

City of Peabody, Massachusetts



Community Relations Plan

EPA Brownfields Cleanup Program

January 4, 2012

**Department of Community Development & Planning
Peabody City Hall
24 Lowell Street
Peabody, Massachusetts 01960**

**PROJECT: 45 Walnut Street- Brownfields Clean Up
Cooperative Agreement Number: BF-96132301-0**

**City of Peabody
EPA Brownfields Clean-up Grant**

**45 Walnut Street
Community Relations Plan**

I. OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

A Community Relations Plan “CRP” is a required component of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Cleanup Grant program. The purpose of the Community Relations Plan is to describe the City of Peabody strategy to address any needs or concerns which the local residents may have about the proposed removal of environmental contamination present at the site known as “45 Walnut Street” within the North River corridor in downtown Peabody. The community relations program is designed to address issues of public concern, inform interested citizens and officials about the progress of the site activities, and provide information about opportunities for public involvement at the Site. This CRP and the community relations activities will be an on-going effort by the City and EPA. Changes to this CRP will be made periodically as needed. Any comments or questions on this CRP should be sent to the spokesperson indicated in the below section.

The 45 Walnut Street site is one of the City’s initiatives focusing on downtown revitalization as well as future development of the Riverwalk. This project will remediate and redevelop the 1.3 acre lot for the purpose of a public park. The redevelopment of 45 Walnut Street will provide much needed passive and active recreation opportunities within walking distance to the downtown and to many family residences. Additionally, it will help revitalize the downtown by restoring a vacant brownfield lot and increase the acreage of open space near the future Riverwalk Trail.

SPOKESPERSON AND INFORMATION REPOSITORY

The Community Relations person for this project is Mr. Brendan Callahan, who may be contacted at (978)538-5780, or email at brendan.callahan@peabody-ma.gov

Information Repository will be maintained by the City of Peabody and will be updated with the inclusion of community meeting minutes, status reports and other communications and information required. Public meetings will be held within the City of Peabody.

An Information Repository is located at the following location:

Department of Community Development and Planning
Peabody City Hall
24 Lowell Street
Peabody, MA 01960

II. SITE INFORMATION

Site Location

The Site is an approximately 1.3-acre parcel of land located at 45 Walnut Street in Peabody, Ma. The Site is currently vacant except for a foundation slab from a former building located in the southeast corner of the Site. The Site is enclosed in a chain-link fence with access via Walnut Street to the north. The remainder of the site is either paved or covered with overgrown grass and weeds. The Site is located in a dense urban area primarily characterized by mixed commercial and residential development. Historically, surrounding properties have been occupied by leather tanneries, automobile repair garages, a coal and wood company, a textile mill, a brass foundry, and paint shops. Presently, the Site is abutted to the north by Walnut Street, to the east by an automotive repair facility, to the south by the Boston & Maine Railroad, and to the west by a mixed commercial and residential property. A canal flows along the southwestern boundary of the Site, and immediately to the south of the Boston & Maine Railroad property, and continues to the southeast toward the North River. The North River discharges to Beverly Harbor approximately 1.25 miles east of the Site.

Site History

Between approximately 1887 and 1969, the Site was occupied by tannery facilities for leather production. Former infrastructure has been comprised of numerous buildings for tanning, coloring, pressing, drying, and finishing leather, as well as salt and storage houses, and multiple unlined settling basins. The Site has been vacant since 1990 when a former Site building was demolished. In June 2009, the City of Peabody acquired the parcel located at 45 Walnut Street, Peabody from the Shawmut-Walnut Corporation utilizing Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS) PARC Grant program funds and City funds, to redevelop the site for public use.

The potential presence of contamination at the Site was initially suspected based on the findings of an ASTM Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) conducted for the 45 Walnut Street property in July 2006 by IES, Inc. Consequently, subsurface investigations were conducted at the Site between October 2006 and June 2010 to assess the quality of the soil and groundwater at the Site.

Site Activities to Date

Previous Site investigations include:

- 2006 Subsurface Investigation, IES, Inc.; conducted on behalf of the Shawmut-Walnut Corporation.
- 2007 Additional Subsurface Investigation, IES, Inc.; conducted on behalf of the Shawmut-Walnut Corporation.
- 2008 ASTM Phase II Environmental Site Assessment, GEI Consultants, Inc.; conducted on behalf of the City of Peabody.
- 2010 Phase II Comprehensive Site Assessment Report, TRC, Inc.; conducted on behalf of the City of Peabody.

Copies of the site investigation reports are available for public review at the information repository.

Nature of threat to public health and environment

Chemical classes detected at the Site include VOCs, EPH/PAHs, PCBs, dioxins, dibenzofurans, and metals.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

Petroleum-related VOCs have been detected on-Site, potentially emanating from former storage tanks or past incidental spills. In comparison to other organic compounds, VOCs are generally less complex molecules with lower molecular weights. Therefore, VOCs generally have higher aqueous solubilities, contributing to their propensity to mobilize in groundwater, as well as a higher tendency to volatilize from the groundwater to the vapor phase.

Extractable Petroleum Hydrocarbons (EPH) / Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)

EPH and PAH constituents that may have originated from petroleum products are considered petrogenic in nature, while pyrogenic constituents were created as by-products of incomplete combustion. Compounds of this class are generally more complex than VOC, and therefore have heavier molecular weights, contributing to a lower mobility in soil and lower aqueous solubility. These compounds commonly have higher organic carbon partition coefficients are not as likely to be conveyed in the aqueous phase in groundwater, and therefore have low relative mobility.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

PCBs are a mixture of up to 209 chlorinated compounds which do not occur naturally in the environment. PCB oils were commonly used as fire-resistant dielectric fluids in high voltage transformers, and are additionally associated with hydraulic equipment and lubricants among many other uses. The manufacture of PCBs in the United States was terminated in 1977. PCBs have a very low solubility in water, have a strong tendency to adsorb to carbon fractions in soils, and also have a strong tendency for bioaccumulation.

Dioxins and Dibenzofurans

These compounds exist as complex mixtures of chlorinated compounds that can be released to the environment by burning organics in the presence of chlorine (i.e., burning polyvinyl chloride or organochlorines in waste incinerators), bleaching paper, automobile exhaust, metal smelting, and natural processes. Dioxins and dibenzofurans generally have high organic carbon partition coefficients, but exert very low vapor pressures. These compounds are generally insoluble in water and therefore immobile, but readily climb the food chain once taken up due to their solubility in fats and oils.

Arsenic

Arsenic occurs naturally in rocks and soil, water, air, and plants and animals. Additionally, arsenic can be released into the environment through natural activities such as volcanic action, erosion of rocks and forest fires, or also through anthropogenic means. A majority of industrial arsenic is currently employed as a wood preservative, but arsenic is also used in paints, dyes, metals, drugs, soaps, and semi-conductors. Industry practices such as copper smelting, mining and coal burning also contribute to arsenic in the environment. Arsenic has a low solubility in water and low potential for transport via groundwater in the dissolved phase.

III. COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Community Profile

The City of Peabody, encompassing 16 square miles, was for nearly a century one of the primary leather-producing centers of the country, and served the area's shoe-producing cities. It was originally settled because of its water resources and its proximity to the growing maritime port Salem. The leather industry grew rapidly in the mid 19th Century with tanneries built above and along the major waterways, including Goldthwaite Brook, the North River, Proctor Brook, and the Waters River. The process of tanning required large amounts of water and with such waterways Peabody was ideally suited to industry expansion. By about 1915, Peabody was known as "The Leather Capital of the World". Over 800 men and women worked in 100 tanneries and related businesses in the City. Immigrants from Europe thronged the City looking for work and to build a better life for themselves and their families.

By the mid 20th Century, industrial uses along the City's waterways had declined and are currently concentrated at the Centennial Business Park outside of the downtown area. As a result of the departing industry, the downtown area has large parcels of underutilized potentially contaminated land that has adversely impacted the quality of life in the downtown area. These parcels, which can be described as Brownfields, pose a threat to the City's health and safety and environment. Several of these parcels and mill buildings within the North River corridor and target area contribute to the City of Peabody's downtown's 33% vacancy rate.

The North River and associated tributaries in Peabody have experienced recurring flood problems since the 1950's. Eight major flood events have occurred in downtown Peabody since 1996 (October 1996, June 1998, March 2001, April 2004, May 2006, (2) March 2010, and October 2011). These chronic flood events have caused major disasters, economic hardship, and cripple a major transportation artery in Peabody and neighboring communities. Several studies and reports suggest these flood events have created a climate for business uncertainty and disinvestment in the downtown.

The target community consists of the urban center, or downtown, of the city. This area supports low-income housing, commercial, and industrial land uses. The proposed cleanup site is within U.S. census block group (tract 2108, block group 2). This block group, as well as several adjacent block groups within the downtown, also qualifies as an Environmental Justice population as defined in the Environmental Justice Policy of the Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. This policy defines Environmental Justice populations as block groups that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Median household income is at or below 65 percent of the statewide median income;
- At least 25 percent of the residents are minority;
- At least 25 percent of the residents are foreign born; and/or
- At least 25 percent of the residents are lacking English language proficiency.

Chronology of Community Involvement

Date	Subject
May 2008 to June 2009	The Community Development & Planning Department requested the Peabody City Council to approve a PARC Grant application to acquire 45 Walnut Street. Prior to submitting the City’s PARC grant application held a community meeting to generate ideas with community members for park development, foster partnerships with neighborhood groups, interested non-profit groups, and downtown business community. In September 2008, the City was awarded PARC grant funds to acquire the property. In June 2009 the City completed the acquisition of the property.
June 2009-July 2009	The Community Development & Planning Department requested the City Council to approve the City’s second PARC grant application for design and construction services associated with the redevelopment of the Site. On June 29, 2009, the City held their second public meeting to provide the public with a status update of the project, solicit additional park development ideas, and informed the public the City intends to apply for an EPA Brownfield Cleanup in Fall 2009 which would provide funding for the site remediation activities.
September 30, 2009	The Community Development & Planning Department held a public meeting for the City’s EPA Brownfield Cleanup application. The meeting generated much discussion on the proposed remediation plan as well as park amenities.
September 2010-September 2011	The City of Peabody and their consultants held several meetings with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MaDEP) to discuss the Site redevelopment plans. MaDEP had indicated to the City that the redevelopment plans could not include any filling of Flood Zone, the Site is located within the 100 foot FEMA flood zone area, as well as the proposed site cap would have to be sufficient that the public could not become in contact with any contaminated soil.

Key Community Concerns

Health concerns are noted in prior sections. The Site is a known brownfield and is a historically contaminated property with expected soil and ground water contaminants. This project will remove the threats that currently exist of contaminated soil from past uses of the property. This topic will be updated as the remediation plans develop in the form of the administrative record.

Continued Community Involvement

The City’s PARC grant applications as well as EPA Brownfield Coalition Assessment and EPA Brownfield Cleanup grant applications has dictated several public participation sessions in compliance with both programs grant application requirements. The key component was the Community Development organizing and advertising these public meetings to the community.

The overall goal of the Community Relations Program is to continue to communicate the

environmental issues at the Site to all stakeholders, City, DEP, EPA, local officials, and community residents. The Community Relations Program keeps local officials and residents informed of the status of all site activities and provide opportunities for interested citizens to participate in the Removal Action process.

The high levels of community involvement regarding this large-scale redevelopment call for a community relations program that further fosters a good relationship among the neighborhood, City officials, and other interested parties.

The community relations program at the Site has the following specific objectives:

1. To establish and maintain communication between the City, DEP, EPA, and interested residents, businesses, and organizations. The City will announce public meetings through a variety of media forums that include notice in the local paper, display on the City of Peabody's website and postings in City Hall.
2. To keep local officials informed of and involved in environmental activities for the Site so that they will be prepared to respond to questions from the public and media.
3. To inform all stakeholders of the goals and procedures of the remediation activities. This information will be discussed in a non-technical manner.

IV. OTHER COMMUNITY RELATIONS ACTIVITIES

This section lists specific community relations' activities that will be carried out to meet the objectives of the Community Relations Plan.

1. **Maintain Information Repository.** The City of Peabody Community Development and Planning Department in Peabody, MA is the designated information repository for the Site. The address for this repository is included in Appendix A. EPA will review the information repository periodically to ensure that they are up-to-date and include all pertinent Site information. The City will ensure that the City Hall files have all of the required documents for the Site.
2. **Provide an Information Contact for the Community.** To meet the information needs of City officials and community members, the City has designated Senior Planner, Brendan Callahan, as the information contact for this project. The contact information is listed in Appendix B and will be included in all information materials distributed to the public.
3. **Hold Public Meetings and Comment Periods.** The City will hold a public meeting and provide a 30-day comment period on the draft Release Abatement Measure (RAM) plan as well as the Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) to provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions and comment on the draft RAM and ABCA plans. Other public meetings and comment periods will be held as necessary, including after the remediation activities are complete.

The City will send an announcement of each public meeting and comment period to the local officials and news media. The meeting notice will be posted at City Hall and appear

on the City's website.

Meetings will be held at a facility that is located near the Site, at City Hall or Peabody Public Institute Library.

4. **Review the Community Relations Plan.** The City will review the Community Relations' Plan and revise it as needed to ensure that it provides programs of community relations' activities appropriate to on-going activities.

Figure 1: Photo, 45 Walnut Street, Peabody, MA

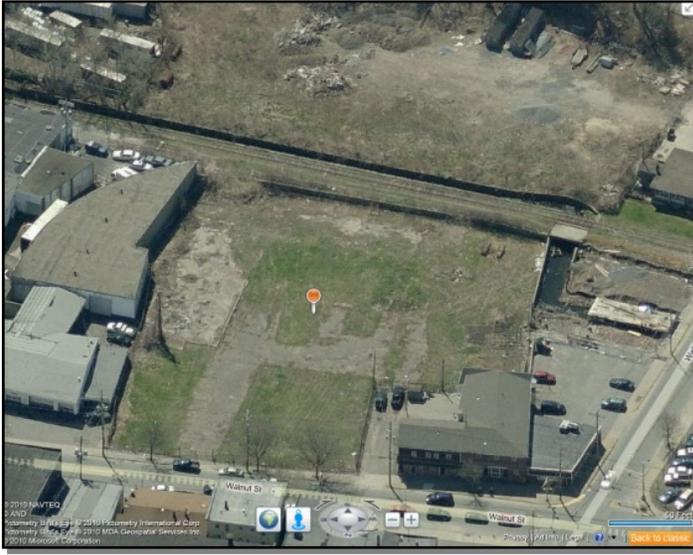


Figure 2: Image, 45 Walnut Street, Peabody, MA



**Figure 3
 Schedule of Community Relations Activities
 45 Walnut Street**

Community Relations Activities	Completion of CRP	During RAM & ABCA Review	Submittal of Generic QAPP to EPA	Start of Removal Action
Information Repository	Update as needed			
Information Contact	Update as needed			
Contact Local Officials	Update as needed			
Press Release/Public Notices	Update as needed			
Public Meetings & Comment Period		One during plan review comment period	After Removal Action is complete	
Information Updates	Update as needed			
Review of CRP	Update as needed			

APPENDIX A

Locations for Public Meetings and Information Repository

Public Meetings

City of Peabody
Peabody City Hall
24 Lowell Street
Peabody, MA 01960

City of Peabody
Peabody Public Institute Library
82 Main Street
Peabody, MA 01960

Contacts

Brendan Callahan, Senior Planner
Community Development & Planning Office
24 Lowell Street, Peabody MA 01960
978-538-5780
brendan.callahan@peabody-ma.gov

Potential Meeting Locations

Lower Level Conference Room-Peabody City Hall
Wiggin Auditorium-Peabody City Hall
Sutton Room-Peabody Institute Public Library

Information Repository

Peabody City Hall
Community Development & Planning Department
24 Lowell Street
Peabody, MA 01960

Office Hours: Monday-Wednesday, 8:30am to 4:00pm
Thursday, 8:30am to 7:00pm
Friday, 8:30am to 12:30pm

Appendix B

Key Contacts

A. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Alan Peterson 617-918-1022
Brownfields Project Officer
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1 Congress Street, Suite 1100 (HBT)
Boston, MA 02114-2023
E-Mail: Peterson.alan@epamail.epa.gov

B. State Agency

Joanne Fagan 978-694-3390
Section Chief, Brownfields
MassDEP Northeast Regional Office
205B Lowell Street
Wilmington, MA 01887
E-Mail: Joanne.Fagan@state.ma.us

C. City of Peabody

Brendan Callahan, Senior Planner 978-538-5780
Community Development & Planning
24 Lowell Street
Peabody, MA 01960
E-Mail: brendan.callahan@peabody-ma.gov

D. Local Officials

Edward Bettencourt, Mayor 978-538-5700
Peabody City Council

Karen Sawyer, Community Development Director 978-538-5770

Tim Spanos, City Clerk 978-538-5750

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24 Lowell Street
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