

# WHAT ARE BROWNFIELDS?

June 2015

### The Need

Many areas across the country, once used for industrial and commercial purposes, sit abandoned or underutilized. Some of these properties are contaminated, while some are only assumed to have environmental problems. These properties are considered brownfields—they are real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

Because lenders, investors, and developers fear that they may be required to cleanup a site's environmental problems they did not create, formerly undeveloped areas, called "greenfields," are often more attractive for new developments. This may result in otherwise viable properties becoming blighted areas of the community, potentially creating safety and health risks for residents.

### Objective

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, cities, tribes, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to assess, safely cleanup, and sustainably reuse brownfields.

### Activities

The EPA's Brownfields Initiative identifies and addresses barriers to cleanup and redevelopment. It recommends swift, aggressive measures for change within the context of the existing Superfund law. Milestones in this initiative include:

- Brownfields Assessment Grants
- Clarification of liability issues for owners and buyers of brownfields sites
- Partnerships and outreach to provide a coordinated brownfields approach and solutions
- Workforce development in communities with brownfields
- Brownfields Tax Incentives to spur cleanup and redevelopment of urban and rural brownfields
- Brownfields Cleanup Grants

## QUICK FACTS

BROWNFIELDS are real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

Coralville has received 15 EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants totaling over \$2.2 million.

With EPA funding, Coralville has completed:

- 97 Phase I Environmental Site Assessments
- 35 Phase II Environmental Site Assessments
- Cleanup on 11 properties

In 2013, Coralville received two more EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants: \$200,000 for Hazardous Substances and \$182,000 for Petroleum.



## Brownfield Assessment Grants

As of early 2012, the EPA has awarded:

- 2,008 Brownfields Assessment Grants totaling \$480.1 million
- 292 revolving loan fund grants totaling \$286.1 million
- 838 cleanup grants totaling \$157.6 million

In June of 2015 the EPA announced that, "Since the inception of the EPA's Brownfields Program in 1995, cumulative brownfield program investments have leveraged more than \$22 billion from a variety of public and private sources for cleanup and redevelopment activities. This equates to an average of \$17.79 leveraged per EPA brownfield dollar expended. These investments have resulted in approximately 105,942 jobs nationwide." (EPA, 2015 News Release)



**Coralville's Iowa River Landing Revitalization Area**

### For More Information:

#### City of Coralville contact information:

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EPA BROWNFIELDS WEBSITE:  
<http://www.epa.gov/ebtpages/cleabrownfields.html>



# BROWNFIELDS FACT SHEET 2: ASSESSING BROWNFIELDS

June 2015

## Brownfields Liability

Under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and amendments (CERCLA/Superfund), new buyers or current owners of a property can be held responsible for correcting past environmental problems. However, the EPA recognized undiscovered conditions could remain hidden until after purchase. In 2002, the passing of the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act provides liability protection. The Act established standards to conduct “all appropriate inquiries” on properties prior to purchase.

## Environmental Site Assessments

Information is necessary to identify if a property is contaminated or not. Common sense tells us that every property with a prior industrial or commercial use does not necessarily require environmental cleanup. Further, it would be impractical to go to every brownfield site and collect samples for laboratory analysis. So how are properties assessed for contamination? Where do we begin?

### Phase I ESAs

A Phase I ESA is a preliminary look at a possibly contaminated property. A Phase I investigation primarily involves records research and onsite visual observations. Often, those performing the Phase I will speak with property owners about previous known uses of the land. No physical sampling or testing is done during a Phase I.

Phase I ESAs are performed to identify recognized environmental conditions (RECs) in which a real or potentially real release of hazardous and/or petroleum materials has or may have occurred. Identification of an REC does not mean that contamination has occurred or, if it has, that it requires cleanup.

Conducting Phase I ESAs provides essential information to:

- Provide liability protection to current and prospective property owners
- Help decide where actual testing should occur when necessary

### Phase II ESAs

If RECs are found on a property, a Phase II ESA may be performed to physically test the site. A Phase II ESA includes sampling of the soil and groundwater to identify the types, concentrations, and extent of potential contamination. If samples are found to have higher than acceptable contamination levels (according to state and federal standards), cleanup of the site may be necessary.

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# BROWNFIELDS FACT SHEET 3: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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## It Can't Be Done Without YOU

Community involvement is a necessary and vital part to the success of the City of Coralville's Brownfields Program. We need to reach members of the public to adequately have an understanding of our community's needs. YOU can help us determine the needs of our community and help shape our future.

Your needs are important in leading us in the right direction. We want to know what you envision for Coralville's brownfield areas. We will work to incorporate the public's ideas into the overall redevelopment plan to create jobs, generate tax revenues, and attract new residents and businesses.

## How YOU Can Get Involved

The EPA requires that cities receiving brownfields grant money involve members of the community by providing opportunities for brownfield redevelopment education. The following opportunities are available to you:

- Public meetings
- Printed fact sheets
- City e-newsletter
- City website with brownfield news, maps, and updates
- Newspaper public notices
- Public comment periods
- Contact persons

## How YOU Can Help

You can learn more about the ways you can get involved in Coralville's Brownfields redevelopment by contacting the City of Coralville Brownfields Project Coordinator, Beth Rumpza, at (319) 248-1720 or by email at [brownfields@ci.coralville.ia.us](mailto:brownfields@ci.coralville.ia.us). Any property within Coralville is eligible for assessment.

Keep an eye out in the City's e-newsletter, the Coralville BEAT, and online at the City's website for brownfield related updates. Your suggestions and ideas are important to us as we work to assess, remediate, and redevelop the brownfields areas in Coralville.

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## BROWNFIELDS FACT SHEET 4:

# CORALVILLE'S BROWNFIELDS

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### The Iowa River Landing Revitalization Area

Coralville's primary brownfields area, the Iowa River Landing Revitalization Area, is rather extensive. It encompasses approximately 200 acres on the east side of First Avenue and an estimated 60 acres on the west. It is this area that the City has identified as having the best opportunity for the use of funds, the best redevelopment potential, and the most likely area for economic payback in the city. The Iowa River Landing Revitalization Area has excellent potential for redevelopment as a commercial district—it boasts good access to Interstate 80, U.S. Highway 6 and the local CRANDIC railroad. Redeveloping this area serves as a feasible option to combat urban sprawl.

Future development in Coralville is limited to currently active agricultural production land, vacant land within residential areas, and brownfield areas. The main sources of infill development land are the existing brownfield sites. However, redevelopment of these areas is hindered by perceived environmental contamination, which the brownfield assessments attempt to address.

### Background on Coralville's Brownfields Program

In 1998, the City of Coralville received its first EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. This pilot program grant for \$200,000 assisted the City in identifying brownfield properties in the targeted area, which was an old industrial park. Since that time, the City has received two Supplemental Assistance Grants for \$100,000 each, as well as additional sets of Brownfields Assessment Grants totaling over \$2 million. Along with federal funding, the City has also received funding from the Iowa Economic Development Authority in the form of grants and loans for assessments and cleanup of various properties.

### Current Brownfields Grants

In 2013, the City of Coralville received two grants, one hazardous substances and one petroleum, from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The hazardous substances grant was for \$200,000, while the petroleum grant was for \$182,000. These grants will be used to assess properties in all six of Coralville's Brownfield Zones, perform community outreach activities, maintain an online electronic brownfields database, and fund oversight of the projects.

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# BROWNFIELDS FACT SHEET 5: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

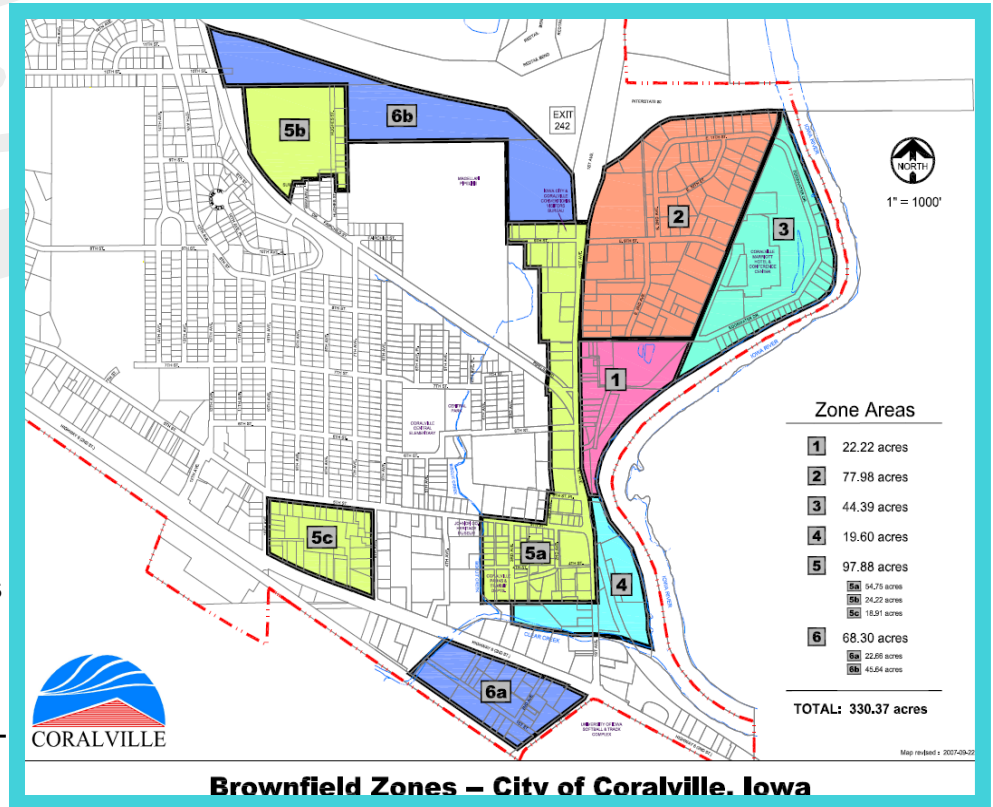
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## Current Brownfields Grants

Ongoing and future brownfield activity will be paid for by the two existing brownfield grants the city has that were received in 2013. These two grants are valid until the end of the federal fiscal year 2016.

## Coralville's Brownfields Zones

With previous EPA Brownfields Grants, the City of Coralville mainly focused on assessing and cleaning up properties in its Brownfield Zones 1, 2, and 3 (these properties make up Coralville's former industrial park area). As of now, Coralville's six brownfield zones contain over 330 acres of property that has been or will potentially be assessed in the future. Additionally, current grants allow for city-wide testing with EPA approval. There have been three properties assessed so far that do not fall into any of the zones seen in the map above.



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