# MACOG Regional Brownfields Coalition: Brownfields + Assessment 101

## Turning Underutilized Properties into Community Assets



*Organized By: MACOG Regional Brownfields Coalition & St. Joseph County*

# Coalition Team & Presenters

01 — Olivia Nix, MACOG
*Community and Environmental Development Planner*

02 — Yolanda Bouchee, Revitalized Communities
*Community Engagement Coordinator*

03 — Roberts Environmental Services
*Technical Consultants*

# Presentation Overview

**Purpose:**

- Introduce MACOG and the Regional Brownfields Coalition.
- Explain what brownfields are and why they matter.
- Show how communities can participate.

**Agenda:**

- MACOG & Regional Brownfields Coalition
- Brownfields 101
- Assessment 101 (Phase I, Phase II, Cleanup/Reuse Planning)
- Local site examples
- Q&A / Next steps

# What is the MACOG Brownfields Coalition?

## A Regional Partnership for Progress

- **The Coalition:** Elkhart, Kosciusko, Marshall, and St. Joseph Counties working together.
- **The Funding:** Powered by a US EPA grant for assessment and reuse planning.
- **The Mission:** Identify, study, and prepare “stuck” properties for new life.
- **Key Point:** We help remove the barriers keeping these properties vacant.



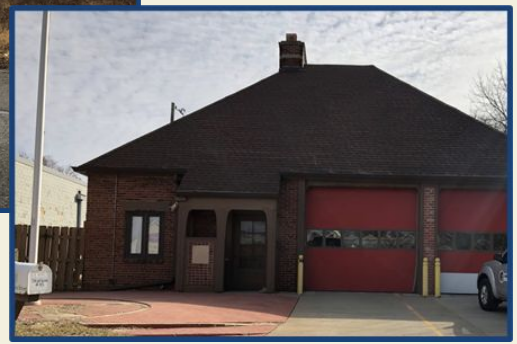
# What is a Brownfield?

- Brownfields are properties with potential hazardous substances
- Redevelopment of Brownfields can be complicated and costly
- Cleanup and reuse of these sites is beneficial
- Brownfields often require environmental assessment and remediation



# Typical Brownfields





## Abandoned Property

- Industrial, commercial, gas stations, dry cleaners, car repair shops, salvage yards, railroad operations

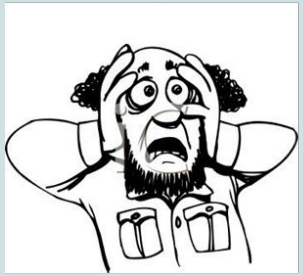
## Blighted Property

- Located at gateways to community
- Former industrials areas



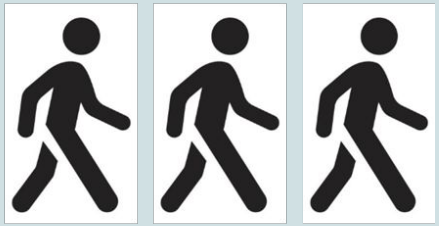


# Brownfields "Fear of the Unknown"


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**Source:** Graphics and Presentation, Steps for Successful Brownfields Redevelopment, KSU TAB (March 2019). Retrieved from https://www.ksutab.org/

# Why Redevelop Brownfields?

- Meet community needs:
  - Housing, public facilities, greenspace, etc.
- Preserve community character and history
- Mitigate blight
- Increase local tax base
- Facilitate job growth
- Mitigate pubic health & safety concerns
- Promote infill



Beutter Riverfront Park & The Mill at Ironworks
Photo: South Bend Tribune

TAB TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO BROWNFIELDS

**Source:** Graphics and Presentation, Steps for Successful Brownfields Redevelopment, KSU TAB (March 2019). Retrieved from https://www.ksutab.org/

# THE BROWNFIELD PROCESS

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

IDENTIFY SITE WITH REUSE POTENTIAL

A

PHASE I ASSESSMENT ALL APPROPRIATE INQUIRY

T A

ENTER STATE VOLUNTARY CLEANUP PROGRAM

A

PHASE II ASSESSMENT

T A

SITE VISION AND REUSE

W A

CLEANUP PLAN (ABCA)

T A

LEVERAGE RESOURCES

CLEANUP ACTIVITY

C R

REDEVELOPMENT

**EPA BROWNFIELD GRANTS AND RESOURCES**

TARGETED BROWNFIELD ASSESSMENT= T ASSESSMENT= A CLEANUP= C REVOLVING LOAN FUND= R AREA WIDE PLANNING= W

# The Brownfields Assessment Process

- **Phase I:** Historical research (Sanborn maps, property records). No actual sampling performed.
- **Phase II:** Soil & groundwater sampling to locate “hot spots” and contamination levels.
- **Cleanup Planning:** Tailored strategies based on intended reuse (park, factory, residential).



# Phase I ESA – The Historical Deep Dive

## Purpose & Process

This is a non-invasive "history lesson" of the property. We review historical records, government databases, and conduct site visits to identify "Recognized Environmental Conditions" (RECs)—essentially, any clues that suggest the land might have been impacted by past uses.

## Key Tools & Sanborn Maps

We use specialized tools like Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. These detailed maps date back to the 1860s, giving us a glimpse at what existed on or around the site throughout history. They allow us to see exactly where old fuel tanks, chemical storage, or industrial machinery were located over 100 years ago.

## A Safe Starting Point

A Phase I assessment involves no digging or sampling. Most importantly, it does not trigger state or federal regulatory action. It is a research-based tool used to provide peace of mind to developers, lenders, and the community.

# Phase II Environmental Site Assessment: Testing the Soil & Water

## Sampling & Investigation

If the Phase I highlights a concern, we move to a Phase II. Roberts Environmental takes physical samples of the soil, groundwater, and/or vapor. This is the "boots on the ground" phase where we confirm if contaminants are actually present and determine their concentration.

## Pinpointing "Hot Spots"

Pollution is rarely spread evenly across a property. We use the samples to map out specific "hot spots" or trends in the data. By knowing exactly where the issues are (and where they aren't), we can save significant time and money during the redevelopment process.

## Understanding the Results

Once testing is complete, we compare the findings against state and federal standards or screening levels (residential or commercial). This data provides the technical "blueprint" needed to satisfy environmental authorities and ensure the site is safe for its next chapter (redevelopment).

# Cleanup Planning & Technical Assistance: A Path to Reuse

## Tailored Cleanup Strategies

Remediation Work Plan (RWP)

Soil Management Plan (SMP)

Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA)

## Innovative Solutions

Cleanup can, and should be, based on proposed redevelopment plans. Minimize or eliminate exposures.

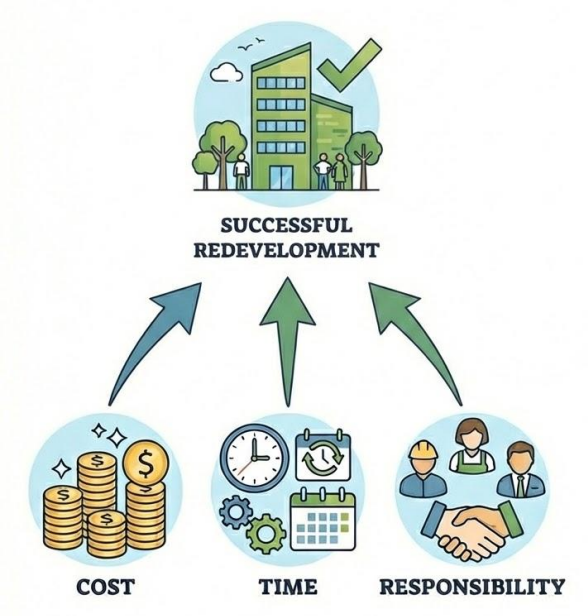
- Parking lot or building over area of soil contamination.
- Adjust building locations.
- Environmental Restrictive Covenants (ERCs).
- Vapor barriers to eliminate exposures.

## Navigating Technical Hurdles

Remediation of impacted soil, ground water, and/or vapor.

- Enter an IDEM program for oversight and final approval.
- Follow-up sampling to confirm remediation was successful.
- “Closure” Letter or No Further Action Letter.

# Costs, Time, and Responsibility




**Cost:** Phase I ($3k–$10k), Phase II ($20k+). Grant funding can reduce or cover these costs.

**Time:** Phase I ~2 months; Phase II several months.

**Responsibility:** CERCLA and the 2002 Brownfields Law provide liability protections. Legal guidance is often recommended.

# Potential Sites in Our Community




Vacant Building, New Carlisle, St. Joseph County



Old Church, North Liberty, St. Joseph County




Former Fire Department, Warren Township, St. Joseph County



Old Building, Walkerton, St. Joseph County

Help identify St. Joseph County's next "Success Story."

**Sites of Interest Form**

# How to Get Involved

**Know a site?** Submit it to the Coalition.

- Frank Fotia (St. Joe County Coalition Representative) ffotia@sjcindiana.gov

**Community Participation:** Provide input on reuse vision and planning.

**Contacts:**

- Yolanda: ybouchee@revitalizedcommunities.com for community questions
- MACOG: onix@macog.com for technical inquiries

# Open Q&A

Open discussion for participants to ask questions about brownfields, assessments, or participation.

# Thank You!

For more information, contact:

**Frank Fotia**, Economic Development Planner, St. Joseph County Department of Infrastructure, Planning, & Growth, at ffotia@sjcindiana.gov

**Olivia Nix**, Community and Environmental Development Planner, MACOG, at onix@macog.com

