



# **COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN**

**CSB Shirland Avenue Property  
126 Shirland Avenue  
South Beloit, Illinois**

**Groundwater and Soil Cleanup**

**US EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant**

**March 2025**

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## 1. OVERVIEW

The purpose of this Community Relations Plan (CRP) is to provide communication strategies that will address the needs and concerns of the citizens of South Beloit, particularly the residents who are directly or potentially affected by the proposed cleanup actions at the former CSB Shirland Avenue redevelopment site, located at 126 Shirland Avenue South Beloit, Illinois (herein referenced as the “Site”).

On September 19, 2023, the City of South Beloit received an EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant award totaling \$311,400. The City anticipates the cleanup grant will be used to remediate known contamination in soil and groundwater on the Site, in preparation for redevelopment activities. Petroleum-contaminated soil and groundwater are present in elevated concentrations near the center of the Site. Some of the contaminant concentrations exceed the State of Illinois Remediation Objectives established in 35 Illinois Administrative Code Part 742 – Tiered Approach to Corrective Action Objectives (TACO). The presence of contamination requires consideration for making the site safe and usable for future redevelopments. The Proposed Cleanup Actions include the following:

- (A) **Remediation:** The documented plume of elevated concentrations of total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), considered the source area on tax parcel 04-06-277-001. Approximately 544 cubic yards of contaminated soil and groundwater will be blended in situ with a remediation implement to approximately 8 feet below ground surface. The remedial work will be regularly verified through collection of confirmation samples and laboratory analysis.  
**Estimated Cost: \$209,000**

Due to the scope of the work that needs to be completed, the City of South Beloit has procured a Qualified Environmental Consultant (QEC) to help plan and administer the environmental remediation practice to clean up the Site for redevelopment. In January 2024, the City selected Fehr Graham Engineering & Environmental as their QEC.

This CRP provides an overview of how the City of South Beloit has involved and will continue to involve affected residents, local organizations, and City staff and officials, in the decision-making process regarding the environmental remediation efforts at the Site. The City holds the responsibility for disseminating pertinent information and seeking community involvement regarding the Site cleanup.

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

## **2. SPOKESPERSON AND INFORMATION REPOSITORY**

The spokesperson for this project is Ms. Sonya Hoppes, City Administrator for the City of South Beloit. Ms. Hoppes may be contacted at:

**City of South Beloit**  
**519 Blackhawk Boulevard, Suite 2**  
**South Beloit, Illinois 61080**  
**(815) 389-3023**  
**[s.hoppes@southbeloit.org](mailto:s.hoppes@southbeloit.org)**

The Information Repository is located at the South Beloit City Hall, 519 Blackhawk Boulevard, Suite 2, South Beloit, Illinois. South Beloit City Hall is located 0.28 miles from the Site. Additionally, the information will be posted and maintained on the City of South Beloit webpage at:

<https://southbeloit.org/epa-has-selected-the-city-of-south-beloit-for-a-311400-grant/>

## **3. SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY**

The CSB Shirland Avenue Property, common address 126 Shirland Avenue, South Beloit, Illinois 61080, is located along the Illinois-Wisconsin state line in South Beloit and is bounded by the Rock River to the west, Turtle Creek to the south, railroad and industrial operations to the east, and a newly constructed minor league baseball stadium (2021) to the north. The Site consists of three (3) parcels of City-owned land, encompassing approximately 11.36 acres of land, transected by a utility corridor/former railroad right-of-way owned by the Union Pacific Railroad.

The Site was developed in 1918 with a manufacturing facility used to produce special cooling equipment for railroad refrigerator cars (Lipman Refrigerator Car and Manufacturing Company; later Lipman Refrigeration Corporation). The original facility included a foundry and car shop. After the conclusion of World War I, the demand for refrigerated rail cars decreased and the facility shifted operations to the production of various smaller refrigeration machines. The car shop was converted to assembly and testing, and the facility was expanded to include a cooling coil manufacturing shop, machine shop, and office. The name of the facility changed to General Refrigeration Corporation in 1930. Historical Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps between 1926 and 1950 depict a machine shop, a coil shop, storage areas, woodworking, painting, oil house, railroad spurs, and an earthen-floor foundry. Refrigeration equipment manufacturing operations continued until at least 1958.

Subsequent operations at the Site included Beloit Bridge & Iron Steel Fabrication / Beloit Corporation Integrated Products Division between at least 1961 and 1972, which included steel storage, welding, a machine shop, and railroad spurs. The Site was briefly occupied by an automotive body shop (Herf's Auto Body) in the early 1980s and was used for food distribution warehousing (Beatrice Foods Warehouse, Kerry Ingredients Certified Parts Corp Warehouse, Equipment Exchange) from 1987 to 2007. The Site has been undeveloped since the manufacturing/warehousing facility was demolished in 2007.

Total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) concentrations were identified at the Site at concentrations exceeding the default and site-specific soil attenuation capacity, which is a threshold criterion for cleanup according to TACO. Therefore, remediation will be required to mitigate risk to human health and the environment from petroleum-contaminated soil at the Site. Through past site investigations, the "hot spot" area of contamination has been defined, requiring remedial attention.

This CRP focuses on the remedial activities at the Site that must be addressed prior to redevelopment, which include the following contaminants of concern:

- A) Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPH) exceeding the applicable default and site-specific soil attenuation capacity threshold criteria.

#### **4. NATURE OF THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH**

Protecting residents and sensitive populations from the contaminant hazards at the Site is a priority. The environmental cleanup actions that are proposed for the Site are necessary prior to redevelopment and public use. To date, no direct negative health impact has been identified to surrounding residences. The Site is located south of Shirland Avenue and along City of South Beloit police patrol routes, deterring any illegal entry or fly dumping at the Site.

- » Treatment of the elevated concentrations of TPH will mitigate risk to human health and prepare the Site to be redeveloped.
- » Engineered barriers in the form of asphalt or concrete pavement, 3-foot clean soil barriers, and alternative green barriers will be necessary at the Site to address other low-level contamination exceeding soil inhalation and soil ingestion exposure routes. These barriers will be installed as part of site redevelopment (outside of the grant-funded activity).

#### **5. COMMUNITY PROFILE**

Similar to many other Illinois communities, the economic viability of South Beloit was historically linked to manufacturing industries within the community. As manufacturing, foundries, and transportation have changed through the years, these older industrial areas struggled to remain economically viable in the face of increasing competition and global changes to industrial-based economies. As opportunities dwindled, most of these industry facilities in the City started closing leaving vacant and deteriorating factories as well as a large amount of underemployed people.

The 2020 US Census listed South Beloit's population as 7,975. U.S. Census 2020 American Community Survey and the Bureau of Labor Statistics demographic data illustrate the community's economic state. The Per Capita income in South Beloit is \$25,781 – just 69% of the State's Per Capita Income, and the Median Household Income of the City is \$59,470, compared to \$72,205 for the State of Illinois. The Shirland Avenue Sites' Census Tract has worse household economic data than the City of South Beloit as a whole: the Per Capita Income is \$19,800 and the Median Household Income is just \$45,000. South Beloit trails the county and nation in employment. This indicates the target community has been disproportionately impacted and has not rebounded despite improvements within the state and federal economies.

Brownfield sites in Census Tract 40.04 are negatively impacting the welfare of sensitive populations. According to US EPA's EJScreen Viewing Tool, Census Tract 40.04 is characterized by significantly elevated occurrences of unemployment and low income. Additional elevated socioeconomic indicators include Less than High School Education and Limited English Speaking Households. Table 1 below is a summary of the data values obtained for the census tract as obtained from the US EPA's EJ Viewer.

**6. TABLE 1 – US EPA EJ VIEWER DATA FOR CENSUS TRACK 40.04**

Indicator	Value	IL Average	US Average
Unemployment	2%	7%	6%
Low Income	24%	29%	31%
People of Color	10%	39%	39%
Demographic Index	17%	34%	35%
Less than HS Education	17%	11%	12%
Limited English Speaking	0%	4%	5%

**7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Site redevelopment options have been considered as early as 2006, when Winnebago County and City commenced environmental assessments through a local brownfields assessment grant. The City acquired the Site shortly thereafter. Since that time, City staff and elected officials have considered redevelopment options and alternatives, with consideration for floodplain/floodway and environmental challenges. The following is a chronology of Community Involvement and its relationship to the environmental assessment, cleanup and planning efforts.

- » November 13, 2006: The City of South Beloit bought 126 Shirland Avenue with the objective of future redevelopment.
- » 2016: The City of South Beloit determined not to implement the remedial strategy because the site was part of a floodway and lack of funding, removing it from the SRP.
- » 2020-2021: A redevelopment of north adjacent site into a minor league baseball stadium reinvigorated conversations of redevelopment and environmental remediation.
- » November 2022: A public meeting was held at South Beloit’s City Hall to inform the community of the history and need for cleanup at the Site, and discuss cleanup alternatives and pursuit of federal brownfield funding for the Site. A grant application was submitted to the USEPA shortly thereafter.
- » September 19, 2023: USEPA Brownfields Cleanup grant funding of \$311,400 was awarded to South Beloit to cleanup petroleum contamination at the Site.

**8. HISTORY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND CLEANUP PLANS**

- » Phase I Environmental Site Assessment services were completed on 126 Shirland Avenue, prepared by Professional Services Industries on May 9, 2009
- » Comprehensive Site Investigation, Remedial Objectives Report and Remedial Action Plan (CSIR/ROR/RAP) and enrolled in Illinois EPA SRP, prepared by V3 Companies and 2010.
- » Site removed from Illinois EPA SRP without closure dated January 2016.
- » Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was updated on 126 Shirland Avenue, prepared by Fehr Graham, dated July 26, 2017.

- » Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was updated on 126 Shirland Avenue, prepared by Brownfield Environmental Engineering, dated November 20, 2020.
- » Phase II Environmental Site Assessment was completed on 126 Shirland Avenue, prepared by Brownfield Environmental Engineering and others, dated September and October 2020.
- » Supplemental Phase II Environmental Site Assessment was completed on 126 Shirland Avenue, prepared by Fehr Graham, dated July 2021.
- » Site re-enrolled into the Illinois EPA Site Remediation Program, January 2022.
- » Remedial Action Plan approved by the Illinois EPA, April 2023.

## **9. KEY COMMUNITY CONCERNS**

To date, no concerns related to the environmental cleanup portion of the project have been communicated. All concerns have focused on the economic and socioeconomic effects of the proposed CSB Shirland Avenue redevelopment project. The City will continue to document and evaluate all community concerns moving forward.

## **10. PUBLIC COMMENT**

The 30-day Public Comment Period, March 3, 2025, through April 2, 2025, and Public Hearing, March 3, 2025; will be the initial steps towards a continuing community relations program for the cleanup effort at the Site.