



DNREC Brownfields Development Program

Revitalizing Communities

Nearly every community in the State of Delaware is affected by brownfields. These contaminated and abandoned properties exist in cities, small towns, suburbs and even rural areas. Left untouched, brownfields pose environmental, legal and financial burdens to a community and its taxpayers. After cleanup and redevelopment, these sites can once again bring economic growth, jobs and pride to communities. Many examples of successful developments of brownfield sites can be found throughout Delaware.

What is a Brownfield?

Brownfields are typically abandoned or idled industrial and commercial facilities where redevelopment is hindered by the real or perceived threat of environmental contamination. They can be found anywhere hazardous chemicals were sold, used or manufactured and may have been spilled, dumped or leaked. Brownfields can be gas stations, dry cleaners, shooting ranges, former warehouses, factories and landfills.

Although brownfields may be found anywhere, they tend to be more concentrated in urban settings with an industrial history.

- Currently, more than 800 sites in Delaware may qualify as potential brownfields.
- Approximately 60 to 75% of these sites are in urban areas, but many are located in rural or suburban settings.
- Many economic and social benefits are generated when these properties are returned to a state of having been made safe for their intended use.

Why Build on a Brownfield?

- Brownfield locations frequently have existing infrastructure.
- Many state and local agencies include brownfields in their economic development area descriptions. These agencies are familiar with brownfield redevelopment and can offer additional support.
- Cleaning up contaminated properties for viable use helps eliminate new development on open space.

Is Brownfields Funding Available?

Through the DNREC Brownfields Development Program, certified brownfield developers may submit eligible expenses for reimbursement for investigation and remediation; frequently, the remediation is part of the redevelopment process. Local governments, non-profits and communities may also apply for competitive EPA brownfield grants.

What is the Role of DNREC?

DNREC provides oversight of brownfield redevelopment projects and certifies that after the completion of remedial actions, the proposed site's usage is safe for human health and the environment. DNREC also provides a free Regulatory Advisory Service that includes guidance regarding environmental permitting requirements. For more information, please call 302-739-9069.

If you or someone you know is considering the purchase of a property that you believe to be a brownfield, it is important that you contact the DNREC Remediation Section prior to buying the property. A brownfield property involves legal issues, including securing liability protection from previous contamination. A brownfield property should be bought only after the purchaser fully understands the legal obligations involved. To be eligible for the Brownfields Development Program and potential liability protection, you must enter into an agreement, known as a Brownfields Development Agreement, with DNREC prior to purchasing the property.

For additional information, please call the DNREC Remediation Section at 302-395-2600 or visit de.gov/brownfields.

