



Community Involvement Plan

Project Summary

In 2022, a coalition of partners in Alamance County successfully applied for \$1 million from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a Brownfields Coalition Grant. With Alamance County as the lead member, the coalition secured federal funding that enables the community to develop a plan for assessing, cleaning up and reusing high priority brownfield sites. Partners such as the City of Burlington and Alamance County Economic Development Foundation made up the coalition named the Alamance Brownfield Coalition (ABC) – a collection of organizations that recognize collaboration and teamwork will best address brownfield redevelopment across the county. Working together as the ABC, the coalition will rally local communities and leaders to strategically focus assessment and cleanup efforts in areas that pose the most risk to human health and development. This work will also simultaneously prioritize the physical redevelopment of the sites.

Residents, elected officials, anchor institutions, local leaders and other stakeholders are essential to the careful planning and decision making necessary for transforming brownfields throughout Alamance County. True collaboration and community involvement do not materialize out of thin air. Key to including those affected by the cleanup process is an articulated plan so people understand the ways in which they can participate in crafting plans and making decisions. This plan and process is what follows. The Community Involvement Plan (CIP) serves as both a living document and planning process that will shape redevelopment efforts through the community's vision.

Site Description

The geographic boundary of this work is Alamance County with a target area focus of Census Tracts 212.01, 202, and 218.01. The county's population was 171,415 as of the 2020 Decennial Census. The county is approximately 60 miles from Raleigh, N.C., and 25 miles from the City of Greensboro. About 40% of the county's land is devoted to agriculture, which remains a vital economic and cultural resource. Commercial and industrial land uses are concentrated in towns and make up a smaller percentage (around 3%) of the land area in the county.

While the assessment process will prioritize specific site work, the ABC has already identified more than 20 potential brownfield sites, including areas in or around the Former Copland Mill, Former Windsor Mill and Former Bellemont Mill properties. Other manufacturing and industrial sites, such as filling stations and other former mills, present opportunities to assess hazardous conditions and plan to transform them.

Community Profile – An Alamance County Snapshot

These former textile mills and industrial sites are traces of Alamance County's thriving textile, agriculture, and railroad industries in the early 1900s. Founded in 1849, the county featured land and a central location in North Carolina that fostered a booming textile industry well into the 1970s. At the turn of the 20th century, as many as 30 textile mills operated within the county's border. Farmers and mill operators also used slave labor as a means for success, setting in place a pattern of historical and planned segregation within the mill towns



and across the county. This segregation persists today in the obvious separation of low-income and minority residential neighborhoods located near the historic mill villages. About 62% of Alamance County residents are White, 20% are Black, and 6% are two or more races, according to the 2020 Decennial Census. About 14.4% of residents are Hispanic or Latino. The county's median household income is \$65,633, which is below that of North Carolina (\$70,804). It features a poverty rate of 12.1%, slightly below the 12.8% poverty rate for all of North Carolina. Its educational attainment lags behind the state average with 29.3% of Alamance County residents earning a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 36.8% across the state.

Despite major losses in mills and farms dating back to the 1970s, the towns within the county have diversified their economic base, promoted new industries, and created jobs for the local workforce. The county's proximity to the growing Piedmont Triad and Triangle regions, as well as its location along U.S. 70 and I-40, make the area attractive for further development and appealing to residents who prefer small-town, rural living with amenities nearby.

Key issues related to site contamination and cleanup efforts are that textile mills are often associated with the unregulated use of chlorinated solvents and can feature former underground storage tanks. For example, the first priority site – Copland Mill – spans two mill areas covering roughly 350,000 square feet of working mill space and 15,000 square feet of office space. This site likely features chlorinated solvents, has a former underground storage tank and is located near high-use areas, such as the North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail, a church and single-family residences.

Community Needs and Concerns

In recent decades, Alamance County has experienced significant growth and development. The region has not been able to keep up with the ever-present need for additional housing. Local government does not have the extra funds necessary to unilaterally redevelop abandoned and neglected mills scattered throughout the county. Providing essential, affordable housing to low-income and minority communities in target sites can uplift a community still dealing with the consequences of historical redlining and racist practices. Target sites show acute effects of racial and economic segregation with negative impacts on average incomes, health outcomes, safety rates, education access and broadband access. Improving these outcomes are important to promoting environmental justice and protecting the health, safety and welfare of communities historically excluded from economic growth and vitality.

Action Plan

The objectives and tasks of the Alamance Brownfield Coalition are to conduct inclusive community outreach activities, build a robust site inventory for assessment, conduct Environmental Site Assessment activities, and to produce Brownfield cleanup plans and analyses that support successful remediation and productive reuse.

The ABC intends to accomplish the following over the three-year performance period:

1. Launch a Brownfields Advisory Group to inform community outreach and involvement, as well as to guide work over the life of the project. Advisory Group members include key stakeholders and partners:



- a. Impact Alamance
 - b. Preservation Burlington
 - c. Elon University's Elon Center for Environmental Science
 - d. Piedmont Conservation Council
 - e. Piedmont Triad Regional Council
 - f. Hart & Hickman
 - g. Terracon
2. Create a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) with regular updates. This serves as both a document and a process by which the ABC will share information, include the community in decision making, and update the process regularly.
 3. Publish and maintain an Alamance Brownfield Coalition website and social media account.
 4. Hold at least 12 community meetings.
 5. Create print materials for information dissemination and public involvement in the program.
 6. Build a Site Inventory list and Evaluation Ranking Tool.
 7. Provide technical environmental assessment activities that advance the program's work, including:
 - a. Three (3) Vision Sessions/Charrettes
 - b. Up to Forty-six (46) Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)
 - c. A Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)
 - d. Up to Twenty (20) Phase II ESAs, including Site Specific QAPP
 - e. Prior to assessment, Site Access Agreements and Property Eligibility Determinations
 - f. Up to eight (8) Analysis for Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans
 - g. Produce Brownfields Revitalization Plans to support redevelopment around impacted sites
 - h. Create up to three (3) Site Reuse Assessments
 - i. Conduct a Market Study to inform revitalization plans
 - j. Create and maintain a contact database for those involved in the program
 - k. Publish a repository for documentation and program updates

Criteria for Assessing the CIP

The effectiveness of the Alamance Brownfield Coalition's Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be evaluated throughout the project to ensure that community engagement remains meaningful, inclusive, and responsive to stakeholder needs. A combination of metrics and process review as defined below will help assess the CIP's success and inform any necessary revisions or updates:



Community Participation

Metric: Number of community members and stakeholders attending public meetings, charrettes, or participating through other engagement methods (e.g., surveys, workshops).

Benchmark: Demonstrated attendance from identified key community groups and stakeholders at meetings or events.

Evaluation: Track attendance through sign-in sheets and use surveys or feedback forms to collect input. Adjust outreach efforts to members of key community groups and stakeholders that are not attending meetings or events.

Timeliness of Information Distribution

Metric: Timely distribution of project updates, meeting announcements, and other important information to the public.

Benchmark: All notices and information releases should be published at least two weeks before public meetings or other key project milestones.

Evaluation: Monitor the timing of communications (website updates, flyers, social media posts) and ensure all materials are distributed on time. Adjust communication channels or strategies if delays are observed.

Quality of Feedback and Responsiveness

Metric: Number of comments, questions, or feedback submissions received from the community and how feedback is addressed in the project plan.

Benchmark: Incorporate all relevant community feedback into the decision-making process or CIP revisions.

Evaluation: Review meeting minutes, surveys, and public comments to ensure feedback is documented and considered. Provide transparency by sharing how feedback influenced decisions through published reports or meeting follow-ups.

Frequency of Plan Updates

Metric: Frequency and thoroughness of CIP updates to reflect new project developments or changing community needs.

Benchmark: Conduct a formal review of the CIP every 6 months and after significant project milestones, with revisions as needed.

Evaluation: Ensure a review process is in place, including input from the Brownfields Advisory Group and key stakeholders, to update the CIP as necessary.



Appendix A – Partners and Contact Information

Organization Name	Contact Name	Email Address
Piedmont Conservation Council	Grace Messinger	grace@piedmontconservation.org
Piedmont Conservation Council	Janet MacFall	macfallj@elon.edu
Alamance Parks	Jamie Merchel	Jamie.Merchel@alamancecountync.gov
Burlington Economic Development	Michael Littell	mlittell@burlingtonnc.gov
Burlington Economic Development	Adam Shull	ashull@burlingtonnc.gov
Alamance Health	Rebecca Rosso	Rebecca.Rosso@alamance-nc.com
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Impact Alamance	Nicole McGinty	nicole.mcginty@conehealth.com
Preservation Burlington	Preservation Burlington-	info@preservationburlington.org
Impact Alamance	Michael Strickland-	mstrickl@elon.edu
Alamance Parks	Nolan Carter-	Nolan.Carter@alamance-nc.com
Town of Swepsonville	Brad Bullis-	brad.bullis@swepsonvillenc.com
Alamance Chamber	Kevin Szostak	kevin@alamancechamber.com
Alamance County	Brian Baker	brian.baker@alamance-nc.com
Alamance Chamber	Reagan Guval	reagan@alamancechamber.com
Alamance County	Anna Bowland	anna.bowland@alamancecountync.gov
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	Consulting Staff:	
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Appendix B – Glossary of Terms

Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternative (ABCA): Remedial plan document that includes analysis of cleanup alternatives: identifies the objectives of the cleanup and provides an analysis of cleanup alternatives based on effectiveness, ability to be implemented and cost; documents if the situation meets the need for a cleanup; provides information pertaining to the site background and health and safety; and identifies the proposed action and explains the rationale for its selection.

Brownfields: Abandoned, idled, or under used industrial, commercial, or residential facilities/sites where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

Community: An interacting population of various types of individuals in a common location; a neighborhood or specific area where people live.

Community Involvement: The term used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to identify its process for engaging in dialogue and collaboration with communities. EPA community involvement is founded in the belief that people have a right to know what the Agency is doing in their community and to have a voice in it. The purpose is to give stakeholders the opportunity to become involved in Brownfields activities and help shape the decisions that are made.

Community Involvement Plan: A management and planning tool outlining the specific community involvement activities to be undertaken during the course of a site investigation and cleanup. It is designed to (1) share communication between the affected community and the EPA, and (2) ensure public input in the decision-making process related to the affected communities.

Environmental Site Assessment: a review of a property's environmental conditions to identify potential contamination and assess liability for cleanup.

Grant: An award of financial assistance, including cooperative agreements, in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, by the Federal Government to an eligible grantee.

Information Repository: A dedicated Brownfields Website that is convenient for local residents, community members, stakeholders and developers.

Public Meeting: Formal public sessions that are characterized by a presentation to the public followed by a question-and-answer session.

Site: Location selected for brownfields or environmental activity; place for potential redevelopment.



Stakeholder: Any organization, government entity or individual effected by the project or with a particular interest in the project.

Preservation: To maintain in safety from injury, peril or harm; protect.

Enhancements: To make greater, as in value, beauty, or effectiveness; augment.



Appendix C – Acronyms

ABCA – Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives

CIP – Community Involvement Plan

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

ESA – Environmental Site Assessment

QAPP – Quality Assurance Project Plan



Appendix D – Figure 1 Site Map

