



# NEWS RELEASE

CITY OF TOPEKA – U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY



## City of Topeka, EPA Region 7 to Celebrate Grant for Riverfront Redevelopment Project

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### Environmental News

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Topeka, Kan., Oct. 26, 2017) - Today, the city of Topeka and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 7 celebrated the funding of a \$300,000 EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant during an event at the NOTO Art Center. Topeka was the only community in Kansas selected by EPA to receive the grant this year.

EPA cleanup and assessment grants help provide communities with resources necessary to determine the extent of site contamination, remove environmental uncertainties, and clean up contaminated properties where needed. The city will use the grant funding to expand redevelopment in the North Topeka Riverfront Area.

“While we at EPA provide seed money in the form of grants like this to support community brownfield redevelopment, it’s the hard work of local communities who roll-up their sleeves that ultimately gets the job done,” said Principal Deputy Regional Administrator Cathy Stepp during the gathering. “I want to commend the City of Topeka for their commitment to Brownfield redevelopment and their success in this grant competition. Brownfield sites are often found in the heart of America’s downtowns and economic centers, and cleaning up and repurposing these vacant or underused properties is at the core of our community economic revitalization efforts and Brownfields Program.”

“We’re certainly eager to see these funds put to work here in Topeka, and look forward to the positive environmental and economic impact they’ll undoubtedly have,” said Stepp.

Brownfield site assessments near the Kansas River, supported by the grant, will serve as an initial step toward redeveloping vacant and unused properties, transforming them to productive reuse that will benefit the community and local economy.

“We are excited to begin these assessments with support from the EPA. This is one more tool to encourage economic development in North Topeka and complements other work going on throughout downtown. Ensuring we are being environmentally conscious in addition to making sites ready for growth is a win-win,” said Interim City Manager of Topeka Doug Gerber.

Addressing and cleaning up brownfield sites across the nation ultimately boosts local economies and leverages redevelopment jobs, while protecting public health and the environment.

Studies have shown that residential property values near brownfield sites that are cleaned up increased between 5 and 15.2 percent. Another study analyzing data near 48 brownfield sites also shows that an estimated \$29 to \$97 million in additional tax revenue was generated for local governments in a single year after cleanup. This is two to seven times more than the \$12.4 million that EPA contributed to the cleanup of those brownfields.

As of May 2017, more than 124,759 jobs and \$24 billion of public and private funding has been leveraged as a result of assessment grants and other EPA Brownfields grants.

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More on EPA's Brownfields program: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

More on City of Topeka's Planning Department: <https://www.topeka.org/>

More on successful Brownfields stories: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-success-stories>

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