



Rachel Ataman - People, planet and profit: Without these, environmental sustainability cannot occur

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My father often discussed success with his three legs of the stool theory; if the three legs are not all in place then the stool will fall. Environmental sustainability can be viewed in this same manner. The three legs being people, planet and profit which is also known as the triple bottom line of environmental sustainability. Not one point is greater than the other and all three need to be equally addressed. When applying this theory to the revitalization of communities through Brownfield redevelopment one can see that profit cannot be left out of the equation. Profit is as equally important component as the planet and people and without profit Brownfield redevelopment will not be sustainable.

Developers can profit from Brownfield redevelopment by purchasing contaminated land or Brownfields and remediating the land during construction. This will save time and money. Contaminated soil can be removed during the excavation of foundations and directly loaded for disposal. There are currently multiple options for contaminated soil disposal that can reduce project costs. Hydro Tech can assist you in working with multiple disposal facilities throughout the tri-state area to identify the best destination for your soil.

New technologies such as the in-situ injection of chemical/biological compounds can also reduce the cost and time frame of the remediation of soil and groundwater. For example, on a State Brownfield Project where a former gasoline station was being developed into a residential building we remediated gasoline contaminated groundwater by injecting biological compounds during the excavation of the building foundation. The remediation was completed by the time the superstructure was erected, approximately one and half years later. The cost of the injection is relatively low when compared to the overall cost of development and older remedial techniques such as air sparge/vapor extraction systems. The remediation did not impact upon development and future residents never had to see any remediation taking place.

The government also offers incentives for Brownfield Remediation. The federal EPA has grant programs for non-profit organizations but both the New York State and New York City offer grants and tax rebates to for profit developers. We have recently entered a new project into the New York State Brownfield Program which will receive approximately 3% of their development cost in tax rebates. Additionally, many properties throughout New York City will qualify for the New York City Brownfield Program which offers grants towards investigation and remediation. Hydro Tech has already entered 4 properties into the New York City Brownfield Program.

The people or the community is another leg of the environmental sustainability stool. Redevelopment of Brownfields will help communities grow by increasing properties values and the overall appearance of the land. Certain communities of New York City have been designated

Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOAs). When development occurs in BOAs then incentives from both New York City and New York State are increased.

Governmental organization and the not-for-profit sector cannot work alone to revitalize neighborhoods through Brownfield redevelopment. In order for it to remain sustainable all three legs of the stool (people, profit and planet) must be equally satisfied. Sustainability is no longer just about saving the earth alone. Contact Hydro Tech today to discuss how we can make your next Brownfield Redevelopment profitable.

Rachel Ataman, LEED AP, is VP of technical services for Hydro Tech, Commack, N.Y.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540