



Member Release

February 12, 2013

TO: Boards and Councils
Chief Administrative Officers

FROM: UBCM Secretariat

RE: **BROWNFIELD RENEWAL: UPDATE & SURVEY**

UBCM members are asked to provide feedback to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations on their Brownfield Renewal initiative.

Attached is an update on the initiative, as well as 4 short survey questions that will help the Province determine the gaps and opportunities for brownfield redevelopment at the local government level.

Please complete the survey by **March 4, 2013** and send your responses via email to Karen McRae at karen.mcrae@gov.bc.ca or by fax to 250-356-6791.

The BC Brownfield Renewal Strategy was created in 2008 to address brownfield sites on both private and Crown land. The strategy includes three (3) key components: funding, policy and legislation, and education. The initiative has:

- provided approximately \$5.3 million in funding for early environmental investigation activities to local governments and private property owners for 65 brownfield properties in communities across BC.
- reviewed and streamlined the Provincial contaminated sites (brownfields) legislation overseen by the Ministry of Environment.
- offered training and educational opportunities across the province.

More information on the Strategy is available in the attached document.

BROWNFIELD RENEWAL: UPDATE AND SURVEY

Funding

Since being announced by the Province in February 2008, the Brownfield Renewal initiative has provided approximately \$5.3 million in funding for early environmental investigation activities to local governments and private property owners for 65 brownfield properties in communities across BC. These 65 properties are a variety of former use sites, including: 17 gas stations; 10 saw mills; 9 aggregate operations; 5 landfills; 2 dry cleaners, and many more.

In a recent review of the properties that received funding from the Province from 2009 to 2011, we found that about 34 percent moved on to the remediation stage and another 34 percent had some further environmental investigations undertaken, and we expect over time that many of these will move on to remediation as well.

Local governments received about 38 percent (or \$2 million) of this funding—and own 23 of the properties funded.

Policy and Legislation

An important aspect of the Brownfield Renewal initiative is the ongoing review and streamlining of the Provincial contaminated sites (brownfields) legislation overseen by the Ministry of Environment (MoE). In recognition of the importance of balancing economic and environmental factors, the goal is to continue to increase certainty in both business processes, and environmental protection outcomes.

A major ongoing initiative towards greater regulatory process certainty is the increased use of external-to-government qualified professionals who make direct recommendations to ministry decision makers for issuance of approvals and certificates.

MoE is hosting a site remediation conference ‘From Policy to Practice’ as an educational and capacity building initiative in early March to gain further insight in support of brownfield renewal. Further details can be found at: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/remediation/>

Education

Since its inception, Brownfield Renewal has actively offered training and educational opportunities across the province. We have provided workshops and webinars to get information about brownfield renewal out to local governments and others. We also partnered with the Ministry of Advanced Education and BCIT in 2010 to develop a series of courses targeted toward land developers, planners, engineers and other experts interested in learning more about brownfield redevelopment. However, the training program did not get the uptake that was hoped for and is no longer being offered. We think the reason for low uptake is that brownfield site owners want information specific to their particular issue—when and as they need it, rather than a broader education on the topic.

What's New?

We are currently exploring a ‘performance support’ approach to providing information as part of a new Brownfield Renewal web site to be launched in the spring. We believe that local governments and others would prefer not to be inundated with large amounts of information, but instead want the ability to focus in on specific details about brownfield renewal on an as needed basis. Consulting with peers and/or experts about a particular situation and how best to move forward is a good example of performance support.

We need your views on what would be most useful on this web site! For example, are the assumptions we’ve outlined here correct? We are also interested in your views in general about

what you think the gaps and opportunities are for brownfield redevelopment at the local government level.

Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions so that we better understand your views on gaps and opportunities.

SURVEY QUESTIONS:

Please send your survey responses via email to karen.mcrae@gov.bc.ca , or by fax to 250-356-6791 **by March 4, 2013.**

1. Which of the following principles should guide the Brownfield Funding Program? Check all that apply and rank in order of importance:
 - a. Focus on applications that have the best chance of being fully remediated within a reasonable time period
 - b. Focus on those projects which need the financial support the most
 - c. Give priority to public projects over private
 - d. Give priority to sites in small communities
 - e. Focus the money on fewer projects to allow them to go further with the funding available
 - f. Spread the money over the greatest number of projects possible

Please add comments here: _____

2. Other than the regulatory responsibilities, what do you think the Province's role should be to help local governments to redevelop their brownfields? Please select all that apply and rank in order of importance.
 - a. Providing a portal to information about brownfield renewal
 - b. Providing access to experts in brownfields
 - c. Bringing essential parties together to support brownfield renewal on a project-by-project basis
 - d. Holding workshops or other information/education sessions on brownfield renewal in communities around BC

Please add any comments here: _____

3. What information would be most helpful to you on a web site devoted to brownfield renewal? Please select and rank all that apply in order of importance.
- a. Information on the legal responsibilities associated with brownfields
 - b. Information on the regulatory requirements surrounding brownfields
 - c. Information on all funding sources for brownfield renewal
 - d. Information on the tools available to communities to support the renewal of privately held brownfields

Please add any comments here: _____

4. What aspect(s) of brownfield remediation is most challenging for you or your community? Please select and rank all that apply in order of importance.
- a. Determining that brownfield redevelopment should be prioritized above other pressing challenges/opportunities
 - b. Sorting through the myriad of information relating to brownfields
 - c. Being clear about regulatory requirements relating to a particular brownfield
 - d. Knowing what process to follow to remediate a particular site
 - e. Developing a community plan that includes remediating brownfields

Please add comments here: _____

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact:

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