

Public Health & Brownfields

9/2010

Brownfields

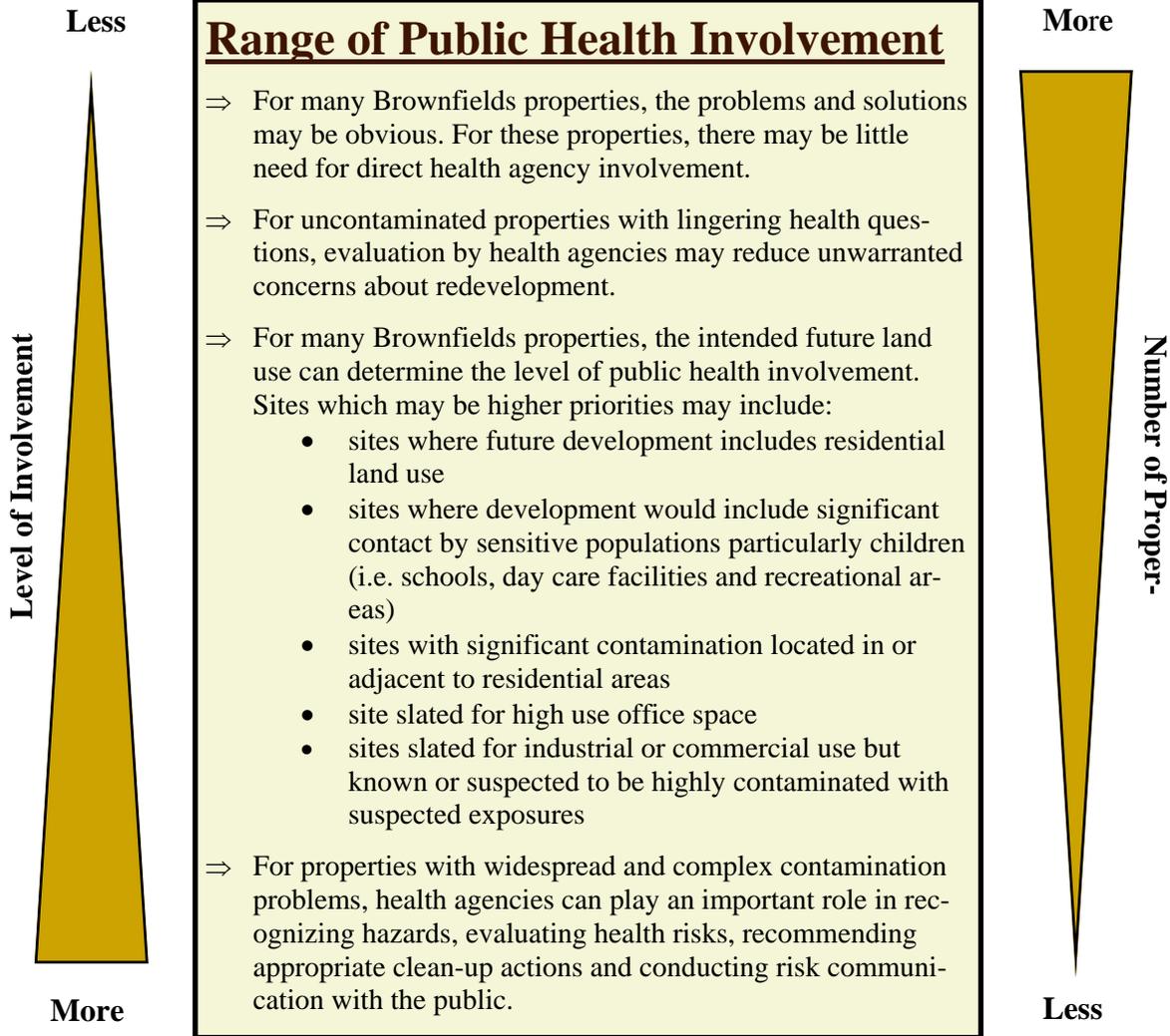
Brownfields are former industrial or commercial properties that sit idle because of real or perceived environmental contamination. These properties have a significant impact on local economies and property development. At the city and town level, the responsibility for revitalizing brownfields properties generally includes planning, zoning and economic development agencies. However local health departments, in conjunction with the state health department, can have a strong role in supporting the re-development efforts while assuring the protection of public health.

Brownfields Redevelopment Protects Public Health

There are many potential health hazards on brownfields properties. Most have physical health hazards such as uncovered holes, unsafe structures, and sharp objects. Past industrial activities often leave behind chemical contamination or drums of chemical wastes. When people enter these properties there is a chance that they may be injured or exposed to toxic chemicals. While most adults show little interest in these properties, children often use brownfields as playgrounds and places to explore. Without incentives for cleanup and redevelopment, contaminated properties may continue to pose public health hazards indefinitely. Brownfields redevelopment programs can protect public health by removing health hazards from our communities.

Public Health Involvement Helps Brownfields Development

While brownfields site activities are largely driven by economic and environmental considerations, there is a strong need for public health involvement. As municipalities move forward with Brownfields initiatives, it is imperative that public health issues be considered from the earliest phases of site selection, evaluation and development and that all Brownfields stakeholders work in a coordinated manner. In general, our experience indicates that early and consistent public health involvement at waste and suspected waste sites results in more effective and appropriate address of public health concerns and better communication and involvement with communities, and more timely and efficient clean up and development of the site.



For More Information About the Role of Public Health in Brownfields Redevelopment, Contact:

CT Department of Public Health
 Environmental & Occupational Health
 Health Assessment Program
 410 Capitol Ave
 Hartford, CT 06134-0308
 (860) 509-7740
www.dph.state.ct.us

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
 US EPA Region I (ATSDR)
 1 Congress St.
 Suite 1100, Mail Code HBT
 Boston, MA 02114-2023
 (617) 918-1490
www.atsdr.cdc.gov/dro/r1.html

For More Information About Brownfield Redevelopment Initiatives in Connecticut, Contact:

CT Office of Brownfields and Redevelopment
 CT Department of Economic and Community Development
 860-270-8095
www.ctbrownfields.gov/ctbrownfields

US EPA New England
 Region I Brownfields Team
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 of Public Health Fact Sheet