



OKLAHOMA CITY
BROWNFIELDSPROGRAM



The people of Oklahoma have always had an undeniable connection with the land. Generation after generation, Oklahomans succeed due to land uses like agriculture, oil and gas production, ranching and commerce.

But even some of our most responsible ventures have left lands behind that are damaged, due to surface and subsurface contaminants. These lands sit underused and abandoned.

The Environmental Protection Agency calls these parcels of land Brownfields.

The Oklahoma City Brownfields Redevelopment Program gives us a second chance to develop our land safely.

The tangible rewards that come from redeveloping a brownfield are motivation enough. Thousands of local jobs are created, historical areas once forgotten and abandoned thrive, landmarks avoid demolition in favor of new uses.

But, brownfield projects accomplish so much more than that...



WHAT IS A BROWNFIELD?

A Brownfield is a piece of land or a structure that sits unused or abandoned due to the presence or potential presence of a hazardous contaminant.

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Generally, these properties have a history of use as factories, railroad yards, service stations, mining and drilling sites and other industrial operations. Buildings with indoor environmental hazards are also Brownfields. In some instances, significant investment must be made in the cleanup of the property prior to redevelopment. However, in many cases a perceived environmental roadblock can be easily overcome. There are at least 800 potential Brownfields in Oklahoma City based on historical or current use.*

**according to city staff*



WHAT BENEFITS ARE THERE IN DEVELOPING BROWNFIELDS?

For every acre of reused Brownfields an estimated 4.5 acres of unused green space is preserved.*

Brownfield redevelopment projects unite individuals. They give people a chance to work together to make a lasting impression on their community. A single brownfield project unites stakeholders from many backgrounds including the private sector, public corporations, local, state and federal governments and financial entities.

Brownfield redevelopment projects are varied and serve many purposes, from establishing safe, new sites for business construction without having to develop previously undeveloped land, to creating green space, parks and recreational areas that beautify communities.

Brownfield redevelopment projects promote a habit of reusing our resources. Reusing brownfield properties also means reusing the infrastructure that services the property. Roads, utilities and other public services are often already in place. For every acre of reused brownfields an estimated 4.5 acres of unused green space is preserved.*

Brownfield projects alter peoples' perception about environmental issues. They prove that the environmental mistakes of our past can not only be cleaned, but also repurposed to promote community improvement and economic growth.

**according to the EPA*



ARE BROWNFIELD PROJECTS FINANCIALLY VIABLE?

Brownfield projects are viable and attractive for investors and developers.

In the past, brownfield clean-up projects were often cost prohibitive—the cost of cleanup exceeded the value of the property upon completion.

More recently, thanks to cost-lowering advancements in cleanup technology and techniques, scarcity of urban lands for new development and ideas for more profitable end use, brownfield projects are viable and attractive for investors and developers.

Today, brownfield properties have been found and developed in unique, historical urban areas and have been located in the midst of beautiful rural areas that couldn't be enjoyed safely before being cleaned up.



WHAT DOES THE BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM DO?

The Brownfields Redevelopment Program is a tool providing financial resources, technical guidance and liability protection.

The Oklahoma City Brownfields Redevelopment Program provides financial resources, technical guidance and liability protection to those engaged in the acquisition or revitalization of a brownfield property. There are services available to individuals participating in all stages of the redevelopment process, including current or prospective property owners, lenders, investors, brokers, architects, engineers, planners, environmental consultants, developers, attorneys and non-profit entities.

Technical guidance

The Oklahoma City Brownfields Program unites brownfield property stakeholders with government agencies and other entities that can help facilitate solutions for technical challenges in the cleanup and redevelopment process. Many forms of technical assistance can be available, including:

- Identification of Brownfields
- Consultations with property owners, developers & prospective purchasers
- Assistance with site selection
- Assistance with state or federal regulatory agency programs
- Phase I/II/III environmental site assessments
- Review of environmental documentation on redevelopment site

Financial assistance

Stakeholders may also contact the Oklahoma City Brownfields Redevelopment Program for financial assistance opportunities. The City's program may be able to assist with site assessment, cleanup, or other phases of a project depending upon the availability of federal funds from the EPA and other agencies. Funds may also be available to stakeholders directly from state and federal agencies. Some of the different forms of federal or state assistance include:

- EPA Assessment Grants
- EPA Revolving Loan Fund Grants
- EPA Cleanup Grants
- EPA Job Training Grants
- EPA Training, Research, and Technical Assistance Grants
- State and Tribal Response Programs
- Targeted Brownfields Assessments (from EPA or state agencies)

Parties interested in financial assistance for a brownfield project may also qualify for non-EPA funding from agencies such as the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Oklahoma Corporation Commission, Oklahoma Water Resources Board and the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board, as well as Federal agencies including the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Transportation.

Liability Protection

Environmental liability is often a concern for stakeholders in a brownfield redevelopment project. Liability protection can be achieved in three ways:

- Perform All Appropriate Inquiry (AAI) prior to purchase and qualify as a bona fide prospective purchaser. This provides liability protection from the EPA under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).
 - Individuals who perform AAI prior to acquisition and meet continuing obligations can knowingly acquire contaminated properties without acquiring the environmental liability.
 - CERCLA liability protections may also be available to individuals qualifying as a "contiguous property owner" or "innocent landowner." (See epa.gov for definitions.)
- Perform a cleanup under one of the applicable state regulatory programs and receive liability protection from the State and EPA upon successful completion of the cleanup.
- A variety of environmental insurance policies may be available to help property owners limit their liability during and after a cleanup.



WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF BROWNFIELD PROJECTS IN OKLAHOMA CITY?

Many projects such as the Dowell Center, the historic Skirvin Hotel & Dell Call Center have been developed through the Brownfields Program.

Oklahoma City has already seen the positive impact of many brownfield projects. Several staples of the Oklahoma City skyline, including the Dowell Center and the historic Skirvin Hotel have been given a new lease on life due to local, state and federal brownfields funding. Additionally, new corporate office and retail space in Lower Bricktown and the Dell Call Center on the Oklahoma River could not have been completed without the civic teamwork involved in funding and facilitating a brownfield cleanup. The overall impact of brownfield projects across Oklahoma City has helped contribute to the estimated \$3.2 billion in reinvestment projects in the urban core from 1995 through 2010. In addition to the significant economic impacts, hundreds of new jobs have been created and dozens of acres of land revitalized.

The list of successful brownfields redevelopment projects grows daily. If you would like assistance in identifying a brownfield property or funding a brownfield cleanup, contact the Oklahoma City Brownfields Coordinator at (405) 297-1639 or visit us on the web at www.okc.gov/planning/index.html



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If you would like more information about the Brownfields Program or to determine if your project is eligible for financial assistance, please contact the Oklahoma City Brownfields Coordinator at (405) 297-1639 or visit us on the web at <http://www.okc.gov/planning/index.html>

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