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Green Municipal Fund



**Promoting
brownfield programs
and redevelopment
opportunities**

Leadership in Brownfield Renewal Program
Guidebook Series

Acknowledgements

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Canada

Promoting brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities

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24 Clarence Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5P3
www.fcm.ca/gmf



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About this guidebook

This guidebook is part of a series of materials developed for FCM's Leadership in Brownfield Renewal Program (LiBRE). It contains helpful information for municipalities that want to promote their brownfield programs and generate interest in their redevelopment opportunities, which is the fifth step in FCM's Leadership in Brownfield Renewal best practices framework.

FCM's **Leadership in Brownfield Renewal** (LiBRE) framework outlines seven key steps to becoming a brownfield champion community. Complete the steps in an order best suited for your community, whether you follow them one-by-one, undertake several simultaneously, or build on work already accomplished.



Commit to action



Understand the landscape



Build partnerships



Devise a strategy



Promote programs and opportunities



Manage programs and projects



Evaluate, improve and celebrate

This framework is based on the practices of Canadian municipalities that have been successful in returning their brownfield sites to productive use.

Introduction

Brownfield redevelopment offers tremendous opportunities and benefits, but it is often more complex and risky than conventional development. Municipalities, property owners and developers need to work together to find creative solutions and approaches to make it happen.

To help catalyze brownfield redevelopment, municipalities can develop programs to:

- Reduce the capital costs of redevelopment by providing funding and modifying development requirements.
- Increase the redevelopment potential of the land through land use planning and zoning.
- Reduce the uncertainties associated with redevelopment, through education, stakeholder engagement and streamlined approval processes.
- Manage the remediation, redevelopment and sale of municipally owned brownfield sites.

The success of these approaches hinges on effective communications, marketing and relationship building. The right **communications activities** will help to ensure that target audiences are informed about brownfield programs and opportunities, while targeted **marketing activities** will help convince property owners, developers and other stakeholders to use municipal programs and opportunities to their best advantage.

Promoting brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities involves much more than developing a compelling sales pitch, a new website and communications materials; it is an ongoing, iterative process of connecting and building relationships with stakeholders. Effective marketing and communications activities provide clarity and certainty, build mutual trust and establish an “open for business” reputation that attracts investment.

This guidebook outlines the key steps to effectively promote brownfield programs and opportunities to your target audiences. It also profiles different approaches used by Canadian municipalities that have successfully catalyzed the redevelopment of their brownfield sites. Finally, it includes appendices with tips and resources to help you develop the right approach to promoting your own brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities.

What is a brownfield?

A brownfield is an abandoned, vacant, derelict or underutilized commercial, institutional or industrial property where past actions have resulted in actual or perceived contamination or a threat to public health and safety, and where there is an active potential for redevelopment.

The benefits of redevelopment include increased property values, local tax revenue and employment opportunities, revitalized neighbourhoods and reduced environmental risks.



Promoting your brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities

Effectively promoting your brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities involves four key steps:

1. Develop a marketing and communications plan
2. Identify a brownfield point-person
3. Develop marketing and communications materials
4. Promote your program and redevelopment opportunities

Each of these steps is described in detail in the sections that follow.

1. Develop a marketing and communications plan

Effective marketing and communications centres on 1) defining your objectives, 2) understanding your target audience and 3) consistently delivering the right message to the right audience at the right time through the right channels. Without a plan to guide your communications activities, you may focus on the wrong audiences and use the wrong messages and activities. As a result, you risk wasting limited time and resources, losing credibility and failing to meet your objectives.¹

A brownfields marketing and communications plan does not have to be a major undertaking. Even a two- to three-page plan can help focus your messages and activities. For example, the brownfield strategies developed by the cities of Ottawa and Welland, ON, each include a brief marketing strategy that articulates their purpose, target audiences, marketing tools and key messages.

Developing a marketing and communications plan involves the following six steps:

1. Define marketing and communications objectives
2. Assess the market context
3. Identify target audiences
4. Develop key messages
5. Decide on strategies and actions
6. Create an evaluation mechanism to measure success

¹ Adapted from the Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society and the Centre for Community Organizations. [Plan the Work: Strategic Communication Planning for Not-for-Profit Organizations](#). 2005. Accessed August 3, 2015.

1.1. Define marketing and communications objectives

The first and most important step in developing a marketing and communications plan is to clearly define your objectives. This will help you identify target audiences, formulate key messages tailored to these audiences and select the right channels and mechanisms to reach them.

The table below provides sample objectives you may want to consider and suggests actions that may help contribute to these objectives. Additional examples of actions to consider are provided in sections 3 and 4 below.

Marketing and communications planning: objectives and actions	
Objectives	Actions
Position my municipality as a supportive partner in the brownfield redevelopment process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a liaison with exceptional customer service skills who will act as a single point of contact for brownfield inquiries and guide brownfield redevelopment applications through approval processes.
Ensure that prospective developers can easily get access to the information they need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a brochure and website to explain the municipal brownfield programs. Make the brownfield liaison's contact information available on the municipal website and through 311.
Promote my municipality's brownfield programs to key players in brownfield redevelopment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with local brownfield developers, landowners and consultants to present information on the municipal brownfield programs.
Demonstrate that my municipality is experienced in facilitating and supporting the brownfield redevelopment process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and share case studies of brownfield redevelopment success stories.
Build internal buy-in for municipal investments in brownfield redevelopment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate staff and council on the benefits of brownfield redevelopment, how our municipality is supporting it, and what the implications are for departmental operations and decision-making.

1.2. Assess the market context

An effective marketing and communications plan is grounded in an understanding of the economic, real estate and market factors that influence brownfield redevelopment. Consider what is important to prospective developers and investors and how you can best present redevelopment opportunities in your community.

Here are some important factors to consider (most of these questions would likely have been answered during the development of your brownfield strategy and programs):

- Economic indicators:** What is the state of the local and regional economy and real estate market? What are the projections for population, employment and housing growth?
- Viability:** The viability of redeveloping a brownfield site depends on each site's real estate value, remediation requirements and potential for redevelopment. It is also influenced by municipal incentives

and the cost of doing business in your municipality. The cost of doing business includes non-financial considerations, such as the time required for redevelopment, the ease of working with the municipality and the relative price of competing opportunities (such as developing on a greenfield site or in another community).

- **Development community:** Are local developers and investors interested in brownfield redevelopment and do they have the requisite experience and skills, or do you need to target developers outside of your community?
- **Vision:** Is there a vision for the redevelopment of municipal areas with brownfield sites? Are community members, regulators and other stakeholders aware of brownfield issues and supportive of redevelopment?

The value of market research

The City of Langley, BC, retained a commercial real estate services company to undertake research on the local market for redevelopment and to help develop its brownfields strategy.

The company helped the municipality better understand the complexity of brownfield redevelopment and focus its marketing on the factors most important to local developers and owners. This built the city's credibility and reputation as a municipality that understands and supports brownfield redevelopment.

“Developers were impressed with the city's proactive approach and the fact that we were coming to them with market research identifying market opportunities.... It helped establish us as a credible partner, not simply as a “regulator” of land use, who could make their project happen. Word travels fast in the development community, and these positive experiences led to other significant projects.

- Gerald Minchuk, Director of Development Services and Economic Development,
City of Langley, BC

1.3. Identify target audiences

It's essential to understand your target audiences and focus on the issues that are most relevant to them in order to capture their attention and gain their trust. A list of common target audiences is provided in the box below. For each group, consider:

- what they already know about brownfields
- how they might contribute to the success of your program
- what they already know about your municipality
- how they are likely to react to your message and why
- how, when and where they access information and the easiest way to communicate with them

The key stakeholders who cause brownfield properties to be transacted, remediated and rehabilitated include **property owners and managers, developers** and potential **end users**. These are the primary target audience for you to consider, along with the **professional service providers** who are involved in brownfield redevelopment (such as consultants and real estate professionals). These service providers have extensive networks and trusted relationships within the development community, and can help attract investment by promoting your program and redevelopment opportunities to their clients.

“It’s important to focus on the positive: if a program is simply positioned as something to ‘get rid of a problem’ (i.e. brownfields) then people won’t get excited about it. So I talk to owners about their vision: their ideas for the site and the potential for redevelopment. Then I connect them with the resources they need to get started, and help them throughout the process.”

— Sandy Blue, Councillor, City of Abbotsford, BC; member UDI Fraser Valley Committee; and former Manager, Strategic Economic Initiatives, City of Maple Ridge, BC

Developing strong relationships with other **regulators** and ensuring you understand each other’s roles, goals and constraints can help to expedite the redevelopment process. Sharing information and opportunities with **other municipalities** and regional governments can also be mutually beneficial.

Raising awareness among the general public, city staff and elected officials about the benefits of brownfield redevelopment and the importance of municipal support in the redevelopment process can help to build buy-in and streamline approval processes.

Key target audiences²

Primary audience

- ▶ **Stakeholders involved in brownfield remediation, redevelopment and transactions:**
 - property owners and managers
 - developers
 - potential end users (such as businesses and home buyers)
 - their respective professional associations
- ▶ **Support professionals, including:**
 - environmental consultants and contractors
 - real estate professionals and organizations
 - lending institutions such as banks and trust companies
 - legal services professionals
 - planning consultants and architects

Other stakeholders

- ▶ **Relevant government bodies, including:**
 - federal and provincial regulators
 - local and regional governments
- ▶ **The general public, particularly community associations and organizations adjacent to redevelopment sites**
- ▶ **City staff and elected officials**

² Adapted from the City of Ottawa. [Brownfields Redevelopment Community Improvement Plan](#). 2010. Accessed August 3, 2015.

1.4. Develop key messages³

Key messages are the points you want your audiences to remember and respond to. They should highlight your unique value proposition and include a call to action; these will vary depending on the audience. They may also say something about the market context, the benefits of brownfield redevelopment, and what your municipality is committed to doing.

Use your key messages consistently throughout your communications, adapting the language and depth of information as needed to different target audiences. Your key messages should be:

- ▶ **Accessible:** Messages are most effective when they are concise, written in plain language and use terminology that is familiar to the recipient.
- ▶ **Believable:** To be believable, messages must be grounded in fact and backed up by your municipality's policies, actions and reputation. If one of your key messages is "we expedite the brownfield redevelopment process" then your program materials and performance record need to demonstrate clearly how you will deliver on that promise.
- ▶ **Compelling:** To be compelling, messages need to evoke an emotional response — this comes from connecting with the audience's priorities, values, motivations or needs.

Many practitioners find that the term "brownfields" is not compelling because it evokes images of decrepit, unused sites and focuses on a problem (contamination) associated with risk, complexity and cost. In contrast, terms such as "redevelopment," "renewal" and "revitalization" evoke a positive response and speak to the outcomes that brownfield programs are designed to achieve. They also reflect what's important to developers and investors: creating a vibrant, successful new development that attracts businesses and other end-users.

- ▶ **Credible:** To be credible, messages need to be delivered by the right messenger. Credibility derives from the knowledge, experience, authority and accessibility of the speaker. Municipalities can bolster their credibility by engaging third-party supporters (such as brownfield developers or community members) and sharing testimonials and case studies from successful projects.

Sample key messages

Sample key messages from the cities of Ottawa, Maple Ridge and Langley⁴:

- ▶ Brownfields represent a significant economic opportunity in Ottawa.
- ▶ The City wants to find new opportunities and partnerships to deal with brownfields and the City is looking for interest from all types of developers and entrepreneurs (big and small).
- ▶ Call us to learn more about how we can help you turn brownfields into a profitable venture.
- ▶ Brownfield Redevelopment in the City of Langley has generated \$192.2 million in development and more than 850 jobs.
- ▶ It's time to invest in one of Canada's best real estate markets.
- ▶ Let us help you turn brown into green: convert your premium location, under-valued industrial or commercial brownfield site into a highly profitable property that not only makes our community more green and sustainable but also puts more green in your pocket.

³ Descriptions adapted from The Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society and the Centre for Community Organizations. [Plan the Work: Strategic Communication Planning for Not-For-Profit Organizations](#). 2005. Accessed August 3, 2015.

⁴ Key messages drawn from the City of Ottawa City of Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Community Improvement Plan marketing strategy, the Maple Ridge Town Centre Investment Incentive Program brochure and the City of Langley Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy website.

1.5. Decide on strategies and actions

Strategies are the broad approaches you will use to achieve your objectives (such as developing marketing materials or presenting to brownfields stakeholders), and actions are the specific activities you will undertake at specific times (such as developing a brochure or presentation). You may choose to include both in your plan, or to keep it at the strategy level and leave the actions to your annual work planning process.

Specific examples and best practices for developing materials and promoting your brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities are provided in sections 3 and 4.

Keep it simple

A marketing and communications plan does not have to be complex. A simple table with the following headers can be sufficient to keep you on track:

- ▶ target audience
- ▶ key messages
- ▶ tools/tactics
- ▶ actions
- ▶ status
- ▶ timeline
- ▶ lead and support staff
- ▶ budget
- ▶ success indicators/metrics

1.6. Create an evaluation mechanism to measure success

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential to assess the impact of your activities and improve your marketing plan and materials. This step also strengthens your relationships with clients and partners by demonstrating that their feedback is important to you.

The effectiveness of your marketing and communications activities can be evaluated by tracking factors such as the number of unique website visits, program inquiries and qualified leads generated, as well as the amount of media coverage.

Information on the levels of awareness, understanding and interest among your target audiences, as well as feedback from participants and partners, can be collected informally through conversations or more formally through feedback forms, surveys, focus group sessions or interviews. Record your outputs and statistics throughout the year (such as the number of presentations you deliver and how many people were present). The information should be analyzed within the context of your broader program goals and performance.

It's important to engage both internal (e.g. municipal staff and elected officials) and external (e.g. clients and partners) stakeholders in the evaluation process. You can also ask peers or experts to review your key messages and materials and provide recommendations for improvement.

“As we learned more about these sites and why they were vacant, we shifted from focusing on the role of the owners to recognizing the complexity and cost of dealing with each site. Our brownfield program is about relationship building and collaboration; we need them and they need us.”

— Barbara Daly, Brownfield Coordinator,
City of Edmonton, AB

2. Identify a brownfield point-person

Identifying a brownfield lead or point-person is the single most important thing municipalities can do to effectively promote their brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities. Developers and property owners are seeking a single point of contact who can answer their questions and help them navigate the municipality's brownfield redevelopment program and the permitting and approval process.

The brownfield point-person's specific responsibilities vary from community to community, depending on the goals and structure of the brownfield program (see Appendix A for examples). However, the most significant part of the individual's role is building relationships and turning opportunities into redevelopment projects. To do this well, the point-person needs to be knowledgeable, credible and approachable. The individual also needs to be an effective communicator and connector, with the ability and mandate to convene key internal and external stakeholders to move projects forward, and the authority to make decisions.

“Having the right brownfield lead is the most important thing: You can have the best marketing in the world but it's worthless if you don't have the right staff person. They should be knowledgeable, motivated and assertive, with the authority to make decisions.”

— Robert Pelda, President, RMP Construction

3. Develop marketing and communications materials

Build on your key messages to develop materials that 1) inform your target audiences about your brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities and 2) convince them to take advantage of these programs and opportunities, and explain how. Here are some tips for developing effective materials:

- ▶ **Tailor to your audience.** Use familiar language and terminology and highlight the key messages that are most relevant to them (e.g. terminology used in a real estate pro forma).
- ▶ **Be positive.** Focus on the opportunities and benefits rather than complexities and risks.
- ▶ **Be consistent.** Descriptions and commitments should be consistent across materials and mediums, and align with your municipality's broader policy goals.
- ▶ **Include a call to action.** Make it clear what you want the reader to do and how they can get involved. Make it easy for them to get started by identifying who to call and what first steps to take.
- ▶ **Highlight success stories.** Testimonials and examples of successful projects build credibility and demonstrate what is possible. Profile successes in press releases, reports and case studies and share these through your municipality's website.
- ▶ **Be comprehensive.** Consider all the information that proponents need to know at each step of the application and approval processes. Provide a succinct overview of the processes as well as approximate approval timelines. Clearly explain what is required from the applicant, and when (e.g. forms, supporting documentation and associated deadlines). Include any forms and sample agreements a proponent might want to review.
- ▶ **Use multiple formats and media.** Different formats (e.g. brochures, checklists, guidebooks and presentations) and media (e.g. online, printed and video material) serve different functions and audiences. Hard copies can be used as leave-behinds when meeting with prospects.

- **Use well-designed materials.** Formatting and design are key to making your materials accessible, compelling and engaging. Use professional graphics and images to reinforce key messages when appropriate.
- **Make it easy.** Bundle relevant materials together in different information packages for each of your key audiences, including the media, and make them available in printed and electronic formats (e.g. on your municipal website or on a USB key).

Examples of the range of content and approaches used by municipalities are provided below. Additional examples can be found in Appendix A.

Information to cover	Types of materials	Great ideas
<p>Essential information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the brownfield program and how it works, including processes and timelines ➤ relevant municipal policies (e.g. land use plan, economic development strategy) ➤ background information on brownfield redevelopment and regulations ➤ market research and real estate information ➤ success stories and testimonials <p>Additional ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ redevelopment opportunities, including maps and site inventories ➤ funding opportunities, such as the FCM Green Municipal Fund ➤ information on local service providers and resources, such as options for disposing of contaminated materials ➤ reporting on program activities and impacts 	<p>Essential materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ program website and links ➤ program guides and policies ➤ application forms and sample agreements ➤ process checklists and roadmaps ➤ brochures, factsheets and presentations ➤ case studies and testimonials <p>Additional ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ incentive calculators ➤ frequently asked questions ➤ media releases, packages and advertising ➤ education and training resources ➤ reports (e.g. annual program report) ➤ videos and podcasts 	<p>Program brand: Maple Ridge, BC, uses the same taglines and image (a sprout) on all its materials. A “business card brochure” provides key contact information and a call to action.</p> <p>Incentive calculator: Brantford, ON, provides proponents with a comprehensive information package that includes a tool for estimating financial incentives they may benefit from.</p> <p>Testimonial letters: The City of Langley, BC, website includes quotations from its partners and a compilation of letter testimonials.</p> <p>Photos and videos: Brantford, ON, hosted a photo competition of old industrial sites and developed a promotional video to get people involved in one of its major redevelopment projects. The city also worked with the local home builders’ association to develop an online “brownfields 101” training video.</p> <p>Guidebooks: Edmonton, AB, developed a guidebook to clarify the municipality’s environmental site assessment requirements for land development applications.</p> <p>Brownfield roadmaps: FCM provides detailed descriptions of the regulations and processes in each province and territory. Similar roadmaps can be created by municipalities to explain approval processes and funding opportunities.</p>

Few municipalities will have the resources to develop all these materials at once: focus on those that are most important for your audience and ensure that you have the capacity to keep them up to date while managing the inflow of potential business.

Creative ideas from a US municipality

To catalyze the redevelopment of a devitalized sector of the community, the municipality of Cheyenne, WY, engaged a marketing firm to develop a brand identity for the area. The historic industrial buildings in the West Edge District were identified as a key asset that could help to attract artisans, brewmasters and other creative entrepreneurs who are drawn to places with a rich history and strong sense of place. Consequently, the branding developed for the West Edge District centres on its rich industrial past, with a logo that includes a landmark historic building that is highly recognizable by the local community. The bolt image used across communications materials also helps to reinforce the area's industrial past.

The municipality developed a broad range of communications materials and platforms to promote the project, communicate its objectives and collect feedback from the community. These included a professionally designed website, a video outlining the development vision through a 3D model, and a project compass to effectively and succinctly communicate the major objectives of the project (flood control, brownfield revitalization, reinvestment and public spaces). Cheyenne also employed an online platform (MySidewalk) to collect and analyze feedback. To build excitement for the project, the city organized a video launch party that featured local bands. Cheyenne is also planning tactical urbanism initiatives to tangibly demonstrate the development vision.

4. Get the word out: Promote your program and redevelopment opportunities

Municipalities need to be proactive to inform prospective investors and other stakeholders about their brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities. Posting information on a municipal website is rarely enough. In many municipalities, the brownfield point-person will arrange one-on-one meetings with developers, landowners, real estate professionals and consultants to provide information and answer questions. Organizing events, such as a breakfast speaker series, and delivering presentations to stakeholder groups such as community organizations or professional associations, are also effective ways to engage and inform key audiences.

Some municipalities focus primarily on promoting what their programs have to offer (e.g. grants, education, etc.) while others also focus on promoting specific brownfield sites and opportunities for redevelopment. These include municipally owned sites as well as third-party sites (see tips in Appendix B). Municipalities can promote redevelopment opportunities through their brownfield inventory or activities such as site tours. If the site is particularly large or significant, a municipality may initiate a stakeholder engagement campaign to develop a vision and land use plan for future development in order to attract investor interest. An example of this is Mississauga's (ON) Inspiration Lakeview Master Plan, which encompasses a 200-acre former industrial site that is not owned by the city.

Here are some tips to consider when promoting your brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities:

- ▶ **Be proactive.** Don't wait for proponents to come to you: ask to speak at meetings and events hosted by key stakeholders and associations. Invite prospective investors to meet with you and your team to learn more about your program and local opportunities.
- ▶ **Align internal partners.** Keep municipal staff and elected officials informed about the program and ensure they understand why it's important and how they can support it. Regular briefings and reports, as well as activities such as lunch-and-learns, help keep it top-of-mind.
- ▶ **Bring in external speakers.** Invite developers, other municipalities and provincial representatives to speak about their experiences, successes and programs.
- ▶ **Foster brownfield ambassadors.** Create opportunities for your supporters to champion and promote your program, both internally and externally. Promote local success stories and consider designating a council brownfield ambassador, assembling an internal brownfield team or creating an external advisory committee. Support professionals (such as environmental consultants) make excellent ambassadors as they tend to have strong relationships with property owners and developers and a financial interest in redevelopment projects.
- ▶ **Apply for awards.** External awards provide great visibility for your community and your brownfield endeavours. Consider applying for an [FCM Sustainable Communities Award](#), a [Canadian Urban Institute Brownie Award](#) or a planning or economic development association award in your province or territory.
- ▶ **Focus on networks and connectors.** Meeting with and presenting to local networks and associations is an effective way to build your profile. Targets include development industry associations, real estate associations, homebuilding associations, environmental industry associations, business improvement areas and local chambers of commerce. There are also national organizations such as the Canadian Brownfields Network, the Urban Development Institute, the Real Estate Investment Network (REIN), and the Commercial Real Estate Development Association (NAIOP).
- ▶ **Use procurement best practices:** See Appendix A for guidance on hiring brownfield service providers and marketing municipally owned brownfield sites for redevelopment.

Examples of the range of promotional activities used by municipalities are provided below. Additional ideas can be found in Appendix A.

Promotion activities	Great ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ one-on-one meetings➤ training workshops➤ networking and learning sessions (e.g. breakfast speakers, lunch-and-learns)➤ media briefings and events➤ open houses and consultations➤ council briefings➤ external conferences and events (e.g. presenting, hosting, exhibiting, etc.)➤ site tours➤ awards and competitions➤ regional joint promotion campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Media briefing: Brantford, ON, issues press releases and gives media representatives a memory stick with relevant files and contact information. In one instance, the city invited media to join the mayor on a tour of a redevelopment site, to demonstrate openness and transparency. This story was profiled in the local newspaper.➤ Brownfield Oktoberfest: Kitchener, ON, included brownfield properties on its tour of development opportunities for out-of-town developers during its popular Oktoberfest event. Participants visited local sites and learned about the city's brownfield program and incentives. This helped establish the city's reputation as good place for redevelopment.➤ Community engagement: Brantford, ON, established a Brownfield Community Advisory Committee with a mandate and budget for public engagement. Over the years the city has hosted workshops, roundtable discussions, brownfield bus tours and photography exhibits. Committee members actively promote the program to their networks.➤ Regional collaboration: Maple Ridge, BC, runs a joint campaign with its neighbours Pitt Meadows and Mission, called <i>Invest North Fraser</i>. Kitchener, ON, and the Region of Waterloo, ON, offer a shared program of financial incentives for brownfield redevelopment.➤ Profiling top redevelopment opportunities: The Region of Niagara, ON, developed a framework to evaluate and prioritize the redevelopment opportunities identified in its brownfield inventory. Phase 1 environmental site assessments and detailed marketing profiles were prepared for the top 30 sites. These were then featured in a brochure, which included a description, map and information on servicing, transportation, environmental conditions, property value and taxes and permitted and recommended land uses. Advanced 3D redevelopment visualizations were also prepared for the top six sites.



The path forward

Positioning your municipality as a key partner in brownfield redevelopment takes time and continued dedication. To increase the uptake of your brownfield programs and generate interest in your brownfield redevelopment opportunities, you need to devote sufficient resources to ongoing promotional efforts and proactive relationship building. Remember the following guidelines:

- Develop clear and compelling key messages tailored to your target audiences.
- Inspire action by focusing on positive outcomes (e.g. community revitalization) rather than negative issues (e.g. contaminated sites).
- Provide consistent messages across materials (e.g. policies, brochures, presentations) and platforms (e.g. online, print, in-person).
- Provide clarity and certainty about what your municipality will do, when you will do it, and what is required of project proponents.
- Provide information proactively by arranging meetings and speaking engagements with key stakeholder groups.

Once you have developed and mobilized materials promoting your brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities, you will have completed the fifth step of FCM's Leadership in Brownfield Renewal program ("Promote programs and opportunities") and will be ready to tackle the next steps:

- **Manage brownfield programs and projects:** Administer your municipal brownfield programs and facilitate the redevelopment of local properties.
- **Evaluate, improve and celebrate:** Assess and ensure ongoing improvement of policies and programs, and celebrate your successes.

Stay tuned for more resources from FCM's Green Municipal Fund that will help support your progress every step of the way.

Appendix A:

Community profiles

The examples below illustrate the range of approaches used by three different Canadian municipalities to promote their brownfield programs and redevelopment opportunities.

Brantford, ON	
Program summary	<p>Brantford's program is supported by its Brownfields Strategic Action Plan, Brownfield Community Improvement Program and policies in its Official Plan. Key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Financial incentives for redevelopment through the Brownfields Financial Tax Incentives Program and Development Charges Bylaw. ▶ Education and outreach through the community advisory committee. ▶ Redevelopment of municipally owned sites.
Brownfield point-person	<p>The point-person is a policy planner in the planning department who coordinates an internal cross-departmental review of brownfield projects and an external community advisory committee.</p>
Marketing and communications highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Website: The professional, well-organized brownfield program website is divided into the following sections: sites, events, completed projects, incentive programs, contacts and related links. ▶ Community champions: The community advisory committee includes representatives from the development community and the general public. The committee reviews grant applications, guides the redevelopment of city-owned sites and helps promote the program using its \$5,000 annual public engagement budget. ▶ Brownfield information package: Prospective developers are provided with a package that includes copies of the relevant policies, a guide to the incentive program, a summary of the process and a calculator to estimate the financial incentives they could receive. ▶ Municipal site redevelopment: Brantford is currently managing the redevelopment of the 50-acre Greenwich-Mohawk site. The project has a dedicated web page with a summary of the project, links to key reports, answers to frequently asked questions and a feedback form for residents. The city also held a public visioning workshop and developed a video (<i>Brantford Brown to Gold Opportunity</i>) to promote the project. ▶ Recognition: The city received a 2014 Canadian Urban Institute Brownie Award in Sustainable Remediation and Technological Innovation for the in situ steam-enhanced remediation technique it tested on the Greenwich-Mohawk site. ▶ Site profiles: Brantford develops a brief two-page profile of each site it is selling, including a site photo, zoning information, and information on the site's current status and eligibility for incentive programs. ▶ Photos and videos: See Section 3 for details. ▶ Community engagement: See Section 4 for details. ▶ Media briefing: See Section 4 for details.
Links	<p>Brantford brownfields home page</p> <p>Brantford Greenwich-Mohawk Brownfield Project</p>

Maple Ridge, BC

Program summary	<p>Maple Ridge does not have a formal brownfield strategy; its mandate comes from its Employment Land Investment Incentive Program and Town Centre Investment Incentive Program. Key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Financial incentives for the redevelopment of sites in its target areas, including brownfield sites.▶ Marketing and outreach to the development community and potential investors.▶ Education and support for brownfield redevelopment proponents.
Brownfield point-person	<p>The point-person is a policy planner in the planning department who coordinates an internal cross-departmental review of brownfield projects and an external community advisory committee.</p>
Marketing and communications highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Key Messages: Town Centre marketing materials feature an image of a sprouting plant and include taglines such as “It’s time to invest in one of Canada’s best real estate markets” and “Maple Ridge: An exceptional investment opportunity.” These messages are reinforced by statistics from the first four years of the program. The messages on brownfields focus on their prime location, relative affordability, excellent redevelopment potential and the availability of tools, resources and funding to support their renewal.▶ Education and outreach: Maple Ridge proactively markets brownfield redevelopment opportunities to commercial real estate agents, developers and local networks through presentations and one-on-one meetings. When developers show interest, municipal staff gets back to them within three days to schedule a meeting to brief them on available incentives and next steps.▶ Incentives at a glance: Each program’s brochure and website includes an accessible one-page table summarizing the incentives and support available for different types of development.▶ Recognition: Maple Ridge was named the 2010-2015 #5 Top Canadian Investment City, the #2 Top BC Investment Town, and the place to live for lifestyle by the Real Estate Investment Network (REIN). Maple Ridge actively markets itself to this network and leverages its ranking to attract investors.▶ Additional incentives: The city’s website links to external incentive programs, such as FCM’s Green Municipal Fund.▶ Program brand: See Section 3 for details.▶ Regional marketing: See Section 4 for details.
Links	<p>Maple Ridge Town Centre Investment Incentive Program Maple Ridge Employment Lands Investment Incentive Program Additional incentives</p>

City of Langley, BC

Program summary	<p>The City of Langley's Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy is supported by the city's Economic Development Strategy and policies in its Official Community Plan. The city has virtually no greenfield sites available — the approximately 10-square-kilometer community is fully urbanized. Key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Encouraging redevelopment through customized site-specific comprehensive development zoning and an expedited approval process.➤ Marketing and redevelopment of municipally owned sites.➤ Marketing and outreach to the development community and potential investors.
Brownfield point-person	<p>The point-person is the director of development services and economic development.</p>
Marketing and communications highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Website and brochure: The city has a simple home page that outlines the benefits of redevelopment, provides testimonials on successful projects and includes a brief call to action. These messages are consistently repeated in the program brochure and picked up in media articles about the program (see link below).➤ Key messages: The city uses the tagline “Turning brown into green.” Its communications materials include key messages such as “Call us to learn more about how we can help you turn brownfields into a profitable venture” and “Brownfield Redevelopment in the City of Langley has generated \$192.2 Million in development and more than 850 jobs.”➤ Proactive marketing: The city engages target audiences by presenting at meetings, breakfasts, conferences and other events.➤ Municipal site redevelopment: One of the city's success stories is the redevelopment of a 10-acre downtown site to house a casino, hotel and convention centre. The city conducted extensive market research and engaged industry associations to develop an economically viable vision for the site, then used an “expression of interest” process to identify potential partners.➤ Recognition: The city's brownfield strategy received the Canadian Urban Institute's 2013 Brownie Award in Communications, Marketing and Public Engagement; the British Columbia Economic Development Association's (BCEDA) 2014 Community Project Award; and a 2015 FCM Sustainable Communities Award.➤ Market research: See Section 1.2 for details.
Links	<p>Langley Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy Article and advertisement in the Business Examiner (September 2014)</p>



Appendix B:

Tips for promoting redevelopment of municipally owned sites

Most municipalities own one or more brownfield sites (such as a former public works yard or a brownfield site in tax arrears). While some municipalities will redevelop a site on their own, most municipalities prefer to sell their sites to developers. In both cases, the many uncertainties associated with brownfield redevelopment can make it challenging to manage the process and attract the right service providers (e.g. to remediate the site) and purchasers (e.g. to develop the site).

The following recommendations may help increase your chances of success and reduce uncertainties for prospective buyers and service providers.

1. Get ready. Complete the activities below in advance of the procurement process:

- a) Research the site.** Review the history of the site and assess the potential for contamination. If possible, prepare Phase 1 and 2 environmental site assessments that can be shared with prospective buyers. Some municipalities also prepare a remedial work plan. Consider meeting with regulators and other key stakeholders to get their input on the site.
- b) Estimate the market value.** Conduct research on remediation options and costs, the state of the market and the potential demand for different types of development. Consider engaging a professional real estate or environmental services consultant to help with this assessment.
- c) Articulate a flexible land use vision.** Most brownfield sites require significant zoning changes to support redevelopment. Prospective buyers need to know what types of development the municipality is open to in order to determine the value of the site. Municipalities can communicate their intentions through a community or neighbourhood land use plan or by committing to work with proponents on a custom zoning solution. Regardless of the approach, it's important to ensure that your vision is economically viable and maintains enough flexibility to accommodate creative ideas or changes in the market.
- d) Prepare a comprehensive information package.** Fully disclose what the municipality knows about the site, outline the incentives available to support redevelopment and reference relevant land use policies and zoning. Include a summary of the redevelopment process and sample application forms and agreements.
- e) Consider other actions to facilitate redevelopment.** Municipalities can facilitate the sales process by undertaking activities that make the site more “investment ready,” such as assembling neighbouring parcels of land or securing funding for remediation.

2. Launch the process to sell or remediate the site. Try to make the process as easy as possible for proponents and keep relevant council, staff and community stakeholders informed.

- a) **Learn from past experience.** Review the results from previous RFPs to see what worked and what didn't. Reach out to developers and other municipalities to get their perspectives.
- b) **Inform proponents about funding opportunities.** Be sure to include information on your municipality's incentive programs as well as the brownfield funding offered by FCM's Green Municipal Fund.
- c) **Start with an REOI or RFQ process.** An REOI (request for expressions of interest) provides an opportunity to test the market, see who is interested and get their feedback on the project. An RFQ (request for qualifications) yields similar information and allows you to develop a shortlist of bidders based on the qualifications and experience that are most important for the work. In some cases there may only be one qualified bidder, which gives you the choice to either begin negotiations with that bidder or rethink your approach to the project.
- d) **If needed, run an RFP process.** Actively promote the RFP (request for proposals) and be sure to allow sufficient time for bidders to visit the site and prepare their bids (at least six weeks for a sale). Try to keep the RFP as flexible as possible to accommodate alternative approaches and ideas. Select the successful proponent based on their qualifications and experience and not just their price: brownfield projects are complex and the lowest bid does not always translate into the lowest-cost (or highest-value) proposal. Be sure to request and review project references to make sure the proponent is the right fit for the project.

RFQs, RFPs, RFIs and REOIs⁵

Two key processes used in the remediation and sale of brownfield sites are **requests for qualifications** (RFQs) and **requests for proposals** (RFPs):

- An **RFQ** is used to collect information on the experiences and qualifications of various services providers in order to generate a shortlist (or pool) of pre-qualified bidders for work to be done on a project. An RFQ may be followed by direct contract or an RFP.
- An **RFP** is a project-based bidding process where the proponent's proposed solution, qualifications, and price are the main criteria for selecting the winning proposal. An RFP can range from a single-step process for straightforward procurements to a multi-stage process for complex and significant procurements.

Additional methods can be used to obtain information on the availability of goods, services or potential suppliers and to determine the level of interest in the site:

- An **RFI** (request for information) is used to collect information on the types of services or products available in the market, and solicit ideas for possible solutions.
- An **REOI** (request for expressions of interest) is used to collect information on service providers who are interested in a project. An REOI can help a municipality assess the market interest in a project and open conversations with prospective bidders.

Note that RFIs and REOIs are not competitive processes. Talk with your purchasing department about how to use each of these processes in your municipality.

⁵ Definitions adapted from Northwest Territories Public Works and Services. "Procurement Processes and Tools." 2009. Accessed August 5, 2015.

- e) **Negotiate the sale and agreement.** Selecting a proponent is just the first step: many sales fail to close due to disagreements over terms and the sharing of risk and liability. Work with the proponent to structure the agreement so that it protects the municipality's interests while providing the developer with the certainty they need to move forward with the project.

For example, some municipalities require developers to achieve certain milestones before approving their grant applications or rezoning requests. This can present a barrier for developers that require a firm commitment to access the financing they need to proceed with a sale. Kitchener, ON, addressed this issue by structuring its agreements so that the sale does not close until the rezoning and incentives are approved. The municipality also retains an external real estate service provider to manage the RFP process, while city staff manages the brownfield incentive application process.

The developer's perspective

Here are some comments from experienced brownfield developers that you may want to consider when trying to sell a municipally owned brownfield site. Note that each municipality is unique and not all of these comments may be relevant to your particular context.

To ensure success, municipalities should put flexible zoning in place before going to tender. Having to go to council for rezoning takes time and exposes the project to risks.

They also need to approach the project as a partnership and be flexible with their agreements and incentive programs.

For example, with one project we worked with the city to split a large site into multiple parcels, so that we could trigger the incentive program separately for each site. This was important as the project was a 10-year build out and wouldn't have worked otherwise.

- Robert Pelda, President, RMP Construction

There needs to be a viable real estate market: if the economics don't work then the municipality should consider interim uses until the market turns around.

Each site is unique and requires a unique approach and set of incentives. Municipalities need to be flexible: if they decide on a vision for the site that the market isn't interested in then they won't be successful. It's better to decide on some broad principles (e.g. low rise, medium rise, high rise) and then get to the details as the process unfolds.

- Dave Harper, President, Kilmer Brownfield, Kilmer Group

Municipalities are doing a decent job of communicating: the important thing is to be able to follow up and do business in a prompt, efficient and secure way that reduces project risks.

It helps if the brownfield lead has a business orientation and is open to the deals that make sense for their project rather than putting on too many conditions.

Developers need agreements and guarantees early on in the process in order to secure their financing and make the project work. These agreements can be conditional so that the municipality is only on the hook if the project happens.

- Timothy Collins, President, LandX Developments

Appendix C:

Resources

Municipal brownfield marketing strategies

- City of Ottawa, ON: [Brownfields Redevelopment Community Improvement Plan](#)
- City of Welland, ON: [Brownfield Strategy](#)

Municipal brownfield marketing and communications materials

▶ Videos:

- City of Brantford, ON: [Brown to Gold Opportunity videos](#)
- FCM [Sustainable Communities Award winners](#) – brownfields category

▶ Promotional brochures:

- City of Maple Ridge, BC: [Town Centre Investment Incentive Program brochure](#)
- City of Langley, BC: [Turning Brown into Green brochure](#)
- Region of Waterloo, ON: [Revitalization Opportunity Investment brochure](#) profiling regional incentives and successful projects

▶ Brownfield websites: City of Brantford, ON: [brownfields home page](#)

▶ Testimonials: City of Langley, BC: [Langley Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy](#)

▶ Guides:

- Region of Waterloo, ON: [Brownfields and Incentives website, guides and FAQs](#)
- City of Brantford, ON: [Incentive Programs website and guides](#)
- City of Edmonton, AB: [Environmental Site Assessment Guidebook and brownfield redevelopment program overview](#)

▶ Brownfield development roadmaps: [FCM brownfield roadmaps](#) for every province and territory

▶ Promoting redevelopment of municipal sites

- City of Brantford, ON: [Greenwich-Mohawk project website](#)
- Niagara Region, ON: [profile of top redevelopment opportunities](#)

Marketing and communications highlights

- [Community Branding and Marketing: A tool for local economic development](#), by FCM International
- Canada Business Network [web pages on marketing basics](#)
- [“Communication Planning for Organizations”](#) fact sheet by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- [Plan the Work: Strategic Communication Planning for Not-for-Profit Organizations](#) by the Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society and the Centre for Community Organizations
- Marketing kits by [HubSpot](#)

Funding resources

- FCM Green Municipal Fund [brownfields sector funding](#)

FCM's **Green** Municipal Fund: Supporting municipal leadership in brownfield redevelopment

FCM's Green Municipal Fund (GMF) is your brownfield clean-up partner and much more. Whether your organization is a **municipal government**, a **municipally owned corporation** or a **private-sector partner**, GMF can help get your brownfield projects moving with funding and knowledge resources.

PLAN	ASSESS	REMEDiate	REDEVELOP
GRANTS (up to \$175,000)	GRANTS (up to \$175,000)	LOANS	LOANS + GRANTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable neighbourhood action plans Community brownfield action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase II ESAs Risk assessments Risk management/remedial action plans Field tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site remediation Risk management Interim use — renewable energy generation on a brownfield site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For eligible capital projects in the energy, transportation, waste and water sectors
KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES: Case studies, roadmaps, webinars, award-winning projects, videos and more.			

The GMF advantage

Let the GMF advantage help you revitalize your brownfields, overcome market barriers and create new economic opportunities. GMF offers attractive financing on a cost-reimbursement basis. Unlike most other funders, GMF offers loans at the remediation stage. Find out about innovative financing methods, such as using municipal incentives like tax increment financing (TIFs) as loan security. GMF funding can be combined with other funding programs (e.g. federal and provincial) and applications are accepted year-round.

GMF can also connect you with a network of brownfield experts and resources and share lessons learned from other projects.

To apply for funding or learn more about GMF, visit www.fcm.ca/brownfields or contact us at **1-877-997-9926** or gmf@fcm.ca.