**SUSTAINABLE JERSEY ACTION ITEMS**

**CAMDEN REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**BROWNFIELDS**

**Brownfield Inventory and Prioritization**

The Camden Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has, since 2005, managed the Brownfield Program for the City of Camden. During that time the CRA has been awarded nearly $38.0 million in grants for the purpose of investigation and remediation of Brownfield Sites. Currently the CRA is managing $12.0 million in active State and Federal Brownfield grants. As redevelopment activity has gained momentum in Camden and the competition for Brownfield funding has increased, the CRA recognized that a strategic plan was required to guide the allocation of resources and ensure alignment of Brownfield projects with various City, State and regional plans. In order to address this need, the Camden Redevelopment Agency engaged the US Environmental Protection Agency-funded, New Jersey Institute of Technology Technical Assistance for Brownfield Communities (NJIT TAB) Program to develop a document entitled “City of Camden Brownfield Redevelopment Strategic Plan” (2014).

The CRA provided NJIT TAB with a list of 30 major Brownfield sites across the City, which the CRA with its extensive knowledge of the City, believed to have some level of redevelopment potential. NJIT TAB began by mapping the sites. They then obtained site specific data including site name, address, block and lot, owner information and site size from tax information. Wetland, floodplains and historic designations were obtained from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection website. Information on the environmental condition of the sites was collected from the CRA’s archive of environmental reports going back to the early 1990’s and an OPRA file search of NJDEP records. Environmental reports were located for approximately ½ of the 30 sites. NJIT TAB reviewed redevelopment of the sites in the context of existing City, State and regional planning documents. On the City level the review included the City of Camden Master Plan, the City of Camden Zoning Map and Land Development Ordinance and four applicable Neighborhood and redevelopment plans. On the State level, the review included the New Jersey State Plan Smart Growth Principals and 2011 New Jersey Energy Master Plan. On the regional level the sites were analyzed for consistency with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission’s “Connections” Long Range Plan. The sites were then scored and ranked on the basis of Funding Considerations, Location, Physical Site Characteristics, Environmental Considerations, Planning Considerations and Ownership.

The Brownfield Redevelopment Plan serves as a roadmap for prioritizing the financial and personnel resources of the Camden Redevelopment Agency in its mission to proactively advance Brownfield projects in a manner that reflects market realities and sound planning principles. In addition, the Plan is an indispensable tool in communicating often complex scientific and regulatory issues by reducing the issues to a coherent plan of action that can be shared with the community, elected officials and the CRA’s Board of Commissioners. The Plan, along with the referenced local planning documents are readily available on the CRA website.

The City of Camden Brownfield Redevelopment Plan serves an organic document by which the CRA regularly engages the community, non-profit organizations, elected officials and regulators in discussions regarding Brownfield redevelopment. As a result of discussions surrounding the development of the Mt. Ephraim Neighborhood Transformation Plan and the subsequent US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) CHOICE application, the CRA is undertaking a review of the priorities established in the 2014 Plan and expects to issue an updated plan for review during 2016.

The CRA manages two DEP Brownfield Development Areas in Camden. One BDA encompasses the North Camden Waterfront and the other encompasses the Cramer Hill Waterfront. By program design the BDAs are intended as a mechanism by which State-funded remediation is prioritized and concentrated. The formation of a steering committee with regular meetings is intended as a mechanism by which to solicit regular community input in the remediation process.

The CRA works closely with the Camden Collaborative Initiative (CCI) and serves a member of its Brownfields Sub-committee. The Sub-committee meets monthly to discuss Brownfield issues and to inform the members of up-coming grant and planning opportunities. Recently the Sub-committee has met with representatives of Creative Land Recycling (a US EPA TAB consultant), The Trust for Public Land and the State Office of Planning Advocacy to discuss the marketing and reuse of smaller Brownfield sites.

The CRA is an active participant in the Quarterly Brownfields Roundtable meetings convened by DEP. These sessions are a forum for municipalities to discuss regulatory changes in the New Jersey Brownfield Program and an opportunity to share innovative land reuse approaches.

In 2015 in connection with the Mt. Ephraim Neighborhood Transformation Plan process, the CRA applied for and received a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the amount of $200,000 for an Area-wide Planning Grant. The purpose of the grant is to inventory possible Brownfield sites in the Mt. Ephraim Neighborhood and to seek community input, through the Neighborhood Executive Council, for the planned remediation and reuse of the Brownfield sites.