

TRIANGLE J BROWNFIELDS CONSORTIUM

2021-2022 WORK PLAN

OVERVIEW

As part of its Community and Economic Development (CED) Program, Triangle J Council of Governments administers and facilitates a regional Brownfields Consortium, to assist our municipalities and better leverage brownfields redevelopment as an economic tool for community revitalization. The consortium annually engages a collaborative task force of municipal representatives to design annual work plans that address brownfields needs related to education; grant application assistance and administration; data collection; property owner engagement; and training opportunities for consortium members.

MISSION

The Brownfields Consortium aims to lessen some of the burden for communities who are struggling to dedicate staff time and expertise to manage the complex topic; empower communities and developers to sustainably invest in brownfield sites; coordinate a development strategy that aligns with additional funding sources/programs; and turn education and planning support into action with the necessary tools to help steer progression.

FY 2022 WORK PLAN

In June 2021, TJCOG distributed an online survey to Consortium Members, aimed at identifying and prioritizing work plan items for the Brownfields Consortium and TJCOG staff.

COMMUNITY GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The following community goals and priorities were identified by Consortium Members in the online survey:

- Identify brownfield sites ripe for redevelopment and seek grant funding for cleanup;
- Need to apply and obtain funding to assist with moving sites forward towards redevelopment; and
- Identify properties for reuse.

ACTIVITIES

Brownfields activities for FY 2022 were derived from responses to the Work Plan Survey and *may include* the following list. *Official work plan items will be reviewed and approved by the Consortium Task Force in Fall 2021.*

- 1. Prioritize and select priority brownfield sites and target areas for member communities and region through tasks such as:**
 - a. Conduct demographics research, mapping, and analysis for consortium communities and/or region using 2020 Census data or related datasets.
 - b. Build upon brownfields database with targeted property research, mapping, and analysis, as directed by consortium communities.
 - c. Provide individualized or “on-call” assistance to consortium members, such as drafting issue papers, white papers, and 101 documents.
 - d. Conduct site prioritization meetings or “deep dives” with individual consortium members and/or Consortium Task Force.
- 2. Apply and obtain funding to assist with moving brownfield sites forward towards redevelopment and cleanup through tasks such as:**
 - a. Provide grant writing support for site, community, and/or region-focused applications.
 - b. Submit Coalition, Community-Wide, and/or Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) applications through the 2022 EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant Program.
 - c. Create plug-and-play “bank” of language for communities’ grants applications (spreadsheet, document, etc.).
 - d. Distribute regular emails with brownfield resources and information, including new funding announcements and guidance, webinars and training opportunities, and local development news.
 - e. Offer grant funding workshops or office hours events with potential funding agencies.
- 3. Determine reuse options and define redevelopment vision for priority brownfields sites and target areas through tasks such as:**
 - a. Connect brownfields with community revitalization priorities for member community and/or consortium region.
 - b. Research and compile best practices and strategies to help prepare sites redevelopment, with emphasis on cleanup activities, environmental assessments, and legal liabilities.
 - c. Review local zoning regulations within downtown areas to ensure compatibility with potential brownfields redevelopment projects.
 - d. Determine which brownfield priority sites and/or target areas are currently underutilized (e.g., not being used as intensely as permitted under current zoning).

4. **Educate elected officials and property owners on brownfields redevelopment through tasks such as:**
 - a. Deliver educational sessions or presentations on brownfields for elected officials with focus on demonstrating importance of brownfields redevelopment.
 - b. Host at least one (1) engagement event between local stakeholders and regional developers, specifically targeting developers that understand brownfield properties and successfully lead redevelopment efforts.
5. **Prepare for new federal budget appropriations and funding opportunities through tasks such as:**
 - a. Create stakeholder “matrix” of key funders and project partners for brownfields redevelopment, such as private developers, community organizations, and federal/state agencies.

The activities ranked as “least important” by the Consortium Members were:

- Connect with private developers or identify public-private partnerships.
- Evaluate market viability of brownfield sites and target areas.
- Find new site and community-relevant data for database and toolkit.
- Connect with other regional or local governments on experience with brownfields.

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FY 2021 SUCCESSES

In 2019, Triangle J Council of Governments began a targeted program to address the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of the region's brownfields. The Regional Brownfields Program is directed by the Brownfields Consortium, which is composed of members from the Town of Fuquay-Varina, Town of Wake Forest, Town of Wendell, and TJCOG staff. In Fiscal Year 2021, these consortium members, along with dedicated TJCOG staff, worked together to accomplish the following successes:

- Submitted an EPA Brownfields Coalition Grant application on behalf of three consortium communities.
- Created a Brownfields Redevelopment Toolkit of best practices, case studies, resources, and information on how to finance and complete brownfields redevelopment projects.
- Produced a handbook of federal and state funding agencies, open and upcoming community development funding opportunities, and tips for improving local applications and leveraging multiple funding sources for brownfields redevelopment.
- Designed a comprehensive regional brownfields site inventory, digital database, GIS catalog, interactive web maps, and content guide using federal, state, and local datasets.
- Built out a database of confirmed and potential brownfields sites in member communities, targeted at downtown districts and priority areas for local governments, and sites competitive for EPA Brownfields Grant applications.
- Provided two no-cost events for consortium members – Brownfields 101 Workshop and 2021 Funder-Palooza.

BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT

This toolbox, created by TJCOG and the Regional Brownfields Consortium, is meant to provide users with information and resources on how to finance and complete a brownfields redevelopment project, and guidance for communicating with property owners about brownfield sites. The toolkit includes sections on: 1. common myths, 2. definitions for commonly used terms, 3. phases of brownfield redevelopment and the stakeholders involved, 4. funding sources, 5. equitable practices and; 6. case studies. [Access the Tool](#)

