

# Town of Sprague Community Relations Plan

## BALTIC MILLS

29 BUSHNELL HOLLOW ROAD SPRAGUE, CT

### Overview

The purpose of the Community Relations Plan (CRP) is to describe the Town of Sprague's strategy to address the needs and concerns of Sprague's residents potentially affected by the proposed remedial activities of environmental contamination present at the Baltic Mills site located at 29 Bushnell Hollow Road. The CRP outlines how the Town has involved, and will continue to involve, affected residents, Town officials and local organizations in the decision-making process regarding the environmental cleanup at the site.

Active residents involved in neighborhood issues are essential resources for the success of the CRP because they have an understanding of the site area and they hold positions of responsibility within the community. The success of the environmental cleanup and subsequent redevelopment of the Baltic Mills property hinges on informed citizen involvement in each step of the cleanup process.

### Spokesperson and Information Repository

The Spokesperson for this project is Cathy Osten, First Selectman, who may be contacted at 860-822-3000 or at Town Hall One Main Street, Baltic, CT. The Information Repository is also located at the Town offices at the above address and is available at [www.ctsprague.org](http://www.ctsprague.org).

### Site Description

The property is located at 29 Bushnell Hollow Road in Sprague, Connecticut. Some old records cite the street address as 2 Scotland Road. The Tax Assessor's designation for the site is Map 26, Block 6, Lot 1, and another small parcel Map 26, Block 5, Lot 4.

The main parcel (Map I.D. 26/6/1) is approximately 16.5 acres, according to Town Assessor's records. Only one structure (Mill No. 10) and a concrete water tank remain on site. Remains of the old powerhouse building (not on subject property) also exist, along with building rubble associated with the main mill structure destroyed by fire. The building rubble is predominately granite and masonry, with some metal and wood.

The headrace and tailrace, associated with providing waterpower to the mill, still exist. Some tree growth exists, particularly in the headrace. Otherwise, the area around the main mill complex does not contain significant vegetation.

East of the Mill No. 10 Building is an undeveloped area. This area abutting the northern side of the tailrace contains some fill material and solid waste. Mr. Hunt (previous property owner) confirmed that past-unauthorized solid waste disposal took place in this area.

A narrow strip of wooded land, between Bushnell Hollow Road and the Shetucket River, extends approximately 1000 feet east of the end of the tailrace. No evidence of fill or disposal was observed in this area other than typical roadside litter.

An undeveloped area of land exists between the tailrace and the Shetucket River, east of the Nutmeg Wire Co. This area is referred to as the peninsular. Apparent disturbance in this area can be seen in old photographs (1947). Above-grade fill material is visible in this area in the old photographs and is still visible on site (although now covered by vegetation).

### Nature of Threat to Public Health and Environment

The following is a summary of the Recognized Environmental Conditions.

Potential Release Areas/ Recognized Environmental Conditions	Nature of Release	Status
#1 Former 50,000 gallon UST	No 6 Fuel Oil	Soil remediation completed 1989. EPA-2006 investigation. PAHs and ETPH detected in soils above CTDEP criteria.
#2 Solid Waste Disposal (eastern side of site)	Solid waste	Solid Waste and Polluted Soil Remediation Planned
#3 Fire Combustion Material	Combustion Ash	No Release Detected
#4 Coal Ash Fill- North side of tailrace	Coal Ash	PAHs and lead detected in soil above CTDEP criteria.
#5 Original Canal	Fill	No Release Detected.
#6 Tailrace- Sediments	Industrial Discharges	Not Investigated. Investigation Required.
#7 Peninsular Area	Fill	Asphalt Like Material (PAHs) Requires Remediation.
#8 Former Gas Works	Potential Coal Tar	PAHs detected above CTDEP criteria.
#9 Weave Shed	Unknown	Partially Investigated- Contamination not detected. Further Investigation Required.

Remediation planned at AOC 2 based on availability of EPA Brownfields Grant funding.

## Community Background

Sprague, Connecticut is a rural community of about 3,000 inhabitants living in more than 1,164 residences throughout three villages: Baltic, Hanover, and Versailles, covering an area of 13.8 square miles. The town is one of twenty-five Connecticut communities classified as a Distressed Municipality by the Connecticut Economic Development Commission, and it ranks 30<sup>th</sup> out of 169 towns in poverty in the state. This designation was received based on the community's ranking in per capita income, change in per capita income, percentage of poverty, the change in population and employment between 1992 and 2002, the percentage of housing stock built before 1939, the adjusted net grand list, and the percent of adults over age 25 with a high school diploma or higher.

The majority of the population is composed of third and fourth generation residents whose families worked in the Baltic and other mills in Hanover and Versailles, along the Shetucket River. Baltic Village, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is the site of what was one of the three largest textile mills in Connecticut and one of the largest woolen mills in the US. The 1999 fire that destroyed the majority of the Baltic Mill buildings was one of the biggest economic blows to this close-knit community, and literally signified a destruction of their community identity that the town has yet to regain.

The majority of Sprague residents now work at moderate paying jobs or part-time at the two casinos, Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun, twenty minutes to the south in Norwich/Ledyard. The town has a weak tax base due to limited local business and industry, and a limited infrastructure. Because of the construction and rapid expansion of the casinos, the explosion of housing development in the surrounding area, and the collateral increase in the region, Sprague has been faced in a short period of time with imminent threats and vulnerabilities: to its infrastructure, its public health services, its citizens' personal safety, and its emergency services delivery. Sprague is attempting to address these threats in as comprehensive a manner as possible, and the Town Master Plan for Development, as well as the new Plan of Conservation and Development, list the adaptive re-use of the Baltic Mills as one of the Town's top priorities.

## Chronology of Community Involvement

Over the past several years, the Town has worked closely with the neighborhood residents, local officials and other interested stakeholders in planning the investigation and cleanup of the site. Community Outreach efforts have included the following:

- March 18, 2008 Project Kickoff Meeting- Town Hall
- May 2008 Public Notice and Public Meeting- Alternative Analysis Report
- Lead and Asbestos Abatement Mill Building 10 (March 2009)
- Town Web Site- Posting of all Baltic Mills Technical Documents
- Establishment of a Baltic Mill Redevelopment Committee March 2010
- Our Town Newsletter; January, February, June and September 2010 – Update on Baltic Mill site

## Continued Community Involvement

A legal notice will be placed in the local newspaper announcing the intent to conduct remediation of the Solid Waste Area (East Side) and to notify residents of a public meeting. A Draft Alternative Analysis report will be available for review at Town Hall or on the Town web site. This notice will also announce the start of a thirty-day comment period on the draft Alternative Analysis report. The Town will accept comments on the report 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 report and other communications.

## Schedule

The following is a tentative schedule for implementing the remediation of the Solid Waste Area (East Side).

- Public Notice/Start of Public Comment - October 23, 2010
- Selectman's Meeting - November 10, 2010
- End of Public Comment - November 26, 2010
- Finalize Alternative Analysis Report - November 30, 2010
- Remediation - December 2010 (weather permitting) or Spring 2011