

Taking Action on Brownfields: Langley, BC

As part of its capacity building efforts through the Green Municipal Fund™ (GMF), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities shares success stories to demonstrate the importance of municipal leadership in brownfield redevelopment. These stories show how local governments can play a key role in returning a site to productive use. Learn from the project described below and visit www.fcm.ca/brownfields for more helpful resources.

Cascades Casino and Coast Hotel & Convention Centre

The City of Langley's Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy focuses on mitigating risk to the landowner and potential developers. It emphasizes building strong working relationships between owner/developers and the municipality. Recommended measures include: establishing a municipal development role, providing tax exemptions, conducting blanket contamination risk assessments on all potential brownfields, considering buying and remediating strategic contaminated sites, streamlining rezoning and development approval processes, prioritizing brownfields in the planning process, and promoting and permitting interim uses. This approach has accelerated the pace of brownfield redevelopment and enabled the city to find the right partners.



Credit: Coast Hotels

Seeing an opportunity to redevelop a brownfield site into a desirable city-owned convention centre, the municipality worked with Gateway Casinos & Entertainment to transform the site into a hotel, casino and convention centre. More than 500 jobs were created, the urban core was enhanced, and a million dollars of tax revenue was generated.

To drive redevelopment, the city:

- ▶ Purchased the site
- ▶ Streamlined rezoning
- ▶ Navigated the provincial remediation regulatory regime
- ▶ Marketed the redevelopment vision and benefits to the community
- ▶ Guided project planning
- ▶ Informed council about the benefits and encouraged active interest

Municipal incentives included staff time and the \$4.4 million land purchase cost. No financial incentives were provided to the developer.

Testimonials

"In our partnership with the city, we have seen that the city not only "talks the talk" but "walks the walk." The city's foresight and assistance allowed Gateway to redevelop the contaminated site into a major entertainment destination and community asset. The alignment with and between city staff, leadership and the people that need to execute was a big reason for success. The partnership was a win-win for both the city and Gateway." — Jag Nijjar, Director of Operations, Gateway Casinos & Entertainment

"In partnership with Gateway Casinos & Entertainment, we transformed a derelict brownfield site into a dynamic entertainment destination, creating significant employment and taxation generation for our community — turning our vision for the site into action!" — Gerald Minchuk, Director of Development Services and Economic Development, City of Langley

Project Details	
Former use	Fertilizer supplier, bulk-fuel storage facility, municipal fire hall
New use	Casino, hotel and convention centre
Parcel size	Four hectares
Development area	14,000 gross square metres (hotel - 4,600 m ² ; casino - 6,500m ² ; convention centre - 2,900 m ²)
Project value¹	\$58.7 million
Duration	Two years – completed 2005
Proponents	Gateway Casinos & Entertainment Limited and the City of Langley
Ownership	Original: Private New: Gateway Casinos & Entertainment own the hotel and casino while the city owns the convention centre as part of a strata agreement.
Costs	Land acquisition: \$4.4 million (incurred by the municipality) Remediation: \$300,000 Development: \$54 million (new construction)
Remediation	Main pollutants of concern: Hydrocarbons from old diesel tanks Approach: Full clean-up
Site	Medium-to-large industrial parcel in an urban, fast-growth neighbourhood

Project Impacts	
Property tax	Before: none (vacant site) After: \$1 million per annum
Property assessment	Before: \$500,000 – \$1 million per hectare After: \$2.5 million – \$3.5 million per hectare An increase between 375% and 500% ²
Job creation	During construction: 200 full-time equivalents (FTEs) at peak After: 450 FTEs
Neighbourhood aesthetics and public space	By cleaning up a derelict site, the new development has significantly improved the aesthetics of the area. The development promotes the city's vision to create a complete, compact and walkable community
Community benefits	An entertainment hub was created and improved the quality of life for residents. Tourists are attracted to the area, creating indirect employment and additional business for restaurants, shops and other enterprises.

¹ Project Value refers to all costs associated with the project including land, remediation and construction costs. Not all of these costs have been incurred by one party.

² Estimates based on value of surrounding properties.

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Canada

Taking Action on Brownfields: Windsor, ON

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3001 Dougall Avenue

With more than 137 brownfield properties on its books, the City of Windsor implemented a redevelopment program in 2010. One property, 3001 Dougall Avenue, is representative of many brownfield sites across Canada: A former gas station that has sat vacant for over a decade in a primary commercial corridor.

The city's program leveraged support from a local entrepreneur who opened a new three-storey commercial and retail development in late 2014. The municipality waived development charges of \$9,008 and provided a tax increment grant of \$67,567, to be paid out over 10 years. The additional municipal tax revenue for years 1 – 10 is expected to be \$82,456.

Testimonials

“Although this project was small in dollar value, one of the biggest takeaways was our ability to capitalize on its visible location to raise awareness about the brownfield program. This unintended outcome has generated significant interest in the program, particularly from developers that also own [brownfields].”

— Greg Atkinson, Senior Planner, Local Economic Development, City of Windsor

“This project was a great experience and lesson on how we could make a positive impact on the surroundings that we live in. It was a great feeling that we were able to be the first to take advantage of the program and we hope that it is going to be the first of many to come. The outcome will be very helpful to us over the next 10 years and hopefully others will take the same step for a better place to live for our kids.”

— Andre Abouasli, Developer



Credit: City of Windsor Planning Department

3001 Dougall Avenue during construction



Credit: City of Windsor Planning Department

3001 Dougall Avenue circa 2010

Project Details	
Former use	Gas and service station (1953-2002)
New use	Three-unit commercial/retail building
Parcel size	0.13 hectares
Project value ¹	\$1 million (includes acquisition, remediation and construction)
Duration	Two years from date of municipal incentive approval; completed autumn 2014
Proponents	Local entrepreneur and the City of Windsor
Ownership	Original: Shell Canada New: local entrepreneur
Costs	Land acquisition: \$200,000 Remediation: \$300,000 Redevelopment: \$853,920 Total: \$1,353,920
Remediation	Main pollutants of concern: hydrocarbons, benzene, toluene, xylenes Approach: bulk of site cleaned up by Shell Canada Some contamination remained and had to be remediated and capped under hardscape.
Site	Small lot — gas station/drycleaner in an urban neighbourhood

Project Impacts	
Property tax	Before: \$3,899 post demolition After: \$12,145 (estimated) (210% increase)
Property assessment	Before: \$236,000 After: \$400,000 (69% increase)
Job creation	Main tenant's company can grow. New commercial space will add to jobs once tenants are identified.
Neighbourhood aesthetics and public space	Redevelopment has removed an eyesore and potential health threat. The project has raised awareness in the development community, creating interest in other brownfield properties across the city.

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Taking Action on Brownfields: The Blue Mountains, ON

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New town hall

In 2011, a new town hall was built to accommodate the staff of the amalgamated municipality and to create a community gathering space. The brownfield site formerly housed a gas station and retail store. A federal and provincial grant from the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund and a loan and grant from FCM's Green Municipal Fund were used to help finance the project and remediate the site.

The project is expected to inspire redevelopment in other parts of the municipality. The town is finalizing its Community Improvement Plan which will define municipal incentives for future brownfield redevelopment.

Testimonials

"The economic benefits of redeveloping this piece of land were a key consideration for the town, as was the potential for this project to inspire other redevelopment projects in the downtown area. The most important lesson we learned was to engage the community early and often. Gaining public support for the project, learning from their insights and vision and keeping them informed was fundamental to the project's success. We're applying what we've learned to all our communication efforts." — David Finbow, former Director of Planning and Building Services, Town of The Blue Mountains

Credit: Town of The Blue Mountains



Aerial view of the new town hall



Front entrance of the new town hall

Project Details	
Former use	Small scale commercial: auto service, gas station and retail store
New use	Town hall
Parcel size	2,500 m ²
Development area	Office space – 1,350 m ² ; public space and parkland – 425 m ²
Project value ¹	N/A
Duration	Four years — completed 2001
Proponents	Town of the Blue Mountains (initial capital: \$218,000), Federal-Provincial Infrastructure Stimulus Fund (grant: \$4.6 million), FCM's Green Municipal Fund (loan: \$3.3 million, grant: \$330,000)
Ownership	Original: private New: Town of the Blue Mountains
Costs	Land acquisition: \$850,000 Remediation: \$605,000 Redevelopment: \$6,993,000
Remediation	16,000 m ³ of contaminated soil removed and bio-remediated at town's solid waste management site. Soil has since been used as a landfill cover.
Site	Small lot — gas station/dry cleaner in a downtown

Project Impacts	
Neighbourhood aesthetics and public space	The redevelopment included an addition of parkland along the Beaver River and Georgian Trail. Public meeting spaces were included in the town hall building. The project removed contaminants, eliminated an eyesore, promoted further development and created a walkable community gathering space. Downtown businesses on King Street East and Bridge Street East have been reinvigorated. The neighbourhood now has nearby municipal services, parkland and recreation facilities.

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Taking Action on Brownfields: Cornwall, ON

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Cotton Mill Lofts

With the decline of the textile industry in Cornwall in the 1990s, the mills along the waterfront closed, presenting an opportunity to redevelop and rehabilitate the area. The Cotton Mill Lofts project is representative of the redevelopment that is taking place all along the waterfront in the city. A cotton mill storage building was converted into a 54-unit residential condominium by a private developer.

The project was partially funded through municipal incentives available under Cornwall's Brownfields Community Improvement Plan (CIP). Without these incentives, the project would not have been economically feasible. Incentives included a tax increment grant of \$1,380,778 paid out over 10 years, building permit rebates of \$49,252 and a tipping fees grant of \$76,384, for a total municipal investment of \$1,506,414. The city receives about \$190,000 a year in taxes from the property, a 2,800 per cent increase, which results in a payback period of eight years. The redevelopment has also spurred the construction of 150 new residential units in the surrounding area.

Testimonials

"Without brownfields incentives, the project would never have been completed."

— R.M.P. Construction & Development

Credit: City of Cornwall



Residential condominiums before redevelopment

Credit: City of Cornwall



Residential condominiums after redevelopment

Project Details	
Former use	Industrial: cotton mill storage
New use	Residential condominiums: 90 — 140 m ²
Parcel size	4,000 m ²
Project value ¹	\$15 million (approximate)
Duration	Two years — completed 2011
Proponents	R.M.P. Construction & Development Ltd. and the City of Cornwall
Ownership	Original: Cornwall Warehousing Ltd. New: Cotton Mill Lofts Inc.
Costs	Land acquisition: \$12 million Remediation: \$1.8 million Redevelopment: \$3 million
Remediation	Main pollutant of concern: heavy metals Approach: full clean-up
Site	Medium-to-large industrial site in a negative/no growth urban neighbourhood

Project Impacts	
Property tax	Before: \$5,685 After: \$192,903 (3,200% increase)
Property assessment	Before: \$182,000 After: \$11,290,500 (6,100% increase)
Job creation	During construction: 100 people for 1.5 years and 30 for remaining construction period

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Taking Action on Brownfields: Kitchener, ON

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Kaufman Lofts

The 1908 Kaufman Shoe factory was restored and converted to a 270-unit residential condominium complex in 2006. The site remediation was intensive; it took two years and over \$1.5 million to clean up the land.

The city's brownfield remediation program made the project viable by waiving development charges of \$1.4 million as well as planning and building fees of \$350,000. The additional annual property tax revenue for the city is \$141,042, giving a 12-year payback period on the municipal investment. The Kaufman Lofts redevelopment contributed to the rejuvenation of Kitchener's downtown core and preserved an historic building.

Testimonials

"[The Project] provided excellent housing in the downtown core and allowed us to restore an historic building. It was worth the effort in large part because of the financial incentives and if we had to pay development charges, the project would not have been viable."

— Gino Ambrosio, Vice-President, Andrin Homes

Credit: University of Waterloo Library



Kaufman Shoe factory circa 1970's

Credit: From Brown to Gold, Summer 2012.
Ontario Home Builders



The Kaufman Lofts

Project Details

Former use	Industrial: shoe factory
New use	270 residential condominiums
Size	1.4 hectares
Project value¹	\$20 million (does not include land sale costs)
Duration	4.5 years of remediation and construction — completed 2006
Proponents	Kimshaw and Andrin Ltd. and City of Kitchener
Ownership	Original: Kaufman Footwear Company New: 410 King Properties
Remediation	Groundwater contaminated Approach: 721L of groundwater and 3,700 m ³ of soil removed
Site	Medium-to-large parcel with heritage building in an urban, slow growth neighbourhood being revitalized

Project Impacts

Property tax	Before: \$9,255 After: \$150,297 (1,500% increase)
Property assessment	Before: \$1,139,000 After: \$36,644,300 (3,120% increase)
Property tax in surrounding area	44% increase in residential taxes, 9% decrease in non-residential taxes. The increase in tax revenues is partially attributed to the brownfield redevelopment.
Community benefits	Eighty-eight per cent of business owners and seventy-seven per cent of residents felt the redevelopment contributed positively to their community. Seventy per cent of business owners agreed the redevelopment had made the area more vibrant and a better place to live. ²

¹ Project Value refers to all costs associated with the project including land, remediation and construction costs. Not all of these costs have been incurred by one party.

² Chakrapani, C., and T. Hernandez. "Brownfield Redevelopment and the Triple Bottom Line Approach." (2012), p.12.

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Taking Action on Brownfields: Ottawa, ON

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The Currents

The Currents is located in the heart of the Wellington West neighbourhood in an established suburb of Ottawa. The brownfield site that housed a former gas station, dry cleaner and car wash was remediated and redeveloped into an 11-storey residential condominium with a performing arts theatre on the first two levels.



Credit: Windmill Developments

Residential condominiums after redevelopment

The project predated the City of Ottawa's brownfield program by several years and Windmill Developments worked with the city to pilot a model for municipal brownfield incentives, which have since been implemented. The city waived development fees of \$420,000, fast-tracked the planning process, approved a height bonus and reduced the parking requirement from .7 to .5 spaces per unit. The city has seen increases of 40 per cent in residential taxes in the neighbourhood, in part due to the rejuvenation of the community. The Currents has brought both visitors and residents to the area. This project received support from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Green Municipal Fund."

Project Details

Former use	Commercial: former gas station, dry cleaner and car wash
New use	11-storey residential condominium complex and performing arts theatre
Parcel size	930 m ²
Project value¹	\$20 million
Duration	1.5 years, completed 2007
Proponents	Windmill Developments, FCM's Green Municipal Fund, the City of Ottawa and Great Canadian Theatre Company
Ownership	Original: private New: Windmill Developments
Costs	Land acquisition: \$1.2 million Remediation: \$400,000 Redevelopment: \$20 million
Remediation	Main pollutants of concern: hydrocarbons and perchloroethylene Approach: 393L of water and 4,400 m ³ of soil removed
Site	Small lot, gas station/drycleaner in an urban neighbourhood

Project Impacts

Property tax	Before: \$19,311 After: \$274,923 (2013 City of Ottawa projection) (1,300% increase)
Property assessment	Before: \$587,250 After: \$18,000,000 (3,000% increase)
Community benefits	Seventy-five per cent of businesses and eighty per cent of residents felt that the redevelopment contributed positively to their community. Sixty-five per cent of businesses agreed that the redevelopment made the area more vibrant and a better place to live. ²

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