



**ASPEN TECH
POLICY HUB**

PROJECT



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To learn more about
this project, please visit
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From Brownfields and Blight to Business Attraction

Leveraging brownfield funding to catalyze
community-led economic development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Environmentally contaminated properties (“brownfields”) have a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged communities. Without the resources to clean up brownfields, communities become trapped in a cycle of blight: businesses avoid the community because of visible disrepair, so the community lacks the financial capacity to clean up the brownfields to attract more businesses. Richmond, California, is one such community. This project recommends that the City of Richmond create a Brownfield Revitalization Initiative (BRI) within its Office of Economic Development to better leverage federal and state resources for brownfield revitalization.

PROBLEM

Richmond has more than 440 identified brownfields, stemming from its history as a center for industrial manufacturing. The city’s plan to grow its commercial base is challenged by the prohibitive costs of remediating and monitoring brownfield sites. Although free technical assistance and funding are available to remediate and monitor brownfield sites, Richmond does not have the staffing or operational capacities to take full advantage of these services. Furthermore, once sites are remediated and ready to be developed, the city does

not have the staffing or operational capacities to market these new sites for desired commercial or industrial businesses.

Cleanup of these sites will provide a safer and healthier environment for Richmond and revitalize much-needed community retail and commercial corridors.

SOLUTION

Now is the time to take advantage of increased state and federal funding. Richmond's Office of the City Manager should create a Brownfield Revitalization Initiative to take advantage of this subsidized capacity building assistance and funding to clean up toxic sites. The city should retain a FUSE Executive Fellow or hire a new full-time staff member to spearhead the development of a BRI in order to take advantage of existing funding and technical assistance from federal, state, and nonprofit organizations. Cleanup of these sites will provide a safer and healthier environment for Richmond and revitalize much-needed community retail and commercial corridors.

*For more information about this proposal, see: (1) **a policy brief** for the City of Richmond explaining this proposal; (2) **an operational plan** outlining how to implement this proposal; and (3) **an onboarding manual** for an Economic Development Fellow.*



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ABOUT THE HUB

The Aspen Tech Policy Hub is a Bay Area policy incubator, training a new generation of science and tech policy entrepreneurs. We take science and tech experts, teach them the policy process, and support them in creating outside-the-box solutions to society's problems.

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