

Brownfields to Green Spaces

What is a Brownfield?



1996- Brownfield in Philadelphia, PA (before)

Brownfields are abandoned, idle or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

More on Brownfields

“Brownfields may make you think of dirty, blighted, abandoned industrial property, but that image is too narrow. Though some brownfields are old industrial sites, others are commercial buildings with little or no environmental contamination.

Brownfields could be –

- former service stations,
- former dry cleaners,
- factories,
- warehouses,
- parking lots,
- hangers,
- lots where heavy machinery was stored or repaired,
- abandoned railroads,
- former railroad switching yards,
- air strips,
- bus facilities,
- landfills,
- and many more types of facilities” (Brownfields Center at the Environmental Law Institute).

Opportunities for Brownfields

Pennsylvania’s cities and towns have a considerable number of abandoned industrial sites. Often located along rivers and transportation corridors, these sites are a legacy of our rich industrial heritage and economic history. Abandoned industrial sites have traditionally been a liability for Pennsylvania’s urban areas. By turning previously industrial properties into recreational spaces these brownfields can become part of our green infrastructure; networks of open space, greenways, natural areas, playgrounds, trails, community gardens and parks, creating more sustainable communities. They can be turned into places that protect natural, cultural and scenic resources, provide recreational benefits, enhance the natural beauty and quality of life in neighborhoods and communities and stimulate economic development opportunities.

Converting Brown to Green:

Some of the benefits of converting Brownfields to Green Space can include:

- Use existing roads and utilities
- Convenient location
- Proximity to other amenities
- Creates more walkable communities
- Turns an unsightly and unusable space into a community treasure, something that all can enjoy
- Reduces urban runoff
- Attractive
- Eliminate health and safety hazards
- Increased land productivity
- Increased property values
- Cleaner urban environment

Resources:

The Trust for Public Land. Conserving Land for People. Brownfields to Parks. http://www.tpl.org/tier2_pa.cfm?folder_id=945

U.S. EPA. Brownfields and Land Revitalization. <http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/>

Brownfields Center at the Environmental Law Institute. Brownfields Basics. http://www.brownfieldscenter.org/big/bf_basics.shtml



2006- Liberty Lands in Philadelphia, PA (after)

More Information

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