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## Brownfields can be redeveloped

**Q: What exactly is a brownfield site?**

**A:** Brownfields are sites where abandoned, underused industrial and commercial facilities were once located. These sites were previously used for industrial businesses or some commercial uses.

The land may have low concentrations of hazardous waste or pollution with potential to be reused once cleanup is performed.

Severely contaminated land with high concentrations of hazardous wastes or pollution would not fall under the brownfield classification.

Mothballed brownfields are properties that owners will not transfer or productively use. Examples of brownfield sites are gas stations and dry cleaners, parking lots, vacant warehouses and factories.

Brownfield redevelopment can be an important part of a community, and can create new local jobs, increase property values, eliminate eyesores, enhance economic/tax base development, support sustainable use of land and preserve greenspace.

When brownfields are turned in to greenspace, communities benefit by having outdoor recreation created. Public parks, walking trails and forested areas are all examples.

Several funding sources are available for brownfield projects, including federal agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which can assist in cleanup, assessing the land and redevelopment. Also, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) can help with property assessment.

Nonprofit agencies and private lenders can also help.

West Virginia also has laws for brownfield development.

In 1996, the state Legislature passed the Voluntary Remediation and Redevelopment Act (VRRRA) in order to encourage the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields. The Voluntary Remediation and Redevelopment Rule enacted in 1997 by the WV Code of State Regulations Title 60, Series 3, administratively:

- Limits enforcement actions of site remediation to the WVDEP.

- Provides financial incentives to encourage brownfield redevelopment.

- Limits liability under environmental laws for those who participate in brownfield remediation through the VRRRA.

State law also requires brownfield participants to provide a plan for public involvement.

Some of the information from this article was found on [wvbrownfields.com](http://wvbrownfields.com).

I hope I have given you some valuable information on brownfields.

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