

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

A brownfield is a property on which expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the possibility of environmental contamination. These sites are usually abandoned, vacant, or underutilized properties. Examples can include abandoned gas stations, dry cleaning facilities, junkyards, old car dealerships, abandoned factories, landfills, and other potentially contaminated properties. As sites remain abandoned and unmarketable, they increase inner city blight and perpetuate the perception that infill development is risky and expensive. Brownfields decrease property values, hurt local economies, and can threaten community and human health and the environment. Brownfield sites present unique development challenges that require a creative and multifaceted approach to address.

In 2011, the City of San Antonio established the Brownfields Program to foster redevelopment of these sites. Program activities include environmental site assessments, cleanup plans, and cleanup of environmental contaminants to prepare a property for safe and productive use. Brownfields initiatives have resulted in the successful redevelopment of several potentially contaminated sites into productive community assets.

It is the policy of the City of San Antonio to identify, assess, remediate, and facilitate the redevelopment of brownfield sites that would otherwise inhibit or delay the positive growth and development of the City and the prosperity of its citizens.

2. PUBLIC BENEFITS

The cleanup and subsequent reuse of brownfield sites produces several community benefits including:

Community Revitalization: Areas blighted by brownfields degrade the sense of community, project a perception of neglect, and can contribute to civic disengagement. Apart from the economic disinvestment generated from such decline, blighted areas undermine the level of comfort and safety of the surrounding neighborhood. Transforming such sites, however, demonstrates not only a financial commitment, but a commitment of genuine attention that inspires renewed community interest and vitality.

Improved Human and Environmental Health: Brownfields represent potential public health and safety hazards. Cleaning brownfield sites aims to remove harmful substances in the environment and encourages environmental stewardship of the

land. This ensures improved health and well-being of San Antonio residents and the surrounding natural resources.

Infill Development: Every reused brownfield site absorbs a project that might otherwise contribute to urban sprawl. The EPA reports that for every acre of reused brownfields, an estimated 4.5 acres of unused green space is preserved. Revitalizing blighted, abandoned, and vacant properties and converting them to productive use protects undeveloped land on the periphery of the city by creating more developable land in central areas with existing infrastructure and services. Preservation of green fields by developing land within the existing city boundaries protects air quality and provides a more sustainable alternative to the proliferation of urban sprawl.

Economic Development: By federal standards, every dollar invested in brownfields programs leverages \$18 in redevelopment benefits. The economic impact of putting a former brownfield back into productive use can be catalytic for a neighborhood considering the introduction of jobs, investment, increased tax revenue, and injection of disposable income to the area.

3. POLICY GOALS

The Brownfield Redevelopment Program aims to accomplish the following goals:

- Identify potential brownfield sites in and around the Center City.
- Assess brownfield properties to determine the level of contamination or to dispel suspicions of environmental contamination.
- Remediate and cleanup contamination to prepare the site for redevelopment.
- Redevelop cleaned sites to return them to safe and productive use.

4. STRATEGIC APPROACH AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Brownfield Redevelopment Program will coordinate with and leverage local, state, federal, and private resources for brownfield identification, assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment to maximize the positive benefits of brownfield redevelopment.

Implementation of this strategy may include such program activities as:

- Reaching out to private property owners of suspected brownfield sites
- Marketing the program through industry associations and membership organizations

- Applying to leverage local, regional, state, and federal funding opportunities to advance program goals
- Match proposed projects with other non-brownfield assistance programs to maximize project success and positive community impact
- Facilitate/conduct educational sessions on brownfield identification and redevelopment

5. BROWNFIELD PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Brownfield Redevelopment Program staff will further develop the City of San Antonio Brownfield Redevelopment Program Guidelines to implement the intent and goals of this policy. Such guidelines will focus on and prioritize the assistance and attention of the program to sites and projects based on the following factors:

- Public benefit
- Level of investment
- Location in a priority area
- Blight elimination
- Abatement of public health contaminant
- Natural resource preservation and restoration
- Alignment with neighborhood and community plans and public agency objectives

The Brownfield Redevelopment Program Guidelines, as well as subsequent substantial changes, will be reviewed and approved as necessary by the appropriate subcommittee of the City Council.

6. PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Although the community benefits of the reutilization of former brownfields are in many ways intangible and unquantifiable, the following indicators can be measured to determine the effectiveness of the Brownfield Redevelopment Program for purposes of evaluation and ongoing program improvement:

- Number of vacant lots redeveloped
- Number of inactive buildings returned to productive use
- Level of investment on otherwise neglected sites (dollars leveraged)
- Public health hazards abated (contamination identified and cleaned up)
- Increase in taxable value

- Number of properties assessed
- Number of new housing units created
- Number of square feet of commercial or retail space redeveloped

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