

## Cleaning up pollution, creating jobs

### Met Council's TBRA grant program helps stimulate economic development

A legacy of industrial pollution and the specter of a costly and lengthy environmental cleanup can be show-stoppers for developers, particularly when trying to secure private financing for a project.

#### Projects can transform neighborhoods

With the Crown Center development in northeast Minneapolis, Hillcrest Development saw a true diamond-in-the-rough opportunity. The complex, a conglomeration of interconnected buildings with significant environmental contamination issues and illegal and unsafe uses, presented a daunting challenge.

Scott Tankenoff, managing partner with Hillcrest, said that through the challenges, he saw a giant opportunity to revitalize a blighted area.

"Name a problem, the site had it," Tankenoff said. "The challenge and degree of difficulty is something we were excited about. And the jobs, the increase in the tax base, etc. speak for themselves."

Tankenoff said his business uses its own resources to redevelop properties like the Crown Center, which allows them to choose more challenging projects without the complications of acquiring outside financing. But with the significant cleanup costs, remediation grants were a necessary component of making the project work.

The project received about \$1.6 million in cleanup funds, including \$690,000 from the TBRA program, and additional funds from DEED and Hennepin County.

"This is a great example of why you need these programs," Tankenoff said. To be successful, he said, development projects need to know where the sources of funding will come from to assure the return on investment.

Today, the Crown Center is nearly 90% occupied, having created dozens of new jobs for the area.

"Communities see it as a jobs program," said Marcus Martin, coordinator for the Council's TBRA program. "This program can have a transformative effect on a neighborhood, with new businesses, new homes, new retail areas, particularly if they haven't seen those types of development."



Hillcrest Development transformed a polluted, 5.6-acre former heavy industrial site in northeast Minneapolis into Crown Center, which will house a variety of professional, industrial, medical and creative businesses. Shown here is one of the buildings before the clean-up and renovation. Grants to clean up the pollution on the site came from three agencies, including the Met Council.



New and refinished floors, ample natural light and exposed found elements of the original buildings are characteristic of the redevelopment at Crown Center. Pictured here is the "after" shot of the building in the previous photo.