



EPA grants totaling \$400K will help clean up Gaines Street

BY JULIAN PECQUET • DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER • APRIL 9, 2008

The city of Tallahassee has been awarded two federal grants to help pay for testing sites for pollutants along the Gaines Street corridor, helping jump-start redevelopment efforts there.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency grants total \$400,000. One grant is for testing for petroleum products, the other for hazardous substances such as dry-cleaning solvents or herbicides from the spraying of railroad tracks.

"At this time of budget cuts, it's really critical for us to have such funds available," said Cynthia Barber, director of the city's Environmental Policy and Energy Resources Department. "There will be a need for clean-up and testing — we know that ahead of time because we know the history of that corridor."

The Gaines Street corridor used to be an industrial area featuring a busy railroad, chemical warehousing and gas stations.

Tony Murray, the city's coordinator of environmental regulation and compliance, said the city has received brownfield grants for Gaines Street in the past. The money was used to test for and remove chemicals on the site of the Marriott Hotel at Railroad Square and the city-owned property at Gay Street, where the Arts on Gaines mix of artists' studios and lofts has been proposed.

"What the city's going to do," he said, "is make sure that (for) any area that has the potential (for residual chemicals), that we'll be able to manage the risk."