



APPENDIX B:
MEETING NOTES

MEETING NOTES

Meeting Date: July 11, 2011

Meeting Topic: Stakeholder Meeting

Project: Chicopee West End Brownfields Area-Wide Plan
CGI Project #29077

Attendees: Attached

Prepared by: Kenneth Buckland, The Cecil Group, Inc.

Copies: Attendees

The purpose of this meeting was for the invited Stakeholders group to meet and become introduced to the project.

Carl Dietz opened the meeting and The Cecil Group represented by Ken Buckland presented a slide show [attached] and facilitated the discussion.

The following agenda items were presented and open for discussion:

- Introduction of Stakeholders and Study Team
- Outline of Scope of Work and goals for the major elements
- Review of the key properties
- Additional properties to include in the study
- An outline of the schedule, stakeholder meetings and agendas

Meeting Notes

1. The Stakeholders represented a significant commitment to and investment in the West End neighborhood. Attendees included elected officials, city officials, EPA representatives, property owners, business owners, community program agents, local Chamber, and financial expertise.
2. Overall goal of the project is to find solutions to reuse of properties and a plan in accord with the EPA funding requirements that focuses on brownfields. This focus is because the study funding is through the 'Superfund Act,' and there are opportunities created by a brownfields designation.
3. For this study the definition of a brownfield is:
 - a. Commercial or industrial property
 - b. Tax distressed
 - c. Vacant, blighted or underutilized
 - d. Real or perceived environmental contamination
4. Owner of Cabotville Mill is out of New York, has raised rents on current businesses increasing vacancies at the Mill. Availability (and cost of installation) of sufficient water supply for fire protection is a requirement for residential redevelopment.
5. Lyman Mills has limited property area and may require cooperation with the Cabotville Mill owners. Currently a small portion of the space is used for manufacturing and employs about 18 people.
6. Potable water supply to Cabotville and Lyman Mills is in a water line that runs beneath the canal and is exposed when the canal is empty.

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7. The former Hampden Steam Plant parcel at the end of Delta Park has a restrictive AUL that currently limits potential uses. A park and access to the river have been considered as possible uses. It was pointed out that the AUL could be changed with improvements of conditions and project design. Other problems are flood plain and access.
 8. Family that owns Freemasons' Lodge also owns adjacent funeral parlor. Both properties are vacant and the owners are not willing to release control even though asked.
 9. Racing Oil site is in the early stages of a 'tax taking' process and may eventually be controlled by City.
 10. The Water Department site is appropriate for change but is part of an overall plan to consolidate Public Works in the City.
 11. The City has a number of capital projects that are being considered that will stress City finances.
 12. The property south of Delta Park is a potential brownfield, has existing river access, includes an easement for a City CSO discharge, has better-than-Delta-Park-but-still-problematic access under the RR tracks, and was recommended to be included in the list of subject brownfield study sites. The Stakeholders concurred.
 13. Other properties listed by the Stakeholders included:
 - a. Former Collegian Court restaurant property
 - b. Market Square: to open up property for parking
 14. The future regional rail system could result in neighborhood improvements under I-391 and within the adjoining properties.
 15. The project is to be completed in six months. Four more stakeholder meetings are proposed with the following agendas:
 - a. Presentation and discussion of Conditions and Opportunities
 - b. Presentation and discussion of Alternatives
 - c. Presentation and discussion of Draft Plan
 - d. Presentation of Final Plan

Actions

The following is a list of actions that need to be taken:

1. Scheduling meetings for Stakeholders
 2. Send copy of Public Works study to The Cecil Group
 3. The Cecil Group to research additional properties for study area
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Chicopee West End Brownfields Area-Wide Plan CGI Project #29077

TO: Stakeholders
RE: Summary of Meeting
ATTENDEES: Attached
FROM: Tracy J. Adamski
DATE: Stakeholder Meeting September 19, 2011

On September 19, 2011, a stakeholders meeting was held at the Chicopee Library. The purpose of the meeting was to identify redevelopment issues and ideas for reuse regarding the Chicopee West End Brownfield sites. The following are discussion items from this meeting.

Ken Buckland of the Cecil Group opened the meeting and presented a slide show and facilitated the discussion.

The following agenda items were presented and open for discussion:

- Review of existing conditions
- Discussion of reuse options
- September 20th Public Meeting

Meeting Notes

1. Bringing in more people and more diversity into the study area will drive economic changes.
2. Approximately 153 businesses are located in the study area. The majority of these businesses are industrial/manufacturing; there is limited retail.
3. The City is currently undertaking sewer separation projects in accordance with an Administrative Consent Order with EPA. The cost of these projects is increasing the sewer fees and there is concern that the high sewer fees will drive away business.
4. The City also has a flat stormwater utility fee. The City is considering a reduced stormwater fee for projects that reduce stormwater impacts with on-site stormwater management systems
5. The study area includes two national register historic districts, one building on the national register and 90 city-designated historic properties.
6. Ames Privilege has 12 commercial units. Engineering companies related to ongoing construction projects in the area are leasing half of the available commercial units.
7. Options for improvements within the Study Area include:
 - a. Use of Historic Tax Credits may be available for building renovations. Ames Privilege has applied for the 3rd round of historic tax credits, and is still waiting for a response
 - b. Consideration of changing the traffic pattern flows to two-way traffic. The current one-way loop forces people to go down to Exchange Street.
 - c. Center Street is the gateway to Chicopee from I-391. The access is easy off of I-391. MassDOT has jurisdiction over the entrance off of I-391, including maintenance of the island and vegetated area off the highway ramp. This area received minimal maintenance from MassDOT. Improvements to this

- gateway entrance into the City could improve the overall feel of entering Chicopee Center
- d. Potential reuse options for Delta Park & the Hampden Steam site include a tree farm or solar array. There are credits for solar.
 - e. Consideration of demolition of some of the mill buildings across from Cabotville Mill complex
8. There is no façade improvement program in place.
 9. The businesses in Chicopee Center are destinations businesses. Most people come into this area to go to a specific place and then leave.
 10. There is no commuter rail service in Chicopee. The recently funded improvements to Amtrak service between St. Albans, VT and New Haven, CT will run adjacent to the study area. Stops are proposed in Springfield and Holyoke; no stops are proposed in Chicopee. The lack of rail is not a deterrent to redevelopment.
 11. The future housing market remains uncertain. There are many vacant houses and the trend is still downward. Currently there is not much difference between low income rates and market rates.
 12. Boutique businesses economically need small spaces and can build off of other amenities. Some of the amenities that attract smaller businesses in other downtown areas, such as symphonies, movie theaters, and ball fields, are not located in Chicopee.
 13. Opportunities for the West End include the expansion of Bay State Medical Center. Baystate is acquiring land in Chicopee for additional parking. This expansion will bring new employees into the area and has the potential to bring new residents and new business opportunities such as restaurants.
 14. The West End area is experiencing a mini-gentrification. 2010 Census indicates three distinct populations:
 - a. Older white females
 - b. Young female Hispanic run households
 - c. Portuguese males, ages 20-40 with higher income

Public Meeting

The agenda for the September 20th public charette follows:

- Existing Conditions
- Explain Project
- Groups mapping exercise
- Write the headline of the local paper in 10/20 years from now
- Publicize through website/channel 5

Actions

The following is a list of actions that need to be taken:

1. Research potential to convert traffic patterns to two-way traffic
2. Contact Chicopee Electric Light Department regarding fiber optic availability
3. Typographical error on page 1 of report – “eastern” Massachusetts should be western Massachusetts
4. Consider Chicopee’s sewer fees as development consideration

Attendees included:

Lee Pouliot, Planner and Administrator, Community Development
Chris Nolan, Project Manager, Community Development
Liz McKiernan, HallKeen
Kate Brown, Planning Director, City of Chicopee
James Dawson, Development Manager, City of Chicopee
Anita Wright, John R. Lyman Company
Jim Tillitson, Councilman
Steve Huntley, Executive Director Valley Opportunity Council
Bill Wagner, Chicopee Savings Bank
Carl Dietz, Director of Community Development
Andrew Loew, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Ken Buckland, The Cecil Group
Tracy Adamski, Tighe & Bond

MEETING NOTES

Meeting Date: September 20, 2011

Meeting Topic: Public Meeting

Project: Chicopee West End Brownfields Area-Wide Plan
CGI Project #29077

Attendees: Attached

Prepared by: Kenneth Buckland, The Cecil Group, Inc.

Copies:

The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the project to the public and to receive their input.

Carl Dietz opened the meeting and The Cecil Group represented by Ken Buckland presented a slide show [attached] and facilitated the discussion.

The following agenda items were presented and open for discussion:

- Introduction of the Study Team
- Presentation by The Cecil Group (attached)
- Questions and Answers

Although the Team had been prepared to break into smaller sessions, the number of people present made it more effective to continue the discussion in one group.

Meeting Notes

1. Specific sites
 - a. Old gas station (Mobil Corner) –
 - i. Either as a Wendy's or Burger King
 - ii. Or as a small park with benches, a fountain, suitable for farmers markets
 - iii. It was noted that there was nothing for older people to walk to and no beauty in the area
 - iv. For sale sign was knocked down and never replaced
 - b. Racing Oil – near two high density buildings that don't have parking spaces – use for public parking and make it easier to rent out buildings
 - c. Kendall – close it down; problematic residents
 - d. Happy with Bay State purchase of racing track
 - e. Library – handicapped ramp would have been better choice than wall/benches – easier to rent
 - f. Freemason's Lodge and Funeral Home – City should take both properties
 - g. Central Oil – site next door has ruptured gas tanks; groundwater has contamination; need funding to clean
 - h. Miller Street – graffiti makes it look scary
 - i. Halfway house – bottles are thrown over the fence into the parking lot of the clothing store

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- j. Ames Privilege nature walk – only 100 yards long – considered a joke because it was never extended
 - k. Family Dollar and Plaza – decrepit
 - l. Front Street – extended construction has choked out businesses
 - m. Losing two more bridges to reconstruction will further choke traffic
 - n. Projects have improved considerably
 - o. Hardware store – looks like it is falling down but most liked the ambiance
2. Concerns about the City's responsiveness
- a. City regulations are not enforced – including parking, cleaning, snow removal, grass cutting, traffic speed, and signage
 - b. City never tries anything from studies
 - c. Focus on crisis management
 - d. City has surplus – spend it on something
 - e. City Hall should set a better example
 - i. Old awnings
 - ii. Cigarette butt holders overflowing
 - f. Mayor seen as not doing anything
 - g. Sign restrictions aren't enforced fairly
 - h. Chicopee sign is decrepit and old – not welcoming
 - i. Hamden and Center – used to be a nice memorial to Jimmy Stefani (s) – removed for construction and never restored
 - j. One business owner has been asking for a bus stop to be moved for nine years with no response
 - k. DPW will respond if you are persistent
 - l. Why is Alderman for this area not here?
 - m. Post Office rarely cuts the grass
 - n. No irrigation lines for planting around City Hall
 - o. City has \$7m in rainy day fund – should take initiative and use \$1m out to make city clean and more hospitable; note that City would want to see a return on any investment
3. Safety and Traffic
- a. Perception that there is a lack of safety
 - b. No longer have police walking the streets – would like a visible sign of law enforcement
 - c. Central Oil has been asked to provide tapes from their security system to the police
 - d. Street posted at 30mph – should be posted at 15mph; City has refused even though other areas have lower limits
 - e. One-way traffic is problem for the clothing store – customers get stuck and miss the store
4. Parking
- a. No parking for the older buildings
 - b. Some business now must pay for parking - \$30/ =month because free parking removed (and meters installed?)
5. Trash
- a. Elks donated a vacuum truck to clean the downtown which has disappeared
 - b. Told that sweeper was put away for the season
 - c. Median strip never cleaned although the ramps are ok
 - d. Sidewalks and curbstones are filthy
 - e. Leaves are left in the streets; bushes are not maintained
 - f. Snow isn't cleared
 - g. Need more trash cans – wrought iron so they can't be flipped
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- h. DPW will only empty bunds once per week; not enough; should put someone in a pick-up truck to go around every other day.
 - i. Dividing strip of 391 is weed infested and full of trash
6. Maintenance – property owners
- a. Lot in the middle of city with high grass – grass cutting regulation not enforced
 - b. Clothing store sweeps own sidewalk every morning – customers complain about the state of the streets
 - c. Junkyard in the middle of the city is a hard selling point
 - d. Owners must restore front properties – cleaning, painting, flowers
 - e. Historical property across from Dan’s Auto (first doors for White House) is owned by someone who has done nothing
7. Specific Concerns
- a. Will the mills be developed with low-income housing?
 - i. No – logistical issues with water line
 - b. Need restrictions and recommendations on redevelopment
 - c. What is happening with Holy Name Church?
 - d. Downtown is imploding
 - e. Clothing business owner considering moving to another city
 - f. Wonderful place to live; great community –would love to see city thrive
 - g. There was a plan to knock down the building behind City Hall
 - h. Clean everything first and build from there – don’t take forever
 - i. Character of historic building? – difference between historic and haunted
 - j. Next steps – looking at best uses for these properties; market assessment; will inform property owners
 - k. Have business owners considered a Business Improvement District?
 - l. Discussion of EPA funding - \$150,000 to study and make recommendations on Brownfields; will provide a roadmap of goals and milestones; may make City eligible for funding

Actions

The following is a list of actions that need to be taken:

1. Find UMass study from 12-15 years ago – 2,5, 10 year programs
2. Study from two years ago recommending removing one-way traffic flow
3. October 22 meeting – attendees are willing to make phone calls to encourage people to come

Attachments



MEETING NOTES

Meeting Date: October 17, 2011

Meeting Topic: Stakeholder Meeting

Project: Chicopee West End Brownfields Area-Wide Plan
CGI Project #29077

Attendees: Attached

Prepared by: Kenneth Buckland, The Cecil Group, Inc.

Copies: Attendees

The purpose of this meeting was for the consultant team to present preliminary market information and reuse/redevelopment options for the Brownfield sites and to seek feedback.

Ken Buckland, representing The Cecil Group, presented a slide show and facilitated the discussion. The presentation included the following elements:

- Preliminary Market Findings and Recommendations
- Concept Plan for the Study Area
- Possible Reuse/Redevelopment Options for the target Brownfields
- Next Steps

Anne Capra, Senior Planner at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission also presented information about several initiatives, including Sustainable Knowledge Corridor and Think Blue Massachusetts.

Meeting Notes

1. Comments about the Concept Plan
 - a. Love the idea of changing downtown streets to two-way traffic flow as people are constantly getting lost and unable to find Ames Privilege
 - b. Do not think there will be a “human cry” if selected buildings are demolished along the canal
 - c. Think the canal district makes sense
2. Questions
 - a. Can Exchange Street between Cabot and Center streets be made into a pedestrian walk?
 - i. Answer: That only works in high density areas. There is also a need to continue accommodating on-street parking.
 - b. Has Elms College reached out to the city about locating students downtown?
 - i. Answer: No
 - ii. Additional information: The city wants to create a dynamic between Elms College and downtown Chicopee.
 - c. Is it OK if the chicken coop (Lyman building) comes down?
 - i. Answer (Wright representative): I think it is an opportunity to demolish the building. The building has lost its functionality.

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- d. In the canal district, is it all or nothing in terms of demolishing buildings? Is it possible to leave some buildings in place?
 - i. Answer: Yes, it is possible to leave some buildings. We do want a continuous link, however, but the proposed path could go through buildings. This would need to be a public/private partnership. The infrastructure piece would be on the City. The City also owns the frontage on Front Street, so there could be negotiations with the private property owners.
3. General observations
- a. Some owners of manufacturing buildings have no experience in conducting outreach to retain or recruit new small businesses to fill empty spaces.
 - b. The canal is in bad shape. The deeds are messed up.
 - c. Con Edison owns the canal.

Actions

The following is a list of actions that need to be taken:

1. Email PowerPoint presentation and maps to Lee Pouliot
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MEETING NOTES

Meeting Date: October 22, 2011

Meeting Topic: Public Meeting

Project: Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Project, Chicopee West End
CGI Project #29077

Attendees: Attached

Prepared by: Kenneth Buckland, The Cecil Group, Inc.

The purpose of this meeting was to update the community on the project and receive public input. The meeting was attended by City of Chicopee officials, Mayor Michael Bissonnette, Cecil Group representatives and 12 to 15 community members.

Carl Dietz opened the meeting and introduced Mayor Bissonnette, who discussed the history of the West End of downtown Chicopee. The mayor also talked about recent improvements and potential opportunities in the West End.

Ken Buckland, representing the Cecil Group, then presented a slide show [attached] and facilitated a discussion. After a brief break, a panel of experts gave overviews of their businesses and discussed strategies for improving the West End. The panelists, listed below, then answered questions from the public.

- John Williamson of Williamson Commercial Properties, LLC
- Ken Vincunas, Owner of Development Associates
- Craig Silverman, Associate with Dorfman Capital
- Gerry-Lynn Darcy, Vice President of Marketing/Business Development with Metric Corporation

The meeting concluded with attendees suggesting headlines for Chicopee in 10 years. These headlines are listed below.

- New Riverfront Expansion
- Great Entertainment Center
- Finally Development at the Old Steam Plant Site
- Great Expectations have Arrived
- One of the Oldest and Newest Destinations
- From Brownfields to Greenways
- Great Family Destination
- A Great Place to Live
- Outstanding Services
- Downtown: A Place to be Again
- Historical Place to Live



Meeting Notes

1. Comments on reuse concept presented by The Cecil Group
 - a. Like the idea of converting one-way streets to two-way streets as businesses are now struggling due to the one-way street network
 - b. Like canal walk (similar to one in front of Ames) and encouraged to hear that there could be money to demolish buildings
 - c. Love proposal
 - d. Agree that some buildings have to come down
 - e. Like mixed uses in the mill buildings (smaller business on first floor and residents above)
 2. Suggestions for reuse/redevelopment
 - a. Small marina between Chicopee and Connecticut rivers for people living in the mills (for small boats to access Connecticut River)
 - b. Capture expansion of Baystate Medical Center (maybe up Center Street and in the Gateway area)
 - c. Hotels at Mobile site and junkyards, then need restaurants and retail shops
 - d. Casino
 - e. Riverwalk like one in San Antonio, includes amphitheater
 - f. Off-leash dog park to build friendships and community
 - g. Community gardens at Water Department site
 - h. Waterfront park
 - i. Private educational uses like training centers
 3. General observations
 - a. As gas prices rise, suburban people are returning to centrally-located places that are closer to jobs. Young people are not moving way out.
 - b. The city holds on to vacant or distressed properties to collect back taxes. The city should instead sell the properties.
 - c. Chicopee is not wealthy enough to support a marina. Can this planning project bring in wealth?
 - d. Elms College is building a new science/technology center on campus, and they're expanding their programs (graduate level). New students are going to need housing.
 - e. The economy is slow. There are no opportunities (job).
 - f. The mills present a great opportunity for people to move into city centers.
 4. Questions and concerns
 - a. Need to minimize growth because of impact on the schools (school children from under 35 population)
 - b. What happens to existing residents in the West End?
 - i. Answer: They stay.
 - c. Has the City communicated with Elms College in terms of connecting to downtown Chicopee?
 - i. The college has been invited to be part of this planning process. We are still reaching out to them.
 - d. People are not aware of the opportunities at these project sites. We need events to expose them (like Delta Park).
 5. Requests for information
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- a. Look at demographics of under 35 population in urban areas similar to Chicopee like Springfield and Holyoke
 - b. School impact study
 - c. List of city-owned distressed or vacant properties
6. Other project updates
- a. Mill project: stalled due in part to issue of providing water to the site
 - b. Market Square Billiards: contract executed, expected to be finished after Christmas
 - c. River league?: project still going forward, idea is to have a club
 - d. Old library: space studies have been done, but no decisions made; site is too confined to city hall, so it will probably end up being a government use

Comments from Panelists

1. Silverman
 - a. There is a market for Brownfields tax credits.
 - b. Sites with an AUL can qualify for credits that cover 25% of cleanup costs. Without an AUL, 50% of cleanup costs can be covered.
 - c. The state Brownfields tax credit program expires on December 31, 2013.
 2. Vincunas
 - a. Land, permitting and construction costs are up, so it is difficult to find customers who will pay for new construction.
 - b. Rehabilitation and reuse projects are more attractive.
 - c. Access is an issue at the Cabotville site.
 - d. It is not out of the question that Development Associates would be interested in taking down mill buildings.
 3. Williamson
 - a. Incubator spaces allow businesses to move around as they grow.
 - b. Cabotville faces competition from the Ludlow mills.
 4. Darcy
 - a. A lot of opportunities for urban redevelopment, particularly around mill buildings.
 - b. The trend is going toward lifestyle communities (retail with residential).
 - c. Chicopee has a lot of great opportunities, including the airport, highway access and resources for energy.
 - d. You need to brand the community, using media exposure to attract people and businesses.
 - e. Projects need attractive amenities adjacent to or part of the development. Desired amenities include access to fitness, restaurants and retail/shopping.
 - f. Chicopee (West End) is a perfect target for urban renewal.
 - g. It is better to renovate than build new construction.
 - i. Project example: Parker Street mill: 200 units, roughly \$130 per square feet for modest finishes
 - h. The trend is for both parents to work, so more people are fleeing toward cities/suburbs with more to offer.
 - i. Projects are attracting new families that have maybe one child. They move out as the family grows and then move back. Despite concerns about school children, new families with children stimulate the economy. There needs to be a balance.
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- j. \$120 per square foot is possible, depending on geologic issues. Parking also increases costs.
 - k. Municipalities need to circulate information about project opportunities. You need to create a campaign. This planning is a good start.

Attachments

1. Presentation by The Cecil Group, Inc.
 2. List of meeting attendees (Sign In Sheet)
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Sign In Sheet

1. Jack Valley
2. Kate Brown
3. Tom Bardon
4. Juan Velazquez
5. Mary Beth Costello
6. Jim Tillotson
7. Craig Silverman
8. Kenneth and Suzanne Bewsee
9. Sandra A. Peret
10. Ruby Batchelor
11. Thomas Batchelor
12. Jeff Couture
13. Andrew Loew
14. James Reilly

Other Attendees (Not on Sign-In Sheet)

1. Ken Buckland (Cecil Group)
 2. Eunice Kim (Cecil Group)
 3. Mayor Michael Bissonnette (City of Chicopee)
 4. Carl Dietz (City of Chicopee, Community Development)
 5. Lee Pouliot (City of Chicopee, Community Development)
 6. Chris Nolan (City of Chicopee, Community Development)
 7. Ken Vincunas (Panelist)
 8. Gerry-Lynn Darcy (Panelist)
 9. John Willimson (Panelist, Project Team member)
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MEETING NOTES

Meeting Date: November 8, 2011

Meeting Topic: Stakeholder Meeting

Project: Chicopee West End Brownfields Area-Wide Plan
CGI Project #29077

Attendees: Attached

Prepared by: Kenneth Buckland, The Cecil Group, Inc.

Copies: Attendees

The purpose of this meeting was for the consultant team to discuss the implementation of the concept plan and solicit input.

Ken Buckland, representing The Cecil Group, presented a slide show and facilitated the discussion. The presentation included the following elements:

- Review of Previous Concepts (market information and concept plan)
- Explain and discuss the implementation chart (draft)
- Discuss next steps

Stakeholders were given a copy of the concept plan, implementation chart, revised property sheets about the Brownfields, and other supporting materials.

Meeting Notes

1. Concept plan and implementation
 - a. I like the tear down of the Lyman building.
 - b. Is there any reuse option for the other six Brownfields? Can FXM take another look?
 - i. Answer: The market is not strong enough for new construction.
 - c. What about river access at the Steam Plant property?
 - i. Answer: Interstate 391 is not high enough. We have a geometric problem. An option for access is to run north parallel along the railroad tracks and then go over the railroad tracks. It would have to be a larger structure... We want better pedestrian and bicycle access.
 - d. What about improved access under the railroad (existing tunnel)?
 - i. Answer: Improving the existing access is key.
 - a. How does District Improvement Financing (DIF) work?
 - ii. Answer: A DIF works because there are multiple properties. You anticipate increased property taxes and apply that to bond the cost of infrastructure and other projects. You can have performance standards. The City would have to take ownership of the infrastructure improvements.

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- a. There is discontent among businesses in Cabotville because they don't know what the future holds.
 - b. What is the timing of the Cabotville permits?
 - i. Answer: They have all the city permits they need. The issue will be at the state level. They have not gone to the state yet.
 - c. How do we help businesses in Cabotville?
 - i. Answer: Bring more consumers in.
 - d. Guttman still needs to submit construction documents to the BBRS. There are compliance alternatives for the building code.
 - e. Guttman raised rents and people left. We need to fill up the condos, and then we need stores and restaurants. Where does it start? No one wants to be first. You could be first and only.
 - f. Financing for condos is more complicated. It has to be apartments.
 - g. Guttman has a special permit project, not a 40R project. The City could get \$600,000 as part of a 40R project.

3. Small businesses

- a. There is often no place to park downtown. The small businesses struggle. The Billiards building is coming down, so maybe that will help with the added parking.
- b. We need boutiques, women's clothing stores and internet cafes to get Elms College students downtown.
- c. The City does not provide much technical assistance to small businesses because the City lacks the capacity.
- d. There are some stores downtown that have been there for a long time and that do draw people downtown.
- e. The City should have an inventory for small business spaces.
- f. Small businesses often call the Chamber, which will walk them around and show them properties.
- g. If spaces are not advertised through a broker, the City often doesn't know about them.
- h. There is money designated for a marketing campaign for downtown called "Easy to Enter Chicopee Center."
- i. The Chamber could work on creating a list of available spaces, and the City could provide space on its website for the list (or a link to the Chamber's website). The issue is collecting the information.
- j. Do small businesses in downtown Chicopee interact with the Chamber of Commerce?
 - i. Answer: They join, but they are transient. They are in and out. The Chamber has a small incubator. Small businesses move from the Chamber to Cabotville.

4. Railroad

- a. It is tremendously difficult to deal with the railroad. You need political support.
 - b. The rail line is being upgraded to passenger level service. There will be a few more trips per day. Trains will go up to 70 mph.
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MEETING NOTES

Meeting Date: January 11, 2012

Meeting Topic: Public Meeting #3

Project: Chicopee West End Brownfields Area-Wide Plan
CGI Project #29077

Attendees: Attached

Prepared by: Kenneth Buckland, The Cecil Group, Inc.

Copies: Attendees

The purpose of this meeting was for the consultant team to present the draft report to the public and seek input. The meeting was held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Norwich Public Library.

Frank Gardner, project officer for the EPA grant funding the Brownfields study, gave a brief overview of the EPA Area-Wide Brownfields Program. He explained that this is the first time the EPA has had funds to support planning in areas with Brownfields. Chicopee is one of 23 communities nationwide that received a grant under the program.

Ken Buckland of The Cecil Group presented a slide show and facilitated a discussion. The slide show presentation included the following elements:

- Market Potential
- Concept Plan and Reuse Scenarios
- Traffic Circulation
- Implementation

Meeting Notes

1. Market Potential
 - a. Is there a market for rentals, not condos?
 - i. Answer: There is a market now for rentals. People lost money in the housing crash, so they have less money to buy condos. The rental market is strong.
2. Traffic Circulation and Railroad
 - a. Can you develop a roadway from Center Street to the riverfront from the south?
 - i. Answer: It would be difficult. You would still need to cross the railroad. The railroad is designing for high speed rail now.
 - b. Chicopee's roads are not welcoming to people. They direct people out of town.
 - c. One suggestion is to only convert Exchange Street and a portion of Cabot Street into two-way circulation.
 - d. High speed rail means trains will travel at speeds of up to 79 miles per hour. The Vermonter will be rerouted here in a year. Currently, freight rail utilizes the railroad tracks, running a couple times a day. The



railroad tracks will be upgraded to passenger level, meaning it will run three to four times a days.

3. Former Steam Plant/Delta Park

- a. It will cost \$5 to \$10 million to improve the access to Delta Park and the former Steam Plant property. The consultant team therefore suggested lower-intensity, rent-producing uses. There is not a use with a high enough value to support improving the access.
- b. Can a boat launch be located there? It would be nice to put a park and boat launch there.
 - i. Answer: Yes, though there are access issues.
- c. Can fields be developed there?
 - i. Answer: Access is difficult. A ball field would fit on the site, but the Fire Chief does not like that idea due to difficult emergency access.
- d. Are there EPA restrictions on the site?
 - i. Answer: No. The Steam Plant building was collapsed into the land, so the consultant team recommends assessing the property for Brownfield issues. There are no restrictions on the land.
- e. Could hydropower be generated?
 - i. Answer: There is potential. Any building in the floodplain would have to be flood proof.

4. Cabotville

- a. Is the \$600,000 40R money going to be given to Cabotville?
 - i. Answer: Undecided. The money can be used to advance smart growth projects in the 40R overlay.
 - ii. The site needs a new water line, which would cost roughly \$800,000. It would supply the mill properties.
- b. Is the shopping center on Exchange Street going to be torn down?
 - i. Answer: The graphic is just a rendering. The shopping center could be redeveloped along with the Cabotville parking lot. It would be nice to reconfigure the shopping center property, so its back was not to Cabotville and the canal.

5. Overall Brownfields Plan

- a. The downtown has tremendous potential. The Brownfields plan is a wonderful idea, but how long is the consultant team going to be here? We want continuity. We need more public outreach. People were unaware of this Brownfields project.
 - b. The Brownfields plan is a road map to be implemented. Certain people are going to be behind it, while others will not be.
 - c. Having done this Brownfields plan will put Chicopee in a better position to get funding in the future.
 - d. What is the most viable option for getting something done? Is it easier to focus on open space, city-owned properties, or circulation?
 - i. Answer: It all costs money. There is a need for many steps. The first step is to clean up the downtown and make it more attractive. Then, Cabotville has to get moving. Then the focus will be on longer-term projects.
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6. General Comments

- a. The city needs parks and fields. The City and School Committee have said that there cannot be more programs because there are not enough fields. It would be nice to have open space and parks developed on the Brownfield sites.
 - b. There is a desire for a dog park in town. Young professionals are waiting longer to have children. They are opting for dogs. They will spend money in town.
 - c. We want to see businesses and properties improved, and we want bad buildings to be taken down.
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MEETING NOTES

Meeting Date: January 11, 2012

Meeting Topic: Stakeholder Meeting

Project: Chicopee West End Brownfields Area-Wide Plan
CGI Project #29077

Attendees: Attached

Prepared by: Kenneth Buckland, The Cecil Group, Inc.

Copies: Attendees

The purpose of this meeting was for the consultant team to present the draft report to the stakeholder committee and seek feedback.

Ken Buckland of The Cecil Group, Frank Mahady of FXM and Paul Furgal, P.E. of Tighe and Bond presented a slide show, which included the following elements:

- Market Potential
- Concept Plan and Reuse Scenarios
- Traffic Circulation
- Implementation

Meeting Notes

1. Market potential
 - a. Can the West End support a restaurant or coffee shop or two?
 - i. Answer: Yes, a good restaurant will succeed regardless of what the retail gap analysis says. A restaurant is a good anchor and can draw people to the downtown. The strategy is to find a successful restaurant somewhere else and recruit them to Chicopee.
 - b. Who are the active players in conducting outreach to businesses (to recruit them)?
 - i. Answer: Typically property owners and brokers.
 - c. Ames Privilege has quirky commercial space and is traditionally full. As for residential units, another 100 or so units could be filled based on the people who call and email on a weekly basis.
 - d. There is demand for an excursion boat service. You just need space for parking and a bulk head. Such a service could be a little economic engine in the West End. People who use the service could spend money in the downtown.
2. Traffic Circulation
 - a. The consultant team heard a business representative say patrons could not find his/her business. Improving traffic flow would result in better business.
 - b. The City changed to a one-way circulation pattern in the 1970s due in part to access issues at the fire station and old library site. The fire



station is still in the same location. One-way circulation is better for the Fire Department in the case of emergencies.

- c. The city used to have more traffic demand in the downtown, so changing to one-way circulation helped traffic flow.
- d. There is pushback from the public regarding the idea of changing back to two-way circulation. Chicopee Savings Bank has concerns, for example. Changing to two-way circulation would have a huge impact on the bank. There are also two insurance companies in the downtown whose clientele reportedly love the one-way traffic pattern. It allows them to park, conduct their business and leave.
- e. Changing to two-way circulation would also impact the post office.
- f. On-street parking is convenient.
- g. If on-street parking is removed, people may park on side streets, which are narrow and already overflowed.
- h. The City should look at current traffic flows as well as projected traffic due to potential future development before moving forward with circulation changes. A traffic study is needed.
- i. One recommendation would be to only make Exchange Street a two-way street. A short portion is currently one-way only. The one-way direction of traffic in that portion could also be switched to the other direction.

3. Public Involvement

- a. The EPA wanted a high level of public involvement in this Brownfields study. What are the top three or four issues that have come up and how have they been addressed in the plan?
 - i. Answer: One-way circulation was one of the first issues to come up, and it has been addressed in the plan (recommended circulation changes). The general cleanup of the downtown came up, and the consultant team has recommended the cleanup and beautification of properties. Waterfront access was an issue, and the consultant team looked at ways to make improvements. The team specifically looked at creating better access to the canal, which would improve the perception of the downtown, get people interested in the water and lead them to the riverfront. The team has also suggested getting rid of derelict buildings and making small improvements to the riverfront, including a boat excursion service. In addition, commercial property owners have asked what they can do with their buildings, and the market study addressed their question. The team determined that targeting Cabotville would be the path of least resistance.

4. Funding

- a. What are funding sources for the plan?
 - i. Answer: The Department of Energy and HUD are just a few of the potential funding sources. MassDevelopment also has funding programs that could be used.
 - ii. HUD has a Brownfields specialist on staff. HUD also has flexible funding, including CDBG funds, HOME funds, Brownfields money and the Section 108 loan program.
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5. Cabotville
 - a. The consultant team suggests focusing first on Cabotville mill. It fits the market demand.
 - b. In East Hampton, a former mill property started filling up with residences and retail stores, and it has jump started the revitalization of the town.
 - c. It will not be easy to get Cabotville going. The property does not have enough parking on site. It will be a hard sell to ask residents to park on the property south of Cabotville that has the same owner. Cabotville is not a nice property for residences. There are a lot of limitations.
 - d. The Fire Department supports the housing plan, but it has to meet certain standards and codes. The main code issues are water access and height.
 - e. There is demand for rental housing, and there is money in rental housing. A feasibility study has not been specifically done for Cabotville.
 6. Riverfront
 - a. The Riverfront Property has access issues from Exchange Street. The access is wider than the Delta Park access, but it is a foot or so less in height.
 - b. The riverfront is a mess after the storms. The consultant team only suggests building outside of the floodplain.
 7. Former Steam Plant/Delta Park
 - a. Access is a big issue. There is only single-lane access. Height is also an issue.
 - b. It has been suggested that the City could sell the portion of property that it owns for an agricultural/conservation restriction. The consultant team recommends low-intensity uses such as a solar array. A conservation restriction could be included.
 8. Mobil site
 - a. Only one small portion has an Activity and Use Limitation (AUL). Depending on the future uses, that portion could be remedied with the contaminated material easily excavated.
 9. Process
 - a. Comments on the Brownfields Report should be given to Andrew Loew in the next two weeks. Within the next month, the final report will be done.
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Chicopee AWP Downtown Business Marketing Forum 3.27.12

Bill Wagner, Chicopee Savings – does the \$120/sq ft cost include a subsidy? Answer from Frank Mahady; no, it's market rate and includes purchase, rehab costs including infrastructure improvement costs

Bill Wagner, Chicopee Savings – if older folks are less mobile according to the data, where does the 55+ market come from? Frank M – older folks are increasingly likely to rent, which is where the market is in the West End

Unknown - Unfinished spaces/partial finish – certain market; “different” urban environment

Ann Burke of Western Mass EDC – High Street in Holyoke supports \$1,200/mo apartments above retail (Walsh Development) demonstrating there is a regional market for residential use at plausible rents in older downtowns

Frank M - Downtown New Bedford – similar projects at projected rental rates with historic tax credits; low/mod income credits

Bill Wagner, Chicopee Savings – Vacancy rate industrial space – 75-80% utilization (COSTAR) seems a bit high. Frank M – this is a 5 year average, so given the recent recession, the future numbers should actually be better than this

West End Resident - Streetscape cleanup is necessary necessary – reinvestment will not matter unless cleanup whole neighborhood. “Retail is detail.” Examples of successful redeveloped downtowns: Blueback Square, Hartford; Northampton, MA. Beautiful architecture in mill buildings – big asset. Currently no pedestrian traffic downtown – need to create it. Target low hanging fruit – wash windows, plant some flowers, sweep the streets. Frank – cleanup is a key first step but a larger catalytic project is key.

West End Resident (different than above) - How about entertainment? Best option to combine entertainment with dining. Frank – this fits in well with the <35 and 55+ housing markets, but the key is that entertainment has to be unique and convenient

West End Resident (different than above) - Who is actively pursuing new businesses to come to Chicopee? For example, Johnny's in South Hadley (a restaurant) is very successful and could probably expand somewhere.

Ann Burke, Western Mass EDC – Need to identify a leader/organization to do this. Possibly a BID – and BIDs can start small and be managed by the local Chamber of Commerce. Follow strategy identified by FXM – approach successful businesses/restaurants and encourage opening second location in downtown Chicopee. Downtowns need to be experiential, authentic. Someone has to “own” it. Need a variety of uses morning to night.

West End Business Owner/Resident – We've talked about a BID before and there was some resistance to the fees from various businesses. It sounds like a good idea but it may be tough to start up.

Ann Burke, Western Mass EDC – property owners within a new BID may opt out of the fee structure at the beginning. They can opt in later once the BID demonstrates what it can do.

John Williamson - Starts somewhere and it grows. One storefront at a time. Critical mass.

West End Resident - Do we need an anchor store? No.

West Hartford – “nice little stores that you can pop into.”

**Chicopee West End Neighborhood Brownfields Plan
Federal-State Stakeholder Implementation Planning Session and Site Tour
April 3, 2012**

Attendee Comments:

Frank Gardner, EPA

Next TIGER Grant round (March 2013) – planning for bridge crossing might be a good application

Davin Elvin, PVPC/PVTA

Gateway – what is the status with transit service? It exists downtown at Route 116 heading north-south, and Elms College-Baystate route.

Cabotville has the most heavily used transit stop for the entire city. There are many existing businesses in the Cabotville mill. Workers cross the bridge and go into downtown. A small transit center might be suitable for the Gateway site which is also on the bus route.

Need more analysis about parking and traffic flow to better assess options.

Mike Vedovelli, MOBD and Erica Kreuter, Mass Permits Regulatory Office

Water line for Cabotville – not enough water for fire-fighting capacity; crosses several properties to feed mill.

For waterline upgrade to be eligible for MassWorks Grant it would need to be public infrastructure that supports private development. Can be a publicly owned easement but not a high priority/competitive situation for MassWorks, but would be eligible if easement publicly owned.

Davin Elvin, PVPC/PVTA

The bike path in Northampton has a crossing under the rail line north of downtown currently under design. Somewhat similar to the Depot Street situation and is projected for about \$5 million.

Sheryl Rosner, EPA

The EPA Building Blocks program can perform code review as technical assistance. EPA brings a consultant in to do a 2-day review of local codes and makes recommendations relative to project objectives. Might be suitable for examining height-related aspects of code as applied to Cabotville. Also, the SRF (State Revolving Fund) might be a resource for the water main project.

Melissa Cryan and Kurt Gaertner, EOEEA

If riverfront land was city owned, PARC Grant could be used for development of agricultural uses such as CSA farm or for more traditional recreational uses. Can be used in conjunction with Gateway Parks program.

Trish Coppolino, State of Vermont (guest)

USDA funding has been used at Intervale Farm in Burlington, VT. Andrew Loew noted that USDA declined to attend meeting because they wouldn't be able to offer any assistance in Chicopee because the population is too high.

Local agricultural sites are often used for events such as weddings in on-site barns, etc. Site accessibility remains an issue for larger crowds.

Sheryl Rosner, EPA

EPA Small Grants- community garden in Roxbury via a SEP. Gave out 4 \$25,000 grants.
EPA Brownfield Cleanup grant was used on a site that then became a CSA and farm stand.
To use MDAR funds, need to partner with a viable farmer.

Kurt Gartner, EOEEA

Ownership of the Front Street properties along the canal after demolition would be a consideration for most public funds to be used for demo.

Ray Jordan, HUD

CDBG availability would depend on population. A non-profit could possibly seek grant for a project relative to redevelopment.

Mike Vedovelli, MOBD

Job training centers within mill complexes – partner with a technical college. Business/enterprise zone partner with an anchor business.

Pre-venture capitalists also interested in business incubators and office sharing.

Where do we find business entrepreneurs to draw to downtown? Life sciences business sectors; Mass gov sciences – some organizations have programs to support driving certain business sectors to a market area. Quasi-public entities such as Mass Life Sciences or the Mass Tech Collaborative may be able to provide information on facilities needs for certain sectors

Sheryl Rosner, EPA

Example to look at – Venture Café in Kendall Square, Cambridge, or in Holyoke related to the HPCC.
Local colleges/universities can provide seed funding

Sean Calnan, MassDevelopment

Holyoke undergoing the exact same marketing now. How will Chicopee distinguish itself from Holyoke?
How does Chicopee compete with Springfield? Need to find unique aspects of each location to market.

“unlock” potential of the place.

Provide access to the rivers.

Sean Calnan, MassDevelopment

MassDevelopment would only provide funds for demolition if tied directly to cleanup. Would need to be municipally owned too.

MassDevelopment board recently voted to evaluate lead and asbestos in brownfield cleanup.

Lee Pouliot, Chicopee

City has a mill overlay zoning district that allows by-right residential development. Current zoning is conducive to redevelopment.

Carl Dietz, Chicopee

City energy costs are competitive. CEL will be taking over several hydropower stations on Chicopee River. CEL rates lower than WMECO; not sure how they compete with Holyoke or other utilities.

Robert Natario, MassDOT

Railroad crossing – need to figure out what is in it for the railroad to improve crossing. What can the City offer the railroad company? Potentially could be turnaround points or sidings.