



CESCHI-SMITH says she has overcome enormous obstacles to reclaim eight new brownfields.

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Cities...
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...should...
...is simple:...
...smart growth...
...can all live in...
...communities."

The...table on the Environment...
and the...would agree. In its report on brownfields...
the independent advisory board has called on the federal government to develop a national strategy with input from the provinces and municipalities. Brownfields often lie fallow even when new projects would more than repay costs. Roadblocks, the Round Table found, include a lack of access to capital, liability risks, limited access to insurance protection, regulatory delays, and little awareness in the public and private sectors.

These obstacles need to be cleared if brownfields, particularly in smaller municipalities, are to be given a new life. Ceschi-Smith cites an example in which Brantford is being forced into the potentially expensive position of suing one property owner after the province refused to repossess the land for taxes owing. The province, Ceschi-Smith says, got cold feet and did not want to be saddled with a polluted lot. "Who do we go to now?" asks Ceschi-Smith. "We're totally hamstrung. And, federally, I can't say it's a whole lot better. For the smaller municipalities, what are we supposed to do?"

DANYLO HAWALESHKA

four football fields, was the "Loco Shop" where they built locomotives for many years. Seeing it as an important centrepiece, the CPR did not want it torn down. But because it was simply too large for single use, it had to be cut into three parts. The third became industrial space for three floors. Gutted, the...houses a roof...cery...ad...move...attention to...Ginette Caron...lived in Rosemont...in the parking lot on a...any still in the area, Caron...in connection to the Angus Shops, the Loblaws. "I was really the first time I stepped in there,"...says. "I said to myself, 'I'm standing here my grandfather used to stand.'"

Claude Lachance, a nurse's aide, moved into his new condo nearby in March. Dust rises from the still-unpaved road as cars lurch by. Lachance, 37, was happy not to have to move off the island to find a place to live. "Look at what they did," he says, waving his arm at the homes around him. "It's super nice, and you've got no bridge to commute across—that means a lot." Lachance's contractor gave him a letter stating the area had been cleaned to the province's environmental standards. The letter helped, but it almost wasn't needed. Says Lachance: "I told myself they wouldn't have built all this on a toxic dump." That's all in the past now.

D. H.

CORNWALL, ONT. COTTON MILLS

THE ROUGH-AND-READY east end of Cornwall, Ont., used to have a bad reputation; some might say it still does. But that's changing. *Le Village*—as the area's now sometimes called—is undergoing a welcome transformation that goes beyond the cosmetics of a swish new name. Several older homes sport new siding and roofs, others have been bought cheap, gutted and upgraded, and a few renovated storefronts now dot the commercial strip where once they stood neglected. Home owners are seeing their properties appreciate. Roger Migneault, 63, has lived there for 30 years. He talks about the

positive impact of the new baseball diamonds down the street, close to the St. Lawrence River, and the plans to renovate an old cotton mill a 10-minute walk away in the other direction. "Everybody here is happy with what's been done," says Migneault. "We can't ask for more."

In the early 1900s, teenage boys came off the farms around Cornwall to work in the mills in Migneault's neighbourhood. But as the companies left for cheaper Asian labour, or simply went bankrupt, many of the buildings along prime waterfront real estate became warehouses before being abandoned. Fortunately, the area isn't terribly toxic, says Chuck Charlebois, a former city councillor and volunteer with the Renaissance Group, a not-for-profit corporation trying to improve the area's fortunes. Six fuel tanks 20 m high were removed last year, along with tainted soil. The lot remains fenced off, waiting for development, but at least it's clean and ready to go, says Charlebois.

The Renaissance Group is cobbling together a business plan to turn one five-storey mill building into 48 high-ceiling lofts. Despite being close to the river, the area sometimes feels more populated by pigeons than people. If the group can interest a developer, the \$8.5-million renovation could start as early as next spring, which in turn could spark development of other abandoned buildings nearby. Incentives may be needed. The plans for the lofts call for the demolition of an annex of one building. Disposing of those bricks would normally cost a developer about \$450,000 for dumping rights, says Charlebois, but the city may waive those fees. There is, however, a payoff for city coffers. Current taxes on the building net Cornwall \$22,000 a year. Redeveloped, the lofts would generate \$118,000 annually. "You shouldn't be ashamed to say the developer can make a buck," adds Charlebois—it's money in the pocket for the city, too.

D. H.

PLANS ARE underway to revitalize some prime riverfront real estate

