

# BROWNFIELD INVENTORIES



*Demolition of the HB Smith Boiler Company, Westfield.  
Photo provided by Tighe & Bond*

## What are the objectives of a brownfield inventory?

A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. An inventory can assist in the prioritization of brownfield sites for redevelopment and create a marketing tool for interested redevelopment partners.

## Why do we need brownfield inventories?

A Brownfield Inventory can assist a municipality in prioritizing sites for redevelopment by identifying its assets and liabilities in terms of redevelopment potential. With all of this information compiled, potential redevelopment partners identify sites that have the criteria they are looking for to locate their project. Easily accessible information facilitates communication with potential developers and can expedite site selection for a project. The inventory also helps the municipality keep track of issues which may be complicating site redevelopment for certain properties, therefore allowing them to dedicate resources, such as grant funding, to sites that have a higher potential for redevelopment.

## How is a brownfield inventory created?

There is no standardized methodology for creating an inventory. It is important that the type of data compiled in the inventory can meet the goals of all potential users including municipal staff as well as potential redevelopment partners. Given the needs of the parties the inventory will serve, the types of information relevant to each must be identified and the data sought. To create an inventory, data must be gathered from a number of sources including, but not limited to: the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Mass GIS, the local assessor's office, local records of past use, and neighborhood surveys and interviews. Specific information about the property such as its structural integrity, proximity to public water and sewer service, access to major transportation routes, lien status, existing infrastructure, available parking, neighboring land use and zoning, MCP status, etc. Once this information is compiled and weighted as to relevance or importance for redevelopment, a prioritization schedule can be assigned to each property.

## DID YOU KNOW...

It is estimated that there are more than 450,000 brownfields in the United States

*(US Environmental Protection Agency)*

## EXAMPLES FROM THE PIONEER VALLEY

### Springfield and Holyoke, Massachusetts



The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and the Center for Urban and Regional Policy (CURP) of Northeastern University partnered with the cities of Springfield and Holyoke to develop brownfield inventories for each of their communities. Data was gathered from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Mass GIS, the cities local records of past use, and property assessment records. The inventory was built in Excel and linked to GIS for map locations of all of the sites.

For more information on brownfield redevelopment, please refer to the state's [Smart Growth/ Smart Energy toolkit](#), developed by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.