

Brownfields Fact Sheet

June 2010

What is a Brownfield?

Brownfield sites are abandoned or underused properties where there may be environmental contamination. Redevelopment of brownfields is often hindered by the liability for the cleanup or the uncertainty of cleanup costs. Brownfield sites that aren't cleaned up represent lost opportunities for economic development and other community improvements.

The Impacts of Brownfields on a Community

Brownfields can:

- Harm human health and the environment
- Become eyesores and contribute to blight
- Limit economic growth and development
- Reduce employment opportunities and tax revenue
- Reduce surrounding property values
- Contribute to neighborhood crime

The Benefits of Brownfield Redevelopment

Redeveloping a brownfield can turn a perceived problem into a community asset. Cleanup and redevelopment can stimulate the community's economy, save green space from development, provide an opportunity for habitat restoration or create public space such as a park. It can set the stage for business development and addressing other community needs.

Cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields can be an effective economic development strategy. The economic benefits are realized in two ways. First is in the immediate and one-time capital costs for cleanup activities, habitat enhancement, infrastructure construction, and vertical construction of site improvements. This initial investment generates one-time tax revenues, significant numbers of family wage jobs, and indirect economic spin-offs within the community. The second benefit is in the long-term economic lift a project brings in the form of increased tax revenues, higher property values, and indirect spending stimulated by a revitalized property. The economic lift is further sustained by job creation on the restored properties.

Cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields can create a number of other community benefits:

- Protect human health and the environment
- Efficient use of existing utilities and infrastructure
- Revitalize neighborhoods
- Educational opportunities
- Build community through public participation

FORMER USES

Common brownfield sites in Washington include properties formerly used as:

- Gas stations
- Auto repair shops
- Dry cleaners
- Landfills
- Manufacturing sites
- Pulp & paper mills
- Wood treating facilities

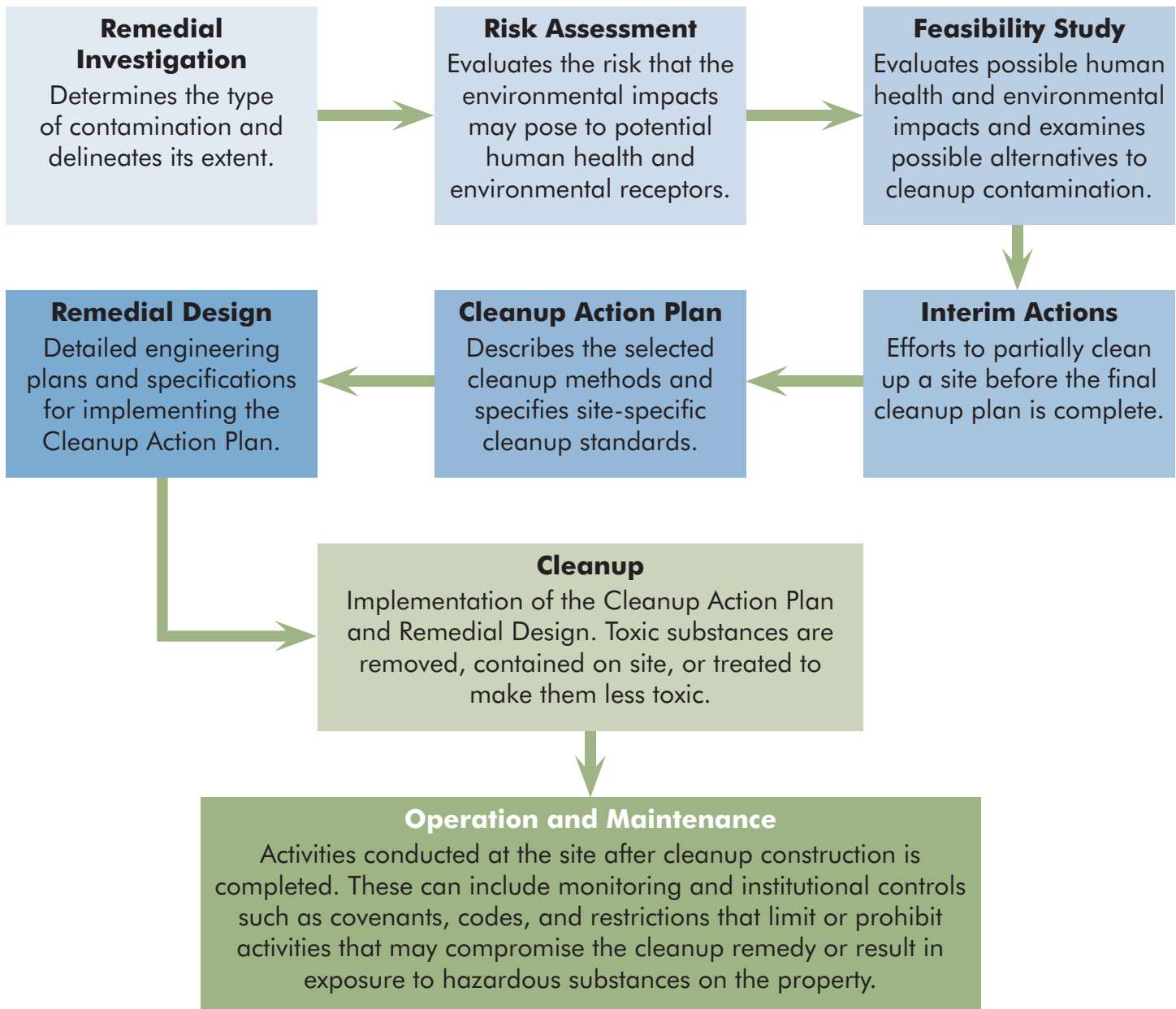
Every \$1 in Washington State cleanup grants creates:

- \$6 in local and state tax revenue
- \$7 in payroll value
- \$32 in business revenue



How is a contaminated site cleaned up?

Cleanup in Washington State is regulated by the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA). The series of required steps to cleanup contaminated property includes:



Financial Resources to Support Cleanup and Redevelopment

Local governments and non-profit organizations are eligible for state and federal grants and loans to support brownfield redevelopment. Private landowners and developers may be eligible for low-interest loans and tax credits to offset the cost of cleanup.

More Information

Interested in cleanup and redevelopment of a brownfield in your community? You can receive information and support from:

Washington State Department of Ecology
John Means, Brownfields Program Manager – 360-407-7188



http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/brownfields/brownfields_hp.html