



Brownfields 2025

Sustainable Communities Start Here

AUGUST 5-8, 2025 | CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Second Life for Rural Brownfields: Identifying Market-Supported Options for Reuse

Andy Arnold, Founder | Principal, Pioneer Development Company

Brooks Cowles, Founder | Principal, 9th Path Advisors

Kate Lucas, AICP, Assistant Director for EPA Region 8, KSU TAB

#Brownfields2025 | CHICAGO, IL





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TAB
Technical Assistance
to Brownfields

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

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Andy Arnold

Founder | Principal
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Brooks Cowles

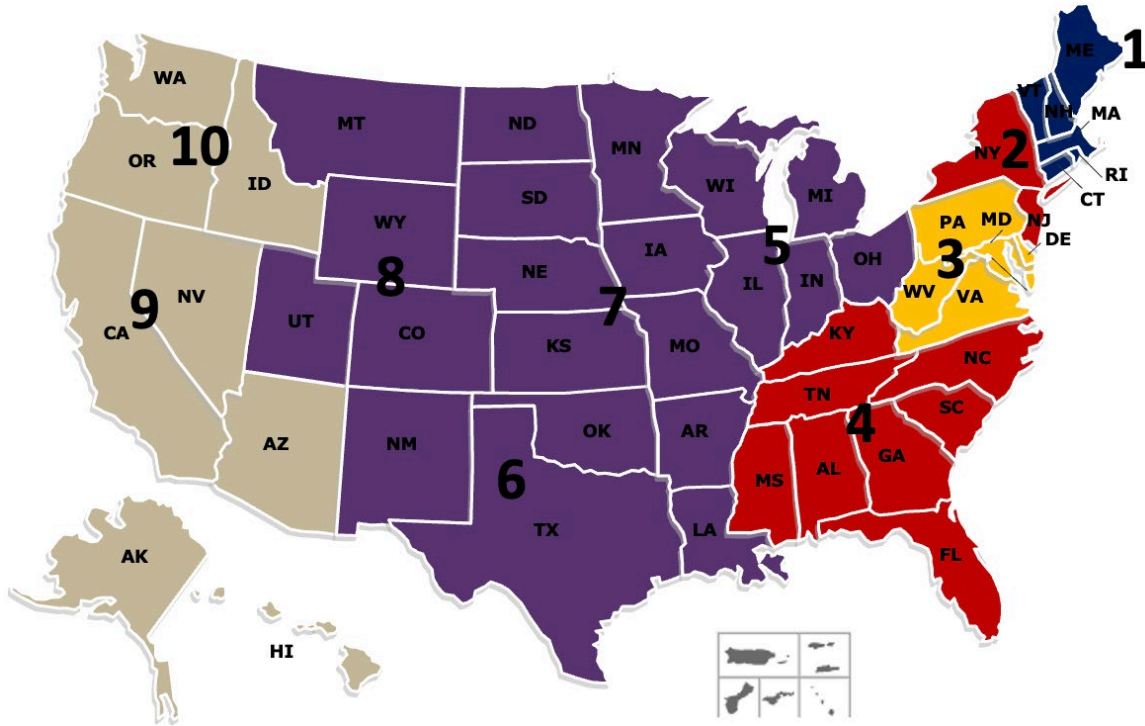
Founder | Principal
9th Path Advisors



Kate Lucas, AICP

*Assistant Director for
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KSU TAB

Technical Assistance to Brownfields



- A national program funded by U.S. EPA
- Dedicated TAB services provider for each EPA region & a dedicated TAB services provider for all federally recognized Tribes & Alaska Native villages
- Services provided are **FREE** and tailored to address specific community needs
- Assist communities and tribes with the brownfield assessment, cleanup and redevelopment process
- Planning, environmental and economic development expertise
- Webinars, workshop, e-tools (e.g., BiT, TAB EZ) and online resources
- And much, much more...

Who are the **TAB Service Providers?**

[University of Connecticut](#) – EPA Region 1

[New Jersey Institute of Technology \(NJIT\)](#) – EPA Regions 2 & 4

[Mid-Atlantic TAB](#) – EPA Region 3

[Kansas State University](#) – EPA Regions 5, 6, 7 & 8

[Center for Creative Land Recycling \(CCLR\)](#) – EPA Regions 9 & 10

[KSU – ITEP – ANTHC](#) – Tribal TAB

What are Brownfields?

- A brownfield is a property where **expansion, redevelopment or reuse** may be complicated by the **presence or potential presence** of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant.
- Governed by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) or “Superfund”

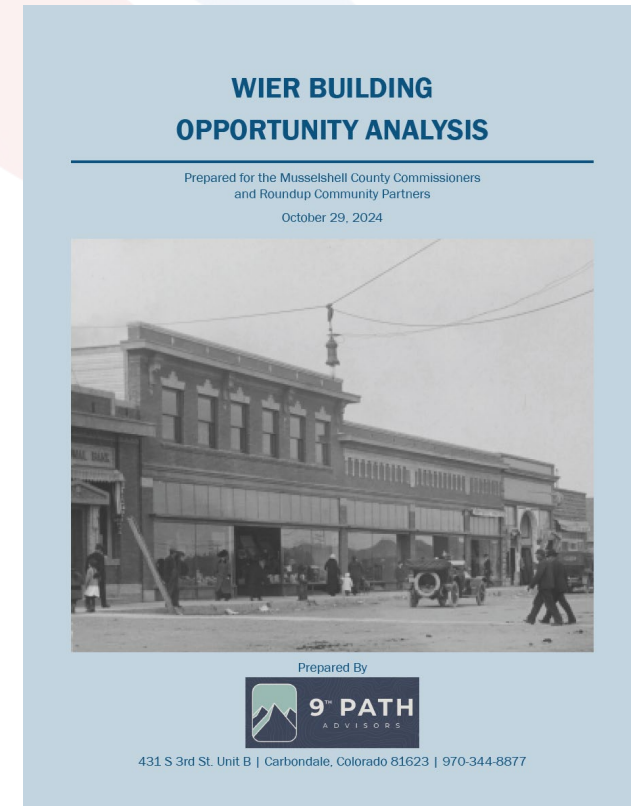


What do Brownfields Have to do with Economic Development?

- Under CERCLA, liability is strict, joint and several, and retroactive
- Concerns about liability for contamination have had a chilling effect on commercial real estate transactions
- In rural areas, abundant, cheap, greenfield land is more appealing than redeveloping a brownfield site
- However, brownfield redevelopment can result in infrastructure cost savings, improve downtown vitality, and preserve historic buildings

Why should I encourage market-supported brownfield redevelopment?

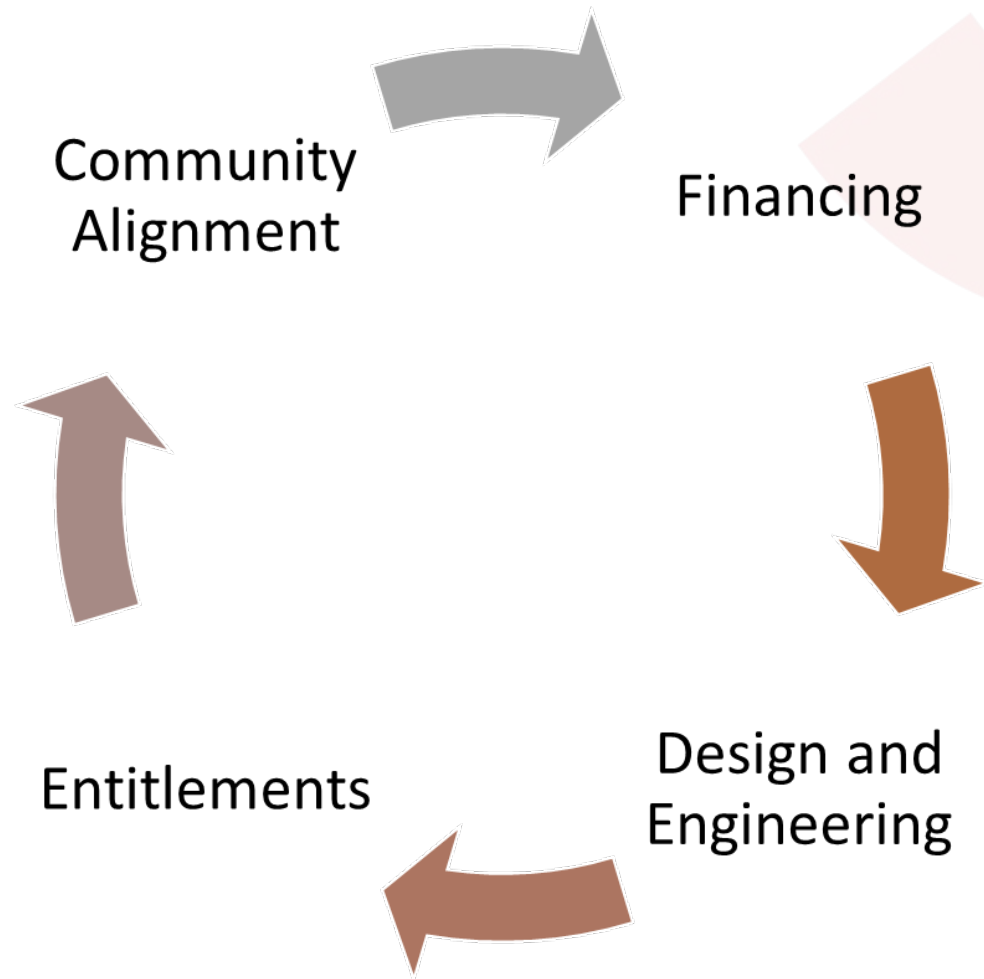
- Greater chance of project success
- **Doing legwork to identify feasible reuse options will strengthen your EPA brownfield grant application**
 - Also removes barriers to private investment in a brownfield site
- Allows for realistic community engagement
- You can with KSU TAB or EPA to assess market-feasible redevelopment options for **FREE!**



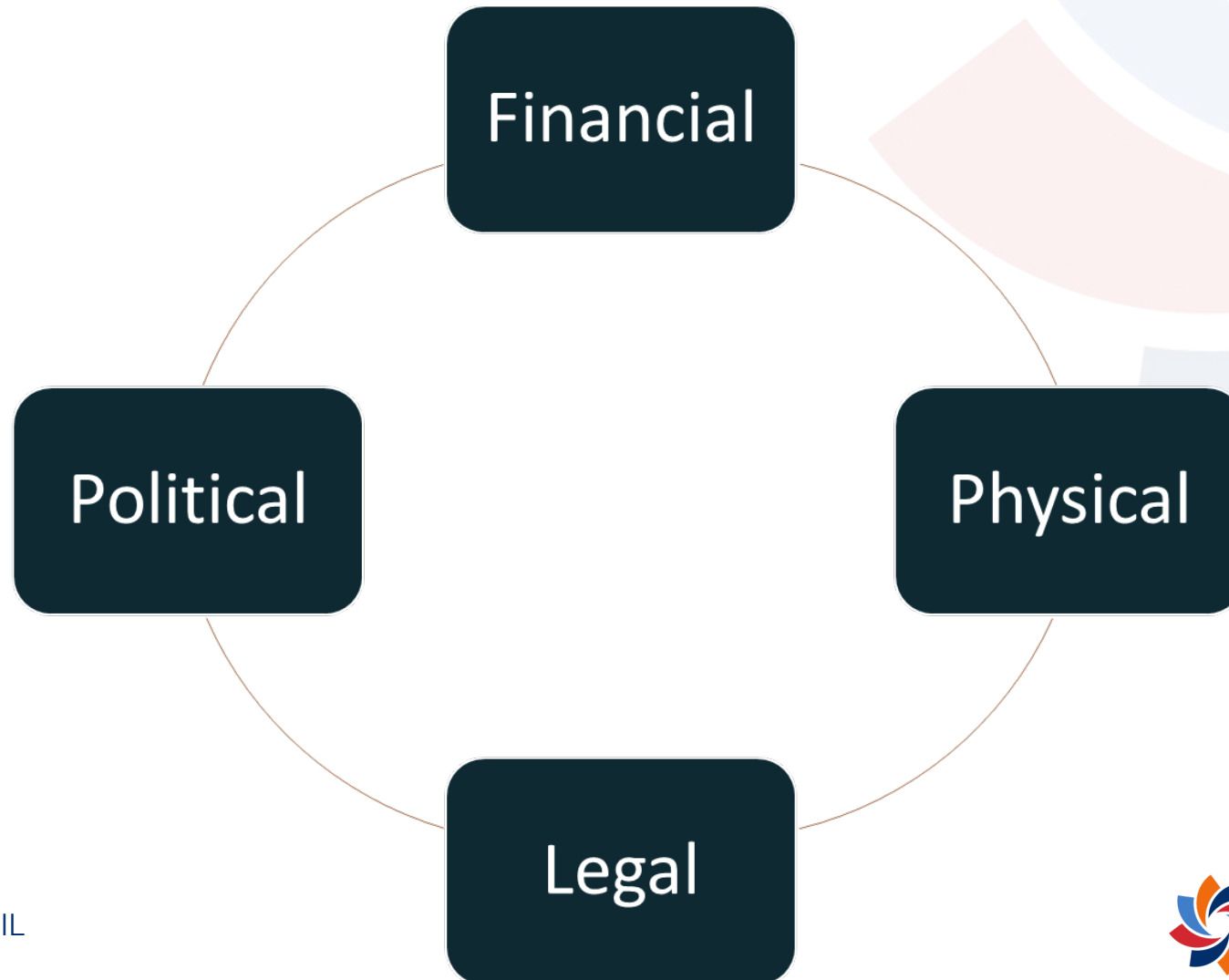
Discussion Question 1 (5 minutes)

- Introduce yourself to the people sitting at your table
- Share some background information about your community
 - Where is it located?
 - What is your population size?
 - What are your main industries?
- Describe a site in your community that you know (or suspect) is a brownfield in need of redevelopment. We will be asking you to discuss this site throughout the rest of this session.

Investment Ready Project Cycle



Development Feasibility – Four Domains



Unpack the Site - Political Feasibility

The Political Feasibility Domain includes public expectations for the Site:

- What do your adopted plans say about this site and its future uses?
 - Comp/Master Plans, Strategic Plans, Corridor Plans, Housing Studies, etc.
- What does the community say about this site's and its future?
 - Has community outreach been completed, surveys?
- Have your elected officials voiced any opinions regarding the site?
 - Even if future development aligns with your regulations, entitlement still requires a majority vote from your electeds? Do you know what uses they prefer?

Unpack the Site - Legal Feasibility

The Legal Feasibility Domain includes the Site's Regulatory Environment:

- What is the site's current zoning? What uses are permitted?
 - What uses are allowed? Are there additional zoning overlays impacting future development?
 - Can the zoning be changed? If so, how long would it take? Is it Politically Feasible?
- How does the land use/building code impact design?
 - Setbacks, Height Restrictions, Parking Requirements, Emergency Access, Sustainability, etc.
- What uses trigger infrastructure upgrades and/or off-site improvements?
 - Does increased density require new off-site improvements? Signalized Intersection, Stormwater, Central Services?
 - Do parking requirements mandate sub-grade/pedestal garages?
- How long will entitlement take? Can certain uses be expedited?
 - Are there uses that limit public meetings, admin review?
 - Remember: Time = Money

Unpack the Site - Physical Feasibility

The Physical Feasibility Domain includes Engineering/Infrastructure constraints:

- What uses require significant engineering relative to other options?
 - Can you design with the land?
- What are the horizontal infrastructure costs, can off-site costs be avoided?
 - Does increased traffic trigger new road configurations, safety improvements?
 - Can the use be served by existing infrastructure, or does it require significant capital improvements?
- Which districts serve the property? Will you need to negotiate?
 - Will redevelopment require new service from district's outside the municipality? Water, Sewer, Fire, Police?
 - Does the use impact traffic on county/state owned highways? Can access be acquired?
- Environmental Constraints - Can these be remediated, and if so, in what time?
 - Understand which efforts can be done now vs later?

Discussion Question 2 (8 minutes)

- What feasibility constraints are impacting your site?
- Are there actions you can take now to increase the site's political, legal, or physical feasibility?
 - Do you own the site, can you acquire it?
 - Can you remediate the site?
 - Can you change its regulations to be more developer friendly?
 - Can fund infrastructure improvements currently?

Assessing Development Feasibility

- Would someone actually build this?
- How can your community convey that this is viable redevelopment opportunity?
- Two Major Components:
 - Market Feasibility
 - Financial Feasibility



Market Feasibility: Matching Vision with Demand

- Is there sufficient demand for a proposed use given the location, timing, and local context?
 - Demographics & Growth trends
 - Supply vs. Demand
 - Comparables
 - Competition
- First Domino or Established Trend?
- Local Stakeholders are best way to ground-truth
- The best reuse ideas fail if the market isn't there. Narrow your reuse options to take advantage of market momentum, not just community aspirations

Financial Feasibility: Can the Project Pencil?

- Is the project economically viable given costs, revenue and funding sources?
 - Hard & Soft Costs
 - Revenue Assumptions
 - Financial Markets
 - Gap Analysis
 - Risk Factors
- “Back of Napkin” Analysis and Pro Formas
- What levers are available to make a project work?
- A good idea must pencil. Financial feasibility tells us what is doable.



Generating Market Gravity

- Brownfield Resources for Pre-Development Work
- What Public Private Financing Tools can be Leveraged towards your project?
 - Tax Increment Financing
 - PILOTS
 - Tax Abatements
 - Impact Fee Waivers
 - Metro Districts/Special Districts
 - Municipal/Voter Approved Bonds
- Grants
 - Brownfield Grants
 - Local/State Grants for specific development uses
- Leverage Public Financing to Close Feasibility Gaps?



Discussion Question 3 (8 minutes)

- Pick a use for your site! (residential, commercial, industrial, open space, etc.)
- Is there sufficient demand for redevelopment of your site? Why or why not?
- Would the redevelopment of your site make sense for a private developer? Why or why not?
- What resources do you have to improve the appeal of the site or project?

Want to Learn More?

- Creative Ways to Finance Brownfield Redevelopments
 - Wednesday, August 06, 2025
 - 3:15pm to 4:15pm
 - Room E351
- Revitalizing Brownfields with TIFs and Special Assessments
 - Thursday, August 07, 2025
 - 2:00pm to 2:15pm
 - Room E253C
- The Biggest Bang for the Buck: Leveraging Grant Dollars in Brownfield Redevelopment
 - Friday, August 08, 2025
 - 09:00am to 10:00am
 - Room E451B

**SCAN
ME!**



**LET'S
CONNECT!**

Scan the QR code to
get in touch with a TAB
team member or to
join our mailing list.

Contact Us!

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