



Waterbury Development Corporation
City of Waterbury
Brownfields Reinvestment
Program



Before



After

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I. CITY OF WATERBURY BROWNFIELDS APPROACH

The Waterbury Development Corporation (WDC) is the City of Waterbury's official economic and community development agency. Formed as a non-profit partnership of the public and private sectors, the WDC is committed to helping the City of Waterbury, its businesses, neighborhoods, and residents "Build Waterbury's Future" by promoting business growth, retention and recruitment; supporting neighborhood re-investment and revitalization; initiating and implementing brownfield remediation and construction projects; and, cultivating partnerships between public and private entities in order to deliver solid results and tangible benefits for the City and its citizens.

WDC's Brownfields Reinvestment Program is one component of the City's efforts to encourage investment in and rejuvenation of its core neighborhoods. The brownfields plan, coupled with the City's economic development, housing, and community development programs, offers a holistic package to spur new uses in the City and to promote sustainable growth.

Waterbury is a fairly dense urban center and one that has limited land available for future development. With little unused developable land available, the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield properties is critical to Waterbury's strategy for economic development and growth. Although brownfield reinvestment and reuse prevents a number of significant challenges, Waterbury is fortunate to have an abundance of these large, former industrial sites – remnants of Waterbury's once booming brass industry that made it the "Brass Capital of the World" – as potential redevelopment sites. These properties represent great opportunities for Waterbury, its economy, its neighborhoods, as well as for the environment.

A. Vision

The sustainable reuse of brownfield sites involves five (5) basic context specific approaches to make the City a vibrant, more livable community, and to improve the quality of life for Waterbury's residents:

- Repurpose underused industrial property for Transit Oriented Development (with a supporting mix of commercial and residential uses) along the Freight Street Corridor which is immediately adjacent to the City's Train Station and the Downtown.
- Revitalize brownfield sites in or adjacent to residential neighborhoods as neighborhood scale commercial operations that reinforce 'village center' ideals or promote opportunities for technological and 'green' businesses and to create opportunities for housing clusters and other appropriate scaled mixed use development.
- Utilize 'smart growth principals' to stimulate economic growth and to create new neighborhoods and maintain existing ones that are attractive, convenient, safe, and healthy.
- Reinforce industrial corridor sectors by repurposing property for new operations for more efficient, and 'green,' land use and to strengthen the industrial base of the City.
- Work to open up riverfront areas for public access and to incorporate a riverfront greenway into all new developments along the Naugatuck River Corridor.

This approach allows the City to maintain our existing industrial base while providing opportunities to attract new development, business and residents.

B. Brownfields Corridors

As part of the City's Brownfields Reinvestment Program, two (2) brownfield corridors have been established based on geographical proximity and serve as guides for a strategic, targeted approach for using brownfield assessment funds and to focus and pursue redevelopment of environmentally challenged areas within the City of Waterbury. (See attached map and supporting documentation.) The two corridors are:

- The **River Valley Brownfields Corridor** which consists of sites located along the length of the Naugatuck River as it winds through the City, and
- The **Center City Brownfields Corridor** which consists of sites near or around the geographical center of the City.

C. Goals and Objectives

The WDC, in partnership with the City, categorizes city-wide brownfields in order to determine the conditions that may have impeded the reuse of the sites; determine the human health and ecological health risks; estimate the cost of remediating individual sites; and, when possible, acquire and remediate sites.

The overall goal of the City's Brownfields Reinvestment Program is to revitalize city-wide brownfields and under the program, the objectives of WDC are as follows:

- Establish inventory of tax delinquent commercial and industrial sites
- Establish priority sites through matrix evaluation
- Apply for state and federal funding
- Conduct environmental assessments
- Conduct cleanups on sites with prospective reuse
- Promote and/or aid in the redevelopment of those sites

D. Partners

In addition to the City of Waterbury, WDC seeks to facilitate sustained and coordinated efforts to renovate brownfield sites with the following partners:

- The *Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)* develops and implements strategies to attract and retain businesses and jobs, revitalize neighborhoods and communities, ensure quality housing and foster appropriate development in Connecticut's towns and cities.
- The *Waterbury Regional Chamber of Commerce* is the region's foremost business network, resource and advocate and is a vital network of professional people, including the area's major industrialists, executives, developers, professionals and financiers. The Chamber advocates the needs of the region's business community on major issues. It serves its membership through programs and services, which enhance and improve a favorable business environment within Greater Waterbury. The Chamber assists the 13-town Greater Waterbury Region with economic development activities, governmental affairs and community resource programs designed to improve the region's business climate.

- The *Small Business Development Center (SBDC)* is a collaboration with the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Connecticut State University System, public and private partners throughout Connecticut and provides a wide array of management and technical assistance to small business owners and entrepreneurs for strengthening business performance and sustainability.
- The *Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC)* is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6) corporation formed through a unique partnership of utility and telecommunications companies and state government. Its mission is to increase Connecticut's economic vitality by helping its customers innovate and compete in the new economy.
- *Main Street Waterbury* is a grassroots, downtown management and revitalization program in the context of historic preservation.
- The *Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB)* is the administrative entity that oversees and administers WIA and CT-DOL funded programs in the Northwest Region Service Delivery Area. It was established by the Governor to promote effective delivery of job training services throughout the Region that includes the forty-one municipalities.

E. Policy

The City of Waterbury Brownfields Reinvestment Program aims to assess, remediate and redevelop brownfields in the City of Waterbury in order to restore livability to established corridor neighborhoods; promote the development of new, sustainable industries in industrial corridor sectors that will offer jobs to the City of Waterbury residents and grow the industrial base of the Naugatuck Valley region; work to open up the City's riverfront to public access through incorporation of a public greenway and redevelop the riverfront in a manner that protects and conserves the City's greatest natural resource; catalyze transit-oriented development along the Freight Street Corridor west of the City's Train Station; and, utilize smart growth principals and green building practices to the greatest extent possible.

II. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Redevelopment in cities and urban growth areas frequently must address legacy environmental contamination from historical uses. Contaminated properties that lie abandoned or underutilized in cities and towns are called "brownfields." A brownfield is defined by Connecticut General Statutes §32-9kk(a)(1) as "any abandoned or underutilized site where redevelopment, reuse or expansion has not occurred due to the presence or potential presence of pollution in the buildings, soil or groundwater that requires investigation or remediation before or in conjunction with the restoration, redevelopment, reuse and expansion of the property."

The cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield properties is a critical strategy for economic development, growth management, and environmental protection. Redevelopment of brownfields presents a number of challenges, but also great opportunities for the economy, communities, and the environment.

The cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield properties is a critical strategy for economic development, growth management, and environmental protection. Communities across Connecticut, including Waterbury, are looking for ways to adapt to economic and cultural changes to help their cities thrive. In recent decades, our populations and development have expanded into suburban areas, turning many downtown districts and industrial areas into shadows of their vibrant

pasts. Today, social and economic trends are leading to increased efforts to revitalize our towns and cities. The move back to cities and towns requires positioning them to take advantage of the opportunities of the twenty-first century. “Adaptive reuse” is the process of renovating and redeveloping existing buildings and properties for new activities. As communities seek to adaptively reuse properties in developed areas, the issue of contamination from historical activities must be addressed.

Brownfields create significant negative impacts on communities, including:

- Threats to public health and the environment
- Blight and stigma that impact the value of surrounding properties
- Diminished local and state tax revenues
- Lost opportunities for jobs and economic development
- Increased vandalism and crime
- Poor City image

Historical industries and waste management practices have left a legacy of contamination in our state’s and city’s soil, groundwater, and rivers. Many of these contaminated properties sites are ideally located for redevelopment to support new uses. The cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields is a key tool for revitalizing our communities and our economies to address legacy issues and take advantage of new opportunities.

A. Scale of the Problem

Because of Waterbury’s past industrial legacy, the scale and number of brownfields in Waterbury is daunting. Each year more contaminated sites are identified. The sites range from those that are large and readily identifiable to those that are small and yet, undiscovered. While great progress has been made to clean up contaminated sites, the City must move forward in a constant and aggressive manner to win the battle.

B. Economic, Community and Environmental Benefits

Despite the daunting scale of the problem, there are numerous benefits to solving the problems posed by brownfields in the City of Waterbury.

- Cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields transform blighted properties that detract from neighborhoods into productive community assets. This is especially true when brownfields are large in size and are visible along major neighborhood corridors. Such is the case of the Anamet site and the Harper-Leader sites, both along the City’s South Main Street river/rail/road corridor. The fact that these brownfields are both large and are located along the riverfront holds great opportunities for future redevelopment in a manner that will further catalyze residential reinvestment in surrounding South End neighborhoods.
- Cleanup and redevelopment of large brownfields may, in some cases, offer the opportunity to build new sustainable, high-density neighborhoods that allows for new types of housing units that appeal to markets now untapped by the City. Such is the case of Freight Street, where the combined impact of the Naugatuck River Greenway and new multi-modal transportation connections will help shape a neighborhood in the direction of transit-oriented development.

- Cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields open up opportunities for new, high-tech industries. This is evidenced by the changes that are now occurring at the Waterbury Industrial Commons (WIC) site, home to Luvata, Atlantic Steel and now, King Industries.
- Brownfield redevelopment creates construction jobs and long-term employment opportunities. EPA estimates that 7.3 jobs are leveraged per \$100,000 of EPA brownfields funded on Assessment, Cleanup and revolving Loan Fund cooperative agreements. The City of Waterbury has experienced record-high unemployment for the past decade. Brownfield redevelopment presents meaningful job opportunities for Waterbury residents.
- Brownfield redevelopment generates an estimated increase in annual local tax revenue thus growing the City of Waterbury's Grand List. In some cases, the increase in property values is essential to the use of tax increment financing that funds brownfield cleanup and is repaid from the additional property taxes generated by the site over time. EPA estimates the \$17.79 are leveraged for each EPA dollar expended.
- Brownfield redevelopment raises property values 5 to 15 percent within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of the site. Larger impact properties that are changing from industrial to park or mixed use have had considerably higher impacts.
- Brownfield redevelopment removes blight and reduces crime, thereby increasing the value of property adjacent to or in proximity of the project and improving neighborhood livability and quality of life.
- Brownfield redevelopment raises the overall quality of life in the City, a major factor considered by companies looking to relocate or establish a business in a community.
- Brownfield redevelopment promotes smart growth. It is estimated that 1 acre of redeveloped brownfield land conserves 4.5 acres of greenfields land.
- Brownfield projects, as compared to greenfields, save between 20 and 40 percent vehicle miles traveled, directly translating to reduced air emissions
- Urban compact development, typical of brownfields redevelopment, reduces transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions by 20-40 percent as compared to sprawl development.
- Brownfield cleanups reduce threats to public health.
- Brownfield cleanups can address the environmental ills suffered by communities who have borne an unfair and disproportionate burden of the ill effects of past industrial practices.
- Reuse of historic buildings on brownfield sites can preserve the valuable architectural heritage of Waterbury.
- Adaptive reuse, and/or deconstruction and green remedial techniques save natural resources, including the raw materials, energy, and water resources required to build new;

prevents pollution that might take place as a byproduct of extraction, manufacturing, and transportation of virgin materials; and avoids creating solid waste that could end up in landfills.

III. WATERBURY'S THIRD GENERATION BROWNFIELDS REINVESTMENT PROGRAM

The City of Waterbury's third-generation Brownfields Reinvestment Program looks beyond the approaches of earlier generations. Historically, the first generation focused on stopping future contamination through the creation of environmental regulations and the enforcement of such regulations (i.e., the federal Superfund). The second generation focused on cleaning up individual brownfield sites. The third generation takes a more comprehensive approach and acknowledges the fact that cities may have areas of multiple brownfield sites that create a larger cumulative impact on an entire neighborhood, city or region. This latest approach looks to combine environmental cleanup with economic redevelopment that is within the context of the needs of both the immediate community and the region. There is a triple "bottom line" of environmental, community and economic impacts. Waterbury's approach to the redevelopment of brownfields involves:

- Ensuring that redevelopment meets both community and economic development goals
- Supporting "green" policies and incentives as a way to send clear market signals to developers about the community's expectations for redevelopment
- Forming collaborations, both in funding and redevelopment
- Working with a variety of different stakeholders in a community to understand their perspectives on redevelopment in their community
- Encouraging projects, where appropriate, to include public amenities such as accessible greenspace and community meeting space
- Assisting developers with partnerships and relationships that will give them access to community resources, technical assistance and funding sources for aspects of sustainable redevelopment
- Making sure that the land is redeveloped to the highest and best use

Looking at the distribution of brownfields in Waterbury, there is a clustering of sites both along the river corridor and in the general central city area. This clustering has resulted in a larger cumulative effect, whether in the South End of the City along South Main Street; along the riverfront corridor along Thomaston Avenue and on Freight Street; or in the central city along North Main Street. When addressing brownfield redevelopment in these clustered areas, it is therefore important that Waterbury consider not just specific brownfields sites, but the adjacent neighborhoods as well – and employ a more holistic approach to revitalization by recognizing the importance of targeting multiple sites; prioritizing the sites that will have the highest revitalization impact; considering the overall community needs of the area, whether educational, housing, employment or recreation; and, directing a variety of resources toward the targeted area to leverage brownfield investments.