



## **Niagara County Brownfields Assessment Program Overview**

### **What is a Brownfield?**

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) "A brownfield site is real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties protects the environment, reduces blight, and takes development pressures off greenspaces and working lands."

### **Assessment Funding**

Niagara County received grant awards from the USEPA to conduct Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) at sites throughout Niagara County. Sites can be publicly or privately owned but written site access is required prior to initiating a site assessment. Assessments are done at no charge to the property owner or municipality and Niagara County handles hiring and managing the environmental consultants who perform the assessment work.

### **What is a Phase I ESA?**

A Phase I ESA is a non-intrusive study that determines whether additional investigation is necessary. The study includes interviews, state and federal database reviews, review of past and present site uses, and a site inspection. The results of the study indicate whether there are potential environmental problems at the site. Through USEPA's program, a Phase I ESA typically takes 60-90 days.

### **What is a Phase II ESA?**

If potential problems are identified in the Phase I ESA, a Phase II ESA is recommended. A Phase II ESA consists of soil sampling and analysis and if needed, an asbestos investigation. Other surveys (mold, lead-paint, etc.) can also be added if warranted. The scope and associated price of a Phase II ESA varies widely depending upon several factors including size of site, known environmental conditions, and reuse goals. Depending on the results of the Phase II ESA, additional investigation may be warranted, cleanup may commence, or redevelopment can proceed. Through USEPA's program, a Phase II ESA typically takes 9-12 months.

### **How Do I Receive Phase I and II ESAs?**

Niagara County accepts written requests for assistance in the form of an email or letter on a continual basis. Before a site assessment is completed, the property owner must sign Consent to Access Property form. The requestor of the site assessment cannot be responsible for site contamination per federal requirements. Sites for assessment are selected based on funding availability and EPA's site eligibility determination.

**For more information, please contact Amy E. Fisk, AICP, Brownfield Program Manager,  
Niagara County Department of Economic Development at (716) 278-8750.**