

RANKING CRITERIA FOR CLEANUP GRANTS (V.B.)

The purpose of the requested cleanup assistance at 116 Cook Avenue, Meriden, Connecticut is to facilitate brownfield reuse by allowing for the transformation of a vacant historic building into a mixed-use development that provides commercial and residential opportunities to a community in transition. The cleanup and redevelopment of 116 Cook Avenue will also allow for the redevelopment of another important USEPA brownfield project just south of the site—Factory H. Factory H was the manufacturing building for 116 Cook Avenue. The 116 Cook Avenue site is strategically located at the gateway to Meriden’s new Transit Oriented Development District (TOD District). The cleanup and redevelopment of 116 Cook Avenue will be a catalyst for the planned revitalization of the City’s inner core and adjacent neighborhoods. The City currently has extensive plans for the rebirth and renewal of its former industrial downtown. Envisioned for this area is a pedestrian friendly, urban, residential neighborhood intermingled with new commercial buildings and public open space within walking distance to improved rail and bus service. This project and the City’s overall revitalization program is intended to correct the disparities found within these neighborhoods by eliminating environmental impacts, improving economic opportunities, and increasing recreational and open space resources. The redevelopment of 116 Cook Avenue is crucial to realizing this vision.

The City of Meriden is on the verge of becoming a new city; older property owners that have maintained the City are being joined by new Spanish-speaking immigrants. Meriden is known as a city in which new immigrant populations are welcomed. However, the City’s aging housing stock and constrained land resources have not been able to handle this new influx effectively. The new populations have put pressure on the already-limited housing and employment opportunities. Building upon previous brownfields assessment, planning, and cleanup work, this project will provide tangible results in improving the health and welfare of the community by removing contaminants that affect the residents and the environment and putting a long dilapidated building back to productive use.

This grant will be instrumental in creating synergy between the City’s current brownfield redevelopment at the Factory H property located adjacent to the site. It will spark additional opportunities for housing and jobs adjacent to downtown neighborhoods of existing immigrant populations, near planned open space, an intermodal transit center, and mixed-use development. The creation of 86 units of new housing will provide alternatives to the aging housing stock in the neighborhoods, the development of over 35,000 square feet of commercial space will provide spaces for businesses to start and grow as the City’s economic base shifts away from manufacturing to service related businesses. The cleanup assistance will make it possible to create and provide access to new parks, bike lanes, water, and green spaces all adjacent to neighborhoods that are typically associated with blight and disinvestment.

1. Community Need

a. Health, Welfare, and Environment

Meriden is located in the center of Connecticut and was one of the state’s most important manufacturing centers. These manufacturing interests have long since relocated, leaving a legacy of brownfields with abandoned buildings and extensive environmental contamination. Meriden is a compact community and the majority of these brownfields are within the City’s historic downtown core, as well as the adjacent neighborhoods, such as the Dutch Hill/Action 13 neighborhood where 116 Cook Avenue is located. These neighborhoods are home to new Spanish-speaking immigrants, creating extensive

environmental justice concerns by putting these sensitive populations at higher risk of potential health problems. In addition to health risks, these brownfield sites undermine property values and are a stigma that impedes investment. They are often associated with criminal activities, such as the use of abandoned buildings to hide or sell drugs. The blight associated with brownfields has had deleterious impacts on Meriden neighborhoods' welfare. In addition, because of the language barrier, many residents are unable to report crime or health concerns, or take action to combat them. This area of Meriden also currently lacks adequate open space and park facilities, meaning neighborhood children often resort to playing on brownfield sites, unaware of the risks.

Using data collected through its ongoing brownfield program, the City estimates that there are approximately 15 brownfields in the area surrounding 116 Cook Avenue and addressing these brownfields sites is a key component of the City's economic and community development strategy. Through this analysis, 116 Cook Avenue has been identified as a catalytic site that can help spur activity within the community as it serves as a key gateway into the proposed TOD District.

Meriden's inner-city area contains high concentrations of populations who are at greater risk and more likely to be exposed to the negative effects caused by the presence of brownfields within their communities.

| Sensitive Populations Surrounding 116 Cook Ave | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|---------|-------------|
| | Census Track | TOD District | Meriden | Connecticut |
| Total Population | 2,006 | 8,402 | 60,868 | 3,574,097 |
| Hispanic | 51.2% | 56.2% | 28.9% | 13.4% |
| Minority | 43.9% | 45.9% | 9.7% | 10.1% |
| Children under 18 | 32.4% | 30.1% | 23.9% | 22.9% |
| Elderly over 65 | 5.4% | 8.6% | 6.5% | 14.2% |
| Source: 2010 US Census. | | | | |

These sensitive populations, many of which live next door or near 116 Cook Avenue, often have the highest incidents of asthma, lead poisoning, and chronic illnesses. According to the *2008 Asthma in Connecticut Report* (the latest information available), from the period 2000-2004, Meriden had the 5th highest rate of asthma emergency department visits in the state. These asthma rates are influenced by urban living conditions, poor indoor air quality, and blight associated with brownfields in the neighborhoods.

Lead exposure risks are also high due to the City's high percentage of older housing stock and abundance of brownfields left over from the City's industrial past. According to the 2007-2009 American Community Survey, 79.2% of the housing stock was built before 1979. In addition, 35.9% of housing city-wide and 65.7% within the census tract is not owner-occupied, leaving a large population vulnerable to absentee landlords. The Connecticut Department of Public Health reports that in 2009 1.2% of Meriden children younger than six years had elevated blood lead levels ($\geq 10 \mu\text{g/dL}$). This is over a third higher than the rate in the State as a whole. These lead levels are most likely linked to

young children living in older housing and playing on soils with high lead levels, such as neighborhood brownfield sites.

According to Connecticut Department of Public Health Annual Registration Reports, 9.5% of all infants and 14.8% of black infants born in Meriden in 2008 were of a low birth weight, higher than the State rate of 8%. According to the Connecticut Department of Education data on physical fitness, Meriden children are less fit than the state average. As of May 2010, over 50% of Meriden children were enrolled in the HUSKY federal Medicaid program and enrollment has increased by over 95% from 2006-2010 (2010 Connecticut KIDS COUNT Data Book).

Redevelopment of 116 Cook Avenue has the potential to provide an enhanced quality of life to many of the City's neediest residents. The redevelopment of 116 Cook Avenue will provide an opportunity to add new housing stock, avoid gentrification, and create opportunities for current residents to stay in the community. The new commercial space planned for 116 Cook Avenue could provide walk-to-work employment opportunities for neighborhood residents and offer much-needed community services to a historically underserved area.

b. Financial Need

Meriden's manufacturing industry began in the early 1800s following construction of the railroad line in 1839. The railroad and proximity of Harbor Brook, which supplied a source of power, allowed Meriden to grow quickly. Meriden became known as the "Silver City" due to numerous factories that produced household and military items made from silver and other metals. Since the 1950s, Meriden has lost a large number of its industrial and manufacturing employers, which were the City's largest taxpayers. Because of the lack of a stable employment base, Meriden was hit particularly hard by the recent economic downturn.

While Connecticut is often considered to have weathered the recession better than other states, this statistic hides the impacts to cities like Meriden and its sensitive populations. In Meriden, child recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program increased 32% from 2007-2009, according to the 2010 Connecticut KIDS COUNT Data Book. The same source reports that 59% of children in Meriden are eligible for free or reduced price lunches. According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, when the economic recession hit in late 2007 and early 2008, Connecticut was still reeling from the recession of the early 2000s. The State did not regain the level of jobs it had in December 2000 until mid-2007. This positive growth was quickly erased when the economy took another downturn. Due to the current economic situation, Meriden has been unable to recapture the lost growth, and in fact, has continued to see declining economic growth. From 2000-2010, the City has lost over 5,000 jobs, or almost 20% of total employment. Foreclosures in the City are elevated and *RealtyTrac* considers Meriden to have an extremely high rate of foreclosure. *RealtyTrac* also reports that in September 2011 Meriden had 32 foreclosed properties, a rate of 1 in 754. This is significantly higher than the state rate of 1 in 1,131.

The poorest of the community are living adjacent to Meriden's blighted and contaminated industrial and commercial properties downtown, such as 116 Cook Avenue. This area is the most densely populated of the City and historically has the highest unemployment

levels. These neighborhoods also represent the largest minority population in the City. Significant new immigrant populations have arrived in Meriden over the last five years. The combination of unemployment, poverty, and brownfields located at and around 116 Cook Avenue highlight environmental justice issues.

| | Target Community/ Census Tract: 1709 | County/ City: Meriden | State: Connecticut | National |
|--|---|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Population: | 2,006 ¹ | 60,868 ¹ | 3,574,097 ¹ | 308,745,538 ¹ |
| Unemployment: | N/A | 10.8% ² | 9.2% ² | 9.6% ³ |
| Poverty Rate: | N/A | 15.1% ⁵ | 9.7% ⁵ | 14.3% ⁴ |
| Percent Minority: | 43.9% ¹ | 26.5% ¹ | 22.4% ¹ | 26.7% ¹ |
| Per Capita Income: | N/A | \$25,862 ⁵ | \$36,412 ⁵ | \$26,530 ⁴ |
| 1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census. 2. Bureau of Labor Statistics, August 2011 – Not Seasonally Adjusted. 3. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 4. 2009 American Community Survey. 5. 2008-2010 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates. | | | | |

Within Connecticut, Meriden is designated as a Distressed Municipality and a Targeted Investment Community, and a State Enterprise Zone Community. Nationally, it is a HUD Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Community. According to the annual censuses, from 2000 to 2010, Meriden’s minority population grew by 33.8% to 26.5% and the Hispanic population increased by 37%. Economically, the number of persons below the poverty level grew from 7.9% in 1999 to 15.1% in 2010 (2000 and 2010 Censuses), and its 2009 per capita income of \$27,021 was below the County and State rates of \$31,318 and \$36,468, respectively. In 2009, according to the 2007-2009 American Community Survey, Meriden’s gross rent was \$896, a 44.9% increase since 2000. Of the State’s 169 towns in 2010, Meriden ranked 25th highest in property tax rate (Connecticut Office of Personnel Management).

In order to address its fiscal problems, the Meriden City Council has limited its General Fund operating budget growth to no more than the growth in its Grand List tax base. With little or no growth in the tax base, new General Funds are scarce. While bonding is an option to finance large scale capital improvement and infrastructure projects, the City Council has limited new bonding to no more than the amount of debt that is retired in the preceding year. This limitation significantly restricts the ability to use bonding to fund new capital improvement projects.

While the City has prioritized redevelopment of brownfield sites highly, the City lacks the resources to fund the cleanup of these sites and make them shovel ready. USEPA grant funds have been absolutely indispensable to the City and its residents as they face the huge challenges associated with eliminating environmental impacts and revitalizing their downtown. The previous USEPA assessment and cleanup grants have paved the way for the successful redevelopment of the HUB and Factory H sites, but that funding will soon be depleted in September 2012. In order to facilitate reinvestment and sustainable growth, the City is investing significant dollars in implementation of necessary flood control measures and infrastructure. This leaves a large gap in funding

available for cleanup activities. Cleanup activities are often the most difficult part of the redevelopment process to pay for; the ability to offer potential developers a clean site is crucial, especially in today's economy.

Back of the envelope pro forma calculations for the redevelopment of 116 Cook Avenue from the 2009 *Preliminary Reuse Planning and Market Analysis: Factory H Area* report, illustrates the need for funding for the cleanup of the site. The site's current condition creates an upside down financial deal, even though the potential redevelopment will have positive net operating income.

2. Project Description and Feasibility of Success

a. Project Description

i) Property Conditions

The 116 Cook Avenue site is 2.8 acres and contains a vacant 72,473 square foot 4-story building. The site is located along a number of main roads that access downtown Meriden and the TOD District. The property is located directly north of Factory H, another of the City's key brownfield properties.

The site was formerly part of a silver manufacturing operation (International Silver-INSILCO) in the late 1800s. The site was also used as a cutlery and possible pewter manufacturing facility, as well as a gun manufacturing facility at the beginning to the twentieth century. From the 1970s to 1990s, the site was occupied by medical offices and most recently by Meriden Medical Center until 2000. The City of Meriden acquired the property on December 10, 2009 through a negotiated sale with the previous owner.

The property was first examined for environmental contamination in 1987. From these investigations, it has been determined that the site has been impacted by former industrial activities. Notably, lead was detected in the soil above cleanup criteria. This prompted the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (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-impact materials in 1989. The impact was concentrated in an ash layer beneath the parking lots. Approximately 1,200 cubic yards (CY) of material characterized as hazardous for lead was also removed and further impacts were found from gasoline constituents attributed to an off-site, upgradient gasoline station. At the time, active remediation was being performed at the gas station. In addition, approximately 10 CY of petroleum-impacted material was removed. The CTDEEP inspected the site after the cleanup and issued a compliance letter indicating that no further action was required in a letter dated June 2, 1989.

An investigation conducted in 1999 evaluated the groundwater for metals, VOCs, soil vapor, and indoor air (inside the building at 116 Cook Ave) for VOCs. Results of these investigations did not indicate any constituents above cleanup standards. The investigations were summarized in a 2003 report that did not conduct any investigations and only reviewed existing data.

A Phase II site investigation was conducted in February 2011. The Phase II followed a Phase I investigation that was completed in November 2009. The Phase I report identified 14 Recognized Environmental Concerns (RECs); however, four of those were associated with building materials that were not evaluated by the Phase II. The Phase II found levels of VOCs, SVOCs, Metals and ETPHs in the soil that exceed the Connecticut Remediation Standard Regulations for Ground Water Pollutant Mobility Criteria, Residential Direct Exposure Criteria, and/or Industrial/Commercial Direct Exposure Criteria.

Through the cleanup and subsequent redevelopment of 116 Cook Avenue, this project advances all six of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities Livability Principles: (1) Provide more transportation choices, (2) Promote equitable, affordable housing, (3) Increase economic competitiveness, (4) support existing communities, (5) Leverage federal investment, and (6) Value communities and neighborhoods. The proposed project activities build on existing neighborhoods and communities and support enhanced transit options through the new intermodal transit center that will drive economic revitalization and create opportunities for new, affordable housing options.

The City of Meriden’s proposed cleanup activities are fully compatible with the USEPA FY2011-2015 Strategic Plan, including Goal 3: Cleaning Up Communities and Advancing Sustainable Development. The tasks outlined in this grant proposal meet several of USEPA’s strategic measures and objectives:

- promoting sustainable communities as this proposal supports infill development and sound planning with equitable participation
- assessing and cleaning up brownfields as this proposal will clarify environmental conditions at priority sites to facilitate cleanup and reuse

ii) Proposed Cleanup Plan

The recommended cleanup plan for 116 Cook Avenue is excavation with off-site disposal for the Trichloroethene (TCE) found in the southern portion of the site and removal of an underground fuel oil tank (UST). The ETPH soil impacts from this area are comingled with the TCE soil impacts. The UST appears to be within the TCE soil impacts and must be removed as part of soil excavation for TCE impacts. Excavation with off-site disposal is an effective way to eliminate risk at the site, since contamination will be removed and the exposure pathways will no longer exist. At this time no specific engineering or institutional controls are planned in this cleanup area. Capping may be implemented during cleanup of other areas of the site.

b. Budget for EPA Funding, Tracking and Measuring Progress, and Leveraging Other Resources

i) Budget Table

| Budget Categories | Project Tasks | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| programmatic costs only | Task 1: Stakeholder Education | Task 2: UST Tank Removal | Task 3: Cleanup Implementation | Total |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Personnel | | | | |
| Fringe Benefits | | | | |
| Travel | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | |
| Supplies | | | | |
| Contractual | \$5,000 | | \$195,000 | \$200,000 |
| Other | | | | |
| Total | \$5,000 | | \$195,000 | \$200,000 |
| Cost Share | | \$13,000 | \$27,000 | \$40,000 |

Task 1: Stakeholder Education (based on outside contractual support for stakeholder education at 50 hours at \$100/hr)

The City will secure consulting services to educate the community about the cleanup process and activities at 116 Cook Avenue. This will include preparing and giving three presentations and necessary supplemental materials for community meetings at the beginning, middle, and conclusion of the cleanup process. Potential outputs include increased community knowledge and understanding of the cleanup activities.

Task 2: UST Tank Removal

Using the local cost share, the City will pay for the removal of an underground fuel oil tank that is located in the cleanup area. Without the removal of the tank, it will not be possible to excavate the TCE contaminated soil in the area. Potential outputs include improved access to key areas to be remediated and reduced exposure to the underground storage tank.

Task 3: Cleanup Implementation

Cleanup implementation of the site will include removal of Trichloroethene contaminated soil and proper disposal off-site. The site will also be entered in to the Connecticut Voluntary Remediation Program (CGS 22a-133x). The program charges an application review fee for all applicants, including municipalities. Potential outputs include site enrollment in the Connecticut Voluntary Remediation Program and reduced exposure to hazardous substances and hazardous substances cleanup of a key area of concern of 116 Cook Avenue.

- ii) **Tracking and Measuring Progress:** The City will comply with all programmatic and financial reporting requirements and information will be provided to USEPA in the ACRES database or a Property Profile Form. To support USEPA’s GPRR reporting requirements, information will be available to USEPA beyond the performance period of this grant.

The City will identify a timeline of key milestones that can be linked to the desired outcomes for this project. Milestones will be created in a transparent fashion with key community stakeholders in order to manage expectations about a timely and comprehensive remediation of the site that will protect the community during and after the process.

Milestones in the project will include:

- Acceptance into the CTDEEP Voluntary Remediation Program
- Selection of a remediation contractor
- Commencement of remediation activities
- Completion of remediation activities
- Stakeholder education events
- All necessary approvals for the CTDEEP Voluntary Remediation Program

Anticipated Outputs:

- Documentation of cleanup activities at 116 Cook Avenue, posted on the City's website
- Documentation of stakeholder education activities, including report of quantities and outcomes of meetings
- Removal of TCE contaminated soil
- Removal of underground storage tank
- Progress reports

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Reduced exposure to hazardous substances
- Hazardous substances cleanup of 116 Cook Avenue
- Increased housing choice and employment opportunities for area residents
- Reduction in the blood lead levels and asthma rates of area children
- Approximately \$1-2 million in funding leveraged
- Approximately 100 key stakeholders engaged in the brownfield redevelopment process

iii) Leveraging: The entire cleanup costs for the site are estimated at over \$1 million. The proposed redevelopment costs are just over \$8 million dollars. In order to meet these costs, the cleanup grant will leverage resources both in-kind and additional funding from public and private sources to manage grant activities, finish the remediation of the site and complete the redevelopment of the site. The City will work with the B&B Committee, other community partners, additional City agencies, and federal partners to ensure that the work is completed to successfully revitalize the site. Over the past decade, the City of Meriden has been very successful in leveraging available funding from a variety of sources to support community revitalization and brownfield redevelopment. Examples of the funding that the City could leverage to complete additional cleanup work include Connecticut's state-wide USEPA Revolving Loan Fund and, on a regional level, the City could leverage the USEPA Revolving Loan Fund run through REX Development, the regional economic development organization. The City will also work with the private market and could include cleanup as a part of the site's purchase price. In order to ensure the creation of affordable housing, the City will partner with the developer/s to assess the feasibility of using various affordable housing vehicles, such as Connecticut's HUD HOME funds, HUD Community Block Grant Development funds, low income housing tax credits, and the affordable mortgage programs of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority. As mentioned above, the City contributes significant time of economic

development, planning, and GIS support personnel to manage and develop the brownfields program in Meriden at no cost to the grant (estimated at approximately \$10,000 a year). In addition, the B&B Committee members donate staff and volunteer time, and meeting space to the City's brownfield endeavors (estimated at \$2,000-\$5,000 per organization per year).

c. *Programmatic Capability and Past Performance*

- i) **Programmatic Capability:** The City of Meriden has a history of successfully managing numerous federal grants. Current federal grants for projects related to housing and community development, transportation, public safety, and economic development/brownfields total approximately \$5.8 million. The City's Department of Health and Human Services and the Board of Education also manage several million dollars in state and federal grant funds.

All brownfield projects are managed by Peggy Brennan, the City's Economic Development Director. The City of Meriden's Economic Development Office has been a recipient of numerous grants from federal and state agencies. Peggy Brennan has managed over ten separate state and federal grants, seven from USEPA, totaling almost \$5 million for the redevelopment of the HUB and Factory H sites, the two brownfield anchors of the TOD District. Ms. Brennan has more than 20 years of experience managing Housing and Urban Development HOME and CDBG programs, large scale redevelopment and brownfields projects, community education, and organization projects for municipalities and non-profit organizations. Ms. Brennan has a Master's Degree in Social Work, specializing in Community Organizing.

The City does not anticipate any change in project leadership, but should the need arise to hire additional City staff or recruit new leadership, the City has a hiring process and will ensure that all new hires have experience in managing large federal grants, specifically USEPA brownfields funding.

All contracts with outside consultants will be competitively awarded in compliance with the Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Parts 31.36, as appropriate. All subgrant recipients will comply with applicable requirements, including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. All transactions between the City and the subgrantees will be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. The City has a process in place that encourages proposals from small and disadvantaged businesses. As with all contracts with the City, any contracts awarded under this cleanup grant would be evaluated using a variety of criteria, including, but not limited to, expertise, availability, past work, and cost.

- ii) **Adverse Audits:** The City has not had any adverse audits and there have not been any problems associated with grant administration.
- iii) **Past Performance:** The City has an extensive history of receiving federal and non-federal assistance agreements.

1. Currently or Has Ever Received an EPA Brownfields Grant: For these agreements the City has complied with all relevant quarterly progress report, financial and reporting measures, and final reports, where applicable. The City has complied with all financial and programmatic reporting requirements on its brownfields awards and all data collected on the following grants were reported to USEPA in the ACRES database.

| Grant Title | Grant Description | Accomplishments |
|---|--|---|
| FY09 USEPA Assessment Grant (\$200,000; \$10,000 remaining) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update city-wide inventory of brownfields • Inventory of recorded institutional/engineering controls • Up to five Phase I and up to four Phase II environmental site assessments | Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative community outreach and stakeholder meetings. Phase II and Phase III completed as a prerequisite of demolition of Factory H brownfields structures. |
| FY07 USEPA Cleanup Grant (\$200,000; \$110,000 remaining) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanup of 77 Cooper Street | Completion of preliminary flood control plan, Interim Remedial Action Plan, and Analysis of Brownfields Alternatives completed. Interim remediation will be completed by March 1, 2012 when grant will be fully expended |
| FY07 USEPA Cleanup Grant (\$200,000; \$116,000 remaining) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanup of 104 Butler Street | Monitored attenuation study underway, Interim Remedial Action Plan, and Analysis of Brownfields Alternatives completed. Interim remediation will be completed by March 1, 2012 when grant will be fully expended. |
| FY07 USEPA Assessment Grant (\$200,000; \$63,000 remaining) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and prioritize brownfields sites for redevelopment • Host a community brownfields redevelopment workshop • Supplemental Phase II/III investigations on select sites | Supplemental subsurface investigation of 77 Cooper and 104 Butler Street completed. Phase I assessments completed at 116 Cook Avenue and 85 Cooper Street. Phase II assessments will be completed on sites earmarked for flood control work by July 2012. Reuse planning concept developed. |
| FY06 USEPA Cleanup Grant (\$200,000; project closed out) | Cleanup of the HUB Site | Implementation of the interim remedial action plan on the HUB property in downtown Meriden. |

3. Community Engagement and Partnerships

a. Community Involvement Plan

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 organization. The B&B Committee was consulted prior to the City submitting this application for cleanup funding.

The B&B Committee meets on a regular basis. All meetings are open to the public. Over the past 18 months, the City held 6 community meetings in the evening, at locations convenient to stakeholders, which targeted specific neighborhoods and populations within and adjacent to the TOD District. 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.

For this project, community-wide meetings are planned at key milestones of the cleanup process. At these meetings, all brownfields issues and cleanup progress are 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.

Most recently, the City initiated a Healthy Neighborhood Initiative intended to reach further into the neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown core affected by brownfields. A series of community workshops were held in late fall 2010 and focused on involving all aspects of the community in the assessment and revitalization planning efforts. 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. Workshops continue to be planned to address neighborhood concerns and ensure the Health Department and other services are reaching new residents. Meriden Family Zone, Health Department, and Women and Family Center are key partners.

If awarded this cleanup grant, the City will continue its comprehensive stakeholder involvement program. A public outreach website and portal has been created (<http://localsynergy.net/meriden>) to facilitate two-way, real-time communication. Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, will also be used to publicize the meetings and provide updates on cleanup progress. Where appropriate, the City will contact local bloggers to inform their readers. Additional activities will include public notification of the grant award and the process of community involvement in the *Record Journal*, the local daily newspaper. Flyers announcing the award 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 information will also be included on the City of Meriden's Brownfield webpage. All information and websites will be provided in English and in Spanish.

The City of Meriden has used a similar process in successfully engaging the Dutch Hill/Action 13 Neighborhood in previous planning, flood control, and brownfields stakeholder involvement activities. Public Meeting announcements, including date, time, place, and purpose of the public meetings will be submitted by press release to appropriate media outlets. A flyer announcing the public meetings will be provided to the B&B Committee for distribution in the neighborhood. The Meriden HUB Reuse Project Homepage is an example of the City's engagement process and includes detailed documentation of expenditures, plans, outcomes, and future activities. Similar documentation and detailed information will be provided for the 116 Cook Avenue site. In addition, communication is carried out in English and Spanish as needed throughout the process.

b. Partnerships with Other Agencies

As previously stated, the B&B Committee is one of the key methods of community outreach for brownfields. The B&B Committee includes members of all sectors of the community, including numerous local health agencies, community organizations, and state agencies, such as CTDECD and CTDEEP.

- i. The City's brownfields program works hand-in-hand with the local health department and through the Connecticut Department of Public Health. The local health department has a representative on the B&B Committee and participates fully in all decision-making by the body.
- ii. CTDECD and CTDEEP, as well as USEPA Region 1, all serve on the B&B Committee and are integrally involved in community outreach and strategic decision-making.
- iii. The City will actively pursue partnerships with Middlesex Community College-Meriden Center, located in the TOD project area.

c. Community-Based Organizations

The City of Meriden actively engages the following key organizations in its brownfields program. Support letters documenting the role of these organizations in this cleanup grant can be found in the Attachments.

- Robyn-Jay Bage, Women & Families Center: The Women & Families Center is a multi-faceted human service agency providing services throughout Middlesex County and the Greater New Haven area. Ms. Bage has been chairperson of the B&B Committee since 2003. She meets regularly with the project manager and will host and help organize community meetings and provide outreach services to key community groups.
- Mary Ellen Mordarski and David Swedock, Meriden Council of Neighborhoods: The Council of Neighborhoods is a non-profit organization that represents over 30 neighborhood associations in Meriden. The residents and businesses represented by the association have a common goal—to improve and maintain the quality of life. Ms. Mordarski is an active member of the B&B Committee and represents the Dutch Hill and Action 13 neighborhood. Mr. Swedock is chairman of the Council of Neighborhoods. The Council will provide outreach to all neighborhood associations

and Ms. Mordarski and Mr. Swedock will be key players in soliciting feedback and maintaining open lines of communication during the project.

- David Radcliffe, Director, and Marisol Estrada-Soto, Chair, Meriden Children First Initiative: The CFI works with a variety of community partners to sponsor parent leadership trainings, publish useful research and information, and connect families with community resources. Mr. Radcliffe, Ms. Estrada-Soto, and CFI will assist the City in outreach to the Spanish-speaking residents and act as a resource clearinghouse for the new immigrant community. CFI will also provide outreach services to the community's youth populations.
- Sean Moore, President, Greater Meriden Chamber of Commerce: The Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization that serves and enhances the area's business community. Mr. Moore and the Chamber will act as liaisons with the business community. They will also provide outreach services to their members. Mr. Moore has been on the B&B Committee for eight years.

4. Project Benefits

a. Welfare and/or Public Health

The City of Meriden conducted a *Preliminary Reuse Planning and Market Analysis: Factory H Area* in 2009, using funding from a USEPA 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 removes 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.

Environmental: The remediation of the site will reduce the presence of TCE and ETPHs that contaminate the soil and present risk to individuals in nearby residential, commercial, and industrial settings. The remediation of these contaminants is critical as the proposed redevelopment scenario includes the creation of open space to the east of the property and day lighting of Mill Brook.

In addition, any remediation plan will provide the necessary protections to the community, such as proper fencing, minimizing diesel truck trips, and dust control measures. Sections of the property that will not be undergoing remediation that are affected with contamination will not be disturbed as part of the cleanup

Social: The remediation and redevelopment of the site will allow for the transformation of an industrial eyesore, surrounded by apartment buildings and single family homes, into quality recreational, shopping, and housing options for the community. The proposed redevelopment plans do not call for the transformation of existing housing units that could displace current residents surrounding the site. Instead the plan creates new residential and commercial spaces for the local immigrant population whose only housing options were existing aging housing stock and avoids gentrification.

Health: The health benefits that will be gained by the community will be two fold. There will be reduced exposure to contaminants found in the soil on site and the community will benefit from the active recreational opportunities that will be available through the

planned open space, bike lanes, and playground. Equitable development principles will be used throughout the cleanup and development process at 116 Cook Avenue. These principles will ensure that those populations historically impacted by environmental contamination, like the largely Spanish-speaking immigrant community located adjacent to 116 Cook Avenue, will benefit from the revitalization of the site. The City plans to target the adjacent communities for the residential units created by 116 Cook Avenue's redevelopment.

b. Economic Benefits and/or Greenspace

i) **Economic Benefits:** 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 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. This development reverses the trend of directing investment to the suburban periphery of Meriden. The City plans to promote affordable housing development at these sites in accordance with existing affordable housing initiatives that the City already has in place through inclusionary zoning. The City will also work with the site developer/s to secure federal and state affordable funding for the site.

The proposed remediation and redevelopment of the area will create 100 construction jobs and 10 permanent jobs.

ii) **Non-Economic Benefits:** The redevelopment plan calls for a greenway and bike path along Mill Brook that will also extend throughout the City, connecting the property with the other areas of the TOD District. In addition, a new playground is proposed to the east of the site which will provide recreational opportunities to the large percentage of children living in the area and serve a critical piece of the flood control zone that will improve flooding in the neighboring community.

c. Environmental Benefits from Infrastructure Reuse/Sustainable Reuse

The successful redevelopment of 116 Cook Avenue is based on maximizing the underutilized infrastructure in the area and using building techniques to make it stand out from traditional suburban sprawl development that is currently drawing residents out of the City.

The site is currently served by a number of main thoroughfares connecting it to the rest of the City. As part of the development plan, changes to current street traffic patterns will be introduced in order to simplify the ability of pedestrians to access this site and other downtown sites, thus encouraging the use of non-motorized transportation. The site is also adjacent to four CTTransit bus routes that provide access to the other employment centers in central Connecticut.

The site will also take advantage of existing power, sewer, and water infrastructure that has serviced the site before. However, the site will have a reduced impact on those systems by using innovative green solutions, specifically in reducing water runoff and flooding in the community. The City believes that the remediation of 116 Cook Avenue

can serve as an example to the rest of the City on how to effectively address these two issues that can impact property values.

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