

## **Brownfields Economic Revitalization Alliance**

### **A Year in Review**

BERA is a joint effort between the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Agency of Natural Resources, intended to help critical redevelopment projects come to completion faster, more economically, and more easily. This new effort will increase coordination between state and federal agencies, regional development corporations, planning commissions, municipal representatives and private sector developers. A team approach will simplify and fast-track brownfield revitalization projects that participate in BERA and ensure that issues are identified and resolved without undue delay. By streamlining the redevelopment process, the host communities can take advantage of all of the benefits of a revitalized downtown center.

Selected sites will receive priority funding from the state, as well as coordinated and timely permitting. By prioritizing state permit review and establishing ambitious timelines for project completion, the team will work to expedite projects by eliminating duplicative reviews and fostering partnerships with the development community. To be successful, this effort will require collaboration among developers, lenders, insurers, and federal, state and community leaders; it will be imperative to engage planners, scientists, engineers and attorneys. Ultimately, the goal of the BERA team deployed for each project will be to create solutions to complex problems plaguing the development of key downtown properties. The redevelopment of these projects will create vital, more sustainable communities, preserve historic and architecturally significant structures, create jobs, increase the tax base, and will stimulate further economic recovery by creating an echo effect on surrounding properties.

The first round of BERA projects was piloted in June 2013. Three projects were selected as pilot projects: 453 Pine Street, Burlington; Railroad Enterprise Project, Burlington; and FONDA/Solo Cup, St. Albans.

Projects were selected by a selection committee and were ranked based on the following criteria:

1. Is the project considered to be high profile in the community?
  - Community need - property is in key location with contamination that stigmatizes and hinders redevelopment of an area of the Community;
  - Community support – subject of public meetings and town officials are on record supporting the project;
  - Is redevelopment of the site part of the regional/municipal plan?
2. Is there a presence of (or potential presence of) complex contaminant issues?
3. Have complex regulatory issues been identified?
4. Will the project need a multitude of funding resources for successful implementation? And, will the project yield positive benefits beyond clean-up that may include job creation or new housing?
5. Are there a myriad of legal issues , that may include:
  - legal complications involving a past owner that are not resolved,
  - Involvement of multiple responsible parties.
  - Need for cost recovery assistance

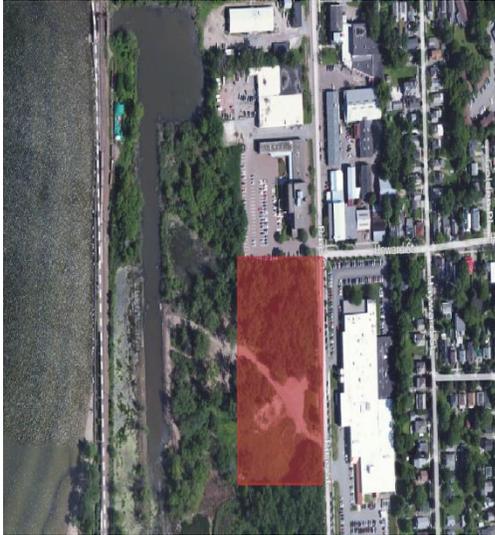
6. Has the property owner or potential purchaser/developer expressed a need for assistance?
7. Is there commitment at the local and regional level to engage in this redevelopment project?
8. Is the project located in or near a designated downtown, village center or new town center? Or, will redevelopment lead to use of existing infrastructure?
9. To the extent practicable, please explain if this project will result in the re-use of an existing historic structure or will preserve historic characteristics of the property.
10. The potential for the project to stimulate or promote environmental, economic or clean energy goals that would provide benefit to the community and the state.

### **Next Steps**

The next round of BERA projects should be announced in the fall of 2014 for a December selection and announcement. The criteria listed above should be used to select sites along with special consideration given to projects where an area wide plan has been conducted.

I would also suggest invited VTrans to be an equal partner with ACCD and DEC. VTrans is currently involved with two BERA projects and will be a partner in the next DEC application for EPA funding. By inviting VTrans to participate, we potentially allow for additional funding and resources to be prioritized for these projects and we mirror the current EPA/DOT/HUD partnership.

## 453 Pine Street



**Property Owner:** Rick Davis

**BERA Team Partners:** DEC, ACCD, Pomerleau Real Estate, GBIC, CCRPC, Burlington CEDO, EPA, VTrans, Consultants

**Property History:** The site is located in the South End of Burlington on Pine Street. The site is located adjacent to the Pine Street Canal Superfund Site and is impacted by the former operation of the Manufactured Gas Plant operations. Site redevelopment at this property has been hampered in the past due to the site geology, site contaminant issues and legal issues associated with the Performing Defendants who are legally responsible for the Superfund Site Remedy.

**Proposed Redevelopment:** The proposed redevelopment for this property is office space. A site conceptual design has been prepared for permitting approval.

**BERA Team Initiative:** The BERA team identified several hurdles associated with this property that needed to be overcome before a developer would be interested in developing this property.

Specific issues that have been resolved are identifying the unstable geologic areas of the site that can't support construction; determination of the distribution of Non-Aqueous Phase Liquid in the subsurface on the property; identification of permitting needs and early resolution of those needs (wetlands, storm water, City of Burlington Planning and Zoning, Act 250) and issues associated with the Deed Restrictions and other associated easements on the property.

Next steps for this site are to meet with the performing defendants to go over site assumptions related to contaminant migration and development and proposed monitoring plan. It is imperative that the performing defendants are supportive of this project. The site engineer is scheduling a technical meeting with the City of Burlington DRB and is awaiting approval from DEC for the conceptual storm water design.

**Completion:** Active BERA meetings could conceivably be complete in the winter of 2015.

## Railroad Enterprise Project



**Property Owner/Developer:** This project is spearheaded by the City of Burlington and encompasses many privately owned properties. The area of the project is within the red outline above.

**BERA Team Partners:** DEC, ACCD, VTrans, CCRPC, Burlington CEDO, EPA, DOT, Consultants

**Property History:** This development is located in the South End of Burlington in the areas of Pine Street and Maple Street. This area of Burlington has been a very industrial and a legacy of environmental issues associated with this area make redevelopment complex.

**Proposed Redevelopment:** The overall concept for this project was to establish a new grid of both traditional and alternative transit options on brownfield properties as a means to create increased connectivity and transportation options, mitigate residual hazards on the

properties, create new street frontage for new development and increased economic activity, reduce traffic in residential neighborhoods, vastly improve storm water treatment, improve public access to the Lake, and create green space and new naturalized landscapes in an area that is primarily hardscape and/or contaminated soils.

**BERA Team Initiative:** The BERA team has really been focused on ensuring that there is collaboration among all of the stakeholders and funding sources associated with this project. Currently there are several overlying funding mechanisms at play that consist of: 1) EPA Area Wide Planning Grant to City of Burlington; 2) DOT Scoping Grant to City of Burlington administered by VTrans and CCRPC; 3) DEC Brownfields Grant for two properties; 4) EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessment Grant to City of Burlington for 339 Pine Street and 5) PlanBTV South effort with CCRPC and City of Burlington.

The BERA team has been working on defining key development properties and also ensuring that the purpose and need for each project are moving in parallel tracks.

Issues identified during team meetings are being addressed by team members before project implementation to ensure that these issues do not stall the project during implementation.

**Completion:** The scoping portion of this site has been stalled and has pushed the DOT portion of the project out to Winter 2018. EPA Area Wide Planning grant will be complete in Fall of 2015. This project should continue in an effort for interagency collaboration.

## FONDA/Solo Cup



redevelopment scenarios in order to better market the property.

**BERA Project Completion:** At this time, the City is reviewing next steps for this project.

**Property Owner:** City of St. Albans

**BERA Team Partners:** ACCD, DEC, City of St. Albans, NWRPC, FCIDC, EPA

**Property History:** The Fonda Site is located at 15-21 Lower Newton Street, in St. Albans City, Vermont. The 5.5 acre property operated as a paper product manufacturing facility since its development in the 1940s. The most recent tenant, Solo Cup Company, ceased operations in 2005.

The City of St. Albans purchased the site in 2007. Deteriorated property buildings were subsequently demolished in 2011 in order to attract greater redevelopment interest. Two plus acres of concrete building slab were left in place for potential reuse by developers. The property remains vacant.

**Proposed Redevelopment:**  
Commercial/Industrial Space

**BERA Team Initiative:** At the request of the City, assistance was recently provided to further define the extent of PCB impacts to the concrete building slab. The City wished to refine previously provided cost estimates for various