

NIAGARA COUNTY BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

"WHERE OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS TWICE"



KNP HEADWEAR BUILDING

Niagara  County
Center for Economic Development

Samuel M. Ferraro, Commissioner

What is a Brownfield?



According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), “Brownfields are real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties takes development pressures off of undeveloped, open land, and both improves and protects the environment.”

The Many Faces of Brownfields



Niagara County Brownfields Program

Virtually every community in the nation's older industrial regions contains brownfield sites. Niagara County, New York is no exception. Niagara County is aware of the legacy that abandoned commercial and industrial sites have had on the economic and environmental landscape of the region. However, brownfields are a link to our industrial past and a valuable community resource that through redevelopment and reuse can bring numerous benefits to a community.



Reuse of brownfield sites is a priority for the Niagara County Legislature and is an important economic tool for stimulating growth in Niagara County. With the Legislature's support, the Niagara County Department of Economic Development established a brownfields program in 1999 with the following goals:

- 🌳 Identify and create a countywide inventory of brownfield sites
- 🌳 Create collaboration between all levels of government and the private sector
- 🌳 Engage the public in the brownfields identification and assessment process
- 🌳 Identify funding sources and find innovative ways to finance brownfield redevelopment
- 🌳 Develop creative reuses for brownfield sites

To meet these goals, Niagara County was awarded its first USEPA brownfields grant in 1999 and has received a total of \$350,000 to complete a countywide inventory of brownfield sites and conduct Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) at high priority sites.

To date, fourteen (14) Phase I ESAs have been completed with six (6) additional Phase I ESAs proposed. A Phase I ESA consists of a historical records review to identify the likelihood of contamination at a site. Furthermore, two (2) Phase II ESAs have been completed, with one (1) additional Phase II ESA proposed. A Phase II ESA consists of targeted soil sampling and subsequent analysis. Once the exact nature and extent of contamination is known, the site can then be remediated and redeveloped. Therefore, assessment results are helping the County and local municipalities bring these sites closer to redevelopment.

Niagara Region Brownfields Showcase Community

The Niagara Region Brownfields Coalition, which was formed in October 2000, is a unique regional collaboration whose members include the Counties of Niagara and Erie and the Cities of Niagara Falls and Buffalo. The Coalition's objective as a USEPA designated Showcase Community is to serve as a model to link brownfields restoration to the economic, social, and ecological restoration of the Buffalo-Niagara Region. The Showcase Community designation allows the Coalition to leverage their dedicated brownfield resources and focus redevelopment efforts on those ventures that will yield the highest benefit to the region's long-term economic and environmental sustainability.



SITE ASSESSMENT



REMEDIATION



REDEVELOPMENT

Under Niagara County's leadership, the Coalition was awarded \$400,000 in grant funding for its efforts. Funding is used for environmental site assessments, development of a regional strategic plan, and community outreach.

Through the Coalition's efforts, eight (8) Phase I ESAs have been completed in Niagara County and eight (8) Phase I ESAs have been completed in Erie County. Additionally, two (2) Phase II ESAs will be completed, one in the City of Niagara Falls and one in the City of Buffalo. The results of these assessments will be shared with local municipalities and used to evaluate remediation and redevelopment options.

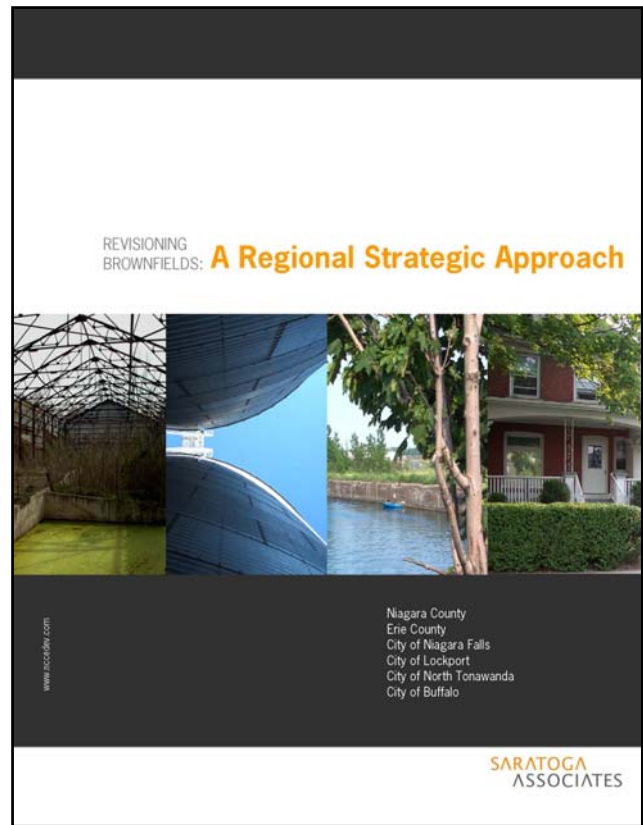
Revisioning Brownfields: A Regional Strategic Approach

A regional brownfields strategy report was created to help the County and its Showcase Community partners establish a framework for which brownfield redevelopment projects will follow. To complete this project, an \$85,000 New York State grant was combined with \$85,000 of in-kind services and \$90,000 of existing USEPA brownfields grant funding.

A comprehensive site evaluation worksheet was developed that enables a consistent approach to site prioritization throughout the region. The worksheet is currently being used to prioritize sites for environmental assessments and contains three broad categories:

- 🍁 **Planning** – how a site aligns with local planning efforts
- 🍁 **Economic** – the availability of incentives for redevelopment
- 🍁 **Infrastructure/Environmental** – site services, accessibility, and known environmental conditions

Specific policies to assist in brownfields redevelopment were identified and concept development plans were created for three areas in the Cities of Lockport, Niagara Falls, and North Tonawanda.



Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund

To aid in brownfield redevelopment, Niagara County partnered with the City of Niagara Falls to jointly receive a \$1 million Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF) grant from USEPA. The BCRLF will provide a source of funding in the form of loans and subgrants to eligible borrowers and applicants who need assistance in remediating brownfield sites in Niagara County. The BCRLF will provide monetary assistance that can be leveraged to advance brownfield sites to the next level of redevelopment. Remediation and subsequent redevelopment will return these sites to productive use, help create jobs, and improve the quality of life for County residents. For program specifics and eligibility information please contact the Niagara County Department of Economic Development at (716) 278-8750.

Petroleum Brownfields Assessment Project



Niagara County Department of Economic Development was awarded a \$200,000 grant from USEPA to expand the scope of the County's brownfield program from exclusively hazardous waste sites to include petroleum-contaminated properties. Grant funding is being used to inventory and assess petroleum-contaminated sites throughout the County. It is anticipated that at least seven (7) sites will receive Phase I ESAs and three (3) sites will receive Phase II ESAs. Ownership information packets will be created as part of the project and will include information on petroleum contamination, resources available for assessing and remediating petroleum contaminated property, remediation strategies, and sustainable redevelopment options. To receive an information packet, please contact the Niagara County Department of Economic Development at (716) 278-8750.

Benefits of Brownfields Redevelopment

Brownfields redevelopment and investment can result in several benefits including:

- ✿ Increasing the tax base and serving as an economic catalyst in an area
- ✿ Job creation and reinvestment in the community
- ✿ Access to specific financial incentives designed to assist in remediation efforts
- ✿ Lower redevelopment costs since existing infrastructure can be reused
- ✿ Prime real estate in urban areas is put back into productive use
- ✿ Protection of public health and the environment
- ✿ Increasing the sense of place and building on the character of the community

Future Brownfield Efforts

Brownfields revitalization is critical to the future of Niagara County. Remediating contaminated sites and making them productive again results in job creation and a healthier environment. Therefore, Niagara County is concentrating on brownfields redevelopment as a key strategy for economic regeneration and environmental revitalization, by understanding that brownfield sites offer a substantial economic opportunity to help the region compete in the 21st century. To this end, Niagara County will continue its brownfields mission by working with all interested stakeholders to identify and redevelop abandoned commercial and industrial contaminated sites.



Additional Brownfields Information

Niagara County



Niagara County Department of Economic Development

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For more information on Niagara County's Brownfields Program visit our website at

www.nccedev.com or contact:

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New York State

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) offers several lucrative brownfield programs and opportunities for the public and private sectors. More information on DEC programs can be found on their website at www.dec.state.ny.us or by calling DEC's Division of Environmental Remediation at (518) 402-9711.

New York State Department of State offers a Brownfields Opportunity Area Program for municipalities and community-based organizations. More information on this program can be found on their website at www.nyswaterfronts.com/grantopps_BOA.asp or by calling (607) 721-8756.

United States Environmental Protection Agency

USEPA offers several federal brownfield programs to assist the public and private sectors. More information on USEPA programs can be found on their website at www.epa.gov/brownfields or by calling USEPA's Office of Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment at (202) 566-2777.