

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

## COMMUNITY-BASED BROWNFIELD ACTION PLAN—WEST FRESNO, CA

In 2011, the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Fresno (Fresno RDA) received technical assistance from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct brownfields training and capacity building community forums involving local community groups. The primary purpose of the forums was to inform an Action Plan for community-led brownfields reclamation in West Fresno.

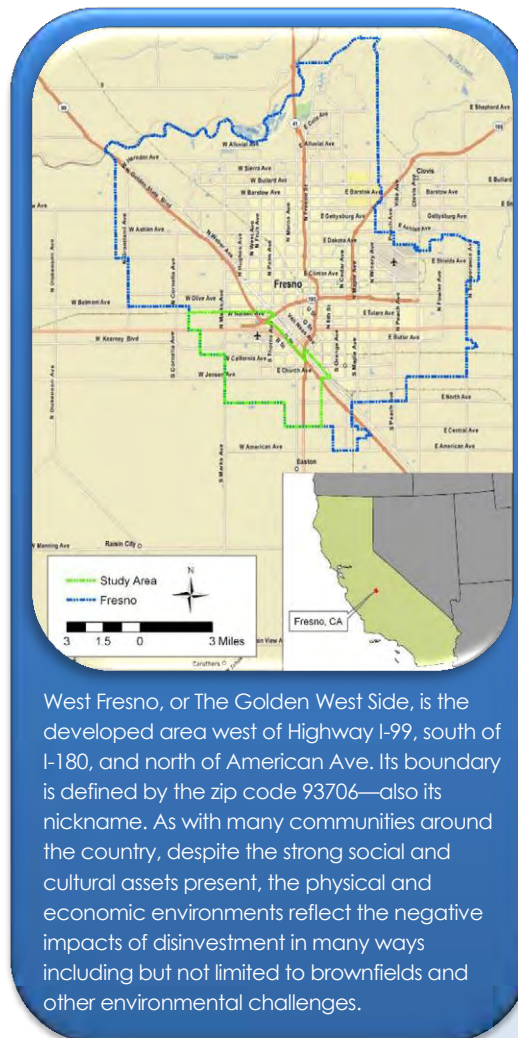
The goal of EPA’s assistance is to improve awareness of brownfields issues and to increase the capacity of West Fresno community organizations and citizens to organize and facilitate community-led revitalization of brownfield properties in West Fresno. Brownfields can be the focal point for strategic community collaboration whose outcomes catalyze larger revitalization. Technical assistance included four planning meetings held directly in the community during the spring of 2011. The planning meetings informed West Fresno residents about brownfields, recorded residents’ concerns related to brownfields, and helped them understand the tools needed to increase their capacity to engage in community-driven brownfields revitalization.

Each meeting built on the theme and knowledge gathered at the previous meeting and served to guide the development of the Action Plan. The meetings were structured to inform the community but also to be informed *by* the community.

### Initial Accomplishments

While the full effects of redevelopment may not be realized for years, many initial project accomplishments occurred as a result of this process, including:

- Convening local and national experts in West Fresno
- Gathering community input on sites of concern and potential reuse
- Engaging local youth through the Fresno Youth Council for Sustainable Communities
- Educating the community on brownfields and reuse issues
- Understanding brownfields tools (e.g., inventories)
- Creating a useable community toolkit (the Action Plan)



West Fresno, or The Golden West Side, is the developed area west of Highway I-99, south of I-180, and north of American Ave. Its boundary is defined by the zip code 93706—also its nickname. As with many communities around the country, despite the strong social and cultural assets present, the physical and economic environments reflect the negative impacts of disinvestment in many ways including but not limited to brownfields and other environmental challenges.

### Project Team

- EPA Region 9 staff
- Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Region 9
- Fresno RDA
- Center for Creative Land Recycling (CCLR)
- SRA International

## Elements

The process led to the development of the Action Plan which outlines necessary elements or steps to achieve community-driven brownfields reuse. The elements do not need to happen in sequence; many of these efforts can be ongoing.

- ELEMENT 1 – Build the Coalition
- ELEMENT 2 – Identify and Inventory
- ELEMENT 3 – Prioritize
- ELEMENT 4 – Engage Property Owners
- ELEMENT 5 – Create a Vision
- ELEMENT 6 – Pursue Financial and Technical Resources
- ELEMENT 7 – Conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) and Remediation
- ELEMENT 8 – Reuse the Site

## Recommended Actions

### Immediate Actions:

- Establish regular meeting schedule amongst the organizations who attended the trainings. Assign tasks to Coalition members and a schedule for implementation.
- Identify other organizations and individuals who should be part of The Coalition to reflect West Fresno's stakeholders.
- Engage in dialogue with the Fresno RDA regarding its EPA Brownfields Assessment grant and the community involvement component.

### Short-term Actions (1-3 years):

- Communicate with leaders from the case studies presented during community planning meetings to identify what The Coalition can learn from their efforts.
- Develop the Mission Statement and organizational structure for The Coalition.
- Create informational material and if possible, a website.

### Long-term Actions (3-5 years):

- Evaluate whether or not the structure and operation of The Coalition is serving its purpose and discuss potential changes.
- Establish annual fund raising, volunteer appreciation, 'friend' raising, or community appreciation events that serve to build The Coalition's status within the community.
- Reaffirm the goals and plans previously established and make changes as necessary to reflect changes in The Coalition's capacity and resources.

For additional information, please contact:

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For a link to the Action Plan go to: [www.epa.gov/region9/brownfields](http://www.epa.gov/region9/brownfields)