

**Community Relations Plan**  
**U.S. EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grant/Loan**  
**116 Cook Avenue– Remediation Project**  
**Meriden, Connecticut**  
**February 2014**

## **Overview**

The purpose of the Community Relations Plan (CRP) is to explain the City of Meriden's (the City) strategy to address resident's concerns with contamination at 116 Cook Avenue (the site). The CRP explains how the City has involved, and will continue to involve, affected residents, local organizations and City officials in the decision-making process with regard to environmental remediation at the site.

The success of the remediation activities and redevelopment is based on a process which is open and transparent to all affected citizens. The City has diligently notified and solicited feedback from active individuals and community organizations.

## **Spokesperson and Information Repository**

The spokesperson for this project is Juliet Burdelski, Director of Economic Development for the City of Middletown. She may be contacted at:

143 East Main Street  
Meriden, CT 06450  
(203)-630-4152  
[www.meridenbiz.com](http://www.meridenbiz.com)

The Information Repository is located at the Meriden Public Library, 105 Miller Street. All public meetings will be held at City Hall which is across the street from the Library where the Information Repository is located.

## **Site Description and History**

The site consists of 2.8 acres with a vacant 72,473 ft<sup>2</sup> 4-story building located at 116 Cook Avenue in Meriden, Connecticut. The building is adjacent to the Factory H (104 Butler Street and 77 Cooper Street) a former cutlery industrial complex, which was recently demolished.

Historically, the site was used for silverware, cutlery and possible pewter manufacturing during the late 1800s in addition to gun manufacturing in the early 1900s. During the 1970s, the building was converted into medical offices and was most recently used by the Meriden Medical Center until approximately the year 2000.



The City of Meriden conducted a Preliminary Reuse Planning and Market Analysis for Factory H Area in 2009, using funding from an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. This report contained a comprehensive redevelopment plan for 116 Cook Avenue and the adjacent INSILO Factory H site. The redevelopment plan for the site includes the removal of a vacant building that attracts vandals, illegal activity, and brings down neighboring property values. The plan outlined a number of improvements to 116 Cook Avenue that would reintegrate two vacant industrial sites into the community and in the process improve the environment, social fabric, and health of the community. The redevelopment of 116 Cook Avenue will create a mixed-use development with approximately 14,880 square feet of commercial space and three floors of 44 new residential units. The total proposed redevelopment, including those of Factory H, would create 86 units of housing and just over 35,000 square feet of commercial space. 116 Cook Ave in conjunction with the already demolished Factory H can provide an excellent development site particularly after the Harbor Brook improvements are implemented.



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

A number of environmental investigations as well as cleanup activities have been conducted at the site from 1987 to 2011 including the following:

- ERL Environmental Investigations, February 1987, April 1989
- ERL Remedial Action, June 1989
- Rizzo Environmental Investigations, October 1999, December 1999, January 2000
- Geoquest Environmental Review, April 2003
- AECOM, Phase I ESA, November 2009
- Tighe & Bond, Phase II ESA, February 2011
- Tighe & Bond, Phase III ESA, November 2011

It has been determined that the site has been impacted by former industrial activities. Notably, lead was detected in the soil above cleanup criteria during the ERL investigations. This prompted the CT Department of Energy and the Environment (CTDEEP) to require the excavation and removal of lead-impacted materials to cleanup criteria existing at the time. The Meriden Medical Center removed the lead-impacted materials in 1989. The impact was concentrated in an ash layer beneath the parking lots in two excavation areas (Areas 1 and 2) from a depth of 2 inches to 2 feet below ground surface. The cleanup standard that existed at the time was leachable lead is higher than the current standard.

Approximately 1,200 cubic yards (CY) of material characterized as hazardous for lead was removed from two areas on the site. At the time, active remediation was being

performed at the gas station. Approximately 10 CY of petroleum-impacted material was removed from the site.

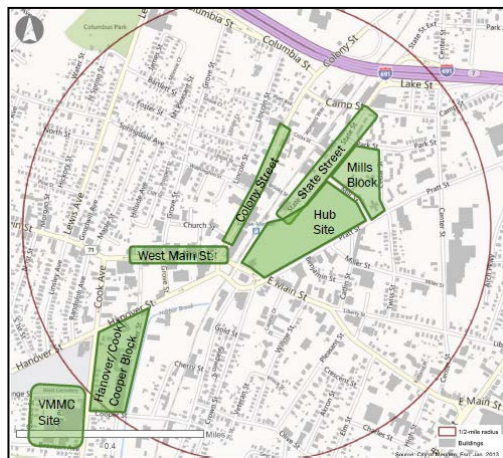
The Phase I ESA conducted by AECOM in 2009 identified 14 Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) at the site, which were further investigated during Tighe & Bond's February 2011 Phase II ESA. Based on the results of the Phase II investigation, Tighe & Bond completed a Phase III ESA at the site in November 2011. The purpose of the Phase III ESA was to further delineate areas of impact discovered in the Phase II ESA and areas requiring remediation to achieve compliance with the CT RSRs.

Analytical results from the Phase III ESA indicated that releases of site constituents of concern (COCs) including extractable total petroleum hydrocarbons (ETPH), polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and metals have occurred to soil and groundwater from historical use of site.

The proposed remedial activities at the site include the removal of a 10,000-gallon UST, the excavation and disposal of TCE-impacted soil, and removal of oil from hydraulic elevators from the interior of the site building.

### Community Background

The subject site is located in the Dutch Hill/Action 13 neighborhood and within a half mile of the Meriden HUB site and the central business district (West Main & Colony Streets) Located in Census Tract 1709, this area has a population of 2,006 persons of which 18.2% are black and 51.2% are Hispanic (2010 Census). The area's aggregate per capita income is only \$14,545, while the unemployment rate is 21.8%. Of the project area's family households, 31.3% are females with children. Relative to housing, the project area has 816 housing units of which 56% are rental, 29.3% are owner-occupied, and 14.7% are vacant. Portions of the Dutch Hill/Action 13 neighborhoods contain high-rise elderly housing which was built in the 1970s and 1980s. This area represents some of the highest unemployment rates, poverty rates and largest minority population in the City.



### Chronology of Community Involvement

The City of Meriden has an ongoing brownfields community involvement program through its Blight & Brownfields Committee. The B&B Committee was formed in October 2002 to guide the City in redeveloping underutilized/vacant/ brownfields properties and to support anti-blight efforts. The B&B Committee includes members of key stakeholder groups in Meriden—non-profits, state and federal agencies, local government, and community-based organizations. Meriden Children First and the Health Department are also key partners. The B&B Committee was consulted prior to the City submitting the application for cleanup funding.

From 2010-2012, the City held six community meetings in the evening, at locations convenient to stakeholders, which targeted specific neighborhoods and populations within our target Brownfield areas. Over 150 residents and businesses participated in these meetings. The B&B Committee played a significant role in having their members/constituents attend the community-wide meetings, by announcing the events at individual group meetings, passing out flyers, word of mouth, and social media. These workshops strived to involve the Spanish-speaking immigrant populations and all notices were provided in Spanish. Priorities for building sustainable neighborhoods were developed and prioritized with the city. These included testing and cleaning play areas for children, use of green infrastructure, working on substandard housing, and engaging new residents in pre-school and social service programs intended to integrate them more fully into the neighborhood. A copy of the final "Healthy Neighborhoods" report is available online at:

<http://www.meridenbiz.com/images/customerfiles//MeridenhealthyneighborhoodNov2010.pdf>

The City and the B&B committee is working on implementing recommendations that resulted from this community outreach process. The City of Meriden notified the community about the cleanup application for the 116 Cook Avenue property in a number of different ways. The City and Economic Development website contained postings indicating the application was being prepared and encouraged public participation. A final copy of the application and environmental reports for the site were also made available on the website.

The community was notified of the City of Meriden's intent to apply for a USEPA Cleanup grant on November 9, 2011. The ad announced that the City was soliciting public comments on and review of the draft Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA).

### **Continued Community Involvement**

The B&B Committee meets on a regular basis. All meetings are open to the public. Meeting notices are posted on the City and Economic Development websites. Public notices are also issued in the *Record Journal* when applicable.

At these meetings, all brownfields issues and cleanup progress will be discussed. Information about the cleanup progress will be posted on the website and distributed to the community/stakeholder mailing list. The meetings will occur at times when it is convenient for the community to attend. The City will work with consultants to make sure that the technical information that is presented at these meeting uses language that is easily understandable for people in their native language, avoids jargon, and is presented in easy to follow graphics. All information will be available in both English and Spanish. Blight & Brownfields committee meetings, or other public meetings, if required, will be scheduled at key milestones of the cleanup process.

An online presence will be created for the 116 Cook Ave. cleanup project. A 116 Cook Ave. cleanup page will be created under the Brownfields heading on the City of Meriden's economic development website at [www.meridenbiz.com](http://www.meridenbiz.com). When appropriate, project updates and other information will be posted on the City of Meriden's Facebook page. This online presence will serve as a source of news and information regarding the site and its status. Flyers announcing meetings will be posted by community groups, distributed to all neighborhood associations, and made

available at City Hall, the City Health Department, and Public Library. All project information will also be made available on the City of Meriden's Brownfield webpage.

The City has recently completed a Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and Alternative Brownfields Cleanup Analysis (ABCA) for the project. We are in the process of placing a legal notice in the Record Journal notifying City residents these documents are available for review. The legal notice will begin a 45 day public comment period and will inform the public that all materials related to the assessment; remediation and development of the site will be available for public review during normal business hours and/or by appointment at the Meriden Public Library. Any public comment garnered during this comment period will become part of the administrative record along with meeting minutes, status reports, and other communications for the project. The City will work with its consultant, EPA Project Manager, B&B Committee, as well as local and state agencies to address public comments and/or concerns for the project.

### **CRP Implementation and Updates**

The City of Meriden will be responsible for implementation of this CRP. This plan will be consulted during the course of the cleanup program at 116 Cook Ave to ensure appropriate community involvement and stakeholder engagement is fulfilled. This plan, and associated contacts and information, will be updated as necessary during the project.