Governor Mitt Romney on brownfields and smart growth

Romney announces Economic Development Plan to boost brownfield investments

At an October, 2003 Pittsfield, Massachusetts event, then gubernatorial candidate Mitt Romney’s economic development plan was summarized as follows:

To create more jobs and entice companies to locate to existing sites in urban areas instead of gobbling up open space, Romney’s economic development plan provides three key incentives to will attract businesses to brownfields. The proposals include:

- Doubling the Economic Opportunity Tax Credit from 5 to 10 percent for the redevelopment of a brownfields site;
- Extending the tax credit for brownfield site clean up, which expired this year, for three additional years; and
- Recapitalizing the Brownfields Redevelopment Access to Capital (BRAC) insurance program to mitigate the financial risk for businesses that clean up brownfields.

Towards a Sustainable Commonwealth

In a document entitled, “Towards a Sustainable Commonwealth,” the Romney Administration stated: “Green space must not be what’s left over when the developers and road builders are done. Brownfields redevelopment must take precedent over destruction of open space.” The Governor established objectives to:

- “Increase safe harbor for brownfield pioneers;
- Initiate Green Space initiative to spur brownfield redevelopment;
- 100% increase in number of brownfields sites redeveloped annually over the next four years; and
- Elevate sustainability to a state priority.”

One of the implementing measures of the sustainability plan was a ranking system for reviewing capital requests that included points awarded for localities that, “Have an affirmative strategy for the redevelopment, remediation, and return to productive reuse for brownfields in their community.”

Commonwealth - 10 Sustainability Principles

The following principles were included in a primer, “Smart Growth Resources for Cities and Towns,” published by Governor Romney’s Office of Commonwealth Development in 2006:

- **Redevelop first.** Support the revitalization of community centers and neighborhoods. Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure rather than the construction of new infrastructure in undeveloped areas. Give preference to redevelopment of brownfields, preservation and reuse of historic structures and rehabilitation of existing housing and schools.

- **Concentrate development.** Support development that is compact, conserves land, integrates uses, and fosters a sense of place. Create walkable districts mixing commercial, civic, cultural, educational and recreational activities with open space and housing for diverse communities.
• **Be fair.** Promote equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development. Provide technical and strategic support for inclusive community planning to ensure social, economic, and environmental justice. Make regulatory and permitting processes straightforward, fair, cost-effective, and oriented to encourage smart growth and environmental justice.

• **Restore and enhance the environment.** Expand land and water conservation. Protect and restore landscapes, coastal areas, inland waters, historic sites and critical natural resources. Increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space. Preserve critical habitat and bio-diversity. Promote developments that respect and enhance the state’s natural resources.

• **Conserve natural resources.** Increase our supply of renewable energy and reduce waste of water, energy and materials. Lead by example and support conservation strategies, clean power and innovative industries. Construct and promote buildings and infrastructure that use land, energy, water and materials efficiently.

• **Expand housing opportunities.** Support the construction and rehabilitation of housing to meet the needs of people of all abilities, income levels and household types. Coordinate the provision of housing with the location of jobs, transit and services. Foster the development of housing, particularly multifamily, that is compatible with a community’s character and vision.

• **Provide transportation choices.** Increase access to transportation options, in all communities, including land- and water-based public transit, bicycling, and walking. Invest strategically in transportation infrastructure to encourage smart growth. Locate new development where a variety of transportation modes can be made available.

• **Increase job opportunities.** Attract businesses with good jobs to locations near housing, infrastructure, water, and transportation options. Expand access to educational and entrepreneurial opportunities. Support the growth of new and existing local businesses.

• **Foster sustainable businesses.** Strengthen sustainable natural resource-based businesses, including agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Strengthen sustainable businesses. Support economic development in industry clusters consistent with regional and local character. Maintain reliable and affordable energy sources and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels.

• **Plan regionally.** Support the development and implementation of local and regional plans that have broad public support and are consistent with these principles. Foster development projects, land and water conservation, transportation and housing that have a regional or multi-community benefit. Consider the long-term costs and benefits to the larger Commonwealth.

Is this kind of information useful to your business? If yes, consider joining the National Brownfields Coalition Brownfields Leadership Circle. Learn more at [http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/brownfields](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/brownfields).

1 http://myclob.pbworks.com/w/page/21956384/10-31-2003
2 http://www.scribd.com/doc/81900663/Sustainability
3 http://www.vhb.com/article.asp?pagename=employee_article_SmartGrowthEncouragesBrownfieldRedevelopment
4 http://commpres.env.state.ma.us/publications/smart-growth_QCD.pdf