

6/4/2020

# Community Relations Plan

City of Orem, Utah

EPA Brownfield Community-wide Assessment Grant

Cooperative Agreement No. BF-96896201



Prepared by BRS, Inc.

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# Overview

The purpose of this **Community Relations Plan (CRP)** is to describe the City of Orem's strategy to address the needs and concerns of community stakeholders who may be impacted by the proposed assessment, remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites within the city's boundaries. Some of these brownfield sites, particularly those located along the Geneva Road corridor on the city's western boundary, were studied as part of the 2017 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Geneva Road Brownfield Area-wide Plan (AWP).

This brownfield assessment program is being funded in part by an U.S. EPA Brownfield Community-wide Assessment grant awarded to the City of Orem in May 2019. This grant specifically provides funds to perform site assessments and develop remediation plans for priority brownfield sites throughout Orem. The City expects to complete eight (8) Phase I assessments and four (4) Phase II assessments using the EPA grant. This CRP is designed to meet the overall community involvement requirements identified in the grant workplan, as well as comply with the EPA's Community Relations and Public Involvement requirements.

The City of Orem is primarily responsible for implementing community relations activities pertaining to the site, with assistance from consultants at BRS, Inc. Residents, business owners, institutional partners and government leaders at all levels are also important resources for the success of this assessment grant. The city has engaged these stakeholder groups in planning efforts for Geneva Road and State Street corridors, and in 2018, the City convened a Brownfield Steering Committee to guide implementation of the city's brownfield projects.

The long-term success of the proposed assessment project will depend on sustaining this community involvement: it will ensure that the proposed assessment projects are successfully executed and move the subject properties closer to the community-derived redevelopment goals as defined by the State Street Corridor Master Plan and the Geneva Road Area-wide Plan.

# Point of Contact and Information Repository

The spokesperson and administrative contact for the project is Mr. Jason Bench, Planning Division Manager for the City of Orem. The administrative record file is located at the address below and is available for public review during the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays by appointment only.

**City of Orem, Planning & Zoning Services**  
**56 N. State Street, Suite 105, Orem, UT 84057**

The administrative record will also be made available on the City's website.

The administrative record file will include the following documents related to environmental assessment of the brownfield sites as they become available:

- Community Relations Plan (CRP)
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Reports
- Phase II Environmental Site Assessment and Remedial Action Plan Reports
- EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Application

If you need a special accommodation to participate in the City of Orem's EPA Brownfield Assessment grant program, please call the Development Services Office at least three (3) working days prior to the meeting at (801) 229-7183.

# Site Location and History

Orem, Utah is a city of 99,744 residents located in Utah County in the Provo-Orem Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Orem is bordered by Utah Lake on the west and the Wasatch Mountains on the east. Orem is also home to Utah Valley University, Utah's largest public university. The 2019 EPA Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment Grant will be used for the assessment of suspected brownfield sites along two major corridors: Geneva Road and State Street.

## Geneva Road

The first target area for this grant is the Geneva Road industrial corridor on the far west side of Orem. Geneva Road has been an important industrial, employment, and residential area for the City of Orem and Utah County since the 1940's. The area grew around the Geneva Steel plant, located in the adjacent city of Vineyard, which opened in 1941 and closed in 2001. The remediation and redevelopment of the Geneva Steel property has brought significant new growth to the Vineyard side of Geneva Road. However, many properties on the Orem side of Geneva Road are underutilized and vacant, due in large part to the area's blight and concerns about contamination. In 2017, Orem received an EPA Brownfield Area-Wide Planning (AWP) grant to plan for the redevelopment of brownfield sites in the Geneva Road Area. The Geneva Road Area-Wide Plan proposed redevelopment of priority brownfield sites with a mix of light industrial, commercial and retail uses and an extension of the area's multimodal transportation infrastructure.

## State Street

The City of Orem is also utilizing the 2019 EPA Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment grant to examine brownfield sites in the City's State Street Corridor. State Street is the historical center of Orem's settlement. It was originally developed with homesteads, farms, and orchards, and transitioned to the primarily commercial corridor it is today. Encouraged by the success of the State Street Master Plan, the City seeks to spur private investment in the corridor and redevelop vacant and underutilized properties.

# Nature and Threat to Public Health and Environment

The historic Geneva Steel mill located on Geneva Road was a source of local pride, as it supported the American defense industry during WWII and provided steady employment for area residents. Over the six decades it operated, commercial and industrial uses clustered around the plant. However, when Geneva Steel closed permanently in 2001, some of the commercial and industrial properties on Geneva Road converted into uses with negative impacts on the environment.

Today, both the Geneva Road and State Street corridors contain concentrated areas of vacant and underutilized industrial and commercial sites that provide opportunities for the City to build its employment and tax base. Some of these potential redevelopment sites include waste transfer, junk and scrap yards, auto body repair, wrecking and parts salvage, surface parking lots for commercial vehicles, natural gas storage, and gas stations.

As part of the scope of work for the 2017 EPA Brownfield AWP grant, Orem conducted a comprehensive brownfield inventory of the Geneva Road area. This inventory identified 56 potential brownfield sites within the target area boundaries. The City and its environmental contractor will re-examine and revise this inventory, including brownfield sites on the State Street corridor as part of the scope of work for the Community-Wide Assessment grant.

While the Geneva Road corridor contains a large number of suspected brownfield sites when compared to other areas of the city, exact environmental conditions at these sites are not yet known, which is why the City of Orem is undertaking this area-wide brownfield assessment program. Details of environmental conditions will be provided in Phase I and Phase II Reports to be made available in the administrative records file upon completion by the city's qualified environmental professional and approval by the EPA.

Assessing brownfield sites will help reduce environmental challenges by removing uncertainties about exposure pathways to hazardous substances and promoting cleanup that can improve public health and spur economic development.

# Community Profile

## Demographics

The City of Orem incorporated in 1919 and was named after Walter C. Orem, President of the Salt Lake and Utah Railroad. According to the 2010 Census, Orem is the 5th largest city in Utah by population (88,000). The population is projected to grow to 123,000 residents by 2060 according to 2010 U.S. Census and the Utah Governor's Office of Planning and Budget 2013 projections. According to the 2018 American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates, Orem's median household income is \$61,373 while the city's poverty rate is 13.1%. Approximately a third of the city's residents are children (29.1%) while a little less than ten percent of residents (9.7%) are adults older than 65 years old. The number of Orem residents with a disability is 9.3%. The City's racial composition is 88.8% White alone, with the next largest groups being Asian alone (2.4%), and Black/African American alone (1.0%). Hispanic/Latinos comprise 16.5% of the city's population. Finally, Orem has a high level of educational attainment with 92.4% of residents having completed a high school diploma.

## Geography

Orem is bounded to the east by mountains, to the west by Utah Lake, and to the north and south by neighboring communities. Historically, the area was developed with fruit and vegetable farms along the corridor between the communities of Provo and American Fork. Orem incorporated in 1919, and by 1930, the census set the City's population at 1,915. Since that time, Orem has grown from a primarily agricultural area to a primarily urban area, with commercial developments replacing farms and orchards along State Street and Geneva Road. Orem is also home to the state's largest public university, Utah Valley University, with a 2019 enrollment of 41,728 students.

The Geneva Road corridor is located on the City's western border, and has served as an important industrial, employment, and residential area since the 1940s. The area grew up around the Geneva Steel plant described on the preceding page. The Geneva Heights, Suncrest, and Orem Park neighborhoods in the eastern part of the Geneva Road area contain the original housing constructed for Geneva Steel workers during the 1940s and 1950s and are among the oldest neighborhoods in Orem. The State Street Corridor, meanwhile, is a five-mile long corridor located in the eastern party of the City, and is defined more by its commercial uses than by any particular neighborhood.

# Community Involvement

Community involvement is a critical component of the Orem's redevelopment plan. The City has engaged a diverse group of stakeholders in the planning processes for both State Street and Geneva Road, which is detailed below.

For the **Geneva Road Brownfield Area-wide Plan**, the City conducted robust digital engagement and hosted two public open houses. The City also held a special property owners' workshop where representatives from the City, consultant team, and the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (UDEQ) helped property owners to understand their responsibilities as well as opportunities to partner in the redevelopment process. In addition, City staff attended multiple community events to provide information on the project and direct community stakeholders to the project website and online survey. These included Summerfest in June 2018 and Harvest Fest in October 2018. Finally, over 400 community stakeholders responded to a survey on existing conditions and proposed redevelopment concepts in the Geneva Road Area

The City of Orem also convened a **Brownfields Steering Committee** as part of the Geneva Road Brownfield Area-Wide Plan. Described in the "Ongoing Community Involvement" section below, the brownfield steering committee was comprised of government officials, institutional stakeholders, economic development professionals, and met quarterly throughout 2018 to guide the implementation of the EPA Brownfield Area-Wide Plan for Geneva Road.

Similarly, for the **State Street Corridor Master Plan**, the City of Orem and its consultants undertook significant community engagement efforts, including conducting public open houses, online outreach, stakeholder and steering committee meetings, City Council discussion and testing of community inspired design and policy solutions. The resulting Master Plan serves as a road map for the implementation of a family-friendly vision for the future of the State Street corridor.



# Key Community Concerns

Throughout the planning process for both Geneva Road and State Street, Orem City staff, consultants, and the project's steering committee, produced and revised concepts, based on feedback from the public. Key community concerns expressed for both corridors include the following:

- **Mobility:** There is interest in making these corridors more pedestrian-friendly and adding more options for biking and alternative modes of transit.
- **Aesthetics:** Some parts of these corridors are unattractive with buildings and storefronts generally in need of beautification.
- **Identity:** These corridors lack identity, community character, sense of place and an identifiable center. The Orem side of Geneva Road stands in stark contrast to the new, mixed-use development on the Vineyard side of Geneva Road.
- **Safety:** These streets are difficult to cross as a pedestrians and unfriendly to bicycles. Each corridor has unique challenges for vehicular traffic, as well.
- **Environment:** Many residents had concerns about the environmental condition of properties on Geneva Road, including soil contamination, hazardous waste, poor air quality, protection of public health and the stigma of pollution.

# Benefits to the Community

Redevelopment of strategic brownfield sites on Geneva Road and State Street will stimulate investment throughout these corridors and lead to increased employment opportunities, tax revenues and visual appeal. With dedicated grant funding to address brownfield sites, both of these corridors have tremendous redevelopment potential: the city has a limited amount of land on which to grow, and there is strong regional demand for commercial and industrial sites.

The Geneva Road Area specifically is the only industrially zoned area in Orem, and is best poised to capture industrial demand, once the extent of environmental liabilities on the existing brownfield sites can be quantified.

Further, developers interviewed as part of a 2018 Market Study for the Geneva Road Brownfield Area-Wide Plan indicated that this area also has additional features that make it desirable for industrial development: access to and visibility from I-15, availability of infrastructure needed for development, and proximity to a large student population at nearby Utah Valley University.

# Ongoing Community Involvement

The City of Orem is committed to community engagement and will provide updates to the public throughout the duration of the project. Any questions, comments, or concerns during the course of the project can be directed to the City of Orem, Office of Planning & Zoning Services at (801) 229-7183.

## **Brownfield Steering Committee**

Orem's Brownfield Steering Committee re-convened in March 2020 and will continue to provide input and guidance on brownfield assessment activities for the implementation of the current EPA brownfield grant.

A list of partner organizations who sit on Orem's Brownfield Steering Committee and will be involved in the project is listed below.

### Brownfield Steering Committee Partners:

- Utah Department of Environmental Quality (UDEQ)
- Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT)
- Utah Transit Authority (UTA)
- Utah Valley University (UVU)
- Economic Development Corporation of Utah (EDC Utah)
- Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG)
- Utah County Board of Health (UCBH)
- City of Vineyard, Utah

The City of Orem will continue to convene meetings of the brownfields steering committee in support of the City's brownfield program. Specific activities anticipated for the steering committee include reviewing the brownfield inventory, providing input on brownfields revitalization priorities, assisting with the planning and preparation for community outreach opportunities and reviewing information and deliverables prepared by the Qualified Environmental Professional, including draft Phase I and Phase II assessment reports.

# Ongoing Community Involvement

The City will also continue prior successful community engagement methods that can be safely conducted in accordance with COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, if applicable. The following efforts will be utilized during the proposed project to keep the community informed of project progress and outcomes:

- **Public Meetings:** The City intends to hold at least two public meetings for the project; however, these meetings may be held in a digital format due to COVID-19 and the associated social distancing requirements. All opportunities for public engagement will be advertised using the City website and supplemented by mailings to surrounding property owners. Public meeting notices will be sent to local media outlets to coincide with each of the planned public meetings.
- **Social Media:** As part of the City's overall Brownfields Program, the Planning Division will utilize its existing social media accounts to distribute project information and solicit feedback from the community. Currently, the Department envisions utilizing Facebook and the City webpage; other venues will be considered as appropriate.
- **Planning Division Webpage:** The Planning Division will post all public notices and other meeting advertisements on the webpage and associate these events with the city-wide event calendar. regularly updating the project website so community stakeholders can gather information and provide comments on the City's brownfield assessment program. The project website also allows for surveying, polling and other public input capabilities, which the City will utilize to solicit input on site selection for assessment and reuse.