

March 2025

# MPCA Brownfield Program 2025 Annual Report

Special features: EQUIS for Brownfield sites update, CO&E highlights, new Brownfield Program guidance



Hatchery Row. Photo provided by City of Battle Lake.



# Introduction

A “brownfield” is any property that is abandoned or under-used due to the known or likely presence of contamination. Brownfields are found 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 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 eligible parties 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. Information about the types of letters offered by the Brownfield Program can be found on the [Brownfield Program Services](#) guidance document.

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

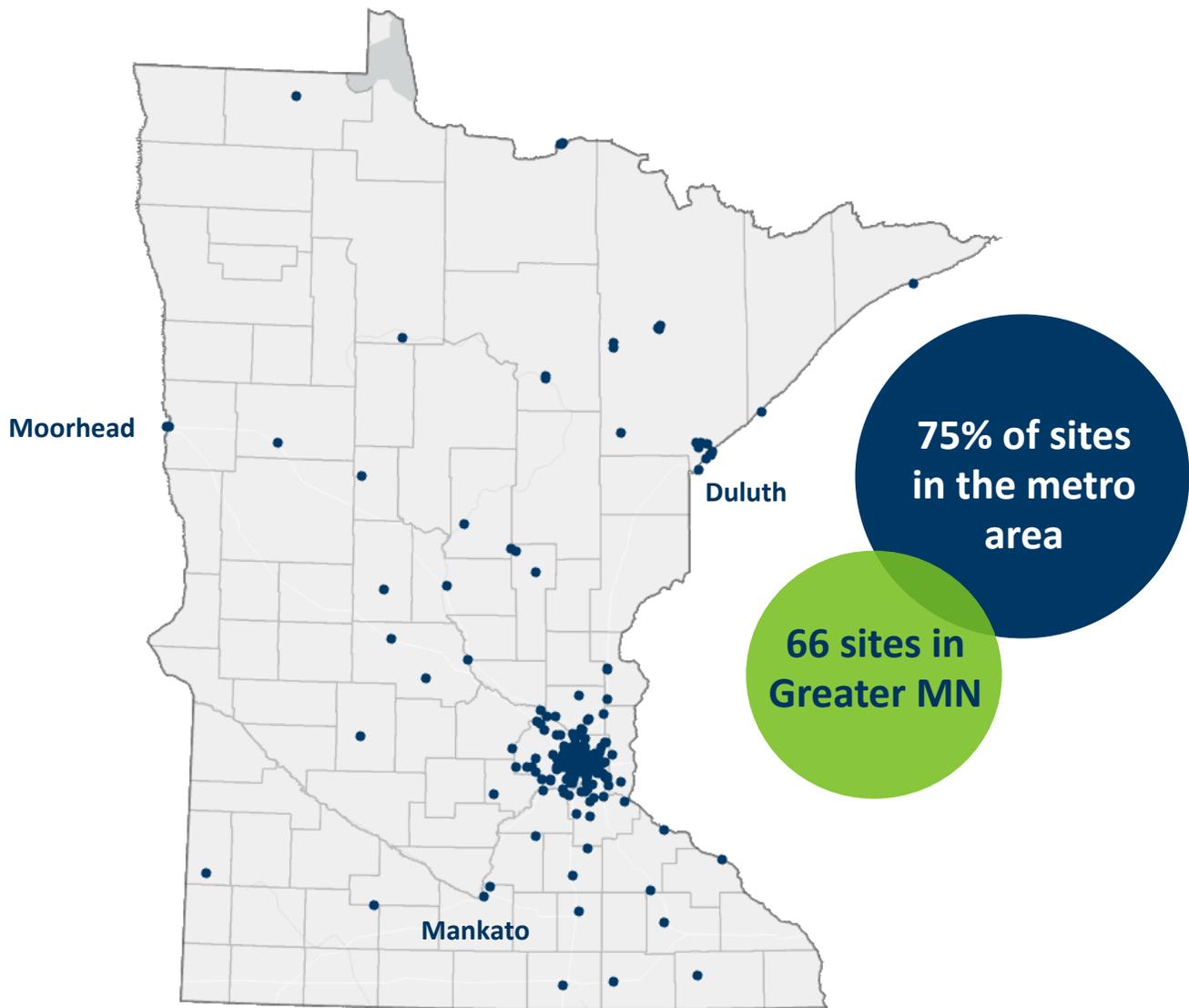
*Right — Currie Commons in Minneapolis. This property was once home to the Warden Oil Company and became a Superfund site in 1995. Extensive soil excavation was completed after demolition of the former building in the early 2000s, and a vapor mitigation system was installed in the new building. The property now provides affordable housing within walking distance of downtown and other transit options. Photo credit: Wellington Management, Inc.*

## MPCA MISSION

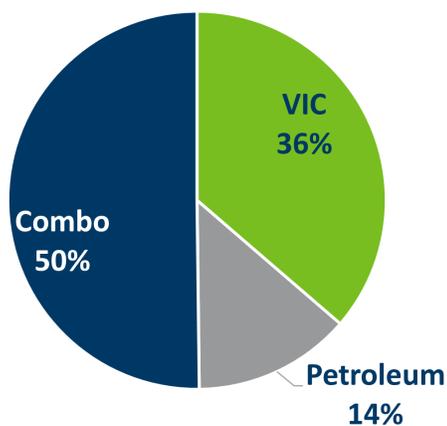
*Protect and improve the environment and enhance human health.*



# 2025 new brownfield applications statewide

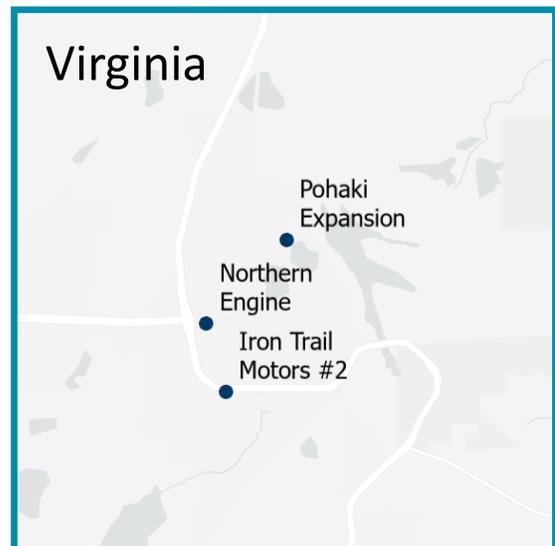
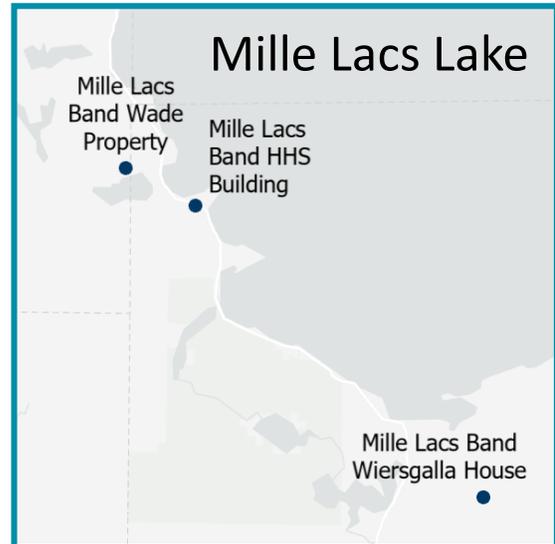
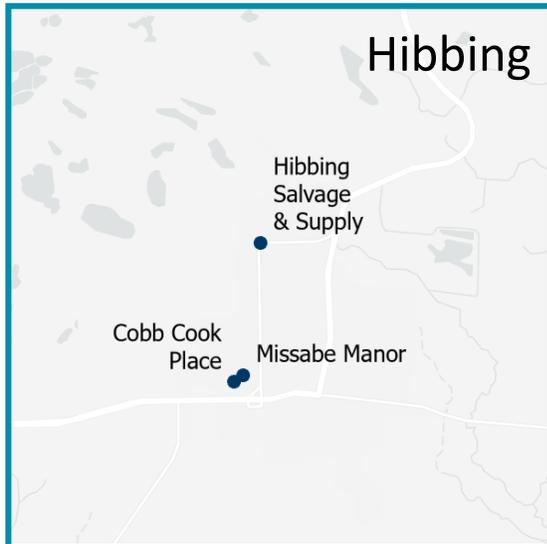
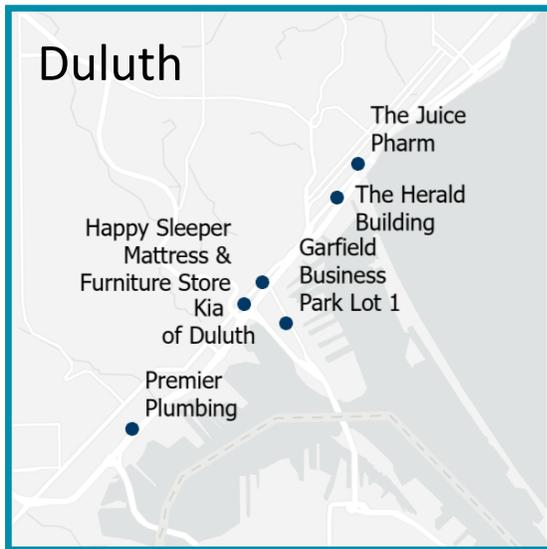


# 2025 new brownfield applications by subprogram

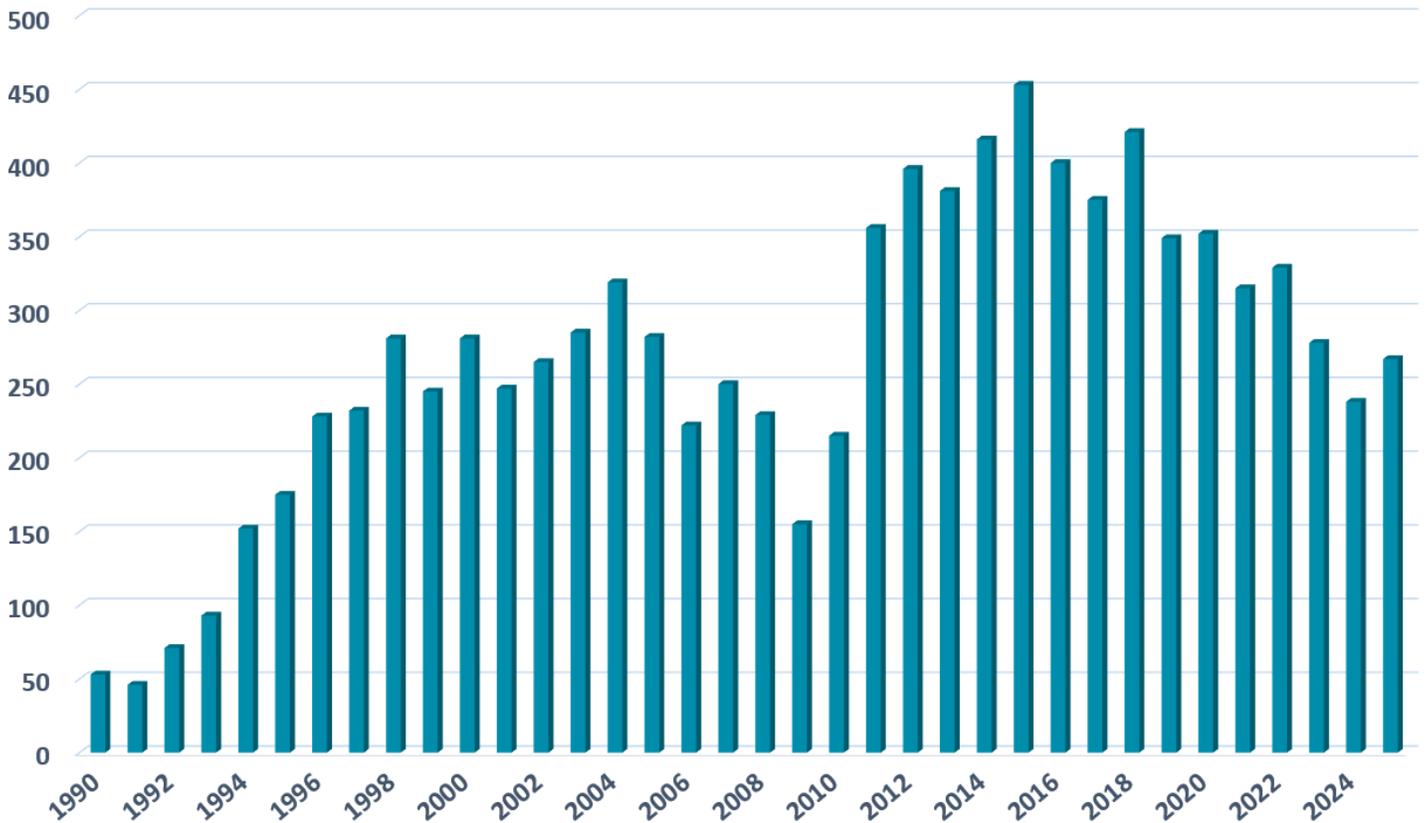


VIC only	97
Petroleum only	36
Combo	134
<b>Total</b>	<b>267</b>

# 2025 brownfield applications in Greater Minnesota



## Annual brownfield site applications



## Metrics for 2025



**123**

**Sites with  
response actions  
completed**



**586**

**Assurance  
letters issued**



**3,358**

**Acres returned  
to productive  
use**

# Electronic data submittals for Brownfield sites

As of **September 1, 2025**, the MPCA Brownfield Program requires electronic submittal of field and analytical data collected at a brownfield site. If the electronic data submittals have not been received, Brownfield Program assurance letters may be delayed.

Here are some common Brownfield Program data submittal scenarios:

- **Site enrolled in the Brownfield Program prior to September 1, 2025:**  
Electronic data submittal is not required for data collected prior to September 1, 2025. Data collected after that date must be submitted electronically.
- **Site enrolled in the Brownfield Program on or after September 1, 2025:**  
Electronic data submittal is required for all data, regardless of data collection date.

Obtaining electronic submittals for historical data or data generated by other consultants may be challenging due to data retention limitations and potential legal or contractual complexities. If you encounter these situations, contact Victor Henao at [victor.henao@state.mn.us](mailto:victor.henao@state.mn.us) to discuss options and determine the most appropriate path forward.

To date, more than 250 electronic data deliverables (EDDs) have been submitted for brownfield sites through the MPCA's Environmental Data Submittal portal. Much of the electronic data is made available to the public through MPCA web applications, such as the Minnesota Groundwater Contamination Atlas and the Groundwater EDA, supporting transparency and public access to environmental information.

In 2026, the MPCA Remediation Division will roll out an application for visualizing and downloading analytical data that allows users to retrieve data for individual sites. This tool is intended to improve transparency and provide a more efficient way to share data with stakeholders. A link to the application will be posted to the [Remediation Data Submittal](#) webpage once it is available. The more electronic data is submitted, the more useful this application will be.

For more information about electronic data submittal requirements, please visit the [Remediation Data Submittals](#) webpage or email us at [remequis.mPCA@state.mn.us](mailto:remequis.mPCA@state.mn.us).

*Right—Crane Lake Visitors Center in Voyageurs National Park. The property was historically used for marina operations, including a lakeside fueling station from the mid-1950s through the early 2000s. Cleanup activities included excavation and disposal of impacted soil to prepare the property for new public facilities. The resulting 5,000-square-foot visitor center offers interpretive space, public docks, improved shoreline access, and connections to regional trail and water-based recreation systems. Photo credit Serena Swenson.*



# Brownfield guidance update—new in 2025!

The MPCA's Brownfield Program created [Frequently Asked Questions: Buying and Selling Contaminated Property in Minnesota](#) fact sheet to help potential buyers and sellers of property in Minnesota understand how the presence of environmental contamination may affect the transaction and future use of the property.

The Remediation Division's [MERLA Groundwater and Soil Investigation guidance](#) provides a framework for investigating contaminated groundwater and soil at MPCA remediation sites with releases that fall under the Minnesota Environmental Response and Liability Act (MERLA). This document provides helpful information for investigating groundwater and soil, focusing on screening values, field screening, sampling design and execution, data analysis, risk evaluation, updating conceptual site models, and more. Appendices include information on regulations, monitored natural attenuation, aquifer characterization, drilling and sampling methods, and common field screening methods for soil.

## EPA National Brownfields Training Conference, Chicago

Several MPCA Brownfield Program staff attended the EPA National Brownfield Training Conference in Chicago, Illinois, in August 2025 (right photo below). The conference is held every two years and brings over 2,000 stakeholders together to discuss learning opportunities and successes in brownfield reuse and redevelopment.

The 2025 conference featured seven topic tracks, with MPCA staff leading two sessions. In the Forging Effective Partnerships with Tribal Governments track, the MPCA teamed with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, the City of Cass Lake, and EPA in a panel discussion around their intergovernmental approach to addressing brownfields in the small town of Cass Lake, MN (left photo below). The session focused on how the Band, the City, the EPA, and the MPCA worked together to overcome obstacles and maximize various funding sources to support the redevelopment vision of the Band and the City.

In the Great Lakes, Great States: Meet the Region 5 State Brownfield Programs, the MPCA teamed with representatives from EPA and the other Region 5 states to discuss unique aspects of each state's brownfield program, funding mechanisms, and technical assistance details.



# Community Outreach and Engagement

The MPCA's Brownfield Community Outreach and Engagement (CO&E) team supports the work of the Brownfield Program by expanding and deepening outreach to local units of government, Tribal Nations, underserved communities, and property owners involved in brownfield redevelopment and real estate transactions. The CO&E team collaborates regularly with local governments and community groups around the state, often in partnership with Kansas State University's Technical Assistance to Brownfields program (KSU TAB), the nonprofit organization Minnesota Brownfields, and MPCA's Tribal Liaison.

Participating in community events is a great way for the CO&E team to make new connections, learn from local residents, and assess the need for brownfield services and resources. By sharing information about the benefits of brownfield redevelopment, success stories, and MPCA Brownfield Program services, the CO&E team helps people across the state access resources to overcome the challenges of brownfield redevelopment.

Highlights of 2025:

- **New feature video: Bailey Builds – a Duluth success story!**

MPCA's brownfield grant program helped a small business owner in Duluth achieve their dream of relocating and expanding their business by resolving environmental concerns at the property they hoped to purchase - an old, abandoned gas station. Check out [The ultimate recycling: providing new life to an old gas station](#) video, created with help from the CO&E team, and posted on our [Brownfields in your community](#) webpage to see the full story.



- **Collaboration with Regional Development Commissions (RDCs)**

The CO&E team harnessed the connection RDCs have with small communities to share brownfield information across their regions, including the City of Comfrey, City of Sebeka, and more. These events opened the door for brownfield planning and opportunities that many small communities were not aware of, and in some cases resulted in MPCA brownfield grant applications.

## Community Outreach and Engagement - continued

- **Partnerships on the Iron Range**

The CO&E team participated in multiple Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation (IRRR) events, strengthening relationships with local leaders and gaining a deeper understanding of the region's unique redevelopment challenges. They delivered presentations in Hibbing in partnership with Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) and contributed to the Iron Range Brownfield Resources Workshop. Beyond these events, they provided ongoing assistance to Iron Range cities navigating brownfield projects and coordinated closely with EPA and KSU TAB to ensure that the unique needs of the region are fully reflected in the support and resources being offered.

- **Urban brownfields bus tour featuring Tribal Nation redevelopment projects**

MPCA had the privilege of collaborating with the [Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals](#) to curate an urban brownfield bus tour for the [Tribal Lands and Environment Forum](#). The bus tour featured four stops – [Bimosedaa](#) (see photo above), [Red Lake Tribal College](#), [Native American Community Clinic](#), and [Minneapolis American Indian Center](#) - each highlighting a Tribal Nation-led brownfield redevelopment project in Minneapolis. Bus tour attendees included representatives from seven different Tribal Nations from across the United States as well as federal partners, organizations and industry allies (see photo below).



*Above — Bimosedaa building in Minneapolis. Originally constructed in 1915 as the Film Exchange Building, the building use transitioned to a furrier by 1946 and remained so for over 70 years. To become Bimosedaa, the building underwent extensive renovation including installation of a vapor mitigation system. The renovated building offers Native-focused supportive housing including 48 apartment homes in downtown Minneapolis.*

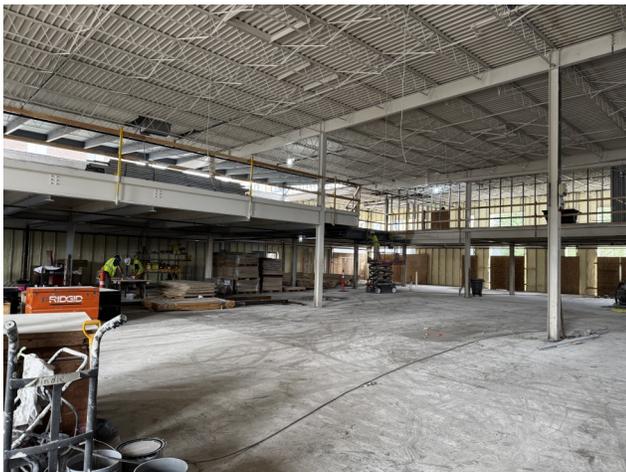
*Left — Photo from the bus tour during the Tribal Lands and Environment Forum event.*

# 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 fee 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 \$649,965 in 2025, and the Petroleum Brownfields Program (PBP) invoiced \$378,660. The average cost recovery rate for the Brownfield Program for the previous four calendar years (2021 through 2024) is 99.1%. The cost recovery rate is always temporarily low for the current reporting year (2025), as payments are still being received for invoices sent late in the reporting period. As additional payments are received for site work completed in 2025, the collection rate will increase to be consistent with that of previous years.

Year	VIC			PBP		
	Total billed	Amount paid	Collection rate	Total billed	Amount paid	Collection rate
2021	\$607,413	\$603,601	99.4%	\$334,182	\$333,941	99.9%
2022	\$737,477	\$731,107	99.1%	\$434,513	\$434,377	100.0%
2023	\$570,976	\$567,075	99.3%	\$355,125	\$354,525	99.8%
2024	\$622,650	\$606,488	97.4%	\$343,238	\$334,725	97.5%
2025	\$649,965	\$567,315	87.3%	\$378,660	\$340,260	89.9%



Above— before (left) and after (right) photos of the St. Paul Bouldering Project building. Bouldering Project took on a new adventure by expanding to a second Twin Cities location in St. Paul’s West Side Neighborhood. The 3.3-acre site had multiple past uses – a foundry, railroad freight depot, and a petroleum-chemical business and a pharmaceutical manufacturer. As a part of site cleanup, impacted soil was treated and then disposed of at a landfill, and a vapor mitigation system was installed in the renovated building. The site was redeveloped into a 35,000-square-foot recreational facility featuring custom bouldering terrain, fitness and yoga studios, and a sauna. The project received DEED Contamination and Cleanup grant funding and is anticipated to create 43 new jobs, increase the local tax base by \$191,838, and leverage \$10.7 million of private investment. Photos provided by St. Paul Bouldering Project.

# MPCA funding for brownfield projects

The MPCA has two grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to promote brownfield redevelopment in Minnesota, as described below. Grant funds can be used to pay for Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, hazardous building material surveys, preparation of cleanup plans, community engagement for reuse planning, and Brownfield Program fees for MPCA review and oversight. Assessment work is completed by MPCA contractors at no cost to grant recipients. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. For more information and an application form, see the MPCA's [Brownfield assessment grants](#) webpage.

If you have questions about funding sources or require assistance, contact the Brownfield Grants Team at [brownfieldgrants.mPCA@state.mn.us](mailto:brownfieldgrants.mPCA@state.mn.us) or call our **Brownfield Grants hotline 651-757-2904**. Many MPCA grant sites also receive grant funding from partners such as Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Metropolitan Council, and counties.

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

The MPCA's Brownfield Program applied for competitive grant funds made possible by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (aka Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) and was awarded a \$2 million Community-Wide Assessment Grant by the EPA in 2022 and in 2025. The grant funds are being used at brownfield sites in areas of concern for environmental justice, for projects that have community support, avoid gentrification of the neighborhood, and support first-time developers. Each grant has a performance period of up to five years; however, due to great demand, 99% of the 2022 grant was allocated or spent in just three years. The 2025 grant funding became available to the MPCA in the fall of 2025. By the end of 2025, six new sites were enrolled in the grant program, including sites in one or more of the four target areas (Cass Lake, Willmar, and the Phillips and Rondo neighborhoods in the Twin Cities). Additional sites are in the queue for grant funding, showing that outreach efforts have been successful and demand is high for these grant funds in Minnesota communities. To date, the MPCA has used 104k grant funds for a total of 60 sites to support brownfield redevelopment in EJ areas.

## 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. In 2025, the MPCA's Targeted Brownfield Assessment grant program provided approximately \$43,211 to assist with environmental assessments at brownfield sites in Minnesota.

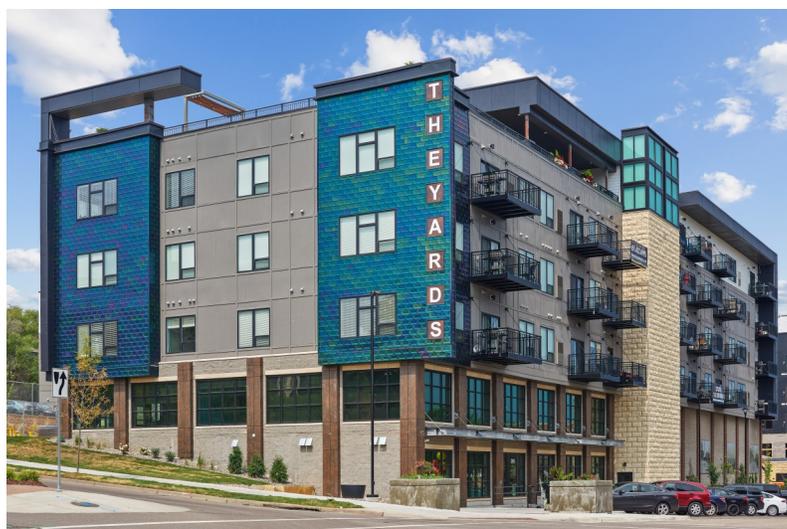
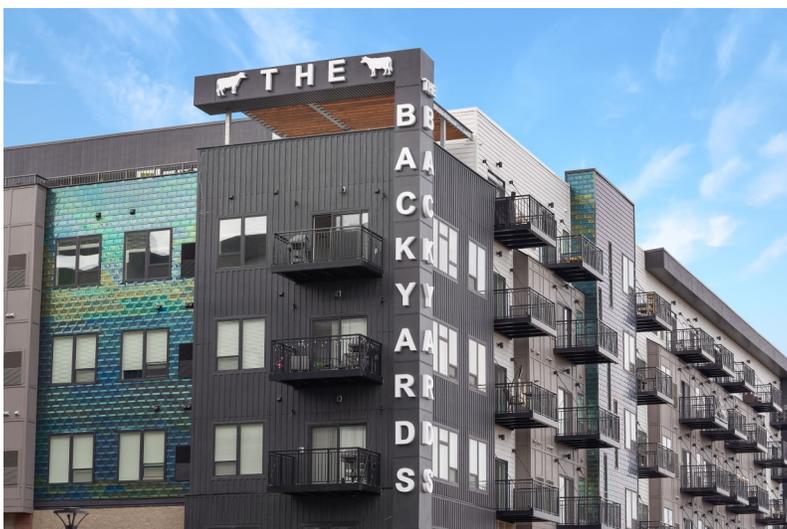
The MPCA favors applications that promote brownfield redevelopment projects located in small communities in greater Minnesota or environmental justice areas, or those that support non-profit organizations, first-time developers, or create community greenspace. Since 2003, the MPCA's TBA grant program has paid for environmental investigations at 112 sites.

## 2025 Grant projects (104k and 128a)

Project Name	Project ID	Location	Redevelopment
14th Avenue Townhomes	BF0003157	Minneapolis	Residential – affordable housing
2926-2930 Development	BF0003186	Minneapolis	Mixed commercial/residential
736 Selby Avenue	BF0003159	Saint Paul	Mixed commercial/residential
750 Linder Ave	BF0002667	Mankato	Residential - Homeless shelter and supportive housing
B&B Properties	BF0003156	Willmar	Residential – affordable housing
Bayfront Lot D	BF0000593	Duluth	Mixed commercial/residential
Big Lake City Hall	BF0002918	Big Lake	TBD
Bohlig Cleaners	BF0003181	Melrose	TBD
Bud's Place	BF0003179	Floodwood	TBD
COPAL-LCCE	BF0002532	Minneapolis	Commercial
Extreme Sandbox	BF0002713	Hastings	Mixed commercial/residential
Former Blazing Star	BF0002134	Albert Lea	Mixed commercial/residential – affordable housing
L&L Grain Elevator	BF0002966	Wykoff	TBD
Lady Slipper Lot	BF0002375	St. Cloud	Mixed commercial/residential – affordable housing
LOLA Lofts	BF0003178	Minneapolis	Mixed commercial/residential
Lundstrum Performing Arts	BF0002970	Minneapolis	Commercial
May Day Café	BF0002911	Minneapolis	Commercial
Mille Lacs Band HHS Building	BF0003046	Onamia	Greenspace
Mille Lacs Band Wade Property	BF0003044	Garrison	Greenspace
Mille Lacs Band Wiersgalla House	BF0003045	Onamia	Greenspace
Minnehaha Cleaning Center	BF0002965	Saint Paul	Commercial
Moorhead Center Mall	BF0003158	Moorhead	Mixed commercial/residential
North Mankato Public Works Yard	BF0002919	North Mankato	Residential
North Sight	BF0002702	Minneapolis	Residential – affordable housing

## 2025 Grant projects (104k and 128a) — continued

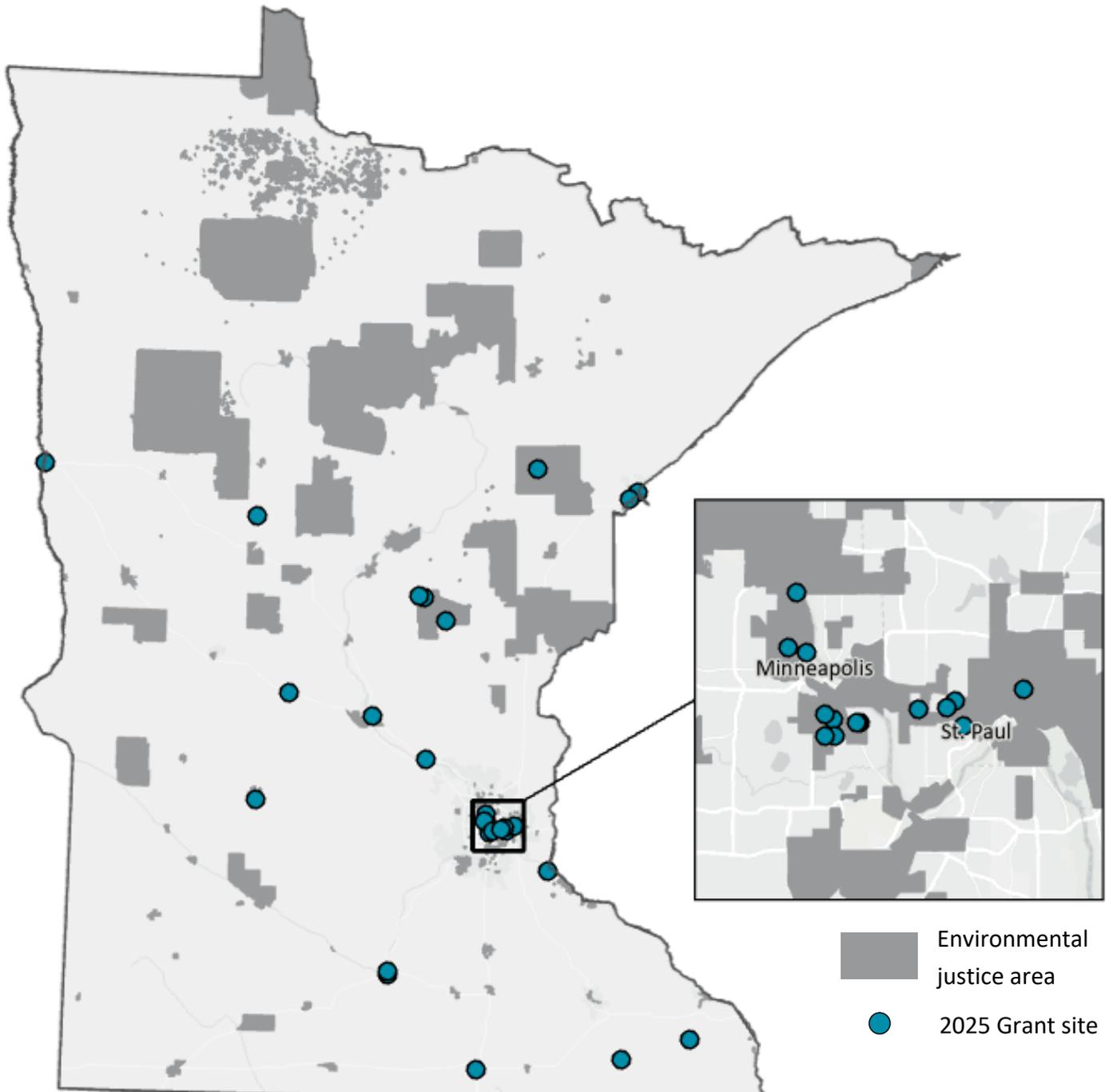
Project Name	Project ID	Location	Redevelopment
Pillsbury Creative Commons	BF0002647	Minneapolis	Commercial
Plaza del Sol	BF0002716	St. Paul	Commercial
Rushford Farmers COOP Elevator	BF0002717	Rushford	TBD
The Lexington Deluxe	BF0002910	St. Paul	Residential – affordable housing
The Old Grocery Store	BF0003180	Sebeka	TBD
The Resolute	BF0002385	Minneapolis	Mixed commercial/residential
The Welch Center	BF0002912	Duluth	Commercial
Viva Apartments	BF0002648	Minneapolis	Mixed commercial/residential



*Left — The Yards and Backyards in South St. Paul. The nearly 4-acre property is located along the scenic Mississippi River Bluffs and near the historic South St. Paul Stockyard area. The site was originally developed by 1890 with residential and commercial businesses, including a fire station, a municipal garage, gasoline filling stations, automotive repair and service businesses, a printing business, a tin shop, and a concrete block manufacturing business. Prior environmental investigations identified impacted soil intermixed with debris, as well as impacted soil vapor. The impacted soil/debris was excavated for landfill disposal, and a vapor mitigation system was installed in one of the new apartment buildings. The Yards and Backyards buildings offer luxury apartments with access to regional trails along the river and access to Downtown St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Bloomington. Site investigation activities were paid in part by MPCA Targeted Brownfield Assessment grant funding. Photo credit: Content Studios.*

# Environmental justice areas and MPCA grant sites

Environmental justice (EJ) areas are defined by census tracts that meet one or more of the following criteria: at least 35% of people reported income less than 200% of the federal poverty level; 40% or more people of color; federally recognized tribal areas; and at least 40% of people have limited English proficiency. 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. Note that previous EJ areas (prior to 2024) included a margin of error that resulted in a larger area. Current EJ areas only include those where the calculated value meets one or more EJ criteria and do not include a margin of error.



# 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 which is 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. 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 **U.S. 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.

*Right — Hatchery Row in the City of Battle Lake. Historical uses of the site include auto repair, a former gas station, an elevator and feed mill, a warehouse, and a hatchery. Underground storage tanks and petroleum-impacted soil were removed during redevelopment. The property now consists of a new mixed-use building, which has spurred additional redevelopment in the community. The site received a DEED Contamination and Cleanup grant and is estimated to create 10 jobs and increase the city tax base by at least \$2.1 million. Photo provided by City of Battle Lake.*



## MPCA Brownfield staff

For more information about the MPCA Brownfield Program, visit our [Brownfield redevelopment](#) webpage.

Ebertz, Jessie (Section Manager)	651-757-2328	jessica.ebertz@state.mn.us
Schmitt, Shanna (Program Administrator)	651-757-2697	shanna.schmitt@state.mn.us
Martin, Shannon (CO&E coordinator)	651-757-2874	shannon.martin@state.mn.us
Mogenson, Crystal (CO&E coordinator)	651-757-2283	crystal.mogensen@state.mn.us

## Voluntary Investigation Cleanup (VIC) Program

Hadiaris, Amy (Supervisor)	651-757-2402	amy.hadiaris@state.mn.us
Guertin, Amanda	651-757-2369	amanda.guertin@state.mn.us
Jarchow, Erika	651-757-2421	erika.jarchow@state.mn.us
Knight, David	651-757-2857	david.knight@state.mn.us
Nichols, Andrew	651-757-2612	andrew.nichols@state.mn.us
Ryser, Rebecca	651-757-2015	rebecca.ryser@state.mn.us
Scheer, Madison	651-757-2821	madison.scheer@state.mn.us
Smokovitz, Jacob	651-757-2321	jacob.smokovitz@state.mn.us
Wrobel, Youmi	651-757-2597	youmi.wrobel@state.mn.us

## Petroleum Brownfields Program (PBP)

VanPatten, Stacey (Supervisor)	651-757-2425	stacey.vanpatten@state.mn.us
Crawford, Alana	651-757-2691	alana.crawford@state.mn.us
Hammond, Jayme	651-757-2615	jayme.hammond@state.mn.us
Henao, Victor	651-757-2204	victor.henao@state.mn.us
Johnson, Holly	651-757-2124	holly.e.johnson@state.mn.us
Krueger, Chuck	651-757-2077	chuck.krueger@state.mn.us
Peters, Ian	651-757-2142	ian.peters@state.mn.us
Umholtz, Mark	651-757-2308	mark.umholtz@state.mn.us

# Brownfield Success Stories StoryMap

The Brownfield Success Stories StoryMap is updated annually with recent redevelopment sites and is located on our [Brownfields in your community](#) webpage. This interactive StoryMap provides background information on what a brownfield site is and allows the user to view a snapshot of many of the successful 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 in the coming years.

## Additional Resources

The following resources are a great way to learn more about brownfield sites, planning, assistance, and the brownfield process:

- [Brownfields in your community \(MPCA\)](#)
- [EPA Brownfields](#)
- [Minnesota Brownfields](#)
- [Kansas State University - Technical Assistance to Brownfields \(KSUTAB\)](#)
- [Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials \(ASTSWMO\) Brownfields](#)
- [Land Revitalization Tool Kit \(EPA\)](#)
- [Climate Smart Brownfields Manual \(EPA\)](#)

Below are some resources to learn more about a given property and what potential impacts could be in the area:

- [What's in my neighborhood \(MPCA\)](#)
- [Institutional Controls in Minnesota \(MPCA\)](#)
- [Minnesota groundwater contamination atlas \(MPCA\)](#)
- [Vapor Intrusion Mitigation in Minnesota \(MPCA\)](#)
- [Search for superfund sites where you live \(EPA\)](#)
- [Minnesota Well Index \(MDH\)](#)

For sites enrolling in the MPCA's Brownfield Program, it's important to provide accurate information on the Brownfield Program application and in site documents. The following resources provide property identification number, current property ownership and date of last sale, legal description of property, accurate legal name of a business entity, and other helpful information:

- [Minnesota county parcel maps \(MN Geo\)](#)
- [Minnesota Department of Revenue -Property Search](#)
- [Minnesota Secretary of State - Search Business Filings](#)