



Brownfields Area-Wide Planning

Successful brownfields revitalization doesn't just happen. It's planned for.

Approach brownfield revitalization through creative, inclusive, and efficient planning activities.

- Early on in the site selection process, consider the range of realistic site reuse options.
- Create a brownfields revitalization plan based on the community's vision, site and surrounding area conditions such as environmental, economic, real estate market, assets, challenges and vulnerabilities. These factors will directly influence how the site is assessed and remediated.

Planning activities focused on brownfields revitalization and as described in this fact sheet are eligible under an EPA Brownfields Assessment or Multipurpose Grant.

Our community needs to:

- Inventory the brownfield sites within a project area, such as a neighborhood, corridor, downtown district, waterfront, etc.
- Research and evaluate existing conditions within the brownfields area.
- Engage community members and other stakeholders on their priorities for the area and build agreement around a shared revitalization vision.
- Use community input and research results to identify the catalyst, high-priority brownfield site(s) which, once remediated and reused, have the strongest potential to spur additional revitalization within the area.
- Prepare and share our plan and implementation strategies for reusing catalyst, high-priority brownfield sites.

How brownfields area-wide planning can help: Brownfields area-wide planning helps identify cleanup and reuse opportunities for key brownfield sites that can serve as catalysts for revitalization of the surrounding area. The approach enables communities to consider local priorities, existing plans, market conditions, infrastructure, and resource availability alongside area environmental conditions. These planning activities help communities make informed decisions about where to direct scarce resources to benefit the existing community. Area-wide planning can also help implement locally-driven initiatives, such as housing, parks, environmental improvement, community wealth building, and equitable and environmentally-just economic development.

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup, and reuse: Helps to prioritize and sequence sites within a project area that need to be assessed and cleaned up. Knowing the potential site reuse(s) helps plan an efficient characterization and contaminant cleanup.

What is involved?

- Collect information and identify community priorities related to near- and long-term revitalization.
- Evaluate environmental conditions, local market potential, and infrastructure improvements.
- Select one or more catalyst, high-priority brownfield sites; develop site cleanup and reuse strategies.
- Identify resources or leveraging opportunities to implement the plans, including specific strategies for public and private sector investments necessary to help with cleanup and area revitalization.

When to conduct? Brownfields area-wide planning is helpful in early discussions of brownfield site reuse, e.g., prior to or during site assessment decisions. Communities that have already been working within a specific area to develop partnerships and identify stakeholder priorities will especially benefit.

What does it typically cost? Costs range from \$50,000 - \$200,000 based on the scale of the project, number of brownfield sites, level of plan detail and amount of stakeholder engagement.

Who can perform? Typically requires a diverse multi-disciplinary team including a community engagement specialist, planner, landscape architect, market analyst, engineer and environmental professional, among others.



Plan for Brownfields Redevelopment Success

Community Health Assessment

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Our community needs to:

- Understand specific public health challenges faced by residents within the brownfields area and their underlying causes.
- Identify opportunities to reuse brownfields to strengthen existing community health assets and prioritize community health improvement.

How a Community Health Assessment can help: Determines how community health needs and issues can be addressed through brownfield site assessment, cleanup and reuse by reviewing community public health information.

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup and reuse: Incorporates public health data and indicators into site selection, assessment and cleanup decisions. Prioritizes community input regarding safety, social and environmental concerns at the site. Shapes a reuse approach that helps alleviate, not exacerbate, local public health challenges.

What Is involved?

- Analyzing existing community health information such as a community health improvement plan or other health agency-led assessments.
- Engaging various community organizations such as youth groups, school teachers, churches and nonprofit organizations to gain perspectives on community health, environmental hazards, and social challenges affecting the brownfields area. Challenges may pertain to:
 - Safety: abandoned and derelict structures, open foundations, compromised infrastructure, inadequate lighting or barriers, etc.
 - Health: high incidence of diabetes, heart disease, asthma, drug addiction, etc.
 - Social: blight, crime, vagrancy, reduced social capital, community connectedness.
 - Economic: reduced tax base and private property values may lead to reduced social services.
 - Environmental: biological, physical and chemical effects resulting from site contamination, groundwater impacts, surface runoff migration of contaminants, wastes dumped on site, etc.
- Collecting or linking baseline health and environmental measures to inform redevelopment planning options. For example, health monitoring or [health impact assessment](#) results that show limited access to health care services or a lack of sidewalks, recreational opportunities or food access for the brownfields community can encourage increased health care services, green space, parks, trails and/or fresh grocers during site redevelopment planning

When to conduct? Implement early in the brownfields site selection and planning process to ensure that community health challenges are addressed to the extent possible. The community health assessment may take 3-12 months, depending on project scope and availability of data.

What does it typically cost? Cost varies; can range from \$15,000 – \$50,000 depending on scope, existing data and community characteristics.

Who Can Perform? A local government agency, nonprofit, university or multidisciplinary brownfields reuse team. Must be designed and implemented in collaboration with local, state or tribal health agencies.



Evaluation of Market Viability

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Our community needs to:

- Identify parties interested in acquiring, redeveloping, leasing and using the brownfield site.
- Identify potential funding sources and financing vehicles.
- Aggregate information needed for decision-making related to site acquisition or disposition.

How an Evaluation of Market Viability can help: This in-depth, formal process helps identify sources of serious interest in brownfield site redevelopment and the range of potential end users. Process typically includes testing the market through an expression of interest and/or request for proposals.

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup and reuse: Understanding the level of interest from parties interested in redeveloping the site guides the local decision-making process. Outside interest may dictate the feasibility of certain site reuse scenarios, which affects assessment, cleanup and reuse. May also help determine whether and how to acquire a site (e.g., through foreclosure, eminent domain, fee purchase, etc.) or dispose of a site.

What is involved?

Expression of Interest (EOI) Process

An EOI is a formal, often confidential, process to gauge interest in a brownfield and identify potential redevelopment opportunities.

- Involves a written request for non-binding EOIs, site tours and review of responses.
- The EOI request describes the site, available utilities and infrastructure, and environmental status.
- Through the EOI process, communities can obtain conceptual development proposals and pre-qualify development teams.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Process

An RFP is a formal, competitive process for obtaining acquisition and redevelopment offers for a brownfield site.

- Involves a written RFP package with documentation on site conditions and assets, copies of existing surveys and deeds, as well as site tours, interviews and review of proposals.
- Usually implemented after completing a site reuse assessment because interested parties need reliable information on the site to submit a bid.

When to conduct? Test market interest by assessing market viability early in the reuse planning process. Obtain proposals from developers or end uses that respond to site opportunities/constraints by assessing market viability after completing the Site Reuse Assessment.

What does it typically cost? Costs range \$25,000-\$50,000, depending on the type of process, the size and complexity of the property, the extent of documentation and level of market interest. Drafting and reviewing solicitations are typically done as internal operations with municipal staff and/or project proponents. Additional developer engagement or feedback sessions may involve an outside consultant and require more funding.

Who can perform? Typically administered by a public agency or private redevelopment consultant.



Plan for Brownfields Redevelopment Success
Infrastructure Evaluation

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Our community needs to:

- Understand the short- and long-term availability of public and private infrastructure servicing the brownfield site.
- Identify necessary infrastructure improvements and priority investments to support brownfield site reuse.

How an Infrastructure Evaluation can help: Provides availability and location of infrastructure servicing the brownfield site. Evaluation includes utilities (water, sewer, electric, broadband, gas, etc.), roads, nearby transit and on-site improvements. Can range from a simple inventory of existing or available infrastructure to a detailed analysis of age, condition and capacity.

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup and reuse: Factors long-term infrastructure availability and location into potential site reuse scenarios, which expands or limits site reuse options. Location of infrastructure onsite affects site preparations, assessment and cleanup decisions.

What is involved? An Infrastructure Evaluation depends on the type of property, its location, assets and the potential site reuse options. Includes an *Infrastructure Inventory*, which is a list of all infrastructure existing or available to and on the site, such as:

- Onsite infrastructure (such as fire and life safety; utilities such as boiler house, electrical substation; security; specialized industrial equipment, assets, services and chemicals).
- Infrastructure serving the site (electric, natural gas, fiber optic cable, water, sewer, stormwater, wastewater systems and other utilities or resources).

When to conduct? Early in the site reuse planning process. Typically, part of a site reuse assessment, but can be completed independently. As a preferred site reuse scenario emerges, a more in-depth infrastructure evaluation will fill data gaps.

What does it typically cost and who can perform?

- **Condition Assessment:** A visual inspection, review of existing documentation and studies, and interviews with utility and site personnel. Costs typically range from \$10,000 – \$20,000 depending on property size, quantity of assets and whether order-of-magnitude estimates are included. Properties with large facilities or many buildings may cost substantially more. Often performed by a multidisciplinary consulting team.
- **Infrastructure Condition and Capacity Study:** A specialized infrastructure condition and capacity study which may be necessary to determine the feasibility of a specific site reuse option. Typically necessary for large, high-value reuse opportunities (e.g., heavy industrial uses often require water and natural gas lines of a certain size or pressure). Studies cost \$40,000+. Usually performed by the utility company for a fee or by a licensed professional engineer.



Plan for Brownfields Redevelopment Success
Land Use Assessment

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Our community needs to:

- Understand regulatory opportunities and constraints for a brownfield site.
- Learn the land entitlement process, timeframes and potential approval barriers that can add time and money to our brownfields revitalization project.

How a Land Use Assessment can help: Analysis reveals surrounding land uses and local, regional and state land use regulations and strategies that pertain to redevelopment of the brownfield site. Includes review of local zoning laws, specialty zones and incentives, land use planning strategies and other entitlement requirements.

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup and reuse: Identifies land use incentives and opportunities to drive redevelopment. Targets potential and desired land uses based on community and economic development priorities. Clarifies the land entitlement process and timeline/strategy needed to obtain regulatory approvals and permits.

What is involved?

- Identifying, collecting, and reviewing local, regional and state land use regulations.
- Interviewing key land use officials.
- Documenting the necessary approval and permitting processes.

When to conduct? Early in the site reuse planning process. Typically, part of a site reuse assessment, but can be completed independently.

What does it typically cost? Costs range from \$5,000-\$10,000 depending on the location and complexity of the site. Land use assessments generally are done in conjunction with site reuse assessments.

Who can perform? An experienced multi-disciplinary brownfields reuse team including a planner, engineer, and environmental professional, among others.



Plan for Brownfields Redevelopment Success Market Study

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Our community needs to:

- Know the local and regional real estate market demands, trends and competition relevant to our brownfield site.
- Understand realistic, market-driven future land use options for the brownfield site.

How a Market Study can help: Study results will indicate economically feasible reuse options for the brownfield site.

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup and reuse: The local economy and real estate market strongly affect long-term viability of a brownfield redevelopment. An upfront understanding of whether the site can support residential, commercial or some other type of reuse is critical to site disposition and redevelopment decisions. The redevelopment affects site assessment and cleanup decisions.

What is involved? A desktop review of publicly available real estate and economic development data, including recent development activity in the area. Identify key trends and demographics. Solicit stakeholder input to identify community needs. Discuss market study results with local real estate and economic development professionals to obtain insights and feedback.

When to conduct? Completed early in the reuse planning process. As a preferred site reuse scenario emerges, an interested developer will usually prepare a more thorough market analysis and/or property valuation to fill market data gaps.

What does it typically cost? Costs range from \$20,000-\$50,000 depending on the scope, location, and availability of public data for the site or area.

Who can perform? Usually performed by an experienced multi-disciplinary brownfields reuse team including a real estate professional, market analyst or planner. A municipality or nonprofit with these skillsets may conduct the market study in-house.



Plan for Brownfields Redevelopment Success
Resource Roadmap

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Our community needs to:

- Condense the brownfields project into distinct, fundable components and assign lead responsibilities.
- Develop a multi-layered funding plan to support brownfields cleanup and reuse.
- Create a timeline for pursuing grants, loans, private and other sources of funds related to our brownfield project.

How a Resource Roadmap can help: Identifies the brownfield site and related revitalization priorities, key components and phases of the priority projects, and the estimated cost and potential funding and financing sources for each key component and phase. Typically designed as a matrix. Serves as a strategic guide to project leveraging by matching individual project components to appropriate funding and financing sources. Shows how matching-fund commitments will be met.

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup and reuse: Outlines a strategy for identifying and tapping into available funding sources for individual brownfield project components from federal, state, philanthropic, private sector and local financing sources such as bonds, loans, special districts, funding matches, or tax incentives.

What is involved?

- Defining the specific project components and phases for each priority brownfield project.
- Estimating costs for each component and phase.
- Identifying the best sources for funding each component and phase.
- Creating a chart or matrix with this information, organized by project component and phase.
- Updating the Resource Roadmap as funding commitments are pursued and secured.

When to conduct? Once site revitalization goals are defined and individual brownfields project components and phases are identified.

What does it typically cost? Costs range approximately \$20,000-\$35,000; influenced by the local knowledge of funding opportunities and level of effort needed to reach out to potential funding partners. More detailed roadmaps will better illustrate the timing of next steps and who is assigned responsibility to follow through on specific activities. Hosting a convening or workshop with state, federal, local government, private and nonprofit funders can be an efficient approach to developing the Resource Roadmap.

Who can perform? A roadmap will typically be developed by the organization or team overseeing the brownfields revitalization project. Local communities and their brownfield teams can conduct the research and planning to create an effective Resource Roadmap. Consider working with EPA's Technical Assistance to Brownfield Communities (TAB) providers, community funding organizations, and/or professional grant and funding consultants.

- For a helpful guide to creating a Resource Roadmap, see the U.S. EPA publication "[Setting the Stage for Leveraging Resources for Brownfields Revitalization](#)", which includes a sample Resource Roadmap at Appendix 1.



Plan for Brownfields Redevelopment Success

Brownfields Revitalization Plan

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Our community needs to:

- Synthesize reuse feasibility studies, community involvement and the preferred design concept for our brownfield site into an action plan.
- Prioritize public investments and incentives to support brownfield site reuse.
- Attract private funding, developers, tenants and other interested end-users to the site.

How a Brownfields Revitalization Plan can help: Document compiles and reflects feasible and actionable approaches to reusing and improving the site. Includes the opportunities and constraints analysis, other site feasibility studies, the site reuse vision and a multi-step implementation strategy for site remediation and redevelopment.

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup, and reuse: Guides the redevelopment process for a brownfield site or area. A revitalization plan can be adopted by the community and used to define reuse options for the brownfield site or area. The plan creates opportunities to convene and attract public funding (state, local or federal); tax incentives; and other investments (e.g., private and foundation funds) to support sustainable reuse.

What is involved? The Brownfields Revitalization Plan reflects the community's input and balances market and infrastructure evaluations, environmental considerations, zoning and land use regulations, partner leveraging and other opportunities and constraints. An effective plan is realistic, doable and includes short- and long-term wins. At a minimum, a revitalization plan addresses:

- Site revitalization goals, objectives, and reuse concepts/designs.
- Proposed land use regulation (e.g., zoning v. form-based code, easement, covenant, etc.).
- Site improvements needed (including remediation if necessary).
- Implementation strategy, including potential funding sources and regulatory requirements.

When to conduct? Whenever large and/or multiple brownfield sites need to be redeveloped. The Brownfields Revitalization Plan guides short- and long-term implementation. All information, data and resources gathered through the site reuse assessment are incorporated into the revitalization plan.

What does it typically cost? Costs range from \$50,000 - \$175,000 based on the scale of the project, level of plan detail and amount of stakeholder engagement. Aligning with previous plans, updating relevant studies and analyses and using existing workgroups can reduce costs.

Who can perform? Typically developed by an experienced multi-disciplinary brownfields team including a planner, market analyst, engineer and environmental professional, among others.



Plan for Brownfields Redevelopment Success
Site Disposition Strategy

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Our community needs to:

- Identify an exit pathway before acquiring a site via tax foreclosure or eminent domain (*pre-acquisition situations*).
- Decide how to reposition and dispose of a brownfield site (*post-acquisition situations*).
- Define redevelopment and post-transaction responsibilities that will frame a brownfield site real estate transaction (*post-acquisition situations*).

How a Site Disposition Strategy can help: Establishes a framework for deciding how to transfer a brownfield site in a manner that provides value to the seller and buyer and supports site goals for sustainable reuse and remediation. Framework includes an analysis of pros/cons that help characterize risks associated with the range of brownfield site transfer options.

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup and reuse: Incorporates environmental considerations associated with a complex and contaminated site, including short- and long-term liabilities and obligations. Guides decision-making on property acquisition and/or disposition alternatives.

What is involved? Preparing a written document that evaluates and compares disposition alternatives for the brownfield site, such as property sale, ground-lease, or lease with option-to-purchase. Discusses benefits and challenges, liabilities, obligations and risk transfer options. Recommends a preferred alternative and associated actions for implementation.

When to conduct? Early stages of the reuse planning process. Reviewed and updated as new information becomes available.

What does it typically cost? Costs range \$35,000-\$100,000, based on whether the strategy is developed and administered by the municipality or a consultant, the role assigned to the consultant and the availability of necessary information. Additional legal fees associated with property transfer are not included in this estimate.

Who can perform? A multi-disciplinary team including an environmental professional, real estate professional, insurance consultant, planner and/or other related professionals.



Plan for Brownfields Redevelopment Success
Site Reuse Assessment

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Our community needs to:

- Identify potential reuse assets and barriers specific to our brownfield site.
- Understand the range of sustainable reuse options for our brownfield site.

How a Site Reuse Assessment can help: Provides a full evaluation of the opportunities, constraints and range of redevelopment possibilities related to the reuse of a brownfield site. Includes:

- Site characteristics and needs
- Area economy and demographics
- Physical, environmental conditions
- Applicable regulations
- Real estate market conditions

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup and reuse: Knowing the potential site reuse helps to plan efficient characterization and cleanup of contamination, and prospectively target appropriate real estate markets.

What is involved?

- Site walkthrough.
- Gathering and reviewing available site documentation.
- Interviews with key community members including local elected leaders and land use officials.
- Developing an inventory of site assets and infrastructure.
- Assessing market conditions.
- Analyzing opportunities and constraints.
- Identifying potential brownfield site reuse options.

When to conduct? As soon as possible after selecting the brownfield site to redevelop. Can be initiated anytime during the environmental investigation process, such as before, during or after the Phase I or Phase II environmental site assessments.

A Site Reuse Assessment can take **six months or longer** to complete, depending on the size and complexity of the site. Budget, timing and circumstances will determine whether a community completes the various activities concurrently vs. separately.

What does it typically cost? Costs range from \$35,000-\$75,000 depending on the size, location and complexity of the site and its assets, and whether it requires base mapping or specific research.

Who can perform? An experienced multi-disciplinary brownfields reuse team including a planner, market analyst, and environmental professional, among others.

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Our community needs to:

- Visually reflect stakeholder input, market data, environmental considerations and other opportunities uncovered during the brownfields Site Reuse Assessment.
- Communicate our desired brownfield site reuse concept to stakeholders, regulatory officials, economic development leaders and the real estate market.

How a Site Reuse Vision can help: *A picture is worth a thousand words!* Illustrates the potential or preferred redevelopment scenario for a brownfield site. Design concepts include visual representations such as sketch illustrations, renderings and/or 3D models of the potential and preferred brownfield site reuse options, proposed land uses, access and key infrastructure. Complements the brownfields revitalization plan.

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup and reuse: Illustrates the location of proposed site structures and site features as per the desired reuse scenarios. Structure and feature placement affect site preparations, assessment and cleanup decisions. The site reuse vision helps reposition the site for redevelopment, and attract interested developers, tenants, end users, funding and financing.

What is involved? Creating an illustration for the site that reflects the community's reuse priorities, integrates site assets and limitations, incorporates neighborhood features and satisfies market demand.

Generally, the Site Reuse Vision is the result of a public planning process that defines the site and reuse goals, gathers input from various stakeholders, and identifies feasible reuse alternatives. The extent of community participation in developing a Site Reuse Vision varies. Some communities:

- Host a design charrette (a collaborative meeting during which planning professionals lead stakeholders through a process of exploring options and sketching reuse designs).
- Have design professionals draft reuse alternatives and present the concepts to the community through a series of public meetings.

When to conduct? Upon completion of a Site Reuse Assessment, after brownfield site conditions and market information are obtained and analyzed.

What does it typically cost? Costs may range from \$35,000 – \$100,000, depending on the complexity of the site and the extent and type of public participation. Creating conceptual schematic designs compliant with local zoning can cost less.

Who can perform? Typically prepared by an experienced site planner, landscape architect or multi-disciplinary brownfields redevelopment team.