Area-Wide Brownfield Planning in Vermont



Services /Expertise

Environmental Assessment and Remediation Area-Wide Planning Brownfields Redevelopment Story Mapping Data Management and Visualization

Markets

Commercial Site / Property Owners State Government Local Government and Regional Planning Commissions

Project Location Various locations, Vermont

Date Completed 2010-present

Project Owner/Clients

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VT DEC) (Merchants Row & St. Johnsbury)

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) (Essex Junction & Winooski)

Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC)

Town of Northfield, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

Project Manager

Daniel Voisin

Links to Story Maps

Please click on the following link to view the Story Map and Area Wide Plans prepared for:

Bennington, Vermont: <u>http://arcg.is/1mcFYls</u>

Northfield, Vermont: http://arcg.is/1TmR04C



MANY downtown areas in Vermont grew as a result of natural resources (e.g. hydropowered mills) or from transportation hubs. Often, these downtowns contain both past and current industrial uses in the proximity of commercial and residential properties. When the need for these industries waned, the communities are left as a shell of their former self. In addition to the void of vibrancy and tax revenue, industrial and commercial properties leave in their wake known and perceived contamination: bulk oil storage and rail operations in St. Johnsbury; dry cleaning and rail operations in Barre, furniture manufacturing mills in Richford; and rail and automotive fuel retailers in Essex Junction.

Past site investigations at a majority of these types of properties have been limited in both scope and areal coverage. Effective and liability-free redevelopment of each area requires a comprehensive, holistic approach to leverage past efforts, available resources for funding, and human capital.

Stone performed comprehensive, multidisciplinary research of available historical resources and environmental sources to develop a record of land use for the past 100 years for each study, utilizing the following resources:

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- State and Federal Databases
- Site Reconnaissance and Interviews
- Mannings City Directories
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Map
- Local Historical Society Document
- UVM Landscape Change Program

Information regarding past use, current conditions, and potential contaminants of concern, was compiled in a geo-referenced database to manage, analyze, and present data. Patterns were identified of when past land use within the study areas have resulted in common- day hazardous sites.

For the Richford Area Wide Brownfield Planning project, the scope was expanded following completion of the Area Wide Assessment to include inventory of utility infrastructure conditions, natural, architectural and archaeological resources, streetscape conditions, and vehicular traffic patterns within the historic Richford Village. General and sector-specific market analyses were performed to assess what potential businesses the

analyses were performed to assess what potential businesses the Village needed and would be successful. A housing analysis was conducted to understand the rental and real- estate markets. Stone lead a Visioning Process using design charrettes and other public involvement forms to evaluate the desires of the community.

Recommendations were developed for how to augment the current needs and how to leverage public funds within near term and long term goals. Five properties were also identified that include are key-stone buildings that should be the focus of initial efforts. Three of these properties were targeted for development with publicly assisted housing grants with first floor commercial development, where the remaining two were identified for mixed retail and professional services. If successfully redeveloped, these properties will trigger privately lead improvements.

In Bennington, Stone teamed with Greenman-Pedersen, Inc., Doug Kennedy Advisors, and a local architect firm to provide Area-Wide Planning Services for the entire designated downtown area. Existing conditions assessment included review of historical land use records, review of available data for managed environmental sites, as well as town-owned Infrastructure evaluation. The Stone Team, BCRC, VT DEC and a group of 14 local business owners and stakeholders quickly identified a key set of properties



for site-specific consideration for targeted analyses. These key properties comprised most of a contiguous block in the downtown core that are currently occupied by a vacant lumberyard, former historic hotel, and underutilized retail spaces. Redevelopment planning was conducted in close coordination with the stakeholder group and included a general market study, retail leakage analysis, concept development plans, and costing. The Stone Team gathered public input of the proposed redevelopment in an unconventional manner: input was gathered at a local farmers market and a home brewers' festival. Revised redevelopment plans are currently underway and are being used by the BCRC while they recruit prospective developers.