# What is a Brownfield?

Property Owner Fact Sheet

Colorado Springs-Fountain Coalition Brownfield Initiative

**A “brownfield” is a property that has been, or may be perceived to have been, affected environmentally.** The potential presence of hazardous substances, petroleum, or regulated building materials like asbestos and lead paint may impede redevelopment opportunities. By completing environmental site assessment and cleanup planning, it is possible to transform brownfields from liabilities into assets that will benefit the community.

# How is this program funded?

In 2018, a Coalition led by the City of Colorado Springs and supported by Colorado Springs Utilities, School District 11, and the City of Fountain successfully applied for a $600,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The grant funds will be used to help revitalize brownfields, primarily in Colorado Springs and Fountain, along the Shooks Run Creek and Fountain Creek Corridors. The Coalition will work with property owners, developers and community stakeholders to promote the productive reuse of brownfield sites.

# What are the benefits of brownfield redevelopment?

Property owners, business owners, and developers who revitalize brownfields provide benefits to themselves and their community, including:

* Removing unknowns regarding site conditions that might hold up a future sale, financing agreement and/or redevelopment project.
* 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 potential impacts from and on adjacent properties.
* Accessing cleanup and reuse planning resources.

# How can you use grant funding for your property?

Grant-funded assistance is available to parties interested in completing environmental site assessments (ESAs) and regulated building material (RBM) surveys and/or developing site cleanup/reuse plans in support of a property’s sale or redevelopment. Property owners, business owners, and developers are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to further economic development initiatives, protect public health, and restore the health of creeks and the environment!

# **Frequently** Asked Questions

# **DO I OWN A BROWNFIELD SITE?**

If you answer yes to the following questions, you may own a brownfield site.

* Is your land idle, vacant, or less productive than it ought to be?
* Are concerns about historical use or environmental contamination hindering redevelopment or sale of the site?

# **WHAT CAN GRANT-FUNDED ASSISTANCE BE USED FOR?**

Grant assistance can help with environmental studies, RBM surveys, and cleanup/reuse planning activities on eligible sites.

* **Phase I ESA:** A background study of historical use and existing conditions to evaluate recognized environmental conditions (RECs) and potential areas where substances may have been released.
  + 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 in which samples (e.g. soil, groundwater, air/vapor, surface water and sediments) are collected and analyzed to characterize the type, distribution and extent of 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 assess whether 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.

## WILL AN ASSESSMENT AFFECT THE VALUE OF MY PROPERTY?

Property values may be affected by uncertainty about site history and the financial and legal risks of environmental impacts. ESAs help property owners quantify the amount of contamination on a property. For properties with little to no contamination, this knowledge may increase marketability. For sites with significant contamination, assessment and cleanup planning can help property owners pursue cleanup funding, realize increased value, and reduce liabilities.

## WHICH SITES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR GRANT-FUNDED ACTIVITIES?

In general, the property must be potentially impacted by petroleum or hazardous substances, underutilized and meet the following criteria:

* Exhibits high potential for redevelopment and/or other opportunities to benefit the community.
* Is not included on the EPA National Priority “Superfund” List, under a Consent Order with the State, or targeted for federal or State enforcement.

## WILL AN ASSESSMENT TRIGGER REPORTING TO A STATE OR FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY?

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Information collected for Phase I and II ESAs will be shared with the EPA and Colorado State agencies. In some cases, the results of a Phase II ESA may trigger a reporting requirement. Local agency reporting requirements may also apply.

## WILL I HAVE CONTROL OVER THE WORK DONE?

The program is voluntary. The Coalition's environmental contractor will obtain the property owner’s permission to access the property to perform environmental assessment work. The property owner will have the right to stop participation in the program at various phases of the assessment process and will receive an electronic copy of all reports.

## HOW DO I NOMINATE A SITE FOR GRANT FUNDING?

Stakeholders are encouraged to nominate sites for grant funding by completing a Site Nomination Form (visit the project website to download a form). Property owner permission is required to perform grant-funded assessments.