



**FINAL SUMMARY**  
**A Brownfield Workshop, Neville Island, PA**  
**September 24-27, 2003**

**Organized by:**  
**Neville Island Board of Commissioners**  
**and the Neville Island Development Association**

**Facilitated by:**  
**The Brownfields Center at Carnegie Mellon**  
**Report Prepared by:**  
**Deborah Lange**  
**December 2003**

# **1 Introduction**

Brownfields are old, idled, abandoned or underutilized industrial or commercial properties where real or perceived environmental contamination is a deterrent to the future development of the property. Brownfields can be in rural or urban settings, and figuratively speaking, sit on a three-way cross road of environment, economics, and social welfare (or quality of life.) Brownfields are concurrently a liability and an asset to the communities in which they sit and because of the dichotomy, there is confusion over the best way to proceed with property development. Developers, policy makers, and urban planners embarking on the revitalization of a brownfield site can be overwhelmed with the complexities such as the need for environmental remediation, limitation of liability, and financing options. Because of the environmental, economic and social potential captured in these sites, there is a benefit to overcoming the barriers and developing these sites as quickly as possible.

From September 24-27, 2003, an extended workshop was held to bring specific attention to brownfields in the neighborhood in Neville Township; total population of approximately 1200. This community is located approximately 5 miles north and west of the city of Pittsburgh along the Ohio River. The workshop was a gathering of local stakeholders (citizens, business owners, property owners, developers, investors, politicians, etc.) and outside experts with the mission to explore the options for overcoming the barriers that stand in the way of development. The workshop was a brainstorming event. The outcomes of the workshop formed a framework upon which a plan for strategic brownfield development can be built.

It is important that the results of the workshop be transferred to an entity that will assume future responsibility. The results of the subject workshop were handed over to the Neville Island Development Association for consideration and implementation. This transition is important to assure that the efforts of the workshop are sustainable. Further, this effort should help to position Neville Island for brownfield development support in addition to the funding that has already been received from the US Environmental Protection Agency.

This was the fourth in a series of workshops performed by The Brownfields Center at Carnegie Mellon. Two previous workshops were performed in the Czech Republic and the third was in Ambridge, PA about 5 miles north of Neville Island along the Ohio River.

## **2 History of the Area**

Neville Island is located in the Ohio River downstream some five miles from the center of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It is approximately five miles long and 2000 feet wide with an area of 1200 acres. The Island is home to approximately 1200 residents and the location of many active and abandoned industrial sites. The boundary of the local governing unit, Neville Township, is defined by the Island itself. The terrain of the Island today appears relatively flat thanks to many years of industrial land filling by local industries. Originally the Island exhibited considerable relief.

Neville Island is named for its first owner, General John Neville, who was given the property by an act of Congress in consideration of his valuable service to the Colonies during the Revolutionary War. There is no evidence that the island, previously referred to as Montour's Island or Long Island, was inhabited prior to that time.

Neville died on the Island in 1803. Following his death throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Island was progressively deforested and converted into high quality farmland. During these first hundred years of productive use, the Island became known as the "Market Basket of Pittsburgh". The finest fruits and vegetables offered in the Pittsburgh area for many years were grown on the island on some forty small farms. With the farms well cultivated and the homes neat and well kept, it is understandable that the Island had the reputation of being one of the most idyllic agricultural locations in the whole country. History shows that "Asparagus a la Neville Island" was on the menu at the Waldorf Astoria and that strawberries from the island were featured in fine local hotels and restaurants.

The Island was without a bridge connection to the shores of the Ohio River during most of this time. In 1884, a railroad bed was graded along the south bank of the island and construction of a bridge was started. By the 1890's two bridges had been constructed at the North and South ends of the island connecting Neville Island via streetcar track and railroad to the mainland for the first time. This connection joined the Island to the rapidly industrializing Pittsburgh region and began a change in land use from an agricultural haven to industrial center which would continue throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The early 1900's brought rapid land use transformation to the Island. Several of the farms were sold for industrial development. Construction was started on the Island's first industrial plant, American Steel & Wire. Grand Avenue was constructed down the middle of the island with the residential streets developed in the central and western parts of the Island. World War I accelerated the transformation of the Island to an industrial center and marked the closing chapter in Neville Island's agricultural heritage. In 1918, the U.S. Government acquired 130 acres of the Island via eminent domain for use as a site for a large ammunition plant. Prior to this government action, the farmers who owned much of the Island had generally resisted the efforts of the Pittsburgh iron and steel interests to acquire the land for manufacturing purposes. The urgency of the war effort and eminent domain overcame their resistance and, after the sale of the farms, an army of men arrived on Neville Island to transform the agricultural setting to an industrial site for war time production.

The stately homes of the original farming settlers were removed or demolished and rudely constructed shacks were erected in their place. Large manufacturing plants were laid out and scores of families who had no intention or expectation of moving from the community a few weeks before, were forced to seek homes elsewhere. When the war came to an abrupt end, the government suddenly withdrew and auctioned off its holdings. The farmers who had originally owned the land could not compete as their former farms commanded prices at auction much higher than what they had been previously paid by

the Government. Large manufacturing interests acquired most of the land, setting the stage for the large scale industrial development that now characterizes much of the Island. After the First World War, more than 50 industries, ranging from steel companies to chemical plants, changed the Island forever from a sleepy farm community to an industrial center.

The Dravo Mechling Corporation is one of the industries that has had a significant effect on the Island industrialization. Founded in 1891 by Francis Dravo, the company moved to Neville Island in 1901. Dravo diversified its early steam powered power plant development business into shipbuilding activities, which exploited the location on Neville Island. The initial vessel built by Dravo on the Island in 1915 was the very first steel deck barge built in the U.S., and positioned Dravo and Neville Island to be a major player in the development of the inland waterway system in the U.S. By 1958, Dravo operated the largest inland shipbuilding works in the country, and used the Island for the repair and maintenance of river craft in addition to supporting the corporation's machining and construction interests.

The Dravo shipbuilding industry on Neville Island led to an acceleration of industrial development of the Island during World War II. A month after the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, Dravo officers were summoned to Washington and offered a contract by the US Navy to serve as the lead contractor to produce 300 ships for the war effort. Most of these ships were to be the "Landing Ship, Tank" or LST vessels which were used for amphibious assault in both Europe and the Pacific. The contract committed Dravo to expand their shipbuilding facilities on Neville Island and increase their employment significantly. This greatly increased the development of heavy industrial infrastructure on the entire Island.

The Naval contract committed the company to expand their shipyard facilities at an eventual cost of \$11 million dollars - - a substantial sum at that time. The expansion changed the Island significantly. The existing Dravo "West Yard" was expanded and a new 66 acre facility developed as the "East Yard" to build vessels considerably larger and heavier than attempted previously by Dravo. Existing shop buildings were expanded and new ones added. Office buildings, dispensaries, cafeterias, locker and washroom facilities and parking lots were added to support a war time build up of Dravo employment on the Island from under 1,000 in 1941 to over 16,000 at its peak. Increased electric power demands brought significant expansion of electric distribution and control infrastructure to the Island along with expanded water lines, storm sewers, steam lines and telephone service. In addition to in-plant transportation and parking needs, the Navy built five miles of four lane highway and an auxiliary timber bridge to connect the island to the shore.

The end of the war brought equally rapid reductions to employment on the Island but the infrastructure improvements remained. Dravo reduced employment on Neville Island to 1200 by 1946 as industry converted to a peacetime economy. Ownership of the East Yard was transferred to the U.S. Government, and Dravo returned to peacetime activities of barge and towboat construction, heavy civil construction and the supply of aggregates and concrete. With Neville Island as its western Pennsylvania base, Dravo built several of

the locks and dams that made the rivers navigable and had also supplied concrete for landmark construction projects in the Pittsburgh Area. The shipyard at Neville Island enabled Dravo to produce 56 towboats and over 1000 barges during the 1950's contributing to the growth of bulk materials transport throughout the inland waterway system.

By the mid 1960's Dravo was a widely diversified industrial enterprise which produced and operated towboats, dredges and barges, and also designed and built gantry cranes, space heaters, steel grating, packaged sewage treatment plants, palletizing plants and bulk materials handling equipment. Neville Island was even the home of the 17,000 square foot Dravo Research Center which focused on improvement of existing products and processes and the development of new products.

Like many widely diversified companies of the era, however, Dravo began to falter in the 1970's. The company was broken apart and its far flung divisions sold off or closed down. Neville Island was no longer the centerpiece of a heavy industrial conglomerate and more and more facilities on the island became underutilized or abandoned. Dravo packed up and left the island in 1980's, leaving the area they inhabited pretty much deserted or sold to others for future development.

The demise of the steel industry in Pittsburgh during the 1980's paralleled Dravo's demise and had additional negative impacts on the Island. Many of the plant facilities on Neville Island were part of the steel making and fabrication industry which was concentrated in the Pittsburgh area. The access to good rail and water transportation facilities and industrial utilities made Neville Island an ideal location for the serving the steel industry which lined the three rivers framing the Pittsburgh region. However when many of the furnaces and fabricators were closed during the 1980's, Neville Island industrial activities suffered a nearly fatal blow. The closure of many facilities during this period coupled with increased environmental regulation governing industrial sites has stymied economic development on the Island for the last twenty years. Despite excellent transportation access to rail, water and the Interstate Highway system, close proximity to the Pittsburgh Airport, available utilities of all types and a flat topography, Neville Island remains largely underutilized.

Neville Island in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is a small community with highly contrasting land use. On the eastern side chemical plants and materials companies still operate with the attendant industrial impacts. In the central and western part of the Island some 1200 residents live in small and generally neat homes off the central corridor, Grand Avenue.

The future uses of the Island are decidedly unsettled. The devolution of the 1900's industrial rise and fall has created not only environmental legacies but also new opportunities. The recent construction of the Island Sports Complex has demonstrated how landowner vision, creative engineering and a responsive regulatory environment have combined to change an unusually contaminated site into a vital market force and recreational asset to the Island. What was once a 32 acre Superfund site on the far western edge of the Island is now a \$20 million athletic complex supporting hockey,

soccer, baseball, golf, fitness training and other activities. The new FEDEX/RPS terminal has likewise been developed on the eastern side of the Island in a manner consistent with its environmental legacy. In recent years, other companies such as New Penn Motor Express, West Rentals, Pittsburgh Gear, Tri-State Trailer, Overseas Packaging and Calgon Research Lab have constructed new or modernized facilities that have slowly started to improve the image of Neville Island. Other industries, however, are on their last legs, ready to leave the Island or close altogether.

### **3 Planning Process**

In 2002, Mr. James Barrick, the Township Engineer approached The Brownfields Center at Carnegie Mellon. The idea of the extended workshop, facilitated by The Brownfields Center was introduced as a mechanism to engage stakeholders in a dialogue regarding the role of brownfields in the future of Neville Island. As a neutral platform, The Brownfields Center could create an environment that would encourage open discussion.

The workshop brought together local stakeholders and outside (non-local) experts. Through a number of venues, the outside experts became familiar with the area of interest and the surrounding communities. Armed with this first-hand knowledge, the experts then brainstormed amongst themselves and developed a plan that can provide guidance to the community for ongoing brownfield development initiatives.

#### **3.1 Building the Partnership**

With The Brownfield Center as the facilitator, it was important to build a local, community-based team to organize, implement and accept the results of the workshop. This early buy-in was important for two reasons: a) the level of effort required to orchestrate the workshop; and, b) the need to have an established body that would demonstrate to the broader community the long term importance of and commitment to this event.

The Steering Committee was formed and included:

- **James Barrick** - Township & NIDA Engineer, [jbarrickpe@aol.com](mailto:jbarrickpe@aol.com), 412 741-1377
- **Gregg Brown** - The Brown Group & NIDA, [gabfirst@aol.com](mailto:gabfirst@aol.com), 412 276-3303
- **Jim Johnson** – Allegheny County Dept. of Economic Development, [jjohnston@county.allegheny.pa.us](mailto:jjohnston@county.allegheny.pa.us), 412 350-1027
- **Deborah Lange** - The Brownfields Center at Carnegie Mellon, [dlange@cmu.edu](mailto:dlange@cmu.edu), 412 268-7121
- **Bill Leon** - Neville Township Commissioner, [wSDL@aol.com](mailto:wSDL@aol.com), 412 279-7170
- **Ron Maloney** – Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, [rmaloney@regionalalliance.org](mailto:rmaloney@regionalalliance.org), 412 392-4555 x4540
- **Denise Moore** – Township Secretary, [nevilletownship@aol.com](mailto:nevilletownship@aol.com), 412 264-1977
- **DeWitt Peart** - Allegheny Conference on Community Development, [depeart@rdconsortium.org](mailto:depeart@rdconsortium.org), 412 471-2547
- **Dick Ritchie** - Robert Morris University, [ritchie@rmu.edu](mailto:ritchie@rmu.edu), 412 262-8324

The Committee met on a regular basis between project initiation in January, 2003 and project execution in September, 2003. The partnership was charged with:

- Defining the area of interest/focus
- Identifying and inviting the experts
- Engaging the respective property owners
- Identifying and inviting the local stakeholder groups
- Finding the funding required to execute the workshop
- Designing the meetings and establishing the venues that facilitate the interaction between the experts and the local stakeholders

### ***3.2 Identifying the Area of Interest***

The first assignment for the Partnership was to identify the site or sites that would be the focus of the workshop. This was not an easy task because the need for attention is prevalent across the entire Island. Time and resource; however, would not allow for the attempt at addressing all of the Island's ills. For that reason, attention was directed toward the properties in the vicinity of the Interstate 79 interchange. This is a primary access point to the Island and a critical location in helping to reverse the negative image of the Island.

The specific properties to be addressed are included in Appendix A.

### ***3.3 Defining the Issues***

The interchange area appears to be an asset to the community and therefore symbolizes an opportunity to advance the community. However, the corridor posed a number of challenges as identified by the partnership:

- The properties in the corridor are owned by a number of companies and are in varying levels of activity from fully-occupied to under-occupied to inactive.
- Located at the center of the Island, the Interchange area is bounded on the northwest by residential/recreational areas and on the southeast by heavy industrial operations.
- Population is generally declining and aging.
- Market demand for property is uncertain; but speculators and prowlers exist and property owners are 'holding out.'
- Regionally, there is a negative impression about the Island, both as regards the environmental situation as well as the political situation.

On the contrary, Neville Island has a number of valuable attributes, such as:

- Proximity to the city of Pittsburgh
- Proximity to the Pittsburgh International Airport
- Relatively level topography
- Access to the riverfront that is unobstructed by rail lines
- Relatively good access

### **3.4 Selecting the Experts**

Experts were selected based on issues that are prohibiting or restricting the development of the corridor. There was an attempt made to select experts from outside of the region so as to bring fresh ideas to the problem. Because of the unique approach that the subject workshop offers to the complex subject of brownfield development, the following experts agreed to volunteer their time to participate in the workshop:

✓Charlie Bartsch  
Northeast Midwest Institute  
Washington, DC  
*Area of expertise: Regulatory programs and financing*

✓Ray Hendry  
Landbank  
Lakewood, CO  
*Area of expertise: Acquisition, remediation, development, turn-over*

✓Randy Muller  
Bank of America  
Lawrenceville, GA  
*Area of expertise: Financing of derelict properties*

✓Ira Whitman  
The Whitman Companies  
East Brunswick, NJ  
*Area of expertise: Planning, engineering and regulatory considerations*

✓Jerome S. Chudzik  
Graef, Anhalt, Schloemer & Assoc  
Milwaukee, WI  
*Area of expertise: Planning and Engineering*

✓Ron Littlefield  
Councilman  
Chattanooga, TN  
*Area of expertise: City planning and firsthand experience with revitalizing derelict urban properties*

✓Jonathan Spergel  
Manko Gold Katcher & Fox, LLP  
Bala Cynwyd, PA  
*Area of expertise: Real estate and environmental law*

### **3.5 Engaging the Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are defined as those having an interest in the outcome of a brownfield development process. For the sake of this series of workshops, stakeholders have been divided into the following categories: Directs and Indirects. Directs are defined as those that have a financial interest in the property of interest and/or have decision making capability and responsibility. These typically include the property owner(s) and the municipal authorities. Indirects can be Primary, Secondary or Tertiary. Primary indirects have the capacity to influence the direction of the redevelopment, but do not necessarily have a financial interest in the result. This category typically includes regulators.



Secondary indirects have no legal nor regulatory authority but can influence the direction of a project. This category can include community development corporations and community based organizations. Tertiary indirects include the public at large but particularly those that may become involved in the project through their self-initiated response to passive solicitations. These stakeholder groups have been defined in more detail below.

### **3.5.1 Owners**

Owners' involvement is critical due to their decision making authority. Without their participation, a workshop has no validity. To the credit of the Partnership, owners of the following properties became enthused participants of the workshop:

- **Dr. James Jeffries**, Silverfox Limo
- **Dean Qualls**, Calgon Carbon
- **Jack Klee & Jack Biseda**, McKees Rocks Industrial Enterprises
- **John Hays**, Martin Marietta Aggregates
- **James Diecks**, Neville Aggregates Company
- **J.J. Gumberg**, Hertz Penske
- **Chuck Snyder, Delvin Miller**, Neville Island Commons
- **Tom & Linda Bowman**, Allison Trailer Court
- **Chuck Schultz**, Pittsburgh Gear
- **Ray Hack**, PennDot
- **Jerry & Dolly Belloma**, Belloma Auto
- **Greater Pittsburgh Aquatic Club**
- **John Cochran**, Allegheny Asphalt
- **George Tony**, Conway Transportation
- **Chuck & Judy Ammon**, Choog's Place
- **Steel City Tire**
- **John Voll**, Tri State Motors
- **Richard Feder**, Port Authority of Allegheny County
- **Ray Vogel**, Carpenters Apprenticeship

### **3.5.2 Indirects**

Indirects do not have a monetary interest in the property but do have a capacity to influence brownfield development. The groups/individuals which were invited to participate in one or more of the workshop events are listed in the subsequent sections of the text. Generally, the following stakeholder groups were represented (exclusive of the owner and municipal government groups as introduced above):

- State and Federal-level public officials
- School Board
- Regulatory agencies
- Planning and economic development entities
- Local businesses

- Historic groups
- Community groups

### 3.5.2.1 Primary Indirects

The following were identified as ‘Primary Indirects’ and subsequently invited for participation in the workshop:

- **Robert Tafelski Jr**, Neville Township Commissioner
- **James F. McGrath**, Neville Township Commissioner
- **Richard Phillips**, Neville Township Commissioner
- **James Hanson**, Neville Township Commissioner
- **Rick Rutter**, Neville Island Development Association
- **Bob Houser**, Neville Island Development Association
- **Brian McKay**, Neville Island Development Association
- **Michael Marmo**, Neville Island Development Association Solicitor
- **National Brownfields Program Coordinator**
- **Linda Garzinski**, United States Environmental Protection Agency
- **Humberto Monsalvo, Jr**, United States Environmental Protection Agency
- **Tom Stolle**, United States Environmental Protection Agency
- **Kathleen McGinty**, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- **John Matviya**, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- **Ellen Kight**, Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development
- **Lynn Heckman**, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development
- **Steve Morgan**, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development
- **Mike Doyle**, United States Congressman
- **Dennis Johnson**, Cornell Educational Center
- **Dr. Edward Nicholson**, President Robert Morris University
- **James Roddey**, Allegheny County Chief Executive
- **Edward Rendell**, Governor of Pennsylvania
- **Catherine Baker Knoll**, Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor
- **Thomas Petrone**, Pennsylvania State Representative
- **Jack Wagner**, Pennsylvania State Senator
- **Rick Santorium**, United States Senator

### 3.5.2.2 Secondary Indirects

The following were identified as ‘Secondary Indirects’ and subsequently invited for participation in the workshop:

- **Joseph Dornbrock**, Airport Area Development Council
- **Matt Mathews**, Allegheny League of Municipalities
- **Sally Haas**, Airport Area Chamber of Commerce
- **Dorothy Antonelli**, Neville Green
- **Jim Hassinger**, S.P.C.
- **Tom Donatelli**, Allegheny County Public Works Department

- **Ron Francis**, County Council
- **Bob O’Conner**, Governor’s Southwest Regional Office
- **Harold Miller**, Southwest Pa Growth Alliance
- **Dennis Davin**, Governor’s Action Team
- **James McCarville**, Port of Pittsburgh Commission
- **Bob Stevenson**, RIDC
- **Randy Forister** – Pittsburgh International Airport
- **John Carlen** – FBO AVCenter
- **Lisa Cessna** – Washington County Planning
- **Richard Feder** – Port Authority of Allegheny County
- **Tom Fox** - Pa Turnpike Authority
- **John Gallo** – Beaver Initiative for Growth
- **Larry Gasparato** – PennVest Region II
- **Cynthia Gitnik** – Beaver County Chamber of Commerce
- **Rob Jones** - Dominion Peoples
- **Jeff Kotula** – Washington County Chamber of Commerce
- **Frank Mancini** – Beaver County Planning
- **Lynn Manion** - Airport Corridor Transportation Assoc. at the Airport Connection
- **Mary Jo Morandini** - Beaver County Transit Authority
- **Max Morgan** - Washington County Council on Economic Development
- **Jim Palmer** - Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development
- **Dick Quasey** - Montour Trail Council
- **Tracy Rapp** – IDC Ind.
- **Sharon Sambol** - Beaver / Butler COG
- **Stan Sattinger** - Montour Run Watershed Assoc.
- **George Scarborough** – CharWest COG
- **Janet Thorne** – Hollow Oak Trust
- **Kim Titley** - Duquesne Light Company
- **Sara Walfoort** - S.P.C.
- **Economic Development Mgr**, Columbia Gas

### **3.5.2.3 Tertiary Indirects**

‘Tertiary Indirects’ are generally defined as the community at large. Invitation to participate in certain workshop events, specifically a public meeting, was made through distribution of announcement through newsletters and posters placed throughout the community.

## **3.6 Outlining the Event**

The workshop covered two half days and two full days with many events designed to allow for interaction between the experts and the local stakeholder groups before the experts retreated into their brainstorming session. It was important that the experts learn the specific details of the brownfields in the corridor but equally important that the

experts learn about the fabric of the community. The workshop started on the afternoon of Wednesday, September 24. The events and proposed participants for each are presented in Table 1. All meetings and event were held at the Robert Morris University Island Sports Center.

Table 1: Workshop Events and Participants

<b>DAY</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>WORKSHOP EVENTS (WSE) AND OTHER ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>ATTENDEES</b>
<b>Wednesday, September 24</b>	1:00-2:45pm	WSE 1: Opening Meeting	Experts, Project Leaders and Property Owners, Committee and Observers
	3:00-3:30pm	Press Conference	Experts, Project Leaders and Property Owners, Committee and Observers
	3:30-4:30pm	Reception	Experts, Project Leaders and Property Owners, Organizers and Observers
	5:30pm	Dinner	Experts and Committee
	8:00pm	Giuliani Lecture (Experts and Special Invitees only)	
<b>Thursday, September 25</b>	8:00-11:00am	WSE 2: Island Tour	Experts and Committee
	11:30-1:00pm	WSE 3: Lunch Meeting with Directs	Experts, Committee and Property Owners
	1:00-3:00pm	WSE 4: Meeting with Primary Indirects	Experts, Committee and Primary Indirects
	3:30-5:30pm	WSE 5: Meeting with Secondary Indirects	Experts, Committee and Secondary Indirects
	5:30-7:00pm	Informal Dinner	Experts and Committee
	7:00pm	WSE 6: Public Meeting	Experts, Committee and Public at large
<b>Friday, September 26</b>	8am-4:30pm	WSE 7: Expert Brainstorming Session	Experts
	6:30pm	"Luau" Dinner	All
<b>Saturday, September 27</b>	8:00-10:00am	WSE 8: Presentation of Expert Results	All
	10:30am	WSE 9: Press Conference	All

### **3.7 Orientation Materials**

Approximately two weeks before the workshop, experts were provided with an orientation book to gain familiarity with the region, community and corridor. The orientation book contained the following information:

- ❖ Introduction – inclusive of workshop objectives, agenda, event descriptions, and invited participants
- ❖ Regional Overview – inclusive of information from the Southwest Pennsylvania Growth Alliance, Pittsburgh International Airport Area Advisory Panel, and the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance (office, industrial, retail statistics as well as county profiles)
- ❖ History of the Neville Island
- ❖ Maps – regional and county level
- ❖ Demographics of Neville Island
- ❖ Description of the Neville Island Development Association
- ❖ Relevant Plans and Issues including Existing Land Use and Constraints, Neville Island Comprehensive Plan (April 1999), Brownfield Revitalization Initiative/Environmental Strategic Plan (February 2001), Grand Avenue and Neville Road Revitalization Plan (November 2001), Riverfront Redevelopment Strategy (September 2001), Community Center Feasibility Study (March 2002), Air Quality Issues, Keystone Opportunity Zone, and Local Economic Revitalization Tax Act
- ❖ Brownfield Property Synopses
- ❖ The Brownfields Center and Robert Morris University
- ❖ Press Coverage – coverage in local newspapers

Note that Expert Biographies were provided in the on-site program and are provided here in Appendix B.

## **4 Workshop Event**

The key workshop events (WSE) are listed below:

- WSE 1: Overview and introduction
  - Overview of workshop events and objectives
  - Introduction and brief statement by each attendee
- WSE 2: Site Visit
  - Allows experts to get ‘first hand’ knowledge of the site
- WSE 3: Meeting with Project Leaders
  - Closed meeting between experts and those having a monetary interest in the development of the property to learn history as well as future vision
- WSE 4: Meeting with Primary Indirects
  - Closed meeting between experts and primary indirects to learn of considerations that may impact site development
- WSE 5: Meeting with Secondary Indirects

- Closed meeting between experts and secondary indirects to learn of other concerns/interests surrounding the property
- WSE 6: Public Meeting
  - Open meeting to collect inputs from the public at large
- WSE 7: Expert Brainstorming Session
  - Experts sequester themselves to brainstorm the possible development alternatives – without interruption from the other participants
  - ‘Runners’ can gather additional information for experts if so requested by the experts
- WSE 8: Presentation Seminar
  - Experts unveil their ideas to the Project Leaders and Indirects
- WSE 9: Press Conference

The workshop opened (WSE 1) with a welcome by Dr. Edward Nicholson (President, Robert Morris University), remarks by Jim Maxwell of FedEx Ground and Allegheny County Executive Jim Roddey, and introduction of the expert panel. Approximately 40 people attend WSE 1.

Day 2 started with a tour of the brownfields in the subject industrial corridor and the sites noted in Appendix A were visited. (WSE 2) FedEx Ground hosted the group for a brief meeting and explained the reasoning behind their presence on the Island: access. They also suggest that ‘good neighbors’ would be those that support the business of ground distribution and transportation.

Prior to the tour, a discussion amongst the experts emphasized the need to focus – too many issues, too little time. Specifically, what does Neville Island really want to happen with the future of the Island? The visit to FedEx Ground was particularly interesting in that it demonstrates an appropriate use for the Island properties and it is a credible ‘anchor tenant’ for the Island.

After the tour, the experts had a lunch meeting (WSE 3) with a few property owners including representatives from Choog’s, Inc., Steel City Tire, Carpenter’s Apprenticeship, and Conway Central Express.

The meeting between the experts and the primary indirects (WSE 4) was attended by approximately 20 people including representatives of PennDOT, Cornell School Board, State Senator Doyle’s office, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PaDEP). The discussion was energetic and informative.

The meeting with the primary indirects (WSE 5) was attended by about 20 people as well, including representatives from the Pittsburgh International Airport, Hollow Oak Trust, Neville Green, Southwest Pennsylvania Commission, and the Airport Chamber of Commerce.

Topics of discussion in WSE 4 and WSE 5 included:

- Moving stubborn/reluctant owners
- Using the powers of eminent domain
- Using the PaDEP Hazardous Substance Cleanup Act to begin some Phase II remediations
- The creation of a masterplan and/or comprehensive land use plan for the Island
- Gaining commitment from the community
- Cataloguing properties and their respective issues
- What is lacking: initiative, leadership, funding
- Need to gain political attention and leverage political clout
- How do properties get transferred/developed: property sells itself, public/private partnership, or public sector finds a way to make it happen!
- Beautification can help to recreate image
- Need to rally around the odor (Valley Proteins rendering plant) issue
- Many programs can be tapped if the initiative and leadership is here (for example: infrastructure development, industrial site recycling program, housing, mainstreet program, transportation programs)
- Need to create a redevelopment plan and plan for property acquisition
- Neville community needs a positive and proactive attitude

After an informal dinner between the experts, a couple of commissioners, and some committee members, a public meeting (WSE 6) was held in the Island Sports Center. Approximately 30 community residents attended the meeting. Contrary to general opinion, community representatives were quite open in their thoughts regarding the future of the Island. Topics addressed in the discussion included: the aging population and the need for assisted living, options for the light metal site (shopping, bank, little shopping mall), positive comparisons to other local developments (such as Washington's Landing<sup>1</sup> and the Waterfront Development<sup>2</sup>), possibility of building condominiums, need to remove the trailer park, need to build hotels and motels, and recreational opportunities. The experts were impressed by the positive and constructive nature of the comments. This further reinforced their appreciation of the human capital in the community.

The expert brainstorming session (WSE 7) began with much enthusiasm and 'high level' thinking. It was important, however, to continue to remind the experts that Neville Island needed a doable action plan and small initial steps that would allow the workshop energy to remain continuous.

The final presentation (WSE 8) and press conference (WSE 9) merged into a single event. The presentation of the experts is included as Appendix C.

---

<sup>1</sup> Located north of the City of Pittsburgh in the Allegheny River.

<sup>2</sup> Located southeast of the City of Pittsburgh, in the community of Homestead, along the Monogahela River

## 5 Workshop Results

The experts provided independent validation of the assets of Neville Island. Specifically, they noted the following strengths of the area:

- ❖ Location, location, location
- ❖ Flat, accessible land
- ❖ 360 degrees of water
- ❖ Committed community
- ❖ Clear Regional, State and Federal Responsibility
- ❖ Favorable regulatory climate

Specifically, the experts indicated that Neville Island has three areas of needs:

- Residential;
- Business/commercial; and
- Cross-cutting (both).

They also indicated that a planning horizon of 10 to 15 years is not unreasonable.

Cross-cutting needs they defined as follows:

- **Institutionalized leadership** for development and redevelopment activities; should have a strong point person who can direct efforts, perform liaison with agencies and politicians, property owners, and developers; must be able to seek out funds. Experts believe that that this leadership would be best carried by a **Redevelopment Authority**. As an agency with condemnation power, the Authority would be a 'player' in redevelopment planning, something that NIDA is not.
- **Growth plan** that prioritizes targets for redevelopment. Should include infrastructure improvements needed to facilitate the plan.
- **An initial project success**. A first, successful project is needed to enhance credibility and morale.
- **Goals** for any effort should include:
  - Enhancement of Quality of life
  - Aesthetic improvements
  - Image enhancement
  - Fair and reasonable property tax management
  - Improved air quality

Residential needs they defined as follows:

- **Develop shoreline resources**
  - Improvements to enhance boating, fishing, rowing
  - More marina facilities needed
- **Leisure and aesthetic facilities**
  - Community center
  - More plantings
  - Walking, hiking facilities
  - Parklets



- Improve street environment; streets are not friendly.
- **Upgrade housing**, especially Mansionettes; add senior care facilities and assisted living.

Commercial/industrial needs they defined as follows:

- New retail commercial facilities, especially at the interchange
- Grocery store, bank, medical, dental services, drug store, professional offices
- Hotel, family restaurant. Most likely at interchange. Perhaps at Island Spring site could be redeveloped.

The experts emphasized that community support is essential. Residents and commissioners must participate and actively support redevelopment activities.

Specific recommendations of the experts included

- Grand Avenue: Reduce cartway to two lanes; fill vacated area with promenade; create linear park; supplement with shops; perhaps extend Montour Trail through the corridor (possible good source of funding).
- Interchange area: hotel, family restaurant(s)
- Expand residential base, especially senior housing
- Promote Island as a recreational destination.
- Pursue possible redevelopment of eastern tip of Island as recreational/commercial area. This is a very long term goal but is worth the effort as it would connect the Island with the Pittsburgh pool.

Recommended steps for implementation

- **Form a Redevelopment Authority** having condemnation capability and retain a full time director to seek grants and funding resources, mobilize political support, investigate insurance resources for funding clean up activities, provide liaison with regional and state development and funding agencies.
- **Identify fees and charges** that can be used to support improvement activities. Suggestions included fire service, stormwater, and sewerage fees; investigate ability of Authority to levee taxes to support activities; investigate revenue producing activities such as providing wireless internet services.
- **Vigorously enforce environmental regulations.** It is vital to the Island's future that air quality be improved significantly, immediately. Without this, the vast potential of the Island cannot be realized.
- **Catalogue all Island commercial and industrial properties.** Identify assets and liabilities, especially environmental. Identify availability for sale, lease, and/or redevelopment. Knowledge of what is available and what can be done is essential to marketing the Island.
- **Assemble marketing information** for developers and investors

- Real estate valuations
- Environmental information
- Tax abatement programs
- **Clean up the I-79 Interchange area.** PennDOT's use as a storage (dump) site is unconscionable. This is the first view of the Island that most people get. This effort must be coordinated with elected representatives to be effective.
- **Utilize EPA grant resources** to the extent possible to maintain NIDA and develop the Authority.
- **Cultivate and use available resources:**
  - Metropolitan and regional planning agencies
  - Allegheny County Department of Economic Development
  - State departments and agencies
  - Robert Morris University
  - Foundations
    - Hillman
    - Heinz
    - Others
  - Seek out others for counsel and guidance
    - Baltimore Inner Harbor development
    - Homestead Waterfront project

## 6 Summary

A brownfield workshop was held on Neville Island on September 24-27, 2003. The year long planning process as well as the workshop proper have brought heightened attention and visibility to Neville Island and the opportunities inherent to the brownfields on the Island.

In addition to the expert observations and inputs, the workshop brought other benefits to the community:

- Seven 'new ambassadors;' the experts that have a new-found interest in Neville Township
- Raised regional visibility of Neville Island based on media coverage of the event
- Raised internal awareness of the value of the brownfields on Neville Island
- Demonstration that local stakeholders can engage in constructive discussion

The real challenge, however, lies ahead. Specifically, the commissioners must find the leadership to take accountable charge for the implementation of the expert recommendations. Failure to do so will negate the efforts required to perform the workshop.