

General Questions



Portion of Eastern State Hospital grounds

Where are Brownfields located, and what do they look like?

Brownfields are usually concentrated in urban areas, but they really can be anywhere. They are typically abandoned or underutilized commercial or industrial sites, such as manufacturing facilities, warehouses, gas stations, machine shops, and dry cleaning facilities, but they can even include residential properties where, at some point, hazardous substances might have been used.

Do I own a Brownfield?

Maybe. Ask yourself this: Is my land or property idle, vacant, or less productive than it ought to be? Are there concerns about environmental contamination contributing to that problem? If you answered yes to both questions, then you might own a Brownfield.

How does a community benefit from Brownfields redevelopment?

Many Brownfield sites are located in unattractive, economically depressed parts of a neighborhood. Cleanup and redevelopment of these sites encourages higher property values and creates jobs, in addition to creating a safer, cleaner environment.

Who is involved in Brownfields redevelopment?

Private and public organizations play a role in assessing, cleaning up and redeveloping Brownfield sites. Key players include state and federal environmental agencies, economic development and planning agencies, citizen and community groups, commercial lenders, technical consultants, legal counsel, local government agencies, developers, investors, and real estate professionals.

Are there incentives for Brownfields redevelopment?

Yes, in addition to direct financial assistance, federal, state and local tax incentives are available to property owners and developers to help reduce the costs of Brownfield projects. Federal tax incentives include the Taxpayers Relief Act, which allows eligible taxpayers to deduct qualified cleanup expenses at Brownfields in the year expenses are incurred, and rehabilitation income tax credits for 10% of the expenses of rehabilitating structures built before 1935.

How much will the cleanup cost?

Many factors affect the cost of cleanup. For example, if groundwater under the site is contaminated in addition to soil, the cost of cleanup is likely to be much higher. If the contaminated materials need to be transported off site for treatment, that will also raise the cost. The cost will also depend on standards that apply to the future use of the property. If a Brownfield property is remediated to commercial use standards rather than residential use standards, the cleanup will typically be less expensive. The cost to the property owner of the site will also be affected by whether there are other parties, such as previous owners, who may be potentially responsible for remediation.



The Copper Fox Distillery in Williamsburg. This property is also in a New Market Tax Credit, Opportunity Zone and Tourism Zone.

How long will the cleanup take?

The cleanup schedule will vary according to the level, type, amount, and extent of contamination, as well as cleanup standards that apply to the site. A site with extensive soil or groundwater contamination cleaned up to residential standards will take longer than a site with minimal contamination that will be used for industrial purposes. Factors like time of year or unusual bad weather may also affect duration of cleanup.

Why did we apply for a grant?

Funding was needed to provide resources to continue the region's ongoing commitment to transforming the Greater Williamsburg communities and broaden the industrial, commercial, retail and service economies. Cleanup and revitalization of vacant and underutilized properties are seen as a tremendous opportunity to increase nearby residential and commercial property values.

How are properties chosen to be included in the program?

The Williamsburg Coalition provides assistance to the City of Williamsburg, James City County, York County and the Greater Williamsburg Partnership in selecting properties based on the following criteria:

- Impact on public health, the environment and wildlife habitats;
- Proximity to municipal or private water sources, residential areas, and schools;
- Potential reuse of the site for economic development, including industrial, commercial, residential, open/green space and/or recreational uses.

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