News

Haley & Aldrich secures $5M Brownfield Cleanup Grant for Oregon city

Burlington, Mass., July 25, 2024 — The city of Sherwood, Oregon, a Haley & Aldrich client, has won a $5 million Brownfield Cleanup Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to remediate and redevelop the site of a former tannery.

A multidisciplinary Haley & Aldrich team developed the grant application, which secured the highest award possible from the EPA brownfield funding program. Sherwood's grant is one of only eight awarded in its category nationally and the only one given to a project in the western United States.

"This funding will allow Sherwood to move forward with its longtime vision for the former tannery site," saidJennifer Casler, R.G., L.G., part of the Haley & Aldrich team that counseled the city on its application. Jennifer has lived in Sherwood, a city of more than 20,000 residents in the Portland metro area, for 25 years and has served on its city council and many city organizations. "This site is one of the last remnants of Sherwood's industrial past, and its redevelopment will catalyze improvements to local and regional stormwater systems, roadways, the regional trail

system, and the nearby Tualatin National Wildlife Refuge."

Alongside Jennifer, Sarah Sieloff, Heather Good, L.G., LHG, Laura Hanson, and Daniele Spirandelli, Ph.D., assisted the community with its application. They brought a range of experience to build Sherwood's case from all relevant angles, including expertise in the EPA Brownfields Program, climate change resilience, community engagement, and environmental justice.

The 25-acre site where the Frontier Leather Tannery once operated has a long history, of both industrial activity and environmental contamination. The tannery began operations in 1947, processing cow and deer hides from local rendering facilities using chromium oxide. When the tannery ceased operating in the 1990s, it left behind two sludge-filled lagoons and discarded hides buried on the property. The site sat vacant for years while undergoing multiple environmental investigations, before the City of Sherwood purchased it in 2023.

The former tannery's location provides an opportunity not only for economic redevelopment for the city but also to interpret and protect the site's unique cultural, geological, and natural resources history.

The city intends to remove tens of thousands of cubic yards of contaminated materials and then develop the property for mixed-use. Sherwood Mayor Tim Rosener noted that, beyond the environmental benefit, "this redevelopment also holds immense potential for job creation and much-needed middle housing, contributing to our community's economic growth and livability. It's a win-win-win situation for Sherwood — an environmental, housing, and jobs trifecta."

A landmark grant marks the beginning of a partnership

At Haley & Aldrich, said Jennifer, "we don't look at a successful Brownfield Program grant as the culmination of our engagement. It primes the recipient for additional funding. We view ourselves as long-term partners who can help Sherwood not only access that funding, but understand the web of state and federal laws that determine how they can utilize those funds. We're here for the long haul."

Sarah added, "It's always an honor to help a community tell its story and bring our knowledge of the Brownfields Program to achieve its goals. We go the extra mile to understand the city and its people, so we feel invested."

As a funding expert with a 100% win record for EPA Brownfields grants to date, Sarah closely tracks the EPA's and other environmental grant programs. She noted that because of funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the EPA is expected to offer historically large brownfield grants through 2025, so, for any organization interested in applying, "now is the time to take a bite of that apple."

For more information: ?
Contact our Media team.