

# PROPERTY OWNER FACT SHEET

## GRAYS HARBOR COALITION

### BROWNFIELD SITE REUSE & REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

#### Program Overview

The Brownfields Site Reuse and Revitalization Program (“Program”) provides funding and technical assistance to eligible property owners to conduct environmental site assessments and define revitalization strategies for brownfields and other underutilized properties in Grays Harbor County. The Program aims to place vacant, abandoned, or underdeveloped properties back into productive use through environmental studies, potential cleanup actions, and redevelopment planning.



**Program Funding Source:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded multiple grants to a Coalition including the cities of Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Westport and Elma. Funds are available through September 2027 (or until funds are depleted – whichever comes first).



**Program Administration:** The Grays Harbor Council of Governments (GHCOG) serves as the local Program administrator (including technical assistance from its consultant Montrose Environmental Solutions, Inc.).



**Participation Opportunities:** Public and private property owners, local governments, and community organizations may apply to participate in the Program. Eligible grant-funded activities include Phase I/II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), Cleanup Planning, Site Reuse Planning/Conceptual Design, and other technical studies associated with brownfield sites (subject to eligibility requirements of the grant).

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**Program Website:**

<http://ghcog.org/index.php/brownfields-program/>

#### Brownfields Defined

A “brownfield” is a property that has confirmed (or perceived) site contamination or hazardous substances caused by previous industrial/commercial activities or due to unsafe building materials (e.g., asbestos). These typically include vacant, abandoned, or underutilized properties. Many times, brownfields remain idle creating voids in the community and contributing to neighborhood blight. Site contamination and hazardous substances constitute “environmental liabilities” that must be addressed before properties can be redeveloped/repurposed for new uses. Brownfield examples may include former gas stations, dry cleaners, legacy industrial sites, shipyards, older buildings, landfills and dump sites, railyards and land along rail lines.

#### Brownfield Redevelopment Benefits

Property owners, businesses, developers, and public entities who address potential environmental liabilities and redevelop brownfields provide benefits to themselves and their communities, including:

- Removing unknowns regarding site conditions that might hold up a sale or redevelopment.
- 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 the potential that adjacent properties could be impacting their property (and vice versa).



# Frequently Asked Questions

## How do I know if my property is a Brownfield?

Your property may be considered a brownfield if you answer “yes” to any of the following:

- Is your property abandoned, unoccupied, or less productive than it could be?
- Did your property contain industrial or heavy commercial uses (e.g., dry cleaner, gas station, manufacturing, fabrication, etc.)?
- Does your property contain older structures with potentially hazardous building materials (e.g., pre-1980s buildings often contain asbestos, lead-based paint, and/or other hazardous materials)?

## Which properties are eligible for funding?

Both publicly- and privately-owned properties may be eligible for funding. GHCOG the local municipality in which the property is located will determine eligibility on a case-by-case basis subject to EPA guidelines and available funds.

## Will I be fined or required to take action if contamination is identified?

Phase I ESA findings are not generally reported to regulatory agencies. If you choose to proceed with a Phase II ESA (e.g., soil, groundwater, surface water, sediments, and/or soil vapor sampling), the findings may trigger a reporting requirement with the Washington State Department of Ecology. Even if contamination is found, fines are typically not imposed. In some cases, Ecology may require supplemental assessment and/or cleanup activities. The Program’s goal is to assist property owners redevelop brownfields for new uses that benefit the community.

## Will I have control over the work done?

Yes, Program participation is voluntary and you may cease participation at any point of the process. Participation requires that you grant property access to the Program’s consultant (Montrose). You will receive an electronic copy of all reports/findings.

## How to a start the participation process in the Program?

Interested parties may submit a Site Nomination Form to GHCOG. Additional information and the form is available on the Program website (<http://ghcog.org/index.php/brownfields-program/>).

## What can the Brownfields Program funds be used for?

The Program funds can be used for environmental site assessments (ESAs), cleanup planning, site reuse planning/conceptual design, and other technical studies that support property sale or redevelopment activities for eligible brownfields. Typical activities include:

**Phase I ESA:** A comprehensive research study of historical land use and existing site conditions to determine the potential for property contamination.

- 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 hazardous 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.