

# NC Brownfields Redevelopment Section: A Fact Sheet for Municipalities



## WHO ARE WE?

The Brownfields Redevelopment Section (BRS), is a branch of DEQ Division of Waste Management.

We partner with prospective developers (aka those who did not cause or contribute to the contamination on a property) to remove or reduce uncertainty in environmental liabilities when developing a Brownfields Property

## About the Section

### What are brownfields properties?

Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or underused properties where expansion or redevelopment is stalled by actual or perceived environmental contamination. Common examples include:

- Former industrial facilities or mills
- Gas stations
- Dry cleaners
- Vacant commercial buildings
- Fill sites
- Idled properties impacted by natural disasters

### Identifying Reuse Opportunities

Properties located in strategic areas, such as downtown districts, commercial corridors, or neighborhoods targeted for revitalization are great Brownfields opportunities. Many successful projects align with local planning goals, respond to market demand, and offer meaningful community benefits, such as new housing, job creation, public amenities, or increased tax revenue.



### What Are the Benefits of a Brownfields Agreement?

A Brownfields Agreement provides developers with a practical tool for managing environmental liability and moving projects forward with greater certainty.

**Liability Protection** - The agreement includes a covenant not to sue, which can provide assurance to lenders and investors.

**Transferable Protection** - Liability protection extends to future property owners, provided they comply with the land use restrictions outlined in the agreement.

**Cost-Effective Remedies** - Environmental obligations are identified before the agreement is signed, allowing developers to plan and budget with confidence.

**Property Tax Incentives** - BRS Tax Incentives are available for the redeveloped value of the property and outlined in the Brownfields Statutes with more information available on our [website](#).



# About the Process

Prospective Developers begin the brownfields process by submitting a Brownfields Property Application to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). If the site is determined to be eligible, DEQ issues an eligibility letter and assigns a project manager to review available environmental reports, evaluate site conditions, and identify any additional assessment or remediation needed to support the safe reuse of the property. Once the assessment process is complete and safe redevelopment requirements are defined, the Prospective Developer and DEQ execute a Brownfields Agreement.

Local governments and eligible nonprofit organizations across North Carolina can access technical and financial assistance for necessary environmental site assessments through BRS and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Program. NC DEQ BRS offers direct support to communities throughout the brownfields redevelopment process.

Municipalities may receive grant-funded assistance for, but not limited to:

- Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)
- Phase II ESAs
- Structural evaluations
- Feasibility studies
- Environmental Management Plans (EMPs)
- Reuse planning

Support for municipalities that have received EPA Brownfields funding includes:

## Technical Document Review

- Generic Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs)
- Site-Specific QAPPs (SSQAPPs)
- Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAPs)

## Community Engagement Support

- Attendance at public meetings
- Presentation materials
- Fact sheets and educational resources
- Translation and accessibility recommendations



## Brownfields Community Network

The Brownfields Community Network (BCN) is a collaborative forum that connects local governments, Councils of Governments, economic development organizations, state agencies, and community stakeholders to share information and resources related to brownfields redevelopment. BCN hosts quarterly meetings that provide grant updates, highlight redevelopment success stories, offer training opportunities, and feature guest speakers on funding and redevelopment resources. Participants can stay informed by subscribing to the [Brownfields Updates mailing list](#), which distributes meeting invitations, funding announcements, training opportunities, and program updates.

# BRS Impact

Since the Brownfields Property Reuse Act was passed in 1997, BRS has negotiated hundreds of brownfields agreements across the State. The projects range in size from a \$100,000 small business expansion onto a neighboring lot to large redevelopments valued at ~\$1 billion. These projects represent significant economic development opportunity to communities. In addition to the private investment facilitated, these projects have created thousands of jobs, returned abandoned blighted eyesores into new tax performers for local governments, and provided infrastructure and resources to community members.