

Community Engagement in Reuse Planning for the Lakes Region Facility, Laconia, New Hampshire

The 300-acre, state-owned Lakes Region Facility property in Laconia, New Hampshire, was built in the early 1900s as a “Home for the Feeble Minded” and was later converted into a minimum security prison. After the closing of the prison in 2009, the New Hampshire State Legislature established a commission (the “Commission”) to make recommendations regarding the disposition and redevelopment of the property.

EPA’s Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization provided funding and technical support for community engagement and site reuse planning activities for the property. This process, which is still ongoing, integrates risk management principles modeled on an approach described in EPA Region 1’s *Process for Risk Evaluation, Property Analysis and Reuse Decisions (PREPARED) Workbook*. The *PREPARED Workbook* is designed to help local governments make informed decisions regarding their involvement in the cleanup and reuse of contaminated properties.

Community engagement and reuse planning activities commenced in March 2010. The project initially focused on conducting various studies and other site research that included an opportunities-and-constraints analysis, market assessment, Phase I environmental site assessment, and stakeholder interviews. This information was necessary to identify potential reuse opportunities, redevelopment barriers, and project risks. The preliminary findings were presented for public comment at an open meeting in August, 2010. A draft summary report was prepared and discussed at a second public meeting in October, 2010. Importantly, the report identified a number of additional studies that may be needed to resolve significant information gaps relevant to the reuse of the property. These include a Phase 2 environmental site assessment, building condition assessment, and infrastructure capacity analysis.



Lakes Region Facility Property

The Commission is evaluating the final report findings to determine appropriate next steps, which may include performing all or some of the studies noted above. This is consistent with the iterative nature of the project risk assessment and management approach outlined in the *PREPARED Workbook*. The Commission intends to continue using the PREPARED approach to refine its final recommendations to the State Legislature.