

Center Of the Region Enterprise (CORE) participants,



Thanks to those of you who were able to attend the CORE work group meeting on August 13th. We heard TJCOG's very own Planners, Kaley Huston and Lindsay Whitson, provide a presentation on brownfields and how they can be used as community and economic development drivers, incorporate sustainability practices, and address environmental concerns. We also heard Chris Dickey and Chuck Hoffman speak about some of the brownfields redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization efforts that the City of Durham is conducting through their Brownfields Program and Office of Economic and Workforce Development.

The full agenda can be found [here](#) and a more in-depth analysis is provided below. Interested in viewing the full presentation? Slides can be found [here!](#)

Want to continue the conversation? Reach out to Kaley Huston at khuston@tjcoq.org or Lindsay Whitson at lwhitson@tjcoq.org. Please contact Lindsay Whiston with any questions related to current or upcoming CORE work group meetings.

Mark your calendars for upcoming meetings of the CORE work group over the next year:

- **Friday, November 12, 2021**

All meetings will continue to be held virtually on Microsoft Teams until further notice and are open to the public.

The Facts!

Kaley Huston and Lindsay Whitson's presentation set the stage for brownfields redevelopment in the CORE region, where they highlighted some of the following background, community benefits, and funding opportunities:

- The NC Brownfields Program estimates that there are **500-plus brownfields sites in North Carolina** and **140-plus brownfields sites in the CORE**, prohibiting communities of all sizes from developing on valuable pieces of property.
- Brownfields can be redeveloped by **private developers, local governments or through public-private partnerships**. A combination of private and public-sector funding may be used to finance site purchase, site assessment, site cleanup, or other redevelopment activities.
- Nearly one-third of the brownfield sites assessed with EPA funding turn out to be free from significant contamination. Sometimes the **perception that a property may be contaminated** can be a barrier to redevelopment!
- Communities have **attracted over \$34 billion in additional funding** and **created 175,000 jobs** in cleanup, construction, and redevelopment after receiving a grant from the EPA Brownfields Program.
- Brownfields redevelopment can **increase the value of nearby residential properties by 5% to 15%** and **generate \$1 to \$2 million in additional tax revenue** for local governments, even just one year after cleanup.
- Federal and state tax incentives can help advance brownfields site cleanup and redevelopment activities, including **Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, and Property Tax Exclusions**.

Chris Dickey, Economic Development Coordinator, and Chuck Hoffman, Mid-Atlantic Associates, shared the key takeaways, lessons learned, and successes of the Durham Brownfields Program and Neighborhood Revitalization programs:

- Since 2006, Durham has been **awarded nearly \$2 million in EPA grant funding** for brownfields assessment and job training. These awards have resulted in **200 properties revitalized** and **280 jobs created** - a true testament to the power of the work accomplished by the Brownfields Program and the Durham community as a whole!
- The Durham Brownfields Program is designed to assess potential brownfield sites located citywide, with an **emphasis on properties located in targeted community development areas**, including Northeast Central Durham.
- Currently, the program is focused on the Angier/Driver commercial corridor, where they hope to transition properties from underutilized, potentially contaminated sites, to new useful purposes that will **promote economic revitalization** and **improve the quality of life for residents**.
- Durham has pursued a **"combined approach" to their brownfields redevelopment activities**, leveraging federal regulatory partnerships, state voluntary programs, (NC Underground Storage Tank and Dry-Cleaning Solvent Act Cleanup programs), and local funding opportunities (Durham Neighborhood Revitalization Incentive Grant Program).
- Chris Dickey and Chuck Hoffman shared advice on how to make an EPA brownfields grant application stand out in the national and regional competition - **demonstrate community need** through compelling demographics, **provide a strong story** for your target areas, and **clearly define the impact to human health and the environment**.

Interested in learning more about the City of Durham's Brownfields Program? Visit their website [here!](#)

Tools & Resources



Lindsay Whitson shared the **Brownfields Redevelopment Toolkit**, created by TJCOG and the Regional Brownfields Consortium. The toolkit is meant to provide users with information and resources on how to finance and complete a brownfields redevelopment project, and guidance for communicating with property owners about brownfield sites. The toolkit includes sections on: 1. common myths, 2. definitions for commonly used terms, 3. phases of brownfield redevelopment and the stakeholders involved, 4. funding sources, 5. equitable practices and; 6. case studies. [Access the Tool here!](#)

Brownfields Discussion Recap

Council Member Charlie Reece, Durham City Council, provided opening and closing remarks, and confirmed that brownfields redevelopment will become more important as the CORE region continues to see development and growth pressure, particularly infill development. Some CORE participants noted that, as unused greenfield sites become scarcer in our urban areas and people recognize the need to preserve the natural environment, brownfields present an alternative development strategy. CORE participants also discussed how to promote economic development and attract substantial investment while also addressing gentrification and neighborhood change in the region.

CORE Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Update

*In FY 2022, TJCOG is working with the CORE work group to update the **Center Of the Region (CORE) Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan!***

Last updated in 2016, the plan is intended to help the municipalities, counties, and organizations located in the CORE area of the Triangle create a linked network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This plan is envisioned primarily as a coordination tool rather than an official statement of local policy. The information is derived from technical staff from each partner organization and compiled by TJCOG staff.

Interested in joining the Technical Advisory Committee for the *CORE Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan* update? TJCOG staff will be reaching out to the CORE work group and our partner organizations to determine staff interest and participation in the Technical Advisory Committee.



About Triangle J Council of Governments

Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG) is the lead regional planning organization for North Carolina's Region J, encompassing Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Orange and Wake counties. TJCOG promotes collaboration among local governments, stakeholders and partners, tackling challenges that cross jurisdictional lines.

Find more about TJCOG [here](#).