



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Community Development Department

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To: Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager

From: Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development
Nancy E. Glowa, City Solicitor

Re: Awaiting Report 18-14 dated 2/05/2018 regarding applying for a
Targeted Brownfields Assessment Grant for Jerry's Pond.

Date: July 23, 2018

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. The EPA estimates that there are more than 450,000 brownfields in the U.S.

Targeted Brownfield Assessment (TBA) Grant Program

The EPA offers the competitive Targeted Brownfield Assessment (TBA) grant program to support assessment activities on brownfield sites. Site assessment can provide a higher degree of predictability toward potential reuse and redevelopment of a site. Funds from TBA grants may be used only for assessment and cannot be applied to any subsequent cleanup activities. Other funding sources exist for cleanup and/or to incentivize brownfield redevelopment. Eligibility and applicability for those funds varies based on site ownership and liability status. The sites for the TBA grant program are selected locally, once a year. The most recent grant proposal deadline was in November 2017.

Program Eligibility

The EPA's program information regarding the Targeted Brownfield Assessment (TBA) grant program provides the following guidance:

- Applicants must be public entities or non-profits who partner with a public entity.
- It is important that the applicant currently have redevelopment plans for the contaminated property.
- The applicant should apply on behalf of a specific site which it currently owns or can obtain ownership through some other means (e.g. tax foreclosure).
- If the site is currently not owned by the applicant, the site should be "abandoned". An "abandoned" site for the purposes of this program is a site where the current owner has shown no interest in the property, has not paid taxes on the property, and does not have the resources to conduct the required site assessment work.

- Sites where the applicant could be considered a responsible party for the contamination on the site are not eligible for assistance under this program.
- The TBA program is not intended to assist private parties to assess and cleanup their sites for redevelopment.

Jerry's Pond

Jerry's Pond is a part of a larger privately-owned site consisting of several contiguous parcels owned by GCP Applied Technologies (GCP). GCP's predecessor, WR Grace, performed building materials testing on the Cambridge site and it has been referred to as the Grace Site for several decades. Prior to W.R. Grace's ownership, it was owned by the rubber company, Dewey and Almy. The site hosted industrial activity since the 1920s and environmental investigations conducted in the 1980s and 1990s identified contamination on site. The owner has informed us that in 2006, an Activity and Use Limitation (AUL) was issued as part of a Response Action Outcome under the Massachusetts Contingency Plan and Chapter 21(e) regulations.

Because the Jerry's Pond site is privately owned, the property owner is not an eligible entity to apply for the TBA Grant Program for that site. The City is also not an eligible entity to apply for the TBA Grant Program for that site, because it does not own the property.

The broader area has been studied as a part of the City's Envision Cambridge Alewife District Study process. The long-term vision under discussion for the area contemplates clustering development in the northern section of the site and improving connectivity through the site to better link adjacent housing, open space resources, and transit facilities. Implementation of any long-term vision for the site would require a collaborative effort with the property owner, in the context of any plans they may have for the site as a whole.

Conclusion

CDD staff have been in contact with members of the Friends of Jerry's Pond group and have met with EPA staff to learn more about the grant program and the specific purposes for which TBA grant funding could be applied. Because Jerry's Pond is a privately-owned parcel, the property owner of Jerry's Pond does not meet the eligibility criteria.

We have had conversation with GCP leadership about the prospect of a Targeted Brownfield Assessment grant for the Jerry's Pond area. GCP has informed the City that it sees the AUL as the strategy 'to ensure no significant risk to health, safety, public

welfare or the environment' exists at the Jerry's Pond area, and GCP has expressed its intention to 'continue to maintain the area of Jerry's Pond as [they] do today, with periodic trash pickup and clearing of brush overgrowth'.

In recent weeks, a number of residents have reached out to GCP Applied Technologies to express their interest in environmental assessment, remediation, and transformation of Jerry's Pond area to a publicly-accessible open space resource. GCP's response is attached. We will continue the conversation with GCP as they develop their long-term plans for the site. If circumstances change and GCP is interested, the City will evaluate the feasibility and appropriateness of an application in collaboration with GCP during future TBA grant cycles.