

## OVERVIEW

One of the legacies of Vermont's industrial heritage over the years has been the challenge of reusing abandoned sites. Developers find it less challenging to build on open pastures or green fields instead of purchasing an existing "brownfields" site in a town or village.

Liabilities attached to contaminated sites and the high costs of cleanup make brownfields redevelopment a complex undertaking. The sites are often avoided and passed over, leaving them idle and distressing both the property owner and the surrounding community.

To help bring abandoned and under utilized sites back into reuse, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) has received funds from the U.S. EPA's *Brownfields Assessment Grant Program*. The Central Vermont Brownfields Program grants funds to conduct site assessments and related activities at brownfields sites to determine whether a site is, in fact, contaminated.

The overall goal of the Brownfields Program is to return sites with real or perceived contamination to the marketplace or to be reused for the public good, such as parks or green space. The Program will provide landowners with a better understanding of the funding sources, benefits, tax incentives, liabilities, insurance protection, and other tools available to redevelop sites.

This project is led by the CVRPC Brownfields Advisory Committee whose membership consists of representatives from towns, financial institutions, community development groups, the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation, law professionals and other interested parties.



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*Helping communities & property owners assess environmental contamination for the purpose of re-use or re-development.*

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Commission

CENTRAL VERMONT BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM



## BENEFITS

- **Free or reduced cost of a phase I or II environmental site assessment:** The Central Vermont Brownfields Program can help fund a phase I and phase II environmental site assessment depending on complexity and available funds. This can save an owner \$2,000 to \$80,000.
  - **Better understanding of site conditions:** The largest barrier to brownfields redevelopment can be the perception (by potential developers and/or investors) of contamination. Without an assessment of the property, this perception cannot be dispelled. Contamination either is on the property or is not on the property. Almost all potential buyers, lending institutions, and investors require that an environmental assessment be conducted before clearing title. The Brownfields Program provides funds to undertake environmental assessments that would otherwise have to be paid by the owner.
  - **Information regarding liability:** Concerns over liability may discourage developers who are unfamiliar with brownfields redevelopment. The Brownfields Program can provide information on liability and available liability protection programs.
- CVRPC can assist land owners and prospective developers with brownfields redevelopment.**

## PROCESS

- **Site Assessment:** Assessment of a brownfields site is often undertaken in two phases. A phase I environmental site assessment determines the historical uses of the property and the likelihood of contamination. Information from a phase I assessment is used to plan a phase II environmental site assessment which includes testing the property's soil, water, and/or air. This information is used to determine cleanup options and develop a corrective action plan.
- **Site Cleanup:** Redevelopment projects take planning, public input, and resources. The cost and extent of the cleanup needed may factor into the type of end use that is appropriate for the site. The Brownfields Program does not provide funding for actual cleanup, but can assist the owner in developing the cleanup plans if necessary, identifying clean up funding sources, and providing other technical assistance.
- **Site Redevelopment:** After site assessment activities are completed, some clean up activities may be folded into grading, construction, building renovations or other site redevelopment activities. With a clear redevelopment plan, brownfields assessment, clean up and redevelopment can be a seamless process.

## PARTICIPATION

CVRPC staff is available to explain the benefits of the program and discuss whether it is the right match for a property. Once a landowner expresses an interest in the program, they are asked to fill out an application form. The Advisory Committee reviews applications and ranks sites by redevelopment potential, the likelihood of addressing public health, environmental, or land use issues, the degree of municipal support, and the potential for public benefit through redevelopment. CVRPC will notify the landowner of the final decision. If the project is approved, CVRPC will hire an environmental consultant to conduct the phase I or II environmental site assessment.

**For more information about the Brownfields Program, please visit [www.centralvtplanning.org](http://www.centralvtplanning.org) or contact:**

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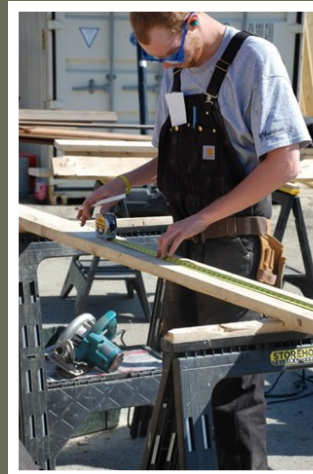


## Restoring Buildings & Jobs: The Brownfields Program at Work in Barre City



A socially conscious, non-profit recycled goods retailer, ReSource purchased this granite shed in Barre City to provide a new retail home in Central Vermont. The funds

from the Brownfields Program helped characterize site conditions through Phase I and II assessments, and allowed for development and implementation of a detailed cleanup plan. ReSource sells recycled household appliances and building materials thus diverting them from the landfill, helps alleviate poverty by making goods and materials available to the poor, and coordinates a job-skills training program for individuals in transition.



## Multi Stakeholder Process

The Brownfields Program would not be possible without assistance from stakeholders such as:

- property owners,
- the public
- environmental consultants
- Vermont Dept. of Environmental Conservation & U.S. Environmental Protection Agency representatives.

Involvement of multiple stakeholders ensures that all interests are addressed and protected.

