

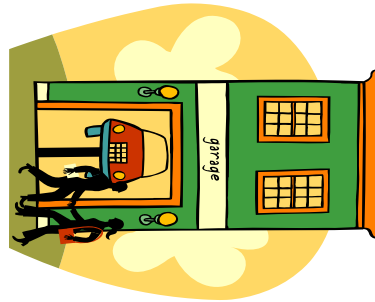
What are Brownfields?

Highway building has shaped East Central Vermont's landscape. In the early 20th Century, gas stations, restaurants, lodges, and other automobile-friendly businesses were built outside of villages and hamlets. Later, when the Interstate highways were built, many of these businesses could not survive and their buildings were abandoned.

These legacies of our region's economic expansion – vacant properties that would be redeveloped but for the suspicion that they are contaminated – are called Brownfields. These properties can be eyesores and potential threats to public health. Brownfields represent lost tax revenues and depress property values.

Properties that catered to automobile drivers, such as gasoline stations, country stores with gas pumps, and vehicle repair shops, may be contaminated with petroleum wastes. The Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission aims to return these properties to active reuse through this project.

Redevelopment of Brownfield properties is challenging because the public fears unknown contamination and the implied environmental liability of owning such a property. Armed with funding and other tools, the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission is ready to help our member towns.



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PETROLEUM BROWNFIELDS PROJECT



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What can you do about Brownfields?

The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) can use grant funds to help public or private property owners who suspect their property may be contaminated by petroleum wastes.

TRORC conducts environmental site assessments at Petroleum Brownfield sites to determine if contamination exists on a property. If contamination is found, we can go on to determine the steps needed to return the property to active use.

Preferred projects include the rehabilitation of historic buildings or supporting job creation through commercial or industrial reuses. Top priorities are properties that are located downtown or village areas, have good marketability, are locally supported, have adequate infrastructure to support redevelopment, or that will serve low to moderate income communities.

Participation is strictly voluntary.

Inquiries into the program will be held confidential to protect landowners who are undecided about the benefits of the program.

How do you redevelop Brownfields?

Bringing a Brownfield property back to use involves these steps:

A. **Environmental Assessment:** Assessment of a Brownfield site is done in two phases. A Phase I Assessment determines the historical uses of the property. Information from a Phase I Assessment is then used to plan a Phase II Assessment, which includes testing the property's soil, water, and/or air. This information is used to determine cleanup options. Assessments are conducted by TRORC's consultant according to industry standards.

B. **Site Cleanup:** Our funding can be used to plan for cleanup and redevelopment of petroleum Brownfields properties. The cost and extent of the cleanup necessary will depend on the intended re-use of the property. Residential re-uses will be held to a higher cleanup standard than commercial re-uses. TRORC does not currently provide funding for actual cleanups. However, we can assist the owner in developing cleanup plans, working with government agencies, identifying cleanup funding resources, and providing technical assistance.

C. **Site Redevelopment:** TRORC can assist owners in developing a site reuse plan, acquiring liability insurance, and identifying funding resources.

Why should you participate in this Program?

- **Free or Reduced Cost of a Phase I or II Environmental Assessments.** At eligible sites, TRORC can pay for the entire cost of the Phase I Assessment and either partial or entire cost of the Phase II Assessment, depending on the complexity of the site and the availability of funds. **This can save an owner anywhere from \$2,500 to \$80,000 – costs that would otherwise have to be borne by the owner.**

- **Better Understanding of site conditions.** Perhaps the largest barrier to Brownfield redevelopment is the perception of contamination by potential developers and/or investors. By conducting an assessment of the property, we gain a better understanding of the real conditions at a site, and can dispel false perceptions.

Almost all potential buyers, lending institutions, and investors require that an Environmental Assessment be conducted before clearing title.

- **Limiting Liability.** Concerns over liability may discourage developers who are unfamiliar with Brownfields. Working with our state partners, TRORC educates land owners and prospective developers on available liability protection.