

## **BERKSHIRE BROWNFIELD PROGRAM SUMMARY SHEET**

### Berkshire Brownfield Program – Site Assessment Funds

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission was recently selected by the Environmental Protection Agency to receive a \$100,000 Petroleum Assessment and a \$200,000 Hazardous Site Assessment Grants. It is the goal of the Berkshire Brownfield Program to target the remediation and sustainable reuse of contaminated and abandoned or underused sites throughout Berkshire County. The overall impacts of known brownfield sites and other languishing sites with known or unknown contamination continue to cripple for the region in terms of lost tax revenues, decreased job opportunities, unknown health and safety risks, and a stigmatized economic condition. Site assessment activities provide the first step toward turning these sites into productive reuse.

According to the state's DEP site inventory list there are over 1,110 brownfield sites in the region. However, it is expected that this number is much higher since many sites sit idle or under-used and have yet to be reported to state agencies. Generally, local Brownfield sites are either former manufacturing or commercial operations (many of which are contaminated with PCB's, asbestos, oil or other hazardous material) or sites where unintended spills have occurred (such as gas or home heating oil).

### Expanding the Brownfield Assessment Program

This December, BRPC will request \$200,000 each from the **EPA's Brownfield Hazardous Site Assessment and the Petroleum Site Assessment Grant** programs. Grant funds will support ongoing assessment work under the existing programs as well as expand assessments throughout Berkshire County. Specifically, funds will be used to conduct the activities:

- Actively coordinate with community stakeholders, public officials, and residents to prepare an expanded list of potential brownfield sites.
- Evaluate, prioritize and select project sites based on a standard set of risk characteristics and redevelopment criteria
- Conduct Phase I and Phase II Site Assessments to determine real environmental conditions and any potential risks to human health
- Conduct a public education program about the physical, environmental and quality of life issues surrounding brownfields in the Berkshires. and cleanup of hazardous waste sites throughout the region. BRPC is requesting hazardous site assessment funds to expand its Brownfield Assessment Program initiated in FY04.

In addition, BRPC is seeking to coordinate with community officials and non-profit redevelopment agencies to apply for up to **\$1 million in Brownfield Revolving Loan Funds**. These funds could be used to assist private and public owners clean up and redevelopment brownfield sites. Ultimately, BRPC seeks to provide the leverage needed to allow for a collaborative approach that enjoys a broad base of regional support, in order to move vacant, abandoned or under-utilized sites toward productive use while improving the health and quality of life for the region's residents.