

Former Fonda Group Inc. Facility Community Relations Plan

Demolition and Environmental Remediation to Ready Site for Commercial/Industrial Redevelopment

Overview

The purpose of the Community Relations Plan (CRP) is to describe the City of St. Albans' strategy to address the needs and concerns of City residents potentially affected by the proposed removal of environmental contamination present at the former Fonda Group, Inc. Facility (Fonda Site) located at 15-21 Lower Newton Street, St. Albans City, Vermont.

The CRP outlines how the City will continue to involve affected residents, City officials and local organizations in the decision-making process regarding the environmental cleanup at the Fonda Site.

Active residents involved in community issues are essential resources for the success of the CRP because they have a comprehensive understanding of the St. Albans area and they hold positions of responsibility within the community. The City perceives these citizens as key points of contact and communication with the St. Albans community. The success of the environmental cleanup and subsequent redevelopment of the Fonda Site hinges on informed citizen involvement in each step of the cleanup process.

Spokesperson and Information Repository

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The Information Repository is also located at the City offices at the above address. All public meetings will be held at the Information Repository offices in the City Council Chambers.

Site Description

The Fonda Site is located at 15-21 Lower Newton Street, in St. Albans City, Vermont. The Site occupies approximately 5.5 acres and topographically relatively flat to gently sloping down from east to west. The Site is bounded by Lower Newton Street on the south; the former Central Vermont Railroad now owned by RailAmerica is located to the west, residences to the east, and the Fitness Zone to the north. The property is composed of a former paper product manufacturing facility, a separate boiler house and storage shed, surrounding parking areas and driveways, and a forested area to the north of the building. The main manufacturing facility is comprised of three interconnected buildings (#1, #2, and #3 from south to north). The City of St. Albans plans to demolish Buildings #1, #2, and #3 in preparation for Site redevelopment. Immediately following demolition of the buildings, the concrete slab will be left in-place for potential remediation and reuse by the prospective redevelopers, and the Site will continue to be

unoccupied until redevelopment occurs. During demolition, the City of St. Albans intends to undertake cleanup activities associated with building demolition using grant funds from the City's EPA Cleanup Grant.

Site History

The property operated as a paper product manufacturing facility since its development beginning in the 1940s. The most recent tenant, Solo Cup Company, ceased operations in 2005. Buildings on the property have been expanded upon and modified throughout the operating period up until the current building configuration. Building #1 was constructed circa 1942 and historically housed offices, paper product production machines, a loading dock, maintenance areas, and a cafeteria. Building #2 was constructed in 1953 and housed paper products manufacturing equipment, a loading dock, the hazardous waste storage room, the ink storage/mixing room, and the printing equipment. Building #3 was constructed in 1956 and housed paper product manufacturing equipment, a printing area, the paper shredder, a loading dock, and the warehouse.

Nature of Threat to Public Health and Environment

There are three known potential sources of environmental conditions at the Site:

- 1) Historical Solvent and Ink Usage: before 1969, inks used at the Site were solvent-based and also contained heavy metals, including lead, chromium and barium. Ink staining was observed inside and outside of the Ink Room in Building #2. The integrity of the piping connected to floor drains was unknown.
- 2) Former Underground Storage Tanks (USTs): Two USTs were formerly located at the Site: a 10,000 gallon, 2 compartment tank that contained acetone and ethyl acetate; and an 8,300 gallon heating oil UST. No confirmatory soil or groundwater samples appeared to have been collected during either tank closure. The distribution piping for the solvent tank was reportedly rinsed and left in place, although integrity testing did not appear to have been conducted.
- 3) Chemical Storage: Two floor drains were located near the ink storage locations, with limited ink staining present on the floor near the drains.

The Johnson Company was contracted by the NRPC under the Northwest Brownfield Program (funded by EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants) to perform a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) update for the Site in December 2007 and a subsequent Phase II ESA was conducted between February and October 2008. The Phase II Environmental Site Assessment included sampling for metals, PCBs, VOCs, and SVOCs. Following the presentation of Phase II ESA results, The Johnson Company completed additional investigation activities to assess the impacts of chlorinated VOCs to groundwater downgradient of the source area beneath Building #2. These investigations are in the information repository on the project and are available for public inspection at the Planning and Development Office, City Hall, 100 North Main Street, St. Albans, Vermont.

Remedial actions are necessary at the Site due to the presence of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), metals, and chlorinated volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in some soil above regulatory limits, chlorinated VOCs in some groundwater above regulatory limits, PCBs in some concrete at concentrations that exceed

applicable Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) regulatory limits, metals above regulatory limits in surface water inside the building, and asbestos-containing building materials. At their present concentrations and locations, these contaminants may present a risk to human health during or following redevelopment of the Site.

When the Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) are completed, notice of their availability will be published in the St. Albans Messenger for public comment. A copy will also be available in the information repository at City Hall.

Community Background

The Fonda site is located in the northwestern edge of St. Albans City. The housing stock is made up of predominately single-family homes built prior to 1939 and the predominant land use of the area is mixed residential and commercial.

The Site is within 2000 Census Tract 107 having within that tract 3,776 persons, 1,593 households, and 939 family households. The median income is below the HUD guidelines for people with incomes within low to moderate guidelines. According to the 2000 US Census, fourteen percent of the population falls below the poverty level.

Although the Fonda site is just outside of the City of Saint Albans designated downtown, it is in the proposed Growth Center.

The City of St. Albans has a proud history of serving the working landscape of Franklin County. With an extensive railway network, the City served as the center of commerce and culture for the County and beyond. This proud history, however, had a dark side that would not become apparent until well into the Twentieth Century. The businesses that depended on the rail line were far from what today we would call “clean industries.” These businesses manufactured and stored a variety of chemicals, solvents, and hazardous waste that today we know have detrimental effects on human health.

It is these contaminated properties that St. Albans will clean and turn into this Century’s opportunities – and restore the City’s proud place in history.

Our two square mile City is divided by a once-active railway that now features a series of 4-acre brownfield sites. Of the six possible sites for redevelopment in our community, all have some level of contamination and are considered brownfields. Since the City is geographically small, most of these brownfields are adjacent to residential neighbors. In general, these sites are characterized by boarded-up historic buildings. Asbestos-containing materials are compromised and lead-based paint is peeling and contaminating surrounding soil. Most sites are neglected, so grass is not mown, trash has accumulated, and “No Trespassing” signs abound. The future of these sites cannot depend on the private sector. Prospective developers are sufficiently experienced to know that redevelopment of these properties can only be achieved with community commitment and public funding assistance.

The Fonda/Solo site is a shuttered manufacturing facility, providing no positive impact on the community; rather it is a boarded-up shell that deteriorates every day – well on its way to

becoming even more of a community liability. Although the site is locked, the possibility of vandalism and negative effects to those trespassers is real.

Chronology of Community Involvement

Over the past several years, the City has worked closely with the community, local officials, interested stakeholders, and the Northwest Brownfield Steering Committee in planning the investigation and cleanup of the site. Community outreach efforts have included newsletters, information brochures, letters to adjacent landowners, and a community meeting regarding the results of an environmental investigation conducted at the site – 15-21 Lower Newton Street which detailed the types of contaminants found. A second public meeting was held discussing a downgradient groundwater investigation.

Key Community Concerns

From the ongoing Community Relations efforts, it was learned that local residents were concerned about the nature and extent of environmental contamination, especially the downgradient groundwater investigation, and the proposed re-use plans for the site.

From an environmental perspective, the community meetings addressed the site investigation efforts and the results of the downgradient groundwater investigation. Information was shared with residents concerning the types of contaminants that were discovered during the investigation and the corresponding environmental risks. Proposed cleanup plans were also discussed.

Continued Community Involvement

A legal notice will be placed in the local newspaper announcing the intended demolition at the site and to notify residents of a public meeting regarding the demolition and removal efforts. The announcement will also be placed in other locations including but not limited to, the City of Saint Albans website: www.stalbansvt.com, and Taylor Park Kiosk. In conformance with Brownfields Cleanup Grant requirements, the legal notice will also announce that the information repository on this project, including the environmental assessments, risk assessments and other environmental information is located at the City offices and is available for viewing by appointment in the Office of Planning and Development, 100 North Main Street, St. Albans (524-1500 ext. 265).

The notice will also announce the start of a thirty-day comment period on the draft Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and Corrective Action Plan (CAP). The City will accept comments on the ABCA/CAP during the comment period and will provide written responses which will become part of the administrative record. The information repository will be updated with the inclusion of all meeting minutes, status report and other communications.

In order to facilitate ongoing community involvement over the duration of the project the City will post regular updates to the website including information on who to contact with questions, comments or concerns. All questions will be answered in a timely manner with questions and answers posted to the website. Periodic press releases will also notify the public of major activities such as, start and finish up cleanup. They will also address milestones and future public meetings to encourage public participation and maintain an open process. A public

meeting will be held when the redevelopment plans have been finalized to explain plans and solicit and address comments/concerns.