

# **COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN**

**Mariners Marsh Park  
4.75-Acre Site in Former Active Recreation Area  
3418 Richmond Terrace  
Staten Island, New York**

**US Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Cleanup Grant  
Cooperative Agreement No. BF 97259006**

**US Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grant  
Cooperative Agreement No. BF 96295712**

**November 2012**

**Prepared by Brownfield Redevelopment Solutions, Inc. on behalf of the  
US Environmental Protection Agency – New Jersey Institute of Technology  
Technical Assistance to Brownfields Grant  
Assisting the City of New York, New York**

## **Overview**

Through a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the New Jersey Institute of Technology Technical Assistance to Brownfields Program (NJIT TAB) provides free assistance to government agencies and non-profit organizations seeking to identify, assess, remediate, and redevelop brownfields. The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) requested NJIT TAB assistance with preparation of this Community Relations Plan (CRP).

The purpose of this CRP is to present the strategies that the City of New York, New York has employed to date and will employ going forward to facilitate communications with, and involvement of, the residents of New York City, City officials, local organizations, and other stakeholders during the process of environmental cleanup at a 4.75-acre parcel inside the Former Active Recreation Area (the Site) of the Mariners Marsh Park on Staten Island, New York. The CRP is particularly aimed at the informational needs of City residents who are potentially directly affected by the proposed cleanup action and redevelopment of the property.

The CRP and the activities described herein are intended to comply with the Community Relations and Public Involvement requirements of the EPA, which provides funding for the project via a brownfields cleanup grant, as found in the National Contingency Plan and Part 35, Subpart O.

The CRP is prepared in accordance with EPA guidance and the governing EPA Cooperative Agreement.

The DPR is primarily responsible for implementing community relations pertaining to the site.

## **Project Contacts and Administrative Record**

The liaison for this project is:

Mr. Bill Tai  
Principal Environmental Planner  
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation  
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The administrative record /information repository is located at the headquarters of the DPR and is available to review by appointment during business hours. Mr. Tai may be contacted at (212) 360-3419 to schedule review of the file.

The administrative record will include the following documents related to environmental assessment and remediation of the project site:

- CRP
- Environmental assessment reports

- Remedial Action Plan (*when completed*)
- EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant Application
- Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives

### Site Description and History

Mariners Marsh Park consists of a total of approximately 107 acres of land, portions of which were historically used for a variety of industrial purposes prior to being designated parkland. Mariners Marsh Park is owned by the City and managed by DPR.

Information regarding park history, summarized herein, was obtained from Phase I Environmental Site Assessment reports addressing Mariners Marsh Park, completed in 2001 and 2005. A portion of the Park of “over 6 acres ...located in the northeast corner of the property was used for recreational purposes sometime after the purchase of the property by the City in 1974 and includes two baseball fields.” This section is referred to in this report as the “Former Active Recreation Area”. A portion of the Former Active Recreation Area along Richmond Terrace (the Site) has been selected for remediation utilizing the USEPA Cleanup Grant funds, and is the subject of this ABCA. Currently, the entire Mariners Marsh Park, including the Site, is closed to the public. The larger Former Active Recreation Area had two baseball fields constructed prior to the establishment of the park. A gravel covered trail/road traverses the Former Active Recreation Area forming a loop. A gate is located along Richmond Terrace which provides authorized vehicle access to the park. The Site contains the undeveloped area within the looped path inside the Former Active Recreational Area and an area along Richmond Terrace that is currently overgrown with vegetation. Based on information provided by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the USEPA, there is currently no federal- or state-designated wetland. No utility services are currently connected to the Site. See the Site Location Map in Attachment A.

While the Phase I ESA reports describe the history of industrial usage of the property that became Mariners Marsh Park no industrial uses were identified within or adjacent to the Site. The following uses were identified for the remainder of Mariners Marsh Park (the park):

- Prior to 1903, the park was undeveloped, most likely consisting of freshwater and forested scrub/shrub wetlands.
- In approximately 1903, Milliken Brothers Structural Steel and Rolling Mill was constructed and operated in the western portion of the property.
- By 1910, various industrial operations were situated on the southern and western portions of the park, including, for example:
  - several gas production sites;
  - a large traveling crane;
  - an open hearth mill, shear mill, blooming mill, and a rolling mill;
  - a powerhouse, at which power and heat were generated from coal, coke and gas; and
  - a sherardizing building, machine shop, and a blacksmith.

- Downey Shipbuilding Yard operated on the southern portion of the park from 1917 to 1931. During this period, rail lines and roadways were constructed, traversing the property. Several ponds, apparently man-made, were evident along the southern half of the property.
- Ownership and land use in the park from 1931 to the mid 1970's is unknown. Varying degrees of demolition of the building structures, as evidenced in a review of available aerial photographs, appears to have taken place up to the 1970's.
- The park was acquired by the City in 1974. It was designated City parkland in 1997 and is managed by NYCDPR.

Over six acres of the Mariners Marsh Park located in the northeast corner of the property was used for recreational purposes sometime after the purchase of the property by the City in 1974 and includes two former baseball fields. The remainder of the property has reverted back to a natural state that includes both indigenous and invasive plant species, ponds and freshwater wetlands.

The funding of the EPA cleanup grant and revolving loan fund for the project will create a remediated 4.75-acre area that will include a two-foot cap of screened sand covered by six inches of topsoil. Potential plans for the Site, the subject of this remediation, include the development a greeting garden with sitting area. The final outcome of the entire Mariners Marsh project, including areas not addressed by the EPA cleanup grant, will include the phased reopening of the park for public recreation as well as a nature preserve.

### **Nature and Threats to Public Health and the Environment**

The results of the investigations conducted at the Mariners Marsh park identified the presence of historic fill in various portions of the park to approximate depth of at least five feet below ground surface. The fill primarily includes sand with gravel, brick, concrete, ash, and cinder fill. The fill exhibits levels of volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile organic compounds, and metals contamination in exceedance of state standards. Further details of environmental conditions are provided in the environmental reports available in the administrative record file.

For the 4.75-acre Site, the soil quality data is consistent with that from the remainder of the Former Active Recreation Area. Elevated metal and PAH concentrations are consistent with typical findings for historic fill and are comparable to the reported chemistry of historic fill on hundreds of properties throughout New York City. These results are unremarkable and do not suggest the need for a removal action and consequent disposal of hazardous substances or petroleum-contaminated wastes, or the presence of a significant contamination source area. Groundwater in the vicinity of the Site on the Former Active Recreation Area is marginally and sporadically impacted by several chlorinated hydrocarbons that are originated south of the Site and independent of the historic fill. Based on the limited impact of historic fill in groundwater quality elsewhere in the park and the limited thickness of fill materials found on Site, the Site does not present a risk to groundwater quality. No structures are planned on this property and, therefore; there is no risk of soil vapor intrusion. The potential for groundwater contamination at the Site is low.

The project area presents potential risks to public health from the on-site historical fill. The public is at potential risk of exposure through multiple pathways, including: direct contact

with site soil; airborne dust; and migration of site contaminants to surface water or drinking water resources via groundwater transport.

The objectives of the EPA revolving loan fund and cleanup grant-funded portion of the project area are to:

- 1) Containment of the potential sources of contaminant exposure at the 4.75-acre parcel; and
- 2) Address any unacceptable risk to public health and/or the environment posed by residual site contaminants, by means of institutional and engineering controls.

### **Community Profile**

The Mariners Marsh Park is located in the Port Ivory section of the Borough of Staten Island. Port Ivory is a coastal area situated in the northwestern corner of Staten Island, and it is located on Newark Bay near the Kill van Kull to the north and Arthur Kill to the west. The area became locally known as Port Ivory after Ivory Soap™, which was produced at a former Proctor and Gamble factory on a site adjacent to Mariners Marsh from 1907 until 1991. As of the 2010 Census, the Port Ivory zip code included more than 26,000 residents.

Six acres of the Mariners Marsh Park located in the north central portion of the property were used for more active recreational purposes and include two former baseball fields. The remainder of the property has reverted back to a natural state that include woodlands with densely-vegetated understory in places, wet meadows, ponds, and freshwater wetlands. A small watercourse enters the eastern portion of the park from a culvert beneath Holland Avenue and flows north along the eastern property line, beneath Richmond Terrace and eventually into Newark Bay.

Mariners Marsh park is surrounded by the following land uses:

- To the north by a New York City Department of Transportation Bridge Maintenance yard, and vacant land that includes tidal marshes;
- To the east by residential and commercial properties;
- To the south by the Staten Island Railway; and
- To the west by the former Proctor and Gamble factory currently owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and the New York Container Terminal.

The 4.75-acre Site is surrounded by the following land uses:

- To the north by a New York City Department of Transportation Bridge Maintenance yard, and vacant land that includes Arlington Marsh;
- To the east by the Former Active Recreation Area and residential and commercial properties along Holland Avenue;
- To the south by the Former Active Recreation Area and the Staten Island Rail Line; and
- To the west by the Former Active Recreation Area, the former Proctor and Gamble factory currently owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the New York Container Terminal.

### **Chronology of Community Involvement**

Community outreach and involvement is a priority of the City of New York, and the City has a long history of community involvement for the Mariners Marsh project. In addition to working with Staten Island Community Board 1, outreach to date has involved two key community-based organizations: the Mariners Marsh Conservancy (MMC) and the North Shore Waterfront Conservancy (NSWC).

Area residents have historically appealed to DPR concerning the lack of parkland on Staten Island's north shore. Mariners Marsh was formally designated New York City parkland in 1997, due in part to the determined efforts of the MMC. A non-profit volunteer group established by local residents in 1995, MMC helped bring attention to the site by conducting park cleanups, restoration work, educational programs, and research and serving as an advocate for Mariners Marsh along with longer-established partners such as NYC Audubon.

Formed in 2001 by a small group of environmentally concerned citizens living on the north shore of Staten Island, NSWC is also a local advocacy group. Under strong leadership, NSWC has also provided valuable community-based input regarding the Mariners Marsh project.

The City has maintained routine contact with MMC and NSWC during the course of the project through both DPR and its Borough Parks Commissioner. Moving forward, the community will continue to be engaged in the project by the City via MMC and NSWC. Other community groups are expected to become more involved with Mariners Marsh, including the Northfield Community Local Development Corporation (Northfield Community LDC) and the North Shore Community Coalition for Environmental Justice (NSCCEJ).

Northfield Community LDC is a community-based organization founded in 1978 by residents, merchants, and property owners that serves to advance community stabilization and revitalization of Staten Island communities with a particular focus on the North Shore. Northfield Community LDC is the recipient of a New York State Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area grant. Through this grant, Northfield Community LDC is overseeing community revitalization planning efforts in the vicinity of Mariners Marsh. As such, Northfield Community LDC also now serves as an additional conduit between community residents and their desires and City officials.

NSCCEJ was formed after Staten Island's North Shore was chosen by EPA as one of 10 Environmental Justice Showcase Communities in 2010. Its membership includes a variety of organizations dedicated to addressing environmental justice issues affecting the North Shore. Their primary mission is to bring community organizations, businesses, academic institutions and residents together to address the environmental health concerns of the North Shore of Staten Island in partnerships with government agencies and community action.

During the course of the aforementioned EPA Removal Action, EPA made presentations to the community and responded to questions at two public meetings held on October 25 and December 14, 2011. The meetings were held in the community at the Borough President's Office and the office of Northfield Community LDC, respectively. EPA also established a

website regarding the Removal Action and circulated weekly pollution reports that were posted on the website.

Moving forward, the Project Liaison will continue to work with DPR Public Affairs to answer any questions regarding activities and progress at the site. In this way, public notification is ensured.

### Key Community Concerns

DPR continues to actively solicit input from the public via the involvement of MMC, NSWC, Community Board 1 and the community's elected officials to address any concerns that are received. The key community concerns expressed to date include:

1. That cleanup is conducted in a manner that is protective of human health and the environment and;
2. That Mariners Marsh Park is once again open to the public.

### Benefits to Targeted Community

Once the site has been remediated, there will be a direct impact on reducing potential risks to public health and the environment. Containing contaminants will immediately decrease the threat of potential future hazards to human health and the environment. The EPA grant funds will be targeted toward ensuring that this work is conducted appropriately by funding the required remediation to enable reuse.

This grant will facilitate the development of open space that will once again be usable by the public. The benefits of re-opening the entire park will be to expand recreational opportunities available to the public and particularly the local community. An early vision for Mariners Marsh Park, supported by the community, included active and passive recreation that was compatible with the park's natural elements and that emphasized the preservation of natural features and habitat values. DPR expects to update that vision for the re-activated park with additional community input.

### Continued Community Involvement

The City and DPR in particular will continue to engage the local community not only to provide them with information about the project's progress but also to drive reuse decision making. Specific forthcoming community involvement activities anticipated to occur include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- 1) Pending, 2012: Acceptance of written comments on draft Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA), and of oral comments at public meeting(s) and publishing responses to those comments in the Final ABCA and Remedial Action Plan.
- 2) Pending, 2012: Public notice of the establishment of the publically accessible administrative record file as well as to solicit comments on ABCA.
- 3) Prior to beginning site remediation: Meet with representatives from Community Board 1 and with MMC, NSWC, NSCCEJ and Northfield Community LDC as needed to provide schedule updates, to explain about future cleanup activities, and to discuss site reuse specifics. DPR will also solicit assistance from these community groups as to additional avenues which can be used to provide information regarding the cleanup activities to the public. For example, DPR could generate a fact sheet regarding the remediation and provide it to the community groups for posting on their

websites or distributing such a fact sheet during their respective community meetings.

- 4) Throughout the course of project: As warranted, ongoing project developments will be discussed at future community meetings to be coordinated by DPR. The meeting(s) will be coordinated with Community Board 1 and with MMC, NSWC, NSCCEJ and Northfield Community LDC and will be held in the local community. Announcements of meetings will be made no less than one week in advance.
- 5) Post-remediation: DPR will provide a fact sheet with a map depicting the area that was successfully remediated.. The map fact sheet will also indicate which sections of Mariners Marsh are still closed to public use. Given the need for maintaining the cap at the area targeted by this EPA grant, the fact sheet will also contain a listing of “do’s” and “don’ts” associated with seeking the public’s assistance to ensure the integrity of the cap is maintained. Contact information will be included in the event members of the public have any concerns regarding site safety.

DPR will also maintain the administrative record file to reflect the status of the cleanup, public comments, response to public comments, and other significant decisions regarding environmental remediation. DPR will run a public notice in the local *Staten Island Advance* newspaper announcing the establishment and location of the publicly accessible administrative record. The notice will also solicit public comments on the draft ABCA. Should comments be received prior to the finalization of the ABCA, DPR will accept comments and will provide written responses that will become a part of the administrative record file. This file will be updated with the inclusion of all meeting minutes, status reports, and other documents as appropriate.