

# BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

## WHAT ARE BROWNFIELDS?

Brownfields are underutilized or abandoned properties where future development is complicated by the perception or actual presence of environmental contaminants. The sites are often avoided by private investors due to lingering financial and/or legal concerns. Examples of common brownfields include former gas stations, dry cleaners, auto repair shops, manufacturing operations, warehouses, or illegal dumping areas.

## EPA BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

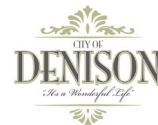
The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Program is designed to empower states, cities, tribes, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to assess, safely cleanup, and sustainably reuse brownfields. EPA awarded the City of Denison a \$400,000 Community-Wide Assessment Grant in 2022. These funds allow the City to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct cleanup planning on targeted brownfields.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact one of the following individuals for additional information on the brownfields program:

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## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YOU

### Financial resources:

- Environmental assessments at no cost for eligible properties

### Technical resources:

- Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) for qualifying sites
- Redevelopment planning for qualifying projects Coordination assistance with state and federal agencies





## ASSESSING BROWNFIELDS

### BROWNFIELDS LIABILITY

New buyers and current owners of a property can be held responsible for correcting past environmental problems under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and amendments (CERCLA/Superfund). The 2002 passing of the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act provides liability protections by establishing standards to conduct “all appropriate inquiries” on properties prior to purchase. ESAs satisfy requirements to obtain innocent landowner, contiguous property owner, or prospective purchaser protections under CERCLA liability guidelines.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENTS

Information is necessary to determine if a site is contaminated. 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 and collect samples for laboratory analysis. So how are properties assessed for contamination? Where do we begin?

### PHASE I ESAs

A Phase I ESA involves taking a preliminary look at a property. The City’s consultant will determine if a release of a hazardous substance or petroleum product has, or may have, occurred by reviewing historical documents such as aerial photographs, city directories, and fire insurance maps; conducting a state/federal environmental database review; interviewing local officials familiar with the property; and visually inspecting the property. A resulting report will recommend whether further investigation is warranted.

### PHASE II ESAs

Phase II ESAs involve collecting groundwater, soil, building materials, and/or indoor air samples to determine the potential presence of contamination. Results are compared to statewide standards to determine appropriate next steps for planned redevelopment activities. If samples are found to have higher than acceptable contamination levels, cleanup of the site may be necessary.



## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Assessment Grants help return properties exhibiting signs of potential contamination back to a productive reuse. This process helps achieve the following community benefits:

- facilitates job growth
- stems urban sprawl
- avoids costly infrastructure extensions
- protects human health and the environment
- strengthens and stabilizes neighborhoods
- spurs additional redevelopment activities
- increases the local tax base
- eliminates eyesores and safety hazards

