

## Example excerpts from Metro's Industrial Land Readiness Toolkit

The Employment Land Site Readiness Toolkit project ([see link](#)) in 2020 was designed to help find tools to move challenged industrial and commercial employment sites within the Metro urban growth boundary to development-readiness to accommodate projected growth. A toolkit update in 2023 focuses on smaller sites. Examples of various tools are cited below by summary excerpts from the toolkit.

### Financing and funding

**Low-cost financing** – “There are no silver bullets when it comes to the challenges facing employment lands in our region. The barriers are often interrelated and many sites face multiple barriers that could benefit from a layering of multiple tools. That said, the fundamental challenge to employment land readiness is a lack of available low-cost financing. Many states have implemented powerful financing tools that Oregon could benefit from studying. Most of these boil down to providing much needed, low-cost, long-term financing to projects.”

**Funding for industrial land development** – “Interview Paraphrase - State-Level Economic Development Agency. Broadly speaking, there is limited to no money for industrial lands programs. Existing funding is focused on “traditional” industrial development path (large site, greenfield). State emphasizes job creation, which likewise could run against small scale investments receiving state support.”

### Regulatory improvements

**Low-cost, fast implementation options** - “About half of the tools identified are immediately implementable at the local level and many have no direct cost. These tools are focused on reducing regulatory or process barriers to capture market strength in places where the market is strong.”

**Permit fast tracking for small industry** – “Lack of local permitting capacity is a significant drag on users’ operations and encourages firms to leave the jurisdiction. Small users in particular would appreciate and benefit greatly from a fast track and direct assistance with permitting small buildouts and space improvements.”

### Infrastructure improvements

**District infrastructure upgrades** – “Adding additional square footage or changing uses within existing spaces can trigger both on- and off-site infrastructure upgrades. The infrastructure itself may serve multiple properties but permitting processes typically put the entire cost burden for upgrades onto the permit applicant, even if it’s a small space or site. Districts with small properties need solutions that can help spread these costs over the entire district and over time. Tools like Urban Renewal or Local Improvement Districts require public participation to be initiated and managed but can help unlock the potential of multiple properties all at once.”

**Economic development funding for infrastructure** – “Interview Paraphrase - State-Level Economic Development Agency. The Special Public Works Fund is the state’s main industrial land readiness program. It can fund infrastructure but only limited to traded sector firms and publicly owned infrastructure, with competitiveness and loan-forgivability based on wages and job creation. In other words, this program isn’t geared broadly toward small industrial businesses.”

## Brownfield tools

**Local and state brownfield tax incentives** – “Tax incentives can improve cost feasibility by reducing the tax burden of the company/individual conducting assessment/cleanup activities. Fewer feasibility gaps reduce the barrier to developing employment-ready lands.”

**Brownfield land banks / site assembly**– “Because land banks are tax-exempt organizations that have limited land carrying costs, they are particularly well positioned to aggregate properties – a process that can take a very long time. In addition, land banks can break the chain of title to clear future purchasers of potential liability associated with contamination. This can greatly improve the market potential of brownfield sites.”

**Non-governmental Technical Assistance Provider** – “A third-party technical assistance provider that can maintain confidentiality with property owners and buyers, while simultaneously being a liaison to brownfields programs is a proven approach to raising awareness, minimizing stigma, and bringing needed cleanup resources to sites that would otherwise sit idle, vacant, and blighted.”

## New industrial land

**Major public site reuse** – “A handful of large, publicly-owned sites exist within the region, but their planning and development could have an outsized impact on the region given the magnitude of development, habitat, and open space that could be possible. The development of these large-scale sites poses unique challenges. Traditional surplusing of these large properties in a single transaction leads to very high carrying costs for the purchaser that can steer the new owner towards a development program that maximizes quick cash return, such as a residential subdivision.”

**Gentrification in formerly industrial areas** – “Significant new incentives aimed at retaining or incorporating new employment spaces into rapidly changing areas can provide room for new and needed development types while also bolstering the market potential to deliver uses that would otherwise be priced out like low impact industrial (i.e. - industrial density bonuses).”

**Industrial reuse in commercial zones** – “Reusing existing buildings for new users is, in theory, less costly than new construction. However, adapting spaces originally built for retail or office users for warehouse or low-impact industrial users typically requires a change of occupancy permit that triggers building code upgrades with significant costs.”