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# REPORT

May 26, 2021

Community Relations Plan  
FORMER VALLEY MOTOR SALES  
(SMS# 2020-4946)  
207 Pleasant Street  
Bethel, Vermont

**Prepared for:**  
Green Mountain Economic  
Development Corporation

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

This Community Relations Plan (CRP) has been prepared by Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. (Weston & Sampson) on behalf of the Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation (GMEDC) and was funded under EPA Brownfields Cooperative Agreement (CA) BF00A00762. The CRP addresses how the local community will be involved in the decision-making process regarding environmental cleanup at a portion of the Former Valley Motor Sales Site, SMS#2020-4946 (the "Site") located at 207 Pleasant Street in Bethel, Vermont.

The purpose of the CRP is to describe the strategy to be taken to address the needs and concerns of residents of the Town of Bethel who may be affected by the proposed cleanup activities. The CRP outlines how residents, Town officials, local organizations, and other parties will be involved in the decision-making process.

### 1.2 Spokesperson and Information Repository

The spokesperson for this project is Mr. Robert Haynes, of GMEDC, who may be contacted at:

Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation  
35 Railroad Row, Suite 101  
White River Junction, VT 05001  
603-448-8494  
[rhaynes@gmedc.com](mailto:rhaynes@gmedc.com)

The Information Repository will be located in the Bethel Town Clerk's office, located at:

Bethel Town Clerk's Office  
134 S Main Street  
Bethel, VT 05032  
802-234-9722  
[betheltownclerk@comcast.net](mailto:betheltownclerk@comcast.net)

Select documents prepared as part of this project will be available in the Information Repository. To conduct a review of the Information Repository, the Town Clerk's office should be contacted to make an appointment during normal Municipal Building business hours:

Monday and Thursday: 8 AM to 4 PM

Tuesday, Wednesday: Friday 8 AM to 1 PM

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## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Site Location

The Site is located at 207 Pleasant Street, in Bethel, Vermont. It consists of a single 2.27-acre parcel, developed with a now vacant 16,500-square foot (sq. ft.) automobile sales and service facility.

The Site is situated approximately a quarter mile from the downtown and is directly between the downtown and the neighboring recreation area and the White River Valley (WRV) Middle and Elementary Schools. Adjoining and neighboring property uses include several residences and a mobile-home park, the Bethel Recreation Center, and properties used for various small commercial and agricultural businesses.

### 2.2 History of Site Use and Ownership

The Site was originally a portion of the Lyman Child homestead in 1890. The first identified development of the Site was in the early 1900s as a small automotive service garage with a fuel dispenser. A cinderblock building with a slab-on-grade foundation, the oldest portion of the current Site building, was developed next to the automotive garage as a Mobil gas station in 1929. In 1933, the Mobil was sold and became Benson Chevrolet, an automobile dealership. The Site was purchased by Valley Motor Sales, an automobile dealership, in 1947 and in 1968, a large metal-sided building with a slab-on-grade foundation was constructed and connected along the south wall of the cinderblock building. Valley Motors operated the Site, which included an auto body shop, until 2018 and the building has remained vacant since that time.

### 2.3 Nature of Threat to Public Health and the Environment

Assessment activities conducted at the Site from 2014 to 2018 identified several contaminants of concern (COCs) in concentrations above allowable state and federal standards. The Site is a listed State Hazardous Waste Site (SMS #2016-4645) for the known releases of the following COCs:

- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in soil.
- Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in soil beneath the building slab in concentrations above Vermont standards for residential use, but below the TSCA threshold.
- Total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) in soil beneath the building slab.
- Asbestos in pipe insulation, joint compound associated with drywall, adhesives associated with decorative wallboard, gasket materials, caulking, and roofing materials.
- Paint containing PCBs greater than 50 ppm on the floor surface of the Site building. Classified as a PCB Bulk Product Waste, it is not authorized for continued use.

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### 3.0 COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Community Profile

The Site is located in Bethel, Vermont, with an estimated population of 1,960 people. Bethel abuts two Opportunity Zone (OZ) communities directly to the north (Randolph) and the east (Royalton). Chartered in 1779, Bethel was originally settled as a farming town at the junction of two major valleys. Bethel has undergone major economic and social changes over the past 100 years, moving towards an economic base of service industry and light manufacturing.

In 2011, Bethel experienced devastating damage to public and private infrastructure during Tropical Storm Irene. Recovery is ongoing and continues to affect the town. Due to shrinking populations, in 2017 residents of Bethel and the nearby Town of Royalton voted to merge their school districts.

#### 3.2 Chronology of Community Involvement

In 2019, GMEDC applied for a Cleanup Grant. As part of the application process, GMEDC presented at a public meeting on November 25, 2019. Copies of the draft funding application, including a draft of the Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) were provided for public review at the offices of GMEDC, the Bethel Town Clerk's office, and at the public meeting.

The Town of Bethel submitted a letter of support with the grant application, as did a local business owner and representative of the Bethel Revitalization Initiative, the White River Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC), the Randolph Technical Career Center, and the Randolph Union High School.

#### 3.3 Continued Community Involvement

A legal notice will be placed in the local newspaper announcing the proposed cleanup activities at the Site. In conformance with the Cooperative Agreement requirements, the legal notice will also announce that the information repository on this project, including the environmental assessments, risk assessments and other environmental information is located at the Town offices and is available for viewing during normal business hours and/or by appointment.

The notice will also announce the start of a thirty-day comment period on the draft Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA), which will run concurrently with the draft Corrective Action Plan (CAP) which will be located at the information repository and online at the State of Vermont environmental Notice Bulletin (ENB).

GMEDC will present the proposed cleanup plans at a public meeting and will prepare outreach materials for posting on the GMEDC website and social media platforms. GMEDC will conduct outreach to local and regional press/media outlets.

GMEDC will accept comments on the ABCA and draft CAP during the comment period and will provide written responses which will become part of the administrative record. The information repository will be updated with the inclusion of all meeting minutes, status reports, and other communications.

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