

DRAFT

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

FORMER ROCKFORD WATCH FACTORY SITE ON SOUTH MADISON STREET: 2014 USEPA RLF PROJECT FOR ASBESTOS REMOVAL PRIOR TO PARTIAL DEMOLITION

1. OVERVIEW

The purpose of this Community Involvement Plan (CIP) is to delineate the communication strategies that will address the needs and concerns of the citizens of Rockford, particularly the residents who are directly or potentially affected by the proposed removal of asbestos contamination present at the former Rockford Watch Factory Manufacturing Site located in the City of Rockford on South Water Street. The asbestos removal includes removing all of the asbestos located within the additions to the original building prior to demolition of those additions. Asbestos removal within the original structure will take place at a later date, possibly during late 2015.

This CIP provides an overview of how the City has involved and will continue to involve affected residents, City officials, and local organizations in the decision-making process regarding the environmental remediation efforts at the site. As with the dissemination of information and the coordination and facilitation of community outreach throughout the activities on the adjacent Ingersoll site, the City is primarily responsible for implementing community Involvement pertaining to the site.

Active residents and institutions in the community are essential resources for the success of the CIP as they hold positions of responsibility within the community. The City of Rockford perceives these citizens and organizations as key points of contact and communication. The success of the environmental remediation and subsequent redevelopment of the former Rockford Watch Factory site hinges on informed citizen involvement in each step of the remediation process.

2. SPOKESPERSON AND INFORMATION REPOSITORY

The spokesperson for this project is Mr. Wayne Dust, Planning Administrator, who may be contacted at:

The City of Rockford
425 East State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104
(815) 987-5636
wayne.dust@rockfordil.gov

The Information Repository is located at the Rockford Public Library, 215 S. Wyman St, and the Montague Branch Library at 1238 S. Winnebago St., both in Rockford, Illinois.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

The former Rockford Watch Factory site, 325 S. Madison Street, City of Rockford, Winnebago County, Illinois, is located within the southwest quarter of Section 23, Township 44 North, Range 1 East, 3 PM. This site occupies approximately 2 acres and located approximately one quarter mile southeast of downtown Rockford. The site is bounded by the School District Property to the North, the Union Pacific N-S Rail Line to the West and South, and Madison Street to the East.

This Community Involvement Plan focuses on remedial activities in the core of the remaining former manufacturing structures. The Original Rockford Watch Factory Structure dates to the 1890's . There were several additions constructed over a period of several years. The City's Plan is to remove the additions to the original structure and, at a later date, repurpose the original structure with a use that will compliment the surrounding uses. There is a considerable amount of asbestos located throughout the original structure as well as the additions. Due to funding limitations, asbestos removal will be limited to the additions at this time.

A Phase I Environmental Assessment had been performed for the site prior to the City's acquisition of the property during the summer of 2014. Phase II Environmental Site Assessment work in the form of a preliminary asbestos survey was performed during 2013, and a final Asbestos Survey report will be available during late November, 2014, and it will be added to the Administrative Record and the City's Website when it becomes available. Bid specs are being prepared and will be finalized during December of 2014, following the completion of the asbestos survey.

4. NATURE OF THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH

Asbestos must be removed prior to the demolition of the additions to the original structure and the adaptive reuse of the original structure. Available funding will be used for the asbestos removal from the additions. Asbestos removal from inside the original structure is expected late in 2015.

5. COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Rockford, Illinois is a community of approximately 153,000 people and is generally located in the southeast corner of Winnebago County, at the intersections of US 20 and I-90 with Illinois 251 and I-39. The City is approximately 90 miles northwest of downtown Chicago and 70 miles northwest of O'Hare International Airport.

Like many Illinois communities, the economic viability of Rockford was historically linked to older industry within the community, in particular to the industrial sites along the Rock River starting in Downtown Rockford and continuing south along the river for about one and one fourth miles on the west bank of the Rock River and, intermittently, much further north and south on the East bank of the Rock River. The overall area also has several rail crossings of the Rock River as well as several railroads that parallel the Rock River for various distances. The Rockford Watch Factory is located less than two blocks from the Rock River along a rail line that parallels the Rock River along Madison Street.

As manufacturing and transportation have changed through the years, these older industrial areas have struggled to remain economically viable in the face of increasing competition and global changes to industrial-based economies. The majority of the manufacturing plants in this corridor have been abandoned or are underutilized while the companies have either relocated out of state, broke up into smaller companies, been absorbed by larger firms, gone out of existence, downsized and relocated to greenfield sites or some combination of many of these company changes. Rockford Watch Company only produced watches for a short time, and the building was used for a variety of office and manufacturing purposes over the last several decades. Recently, only the additions to the building have been used.

The Rockford Watch Factory site is located in Census Tract 10.

Based on the 2010 US Decennial Census and 2011 Community Survey data, the median income for households in Census Tract 10 is only \$15,794, while the figure for the City of Rockford as a whole is \$38,573. Additionally, the percentage of families living below the poverty line in Census tract 10 is 44.1%, compared to the City percentage of 17.8%. This trend continues in regard to persons below poverty level; in Census Tract 10 this measure is 58.8 %, while the City as a whole has 23.35% of the respective persons below the poverty level. Additionally, 69 % of the population in Census Tract 10 is a member of a minority group, compared to 42 % in the City as a whole.

Demographic statistics for Rockford show that the City has experienced slow population growth due entirely to annexations, while surrounding communities have experienced rapid growth, both in Winnebago County and surrounding counties. Census Tract 10 has experienced population and housing unit loss during the past several decades. The population of Census Tract 10 declined from 4,464 in 1970 to 2,469 in 2010, a population decline of almost 45%.

6. CHRONOLOGY OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Rockford Watch Factory Site has become a component of the Indoor Sports Complex at Ingersoll, and because of the extensive Community Involvement there, the Rockford Watch Factory Site is very familiar to the community.

For the adjacent Ingersoll site, City acquisition took place during 2002. The City conducted a “Request for Developer Qualifications” that was issued December 7, 2004. Because of the riverfront location, there was considerable developer interest. However, with the uncertainty regarding the environmental conditions at the site at that time, no developer was selected as a result of the initial RFQ process. Environmental site assessments were initiated shortly thereafter during 2006, and largely completed during 2008. The City received the USEPA Cleanup Grant for the Rockford Watch Factory site in January of 2010, Cooperative Agreement BF-00E00320, and, as part of the Grant administrative process, conducted the Public Hearing for this grant on October 31, 2011. The Alderman of the 1st Ward at the time, Doug Mark, had been kept informed of the status of this property from the time of initial purchase by the City through April of 2013 when Tom Mc Namara became the Alderman of the 1st Ward.

More recently as the Cleanup of the site was nearing completion during 2012, the City, in conjunction with the Rockford Park District, unveiled the proposal for the Indoor Sports Complex at Ingersoll. Initially, only the 5-acre Ingersoll site was to be used with parking to be resolved at a later point in time. Subsequently the decision was made to provide parking for the Indoor Sports Facility on a nearby site concurrently rather than as a separate process. As a result, the City has been working to find the additional funding for the expanded concept. The alderman of the ward, Tom Mc Namara, as well as the nearby residents have been kept well informed of this project and the recent expansion of the scope of the project. The Rockford Watch Factory was proposed to be added to the scope of the Indoor Sports Complex as early as 2012; City acquisition of the property was completed July 17th, 2014.

7. Key Community Concerns: Rockford Watch Factory

The City of Rockford purchased this site during 2014. Through the public process, the following goals for the Rockford Watch Factory site have been identified:

- Provide asbestos removal within the additions to the original structure prior to demolition of these additions;
- Provide Asbestos Removal within the Original Structure prior to repurposing of that structure;
- Provide Phase II environmental assessment and cleanup, if required, for the overall site
- Continue to refine the Redevelopment Plan for the area to include the Com Ed site (for public use) as well as the Illinois Railway Bridge across the Rock River immediately south of the Com Ed property. This railway bridge is now City owned.

8. Continued Community Involvement

Alderman Tom Mc Namara has been contacted regarding the status of the Environmental Assessment and intention to move forward with the Ingersoll portion of the project as well as the first component of the Rockford Watch Factory site using the RLF Program Funds.

The Public Comment Period, November 10th 2014 through December 10th 2014 and Public Hearing , November 24th 2014 will be initial steps towards a continuing Public Process for the Rockford Watch Factory site Cleanup and Redevelopment as well as similar initiatives at the adjacent Ingersoll site and nearby Brownfield sites, especially the Commonwealth Edison site .