



Promoting the Reuse of Oregon Mill Sites

Who are we, and what's our project objective?

In 2015, using the [Collective Impact](#) approach, staff from four Oregon agencies teamed up with the goal of creating the first centralized inventory and map of abandoned or diminished wood-product mill sites ("sites"), a significant subset of Oregon's brownfield sites. Using the definition of mill site in [ORS 197.719](#), the team identified shared interests in potential for reuse that addresses cross cutting needs in economic development, environmental restoration, land use, and health - specifically in rural areas.

What's the issue?

The [wood products industry](#) peaked in the 1970s, and since then the industry and wages that the industry supported have experienced a steady decline. Meanwhile, no single statewide inventory or map exists to identify the status, location, or footprint of these sites. The state has no portfolio to market or characterize the extent or magnitude of these sites. Our team's collective expertise with these sites reveals the risks that they pose. Common hazards include: environmental contamination from previous use, fire/arson, vandalism, drug use, and other illegal, unsafe, or blight-producing activities.

What's the opportunity?

Many of these sites are large, close to town centers, residential areas and infrastructure. These properties present real opportunities to address current needs in unmet demand for housing, jobs, healthcare services, community building spaces, and other amenities that support quality of life.

What did the team do?

Our team created the first statewide database of wood-product mill sites including a searchable inventory of over 500 sites (designed to be modified and added to) as well as a GIS map. The map includes indicators of significance to the four agency's shared priorities (i.e. socio-economic, property status, zoning, etc.). Due to disparate data sources and non-uniform data collection practices the map's accuracy (i.e. exact location of former mill sites; current status of the site property, etc.) is a work in progress. The map is available [here](#) and your input to improve the map is welcomed.

How can you get involved?

Help to identify areas in the state where there is interest and support for reusing mill sites to meet economic, environmental, health, or land use goals and priorities. The team is available to collaborate on regionally significant and local efforts. Please share this resource with interested stakeholders interested in site reuse, including community partners.

- Request a presentation from our team; we are happy to present more about this project and navigate the map features, in person or through a webinar.
- Help us to identify priority areas where this resource and the expertise of brownfield and redevelopment staff from our agencies can be leveraged to reuse these sites.
- Contact us with specific requests for information on mill site funding and technical assistance.

Project Contact

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