GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE
L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

# DISCUSSION ON BROWNFIELDS: DEMYSTIFYING REMEDIATION AND EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES

Presented by: RAMBOLL

Jennifer Hagen

**Ramboll**

Amy Dzialowski

**Geosyntec**

Evan Kanji

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Tory Kress

**Redevelopment Authority of City of Milwaukee**

Sarah Bregant

**Northwest Side Community Development Corporation**

# SPEAKERS

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Bright ideas.
Sustainable change.

# Ramboll in the Americas

# Ramboll in brief

- Independent architecture, engineering, and consultancy company
- Founded 1945 in Denmark
- 18,500 experts
- Present in 35 countries
- Particularly strong presence in the Nordics, the UK, North America, Continental Europe, and Asia Pacific
- Creating sustainable solutions across Buildings, Transport, Energy, Environment & Health, Water, Management Consulting, and Architecture & Landscape.
- EUR 2.2 billion revenue
- Owned by Rambøll Fonden – The Ramboll Foundation

# Select Multi-Sector Expertise

## Water

- Climate resiliency and flood management
- Water and wastewater infrastructure
- Water and wastewater treatment
- Early strategic consultancy
- Water resources management
- Urban planning and design

## Environment and Health

- Air & climate
- Biodiversity & ecosystems
- Circular economy & resource management
- Contaminated site & facility solutions
- EHS compliance assurance & performance
- Environmental due diligence
- Health sciences
- Impact assessment
- Technical sustainability services

## Transportation

- Bridges, Tunnels & Major Crossings
- Smart Mobility
- Rail Systems
- Aviation
- Roads and Highways
- Ports, Marine and Waterways




# Ramboll in the Great Lakes Region

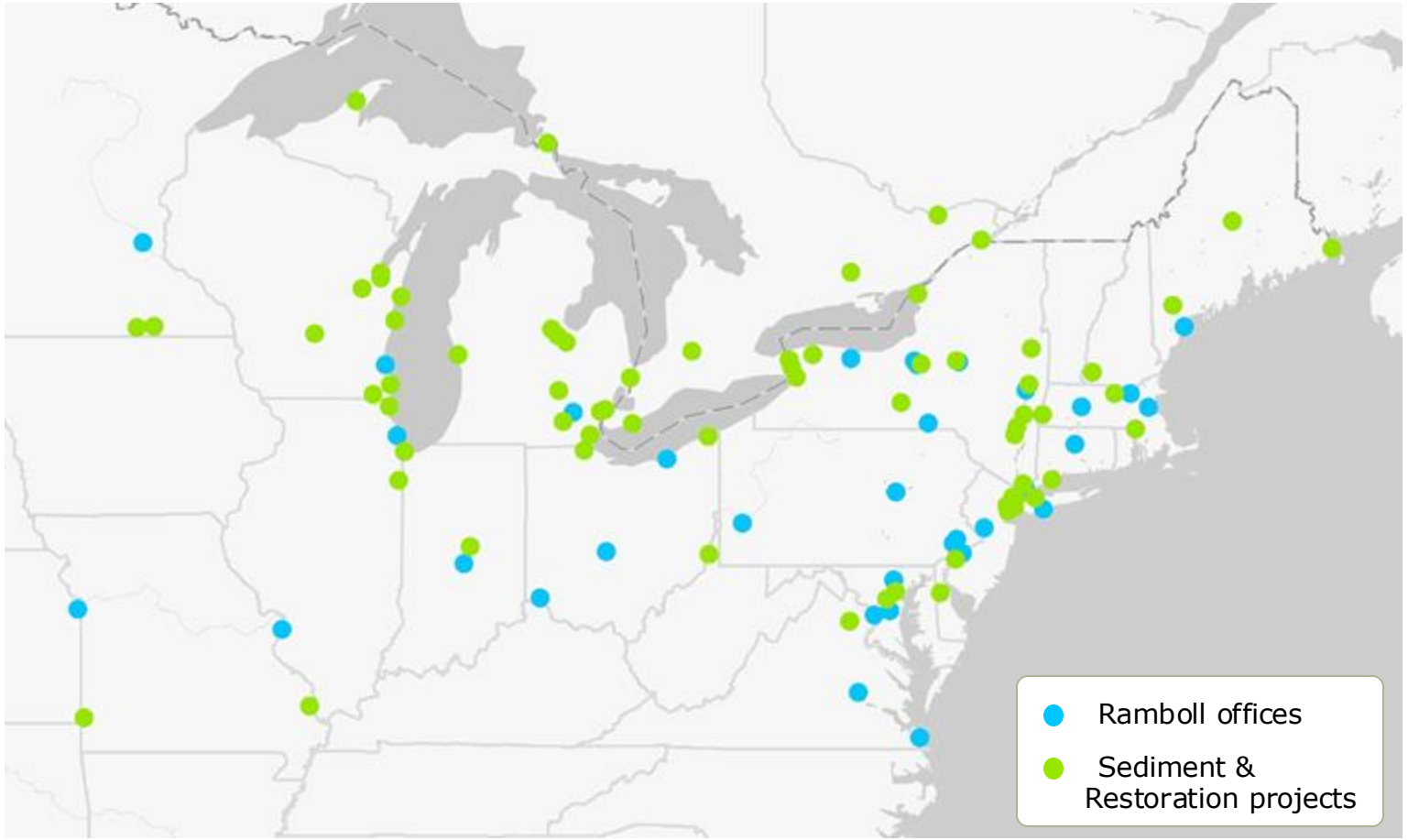
More than 500 employees in the Great Lakes region across various disciplines able to support a myriad of projects

**Sediment Experience**

- Substantial Great Lakes Experience centered in Ann Arbor, Cleveland, Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Rochester and Syracuse
- Sediment remedy design and remedy implementation (EPC)
- Extensive Great Lakes Legacy Act (GLLA) experience with GLNPO
  - Scott Cieniawski: "Ramboll understands our program and we trust Ramboll's work"

## Ramboll's Experience in the Great Lakes Region

**1. Ashtabula River**
**2. Buffalo River**
3. Detroit River
**4. Grand Calumet River**
5. Kalamazoo River
6. Lower Fox River
**6. Lower Rouge River Old Channel (LRROC)**
**7. Milwaukee Estuary**
**8. Monguagon Creek - UTC**
**10.Munger Landing, Duluth**
11.Muskegon Lake
12.Niagara River
**13.Ottawa River**
**14.Otter Creek**
**15.Peninsula Harbour**
16.South Plant MGP
**17.River Raisin**
18.Rochester Embayment
19.Saginaw River / Bay
**20.Sheboygan River**
**21.St. Clair River**
**22.St. Lawrence River**
**23.St. Mary's River**
**24.Thompson Reservoir**
25.Tittabawassee River
**26.Torch Lake**




**Bold text** indicates GLNPO GLLA project, or Canadian equivalent

# Investigation, Remediation and Redevelopment of Former Coke Plant

# Bright ideas Sustainable change.

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# Amy Dzialowski
# Geosyntec

Ramboll

# Brownfields are…

Real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or *potential* presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

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# Examples of Brownfields Properties

- Former service stations
- Oil and gas sites
- Salvage yards
- Illicit dump sites
- Landfills
- Industrial sites
- Rail yards
- Abandoned/ Occupied buildings
- Commercial Sites (drycleaners, printers, auto salvage, etc.)

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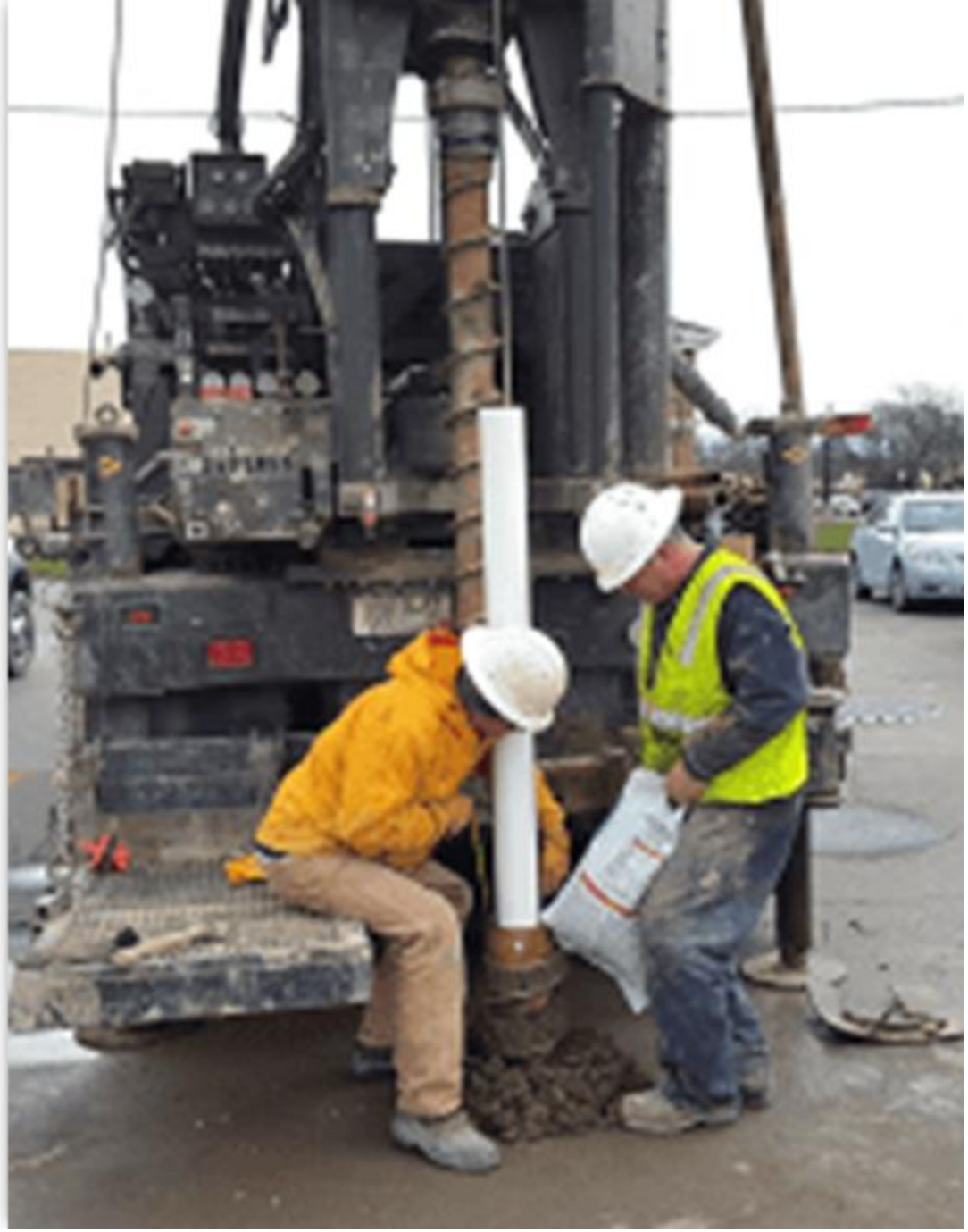
# Traditional Brownfields Tasks

- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment
- Phase II Environmental Site Assessment
- Hazardous Building Materials Survey
- Remediation/Mitigation Planning and Cost Estimates
- Community Engagement and Outreach



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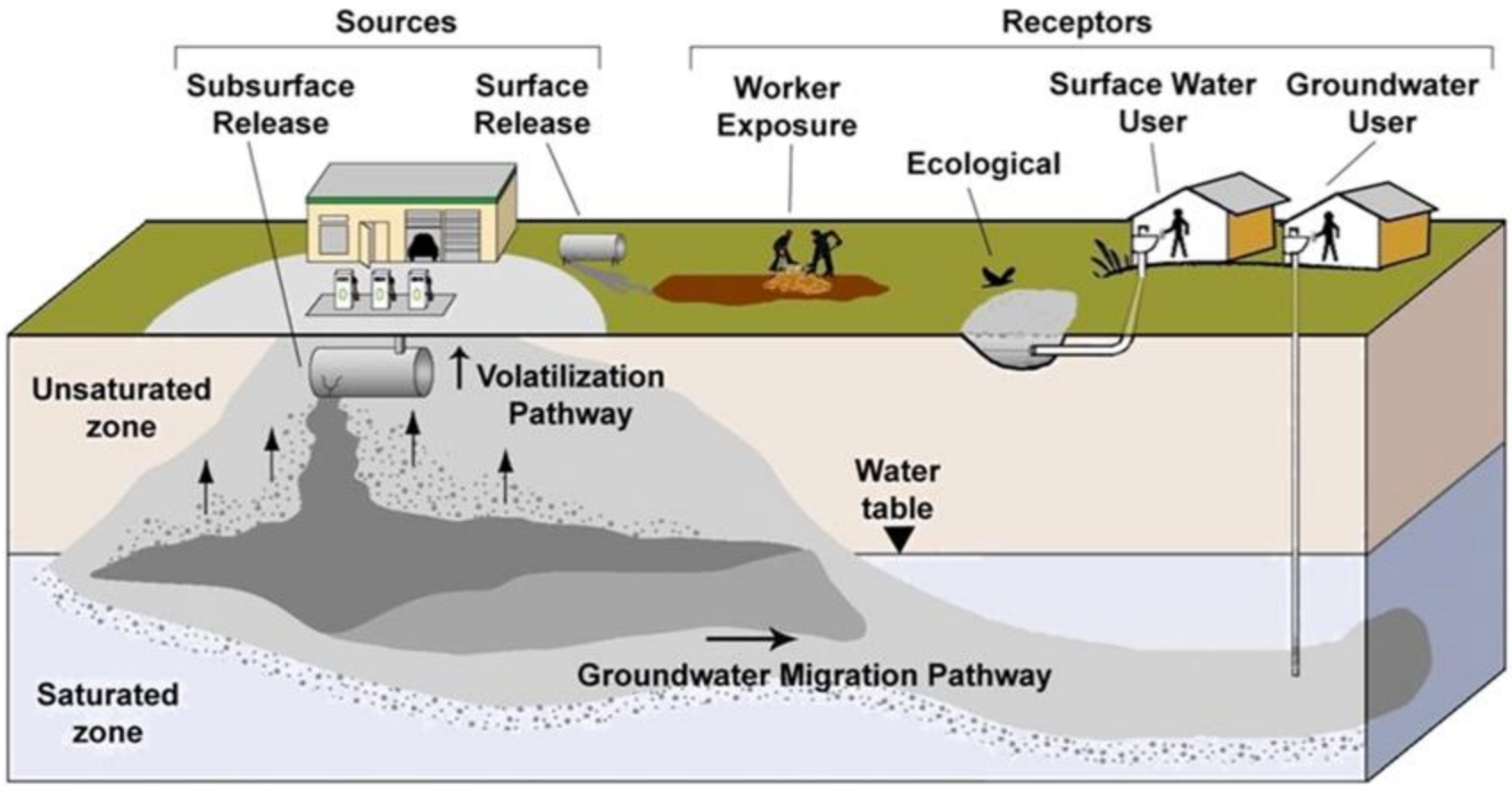
# Environmental Assessment



# Brownfields are also…

Redevelopment opportunities that result in viable public and private development projects and provide environmental protection while reducing urban sprawl and greenspace development and solving some of our most complex community challenges.

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# What Drives Brownfields Redevelopment?

| Redevelopment Scenario | Implication |
|---|---|
| Market value exceeds cleanup costs | Private sector completes cleanup and redevelopment |
| Value close to covering development & cleanup costs | Targeted public investment can make project feasible |
| Environmental liability far exceeds property value | Requires significant public investment or market change |

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# Brownfields through a Wider Lens

As brownfields advocates, we have focused on protecting public health and the environment as we cleanup properties and strengthen local economies. Increasingly, we turn our attention to creating healthier, affordable, equitable and more livable communities.


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# Strengthening our Communities through Brownfields Redevelopment


PROCESS **BROWN FIELDS**

POTENTIALLY CONTAMINATED/ UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTY → PUBLIC OR PRIVATE INVESTMENT MARKET DICTATES BROWNFIELDS GRANT → BROWNFIELDS GRANT SUPPORT → REGULATORY CLOSURE REMEDIATION → PROPERTY REDEVELOPMENT → BACK INTO BENEFICIAL REUSE

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# Systemic Change through Brownfields Redevelopment

Future brownfields opportunities in our communities will focus on ways community engagement, assessment, and the brownfields process can improve sustainability, renewable energy, health, environmental justice, preparedness and resilience.

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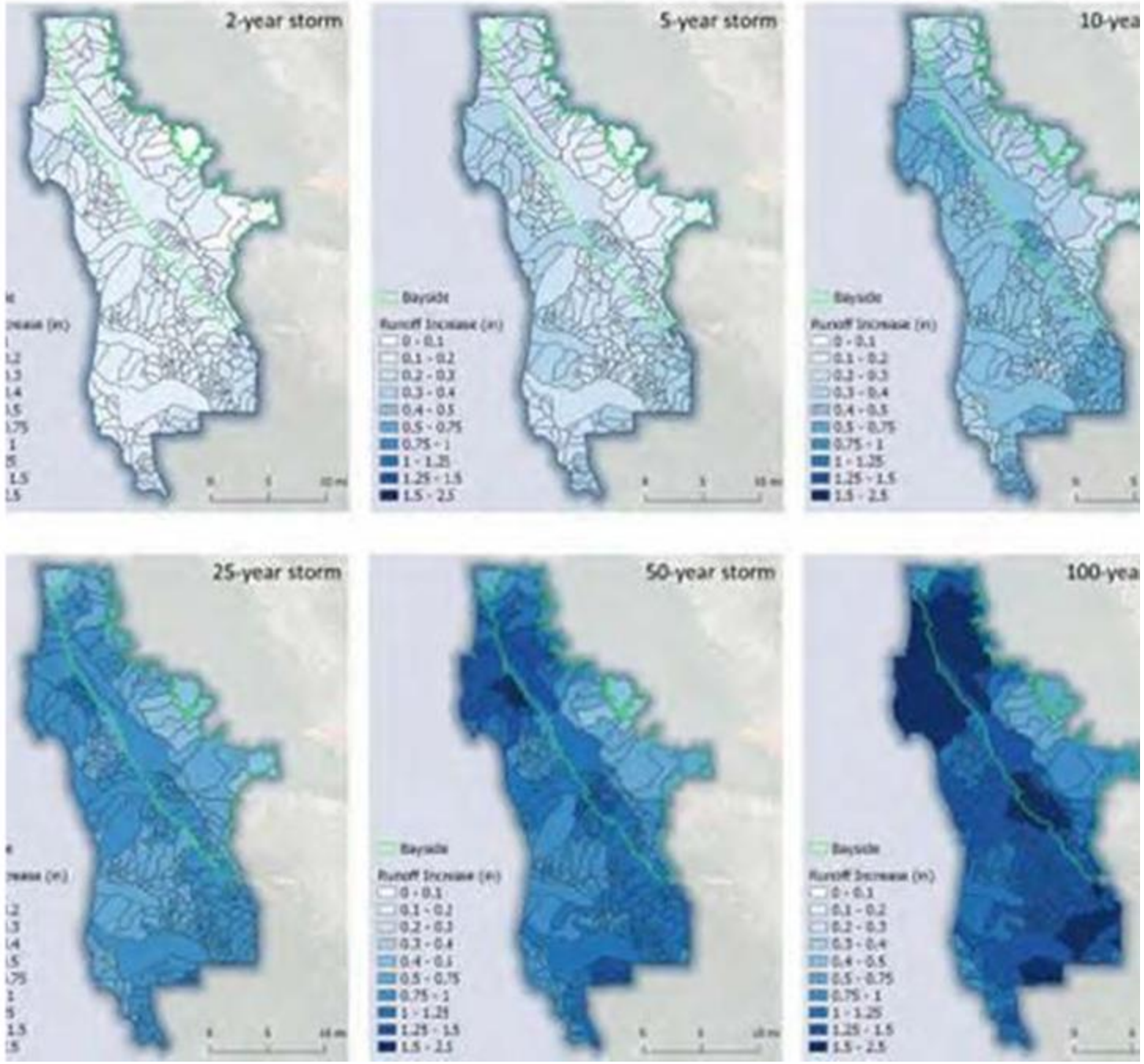
# Planning for Resilience and Brownfields

- Brownfields Area-Wide Planning
- Climate-Smart Brownfields Planning
- Equitable Development Activities
- Economic Impact Analysis
- Infrastructure Evaluation
- Market Impact Studies
- Site Reuse Evaluations and Visioning

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# Case Study: Scissortail Park

- Planned 70-acre Urban Park connecting the urban core of the community to the adjacent river.
- Construction of the project funded by a municipal, penny sales tax for capital improvement projects that create a better quality of life for city residents ($132M).


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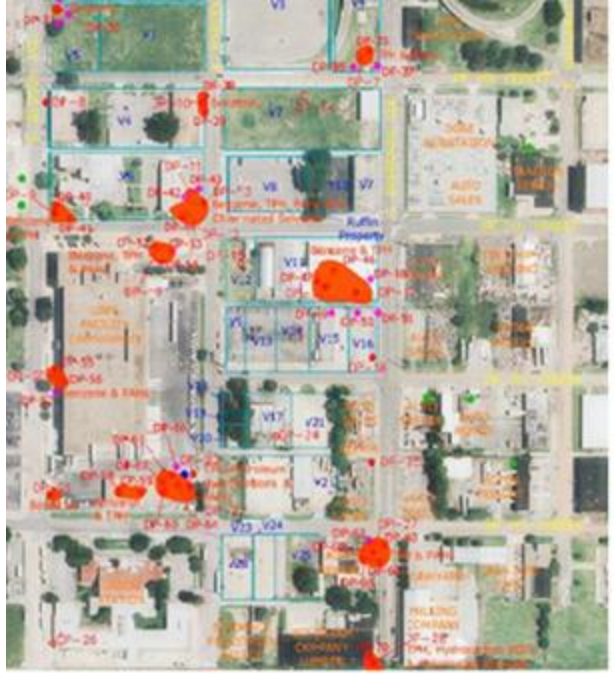

# Environmental Assessment

- USEPA Brownfields Program funded Phase I ESA's as properties were acquired. $350,000 site-specific brownfields assessment grant funded additional Phase I ESA's and comprehensive Phase II ESA.
- The assessment identified numerous recognized environmental conditions.
- As an acquisition strategy, the City did not negotiate property values based on potential environmental concerns.

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# Systemic Strategies

- Community engagement, design, and funding discussions were concurrent with environmental assessment. Communication was key.
- Applied for funding at every opportunity, emphasizing brownfields to greenfield and restored natural functions! Received $600,000 brownfields cleanup grants.
- Innovative mitigation measures. Cleanup dollars helped to pay for a liner in the water feature.

"It's an aspirational park, in that it's the kind of amenity that people used to imagine only existing in other places," ~ OKC Mayor, David Holt

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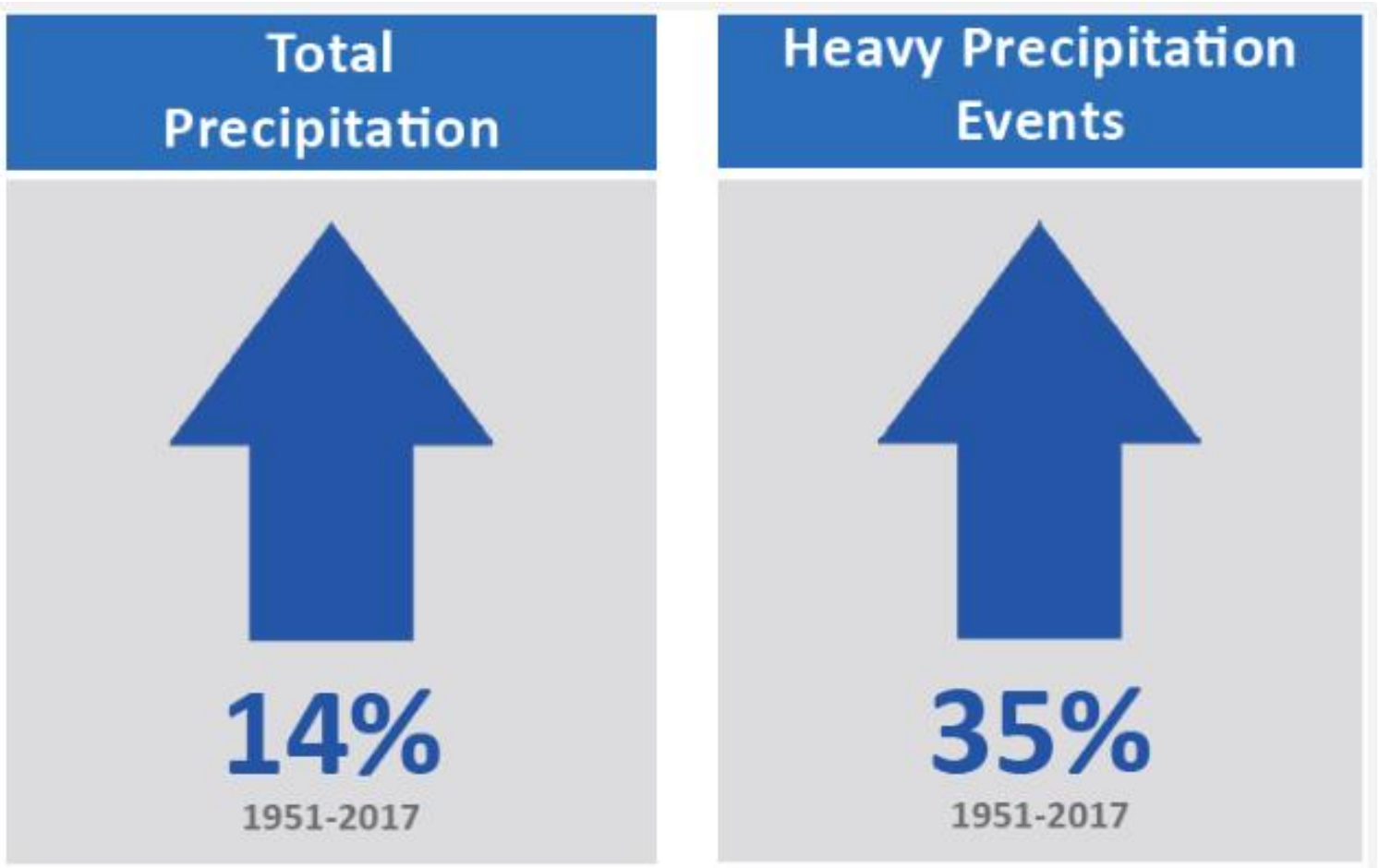
Evan Kanji

# Geosyntec

# Precipitation and Climate Change in the Great Lakes Basin




Source: GLISA

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# Disinvestment and Flood Risk

- Case Study: Detroit
  - Experienced two 500 year floods in the span of seven years, along with three other major flooding events


Image Credit: Grist

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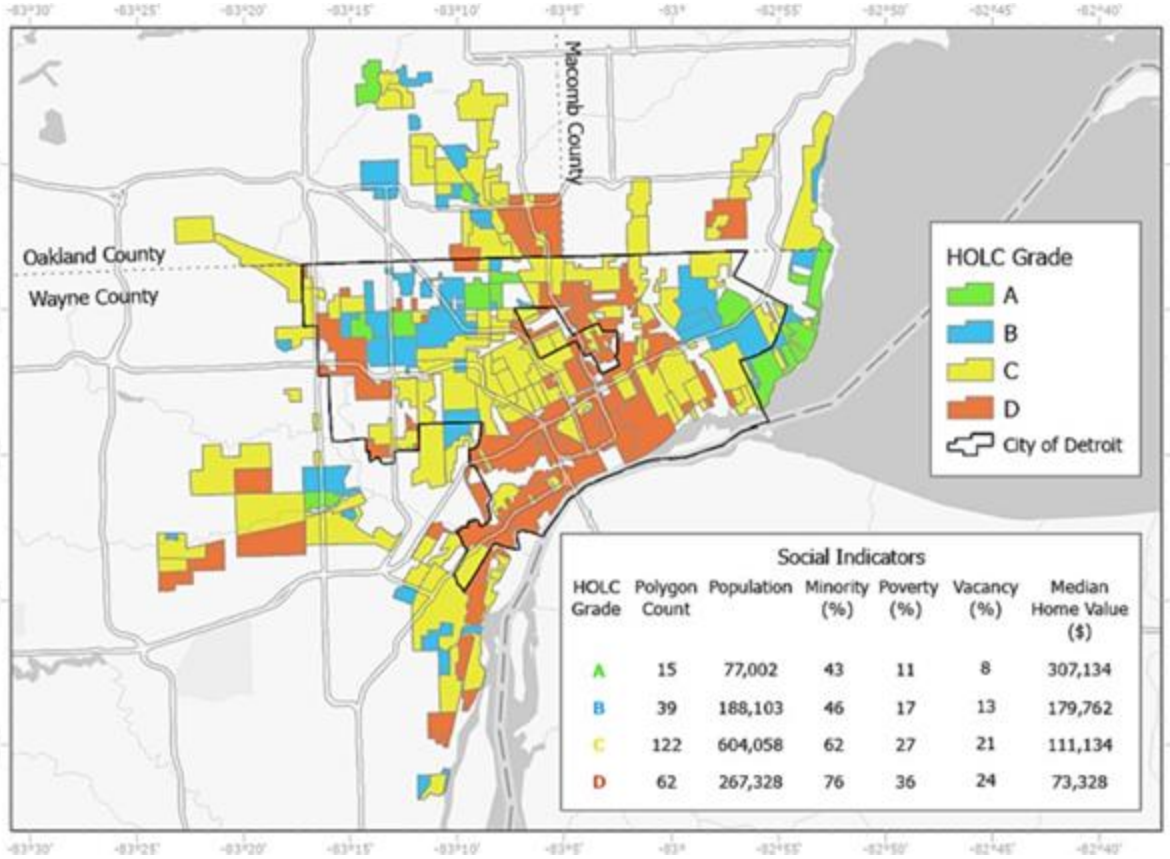
# The Legacies of Disinvestment on Flood Risk




Social Indicators

| HOLC Grade | Polygon Count | Population | Minority (%) | Poverty (%) | Vacancy (%) | Median Home Value ($) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 15 | 77,002 | 43 | 11 | 8 | 307,134 |
| B | 39 | 188,103 | 46 | 17 | 13 | 179,762 |
| C | 122 | 604,058 | 62 | 27 | 21 | 111,134 |
| D | 62 | 267,328 | 76 | 36 | 24 | 73,328 |

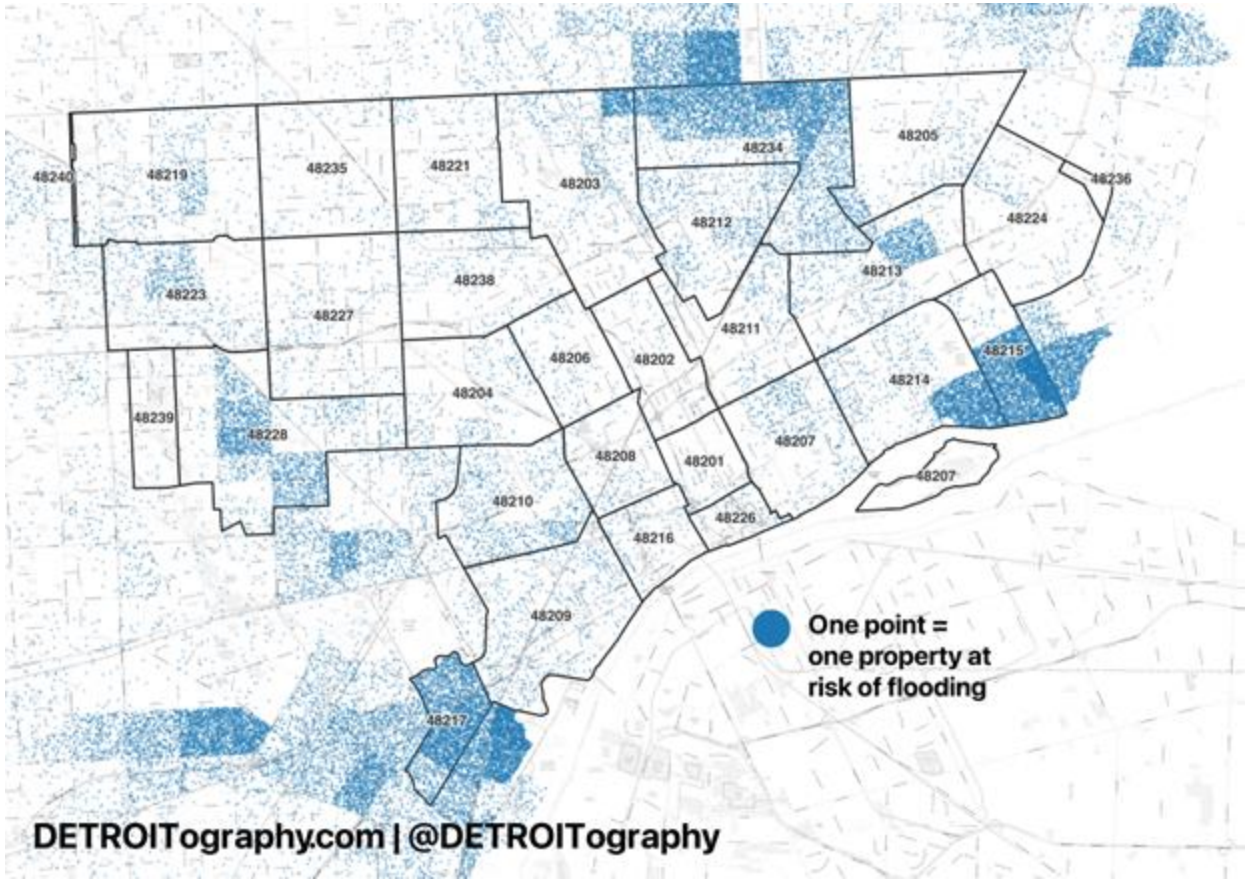



Image Credits: Napieralski et al, Detroitography (with data from First Street Foundation flood model)

# The Legacies of Disinvestment on Flood Risk

Detroit: (From Napieralski et al)

| HOLC Grade | Average Land Surface Temp. Difference | Tree Canopy (%)[1] | Impervious Surface (%)[1] | Percent Greenness (NDVI≥0.30)[2] | Current Stream Density (km/km²)[3] | Current Wetland Density (m²/km²)[4] | Historic Stream Density (km/km²)[5] | Historic Wetland Density (m²/km²)[5] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | −1.4 | 25.4 | 43.8 | 34.7 | 0.43 | 0 | 0.83 | 5060 |
| B | −0.5 | 17.0 | 53.0 | 26.3 | 0.32 | 1834 | 0.85 | 5063 |
| C | +0.08 | 12.4 | 58.2 | 22.4 | 0.46 | 1323 | 0.60 | 6164 |
| D | +0.52 | 8.5 | 61.1 | 17.5 | 0.29 | 1796 | 0.40 | 11,849 |

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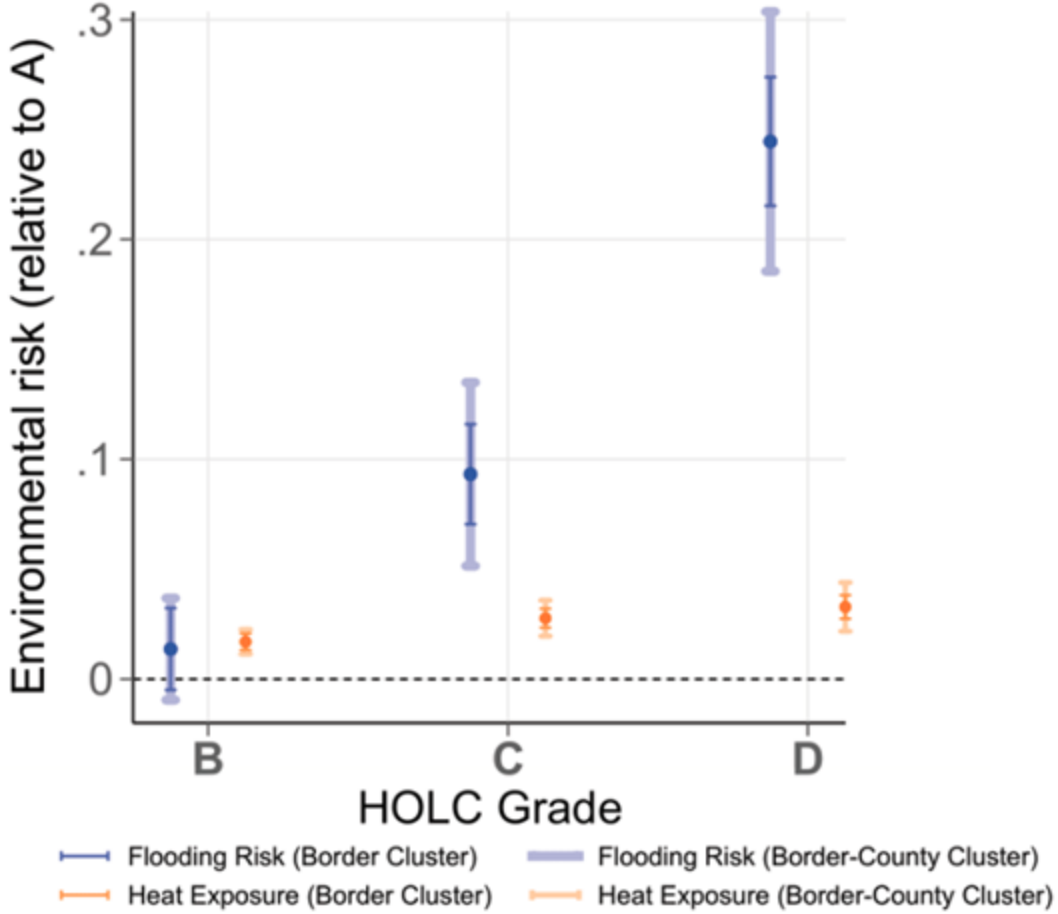
# The Legacies of Disinvestment on Flood Risk

Nationally: (Salazar-Miranda et al)

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# Flood Infrastructure Disinvestment

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"The communities that have wealth can afford insurance, they can afford rain gardens, they can manage coastlines...redlined neighborhoods are struck with the legacy of 70 to 80 years ago and the continued impacts on the quality of life." - Napieralski

Federal funding has decreased from funding 63% of water infrastructure in 1977 to 9% in 2017.

# The Disproportionate Burden of Brownfields

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| TABLE 1: Proportions of Key Demographics in the Total Near Site Population and the Total U.S. Population | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Population within 0.5mile of All Sites | Population within 1 mile of All Sites | Population within 3 miles of All Sites | U.S. Population |
| Minority | 55.2% | 53.6% | 47.8% | 39.6% |
| Below poverty level | 22.1% | 20.1% | 16.3% | 13.7% |
| Linguistically isolated | 7.4% | 7.2% | 6.5% | 5.1% |
| Less than a High School Education | 17.8% | 16.8% | 14.2% | 12.5% |

(US EPA, 2020)

Black people make up **double the population** in neighborhoods within 0.5 mile of a brownfield compared to their percentage of the US as a whole. The siting of brownfields **often mirrors longer-standing racial segregation patterns**, due to the legacies of **industrial zoning as a segregation tool, redlining, devalued land, and neighborhood-level disinvestment.**

# Waterfront Brownfields and Shoreline Naturalization

**Case Study: West Don Lands, Toronto**

- Former industrial lands at the mouth of the Don River along Lake Ontario.
- Redeveloped into parks, housing, and flood resilient infrastructure along the Don River
- Working on naturalization of the river mouth - at present, floodwaters from the Don would overwhelm much of the area surrounding the rivermouth during a major storm
- Geosyntec role: lead design role for long-term environmental risk management measure (cutoff walls along the river channel and multi-composite riverbed barrier)

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Image Credits: Spacing.ca

# From Brownfield to Flood-Resilient Rivermouth


Image Credit: Waterfront Toronto

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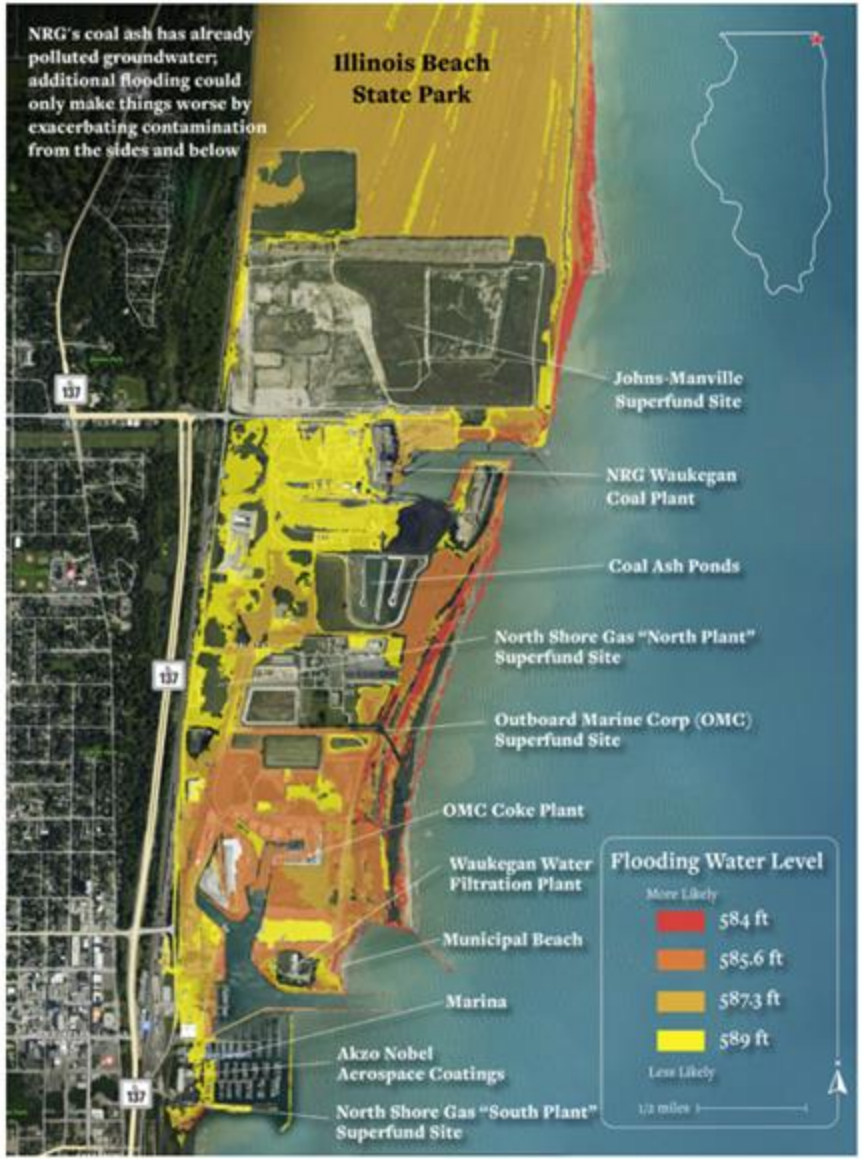
# Waterfront Brownfield Inundation




Source: Environmental Law and Policy Center

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Image Credit: American Planning Association

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# *Who are we redeveloping for?*

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## Residential Mobility, Brownfield Remediation and Environmental Gentrification in Chicago

Richard T. Melstrom and Rose Mohammadi

*Published online before print* October 20, 2021, 060520-0077R1; DOI: https://doi.org/10.3368/le.98.1.060520-0077R1

"When pollution is located in minority and low-income communities where cleanup has the potential to reduce injustice, post-cleanup move-in by higher-income white residents will push poor, predominantly minority residents away, maintaining disparities in pollution exposure."

# Defining Green Gentrification - Framing the Issue

Three dimensions of gentrification:

- Physical displacement of lower-income residents
- Displacement of existing cultures and institutions that support them
- Physical transformation of neighborhood spaces

*(adapted from The Uproot Project at the University of Texas)*

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# The Present Paradigm - Economics First


Credit: Bruce Firestone

- EPA Brownfields Grants and State equivalents typically only cover the assessment and remediation part of redevelopment - significantly easier for bigger developers whose main motive is profit to get them.
- Communities are rarely engaged with deeply until grant funding is obtained, at which point projects are mostly planned already.

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# How can we better prioritize the needs of the community and the ecosystem in brownfields work?

# Participatory Planning: A Deeper Form of Engagement

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Guiding Principle:

# Engagement without power-sharing is just checking a box.

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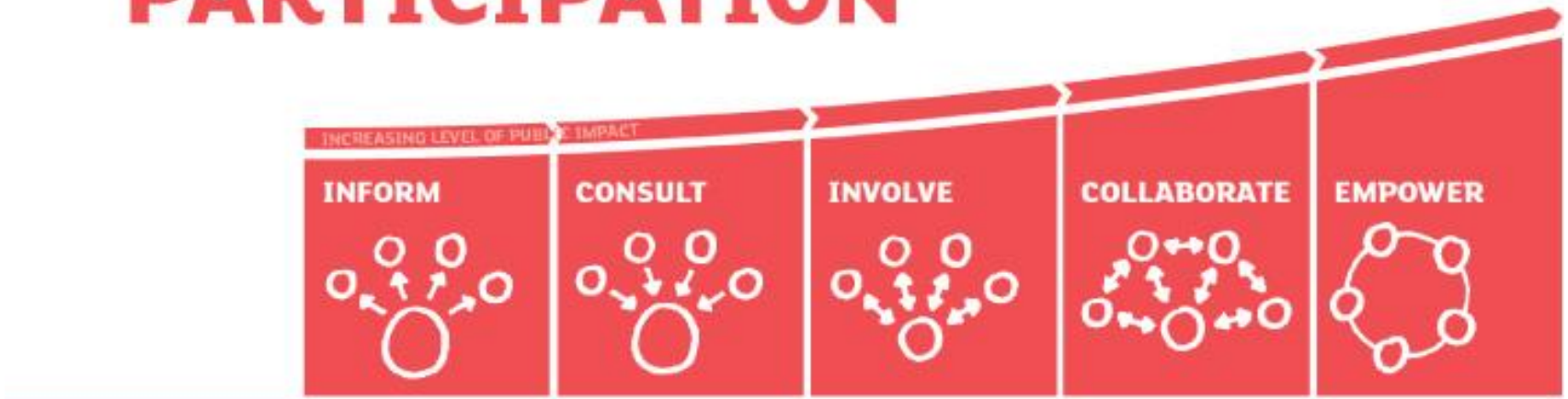
# IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION




| | INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GOAL | To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner. | To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions. | To work with the public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making. | To place final decision-making in the hands of the public. |
| PROMISE | "We will keep you informed" | "We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns." | "We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made." | "We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible." | "We will implement what you decide." |

Source: iap2.org


Source: Northwest Side Community Development Corporation

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Planning for Real 136 by Katy Wrathall via flickr, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Village in Malawi by SuSanA Secretariat / Katherine Anderson via flickr, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

# Participatory Planning Best Practices:

- Show up early and often!
- Meet people where they already are:
  - Show up to existing events, collaborate with existing institutions
  - Plan dedicated events to be easily accessible and meeting residents basic needs
- Plan for diverse languages and cultures:
  - Arrange translation beforehand
  - Be considerate of different cultural needs and norms
- Define your process before, and be transparent about your limitations
  - Transparency about level of power-sharing and involvement
- Make it fun!
  - Favorite examples: community barbecues, participatory bike rides - effective participation doesn't have to be formal

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Tory Kress

# Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee

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DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

Sarah Bregant

# Northwest Side Community Development Corporation

# Green Tech Station:
# A Brownfields Opportunity Fulfilled

The Future of Fresh Water:
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
2025 Annual Conference

Milwaukee, WI
May 15, 2025

Tory Kress & Sarah Bregant

NORTHWEST SIDE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

City of Milwaukee

RACM
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE

# Agenda

- Background
  - Milwaukee's Brownfield Program
  - 30th Street Industrial Corridor
- Development of Green Tech Station
  - Site History & timeline
  - The Project & Partners
- Green Tech Station Features
  - Youth Field Trips
  - Research & Training
  - Community Involvement & Events
  - Public Art
- Process & Logistics
- Lessons Learned & Takeaways

# Milwaukee's Brownfield Program

- Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee (RACM) was created in 1958 by State Statute. It's mission:
  - Eliminate blighting and slum conditions that inhibit neighborhood reinvestment;
  - Foster and promote business expansion and job creation; and
  - Facilitate new business and housing development.
- 104 East Nash Street - "the original brownfield"
  - Prior to 1988, City foreclosed on any and all tax delinquent properties
  - Once foreclosure occurs, City has to manage properties – public safety
  - Protect the City from unknowingly acquiring environmental liability
  - In-rem screenings

# Milwaukee's Brownfield Program

## GOALS

- Protect public health, safety and the environment
- Eliminate blight
- Utilize existing infrastructure
- Facilitate redevelopment projects – residential, commercial, industrial
- Increase tax revenue
- Create jobs

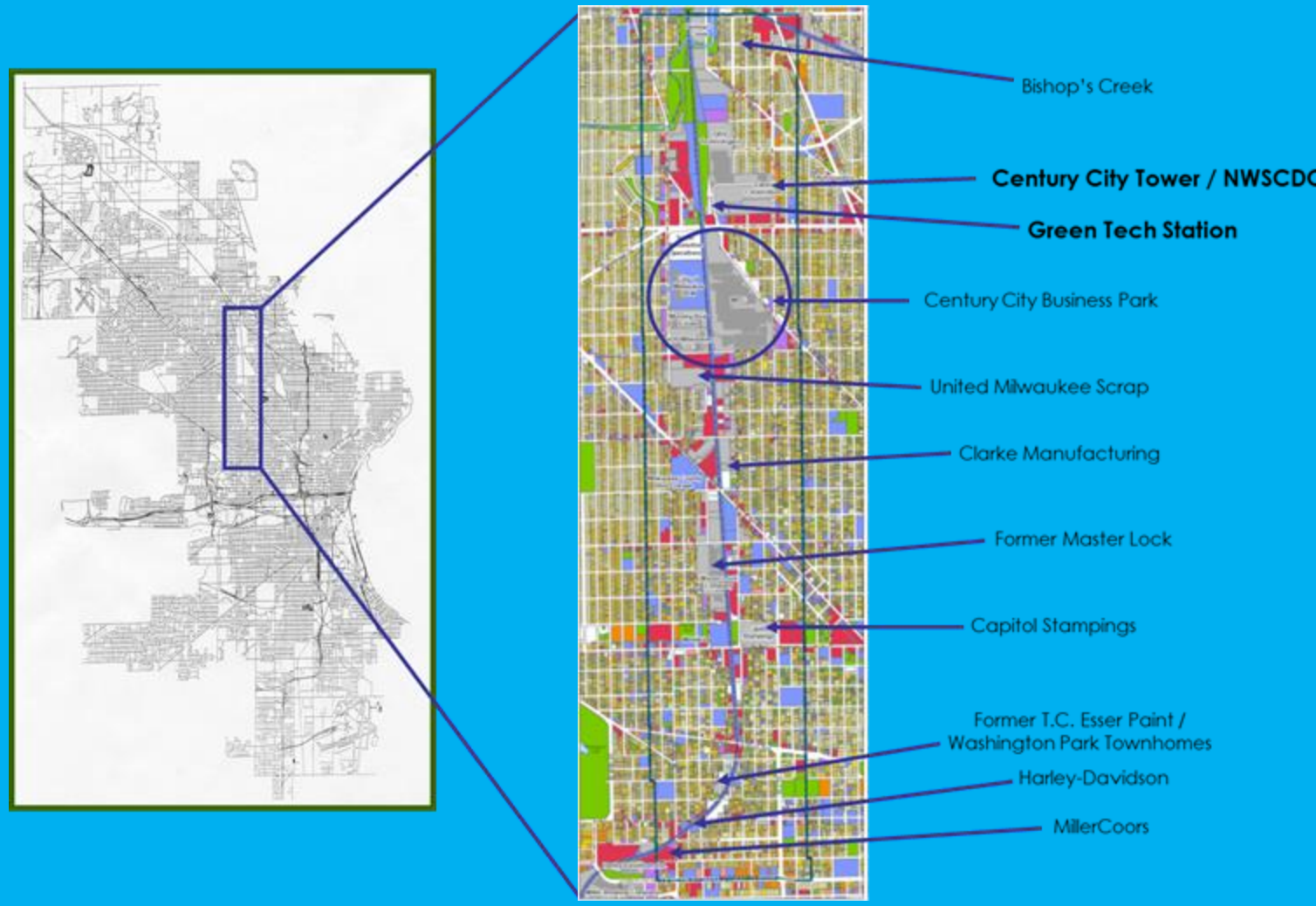
## ROLES

- Assist with real estate transactions (acquisitions, sales, foreclosures)
- Manage environmental investigation and cleanup of sites
- Coordinate with developers through redevelopment process
- Community outreach
- Grant management
- Catalytic and special projects

# 30th Street Industrial Corridor

## Long Term Reinvention Strategy

- Business Retention & Attraction
- Neighborhood Stabilization
- Workforce Development
- Brownfield Initiative
- Sustainability
  - Residential/Business BMPs
  - Infrastructure
  - Stormwater
- Urban Agriculture
- Catalytic Projects



# Site History


1937


1951


1970


1990


2015

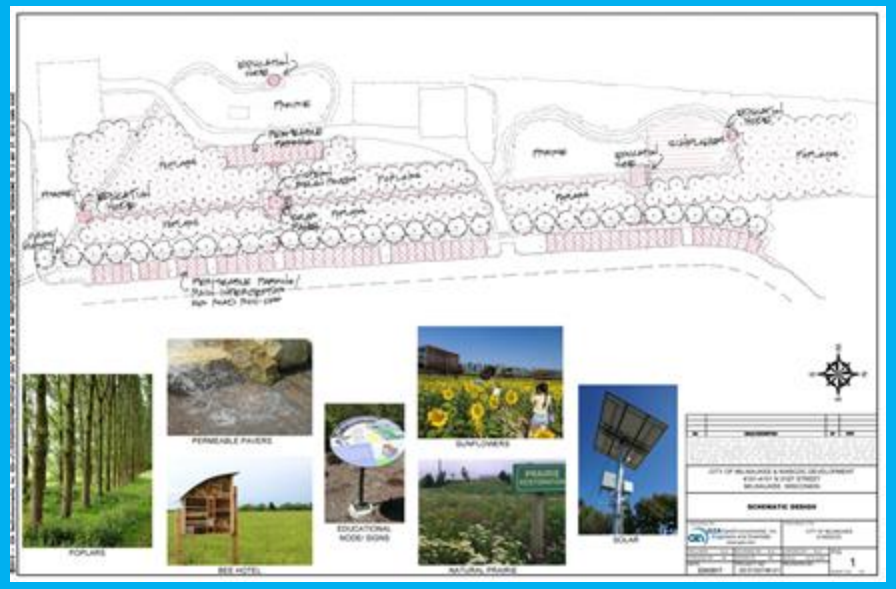
Source: Milwaukee County Land Information

# Pre-Development Timeline

- 2007
  - March
    - Receive Special Inspection Warrant
    - Receive WDNR and EPA Eligibility Approval
  - April - Initiated Site Investigation
  - August - Foreclosed on Property
- 2010
  - EPA Stormwater Management Feasibility Study
- 2013
  - Gorman NOVA Tech Proposal
- 2014
  - Re.Invest I-Park Study Completed
  - Ownership Transfers to RACM
- 2015
  - EPA Brownfield Grant Awarded
- 2016
  - Project Partners Assembled & Visioning Begins

# The Project & The Partners

- Transforming a brownfield into a green infrastructure demonstration & education center
- Partners:
  - NWSCDC
  - City of Milwaukee/RACM
  - Reflo
  - GZA/Ramboll
  - Clean Wisconsin
  - Triangle Neighborhood Association
- Funding from:
  - EPA
  - US Forest Service/ GLRI
  - MMSD
  - Fund for Lake Michigan
  - Kohls
  - Greater Milwaukee Foundation
  - and more…



# Redevelopment Timeline

- 2017
  - Additional investigation & cleanup planning
  - Community engagement & grant writing
- 2018
  - Additional partner engagement & fundraising
  - 10-year lease signed
  - Project bid out & construction begins
- 2019
  - Trees, prairie, wetland, & green infrastructure installed
- 2020 - 2021
  - Pavilion /classroom constructed
  - Soft opening, field trips & research begin
- 2022
  - More events & field trips – Citywide Arbor Day celebration
  - Solar array installed
  - African water vessel sculptures installed
- 2023
  - WaterMarker installed
  - Grand opening / ribbon-cutting
- 2024-2025
  - Ongoing maintenance & programming

# Green Tech Station Features

Native plants & trees

20,000 gallon underground cistern

Permeable pavement

4 bioswales

Educational signage & walking paths

Solar panels on outdoor classroom

# Youth Field Trips

2019-2025: 3,000 visitors
15-20 school field trips per year

# Research & Training

Marquette University & USGS conducting research
Side-by-side test cells for green infrastructure experiments & product testing
Hands-on workshops for teens

# Community Involvement & Events

Volunteer workdays, cistern build day, grand opening/ribbon cutting, art unveiling, tours, Doors Open MKE, and more!

# Incorporating Public Art



Aldo Leopold benches & bottle cap mosaic by ArtWorks for Milwaukee

# Incorporating Public Art


African water vessel sculptures &
'G' WaterMarker

# Process

- 10-year lease
- Community & funder engagement
- Online forms
- Activation & events
- Maintenance
- Ongoing project team meetings

## Green Tech Station Site Reservation Request

Green Tech Station is an outdoor environmental education and research destination located at 4101 N. 31st Street in Milwaukee, WI.

We are currently accepting groups for tours, field trips, meetings, research, volunteer activities, or other events. Please fill out the form below with details on your proposed visit.

Northwest Side Community Development Corporation (NWSCDC) staff will follow up to confirm your request.

**Main Contact Name** *

First | Last

**Email** * | **Phone** *

**School or Entity** *

**Grade Level (if school group)**

**Brief Event Description** *

*Field trip, tour, meeting, research, volunteering, other event, etc.*

**Date of Activity** * | **Beginning Time** * | **Ending Time** *

**Estimated Number of Attendees** *

# Lessons Learned / Takeaways


- Strong, committed & capable partnerships
- Expanding breadth brings more visitors, funding, & awareness
- The maintenance struggle is real, but is also an opportunity to support small businesses & workforce development
- Be flexible!

# Thank you!

**Tory Kress, P.E., AICP**
tkress@milwaukee.gov
414-286-8268

**Sarah Bregant, AICP**
sarah.b@nwscdc.org
414-444-8200 x.8104

Links:

- nwscdc.org/planning-green-tech
- city.milwaukee.gov/DCD/CityRealEstate/BrownfieldRedevelopment

NORTHWEST SIDE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

City of Milwaukee

RACM REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE

# Thank You Milwaukee + Northwest Side CDC!

GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE
L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

# Upcoming Funding Opportunities:

- Federal Programs- USEPA Brownfields Grants
- State Programs- Petroleum storage tank funds, brownfields funds/credits, redevelopment funds, community development funds, historic tax credits, housing programs, workforce programs, loans, land trusts/banks
- Local Programs- Redevelopment funds, community development funds, tax increment finance districts, housing programs, workforce programs, designated sales tax initiatives

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# GEOSYNTEC + CITIES INITIATIVE PILOT PROGRAM

**How do we build more resilient, community driven brownfield transformations?**

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# GEOSYNTEC + CITIES INITIATIVE PILOT PROGRAM

- Initial site selection
- Flood + climate resiliency planning
- Initial rounds of participatory planning
- Grant-writing to conduct full-scale Environmental Site Assessments, Participatory Planning, Remediation, and Flood-Resilient Redevelopment for Public and Community uses

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# SMALL-GROUP VISIONING

Think of a vacant lot or brownfield property in one of your communities, and envision how you might start to transform it.

Some possible things to consider:

- Site-specific challenges and ownership
- Barriers to redevelopment
- What are the needs of the surrounding community and ecosystem?
- Possible partners

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# CLOSING CEREMONY

## SIMONE BALLROOM 2

## TODAY

## 4:45 PM – 5:30 PM

GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE
L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

# AWARDS DINNER

## SIMONE BALLROOM 2

TODAY

7:30 PM

We can work together to **shift the paradigm** and protect the Future of Fresh Water in the Great Lakes.

# THANK YOU

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L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

PRESENTED BY AQUA ACTION

# THE FUTURE OF FRESH WATER | L'AVENIR DE DE L'EAU DOUCE

MAY 14 - 16, 2025 MILWAUKEE, WI

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