

Case Studies: Brownfield Redevelopment

FERNWOOD GROWING CENTER Toledo, Lucas County

Date Completed: Phase 1 was completed in May of 2011.

Description: The Toledo Community Development Corporation (TCDC) transformed a brownfield into a site that features urban agriculture as a new industry, and one designed specifically for community engagement. The TCDC has since hired an urban farm manager to provide oversight of the Fernwood Growing Center.

Project Size: Fernwood Growing Center is on a donated, former parking lot that encompasses 2 acres.

*Below: Marigold & Tomato Vertical Hydroponic Garden
(Photo: The Toledo Community Development Corporation)*



Urban Farm Planned for New Fernwood Green District, Toledo, Ohio

The City of Toledo and its partners are using urban agriculture as one of the major redevelopment strategies for a newly designated future green district containing multiple brownfield properties. The city plans to reuse a two-acre, former spark plug manufacturing site as the location of the Fernwood Growing Center. The site is within a Brownfields Impact Area along the Detroit-Smead Corridor, which contains 19 brownfields and nearly 200 vacant lots. This corridor runs through one of Toledo's housing priority districts, where there is a high rate of poverty. Residents report that the closest source of fresh produce is over two miles away.

With the help of EPA funding and technical assistance from EPA Region 5, the green district pilot project will be completed in two phases. Phase one focused on the development of a business planning tool that can be used as a framework by all communities interested in urban agriculture projects. This tool will help assess the infrastructure, tasks, relationships, and costs required to create a sustainable urban agriculture project. Phase two will evaluate opportunities for urban agriculture and other sustainable development projects that will form the foundation of a "green district." Reuse of the sites within the Detroit-Smead Corridor will spur an overall revitalization of the area, improve environmental quality, provide career opportunities for local residents, improve access to nutritious food, and provide the neighborhood with a new optimism.



Potential layout of the Fernwood Growing Center

Developer/Client/Owner:

Toledo Community Development Corporation (TCDC)
1611 N. Detroit Ave.
Toledo, Ohio 43607
www.toledocdc.org

Designers/Consultants:

The Collaborative
500 Madison Ave
Toledo, OH 43604
<http://www.thecollaborativeinc.com/>

Environmental Protection Agency
US EPA, Region 5
77 W. Jackson Blvd. SM-7J
Chicago, IL 60604
www.epa.gov

*Below: Vertical Hydroponic Strawberry Garden
(Photo: Center for Innovative Food Technology)*



Key Features:

- Training center.
- Hoop houses for year round growing.
- 2,100 vertical hydroponic gardens.
- Retail market.
- Employs organic growing practices.

Project Cost: \$700,000

Maintenance Cost: \$20,000/year. The project is operated by Fernwood Growing Center. The Center has just begun to make money and netted \$1,000 in its first summer selling produce at the Toledo Farmer's Market. In addition, two restaurants were recently signed to purchase herbs from the market during the summer months for a total of \$2,500.

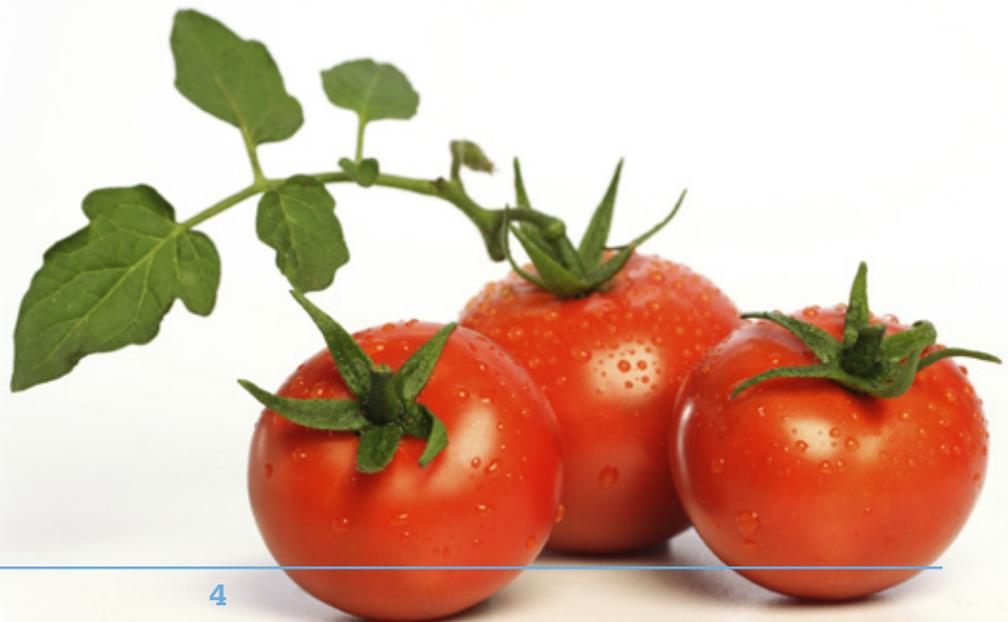
Funding Sources / Incentives:

Phase 1

- \$200,000 Brownfield Cleanup Grant from US EPA through the City of Toledo's Department of Environmental Services;
- \$100,000 economic development grant from the Ohio Community Development Finance Fund;
- \$35,000 Pre-development grant from the Toledo Lucas County Port Authority.
- \$20,000 pre-development grant from the Ohio Community Development Finance Fund.

Phase 2

- \$345,000 ; The 2nd phase should begin March 2014 contingent upon the remaining portion of funding being raised.



Additional Support:

Technical assistance was provided through the EPA Brownfields Office.

Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur’s office was strategic in connecting TCDC with the US EPA Region 5 group. Congresswoman Kaptur was the catalyst through which Fernwood Growing Center became the brownfield to urban agriculture pilot project for US EPA Region 5.

Applicable Zoning Regulations: A zoning change was required; a special use permit for urban agriculture was granted.

Lessons Learned: The partnership structure of a project is critical. Collaboration is dependent upon a shared vision from the idea stage on.

*Below: Neighborhood Resident
(Photo: The Toledo Community Development Corporation)*

