



# Brownfields

## EPA Region 7

### JeffVanderLou Neighborhood

St. Louis, Missouri

#### Background

The 1.6 acre Habitat for Humanity site in the JeffVanderLou Neighborhood in midtown St. Louis is located on a city block bound by Martin Luther King Boulevard and Sheridan Avenue. The site has been developed since before the 1900s and has been used for both residential and commercial purposes. The Jeff-Vander-Lou district is historic – first and foremost due to the fact it was the first place in St. Louis where African Americans were allowed to own property. Since approximately 1980, much of the site has been blighted and vacant. The site is one of the largest Habitat for Humanity projects in Habitat St. Louis' history, encompassing twenty-four new homes for 2009, adding up to ninety-one total for the JeffVanderLou neighborhood alone since the inception of the project six years ago.

#### Partnerships:

- EPA: \$? Brownfields Assessment Grant/ARRA-RLF funds
- Vacant lots were purchased by Habitat St. Louis for redevelopment
- Site was enrolled in the MissouriDNR Brownfields/Voluntary Cleanup Program (BVCP) for oversight and assistance with the cleanup
- Total construction costs leveraged: \$?



Before

#### Protection:

In 2007, the BVCP completed Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), through a United States Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Assessment Grant administered by the BCVP. The Phase II ESA identified surface soil contamination consisting of lead and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons at concentrations exceeding levels safe for residential use. A portion of the contaminated soil was removed from the site and clean soil was brought in as fill to elevate the surface grade of the property three feet above areas of contaminated soil.



After

#### Redevelopment and Restoration:

Habitat for Humanity actually began this project in 2003, when it built 20 houses on Bacon, Garrison and St. Louis avenues in the northeast corner of the neighborhood. Neighborhood residents identified the need for this project as part of intensive community planning conducted as part of the Jeff-Vander-Lou Initiative process. The organization identified the need for more construction in the southeast part of the neighborhood, around the intersection of Sheridan Avenue and Martin Luther King Drive north of the reclaimed Blumeyer housing project. In summer 2009, Habitat for Humanity started construction on 24 houses on Thomas Avenue that will receive the Platinum LEED certification. About 70% of all construction labor is contributed by volunteers, including every prospective home owner.

#### Investment and Results:

The houses now finished with construction on Thomas, east of Elliott, are 24 one-story, 1,184-square-foot houses that will sell for \$77,000 each. These homes are of modest scale and materials, but they are as unique as their predecessors: these houses all meet Platinum LEED certification standards. This is one of three projects for which Habitat for Humanity St. Louis has utilized the Brownfield Assessment program and the BVCP as part of the redevelopment and revitalization of the JeffVanderLou Neighborhood in the 19<sup>th</sup> Ward of St. Louis.