



Northern Rocky Mountain
Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc.

502 South 19th Avenue, Suite 105, Bozeman, MT 59718
phone: (406) 582-5700, fax: (406) 582-5855
email: info@nrmrcd.org, web: www.nrmrcd.org

Dear Ted Lanzano,

All RLF loan and subgrant cleanup activities require a site-specific community relations plan that includes providing reasonable notice, opportunity for involvement, response to comments, and administrative records that are available to the public. According to Section 3a(ii) of the Central Montana Brownfields Coalition's (CMBC) Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for our Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund:

"The coalition will fully involve community organizations, citizens' groups, developers, Realtors, local government officials and other stakeholders in identifying potential Brownfields RLF candidates."

"The following components will be included in the Community Involvement Plan": Coalition Steering Committee; Public Outreach and Education of RLF Process; Brownfields Web Page and Information Availability; and Site Identification and Selection Process.

The CMBC is working to deliver, from its Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund, a subgrant for asbestos abatement at the City of Lewistown's Paris Laundry buildings.

No one has been willing to buy, develop, or re-use the property because of the perception and presence of contamination on the property. The property has been vacant and unused for many years. The property faces a main entrance to the City of Lewistown and is an eyesore having negative impacts on the entire city.

This property is located across the street from a city park and children's softball field. This property is the "gateway" to Lewistown for travelers entering the town from the north. The public has been involved in the project through newspaper articles, monthly radio programs by Snowy Mountain Development Corporation (SMDC, a partner within CMBC) staff, SMDC's semi-monthly board meetings, discussion of the acquisition and assessments at city commission meetings since 2003. After weighing its options of improving the site or taking no action, the community overwhelmingly supported the acquisition and cleanup of this property with the intent of transforming it into a park, potential parking area for park activities, and an aesthetic "gateway" to Lewistown. An announcement of the approval by CMBC of this subgrant was made in SMDC's April 2010 newsletter and will be announced in the Lewistown News-Argus upon EPA's final

approval and ongoing articles and radio programs will be conducted throughout the clean-up of the project.

Public Involvement for the Paris Laundry buildings:

In September 2005, the City of Lewistown adopted a Revitalization Plan, which included the idea of purchasing the abandoned Paris Laundry property on the north side of Lewistown and transforming the site into a welcoming “gateway.” This Downtown Revitalization Plan included this northern entrance to Lewistown and was the result of a series of public meetings beginning in 2003, spearheaded by the Revitalization Steering Committee. The Lewistown Revitalization Steering Committee was created to guide the planning process and work closely with the project team. The committee represented a wide range of community interests and was critical in the development of the plan. The multi-disciplinary team hired to develop Lewistown’s Master Plan consisted of a project coordinator/meeting facilitator; downtown market specialist; landscape architect; and architect.

An extensive, open public process was an important component in developing Lewistown’s Downtown Master Plan, which includes a section on Community Gateways, including the Paris Laundry property at the junction of Highway 191 N. and the Truck Bypass. Input from the community was gathered through surveys (shopper and business); public meetings, where more than 100 participants used a post-it note process to list local assets, challenges, values to protect, and changes they would like to see in the next 5 years for Lewistown; and design workshops, events and on-site balloting where over 130 stakeholders voted on a variety of proposed design concepts. The project team framed the plan’s recommendations based on community input and preferences. Transformation of the Paris Laundry site scored the highest for desired improvements, with a 79% approval through the community balloting process.

The Revitalization Plan proposed the following:

“The work plan for the ‘T’ intersection includes the acquisition of the property at the ‘T’ and removal of the dilapidated building, which would open up the view to Hawthorn Park. The short street between this piece of property and Hawthorn Park could then be vacated to create a larger contiguous park space. An entry statement for this intersection would include an oversized large elk sculpture, along with landscape plantings and plaza elements, such as benches and special paving materials. The sculpture could be either realistic or representational in nature, and ideally would be created by a local artist working with a regional foundry. Plantings, as part of the entry feature, could include evergreen trees as a backdrop with shrubs and flowering trees to help frame the space. Night lighting that accents the sculpture and leads into the park would offer a dramatic alternative to the current situation and better reflect the recreational and outdoor spirit of Lewistown. Creating a strong and visually inviting entry statement at this gateway should be a high priority project, as this concept received the highest approval rating by the community.”

Public Involvement Related to Asbestos Abatement:

In 2009, the Paris Laundry property was purchased by the City of Lewistown. The All Appropriate Inquiry had confirmed that the warehouse harbored asbestos that would require abatement. Because the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) requires cleanup of asbestos that would be impacted by demolition, and because extant plans would have disturbed the asbestos, the City of Lewistown was faced with a dichotomous decision: proceed and abate the asbestos, or abandon the project. The Gateway Committee formed as a result of the Revitalization Plan recommendations. The committee, made up of community members, considered this question and elected to proceed. No abatement-specific meetings were held, as the public had already overwhelmingly supported this project during the Revitalization Plan's public meetings and community surveys.

For this project, the CMBC believes the intent of the community-relations clause has been met. The decision of whether to move forward was made by the Gateway Committee that was formed to manage this project and was competent to make that decision. Because MDEQ mandates only one possible course of action, there was no need to consider alternative methods or choices on cleanup. No community member argued that the Paris Laundry buildings should be left as they are, in preference to abating the asbestos containing material. Given this dichotomous choice, the lack of public concern, and the strong sentiment favoring demolition, and hence asbestos abatement, of the Paris Laundry buildings, the CMBC deems the community relations requirements associated with our Cooperative Agreement to have been met. Barring any concerns on your part, we will include this letter in the administrative record for this project, and deem it to satisfy the Community Involvement Plan requirement.

With thanks,

Travis Wright
Acting NRMRC&D Chairman