



# The United States Conference of Mayors

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## **Brownfields Report Shows Untapped Potential for Redevelopment in the Nation's Cities**

### *The U. S. Conference of Mayors Surveys More Than 200 Cities*

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) today released a national report on the status of brownfield sites in more than 200 American cities. Brownfields are abandoned or underutilized properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by either real or perceived environmental contamination. As a result, brownfields present a major challenge for both small and large cities – primarily due to the lack of funding necessary to redevelop and/or recycle these lands. Brownfields come in many forms including old industrial and commercial properties, vacant buildings, or abandoned gas stations.

This report, titled “*Recycling America’s Land: A National Report on Brownfields Redevelopment*”, is the seventh report which documents the problems of redevelopment of brownfields faced by local communities throughout the United States and identifies the fleeting opportunities lost when properties remain idle and abandoned. This report quantifies some of the benefits from brownfields redevelopment efforts across the country with cities responding their positive results from land recycling and the return of brownfields to productive uses.

“Brownfields redevelopment allows us to continuously rebuild and reinvest in our local neighborhoods and communities making us stronger and more viable,” said USCM President Trenton, NJ Mayor Douglas H. Palmer. “As Mayors we know that unused properties and abandoned sites hold the promise of reaching our economic development goals,” Palmer added.

This year’s results indicate that 188 cities estimated that they collectively had more than 24,896 brownfields sites, with the average size of a brownfield site being 6.5 acres. Additionally, there were 176 cities estimating 83,949 acres of land, which were idle or abandoned properties holding the potential to create jobs or produce tax revenue. More than 150 cities also estimated 3,282 sites have been “mothballed”, which are sites that the current owner has no intention of redeveloping or selling due to environmental impact concerns. Another key finding is that 150 cities reported successfully redeveloping nearly 1,600 sites which represents approximately 17,000 acres. The survey also reported that 187,000 new jobs have been created.

“Many cities are experiencing a renaissance and residential boom in their downtowns and center city where there is a renewed interest and demand by residents to live closer to the hub of the city,” said Charlotte Mayor Patrick McCrory, Chair of the USCM’s Environmental Committee. “Brownfield redevelopment can fuel this boom and is an essential component to the economic and environmental growth of a modern city. This is the only way to truly grow in a sustainable manner – save green space and redevelop land that was previously used and put back into positive use,” McCrory continued.

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Other highlights of the survey findings include:

- Over 46 percent of survey respondents stated that if their brownfield properties were redeveloped they could realize tax revenues between \$1.3 billion to \$3.8 billion annually.
- 62 cities provided actual tax revenue from redeveloped brownfields sites totaling over \$408 million.
- The report indicates that it now takes 4.5 to 5 years to redevelop a brownfield site compared to a previous average of 3 years.

The complete list of surveyed cities and the entire brownfields report can be viewed on the U.S. Conference of Mayors website at [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org).

*The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.*