

Make Your Market: A CCLR Guide to Revitalizing Underutilized Properties

Brownfields exist in nearly all communities. Follow these steps to develop market interest in your brownfield(s) for redevelopment.



CENTER FOR CREATIVE
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➤ Getting Started: Building a Brownfield Inventory

Brownfields are opportunities for community revitalization. Repurposing a previously used property can create new jobs, bring in amenities and create economic growth.

Savvy investors see the value and opportunities in brownfield redevelopment. Savvy communities make it easier for investors to say yes by identifying, learning about and publishing detailed information about available local brownfields. This is your brownfield inventory.

A brownfield inventory helps stakeholders make informed decisions about which sites to prioritize for cleanup and redevelopment. It also signals to the market that a community is serious about and ready for new investment.

The question is not whether you need a brownfield inventory, it is whether you have the capacity to create it on your own. If not, you may need to engage a third-party consultant.

Some factors to consider:

- **The technical ability and availability of in-house resources**
- **Timeline for completion**
- **Budget**

Seek to work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders in developing your inventory, to make the process and the final product comprehensive and inclusive.



What is a Brownfield?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines a brownfield as “a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential* presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”

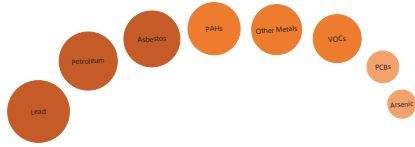
** A property need not in fact be contaminated to qualify for assessment funding; the purpose of the funding is to determine whether contamination is present. In some cases, lack of clear information on the historical use of a property is enough to designate a site as a brownfield.*

Environmental Contaminants Often Found at Brownfield Sites

Brownfield properties are often overlooked for reuse or redevelopment due to fear of environmental contamination. Understanding the types of contaminants present (or potentially present) and how people may be exposed to those contaminants will help a community plan cleanup and site reuse options that limit exposure risk.

U.S. EPA, states and tribes have programs that can help communities identify properties that are brownfields, determine whether the property is environmentally-contaminated, address contamination when needed and plan for site reuse that will bring new benefits to the community.

Below are the contaminants most commonly reported from brownfields cleaned up using U.S. EPA grant funds. Each circle's size reflects how often the contaminant was reported to the U.S. EPA.*



Contaminant	Substance Type	Examples of Past Uses
1. Lead (Pb)	Metals	Mining, fuel, paint, ink, piping, batteries, ammunition
2. Petroleum	Oil, hydrocarbon compounds	Oil and refining, fuel, chemical and plastic production
3. Asbestos	Fiber in rock	Mining and processing, piping, insulation, fire proofing, textiles
4. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAHs)	Hydrocarbon compounds, combustion byproduct	Coal tar, creosote, soot, fire, industry/manufacturing byproduct
5. Other metals	Metals	Metal fabrication, plating, mining industry/manufacturing
6. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)	Manmade chemicals	Industry and commercial product solvents, degreavers, paint strippers, dry cleaning
7. Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)	Manmade chemicals	Heat and electrical transfer fluids, lubricant, paint and caulk, manufacturing, power plant
8. Arsenic (As)	Metals	Pesticides, agriculture, manufacturing, wood preservative

COMMON BROWNFIELD CONTAMINANTS

- Solvents and other volatile organic compounds
- Petroleum products
- Asbestos
- Lead and other metals
- PCBs
- Arsenic

➤ Know Your Purpose

Your brownfield inventory can be used to catalog a municipality's surplus properties, raise public awareness about potential risks in the community, facilitate public private partnerships (P3) to support revitalization or prioritize sites for redevelopment. Some communities develop their inventories according to local priorities — highlighting properties that are suitable for housing, for example, or large-scale renewable-energy projects.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Several excellent tools and templates are available to help you catalog and track the brownfields in your community. These include:

[Brownfield Inventory Tool \(BiT\)](#), developed and supported by Kansas State University, a U.S. EPA Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) Communities provider.

[Community Reuse Property Prioritization Tool](#), a spreadsheet template for Excel developed by the Land Revitalization Team of U.S. EPA.

[EPA Property Profile Form \(PPF\)](#), used by EPA brownfield grant recipients to report property information, past uses and environmental activities on brownfield sites.

[10-step guide to developing a municipal brownfield inventory](#), published by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.



Affordable housing developer construction project using a brownfield to support new infill development.

➤ Gathering Information

There are different resources to assist in identifying potential brownfields in your area, from community workshops to online databases. State-specific databases can identify active brownfields in your region. Some of these databases are attached in the appendix for EPA Regions 9 and 10, such as this [GIS tool](#) maintained by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, which lists active and completed clean-ups. Users also can review previously completed environmental assessments for potential brownfields.

You can typically get ownership information from the Tax Assessor's Office for the local area or in some cases the county if property is in an unincorporated area. Driving or walking around the perimeter of a property and taking photographs is an easy way to document conditions such as building status or visible debris.



Brownfields Inventory Checklist

- ✓ Parcel address
- ✓ Parcel tax ID(s) — careful, there may be more than one
- ✓ Legal owner
- ✓ Assessed value
- ✓ Annual taxes
- ✓ Lot size
- ✓ Developable area
- ✓ Property condition
- ✓ Zoning
- ✓ Amenities (water/sewer, electricity)
- ✓ Environmental records, including any known contamination
- ✓ Environmental program(s) if any
- ✓ Entitlements
- ✓ Potential incentives

The Benefits of a Brownfields Inventory: Knowing what you have empowers you to act!

- **ALLOWS** you to be proactive in redeveloping brownfields
- **SUPPORTS** the prioritization of sites for beneficial reuse
- **IDENTIFIES** potential human health and environmental risks
- **ASSISTS** in marketing sites for redevelopment
- **PROVIDES** a valuable land use planning tool
- **AIDS** in decision-making when allocating public resources

Using Your Inventory

Once you have created an inventory, consider prioritizing sites based on factors such as ownership (public vs. private), public health risk, redevelopment potential or those most important to community needs/goals. A brownfield inventory can assist in applying for grant opportunities, program and regional planning for capital improvement projects, zoning decisions, stakeholder engagement, and as a marketing tool to attract and engage with developers.

Value of Redeveloping Brownfields

Brownfields offer an opportunity to support community needs such as open space and parks, housing, and commercial redevelopment without urban sprawl. There are significant opportunities for brownfields funding, including state-specific grant opportunities like California's [Equitable Community Revitalization Grant](#), Alaska's [DEC Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup \(DBAC\)](#) program, and Washington's [Affordable Housing Cleanup Grant Program](#), as well as federal funding opportunities such as [EPA's Brownfields Program](#).

If you have any questions or need assistance in building your brownfields inventory, please contact the Center for Creative Land Recycling at info@cclr.org.

You may wish to consult with affected property owners and/or your attorney or legal department before publishing information about a private property or properties.



Abandoned waterfront property in Washington: Imagine the possibilities.

APPENDIX

State Resources:

EPA REGION 9

ARIZONA

[Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
Sample Brownfield Inventory conducted in Tucson](#)

Pima County and Sonora Environmental Research Institute, Inc., used the official Pima County tax assessor database and 11 federal, state and county environmental databases to develop a brownfield inventory. The goal of the project was to prioritize properties that stood to benefit from grant funding.

CALIFORNIA

[CA Water Board's GeoTracker
DTSC's EnviroStor](#)

HAWAII

[Hawaii Brownfield Inventory Resources](#)

NEVADA

[Nevada DEP Brownfields Program](#)

EPA REGION 10

ALASKA

[Contaminated Sites Search
Contaminated Sites in GIS](#)

IDAHO

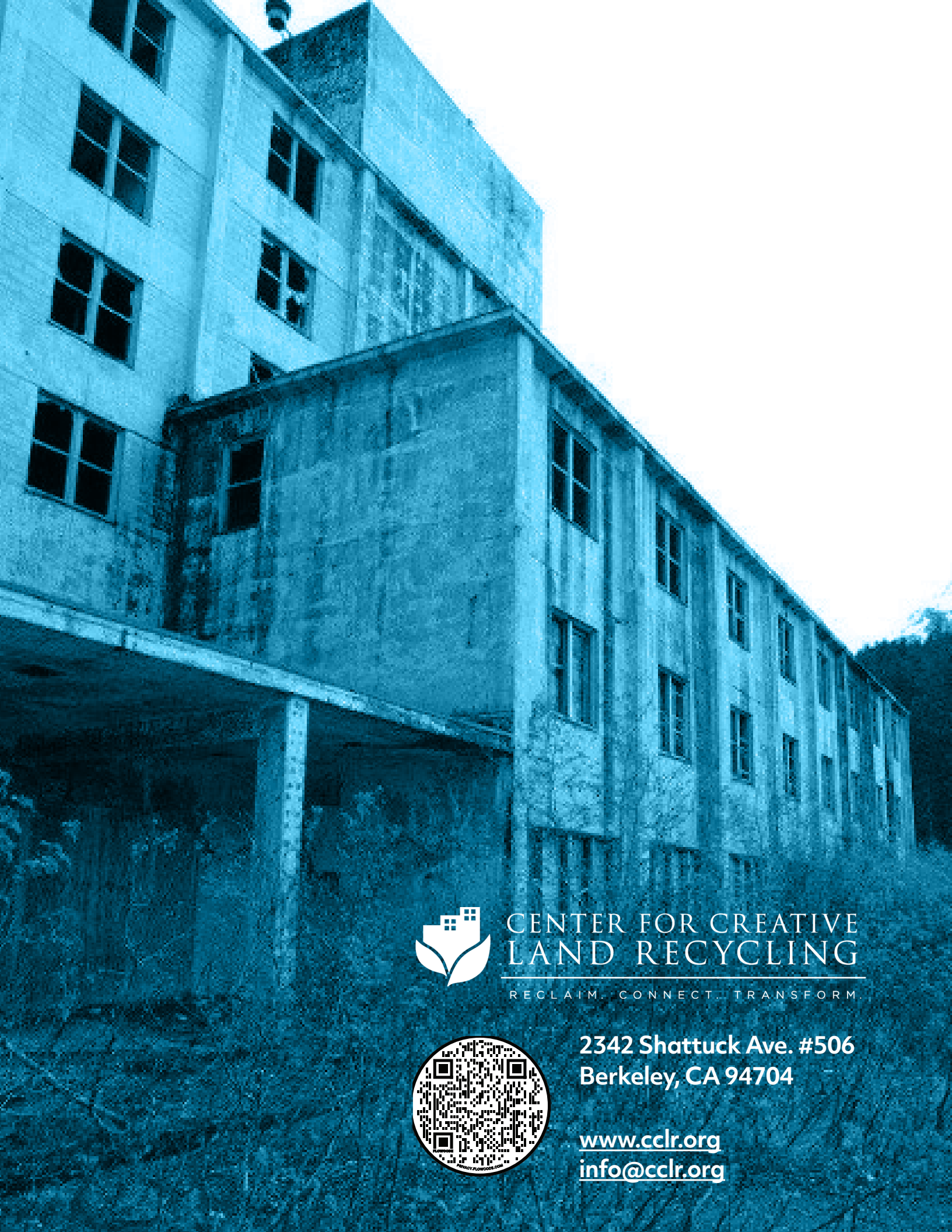
[Idaho DEQ Guidance on state-specific programs](#)

OREGON

[Oregon DEQ Guidance on Identifying Brownfields](#)

Washington

[What's in My Neighborhood
Confirmed and Suspected Contaminated Sites](#)



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