Engagement Summary

The Brownfield Renewal Strategy team participated in a number of engagement events in conjunction with the Growth Plan and Corridor Growth projects. Stakeholders across all the events included representatives from land owners, developers, realtors, industry professionals, and the general public. Valuable feedback was received from the following events:

- March 7, 2018 Plan for Growth kickoff event at the Western Development Museum;
- November 21, 2018 Corridor Growth stakeholder engagement event at TCU Place;
- January 31, 2019 Come and Grow event at the College Drive Holiday Inn Express & Suites;
- February 7, 2019 Developers Liaison Committee meeting;
- February 13, 2019 Brownfield Renewal Strategy stakeholder workshops; and,
- Project stakeholder survey open for input between March 25, 2019 and April 19, 2019.

Engagement feedback highlights are as follows:

- There was an overall preference for medium to high City intervention on the reduction of brownfield sites. It was noted that assistance is needed for current land owners that have acquired, inherited, or historically purchased a brownfield site without the knowledge of the environmental burden.
- Request for City intervention on certain brownfield sites in order to avoid potential tax defaults. This would potentially reduce future City liability and costs. The intervention would then increase tax assessment through onsite improvements and redevelopment. These improvements are difficult to achieve with certain financial institution restrictions.
- Uncertainty and ambiguity regarding provincial impacted site regulations and how they fit with current and future City zoning. It was also mentioned that there is a perception that the Ministry of Environment does not do enough to enforce the regulations when it comes to chronic impacted sites.
- Zoning issues tend to be a major factor with brownfield redevelopment. Addressing these would help in reducing the brownfield redevelopment burden.
- There is sentiment that in order for brownfield and infill development to be successful, the required effort must be equal or less than greenfield development.
- Interest from stakeholders for the City to investigate a punitive approach to brownfield minimization and site management.
- Interest in having a key City brownfield or infill contact, as well as having relevant and pertinent brownfield information readily available. There is ambiguity regarding the roles and responsibilities between the City and the Ministry of Environment.
- Public – Private partnerships could be an avenue where the burden of brownfield redevelopment could be shared between a developer and the City. This could be an option for Corridor Planning "catalyst" sites, or an avenue to leverage
external remediation and redevelopment funding (i.e.: Federation of Canadian Municipalities, other federal or provincial programs, etc.).

- There was some sentiment of caution with respect to the involvement of third party funders, such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, as they sometimes burden projects with extra constraints or restrictions that developers may not be amenable to.

- A major cost for brownfield redevelopment is the soil excavation and disposal aspect of remediation, as there is a lack of adequate local soil disposal locations. There is support for the implementation of a local soil disposal/treatment facility in order to greatly reduce the cost of brownfield redevelopment.

- Financial incentives could be an effective tool to promote and encourage redevelopment in certain high-potential areas of the city. Study grants could provide cost relief for those that need an environmental site assessment in order to secure financing or other funding. There was also interest in a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) model as a brownfield incentive. Tax abatements are also viewed favourably, but participants would like to expand their duration beyond 5 years.

- It was noted that any financial relief would be needed at the start of a brownfield project, as opposed to at the end. The upfront cash infusion greatly helps with remedial and other environmental requirements.

- General support for brownfield interim uses; however, there needs to be a level of oversight in order to ensure reasonable site uses. Much focus was on more urban gardening opportunities, and having the ability to have mini-markets.