

The redevelopment of underutilized or disinvested properties and districts is a complex but critical opportunity impacting local and regional economic competitiveness. Most metro area communities will be faced with the challenge of developed sites that have declined in economic productivity, sapped local resources, impaired neighborhood and community image, or suffered from lack of maintenance or upkeep. Without identification, assessment, planning, and ultimately investment, conditions of underutilization and disinvestment often stunt the economic vitality of particular properties, and often the neighborhoods that surround them. If left unchecked, such conditions can project an image of disinvestment on the surrounding community and inhibit the ability to attract and retain both workforce and employers. As a community prepares its comprehensive plan, acknowledging and addressing redevelopment challenges and opportunities can be a powerful way to bring focus and identity to the plan by providing readily identifiable goals, policies, and programs to revitalize the city's tax base.

Regional Best Practice: The [City of Fridley Economic and Redevelopment Plan \(Chapter 4 of their 2030 Comprehensive Plan\)](#) provides a straight-forward but effective approach to integrating redevelopment into the comprehensive plan, identifying conditions and areas within the community for future redevelopment and establishing goals and action steps for redevelopment.

Redevelopment Possibility: Brownfields

Your community's comprehensive plan can begin to identify the presence of brownfield challenges in your community through mapping and characterizing these issues, and setting objectives and policies that position brownfield properties as an economic opportunity. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a brownfield as "a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." As [MPCA's "What's in My Neighborhood" application can help you to visualize](#), virtually every community in the Twin Cities Metro Area includes brownfield properties, many of which the local government has worked with other public and private partners to identify, assess, clean up, and redevelop successfully. Still, brownfields will continue to pose environmental and economic challenges for property owners, citizens, and governments throughout the region.

Regional Best Practice | Brownfields: [City of Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan \(2010\)](#)

National Best Practice | Brownfields: [City of North Tonawanda, NY \(2008\)](#) – See especially page 27 – 31

Redevelopment Possibility: Greyfields

For communities that experienced commercial development in the latter half of the 20th Century, the comprehensive plan provides an opportunity to examine the presence of any greyfield properties in the community, and to establish a strategy and policy framework to address those that have fallen, or may be poised to fall, into obsolescence. "Greyfields" is a moniker most typically given to auto-oriented retail and commercial shopping sites (strip malls, big-boxes, or older malls, for example) that were once thriving but have become outdated, underused, economically obsolete, or even vacant. Generally, greyfields are not encumbered by actual or perceived environmental contamination as are brownfields. The real estate market can value greyfields because they often encompass several acres of relatively flat land with substantial existing infrastructure that can yield significant value with intensification of use. For communities that experienced commercial development in the latter half of the 20th Century, the comprehensive plan provides an opportunity to examine the presence of any greyfield properties in the community, and to establish a strategy and policy framework to address those that have fallen, or may be poised to fall, into obsolescence.



Greyfield Success Story: The Oakdale Mall at 694/10th Street in Oakdale, reimagined as a mixed-use neighborhood.



Regional Best Practice | Greyfields: [City of Oakdale Comprehensive Plan – Chapter 7 \(2010\)](#)

National Best Practice | Greyfields: [Greyfield Redevelopment – Community Choices Quality Growth Toolkit – Atlanta Regional Commission \(2009\)](#)

Redevelopment Possibility: Downtown Development and Revitalization

The comprehensive plan can be an opportunity for your community to assess your downtown's existing conditions, identify capital programs and other initiatives to keep the downtown's economy viable, and determine how and what types of businesses would benefit from a downtown location. "Downtown" represents a unique and key economic opportunity for those communities that have a traditional and historic center of commerce, as by their nature downtowns developed in a compact manner, are conducive to a mix of uses and have public infrastructure such as streets and utilities largely intact and in place. An economically viable downtown district is important in a community's overall economic health, both because of the infrastructure investment typically already in place there and for the sense of community identity and quality of life that downtowns tend to project.

Regional Best Practice | [Downtown Development and Revitalization – City of Stillwater Comprehensive Plan \(2010\)](#)

National Best Practice | [Downtown Development and Revitalization](#) – Although the [Downtown Action Plan](#) serves as an Appendix to [PlanLafayette \(2014\)](#) for Lafayette, LA, the importance of Downtown is evident throughout the policy and strategy that PlanLafayette espouses.

Redevelopment Tools and Programs

Municipalities and counties in Minnesota have the authority to enact several programs and strategies towards the redevelopment of declining properties and neighborhoods, and there are examples throughout the region of special authorities, districts, and financial tools that have been put in place to do just that. The comprehensive plan update offers an opportunity to identify those resources within your community, and how local policies and programs should be directed to support those resources, as needed.

Regional Resource | [Redevelopment Tools and Programs – The League of Minnesota Cities' "Handbook for Minnesota Cities" \(Chapter 15\)](#) provides a catalog of programs and tools that might warrant further exploration in conjunction with your community's comprehensive plan.

National Best Practice | [Redevelopment Tools and Programs – Cranberry \(PA\) Plan – Redevelopment Funding Matrix](#)

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