



Canadian Brownfields Network (CBN)  
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February 12, 2021

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy  
Minister of Finance  
c/o Budget Secretariat  
Frost Building North, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
95 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Z1

**Re: Ontario 2021 Budget Consultations**

As a proud Ontarian, I would like to thank the Treasury Board for consulting with the people of Ontario to solicit ideas to support citizens and employers during this devastating COVID-19 pandemic; and for inviting the Canadian Brownfields Network to provide a submission. Our Network is a multi-disciplinary expert-based organization of passionate professionals from the private, public, and non-profit sectors established over 15 years ago to advance solutions to brownfields redevelopment. Brownfields are properties that lay underused, idled, or abandoned whose redevelopment is complicated by known or suspected contamination. Many are industrial, commercial, and retail businesses that fell victim to past economic shocks and, like our economy now, require a little extra help to be restored and redeveloped. CBN's vision is that Ontario grows its population and recovers its economy on brownfields-first: remediating and recycling these gently-used properties for work, live, and play opportunities while preserving our agricultural and natural land resources.

Research has shown that supportive provincial policies guiding remediation, growth management, and community improvement planning have already started to bear fruit. These have put over 4,500 brownfields and 23,000 hectares of land in Ontario to more productive commercial and residential use, which is an area roughly the size of Markham. Just considering sites assessed and remediated between 2004 and 2011, Toronto has seen over 1,000 hectares of brownfields reclaimed worth \$37 billion in assessed value including over 84,000 residential units. Kingston has seen 70 hectares of brownfields reclaimed worth \$316 million in assessed value, and the City of Waterloo 15.5 hectares reclaimed assessed at \$148 million.

But while news has been good for some robust urban markets, small- and mid-sized communities, along with weaker-market areas in our big cities, need a boost from Provincial and Municipal governments to spread the benefits to all Ontarians and ensure an equitable economic recovery from COVID-19.

From surveys of our membership and other research initiatives, CBN recommends that the provincial government:

1. Increase provincial funding and technical support to municipalities to help them overcome barriers to the municipal acquisition of brownfields and to improve their capacity to facilitate and engage in assessment, remediation, and redevelopment with all sectors;
2. Provide provincial funding to support brownfield projects, including direct funding for private developments that meet public objectives (e.g., affordable housing, sustainable development, healthy communities, in proximity to higher-order transit such as Major Transit Station Areas) to drive private developer interest in brownfields first.
3. The Ontario government should support brownfields first for public infrastructure (i.e., affordable housing, schools) by funding incremental construction costs (“extraordinary” compared to greenfield);
4. Shift the provincial approach from regulatory to partnership for provincial staff involved in environmental review and planning, finance, and economic development by streamlining and expediting the regulatory approvals process for site assessment, remediation, and redevelopment via a more transparent, centralized, and personalized “one-window” approach; and
5. Support a more holistic development approach that links brownfields redevelopment to other socio-economic and environmental objectives (e.g., affordable housing, economic and workforce development, climate change mitigation).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Christopher De Sousa".

Christopher De Sousa, President  
Canadian Brownfields Network (CBN)