

# *BROWNFIELDS MARKETABILITY SCORING TOOL*

Prioritize brownfield sites for redevelopment using this scoring tool that takes into account the following site and community characteristics:

- 1 OWNERSHIP**  
-5 to 10 points
- 2 SITE USE**  
-5 to 20 points
- 3 LAND CHARACTERISTICS**  
-8 to 20 points
- 4 COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS**  
-14 to 28 points
- 5 COMMUNITY CAPACITY**  
-12 to 12 points
- 6 REDEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES**  
-5 to 8 points
- 7 INFRASTRUCTURE AMENITIES**  
-25 to 43 points
- 8 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**  
-30 to 30 points
- 9 BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS**  
-11 to 33.5 points

# 1 OWNERSHIP

Ownership (or a path to ownership) is a critical component to a realistic assessment of the redevelopment potential of a site. Obtaining site control can take years because of impediments such as liens, bankruptcy, abandonment, or uncooperative and unrealistic owners.

## PART A: Select the question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Do you own the property?  
+10 points
- ☐ Can you get site control of the property through a sales contract?  
+6 points
- ☐ Can you get site control by clearing or foreclosing on a lien?  
+2 points
- ☐ Do you still need to determine a path to site control?  
-5 points

Total points for OWNERSHIP section:  points

## 2 SITE USE

The anticipated benefits of site reuse are most often the impetus for brownfield clean-up and redevelopment. Reuse opportunities drive clean-up requirements, project economics and financing options and community impacts. The intended reuse of a property should bring the market together with the community's goals and aspirations.

### PART A: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Do you have an interested, qualified user?  
+20 points
- ☐ Has anyone expressed interest in reusing the site in the past year?  
+8 points
- ☐ Have any properties adjacent to the site been redeveloped within the past two years?  
+7 points
- ☐ Have any properties within ½ mile of the site been redeveloped within the past two years?  
+5 points

### PART B1: If you have a clear idea of the type of desired end use, select the first question for which the answer is "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is it complementary or consistent with surrounding uses?  
+2 points
- ☐ Is it consistent with the zoning on the property?  
+2 points
- ☐ Is it consistent the community's plans and goals?  
+2 points
- ☐ You don't know?  
+0 points

**PART B2: If you DO NOT have a clear idea of the desired end use, select the first question for which the answer "YES"**

Choose only one.

- ☐ Are there other existing community assets near by that make this site desirable?  
+4 points
- ☐ Are there other planned community assets such as other businesses or public service centers, that attract people or investment that could help make this site desirable in the near future?  
+2 points
- ☐ Are there temporary uses for the site that could improve its long term marketability?  
+1 points
- ☐ Are adjacent or nearby properties vacant or blighted?  
-8 points
- ☐ No idea?  
-5 points

**Total points for SITE USE section:**  points

# 3 LAND CHARACTERISTICS

## SIZE

The size of a property (or multiple properties that can be assembled together into one property) contributes to the redevelopment potential of each brownfield site. There are more potential users for mid-sized sites than for very large or very small sites.

### PART A: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is the property itself between 1 and 5 acres?  
+10 points
- ☐ Can the property be assembled with others to be 1-5 acres?  
+8 points
- ☐ Is the property between 5 and 15 acres?  
+8 points
- ☐ Can the property be assembled with others to be 5-15 acres?  
+6 points
- ☐ Is the property itself between 15 and 50 acres?  
+6 points
- ☐ Can the property be assembled with others to be 15-50 acres?  
+4 points
- ☐ Is the property over 50 acres?  
+4 points
- ☐ Is the property between ½ and 1 acre?  
+2 points
- ☐ Is the property less than ½ acre?  
+0 points

## FLOODING

Flooding can increase the costs involved in redeveloping a site especially as communities around the country out grow their stormwater systems. Green infrastructure can be a less costly option for addressing flooding problems than more costly sewer based systems.

**PART B: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”**

Choose only one.

- ☐ There are no obvious or known flooding problems on the site?  
+5 points
- ☐ There obvious or known flooding problems on the site but green infrastructure is an option?  
+2 points
- ☐ There obvious or known flooding problems on the site and green infrastructure is not an option?  
-3 points

**SOIL**

Soil conditions can make it more costly or difficult to build upon a site. Watch for dump sites, building foundations, sandy soil and other conditions that could lead to significant extra costs. Consider having the site assessed by a professional.

**PART C: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”**

Choose only one.

- ☐ Are there no known or obvious problems with the soil conditions or compaction on the site?  
+5 points
- ☐ Are there known or obvious problems with the soil conditions or compaction on the site?  
-5 points

**Total points for LAND CHARACTERISTICS section: 20 points**

# 4 COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

For better or for worse, the condition of adjacent and nearby properties impacts the market for a site. The trend is especially important. Whether a neighborhood is improving or declining will impact the appetite of developers, particularly private sector developers, to invest there. Municipalities, non-profit organizations and some very large developers may be interested in making investments that seed rather than participate in an on-going trend.

## PART A: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”

Choose only one.

**In the past two years have adjacent or nearby properties (within two blocks) been...**

- ☐ Improved?  
+10 points
- ☐ Maintained?  
+6 points
- ☐ Blighted?  
-2 points
- ☐ A mixture of the above?  
+2 points

## PLANNED INVESTMENT AND NEARBY USES

Planned investments and nearby uses (within 1/4 mile) can be important to the marketability of the site if they attract people to the area or provide a market for goods and services or, on the other hand, if they discourage people from coming to a site. For example, a planned or existing hospital may bring people to the area and provide a market for a flower shop, a restaurant or a pharmacy on the site. Or, a junk yard or even a high school that causes congestion may discourage people from using or visiting the site. Only investments and that impact people's willingness to invest in or to go to the site should be scored in this section.

**PART B: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”**

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is there a large planned investment or use nearby that provides untapped market opportunities for the site?  
+10 points
- ☐ Are there existing or planned smaller uses nearby that will bring more investment and people to your site?  
+6 points
- ☐ Are there planned or existing smaller uses nearby that will discourage people from coming to or investing in the area?  
-6 points
- ☐ Is there a large planned or existing use nearby that will discourage people from coming to or investing in the area?  
-8 points
- ☐ Nearby uses and planned investments will not impact this site.  
+0 points

**CRIME AND SAFETY**

The perception that a site is in a safe location will impact the demand and potential uses for a site. The ability to get to and from a site safely can be as important as the safety of the actual site.

**PART C: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”**

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is the crime rate where your property is located lower than average for the city or town?  
+8 points
- ☐ Is the crime rate where your property is located about average the city or town?  
+4 points
- ☐ Is the crime rate where your property is located worse than average for your city or town?  
-4 points

**Total points for COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS section:**  points



# 5 COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Local government can facilitate or inhibit brownfield redevelopment in many ways. Brownfield transactions tend to be complicated and government help is often needed to overcome these complications. A community that is capable of and willing to provide this help can make an otherwise impossible situation workable.

## PART A: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Does your community have a successful brownfield redevelopment program through which other properties have been redeveloped in the past two years?  
+6 points
- ☐ Is this community lacking a successful brownfield program?  
-5 points
- ☐ You don't know?  
-1 points

## COMMUNITY PLAN

Community consensus about the future use of a brownfield site removes a significant amount of risk facing the potential developer of a site. Protracted battles about zoning and environmental impacts can costs, uncertainty and even months or years to a redevelopment project.

## PART B: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose all that apply.

- ☐ Does your community have a generally accepted redevelopment plan less than five years old that includes this property?  
+6 points
- ☐ This community has no redevelopment plan that includes this property.  
+0 points
- ☐ Is there agreement about the reuse of this property?  
+0 points
- ☐ Is there controversy about the redevelopment goals for this property?  
-7 points
- ☐ You don't know?  
-1 points

Total points for COMMUNITY CAPACITY section:

points

# 6 REDEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Some brownfield sites are up-side-down, that is the cost of cleaning them up and redeveloping them are greater than the economic value of the redevelopment to the developer. Other sites come close to this point. In such cases redevelopment incentives are needed to pay these legacy costs so development can be economically viable. Many communities find it reasonable to provide incentives because they benefit from redevelopment through impacts such as new tax revenue, job creation, services, and increased property values.

## PART A: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is it included in a formally designated redevelopment area or Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District?  
+8 points
- ☐ Is it eligible for Historic or New Markets Tax Credits?  
+6 points
- ☐ Is it eligible for other redevelopment grants or loans?  
+8 points
- ☐ Are financial incentives lacking for this property?  
-5 points
- ☐ You don't know?  
-1 point

**Total points for REDEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES section:**

points

# 7 INFRASTRUCTURE AMENITIES

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Access to a site impacts its marketability and in many areas public transit is a key form of transportation for potential users (workers, students, residents, shoppers, etc.) More users will find easily accessible sites attractive thus creating a stronger market for these sites.

### PART A: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is this property is located within 1/2 mile of a public transit train stop?  
+8 points
- ☐ Is this property is located within 1/2 mile of a public transit bus stop?  
+6 points
- ☐ Is public transit access lacking within 1/2 mile if the property?  
-2 points

## ROADS

Road access also impacts the marketability of a site. Most people travel by car and most goods travel by truck making highway and arterial street access a very important asset. In some cases, such as retail uses, visibility and the amount of traffic traveling past a site each day play key roles in impacting desirability.

### PART B: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is the property on a major roadway?  
+8 points
- ☐ Is the property within 1/2 mile of a major roadway?  
+6 points
- ☐ Is the property between 1/2 mile and 2 miles of a major roadway?  
+4 points
- ☐ Is the property between 2 and 5 miles of a major roadway?  
+2 points
- ☐ Is this property lacking major roadways within 5 miles?  
-6 points

## WATER & SEWER

If water and sewer service are not adequate they can add significant costs to site redevelopment.

### PART C: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Does adequate water/sewer come to the site?  
+5 points
- ☐ Is adequate water/sewer missing from the site?  
-3 points

## ELECTRICITY

If electrical service is not adequate it can add significant costs to site redevelopment.

### PART D: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Does adequate electricity come to the site?  
+5 points
- ☐ Is adequate electricity missing from the site?  
-3 points

## HEATING FUEL

If heating fuel is not accessible at the site, in order to remedy this problem, significant costs can be added to site redevelopment.

### PART E: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Does adequate heating fuel come to the site?  
+5 points
- ☐ Is adequate heating fuel missing from the site?  
-3 points

## INTERNET

Many potential users require high speed internet access. Existing access can be a big asset for a site. Lack of adequate service can add costs or even make a project not viable at a particular location.

### PART F: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Does the site have adequate internet access?  
+5 points
- ☐ Is the site lacking adequate internet access?  
-3 points

## OTHER

Some sites have very specific amenities, such as a railspur, that play a key role in bolstering the market. At other sites, a lack of other amenities or infrastructure, such as a crumbling seawall, can hinder the market.

### PART G: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Does this site have other important amenities/infrastructure such as a railspur or port that support redevelopment?  
+7 points
- ☐ Does the site need other significant amenities/infrastructure to encourage redevelopment?  
-5 points

**Total points for INFRASTRUCTURE AMENITIES section:**  points

# 8 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Knowledge about the environmental conditions of a site help potential users determine whether they are interested in a site or not. It costs money to obtain this information. It is easier and cheaper for potential users to evaluate a site when this information is readily available.

## **PART A: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”**

Choose only one.

- ☐ Does the site have an NFR?  
+10 points
- ☐ Does the owner have recent reports that indicate what clean-up is needed?  
+8 points

## **PART B: Does the owner have recent reports that indicate what additional environmental investigation is needed?**

Choose only one.

- ☐ Unlikely Contaminated  
+8 points
- ☐ Likely Contaminated - Light  
+4 points
- ☐ Likely Contaminated - Moderate  
+0 points
- ☐ Likely Contaminated - Substantial  
-8 points
- ☐ Unknown -- If there are no reports, based on the history of the property do you suspect that environmental clean up is needed?  
-4 points

## **ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION RESOURCES**

Environmental investigation can be expensive. Potential users are often reluctant to pay money to determine the environmental problems on a site they do not own-- especially if alternative sites are available that do not require such investigation. Often, a source of funds to characterize the environmental

problem can encourage potential users to continue evaluating a site for redevelopment.

**PART C: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”**

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is there an existing source of funds to conduct the environmental investigations needed?  
+6 points
- ☐ Is there a potential source of funds to conduct the environmental investigations needed?  
+2 points
- ☐ Are sources of funds lacking to help conduct environmental investigations?  
-5 points
- ☐ You don't know?  
-1 points

## ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION COSTS

Environmental remediation costs can have a big impact on the redevelopment potential of a site. The smaller the remediation costs in relation to the value of the property the more likely a developer will be able to pay these costs and still make a profit without the hassle and uncertainty applying for government incentives to cover them.

**PART D: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”**

Choose only one.

- ☐ Do you suspect that the cost of clean-up (including demolition) is as less than 50% of the value of the property?  
+7 points
- ☐ Do you suspect that the cost of clean-up (including demolition) is as between 50% and 100% of the value of the property?  
+3 points
- ☐ Do you suspect that the cost of clean-up (including demolition if needed) will be greater than the value of the property?  
-10 points
- ☐ You don't know?  
+0 points

## ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION RESOURCES

Sometimes there is no economically viable option to redevelop a site without government incentives. Government incentives can take a long time to access. If they are all ready in place they can make the process to obtain them easier, less risky and quicker.

### PART E: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is there an existing source of funds to help pay the remediation and/or demolition costs if needed?  
+7 points
- ☐ Is there a potential source of funds to help pay the remediation and/or demolition costs if needed?  
+7 points
- ☐ Are sources of funds lacking to conduct environmental remediation or demolition?  
-7 points
- ☐ You don't know?  
-1 points

**Total points for ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS section:**  points



# 9 BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS

Most end users require a building of some sort. Sites with existing buildings can be appealing to specific users that require a similar structure. The cost and time involved in new construction can deter many potential users that are interested in an easier, cheaper alternative. Also, most users do not want to build a facility that costs significantly more than the value of other buildings in the general area.

## PART A: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Does the property have a substantial building on it?  
+0 points
- ☐ If the property just land (without a substantial building) is the cost of new construction in the area is less than 30% more than the sale price of desirable buildings?  
+8 points
- ☐ If the property just vacant land (without a substantial building on it) is the cost of new building construction in the area is over 30% more than the sale price of desirable buildings?  
-5 points

## BUILDING QUALITY

An existing building can be an asset as described above. But, it can also be a detriment if it needs too much investment in order to be useful or if it is not usable and needs to be demolished.

## PART B: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Does the property have a substantial usable building on it?  
+7 points
- ☐ Does the property have a substantial building that can be usable with modest effort such as cosmetics and demising walls?  
+6 points
- ☐ Does the property have a substantial building that needs significant work one major item (such as a roof, windows, HVAC system) to be usable  
+2.5 points
- ☐ Does the property have a substantial building that needs significant work more than one major item (such as a roof, windows, HVAC system) to be usable  
-1 points
- ☐ Does the property have a substantial building that needs to be demolished?  
-3.5 points

## BUILDING STORIES

The market for modern single story buildings that can be used as is is greater than the market for multi-story buildings that require adaptive reuse.

### PART C: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is the building mostly single story?  
+5 points
- ☐ Is the building mostly 2-3 stories?  
+1.5 points
- ☐ Is the building 4 or more stories?  
-2 points

## BUILDING SIZE

There are more potential users for mid-sized buildings than for very large or very small buildings.

### PART D: Select the first question for which the answer “YES”

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is the building footprint between 5,000 and 25,000 square feet?  
+4 points
- ☐ Is the building footprint between 25,000 and 150,000 square feet?  
+2.5 points
- ☐ Is the building footprint over 150,000 square feet?  
+1 points

## BUILDING FLEXIBILITY

Some buildings were built to be more flexible space that can be reused in many ways by many potential users. Other buildings were designed for a specific use and are not easily reusable by many potential users

### PART E: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

- ☐ Is the building set up best for just one user?  
+4 points
- ☐ Is the building easily divisible for multiple users?  
+3 points
- ☐ Is the building divisible with moderate investment?  
+0 points
- ☐ Do you still need to figure this out?  
-0.5 points

## BUILDING FAR

Buildings that take up a smaller footprint on a site leave more flexibility for potential users of that site. Potential users may need room for truck access, parking, expansion, outdoor storage, detention ponds, etc. to operate effectively. Thus, buildings that take up a large portion of a site do not provide the flexibility that many potential users need.

Note: 1 acre = 43,000 square feet

$$\text{Floor Area Ratio (FAR)} = \frac{(\text{Building Footprint in square feet}) \times (\# \text{ Stories})}{\text{Acreage in square feet}}$$

### PART F: Select the first question for which the answer "YES"

Choose only one.

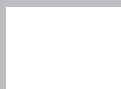
- ☐ Is the Floor Area Ratio .3 or less? Bldg floor sq ft/plot sq ft  
+5 points
- ☐ Is the Floor Area Ratio between .3 and 1? Bldg floor sq ft/plot sq ft  
+2 points
- ☐ Is the Floor Area Ratio greater than 1? Bldg floor sq ft/plot sq ft  
-1 points

**Total points for BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS section:**

points

# FINAL PROPERTY SCORE

Points per  
Category



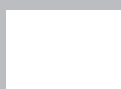
**OWNERSHIP**



**SITE USE**



**LAND CHARACTERISTICS**



**COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS**



**COMMUNITY CAPACITY**



**REDEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES**



**INFRASTRUCTURE AMENITIES**



**ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**



**BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS**



**TOTAL POINTS**



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## **About Delta Institute**

Delta Institute is a nonprofit organization that builds a more resilient Great Lakes environment and economy through sustainable solutions.

For more information visit us online at

[www.delta-institute.org](http://www.delta-institute.org) or contact Margaret Renas at [mrenas@delta-institute.org](mailto:mrenas@delta-institute.org).