECTS:

Contact Bill Haack, City Administrator
(503) 429-5291 or bill@vernonia-or.gov



Art Exhibit Features Northwest Landscapes

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these trips were made in 2005, 2010 and 2011. Another journey occurred this summer, from Port Townsend to Ketchikan, Prince of Wales Island, Baranoff Island and Sitka, Alaska.

Kathryn Cotnoir and Erik Sandgren are residents of Aberdeen WA. Sandgren is a professor of art at Greys Harbor College, and a well-known painter, printmaker, muralist and workshop leader in Oregon and Washington. Both artists have work at the Portland Rental Sales Gallery and have shown in galleries throughout the northwest.



Above art by Kathryn Cotnoir.

Vadnais, a resident of Deer Island, has most recently shown her work at the University of Portland, in the **Native American Influences: Northwest** exhibit at the Buckley Center Gallery. She has also shown in many juried and invitational exhibits, including a two person show at the Cannon Beach Gallery.



Above art by Dee Vadnais.

Good News is Shared at the Grade School

The Nehalem Valley Bible Church is starting their 8th year providing an after school program called the "Good News Club". They meet right after school on Mondays until 4:15 p.m., in room 138.

The program is geared for kindergarten to fifth graders. Every child in this age group is welcome. The program's goal is to teach basic Christian truths and Bible stories and to encourage children to choose to be good citizens. The leaders of the program are members of the Nehalem Valley Bible Church and

have taken additional training through Child Evangelism Fellowship, to facilitate this program. The student's time will be spent hearing a story, learning a Bible verse that goes along with the story, as well as some singing.

There is a permission form that needs to be filled out for any k-5th grade child who would like to attend. Permission forms were sent out the week of October 14-18th, or permission forms are available on Mondays at the club. If you have additional questions you can contact Diana Taylor at 503-429-0774.

Vernonia's Voice is published on the 1st and 3rd Thursday. Our next issue will be Nov. 21st.