

BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA PROGRAM

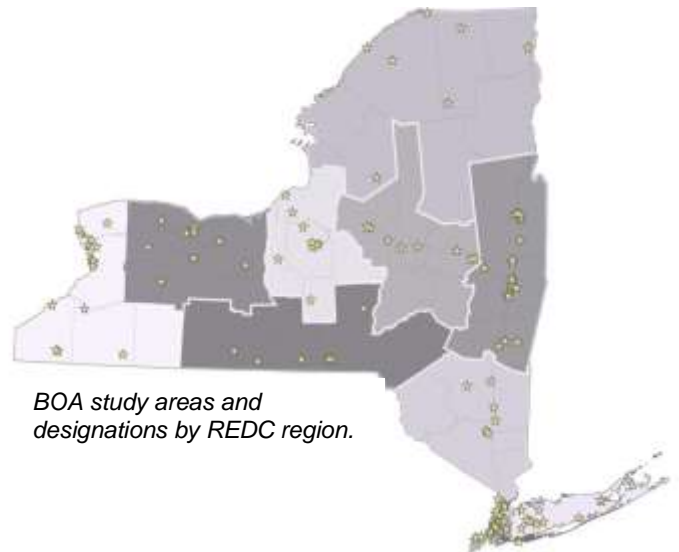
Empowering communities to revitalize distressed areas

What is a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA)?

Brownfields are neighborhoods or areas within a community negatively affected by real or perceived environmental conditions. These properties often are underutilized because the contamination (or perception thereof) has impeded investment and redevelopment, making them an economic and aesthetic drain on localities.

The New York State Department of State's (DOS) BOA Program was created by the Superfund Law of 2003. Through this program, brownfields are transformed from liabilities to community assets that generate and support new businesses, jobs, and revenues for local economies, as well as provide new housing and public amenities.

There are presently 122 BOA study areas and 44 designated BOAs across New York State. These areas include former industrial/manufacturing sites, commercial corridors, residential areas, downtowns, and waterfronts.



Program Goals & Key Outcomes

DOS's BOA Program provides a neighborhood or area-wide approach to the assessment and redevelopment of brownfields and other vacant or abandoned properties. Goals of the program include:

- Assess the full range of community redevelopment opportunities posed by a concentration of brownfields.
- Build a shared community vision for the reuse of strategic sites and actions to achieve community revitalization.
- Coordinate and collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies, community groups, and private-sector partners to identify and implement solutions and leverage investments.

When key sites are remediated and redeveloped, these properties can increase neighboring property values and the local tax base, ameliorate public health risks and environmental justice concerns, address food deserts, and spur additional investment in a community.

The BOA Process

There is a multi-step process for neighborhoods or areas to be eligible for the benefits associated with having a BOA(s) in their locality, including nomination and subsequent designation by the Secretary of State. The first phase entails a BOA Nomination Study, which charts the roadmap to return dormant brownfield sites to

productive use. These studies identify the opportunities and challenges posed by brownfield sites, present a clear and attainable community vision, and pinpoint key redevelopment opportunities.

When a BOA Nomination Study is complete, a community may request BOA designation by the Secretary of State. This official designation allows developers who are participating in the voluntary Brownfield Cleanup Program to receive a tax credit “bump-up” to redevelop the sites in a manner that is consistent with the community’s vision and Secretary-approved plan. Designated BOAs also receive priority and preference for some state grant programs, including DOS’s Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and the Department of Environmental Conservation’s (DEC) Environmental Restoration Program.

BOA designation demonstrates community support for the goals outlined in the plan. This removes risk and uncertainty ordinarily associated with investment in a transitional or marginal market by assuring potential developers that their investment is part of an overall plan for the revitalization of the area.

Grant Opportunities

To date, more than \$45 million in BOA grants have been awarded to both urban and rural New York communities. Programs grants support a variety of revitalization activities including:

- Community visioning and public participation processes
- Strategic site identification
- Economic and market studies
- Site contamination assessments
- Environmental impact assessments and statements
- Site-specific redevelopment plans
- Infrastructure improvement studies
- Local law changes, including development standards and design guidelines

The aforementioned activities must be undertaken in pursuit of a state BOA designation.



The Wyandanch Rising BOA in Nassau County calls for a transit-oriented designed mixed-use downtown with affordable housing, retail, community amenities, and open space. The community has received two BOA grants totaling \$1.7 million.

Additional Information

Brownfield Cleanup Program: <https://esd.ny.gov/brownfield-cleanup-program>

Brownfields Legislation (2008 Amendments): <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/45734.html>

Geographic Information Gateway: <http://opdqig.dos.ny.gov/#/home>

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