



ASPEN TECH POLICY HUB



Brownfield Revitalization Initiative

City of Richmond, California

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| BRI..... | Brownfield Revitalization Initiative |
| CCEDA..... | California Community Economic Development Association |
| CCLR..... | Center for Creative Land Recycling |
| CDFA..... | Council of Development Finance Agencies |
| CHDC..... | Community Housing Development Corporation |
| DTSC..... | California Department of Toxic Substances Control |
| EPA..... | US Environmental Protection Agency |
| GO-Biz..... | Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development |
| OBLR..... | EPA Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization |
| SWRCB..... | California State Water Resources Control Board |
| TIF..... | Tax Increment Financing |



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Executive Summary

The City of Richmond Brownfield Revitalization Initiative (BRI) is a proposed city-run program designed to accelerate the cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated sites (“brownfields”) within the city by leveraging available grant funding, technical assistance, and developer partners who will align with the community’s vision. To protect the health of its residents, improve the sense of the community, promote economic well-being, and build community wealth, the BRI will focus the city’s economic development work on cleanup and redevelopment in catalyst areas, defined as areas with the potential to become neighborhood hubs and attract additional investment. Cleanup of these sites will provide a safer and healthier environment for our community and revitalize much-needed industrial, retail, and commercial corridors.

The goals of the BRI are to:

1. Improve community **health** by cleaning up the soil and groundwater for redevelopment;
2. Improve the **sense of community** by converting underutilized lands (with or without identified brownfields) for purposes desired by local community members; and
3. Build community **wealth** by supporting local businesses and community-centered development on remediated land.

Each of these 3 areas of focus is vital to successfully meeting the city's economic development goals outlined in the [Richmond General Plan 2030](#). The purpose of this document is to provide a roadmap for the creation, implementation, and operation of the BRI. While this document was specifically designed for the City of Richmond, California, the BRI model could be beneficial for any city suffering from a combination of brownfields and blight.

Target Audience

The target audience for this document includes:

1. The Richmond City Manager's Office of Economic Development, which is responsible for supporting Richmond businesses and improving market-readiness of the city, including the [Environmental and Health Initiatives](#), [Real Estate, Port, Arts and Culture](#), [Business Development](#), and the [Richmond Housing Authority](#) divisions;
2. Key stakeholders in the city's decisionmaking process responsible for budget and operational planning, including the Finance, Human Resources, and Information Technology offices;
3. Planning personnel who would be involved in zoning, grant writing, and community engagement, including Building, Code Enforcement, Housing, and the Redevelopment Agency's Successor Agency divisions;
4. Environmental and engineering personnel at the city who work on brownfield revitalization and capital improvement; and
5. Any key internal or external stakeholders whose role supports brownfield remediation or economic development in and around the city of Richmond.

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BRI Overview

The BRI is modeled after the [Community Housing Development Corporation's](#) (CHDC) program, which sites, funds, remediates, and builds affordable housing throughout the Bay Area. Because brownfield grants are available only to government or nonprofit entities (like the CHDC), the BRI is designed to be the program by which the city can site, fund, remediate, and build commercial businesses in community-desired locations throughout the city, prioritizing locally owned businesses and community-driven development. **The BRI allows the city to provide businesses access to free technical assistance, and state and federal funding to remediate brownfield sites for redevelopment.** The BRI would bring in available public capital to help the city, developers, and local entrepreneurs transform brownfields into usable real estate and economic opportunities.

The BRI should be housed within the City Manager's Office of Economic Development and ideally would eventually include 3 full-time dedicated city staff members who will work with the economic development team, the community development and planning team, and BRI partners. However, the program can be launched with as little as a single staff member or fellow supporting its work.

The 12 key actions of the BRI are:

1. **INVENTORY:** Keep an ongoing, up-to-date inventory of brownfield sites and development stages, in order of development priority, within the city.
2. **SITE PRIORITIZATION:** Biannually reevaluate priority sites with input from the community.
3. **CAPACITY BUILDING:** Develop and lead internal city educational webinars and meetings to ensure that city staff are up-to-date on available technical assistance and capacity building resources to redevelop brownfields. Join the California Community Economic Development Association (CCEDA) to access federally subsidized technical assistance for brownfield revitalization design and economic redevelopment.
4. **BUSINESS FUNDING SUPPORT:** Help developers apply for and access funding. Maintain a list of financing mechanisms, resources, grants, programs, and organizations that fund brownfield revitalization and redevelopment (including development financing and private investment), organized around project stage and type of project they support.
5. **GRANT APPLICATIONS:** Apply for brownfield and economic development grants from the state and federal governments and philanthropic organizations.

6. **BUSINESS TECHNICAL SUPPORT:** Maintain a list of technical assistance resources, people, programs, and organizations that support brownfield revitalization and redevelopment organized around project stage and type of project they support. Maintain relationships with regional technical assistance and grant providers as well as brownfield remediation oversight agencies.
7. **REPRESENT RICHMOND’S INTERESTS IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS:** Represent Richmond on the Bay Area Community-Based Solutions Unit and other local, regional, or state brownfield remediation and economic development groups.
8. **COMMUNITY VISIONING:** Organize, support, and attend community visioning and development meetings.
9. **COMMUNITY EDUCATION:** Organize, support, and present community educational webinars and meetings around brownfield remediation, available technical and financial support for brownfield remediation and development, market opportunities, and priority sites.
10. **BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT:** Work with the economic development and planning offices to organize and present market opportunities to potential businesses or developers based on community needs in priority sites (including maintaining an online marketplace with opportunities for development).
11. **PLANNING AND INCENTIVES:** Ensure that local business codes are enforced so that existing commercial space is appealingly presented and not filled with absentee investors. Simplify the zoning process for commercial corridor-focused businesses. Explore new and creative ways to finance brownfield remediation and redevelopment around the city. Explore incentives for business placement in remediated urban infill locations and Opportunity Zones.
12. **LEARNING AND SHARING:** Attend local, regional, state, and national conferences to remain informed and up-to-date on available funding and technical assistance for brownfield revitalization and redevelopment. Present on Richmond success stories at these conferences.

Each of these 12 actions of the BRI are explained in more detail in the following BRI Operations section.



Photo by Abby Chung

BRI Operations

The below reviews in detail the 12 key actions the BRI program should undertake.

1. BROWNFIELD SITE INVENTORY

With a [2021 EPA Brownfield Grant](#), the [Richmond Community Foundation](#) (RCF Connects) has initiated a brownfield site inventory and prioritized sites. The BRI would be a home for this inventory and would keep it up-to-date and publicly available. Using the EPA [Revitalization-Ready Workbook](#), the BRI would document information, status, and facts about specific sites that are being evaluated for redevelopment. The information being inventoried should include:

- ▶ Site location
- ▶ Site size
- ▶ Number of parcels
- ▶ Parcel owner(s)
- ▶ Parcel(s) addresses
- ▶ Status of development (Assessment, Cleanup, Ready for intended reuse, Development, Completed)
- ▶ Contaminants
- ▶ Ongoing monitoring

- ▶ Oversight agency (California Department of Toxic Substances Control [DTSC], California State Water Resources Control Board [SWRCB], California Environmental Protection Agency [CalEPA])
- ▶ Data sources
- ▶ Developer
- ▶ Neighborhood
- ▶ Zoning
- ▶ Land size
- ▶ Assessed value
- ▶ Site's physical condition
- ▶ Photographs
- ▶ Community vision

Building and keeping an up-to-date inventory would be useful to helping prioritize sites. Funding is also more likely to become available if sites have a plan for reuse. In addition, information from this inventory (such as site locations, values, and photos) will be included in a marketplace that will market these sites; see Phase II of BRI Implementation (“Marketing, Education, and Engagement”). Finally, this inventory would serve as a useful tool for the community and local businesses and developers to stay informed around the work being done to clean up environmental contaminants in their neighborhoods.

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2. SITE PRIORITIZATION

Using existing and previous community surveys, along with community visioning exercises (see action 8, “Community Visioning”), the BRI should determine the criteria that are important to prioritize among sites. The BRI should consider the overall vision of the neighborhood where a site is being considered for redevelopment, and plan for a diversity of services to ensure that local community members have equitable access to healthy food, convening places, physical activity, and outdoor space. The BRI will also take into account the economic development goals of the city and prioritize catalyst sites whose redevelopment could spur further economic growth and business attraction.

Building a metric for site prioritization will help streamline the development process, making it easier for developers to apply for permits. Transparency of the prioritization process is important in order to demonstrate to community members why a particular site was chosen for redevelopment.

3. CAPACITY BUILDING

During Phase I, the BRI director should also organize free and available resources – including grant writing, business development, financial support, brownfield revitalization technical support, and economic development support from state, regional, and federal partners – into a clear and accessible database for city staff to use to augment their efforts in economic development, planning, and fundraising.

In addition, armed with the connections and extra tools provided by these partners, the BRI director should put together educational webinars and meetings for city staff to make sure that they are informed of these resources.

As a part of the Capacity Building piece of the BRI, the city should also become a member of the CCEDA to gain access to additional resources, mentorship, and advisory services.

4. BUSINESS FUNDING SUPPORT

Existing businesses in Richmond, local aspiring entrepreneurs, and outside businesses that may be looking to set up shop all face similar challenges accessing capital. If the perfect business site they are looking to occupy lies on top of a brownfield site, they will face an additional barrier. The BRI should keep an up-to-date database of available funding for various activities in the remediation and development process, such as:

- ▶ Environmental site assessments
- ▶ Development and implementation of marketing strategies
- ▶ Development of plans and specifications
- ▶ Real estate services
- ▶ Building conditions studies
- ▶ Infrastructure analyses
- ▶ Zoning and regulatory updates
- ▶ Environmental housing and economic studies, analyses, and reports
- ▶ Public outreach

The database of funding options for the brownfield development site locations can include:

Environmental site assessment and remediation funding:

- ▶ Private money (by polluter)
- ▶ [EPA grants](#)
- ▶ [DTSC grants and loans](#)

Pre-development funding:

- ▶ EPA Multipurpose Grants
- ▶ Tax credit incentives for private developers
 - ▶ [Opportunity Zones](#)
 - ▶ [HUBZones](#)
- ▶ [Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts](#)

The BRI should also help and or partner with businesses in applying for public grants. Finally, it should connect businesses to Community Development Financial Institutions that can advise and support businesses.

5. GRANT APPLICATIONS

In partnership with developers, nonprofits, or on its own, the BRI should apply for brownfield grant funding for any Richmond brownfield projects. All BRI full-time staff should be well versed in the grant writing process and have relationships with regional, state, and federal grantmaking departments. They can also bring in grant writing support from their wide network, which they will build throughout their learning and sharing remit (see “Learning and Sharing” section).

There are myriad opportunities to apply for brownfield revitalization funding. For instance, in response to the Biden administration’s [Justice40 Initiative](#), the EPA is targeting 40% of its programs and services to disadvantaged communities such as Richmond. These programs and services include:

- ▶ [Assessment Grants](#);
- ▶ [Revolving Loan Fund Grants](#);
- ▶ [Cleanup Grants](#);
- ▶ [Multipurpose Grants](#);
- ▶ [Job Training Grants](#); and
- ▶ [Technical assistance, training, and research](#) support.

The EPA has also published [toolkits and webinars to guide communities](#) in getting their brownfields ready for development.

In California, the Cleanup in Vulnerable Communities Initiative recently allocated \$500 million to invest in brownfield cleanup and redevelopment in disadvantaged communities like Richmond. This money is being granted to communities by the [DTSC](#) via the [Equitable Community Revitalization Grant](#) and technical assistance, workforce development, and community benefit agreement grants. California also offers a number of other resources for brownfield cleanup support:

1. [California Water Boards Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund](#)
2. [Water Boards Orphan Site Cleanup Fund](#)
3. [California Pollution Control Financing Authority](#)
4. [Targeted Site Investigation Plus Program](#) (currently accepting applications)
5. [DTSC Loans and Assistance Programs](#)

To assist Richmond in applying for funds, free technical assistance and capacity building support can be provided by organizations such as the [Center for Creative Land Recycling](#) (CCLR).

6. BUSINESS TECHNICAL SUPPORT

As mentioned in the “Capacity Building” section, the BRI should create – and keep up-to-date – a resources database with technical support for the city staffers, but also for local businesses. This should include access to discounted business training opportunities through RichmondWORKS, and on-the-ground available staff to answer business questions regarding permitting, licensing, siting, cleaning up brownfields, and connecting with state resources. The BRI should also have a form on its website where business owners can seek help or provide feedback.

In some cases the BRI should reach out directly to businesses to help them access funding to clean up their brownfield site. For example, a small dry cleaner likely does not have access to the capital needed to clean up its potential contamination. However, the BRI should be aware that (a) location is important for community revitalization and redevelopment and (b) grant funding is available for small businesses in California to clean up their contaminants. In such a case, the BRI may reach out to the small business owner and offer to apply for a grant in partnership with them. They should walk through the brownfield remediation, cleanup, and monitoring process with the business owner and help them feel at ease.

7. REPRESENT RICHMOND’S INTERESTS IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Richmond is not a lone city; it is part of a wider urban ecosystem that encompasses the whole Bay Area. Other Bay Area development and infrastructure projects affect Richmond. Therefore, it is important that someone from the city with experience in brownfields represent Richmond in regional economic development conversations. The Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) has received funding to implement regional economic development units (GO-Biz Community-Based Solutions Units). A Bay Area Community-Based Solutions Unit has been established, and GO-Biz [has selected All Home](#) to be the convening partner. A representative from the city should join that unit.

In addition, the agencies that oversee brownfield revitalization (DTSC, SWRCB, CalEPA) are also overseeing grant opportunities. These agencies are meeting with communities and listening to their concerns. The BRI director should advocate for Richmond and bring the local members of these agencies to Richmond to show them what Richmond’s development plans are. Given that the DTSC has [recently been awarded](#) a major grant to help fund brownfield revitalization – a grant that will run out by the end of 2024, according to our conversations with DTSC staff – the BRI director should initiate these conversations, relationships, and grant writing opportunities as soon as possible so that Richmond does not miss out on available funding.



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8. COMMUNITY VISIONING

All redevelopment should be done in concert with the community. No development that is planned can move forward without community support, and in order to develop and revitalize without displacing people, development should be community-driven. Therefore, the community visioning process is key to each new site and to the vision of individual neighborhoods or the city as a whole.

The city requires major development to be approved by the City Council, and often developers will be invited to neighborhood council meetings throughout different stages of the brownfield revitalization process to share what they have been working on and get feedback from the community. The BRI can help guide these conversations before a developer even comes in by having an active community engagement and visioning agenda.

As of August 2022, the city is completing a [Community Needs Assessment](#) in which community members are asked to provide their suggestions for how the city should spend its remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. An online survey such as this is an example of how the city can solicit suggestions and ideas of the community’s vision for a particular site or corridor.

In addition, in-person or virtual community visioning exercises can be organized to help community members explore and share their vision. State and federal brownfield grants can be used to put together these types of events and pay community members to participate. Below are examples from the City of Fremont that the City of Richmond can use to support community vision planning:

- ▶ [Community Visioning Planning Document](#)
- ▶ [The Ecosystem Laboratory visioning exercise](#)

9. COMMUNITY EDUCATION

As a part of the BRI's community engagement, the city should create a robust community education campaign to regularly inform community members about the BRI's work, the brownfield revitalization process, and ongoing projects. The purpose of this piece of BRI's work is to promote trust between the community and the city and help the community better understand why certain cleanups or developments happened the way they did. The community education campaign should include attending and speaking at neighborhood council meetings at least twice a year, keeping an up-to-date list of redevelopment activity on the city website, and replying to community concerns submitted through an online portal.

10. BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

The BRI should create and implement a Developer Outreach and Brownfield Site Marketing Plan that includes:

- ▶ A marketplace highlighting available sites, current market value (pre-development), potential market value (post-development), location details, zoning and permits, incentives, community vision, local amenities, and links to available funding for remediation, redevelopment, and business financing. The BRI team should seek free support from the [Council of Development Finance Agencies \(CDFA\) Brownfields Technical Assistance Program](#) to best customize the incentive and marketing plan;
- ▶ Outreach presentations to external and local businesses based on expressed community needs to help build the desired business types in the desired locations;
- ▶ Outreach and engagement with local businesses to ensure that they are following code and that there are not absentee investors taking up valuable real estate;
- ▶ A list of local businesses that are seeking commercial or industrial space to make it easier for developers to fill empty space in their developments; and
- ▶ Direct marketing campaigns, presentations at commercial/industrial developer association meetings, and Opportunity Zone sessions.

The BRI should include business outreach and engagement during all phases of redevelopment. The EPA Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization (OBLR) has online courses from the Brownfield [RE-Development Academies](#) that complement the hands-on training and mentoring the BRI team will receive from the CCEDA consultant. These courses should be viewed in their entirety before a Developer Outreach and Brownfield Site Marketing Plan is created.

The BRI team should take the time to understand not only the phases and processes of brownfield redevelopment but also the best practices on how to approach developers with redevelopment opportunities. Specifically, the BRI team should become familiar with the following resources on redevelopment:

- ▶ **Part 1:** [Redevelopment Process: The Intersection of Real Estate and Brownfields](#)
- ▶ **Part 2:** [Peering into the Crystal Ball: How the Market Decides Future Use](#)
- ▶ **Part 3:** [Pulling Back the Curtain: How Developers Make Money](#)

To learn how to reposition sites, manage risk, and overcome challenges to attracting investment to brownfield sites, the team should view the following RE-Development Academy sessions:

- ▶ **Part 1:** [Removing the Barriers: Repositioning Brownfields Sites for Success](#)
- ▶ **Part 2:** [Risky Business: Overcoming Challenges to Attracting Investment at Brownfield Sites](#)
- ▶ **Part 3:** [Show Me How: Brownfields Redevelopment in Economically Distressed Areas](#)

With this knowledge, the BRI team will be ready to effectively partner with the CCEDA consultant to create an effective Developer Outreach and Brownfield Site Marketing Plan. The outreach plan should include industry-specific strategies based on the locations of the inventory of brownfield sites available for redevelopment. The redevelopment strategies should match the priorities of the Business Development Strategy, the 2030 General Plan and the FY 2022–23 Budget. Those community vision recommended industries include:

- ▶ Commercial services in mixed-use housing revitalization locations;
- ▶ Commercial services and franchise businesses for the downtown commercial corridors; and
- ▶ [Richmond Green-Blue New Deal](#) businesses to revitalize industrial locations.

The BRI should actively collaborate with the Planning Department and RichmondWORKS to prioritize support to local business as the city rebuilds its pro-business, pro-community reputation.

11. PLANNING AND INCENTIVES

Economic development incentives are discretionary and are created by federal, state, or local governmental bodies to attract or retain business operations, promote new business activity, or encourage job retention. [Municipalities use economic development incentives to promote and cultivate growth](#). The BRI team should work closely with the planning department to create a digital suite of planning tools, incentives, and services that will simplify the process for developers. This digital toolkit could be assembled for each neighborhood or corridor and could be called the Brownfield Revitalization Planning Packages (BRPP). The BRI business liaison should collaborate with the planning department to build out industry-specific zoning packages for commercial and industrial brownfield revitalization projects. Based on the [State of New York's Brownfield Opportunity Area program](#), the BRPP should have the following components:

- ▶ Map of brownfield sites by neighborhood or commercial/industrial corridor:
 - ▶ A map showing each known or suspected brownfield or contaminated site in the neighborhood;
 - ▶ Site profiles with a summary and analysis of each relevant brownfield and vacant site abandoned, including size and condition, ownership, current groundwater conditions, potential contamination issues, existing infrastructure, proximity to existing transportation networks, natural and cultural resources or features, and environmental and land use history; and
 - ▶ Designation of individual brownfield sites that, with the consent of the site owner, may be candidates for site assessment funding.
- ▶ Information on potential development:
 - ▶ Listing of potential developments for specific sites within the neighborhood by the current or prospective owners of such sites;
 - ▶ Documentation of meetings and workshops that have taken place to attract a developer to such sites;
 - ▶ Maps identifying strategic redevelopment sites within the neighborhood or corridor and a description of anticipated uses;
 - ▶ A list of local legislative or regulatory actions that may be required to facilitate redevelopment of the neighborhood or corridor;
 - ▶ An analysis that identifies anticipated end or future land uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, or cultural;
 - ▶ A map of private and public land ownership patterns; and
 - ▶ A map showing the publicly controlled and other developable lands and buildings within the proposed brownfield opportunity area.

- ▶ Community support materials:
 - ▶ Documentation of public outreach methods and techniques used to ensure public participation throughout the preparation of the project and the partners and other interests that have been consulted about the plan; and
 - ▶ A vision statement and the specific short- and long-term objectives to be achieved relative to community redevelopment and revitalization as shaped and expressed by the community.
- ▶ Incentives:
 - ▶ Listing of incentives for business placement in remediated urban infill locations, including Business Improvement Districts, HUBZones, and Economic and Opportunity Zones.

12. LEARNING AND SHARING

Finally, the BRI team should play a lead role in keeping the city up-to-date on laws and regulations as they relate to brownfields and economic development. They should attend local, regional, state, and national conferences to remain informed on available funding and technical assistance for brownfield revitalization and redevelopment. They should meet with other brownfield revitalization programs around the country and explore and advocate for new and creative ways to finance brownfield remediation and redevelopment in the city. They should also present success stories at conferences so that other communities can learn from the BRI.

BRI team members will amass a wealth of knowledge and relationships related to brownfield funding, redevelopment incentives, community concerns, and free available technical assistance partners. As such they will need to record and keep up-to-date all of the available resources and partner contact information for the city and the community so the institutional knowledge is not lost when BRI team members leave.

BRI Implementation

OVERLAP BETWEEN CITY OF RICHMOND PLANS AND BRI IMPLEMENTATION

The [2022–23 Adopted Operating Budget](#) specifically sets aside money to implement the [Richmond Business Development Strategy](#).

The BRI is a clear operational initiative to staff and deliver the recommended actions of the Business Development Strategy and the Richmond General Plan 2030 [Economic Development Element](#).

More specifically, the Richmond General Plan 2030 Economic Development Element directs Richmond to clean up brownfield sites.

The [Business Development Strategy](#) directs the city to:

- ▶ “Develop consistent processes for ongoing engagement with residents and businesses”;
- ▶ “Build regional partnerships to support economic development”;
- ▶ “Expand local incentives to reduce the cost of doing business, retain and attract priority industries, and build economic mobility”;
- ▶ “Provide support for small businesses in finding . . . brick-and-mortar space”; and
- ▶ “Build relationships with commercial and industrial property brokers to increase marketing and leasing of available properties.”

In addition, the BRI will support successful delivery of the requirements of Richmond’s [2021 EPA Brownfield Grant](#) to inventory and prioritize sites, conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments, develop cleanup plans and reuse plans or market studies, and support community outreach activities.



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PHASE I: FUNDING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

HIRE A BRI DIRECTOR

Because of the city’s limited staff capacity, we recommend this program be initiated by a new staff member or 2-year economic development fellow. The new staff member could be transitioned from another role. Alternatively, the city could hire a 2-year economic development fellow from a program like the [FUSE Fellowship](#) (see more below). To make it easier for the city to hire, we have included a job description outlining the qualifications and responsibilities of this position (see Appendix A) and an [onboarding manual](#) to get the new BRI director up to speed. The BRI director or economic development fellow can use this operational plan to guide their development of the BRI program, hire staff, and initiate BRI actions.

Fuse Fellow

FUSE is a “national nonprofit that enables local governments to create holistic solutions that advance racial equity and address pressing challenges... by placing experienced professionals in local government agencies.” [The FUSE Executive Fellowship program](#) is a 1- to 2-year, full-time public service role in city or county government. FUSE Executive Fellows work alongside senior government leaders and community members to carry out initiatives defined by their city partners. FUSE Executive Fellows are experienced professionals and executives, often with 2 decades of work experience.

The [FUSE Fellowship](#) program would be a good fit to stand up the BRI because it identifies executive level economic development fellows and places them within local governments to address pressing challenges, including workforce training, health equity, and climate resilience. FUSE fellows have worked in East Palo Alto,

Fresno, Oakland, Sacramento, and San Francisco, along with other cities around the nation. Working with FUSE would take the onus of hiring off the city's hands because FUSE would conduct an individualized search based on the BRI project to find a candidate with at least 15 years of professional experience and the required competencies for the role. The Executive Fellow would be hired as a FUSE employee and embedded within the Richmond Office of Economic Development. FUSE also would provide mentorship, training, and professional support to fellows to help them achieve their project goals.

One FUSE Fellow will cost \$180,000 per year, including salary and benefits.¹ Thanks to a recent grant, the FUSE program may be able to provide up to \$100,000 of these funds for climate-related projects. The additional funds for this position can come from the city's unallocated ARPA funds, from existing funds allocated toward economic development, or from application of a [Brownfields Multipurpose Grant](#). Alternatively, the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, and Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation are all potential philanthropic sponsors of this position. The city can also reach out to the CCEDA to find alternative sources of funding.

A community's application to host a FUSE Fellow is informal and begins with a conversation with the FUSE team. The authors can make an introduction to the FUSE staff if this is of interest.

See Appendix A for a sample job description for recruiting the FUSE Fellow and the associated [guide](#) for helping onboard the fellow.

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FIRST 2 YEARS

During the first 2 years, the BRI director should focus on actions 1–7 of the BRI Overview: (1) building site inventory; (2) prioritizing sites; (3) capacity building by developing and leading internal educational webinars and meetings; (4) helping businesses find funding; (5) applying for grants; (6) maintaining a list of technical assistance resources, people, programs, and organizations (see [here](#) for an initial database) and building relationships with those people and organizations; and (7) making sure Richmond is involved in regional economic development conversations.

Importantly, the BRI director will be the liaison for the city to connect with economic development and brownfield technical assistance and capacity building support from organizations like CCEDA. CCEDA provides resources, training, small business support, financing support, and grant writing support to communities and local governments in low- and middle-income communities. CCEDA has experience creating economic development programs and can also support the BRI director or fellow to set up the BRI.

PHASE I BUDGET AND FUNDING

Phase I of implementing the BRI will cost approximately \$300,000 over 2 years. This includes 10 hours of staff time to interview candidates, 100 hours of staff time to work with the new director, a \$110,000 annual salary for the director, the cost of benefits and travel, and the \$120/month CCEDA membership. We recommend that this Phase I FTE position be paid for by either using existing funding from the approved 2022–23 Budget or using [remaining ARPA funds](#) for the first 2 years. Initial results of the Community Needs Assessment indicate that the community has expressed interest in using ARPA funds to build the city's capacity to support economic development² in the way that the BRI director would do as outlined in this operational plan.

In addition, brownfield revitalization and redevelopment [generates more than 12 times the amount of public dollars spent in local and state tax revenues, 14 times the amount in payroll value, and 64 times the amount in business revenue](#). The benefits of implementing this initial phase will far outweigh the costs in the long term.

PHASE II: MARKETING, EDUCATION, AND ENGAGEMENT

After the BRI director has worked with city staff to optimize the program, they will understand the gaps the city needs to fill to achieve the goals of the BRI. They will also have prepared the resources necessary to support city planning in better organizing and keeping track of brownfield revitalization initiatives, and helped the economic development team streamline permitting for developers based on best practices. They will have hopefully been awarded grant funding and/or additional budget from increased tax revenue to conduct some community visioning exercises in priority sites. Ideally, they would also hire 2 new members to the BRI team to support actions 8–12 of the BRI Overview: (8) community visioning, (9) community education, (10) business engagement, (11) planning and incentives, and (12) learning and sharing.

One of the new team members should be the community liaison, attending community meetings and events as well as organizing visioning exercises (such as described [here](#)). They should act as a 2-way liaison learning from community members about what they want and what their concerns are, and bringing those needs and concerns back to the city to inform city actions. They also should share with the community the status of brownfield inventory, priority of remediation and redevelopment, and other related economic development projects, including educating the community on the brownfield revitalization process. This team member will help build trust within the community and represent Richmond in regional economic development conversations.

The other team member should be a business-facing team member, the business liaison. They should provide technical support for businesses, meet with business and labor groups throughout the city, help developers apply for and access funding, and maintain the list of financing mechanisms and resources. Importantly, they should also engage businesses both inside and outside of Richmond to market priority sites and locations, and clearly showcase the available business incentives and permitting process on the City of Richmond’s website, as suggested by the [Business Development Strategy](#).

| Members of the Brownfield Revitalization Initiative | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Director | Community Liaison | Business Liaison |

All 3 members of the BRI should attend local, regional, state, and national conferences to remain informed and up-to-date on resources to support revitalization and redevelopment of the community.



Image by Cristina Gottardi on Unsplash

Phase II should also require the planning department to spend time supporting community development outreach, reviewing and implementing community visions, revisiting zoning, and overseeing business tax incentives.

PHASE II BUDGET

The Phase II Budget represents the overall annual budget of the BRI and is estimated at around \$746,000. This will include the time needed to transition the work efforts from standing up the program operations, applying for grants, and other financial incentives, and a significant amount of consultant time to design the marketing and online marketplace to showcase available space, attract investors and businesses, and provide easily accessible information to businesses on permitting and financial incentives to doing business in Richmond. Finally, a large portion of the budget is for hiring consultants to guide the community vision exercises, and compensation to community members for participating in community visioning exercises and activities.

| Activity | Cost |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Legal, Finance and Administrative Support | \$110,000 |
| Marketplace Site Design and Development | \$30,000 |
| Marketing Travel | \$6,000 |
| Marketing Content Creation | \$10,000 |
| Marketing Content Distribution | \$10,000 |
| Community Visioning Consultants and Community Compensation (\$50,000 x 2 per year) | \$100,000 |
| Graphics | \$30,000 |
| Staff Salaries and Benefits (3) | \$450,000 |
| Total | \$746,000 |

TIMELINE**Phase I: Funding and Capacity Building**

- ▶ December 15, 2022: Meet with FUSE or publish BRI Director Job Description on the city website.
- ▶ January 2023: Hire BRI Director/FUSE Fellow. BRI director begins city and community interviews, and joins the Bay Area Community-Based Solutions Unit (see associated FUSE Fellow [onboarding manual](#)).
- ▶ March 2023: Complete site inventory and interviews with city staff, community groups, business groups, brownfield oversight teams, and technical support teams. Join CCEDA.
- ▶ April 2023: Complete site prioritization.
- ▶ May 2023: Complete resource and funding lists for brownfield revitalization and redevelopment.
- ▶ June 2023: Organize first internal capacity building webinar for city staff.
- ▶ November 2023: Complete 4 cleanup and reuse plans in concert with developers.

Phase II: Marketing, Education, and Engagement

- ▶ November 2023: Hire the community liaison and the business liaison to lead community and business engagement, respectively.
- ▶ December 2023: Present the first community educational meeting around the brownfield remediation process.
- ▶ January 2024: Draft marketing site.
- ▶ March 2024: Publish marketing and business development section to city website.
- ▶ March 2024: Launch business code enforcement team to educate business owners about the importance of facade upkeep and maintenance, and buy out absentee investors.

Appendix A: FUSE Fellow Job Description

DRAFT JOB DESCRIPTION FOR FUSE FELLOW

Fellowship Dates: January 1, 2023–December 31, 2024

The City of Richmond is looking for a bright, dynamic individual to fill a vacancy for a Brownfield Revitalization Initiative Director.

OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE

The City of Richmond is seeking hands-on support to build capacity and implement a Brownfield Revitalization Initiative (see more details below). As an embedded member of the Office of Economic Development, your ultimate goal during this 2-year fellowship will be to set up and implement the Brownfield Revitalization Initiative to take advantage of funding and resources.

BROWNFIELD REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

The Richmond Brownfield Revitalization Initiative (BRI) will be a new city-run program developed to accelerate cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated brownfield sites such as former gas stations or dry cleaners. There are more than 440 of these sites within the city limits. Cleanup of these sites will provide a safer and healthier environment for our community and revitalize much-needed community retail and commercial corridors.

The goals of the BRI are to:

- a. Improve community health by cleaning up the soil and groundwater for redevelopment;
- b. Improve the sense of community by converting underutilized lands (with or without identified brownfields) for purposes desired by local community members; and
- c. Build community wealth by supporting local businesses and community-centered development on remediated land.

The BRI will achieve these goals by identifying catalyst sites and prioritizing contaminated site remediation, attracting and finding funding to pay for cleanup, supporting community visioning for planning and redevelopment, and developing tools and collateral to market the desired sites to developers, business owners, and locally owned franchisees.

The director will work in the City Manager’s Office of Economic Development and will be supervised by the environmental manager within that department. They will also work cross-functionally with the planning and community development department.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- ▶ Lead the implementation of the BRI, including building relationships with city staff, partners, businesses, residents, and technical assistance providers.
- ▶ Keep an ongoing, up-to-date inventory of brownfield sites and development stages, in order of priority, within the city.
- ▶ Biannually reevaluate priority sites for redevelopment with input from the community.
- ▶ Develop and lead internal city educational webinars and meetings to ensure that city staff are up-to-date on available technical assistance and capacity building resources. Join the California Community Economic Development Association (CCEDA).
- ▶ Help developers apply for and access funding. Maintain a list of financing mechanisms, resources, grants, programs, and organizations that fund brownfield revitalization and redevelopment (including development financing and private investment), organized around project stage and type of project they support.
- ▶ Apply for grants from the state and federal governments, and philanthropic organizations.
- ▶ Maintain a list of technical assistance resources, people, programs, and organizations that support brownfield revitalization and redevelopment organized around project stage and type of project they support. Maintain relationships with regional technical assistance and grant providers as well as brownfield remediation oversight agencies (DTSC, SWRCB, CalEPA, EPA Region 9).
- ▶ Represent Richmond on the Bay Area Community-Based Solutions Unit and other local, regional, or state brownfield remediation and economic development groups.



Photo by Pixabay

QUALIFICATIONS (largely taken from FUSE Corps’ Environmental Justice [Fellow job description](#))

In addition to the qualifications listed below, the BRI director should have 10 years of experience with a background in economic development, urban planning, brownfield environmental cleanup, and/or redevelopment strategies.

- ▶ Must be a self-starter, capable of prioritizing and planning their own schedule and managing a small team’s schedule.
- ▶ Synthesizes complex information into clear and concise recommendations and action-oriented implementation plans.
- ▶ Develops and effectively implements both strategic and operational project management plans.
- ▶ Generates innovative, data-driven, and result-oriented solutions to difficult challenges.
- ▶ Responds quickly to changing ideas, responsibilities, expectations, trends, strategies, and other processes.
- ▶ Communicates effectively both verbally and in writing, and excels in both active listening and conversing.
- ▶ Fosters collaboration across multiple constituencies in order to support more effective decisionmaking.
- ▶ Establishes and maintains strong relationships with a diverse array of stakeholders, both inside and outside of government, and particularly including community-based relationships.
- ▶ Embraces differing viewpoints and implements strategies to find common ground.
- ▶ Demonstrates confidence and professional diplomacy, while effectively interacting with individuals at all levels of various organizations.

Appendix B: Successful Brownfield Programs

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL BROWNFIELD PROGRAMS:

[Community Housing Development Corporation](#): The CHDC is a Bay Area non-profit that has successfully applied for and received public funding for brownfield remediation and development to support its affordable housing development initiatives.

[Washington State Department of Commerce Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund](#): This is a state-supported revolving loan fund to help pay for brownfield assessment and revitalization.

[New York Brownfield Opportunity Area Program](#): This state-run program takes a community vision lead approach to identifying, funding, and redeveloping brownfield locations at the neighborhood level.

[Rhode Island Woonasquatucket Brownfields Assessment Program](#): Community members can contact this program to suggest areas that they would like to see redeveloped. This program supports interested businesses and investors with a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment.

Endnotes

- 1 James Weinberg, CEO, FUSE Corps, via Zoom, August 23, 2022.
- 2 HR&A Advisors staff, via Zoom, August 2, 2022.



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