

# What is a **Brownfield**?

A “brownfield” is a property that has, or may be perceived to have, **environmental impacts**. The potential release of hazardous substances, petroleum, or presence of regulated building materials may consequently impede reuse/redevelopment opportunities. By completing environmental site assessment and cleanup activities, brownfields have the potential to transform from liabilities into assets that will benefit the community.

## Property Owner Fact Sheet

### Brownfield Site Reuse & Revitalization Program

#### Grays Harbor Coalition

## What are the **benefits of brownfield redevelopment**?

Property owners, business owners, and developers who cleanup and reuse brownfields provide benefits to themselves and their community, including:

- Removing unknowns regarding site conditions that might hold up a future sale, financing agreement and/or redevelopment project.
- Increasing return from the property by making it more valuable and marketable.
- Contributing to economic prosperity and environmental restoration in the community.
- Making neighborhoods safer and healthier.
- Avoiding actions by regulatory agencies that may impose penalties and costly cleanups.
- Reducing potential impacts from and to adjacent properties.

## How is this program **funded**?

The project is funded by \$600,000 of Brownfields Assessment Grants awarded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to a Coalition led by the Grays Harbor Council of Governments (GHCOG) and supported by the cities of Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Cosmopolis, Westport and Elma.

The Coalition will work with property owners, developers and other community stakeholders to identify and prioritize brownfield sites in need of environmental assessment and cleanup/reuse planning to support redevelopment.

*Disclaimer: Although this project has been funded wholly or in part by the EPA, the contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the EPA.*

## How can you **use grant funding for your property**?

Funding is available for publicly- and privately-owned properties in need of environmental site assessments (ESAs) and regulated building material (RBM) surveys and/or developing site cleanup/reuse plans in support of property sale or redevelopment. Property owners, business owners, and developers are encouraged to take advantage of this funding opportunity that will further economic development initiatives, protect public health, and restore the environment!

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Do I own a brownfield site?

If you answer yes to the following questions, you may own a brownfield site.

- Is your land idle, vacant, or less productive than it ought to be?
- Are concerns about historic use or environmental contamination hindering redevelopment or sale of the site?

## What can grant funds be used for?

Grant funds can be used for Phase I/II ESAs, RBM surveys, and cleanup/reuse planning activities on eligible sites.

- **Phase I ESA:** A comprehensive background study of historic use and existing conditions to evaluate recognized environmental conditions (RECs) and potential areas where substances may have been released.
  - Assess potential impacts from petroleum or hazardous substances that may impede redevelopment.
  - Establish baseline conditions for liability protection.
  - Support property sale/acquisition activities.
  - Provide documentation required to secure loans.
- **Phase II ESA:** A physical study where samples (e.g. soil, groundwater, air/vapor, surface water and sediments) are collected and analyzed to characterize the type, distribution and extent of substances (if present) in the environment.
  - Evaluate the findings of the Phase I ESA (if contamination is suspected).
  - Determine if a release has occurred and delineate the extent of contamination (if present).
  - Support efforts to obtain regulatory closure.
- **RBM Survey:** A physical study where building material samples are collected and tested to confirm if hazardous substances are present.
  - Determine if asbestos, lead paint, mold, PCBs, mercury or other regulated substances are present in building materials.
  - Evaluate regulations that apply to the disturbance or disposal of confirmed hazardous materials before undertaking a building remodel, renovation or demolition.
- **Site Cleanup/Reuse Plan:** A detailed analysis of cleanup alternatives, cost estimates and implementation plans.
  - Evaluate cleanup alternatives with reuse plans and redevelopment strategies.
  - Select preferred cleanup alternative.
  - Prepare detailed plans and cost estimates to implement preferred cleanup method.

## Will an assessment affect the value of my property?

Property values are often affected by uncertainty regarding site history and the financial and legal risks of potential environmental impacts. ESAs allow property owners to quantify the amount of contamination on a property (or

lack thereof). For properties with little to no contamination, this knowledge may increase marketability. For sites with significant contamination, property owners can realize increased value through cleanup, tax incentives and reduced liabilities.

## Which sites are eligible for grant funds?

Publicly- and privately-owned properties can be eligible for funding on a case-by-case basis. Generally, to be considered eligible for grant funding, the following criteria must be met:

- the property is vacant, underutilized or undergoing transition;
- the property has potential impacts from petroleum and/or hazardous substances; and
- the property exhibits high potential for redevelopment and/or other opportunities to benefit the community.

## Will I be fined if contamination is found on my property or will an assessment trigger a requirement that I take action?

Information gathered during Phase I ESAs is generally not reported to regulatory agencies. If you choose to move forward with Phase II ESA activities, in some cases, the results may trigger a reporting requirement with the Washington State Department of Ecology. Even if contamination is found, no fines are typically levied. In some cases supplemental assessment and/or cleanup activities may be required. The goal of the program is to assist property owners and developers with safely assessing, cleaning up and redeveloping brownfields for the benefit of the community.

## Will I have control over the work done?

The program is voluntary. You will be asked to provide access to your property to an environmental consultant from Stantec Consulting Services Inc. You will have the right to stop participation in the program at various phases of the assessment process. You will receive an electronic copy of all reports.

## How do I nominate a site for grant funding?

Stakeholders are encouraged to nominate sites for grant funding by completing a Site Nomination Form (visit the project website at the link below to download form).

## How do I obtain additional information?

For more information or to submit a site for grant funding consideration, please contact us or visit our project webpage: <https://www.ghcog.org/brownfield.html>

### Contact Information

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