

**Community Relations Plan
US EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant
Former Reliable Truss Site
246 River Road
New Bedford, Massachusetts**

**DRAFT
September 22, 2009**

1.0 OVERVIEW

In August 2004, the City of New Bedford was awarded a \$200,000 Brownfields Cleanup grant by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the remediation of contamination at the Former Reliable Truss Site (the “Site”) located at 246 River Road in New Bedford, Massachusetts. In accordance with the Cooperative Agreement between the City and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the City is required to prepare a Community Relations Plan (CRP) that outlines the City’s plan for involving the public during the cleanup process.

The purpose of this CRP is to identify the communication strategies that will address the needs and concerns of the citizens of the City of New Bedford, particularly the residents who are directly or potentially affected by the remediation of contamination at the Site.

This CRP describes how the City has involved, and will continue to involve, affected residents, City officials, and local organizations in the decision-making process regarding the environmental remediation efforts at the Site.

Active residents and institutions in the community are essential resources for the success of the CRP as they hold positions of responsibility within the community. The City of New Bedford perceives these citizens and organizations as key points of contact and communication. One measure of success of the environmental remediation hinges on informed citizen involvement in each step of the remediation process.

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2.0 SPOKESPERSON AND INFORMATION REPOSITORY

The spokesperson for this project is Scott Alfonse, Director, City of New Bedford Department of Environmental Stewardship, who may be contacted at:

133 William Street
New Bedford, MA 02740
(508) 979-1487
scott.alfonse@newbedford-ma.gov

The Information Repository is located at the main branch of the New Bedford Public Library, 613 Pleasant Street, New Bedford, MA 02740. Select documents prepared as part of this project will also be available on the City's website at:

<http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/Environmental/EnvironmentalStewardshipMain.html>

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3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

This section provides the historical, geographical, and technical details necessary to show why the Site is being cleaned up.

3.1 Site Location

The Site is located at 246 River Road in New Bedford and is shown on New Bedford Assessors Map 119 as Lots 39, 40, 41, 178, and 42.

3.2 History of Site Use and Ownership

The Site is an approximate 2.9-acre irregularly shaped parcel located at 246 River Road in New Bedford and has a history of commercial use since 1924. A manufacturer of wooden cabinets and a general contractor formerly occupied the Site. The most recent occupant was the Reliable Truss Company, a manufacturer of wooden trusses. In 1999, the buildings on-site became vacant, and were subsequently demolished in August 2001. The vacant Site was used by EPA and its contractor from October 2002 through June 2003 as a staging area for the cleanup of a portion of New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site (Site Number MAD980731335), which borders the Site to the east. Since that time, the Site has remained vacant and partially surrounded by a chain link fence.

The City of New Bedford purchased the property in October 2001. The property was purchased from Trust for Public Land (TPL), a nominee trust, who purchased it from the previous owner, New Bedford Lumber (owner of Reliable Truss). As a nominee trust, TPL helped to broker the deal between New Bedford Lumber and the City by: negotiating the purchase price and demolition of buildings by New Bedford Lumber; and contracting for and providing a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment prior to purchase by the City.

3.3 Nature of Threat to Public Health and the Environment

USEPA Polychlorinated Biphenyl Investigation and Cleanup

Eastern areas of the Site located within 50 feet of the mean high water level of the Acushnet River are considered to be within the New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site under the Comprehensive Environmental Response and Liability Act (CERCLA) or "Superfund." The Former Reliable Truss Site lies within two sections of the Acushnet River located north of Wood Street in New Bedford, Massachusetts identified as Compliance Demonstration Areas (CDAs) 2 and 6.

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In May 2001, sampling was performed by the EPA in floodplain areas of the Acushnet River to identify and assess the extent of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination. Sixty-seven soil and sediment samples were collected from 22 locations at the Site. Total PCB concentrations in soil at the Site ranged from 0.014 to 0.85 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg), which are less than the EPA Maximum Contaminant Level established in the New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site Record of Decision. These soil PCB concentrations are also less than the current MCP Method 1 S-1/GW-2 and S-1/GW-3 soil cleanup standard of 2 mg/kg. Detected concentrations of PCBs in 9 sediment samples collected from 22 locations near the high water line of the Acushnet River ranged from 5.5 to 680 mg/kg, which are above the standards set by both EPA and MassDEP.

EPA conducted remedial actions at areas of the Site included within CDAs 2 and 6 between 2002 and 2003. The remedial actions consisted of excavation and dredging of soils and sediments, and replacing those areas with clean backfill. The average PCB concentrations in 48 post-excavation samples collected from CDA 2 prior to the placement of clean backfill was 4.4 mg/kg. The average post excavation PCB concentration in 61 post excavation samples from CDA 6 was 7.0 mg/kg.

Former Reliable Truss Site Investigations

In addition to the EPA investigation and cleanup, the following historical investigations/assessments have been conducted at the Site:

- Phase I Environmental Site Investigation by Ambient Engineering, Inc. in 2001;
- Phase II Comprehensive Site Assessment by Atlantic Environmental Technologies, Inc. in September 2002;
- Interim Phase II Comprehensive Site Assessment by TRC in June 2007; and
- Additional investigation activities pursuant to the June 2007 Interim Phase II Comprehensive Site Assessment by TRC in September 2008.

Based on the results of the Phase II soil and groundwater testing conducted by Atlantic Environmental Technologies, Inc. in 2002 at the Site, it was concluded that there were three distinct areas of elevated lead concentrations in soil.

In April 2006, TRC conducted additional testing at the Site to better refine the extent of lead-impacted soil in each of these three areas, and to investigate the presence of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). PAHs had been detected in at least one soil sample from the Site at concentrations above applicable MCP Reportable Concentrations (RCs) during previous Site investigations. Additionally, Site soils were tested for PCBs to confirm the findings of the EPA investigations and remedial actions relative to the Site.

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The scope of work, as described in TRC's February 2006 Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) submitted to the EPA, included completion of a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey and the installation of 11 soil borings, two of which were completed as groundwater monitoring wells.

The results of TRC's April 2006 investigation confirmed the presence of lead and PAH-impacted soil in the fill material within the three areas of concern identified above. PCBs were not identified above applicable RCs. Additional findings from TRC's April 2006 investigation are noted below:

- Lead was identified above the applicable RC of 300 mg/kg just outside of Area 3 in the fill material at locations TRC-9, 10, and 11 from the 0-3 ft below ground surface (bgs) sample interval. The original Area 3 boundary was subsequently modified to encompass these locations.
- Cadmium and zinc were identified above the applicable RCs within Area 3 in the fill material from location TRC-8 in the 0-3 ft bgs sample interval.
- Lead and benzo(a)pyrene (a PAH constituent), were identified above the applicable RCs just outside of Area 2 in the fill material at location TRC-6 from the 3-6.5 ft bgs and 5.5-6.5 ft bgs sample intervals, respectively.
- Chromium and nickel were identified above the applicable RCs in Area 2 from the native material at location TRC-4 from the 10-12 ft bgs sample interval.

In January 2007, the seven monitoring wells installed by Atlantic in 2002 could not be located and/or were severely damaged, and necessitated the installation of additional monitoring wells. Four monitoring wells were installed by TRC in January 2007, in addition to the two discussed above, to further assess the groundwater quality across the Site. Groundwater samples were collected from the newly-installed wells in order to assess potential impacts to Site groundwater that may have resulted from contaminated fill materials, past Site uses, and potential encroachment from the adjacent superfund site. Results from this round of sampling supported previous data relating to the extent of lead contamination in all areas on Site, by indicating that lead contamination appears to be confined to the soil matrix, specifically the layer of fill material. Based on groundwater gauging data collected by TRC in February 2007, groundwater flow direction is inferred to the north/northeast across the Site. However, groundwater elevations and flow direction at the Site are likely to vary daily because of influence from tidal fluctuations up to five feet in the adjacent Acushnet River.

TRC submitted an Interim Phase II CSA to MassDEP for the Site on June 19, 2007. The conclusions presented in TRC's Phase II CSA indicated that a more focused delineation of lead in surface soils was warranted south of the Site's southern property boundary.

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Sediment and surface water sampling in the adjacent portion of the Acushnet River and associated wetland was also warranted to further assess the extent of lead contamination.

On September 2, 2008, TRC conducted the sampling activities that were recommended in the June 2007 Interim Phase II CSA. The investigations were conducted under QAPP Addendum E, and consisted of seven sediment samples, four surface water samples, and nineteen soil samples. Results of these investigations are discussed below.

Soil

Lead was detected at a depth of 0-3 feet in soil boring TRC-12 at a concentration of 960 mg/kg, which is above the MCP Method 1 S-1/GW-2 and S-1/GW-3 soil cleanup standard. Based on data recovered from other borings in the immediate vicinity of TRC-12, this location is believed to be an isolated area of elevated lead concentrations.

Soil samples collected in the southern portion of the Site exhibited lead concentrations below the MCP Method 1 S-1/GW-2 and S-1/GW-3 cleanup standard of 300 mg/kg with the exception of a soil sample collected from boring TRC-16 where lead was detected at 1,100 mg/kg.

Sediment/Surface Water

Lead was detected at concentrations in excess of MassDEP soil standards in sediment samples SED-4 and SED-5. Mercury was detected in excess of the applicable standards in sample SED-4, but also in the upstream sample SED-2. Because of this, further sediment sampling for mercury analysis is not necessary as mercury in sediment may be attributable to background/local conditions.

Site investigation and assessment is ongoing. Additional sediment samples are warranted to further delineate the extent of lead identified in SED-4 and SED-5. Further delineation of lead in soil is warranted to the south of boring TRC-16. Also, further sampling is necessary at several locations across the Site to support an evaluation of the human health risk and hazard associated with current and future Site use.

On July 29, 2009, TRC submitted a QAPP Addendum E2 to EPA for review and approval for the additional proposed soil and sediment sampling activities. TRC proposed an additional nine soil borings (TRC-22 through TRC-30) to refine the extent of lead contamination south of boring location TRC-16. Up to two samples will be collected from each boring and analyzed for lead. TRC also proposed up to 16 soil borings (TRC-31 through TRC-46) across the Site to support a risk characterization. One 0-3 foot sample will be collected from each boring location and analyzed for lead. In

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addition to the soil samples, TRC also proposes to collect up to four sediment samples (SED-8 through SED-11) to further delineate the extent of lead contamination in sediment in the vicinity of previous sampling location SED-4 and SED-5.

EPA Cleanup Funds will be used to reduce threats to human health and the environment primarily by further refining and characterizing the contamination at the Site, and then by developing a remedial plan for the Site and remediating contaminated soil.

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4.0 COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

This section will describe the community and its involvement with the Site.

4.1 Community Profile

New Bedford is the seventh largest city in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with an approximate population of 93,768. Situated on the south coast of Massachusetts, the City has a long history as an industrial center. New Bedford's early prosperity was based on three major industries: whaling, the manufacture of fine cotton goods, and general fisheries. However, the business sector today presents a broad diversification in manufacturing, service, retail, and tourism-related operations throughout the City.

The New Bedford Business Park, located in the far north end of the City, is home to preeminent international companies, including Titleist and Foot-Joy Worldwide, and American Flexible Conduit. The City continues to draw a substantial part of its living from the sea. Today, the port is home to more than 225 commercial fishing vessels of various drafts and rigs. New Bedford continues to rank as the nation's number one commercial fishing port in value of landed catch. The working waterfront is home to several national seafood-processing plants, which produce a wide array of products shipped around the world.

Tourism is also a fast-growing segment of the local economy. New Bedford's rich history, the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, New Bedford Whaling Museum and its authentic working waterfront draws increasing numbers of tourists annually. In addition, a continued increase in the number of galleries, museums, and cultural events is earning New Bedford recognition as "a city of art," attracting professional artists, art patrons and visitors of all interests drawn to the City's growing artistic vibrancy.

The City is poised to become a major transportation center. In 2004, fast ferry passenger service began from a new ferry terminal in downtown New Bedford to Martha's Vineyard. The City is nearing completion of the remediation and redevelopment of the former railroad depot site, a 25-acre Brownfields site that had been vacant for decades. The New Bedford Regional Airport has undergone renovations to its passenger terminal and provides regular service to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

New Bedford's demographics present certain challenges. According to 2000 U.S. Census data, the per capita income of \$15,602 is 72 percent of the national average of \$21,587 and 60 percent of the Massachusetts average of \$25,952. Over 20 percent of the population of the City has income below the poverty level, compared to 9.3 percent for the Commonwealth as a whole. Forty percent of households with children are headed by

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females. Twenty-nine percent of children and 17.3 percent of families live below the poverty level, compared to 11.6 percent and 6.7 percent, respectively, for the Commonwealth (U.S. Census, 2000).

The City has historically had high unemployment and low educational attainment rates. According to the Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training (DET), New Bedford's July 2005 unemployment rate was 7.1 percent, compared to 4.9 percent for Massachusetts. The high school dropout rate for the New Bedford School District was 9.3 percent in 2003, six percentage points above the Commonwealth average.

The population of New Bedford has historically been and remains diverse. Roughly one half of the population is Portuguese or of Portuguese descent. According to 2000 Census results, a significant percentage of the City's population are minority:

- 21 percent of the population is “non-white”.
- 10 percent of the population is comprised of Hispanic persons (up from 7 percent in 1990).
- 4 percent of the population is black.
- 6 percent of the population is comprised of persons of multiple race.

A significant percentage of the City's population speaks a language other than English:

- 37.8 percent of residents five years and older speak a language other than English at home (from 2000 Census data)
- 17.3 percent of residents five years and older say they do not speak English very well (from 2000 Census data).

The Site is located in census tract 6503. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, over 27% of the residents within this census tract report speaking a language other than English. Within the census tract, less than 65% of the residents identified as Spanish or as “Other Indo- European languages” (which includes Portuguese) report speaking English “very well”.

The Site is located within *Environmental Justice Population Areas*, as delineated by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). Based on EOEA's Environmental Justice Policy, “*Environmental Justice Populations* are those segments of the population that EOEA has determined to be most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making or to gain access to state environmental resources.”

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Environmental Justice Populations represented in EOE spatial data are defined as neighborhoods (U.S. Census Bureau census block groups, 2000 data) that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The median annual household income is at or below 65 percent of the statewide median income for Massachusetts; or
- 25 percent of the residents are minority; or
- 25 percent of the residents are foreign born, or
- 25 percent of the residents are lacking English language proficiency.

4.2 *Chronology of Community Involvement*

To date, efforts to involve the community in the cleanup planning for this Site has consisted of the following:

On March 1, 2004, the City published a legal notice of its intent to submit an Application for Brownfields Cleanup Funds to EPA for the remediation of the Site to solicit comments on its draft application. No comments were received.

A public presentation and a charette for the development of the Upper Harbor Vision Plan were held on the weekend of February 15, 2008 at the Joseph Abboud Manufacturing Corporation mill located approximately 2 miles from the site. The site is located within the geographic scope of the planning area. The plan was then presented to the community to ensure it was what the public envisioned for the Upper Harbor District. Three meetings with translators available were held on July 30, August 2 and August 7, 2008. One of the common themes expressed during the meetings was the accelerated development of public access points to the water, and specifically at the 246 River Road site.

4.3 *Key Community Concerns*

Through this process, the City will seek public comments on what the community's concerns are relative to the risks posed by the Site or processes which may be used to address those risks. The public input will be summarized and included in this section of the document. Other sections of the document will be revised to as necessary to respond to comments received as part of this process.

One of the goals of this project is to address general concerns expressed by the community relative to the impacts of Brownfields sites. Concerns relayed to City officials at public meetings on other Brownfields sites, and through interaction of City officials with the public, generally center on the potential threat to public health and

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safety from a Brownfields site. The community continues to express concerns about the lack of data available on certain sites, or the potential risk to public health and safety from sites where sufficient data exists.

The community has also expressed concerns about outreach efforts to inform the community about ongoing assessment or cleanup activities at other Brownfields sites. The City has attempted to address this concern by using a variety of communication methods (City website, public meetings, direct mailing, newspaper ads, multi-lingual printed information, and translators at meetings) for informing the public about activities and progress on Brownfields sites.

The City will continue to seek public input on concerns specific to this Site. This section of the document may be revised as necessary to summarize the Site-specific concerns. Other sections of the document may also be revised to respond to comments received as part of this process.

4.4 Benefit to Targeted Community

The City's vision for sustainable reuse of its Brownfields Sites is "... to build a strategic framework that identifies, prioritizes, and enables the successful remediation and sustainable development of New Bedford's Brownfields sites resulting in a reduction in the number of Brownfields sites; a reduction in environmental risks; increased property values; creation of jobs; and an improved image of New Bedford."

It is the explicit intent of the City to continue moving forward with its waterfront Brownfields projects *and* to increase its momentum in addressing sites in other areas of the City that pose significant risks to residents and/or have significant potential future benefit to neighborhood residents and businesses. The Site at 246 River Road represents a major opportunity in both regards.

Specifically, the City expects the targeted community will benefit from the project in the following ways.

The project will facilitate the redevelopment of an underutilized parcel of land.
Vacant and underutilized land detracts from neighborhood aesthetics. Remediation of the Site will help facilitate redevelopment as open space, providing shoreline access where none had previously existed.

The project will address/facilitate a reduction of threats to human health and the environment within the community

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Lead contamination in on-site soil currently exceeds applicable MCP standards. The project will remediate this contamination and reduce the potential health and safety risk to the community living near the Site.

Cleanup activities are expected to have mostly positive impacts on the environment. In general, the work proposed will remediate contamination on Site. It is expected overall impacts to the environment by the proposed work will be positive.

The City will develop strict contract documents to ensure that any contractor's activities will have minimal impact on public safety and the environment. Soil excavated during remediation will be handled in accordance with all applicable regulations designed to minimize impacts on the environment. All contractors will be required to conduct assessment and remedial activities in accordance with a suitable health and safety plan.

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5.0 CONTINUED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In order to solicit public comments on the approach to remediation, a clear understanding of the Site background, the existing health and environmental risks, and need for response actions will be provided. Summaries of data and applicable State regulations will be presented for review. As a part of the remediation planning process, several remedial alternatives have been considered and will be reviewed with the public. These alternatives will be presented along with details relating to cost and public benefit among other criteria.

The City shall place a notice in the New Bedford Standard Times announcing the availability of the Draft Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA), which will evaluate several potential cleanup alternatives for the Site, and identify the most feasible alternative for reducing the risk associated with exposures to Site contamination. The notice will also inform residents that a public meeting about the project will be held on September 29, 2009. A summary of the Draft ABCA will be prepared in English, Spanish, and Portuguese and mailed to abutters.

The legal notice will also announce that the repository of information on this project, including copies of the Community Relations Plan, the Draft ABCA, and environmental assessments, is located at the Main Branch of the New Bedford Public Library, 613 Pleasant Street, New Bedford, MA for viewing during normal business. The Community Relations Plan and the Draft ABCA, including the summaries, will be available on the City's website at:

<http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/Environmental/EnvironmentalStewardshipMain.html>

The legal notice will announce the start of a thirty-day comment period on the Draft ABCA. The City of New Bedford will accept comments on the Draft ABCA during the comment period, and will provide written responses that will become a part of the administrative record. Anyone wishing to comment is strongly urged to submit written comments. However, the City will consider all comments it receives. Comments may be submitted at the meeting, or in writing to the following addresses:

Mail

City of New Bedford, Environmental Stewardship Department, 133 William Street, New Bedford, MA 02740

Electronically

Scott.alfonse@newbedford-ma.gov

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The information repository will be updated with the inclusion of all meeting minutes, progress reports, and other communications as they are generated. Information will be specific as it relates to meeting both State and Federal requirements.

Upon completion of the 30-day comment period, the City shall prepare a Final ABCA that responds to comments received during the comment period. The Final ABCA will be completed within 60 days of the end of the comment period and will be available in the information repository and on the City's website. A summary of the Final ABCA will be prepared in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

The City will communicate the progress and status of the project (including redevelopment plans, funding strategies, and the general project timeline) to the community through the distribution of progress summaries in English, Portuguese, and Spanish that will be mailed to abutters and available in the information repository and on the City's website. Project progress will also be reported through press releases to the local media. The City's consultant responsible for providing technical oversight of the project will present this information to prevent any inaccuracies in disseminating technical information.

Upon completion of the cleanup actions described in the Final ABCA, the City shall prepare a project summary in English, Portuguese, and Spanish describing what has been done to clean up the Site and the final outcome.

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6.0 PROPOSED PROJECT SCHEDULE

July 29, 2009 – City prepares and submits Quality Assurance Project Plan to EPA for review and approval.

September 16, 2009 – City prepares and submits Community Relations Plan to EPA for review and approval.

September 18, 2009 – EPA approves Community Relations Plan; plan is placed in repository and posted on City's website.

September 22, 2009 – City announces notice of availability of Draft ABCA. City schedules public meeting public meeting to present the plan and solicit comments. A legal notice announcing availability of plan is published, marking the beginning of a 30-day public comment period on the plan.

September 29, 2009 – City holds public meeting to present the plan and solicit comments.

October 22, 2009 – Public comment period ends.

November 6, 2009 – City issues Final ABCA.

November 16, 2009 – Cleanup project begins.

December 31, 2009 – Cleanup project completed.

February 26, 2010 – City submits project closeout documentation.

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