

Introduction

A brownfield is an abandoned, vacant, derelict, or underutilized commercial or industrial property that because of past use may have perceived or actual contamination. The overall goal of the Brownfield Renewal Strategy (Strategy) is to reduce the number of brownfields by increasing development potential within targeted areas of the city.

Brownfields are a critical part of sustainable infill growth and their redevelopment potential is recognized in the City of Saskatoon (the City) Official Community Plan (OCP). The City is committed to promoting and facilitating brownfield redevelopment through the appropriate management and transformation activities. Remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites can be promoted by reducing barriers to development, establishing partnerships, creating incentives, allowing interim uses, and producing educational materials on brownfields.

Project Background

The Strategy is developing alongside the Bus Rapid Transit and Corridor Growth initiatives as a subproject of the Growth Plan to Half a Million. Phase 1 was funded through a combination of Public Transit Infrastructure Fund (PTIF) and Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Green Municipal Fund (GMF). City Council approved the direction and funding model for the Strategy at its meeting held on June 26, 2017.

Phase 1 – Information Gathering

This Phase involved conducting research and engagement for the purpose of developing program recommendations, preparing an inventory of brownfields along the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridors, and completing environmental site assessments and contamination management plans for key corridor redevelopment zones and BRT station sites.

The City contracted Dillon Consulting to help complete Phase 1 of the Strategy. Dillon supported the City's successful application to FCM's GMF, which ultimately provided \$89,000 in project funding. Dillon also produced a research report on brownfields incentive programs, created a scoring tool for evaluating redevelopment potential, and made an inventory of brownfield sites along the Red & Blue BRT corridors. The inventory was then ranked according to potential environmental risk and Dillon conducted environmental assessments at two locations along the Blue Line and six sites along the Red Line and produced management plans where contamination was confirmed.

Between March 2018 and March 2019, the Strategy project team participated in engagement events in conjunction with Plan for Growth and Corridor Planning project teams. Feedback collected from engagement events helped to shape the Strategy.

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Phase 1 work was initiated in July 2017 and completed in 2019. Deliverables included:

- Corporate membership in FCM's Leadership in Brownfield Renewal (LiBRe) municipal networking group;
- Successful application for funding to PTIF and FCM to support the Strategy;
- Creation of a Brownfield Renewal Strategy website, embedded within Plan for Growth and Corridor Planning sites, including brownfield fact sheets;
- The *Brownfield Renewal Strategy & Incentive Program Recommendations Report*;
- Eight Limited Phase II Environmental Site Assessments at key corridor locations with management plans where contamination was confirmed;
- Engagement feedback specific to brownfield renewal challenges in redevelopment; and,
- A proposed framework for moving forward with the strategy.

Phase 2 – Program Development

Council approved the *Brownfield Renewal Strategy – Plan Framework* report at the regular business meeting in June 2019.

Table 1: Brownfield Renewal Strategy – Plan Framework

Proposed Component	Description
Official Community Plan	Embedding support for brownfield redevelopment into the foundational policy for the City.
Brownfield Program	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upkeep and expansion of a brownfield inventory.• Creation of new brownfield guidance documents and provision of online brownfield resource information• Continued membership with FCM's LiBRe network
Incentives	Establishing criteria that may allow for financial assistance for brownfield sites within select corridor planning implementation areas.
Environmental Assistance	Evaluating solutions to cost prohibitive soil disposal linked to brownfield development.
Community Stewardship and Recognition	Policy and/or program intended to motivate good stewardship from brownfield owners, operators, and managers.

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Proposed Component	Description
Opportunity Seeking	Creating an internal process for Administration to seek out and evaluate brownfield redevelopment opportunities.
Interim Use	Policy to allow temporary use of brownfield sites for a defined period of time.

To date, work has been completed on the first two elements of the Plan.

- Brownfields and their redevelopment potential were included in Bylaw No. 9700, The Official Community Plan Bylaw in June 2020; and,
- Brownfields Program:
 - The brownfield inventory is being maintained and expanded as part of Sustainability's Impacted Sites Map
 - Content for new brownfields guidance has been created and will be available online
 - The Sustainability Department maintains membership in FCM's LiBRe network.

Progress on the remaining elements of the Plan has been delayed by the COVID pandemic and is anticipated to continue in pace with the Corridor Transformation Plan, which was approved by Council in January 2020.