

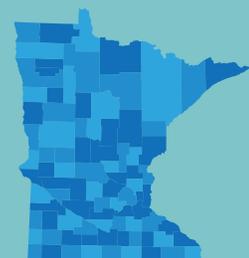
March 2023

MPCA Brownfield Program 2022 Annual Report

Special features: Community-wide assessment grant for states and tribes (104k grant), new brownfield section, success story interactive StoryMap, EQUIS update



m MINNESOTA POLLUTION
CONTROL AGENCY



Introduction

A “brownfield” is any property that is abandoned or under-used due to the known or likely presence of contamination. Brownfields are located in cities and towns all across Minnesota. Whether it’s a deserted railroad depot, a closed factory, a former drycleaner, or an abandoned gas station, brownfields offer both a challenge and an opportunity for local communities and developers. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s (MPCA) Brownfield Program was created to help overcome the environmental and legal barriers that prevent the redevelopment of these properties. To learn more about the importance of cleaning up contaminated properties for reuse, see Minnesota Brownfield’s [Benefits of Cleanup and Redevelopment](#) webpage.

The MPCA Brownfield Program is a fee-for-service program that provides technical assistance and various liability assurance letters to promote the investigation, cleanup, and redevelopment of property that is contaminated with petroleum and/or hazardous substances. The assurance letters provide liability protection for property developers and environmental closure for identified contamination. Customers include property owners, prospective purchasers, developers, development agencies, lending institutions, non-profit organizations, and local units of government.

The MPCA Brownfield Program consists of two integrated programs, the Petroleum Brownfield Program, which handles petroleum contamination under the Petroleum Tank Release Cleanup Act (Minn. Stat. § 115C), and the Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup (VIC) Program, which handles hazardous substance contamination under Minnesota’s Environmental Response and Liability Act (Minn. Stat. § 115B).

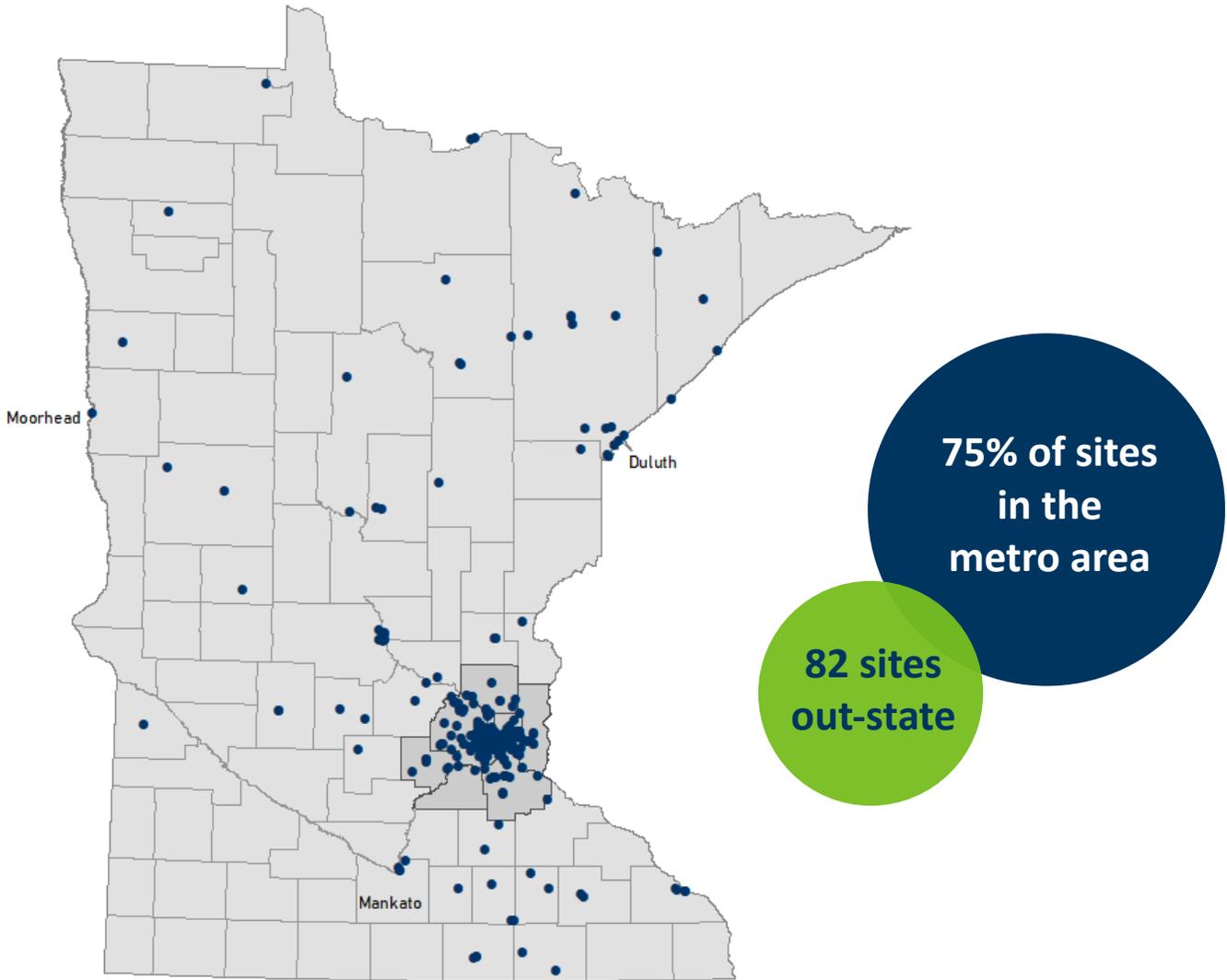
Right - The new Brook Avenue Co-op and Maya Commons building in Minneapolis (right photo). The former Bunge grain elevator operated until 2003 and sat vacant for years afterwards (left photo). A collaboration between two nonprofits transformed the blighted property into affordable and student housing. The grain elevator headhouse tower was preserved and renovated into a shared community space, and is now the world’s largest Peace Pole. Photos provided by Project for Pride in Living and Riverton Community Housing.



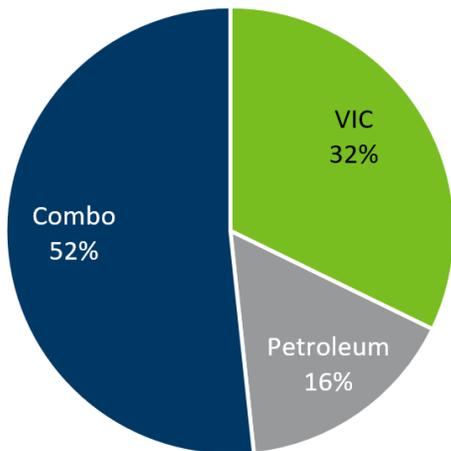
MPCA MISSION

*Protect and improve
the environment
and enhance
human health.*

2022 New brownfield applications statewide

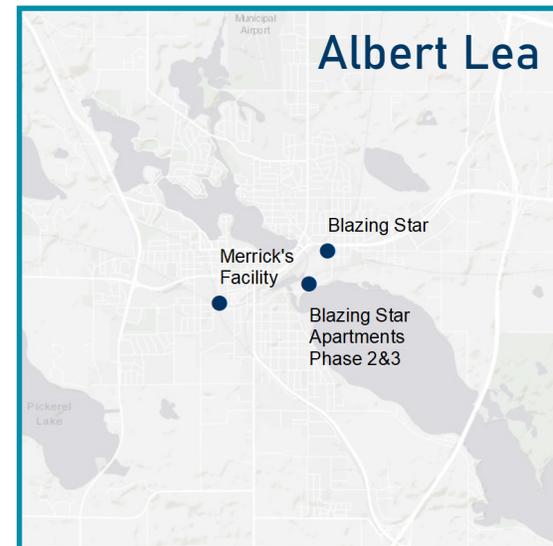
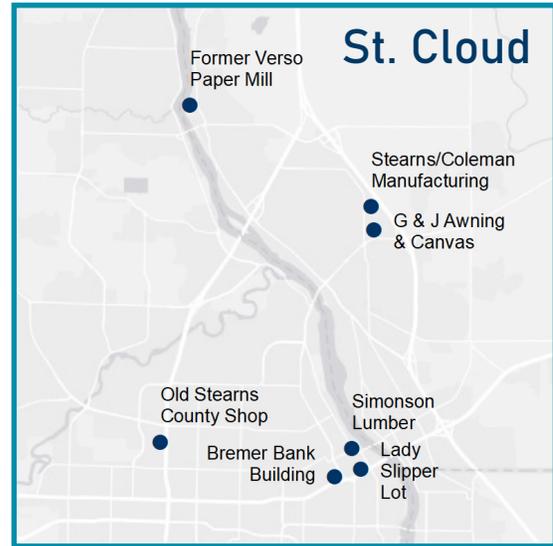


2022 New brownfield applications by subprogram

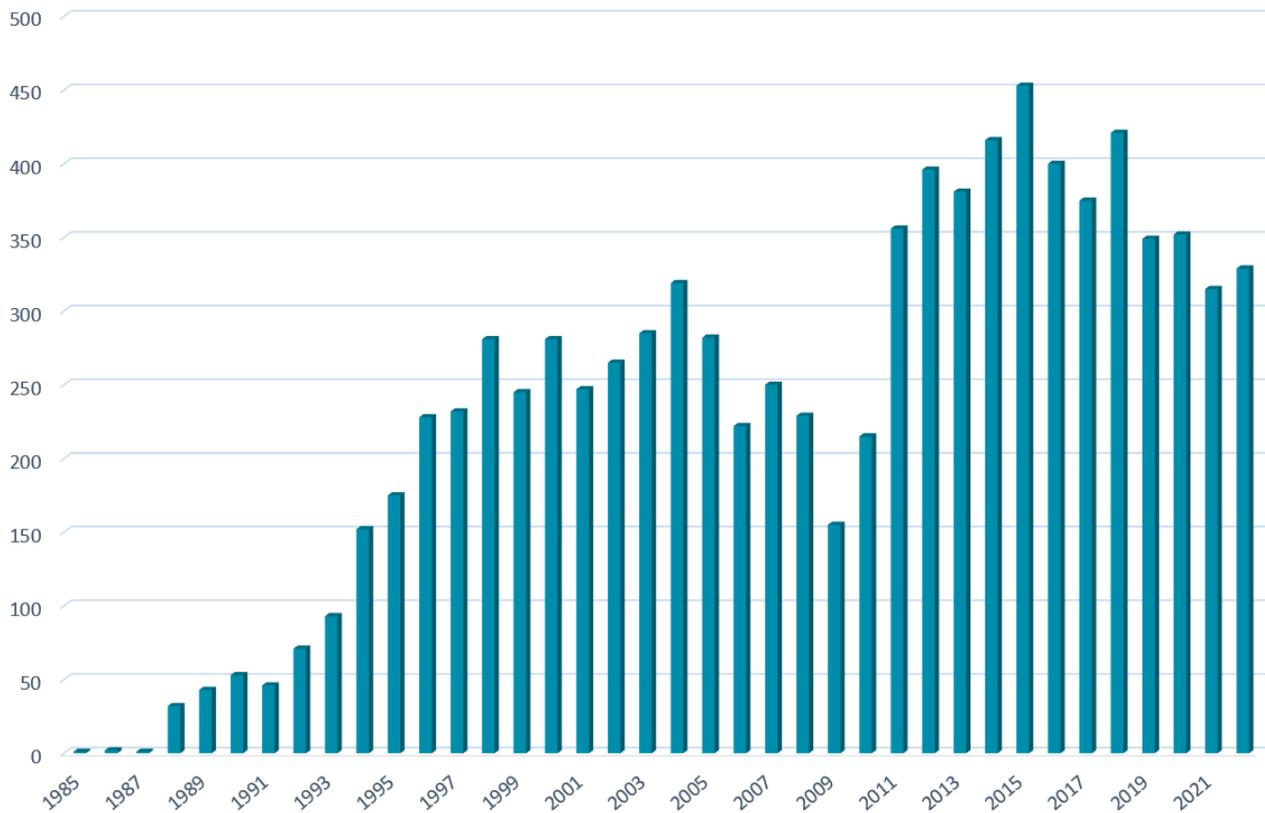


VIC only	106
Petroleum only	53
Combo	170
Total	329

2022 Brownfield applications in other urban areas

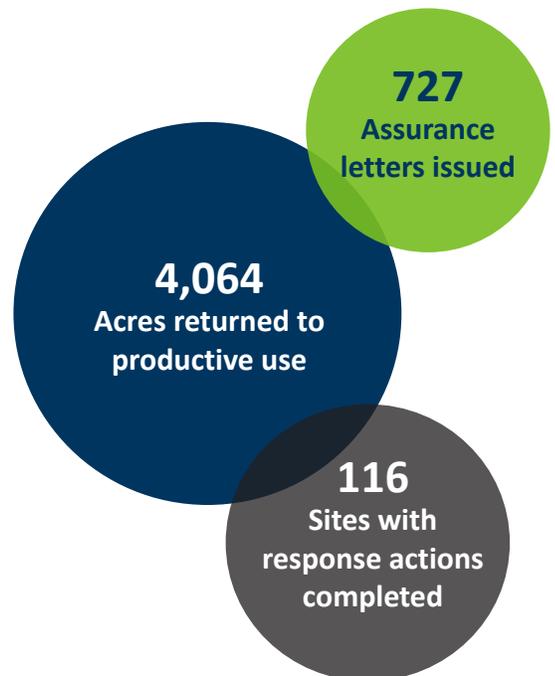


Annual brownfield site applications



Kaposia Landing in Dakota County encompasses 87 acres nestled along the Mississippi River and was formerly a construction/demolition landfill. The land was redeveloped in phases, excavating and disposing of impacted soil and debris to create a clean buffer for recreational use of the site. The community park features river overlooks, five baseball diamonds, a concession building, picnic shelters, a play area, an off-leash dog park, and almost two miles of paved trails.

Metrics for 2022



Cost Recovery

As per statute, parties requesting assistance from the MPCA's Brownfield Program are required to pay the agency for the cost of providing assistance. The current rate is \$150/hour. Brownfield Program staff track the time they spend doing site work, including the time to review reports and correspondence, provide guidance and technical assistance, and issue requested assurance letters.

As shown in the table below, the Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup (VIC) Program invoiced \$737,477 in 2022, and the Petroleum Brownfields Program (PBP) invoiced \$434,513. The average cost recovery rate for the Brownfield Program for the previous four calendar years (2018 through 2021) is 99.1%. The cost recovery rate is always temporarily low for the current reporting year (2022), as payments are still being received for invoices sent late in the reporting period. As additional payments are received for site work completed in 2022, the collection rate will increase to be consistent with that of previous years.

	VIC			PBP		
Year	Total Billed	Amount Paid	Collection rate	Total Billed	Amount Paid	Collection rate
2018	\$724,064	\$707,947	97.8%	\$415,563	\$409,688	98.6%
2019	\$669,656	\$657,900	98.2%	\$377,344	\$375,800	99.6%
2020	\$702,250	\$699,224	99.6%	\$421,250	\$421,143	100.0%
2021	\$607,413	\$604,636	99.5%	\$334,182	\$332,679	99.6%
2022	\$737,477	\$650,199	88.2%	\$434,513	\$386,414	88.9%

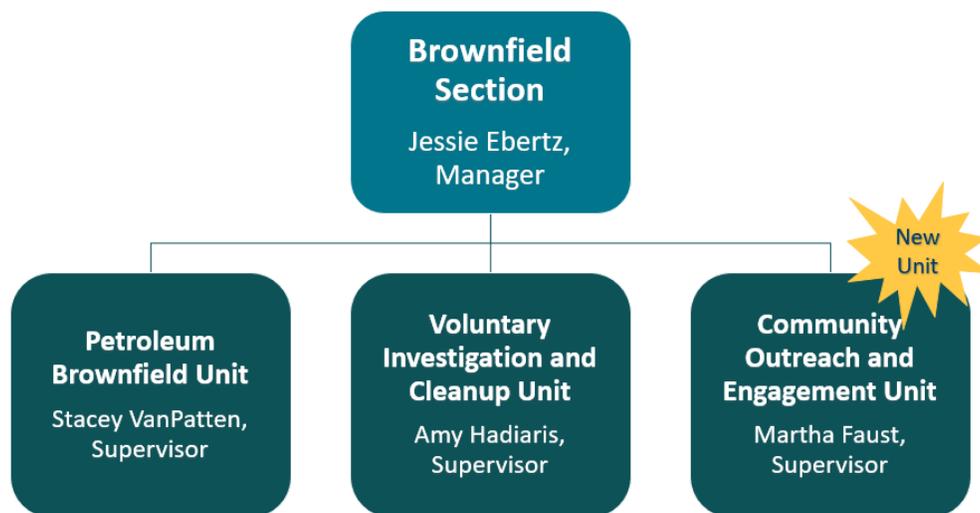
Coming in 2023 - EQUIS for Brownfields

Federal brownfields money made available by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (aka Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) is providing a timely boost to the Brownfield Program's plans for electronic submittal of environmental data. Several other programs at the MPCA have been using the Environmental Quality Information System (EQUIS) for quite some time, and the Brownfield Program is pleased to join in this effort, with the goal of making environmental data more available to the Brownfield community in a self-service format.

The Brownfield Section will be hiring two new staff to help with our electronic data collection efforts. We will be coordinating trainings on how to properly capture data and providing guidance on how to submit Electronic Data Deliverables (EDDs) for sites enrolled in the MPCA's Brownfield Program. Look for more information later this year as our transition to EQUIS gains traction.

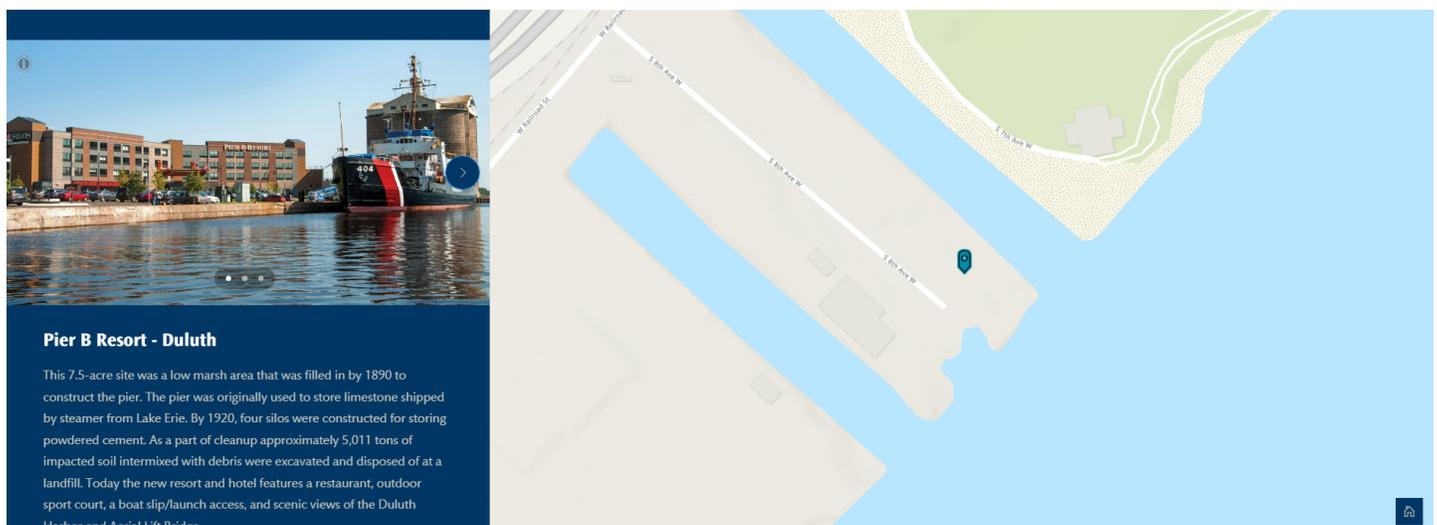
New in 2022 – the MPCA Brownfield Section!

The MPCA’s Brownfield work previously occurred under the umbrella of the Superfund and Redevelopment Section (Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup Program) and Petroleum Remediation Section (Petroleum Brownfield Program). While this framework initially worked well, our Brownfields work has grown significantly through the years, and the old structure no longer met our needs. In September of 2022, the MPCA’s VIC and PB Programs moved into a brand-new Brownfield Section! This change makes it easier for our two Brownfield Programs to share resources and work together to meet a growing demand for services. The new Brownfield Section will also include a new unit dedicated to community outreach and engagement, as shown below, with a special focus on expanding our outreach to neighborhood groups, local units of government, and underserved communities in areas of concern for environmental justice.



New Interactive StoryMap of Brownfield Success Stories

This interactive StoryMap on our [Brownfield redevelopment](#) webpage allows users to view a snapshot of many of the successful brownfield redevelopment sites across Minnesota. Users can click on either a site photo or a location on the map to see a short summary of each project. The StoryMap will continue to be updated with new sites throughout the year.



MPCA funding for brownfield projects

Community-wide Assessment Grant for States and Tribes (104k Grant)

The MPCA's Brownfield Program applied for competitive grant funds made possible by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and was awarded a \$2M Community-Wide Assessment Grant by the EPA in October 2022. The grant funds will be used at brownfield sites in areas of concern for environmental justice, for projects that have community involvement or support. The grant has a performance period of up to five years.

104k grant projects that received funding in 2022 are summarized in the table below.

Project name	Project ID	Location	Redevelopment
Bayfront Lot D	BF0000593	Duluth	Mixed commercial/residential
Bios Forte	BF0002410	Nett Lake	Unknown
Buffalo Lake Advanced Biofuels (BLAB)	BF0002355	Buffalo Lake	To be determined
Bush & Cypress	BF0002415	St. Paul	Affordable housing
Children's Museum Mankato	VP29970	Mankato	Museum
Clinton Place Addition	BF0001563	Duluth	Affordable housing
Former Blazing Star	BF0002134	Albert Lea	Affordable housing
Former Smith EZ Stop	BF0001462	St. Paul	Community art space
Lady Slipper Lot	BF0002375	St. Cloud	Retail/affordable housing
LERA Innovation Hub	BF0002357	Minneapolis	Urban garden facility
Lyndale Green Leaf	BF0002374	Minneapolis	Commercial/retail
Merrick's Facility	BF0002135	Albert Lea	Regional bike trail
Merrick Main St	BF0002136	Albert Lea	Regional bike trail
Prior Works	BF0002382	St. Paul	Commercial/retail
SPIN Front Ave	BF0002137	St. Paul	Affordable housing

MPCA funding for brownfield projects - continued

Targeted Brownfield Assessment Program (Section 128a Grant)

The MPCA's Targeted Brownfield Assessment (TBA) Program is funded by an annual grant from EPA, made available through federal brownfields legislation. Eligible brownfield projects must have community involvement or support. In addition, the MPCA favors applications that promote brownfield redevelopment projects located in small communities in greater Minnesota or environmental justice areas, or those that support non-profit organizations or create community greenspace. Since the program's inception in 2003, the MPCA's TBA Program has paid for environmental investigations at 78 sites, with 43 of those sites located in environmental justice areas.

TBA grant projects that received funding in 2022 are summarized in the table below.

Project name	Project ID	Location	Redevelopment
Anderson Trucking Facility	BF0001679	St. Cloud	Affordable housing
Center Mart	BF0002356	Centerville	Commercial/retail
Douglas Drive Service Center	BF0001939	Crystal	Residential
Former Blazing Star	BF0002134	Albert Lea	Affordable housing
Merrick's Facility	BF0002135	Albert Lea	Regional bike trail
Outlot A Sibley Parkway	BF0001780	Mankato	Affordable housing
SPIN Front Ave	BF0002137	St. Paul	Affordable housing



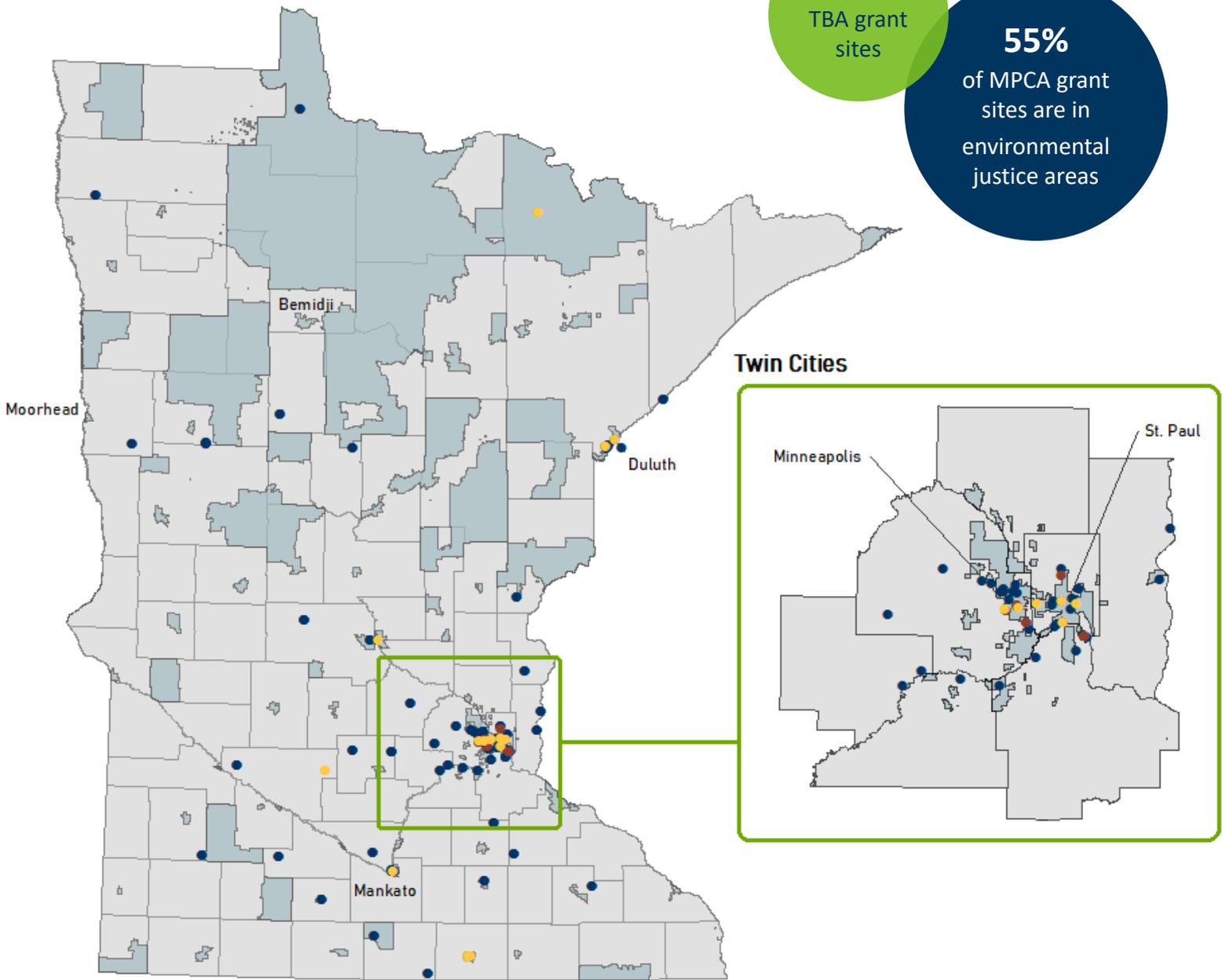
B.F. Nelson Park - TBA grant site completed cleanup circa 2011. Photo credit: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Environmental justice areas and MPCA grant sites

Environmental justice areas are defined by census tracts that meet one or more of the following criteria: at least 40% of people reported income less than 185% of the federal poverty level; 50% or more people of color; and federally recognized tribal areas. Data are from the US Census Bureau. For more information about environmental justice areas in Minnesota and interactive maps, see the MPCA's [Environmental Justice](#) webpage.

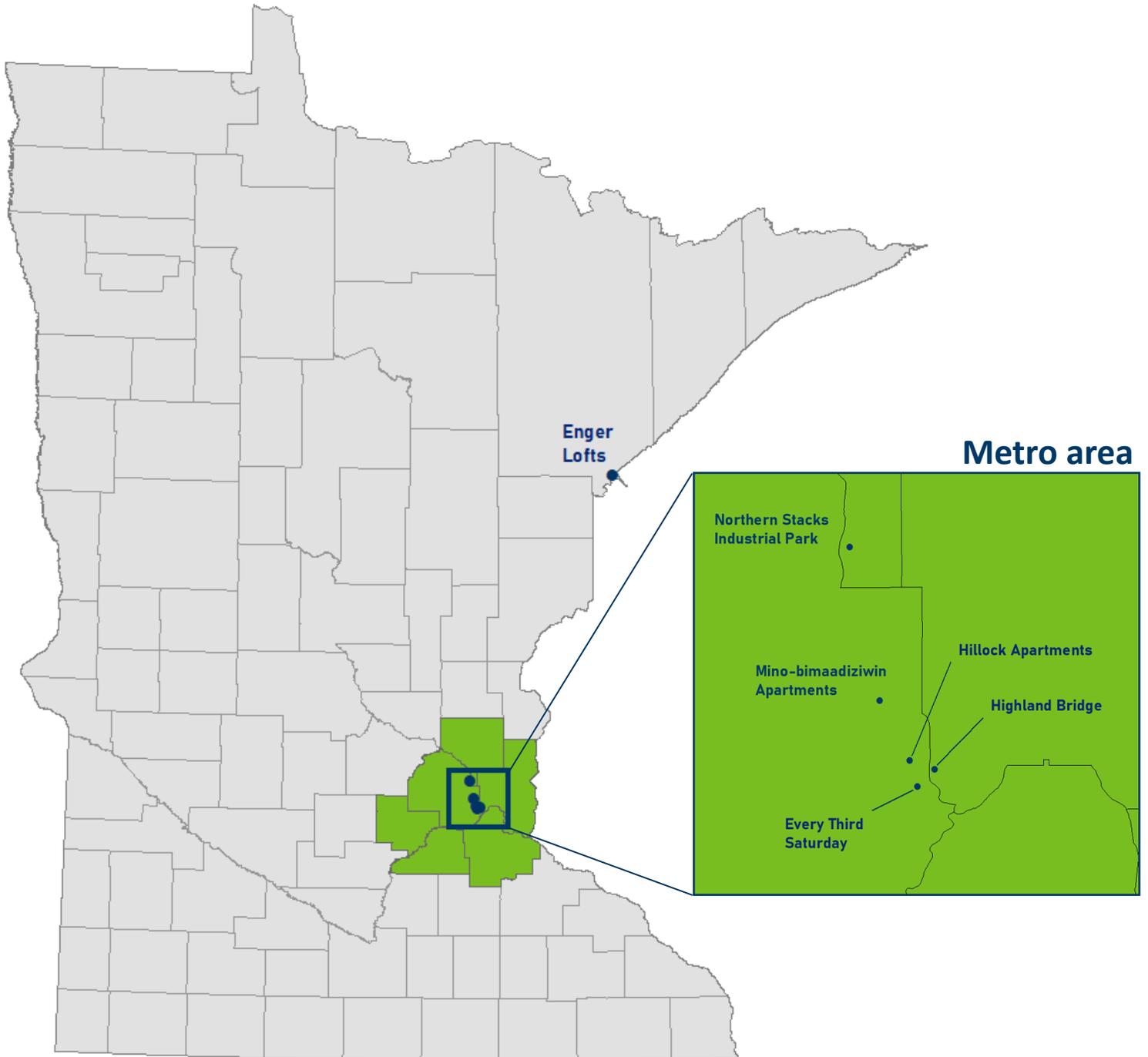
78
TBA grant sites

55%
of MPCA grant sites are in environmental justice areas



- Environmental justice areas
- Environmental Justice Brownfield Assessment grant sites (2022)
- Environmental Justice Brownfield Assessment grant sites (2018-2020)
- Targeted Brownfield Assessment grant sites (2003-2022)

2022 Case study locations



Case studies

Case study selection

The case studies were selected to show representative examples of the different types of sites that enter the Brownfield Program. Categories include greenspace, commercial, industrial, residential, and community projects. All of the selected sites completed investigations and/or redevelopment in 2022 or in recent years. For more case studies see our new interactive StoryMap on our [Brownfield redevelopment](#) webpage.

Northern Stacks Industrial Park - Fridley

Redevelopment of a partially de-listed Superfund site (most recent phase, Northern Stacks VIII)

The Naval Industrial Reserve Ordnance Plant (NIROP) is an 80-acre federal Superfund site where industrial activities, including the production of naval guns during World War II, resulted in soil and groundwater contamination. Hyde Development enrolled the site in the MPCA's Brownfield Program and completed additional investigation and cleanup to support redevelopment of the site and delisting of the soil from the state and federal Superfund lists. The new [Northern Stacks Industrial Park](#) is home to several businesses, including BAE Systems, Mygrant Glass, Business Essentials, Heraeus Medevio, Axalta Coating Systems, NPARALLEL, Forgotten Star Brewing, and more. These businesses employ over 1,100 people and generate an estimated \$600 million in annual revenue. The redevelopment represents successful reuse of a federal Superfund site, reducing blight, improving the community, and generating significant tax revenue. In 2022, the project received a National Federal Facility Excellence in Site Reuse award from the US EPA. *Photo credit: Hyde Development*



Before redevelopment



After redevelopment

Case studies

Enger Lofts Hotel & Apartments - Duluth

Renovation of a historic building

The Enger Lofts Hotel & Apartments are nestled in the Lincoln Park Craft District in Duluth. The building was constructed in the late 1800s and was occupied by retail furniture businesses from circa 1908 until at least 2018. The historic building was renovated in 2021, including the installation of a vapor mitigation system, and now features market-rate apartments, hotel rooms, a boutique, and a coffee shop.



Before renovation



After renovation

Photo credit: Enger Lofts Hotel & Apartments

Mino-bimaadiziwin Apartments – Minneapolis

Affordable housing

Mino-bimaadiziwin, which means “living the good life” in Ojibwe, provides 110 new affordable apartments for those in need of housing. The location is near many Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indian residents and other local Native Americans in the community. The development features the Red Lake Nation Embassy and Mino-bimaadiziwin Wellness Clinic, as well as a fitness center, large community room, and children’s playground. The clinic also offers day care services, supportive housing services, substance use programs, and prenatal mental health assistance.

The property was formerly used for various commercial/ industrial purposes over the years, and most recently was used by the City for temporary shelter, support facilities, and a navigation center for individuals who were living in the tent encampment along Hiawatha Avenue, many of whom were Native Americans. Approximately 7,924 tons of impacted soil intermixed with debris were removed for landfill disposal, and a vapor mitigation system was installed in the building.



Photo credit: Alan Blakely Photography

Case studies

Every Third Saturday – Minneapolis

Non-profit veteran service center

Every Third Saturday (ETS) is a non-profit founded in 2010 by Tom McKenna, a Marine Corps veteran, who started collecting and distributing supplies to veterans in a minivan. Over the years, the non-profit has expanded and recently developed a new, approximately 10,000 square-foot, veteran service center in south Minneapolis. The service center includes a coffee shop that employs veterans, a supply store where veterans can shop free of charge, a fitness center, ETS offices, and conferences/gathering rooms for veteran support programs.

The property was formerly an auto repair garage with petroleum and non-petroleum impacted soil. The garage building was demolished and approximately 803 tons of impacted soil was excavated to prepare for redevelopment of the new service center.

Photo credit: ETS



Before redevelopment



After redevelopment

Hillock Apartments - Minneapolis

Affordable senior housing

The Ecumen/Hillock apartments are an affordable 100-unit senior housing community. The apartments are the first phase of redevelopment in the Snelling Yards Development, which will also include workforce affordable housing. The community includes green spaces, outdoor amenities, and neighborhood connection to local trails. Site investigation and cleanup activities were paid in part by MPCA TBA grant funding.



Photo credit: Ecumen



Case studies

Highland Bridge – St. Paul

Former Ford Twin Cities Assembly Plant

Redevelopment of the former Ford Motor Company (Ford) Twin Cities Assembly Plant in St. Paul is well underway, a success story that reflects years of planning and partnership by the City of St. Paul, Ford, the MPCA, community stakeholders, and more recently, Ryan Companies, the chosen master developer for the site. From 1925, when the first Model T rolled off the assembly line, through the plant's conversion in the mid-1970s to an assembly plant for light duty trucks, to the plant's closure in 2011, the Ford plant was an important part of the community. Today, the 122-acre site, perched on the bluff above the Mississippi River in the Highland Park neighborhood, is taking on a new life as a vibrant mixed-use community, known as "Highland Bridge".

Soil investigation

Over 1,300 soil borings were advanced at the site between 2007 and 2018, with additional sampling during decommissioning activities as former site structures were removed. Soil contaminants identified at the site include heavy metals such as lead and arsenic, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and petroleum compounds.

Cleanup

Soil remediation began in 2013 during site decommissioning and continued through January 2019. Soil response actions included the excavation and landfill disposal of approximately 440,000 cubic yards of impacted soil. Large portions of the site were excavated down to the shallow bedrock, which occurs 6 to 12 feet below ground surface. Clean soil was imported to the site to backfill the remedial excavations. Clean concrete generated during demolition of the plant was crushed and used to backfill many tunnels, vertical shafts, and utility trenches associated with the former plant.

Redevelopment

The redevelopment includes a variety of residential housing, including custom homes along Mississippi River Boulevard, a charming rowhome district, apartment communities, and senior living. Of the 3800 new housing units in Highland Bridge, 20% will be affordable housing. The redevelopment also includes office and retail space and more than 55 acres of open space, including a civic square, a central water feature, and new city parks.



Assembly plant pre-demolition



Site during clean-up

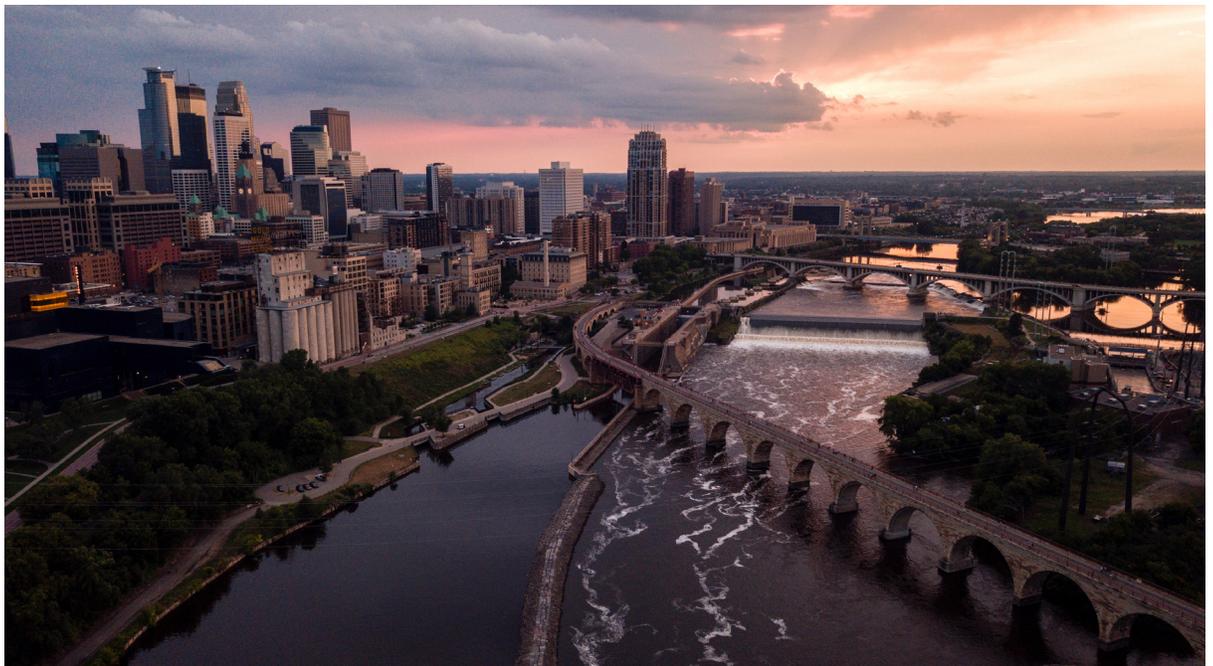


Site during redevelopment

Partnerships

A successful brownfield redevelopment project depends on many partners working together to navigate the environmental, legal, and financial challenges that arise when transforming a blighted property into a community resource. The MPCA Brownfield Program strives to develop strong partnerships with program applicants and organizations that support brownfield redevelopment work in Minnesota. Key partnerships include [Minnesota Brownfields](#), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the efficient cleanup and reuse of contaminated land through education and research. MPCA staff are frequent speakers at Minnesota Brownfield forums, where topics are often chosen to coincide with current MPCA initiatives. Minnesota Brownfields also serves as an effective and efficient way for the MPCA's Brownfield Program to seek feedback when developing new guidance on topics of importance to Minnesota's brownfield community.

The MPCA Brownfield Program partners with the **Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)** and the **Metropolitan Council** by providing technical support and review of applications submitted to their contamination investigation and cleanup grant programs. More information on the [DEED Investigation and Contamination Cleanup Grant Program](#) and [Metropolitan Council's Investigation and Contamination Cleanup Grant Program](#) can be found on their websites. On redevelopment projects where the community has questions about risk to public health, the MPCA's Brownfield Program works with the **Minnesota Department of Health** to resolve concerns. The MPCA's Brownfield Program coordinates with the **Minnesota Department of Agriculture** if a brownfield redevelopment site also contains a release of agricultural chemicals. The **US Environmental Protection Agency** provides valuable financial support to MPCA's Brownfield Program through federal grants that help pay for program operational expenses and investigation grants administered by the MPCA.



MPCA Brownfield staff

We are now the Brownfield Section and have a Section Manager! For more information about the MPCA Brownfield Programs, visit our [Brownfield redevelopment](#) webpage.

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