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## GREEN AWARENESS

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# The Importance of integrating Brownfield's into the greening of the economy

The term "brownfield" has been used over the last 10 years to describe properties that may be contaminated and thereby making their redevelopment or reuse challenging due to the potential for environmental issues. Moreover, the United State Environmental Protection Agency has reported that for every acre of brownfield redevelopment four (4) acres of green space is saved. Therefore, the cleanup and reuse of these properties are often considered critical to the revitalization of many of our cities and urban cores as part of an overall strategy to respond to urban sprawl and preserving green space. The value that a brownfield property brings to an urban location is its proximity to jobs and ready workforce as well as access to mass transit. Successful brownfield redevelopment projects have often been the catalyst to the revitalization of an entire area. In addition, the reuse of a brownfield property often facilitates the redevelopment of adjacent or neighboring properties. Examples of this aspect of brownfield reuse can be found in many places in the mid-Atlantic region such as the waterfronts of Wilming-



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ton, Delaware, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Trenton, New Jersey as well as on many properties within these states urban core. These successful revitalization efforts have spurred a renaissance of the landscape of the area and an opportunity for the cities to reinvent themselves. It should be noted, however, that the redevelopment of these areas and those similar may also require more than just addressing the potential environmental issues; it may also require addressing other urban challenges such as public safety, parking constraints and tax delinquency.

Now that the current focus is on the "greening" of the economy due to the recently signed federal stimulus package the logical next step for the redevelopment of a brownfield property is to in-

tegrate aspects of the green building effort as part of the property's redevelopment and/or use. This integrated redevelopment effort should be carefully planned and an evaluation of the green building initiatives conducted to determine what type of criteria should apply to the project and which would have the potential to decrease the buildings' carbon footprint, and provide for energy efficiencies, as well as provide a positive impact to the surrounding area. In addition, the use of green building initiatives and sustainable design criteria would provide an avenue for ensuring that the redevelopment project is sustainable over the long term which in turn will also influence the overall success of the redevelopment project. Some examples of sustainable design and green building concepts that could be considered for incorporation into the redevelopment of a brownfield property include, but are not limited to the reuse and recycling of resources, construction and demolition (C&D) debris recycling, storm water management and reuse, construction waste management, soil recycling/reuse, energy efficient designs,

green roofs, carbon zero concepts, wind energy, solar panels, the reuse of existing infrastructure and the encouragement to use available public transportation. All of these considerations would assist in the improvement of the quality of life in the area and provide a means to stabilize existing green space in the community, preventing further sprawl.

The overarching goal of brownfield redevelopment is to improve the environment, and the economic, physical and social conditions of cities and neighborhoods across the country through the use of abandoned and environmentally challenged properties. To this end, the successful reuse of brownfield properties that incorporate green building and sustainable criteria leads to increasing the local tax base, providing jobs, producing energy efficiencies, and reducing vehicle miles traveled while encouraging additional infill redevelopment that further reduces sprawl and encourages future investment.

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