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Washtenaw County Brownfield Program Two-Year Report Shows Steady Success Despite Pandemic

WASHTENAW COUNTY, MI., June 11, 2021 – Washtenaw County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (WCBRA) recently released the program’s two-year report, which reflects an active program over the last two years, despite economic slow-downs due to the pandemic. The report includes information about activities, grant programs, and financial data from 2019 and 2020.

WCBRA, which is housed in the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED), leveraged \$124 million in private investment, over the two-year period, from six active construction projects supported by brownfield incentives, two completed projects, and two new approved Brownfield Plans.

Major accomplishments include the following:

- The City of Ann Arbor completed most of the site remediation at the Leslie Science and Nature Center by the end of 2020, supported by a \$538,000 Grant from the County Local Brownfield Revolving Fund. The Local Brownfield Revolving Fund is funded by projects in the Brownfield program.
- A condominium project on North Ashley Street in Ann Arbor broke ground in 2019 and was more than 50% complete by the end of 2020
- The former "Lower Town" redevelopment, now known as Beekman on Broadway, completed its first phase of redevelopment in 2020, including environmental remediation resulting in an over 80% drop in dry-cleaning solvent contamination leaving the site. Phase one added 250 apartments to Ann Arbor, including 8 out of 15 planned affordable housing units provided with this first phase
- The White Street site redevelopment, part of the Swift Lane affordable housing redevelopment, was completed in Ann Arbor with help from a \$600,000 County LBRF grant, and resulted in the addition of 32 affordable housing units
- The Thompson Block redevelopment in Depot Town was completed, adding 20 urban loft apartments, with ground floor restaurant and entertainment space to be opened in 2021

“Our program continues to grow as we’ve expanded our grant programs and found new opportunities to help our community partners redevelop challenging brownfield sites,” said Trevor Woollatt, the Brownfield Authority Chair. “We have resources at the Federal, State, and County level to assist communities and property owners tackle tough sites,” said Woollatt.

Major accomplishments align with OCED and WCBRA's goal of investing in the community, revitalizing neighborhoods, creating new tax base, and mitigating threats to public health and the environment.

In line with the 2018 Racial Equity Policy and the recent launch of the [2020 Opportunity Index](#), WCBRA added equity criteria to its Environmental Assessment Grant program and plans to increase funding to redevelopment projects located in low and very low opportunity areas in the County.

To view the Two-Year Brownfield Program Report, visit <http://bit.ly/brownfield21>.

Since its establishment in 1999, WCBRA has completed 18 projects, leveraged \$648 million dollars of private investment with only \$21.9 million of public investment of Brownfield TIF funding, redeveloped 1,068 acres of land throughout the County, and created 1,974 jobs. Learn more at <https://www.washtenaw.org/brownfields>.

Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) is a government agency committed to stepping out of traditional government roles to drive long-term system changes that increase equity and opportunity for all residents. For more information, please visit www.washtenaw.org/oced or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter at @washtenawOCED.