

Brownfield Basics – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



Site Reuse and Revitalization Program: Community Wide Assessment

How might a property owner know if they own a brownfield?

Property owners should ask themselves a couple of questions:

- Is my land idle, vacant, or less productive than it ought to be?
- Are concerns about historic use or environmental contamination potentially contributing to the problem?

If a property owner answers yes to both questions they might own a brownfield.

Which sites are eligible to receive Community Wide Assessment grant assistance?

Generally, a property must be underused, potentially impacted by contamination and meet the following criteria:

- The property exhibits high potential for redevelopment and/or other community benefit opportunities.
- The current property owner did not cause the contamination.
- The site must not be listed on EPA's "Superfund" list or targeted for federal or state enforcement action.

Does environmental assessment affect property values?

Assessment itself does not affect property value or create stigma - it only quantifies the amount of contamination (if any) on a site. In some cases property owners realize increased property value through clean-up activities or simply eliminating unknowns.

Will environmental assessment trigger a requirement to take additional action?

The program is voluntary. Information collected during Phase I ESAs is often not reviewed by the USEPA and or submitted to the WA Dept. of Ecology (DOE). In certain cases Phase II ESA results may trigger a reporting requirement with DOE. Unless Phase II ESA results indicate a significant threat to human health or the environment, enforcement actions is not likely to be pursued by DOE or USEPA.

What is a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment?

A Phase I Assessment is a research study intended to gather information to assess the environmental condition of the property and identify potential areas where substances may have been released.

What is a Phase II Environmental Assessment: How is it different than a Phase I Assessment?

Phase II Assessments are considered intrusive studies. During a Phase II Assessment actual physical environmental samples are collected and analyzed to characterize the type, distribution and extent of substances in buildings or the environment (if present).

Who is paying for this work?

The U.S. EPA Grant can provide 100% of the funding for ESA and clean-up/reuse planning.

Additional Information

For more information, contact Melissa Owen (Project Planner, Spokane Planning & Development Services) at 509-625-6063, mowen@spokanecity.org, or visit the project website at <https://my.spokanecity.org/projects/the-yard/>