



# City of Bristol

BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT 06010

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

**Former H.J. Mills Property  
149-151 Church Street  
Map 30 Lots 61-1A and 61-2  
Bristol, CT 06010  
EPA Grant # 2B-96111401**

### **Overview**

The purpose of the Community Relations Plan (CRP) is to describe the City of Bristol's strategy to address the needs and concerns of Bristol's residents potentially affected by the proposed removal of environmental contamination present at the Former H.J. Mills (Mills) property located at 149-151 Church Street Assessor's Map 30 Lots 61-1A and 61-2. The CRP outlines 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 cleanup at the site.

Active residents involved in neighborhood issues are essential resources for the success of the CRP because they have a comprehensive understanding of the Bristol downtown business district and the West End Neighborhood area where the site is located. The City perceives its residents as key points of contact and communication. The success of the environmental cleanup and subsequent redevelopment of the Mills property hinges on informed citizen involvement in each step of the cleanup process.

### **Spokesperson and Information Repository**

The Spokesperson for this project is Robyn L. Bugbee, Grants Administrator for the City of Bristol, and may be contacted at:

Bristol City Hall  
Bristol Development Authority Office, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
111 North Main Street  
Bristol, CT 06010  
Phone: 860-584-6190  
Hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM through 4:30 PM  
E-mail: [hjmillscleanup@ci.bristol.ct.us](mailto:hjmillscleanup@ci.bristol.ct.us)

The Information Repository is also located at Bristol City Hall at the above address and during the above hours. Public meetings will be held at various community based organizations throughout the project period. Meeting announcements will be made well in advance and will include location, time, and topic. Information regarding the project, including meeting announcements, will also be posted on the City of Bristol website at <http://www.ci.bristol.ct.us/hjmillscleanup> .

## **Site Description and History**

### **Site Location**

The Mills property is located at 149-151 Church Street and consists of three parcels: Assessor's Map 30 Lot 49-50; Assessor's Map 30 Lot 61-1A; Assessor's Map 30 Lot 61-2. This CRP is for the parcels of the Mills property encompassed by Assessor's Map 30 Lots 61-1A and 61-2 and comprise 0.4 acres.

The site is located in the southern portion of the Bristol downtown business district and adjacent to the West End Neighborhood. The area has mixed uses. The residential population is mostly low to middle income and elderly, and contains the City's largest Hispanic contingent. There is a preponderance of child care facilities that cater to low income families in the area as well. The area is also home to small retail and commercial operations as well as to a number of service agencies. The neighborhood needs added parking, but even more importantly it needs to have this property become an asset.

### **Site History**

The Mills Property has been an abandoned and blighted site in our downtown business district for twenty-three years. The entire property is bisected from east to west by a culverted stream historically known as Ivy Brook. The site housed a paper and cardboard box manufacturing facility dating from approximately 1895 through 1985, at which point the site was abandoned. A fire destroyed the facility in December 1998, and the building remains were immediately demolished and removed from the site by the City. The City acquired the property in July 1999 through foreclosure due to tax arrearage and lack of a living owner. In March 1999, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded the City a Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) grant, and Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments of the property were conducted by Metcalf & Eddy. In September 1999, the City engaged an environmental firm to remove a heating-oil underground storage tank and to effectuate a closure of the same on the site. Based in part on the work done through the TBA and the underground storage tank closure, the City applied for and was awarded an EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots (Assessment) grant in August 2001. As part of our Assessment grant, a Phase III environmental site assessment including a conceptual remediation plan and cost estimate was completed for the Mills Property site. The City has determined that the most appropriate reuse of the site is a community parking lot. In September 2008, the City used the data from the environmental site assessments to engage an environmental consulting firm with additional expertise in engineering and landscape architecture to develop three conceptual designs and cost estimates for concurrent remediation and construction for the site.

## **Nature of Threat to Public Health and Environment**

The Assessor's Map 30 Lots 61-1A and 61-2 parcels of the Mills Property contain two contiguous areas targeted for remediation based upon the Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III environmental site assessments that have been performed. The end use of the property as a community parking lot will facilitate remediation to the CT DEP RSR industrial/commercial criteria. It is assumed that compliance with the CT DEP RSRs will require excavation to the water table at six and a half feet in the impacted areas. The conceptual remediation plan includes both removal and encapsulation of contaminated soil, the implementation of no disturbance and no residential use Environmental Land Use Restrictions (ELURs), and monitoring the effect of the remediation on groundwater quality. It is expected that monitoring of groundwater will be ongoing for a two year period upon completion of the soil remediation.

Copies of the Phase I, Phase II and Phase III environmental site assessments along with documentation related to the heating-oil underground storage tank closure are in the project Information Repository and are available for public inspection at the location and during the hours listed above. The City will engage an environmental consultant/engineering firm to implement the concurrent remediation and redevelopment of the site as a community parking lot. One of the responsibilities of the firm will be the development of an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA). Upon completion of the ABCA, it will be maintained in the Information Repository and be available for public inspection at the location and during the hours listed above.

## **Community Background**

### **Community Profile**

The City of Bristol has a long history of manufacturing in clock making, brass products, primary and fabricated metals, specialty springs, wire goods, machinery, and machine and automotive parts. By 1995, the City had lost all of its significant manufacturing businesses. Unfortunately, that history has left a legacy of vacant, underutilized, and contaminated properties throughout the City. Through an informal inventory in 2001, the City identified six Brownfield sites. Since then, as the developable land area in the City has continued to shrink, the list of sites noted as potentially contaminated has become longer and has grown to seventeen. Nearly 60% of the Brownfield sites, ten of seventeen, are located on the gateways to or within our downtown business district. In fact, five, or 30%, of the sites, including the Mills Property, are clustered in Census Tract 4061, an area encompassing only 0.62 square miles.

Of the ten sites on the gateways to or in the downtown business district, seven are vacant; within Census Tract 4061, three of the five sites are vacant. This concentration of unused, blighted, and contaminated properties lends a sense of shabbiness and hopelessness to the neighborhood. It also provides opportunity for mischief and vandalism, and promotes the use of the area by the City's indigent population.

Data from the Bristol Police Department for the period from October 8, 2007 through October 8, 2008 shows a higher incidence of criminal activity in the area including Census Tract 4061 and the neighboring Federal Hill neighborhood than for the City as a whole in a number of categories. Vulnerable populations data show a striking preponderance of indicators within Census Tract 4061 as compared to the City as a whole, to the State of Connecticut, and to the

nation. Vulnerable populations include the elderly, children, low birth weight babies, unmarried new mothers, teen mothers, and minority residents. Census Tract 4061 contains eight schools with another three schools adjacent to the area. Four of the schools provide Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) only with the remaining seven schools providing a range of grades from Pre-K through Grade 8. The capacity of the eleven schools is 3,663 students. Bristol-Burlington Health District (BBHD) collects asthma case data on schools providing Pre-K through High School, but not for those providing Pre-K only. According to the BBHD, asthma cases in these schools have increased over time, from 116 in the 2004-05 school year to 164 in the 2007-08 school year. Additionally, the schools in or approximate to Census Tract 4061 account for 31.8% of the schools for which data is collected, but contain 39% of the reported asthma cases. In addition to the obstacles to redevelopment posed by Brownfields in the downtown area, Census Tract 4061 is home to a disproportionate number of low income individuals and families within the City. These rates are also disproportionately high compared to the State and nation.

The data clearly shows that the City and particularly Census Tract 4061 in which the Mills Property is located is economically depressed. The State of Connecticut has recognized Bristol's dilemma and has designated the City as a "Distressed Municipality" for the past nine years. Cleanup and reuse of the Mills Property will provide a spark that will help to ignite revitalization of the surrounding properties and, hopefully, the entire downtown district.

### **Chronology of Community Involvement**

As discussed earlier, the City has performed a Phase III environmental site assessment of the Mills Property using EPA Assessment grant funds. Part of our responsibility under the grant was community outreach and dissemination of information regarding the outcomes of the Phase III assessment. A public meeting was held upon the conclusion of the assessment to inform the community of the types and degrees of contamination that were found, to propose potential reuse of the site, to answer any questions or concerns from the community, and to receive community input on future site cleanup and reuse. The City proposed cleanup to CT DEP industrial/commercial RSRs and reuse of the property as a parking lot for the Bristol Board of Education. The participants in the public meeting agreed that the property should be redeveloped as a parking lot, but overwhelmingly felt that the usage should not be restricted solely to the Board of Education. The City has continued to reach out to the community regarding the property reuse since the completion of the grant. Based upon community wishes and direction from City planning and land use boards, the City has decided that the site will be used as a community parking lot. This use will be beneficial to nearby social service and arts groups, private businesses, and neighborhood residents.

In preparation for making application to EPA for this Brownfields Cleanup Grant, the City engaged AKRF to develop three conceptual designs for the concurrent cleanup and construction of the community parking lot. A public meeting was held to disseminate information regarding the nature and extent of contaminants on the site, to present the conceptual designs for concurrent cleanup and construction of the community parking lot, and to solicit initial public input on the conceptual designs. Support for all three designs was exhibited as well as suggestions that variants of the three designs using elements from some or all of the designs might present better options.

## **Key Community Concerns**

From ongoing community relations activities, it has been learned that local residents were concerned about the nature and extent of environmental contamination, the proposed reuse plans for the site, and the economic development value for the entire neighborhood of proposed reuse plans.

Community meetings have addressed the site investigation efforts and results. Information has been shared regarding the types of contaminants discovered and the corresponding environmental risks. A proposed cleanup and reuse plan was presented and extensive public input received. Based upon the public input, the reuse plan was modified from a single-use parking lot to a community parking lot. Subsequently, three alternate conceptual remediation and parking lot designs were developed and presented publicly for community input. Further community input is needed prior to final selection of a concurrent remediation and community parking lot design.

## **Continued Community Involvement**

The City has entered into partnership with six community based organizations, our Community Partners, to implement the cleanup and reuse of the Mills property. These Community Partners will have key roles in ensuring that community involvement continues throughout the project period. Following is a listing of the organizations and their roles/commitments to the project:

<b>Community Partner</b>	<b>Role/Commitment</b>
Bristol Baptist Church	-Outreach to parishioners -Outreach to other faith-based organizations -Hosting a public informational meeting
Bristol Boys & Girls Club/Imagine Nation Museum	-Outreach to proximal child care families -Hosting a public informational meeting
Bristol-Burlington Health District	-Collection and analysis of school-based asthma data -Participation in all informational meetings
Bristol Community Organization	-Outreach to Hispanic, low-income, and proximal child care families -Provide Spanish language translation of outreach materials -Provide Spanish-speaking translator for all public informational meetings
Bristol Preschool Child Care Center	-Outreach to proximal child care families
Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce	-Marketing and outreach to the business community -Hosting two informational meetings for the business community

It is important to the City that the community engagement that occurred with our previous work on the site continues as we move forward with cleanup and redevelopment activities. To that end, the conceptual remediation/parking lot designs developed by AKRF will be the subject of the City's first community outreach public meeting so that the community's voice will become a

major factor in the final selection of remedial/construction design, and development of the draft Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA). The draft ABCA is expected to be available in early spring 2010. The City will accept public comment on the draft ABCA for a period of 30 days from the date of availability. An announcement that the draft ABCA is available and open for public comment will be placed on the project webpage at <http://www.ci.bristol.ct.us/hjmillscleanup>. The draft ABCA will also be placed on the webpage; it will also be available for viewing by the public at the Information Repository at the location and during the hours referenced above. Additionally, a meeting will be held to solicit public input on the draft ABCA; the meeting date, time and location will be posted on the project webpage. Comments on the draft ABCA will be accepted in writing and during the public meeting. Minutes of the public meeting will be posted on the project website. Written comments may be submitted by e-mail to [hjmillscleanup@ci.bristol.ct.us](mailto:hjmillscleanup@ci.bristol.ct.us) or may be mailed or dropped off at the Information Repository. All written comments received within the 30 day comment period as well as those received during the public meeting will be considered by the City and its environmental consultant/engineering firm for inclusion in the final ABCA. Responses to written comments and those from the public meeting will be posted on the project website at the completion of the 30 day comment period. Additional public meetings will be held at the mid-point of the project to provide information, answer questions, and receive comments on project progress. A final public meeting will be held close to the conclusion of remediation. Two additional information meetings will be held for members of the Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) to inform the business community of the work and to solicit their input. Meetings will be scheduled in the early evening to accommodate the needs of working families. The meetings for the general public will be held in locations close to the site: The Imagine Nation Museum, the Bristol Baptist Church, and City Hall. Meetings for the business community will be held at the GBCC. In addition to public meetings, the City, in conjunction with our environmental consultant/engineering firm and Community Partners, will develop informational flyers that will be distributed to the community at large with special emphasis on residents and businesses located in Census Tract 4061 in which the site is located. All written materials for both meetings and general distribution will be provided in Spanish and English. A Spanish speaking interpreter will attend all public meetings to ensure that information presented and received is understood by all. Public meetings will be taped by City staff and will be aired on Nutmeg Public Access TV.