

Dept. of Natural Resources: Awards brownfields grant to city Of Neenah

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Funds Will Be Used For South Side Redevelopment



A former auto salvage yard in Neenah is in the early process of being redeveloped. / Photo Credit: City of Neenah

MADISON, Wis. – With the assistance of a brownfields grant from the Wisconsin

Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the City of Neenah is taking the next steps towards redeveloping of a former auto salvage yard on the south side of the city.

The financial award is from the DNR's Wisconsin Assessment Monies (WAM) program, which provides contractor services worth up to \$35,000 for eligible sites. The DNR awarded the grant to the Community Development Authority of the City of Neenah for the property that local officials say will be in position for redevelopment once a determination is made regarding the presence of any environmental contamination.

"This property is in a prime location for redevelopment given its proximity to Neenah's Southpark Industrial Center and U.S. Highway 41," said Jodie Peotter, DNR Remediation and Redevelopment Program's Brownfields, Outreach and Policy Section Chief. "It's a highly visible property located at one of the main entry locations to the city. Until the property is investigated, the ability to attract new development remains diminished because of the perceived environmental condition of the property."

The 9.3-acre property, located at 2405 Schultz Drive, has a history as an auto salvage yard in Neenah that goes back to at least the mid-1980s. Over the years, some 3,000 salvaged vehicles in various conditions accumulated on the property. A rail line on the western edge of the property and uncharacterized fill material were also identified as potential environmental concerns.

"The property is not as attractive as it could be to potential buyers in its present condition," Peotter said. "With the DNR's help, the city will determine the true environmental conditions at the property, address any necessary cleanup issues and then market the property to a new buyer."

Since 2009, the WAM program has provided 95 awards worth more than \$2.6 million to more than 65 communities across Wisconsin, partnering to help clean up and often redevelop run-down or underused properties that detract from a community's potential.

Administered by the DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment Program, WAM awards provide communities with professional environmental site assessments of properties with known or perceived contamination. The program is funded through a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) brownfields assessment grant.

Participation in the WAM program requires minimal effort by local governments. Because there is no local financial match, WAM is an attractive opportunity for communities to learn about environmental conditions. In many instances, WAM awards are leveraged with other funding sources to kick-start repurposing efforts on properties underutilized for many years.

Applications for WAM assistance may be submitted at any time. The DNR uses WAM funding to assess brownfields throughout the state, concentrating on industrial sites and closed or closing manufacturing plants. WAM awards are also made available to brownfields that may not have had a history of manufacturing but are in rural areas, racially diverse communities or economically disadvantaged areas.

For more information about WAM or other cleanup award programs from the RR Program, visit the DNR's [WAM webpage](#) or the [brownfields webpage](#).