



MACOG Regional Brownfields Coalition



BROWNFIELDS BASICS

What is the MACOG Regional Brownfields Coalition?

The Michiana Area Council of Governments Regional Brownfields Coalition is a coalition of Elkhart County, Kosciusko County, Marshall County, and St. Joseph County. The Coalition obtained a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) to assess and plan for the reuse and cleanup of brownfields. We have identified focus areas, including Elkhart and Warsaw, and other sites across the region. The Coalition welcomes additional sites to be added to the inventory at any time. If there are sites you believe are brownfields and would like for us to take a closer look, please contact MACOG.

What is a “Brownfield”?

Many areas across the region were once active industrial and commercial sites and are now abandoned or underutilized. This makes them excellent candidates to be reused and redeveloped. Some of these properties may be contaminated, while others have not been assessed but it is suspected that they may have environmental issues. These properties are called “brownfields”, defined by the US EPA as real property in which the expansion, redevelopment, and reuse can be complicated due to the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Typical properties of brownfields include abandoned factories, gas stations, blighted commercial buildings, and dry cleaners.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

MACOG Brownfields:

[macog.com/
brownfields.html](http://macog.com/brownfields.html)

Environmental Protection Agency:

epa.gov/brownfields

Understanding Brownfields:

[epa.gov/brownfields/
understanding-
brownfields](http://epa.gov/brownfields/understanding-brownfields)

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Why redevelop Brownfields?

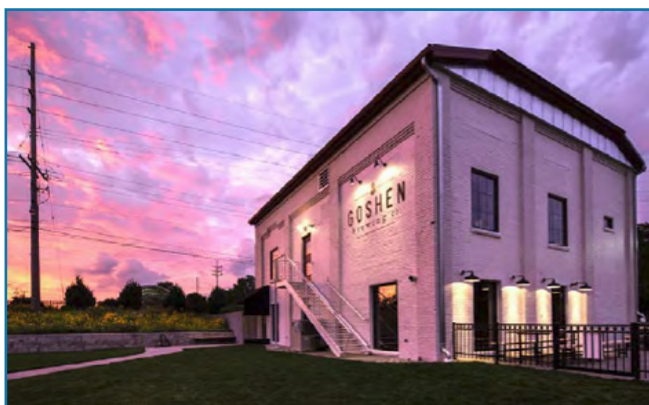
Redeveloping and cleaning up brownfields can transform communities, improving health and the environment and at the same time promoting economic revitalization.

- **Meet community needs: Housing, greenspace, parks & trails, retail (dining, shopping, entertainment), office space, industry, etc.**
- **Opportunity for job creation and tax revenue**
- **Improve property values, reduce blight**
- **Aesthetic improvement & community morale**
- **Protect public health and the environment: Decrease exposure to hazardous substances that affect our health and groundwater.**
- **Improve public safety: Reduce illegal dumping, vandalism, drug labs.**
- **Efficient use of public infrastructure and preservation of land: uses the public transportation, drinking water, drainage, electricity, and other types of infrastructure that are already available.**



*Photo Credit:
Goshen Redevelopment Commission*

*Local Brownfields Redevelopment Example:
Former NIPSCO Building in Goshen*



*Goshen Brewing Company, After Redevelopment
in 2015*

Why is brownfields redevelopment a challenge?

When redeveloping brownfields, sometimes unexpected things are discovered such as buried debris, unmarked utilities, or additional contamination, requiring more time and money. Developers may fear they might have to fix environmental problems they did not create. Because of this, they often build on suburban or rural sites that have not been developed. These are called green fields. The development of green fields may lead to sprawl. Sprawl can create communities with commercial and residential areas segregated, accessible primarily by cars.

In contrast, redeveloping brownfields often supports dense in-fill development, increasing the activity and residents within communities. Although there are sometimes challenges with in-fill, adding re-activating vacant places can building up local economics and promote healthier lifestyles through more walkable communities.

What is the brownfields assessment process?

Redeveloping a site begins with an examination of the property's past uses. This initial historical study of the site is called a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and it gives us an idea of the types of contamination that might be found on the land or in groundwater. The Sanborn fire insurance maps are important tools for a Phase I report, as they provide historical information and data from approximately 1860.

If needed, a Phase 2 assessment analyzes soil and groundwater samples to confirm the type, level, and location of contamination in the area. Pollution may not be evenly spread across the property. For example, one area could have a "hot spot" or high pollution area, and another could be affected by a completely different type of pollutant. Phase 2 assessments help determine this and plan for the type of cleanup. After Phase 2, additional studies may be required to establish site-specific cleanup goals or to develop cleanup plans depending on the redevelopment vision.

Could a Phase I or Phase II result in regulatory action?

The Phase 1 will identify the main issues at a site that may require further investigation through Phase 2 sampling. The Phase 1 will not result in regulations by a state or federal regulatory agency. If the presence of contaminants has been confirmed through Phase 2, the results may be required to be reported to the regulatory authorities.

What is the cost and time required to "recycle" a piece of land?

Assessment and cleanup costs are additional development costs that largely determine whether a brownfield area redevelopment is feasible. The US EPA and many individual states offer grant or revolving loan programs for the assessment and cleanup to reduce financial burden. Time is money, which means that time is very important in the cleanup process. Likewise, technical reliability and the method used for cleanup are also important because the polluting substances that remain must be controlled over time. A Phase 1 can be completed in a few months at a cost of between \$3,000 and \$10,000, depending on the complexity and size of the site. A Phase 2 can take several months and cost \$20,000 or more.



This diagram shows a potential reuse vision for the Arnolt site from the Argonne Corridor Vision Plan from the Kosciusko County Economic Development Corporation.

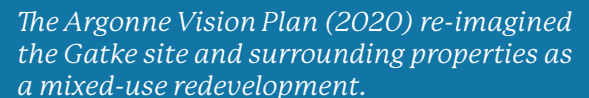


Sampling of soil and groundwater is taking place at the former site of the Arnolt Corporation in the City of Warsaw.

The goal of clean-up, if needed, is to ensure that the site is cleaned up consistent with the planned reuse of the property. For example, a parking lot requires a different level of clean-up compared to a lot that is converted to a community garden. Future residential sites have higher standards than commercial sites and are therefore more expensive to clean up.

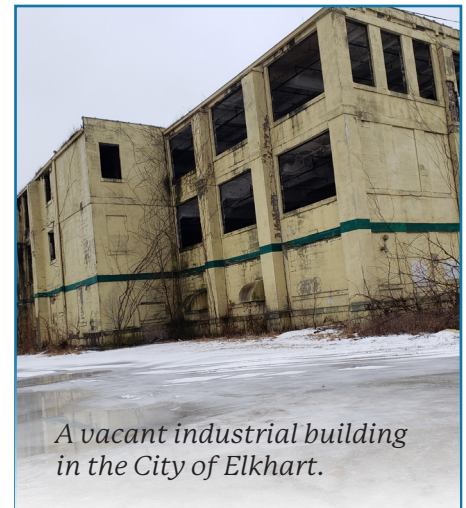
Another common strategy is to prevent contact with contaminated soil through barriers such as clean soil, plastic, or other impervious surfaces. There are also innovative and less conventional techniques that include the use of plants, microbes or fungi to degrade or stabilize contaminants.

Determining who is responsible for assessment and cleanup costs is a common concern. Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, CERCLA in 1980, owners of the past, present, as well as future users of the site could be held responsible for cleanup. In 2002, the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act added some liability protections in CERCLA. Legal advice is frequently necessary to move a project through the legal and regulatory process and to appease investors' and lenders' concerns.



What is the role of the local government, the community, and the private sector?

There are many parties involved in brownfields redevelopment: the city or municipality where the property is located, federal and state government agencies, community organizations, tribal authorities, urban developers, lenders, private and public service providers, and regulatory agencies. Their respective roles depend largely on who caused the contamination, the type of clean-up required, whether the land is publicly or privately owned, redevelopment interest from the private sector, and participation of the community in the visioning and planning process. Leadership at the local and community level is a necessary ingredient for the success of a brownfields redevelopment project.



A vacant industrial building in the City of Elkhart.

The former Ward Bakery Building / Ford Distributing Company in South Bend.



IT CAN'T BE DONE WITHOUT YOU!

How to be part of a project:

Your participation and contributions are crucial to supporting the sustainable and equitable redevelopment of underutilized or contaminated properties in your community. As a public official or local resident, you can participate in meetings or surveys, or speak at public hearings. As a community leader, you can educate yourself on brownfields projects and health and safety issues affecting your community and you can provide input on the development plan. As interested participants in the process, rather than just bystanders, community residents are more likely to support a successful cleanup and redevelopment plan that they understand and have helped develop.

**To learn how
you can be
involved, visit:**

**[macog.com/
brownfields.html](http://macog.com/brownfields.html)**

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