

BROWNFIELDS SUCCESS IN NEW ENGLAND

1558 BARNUM AVENUE
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT



Property Details

Property Address:	1558 Barnum Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06607
Property Size:	4.80 acres
Former Use:	Scrap yard
Contaminants Found:	Petroleum, PCBs, lead, PAHs, other metals
Current Use:	Industrial space
Current Owner:	Jan Cohen, Northeast Builders Supply

Project Partners

Northeast Builders Supply; City of Bridgeport; 1558 Barnum, LLC; Community Capital Fund; New Alliance Bank

Motivation for Redevelopment: The Barnum Avenue site was a metal scrap yard from the late 1930s until 2004. During that time, the property had been cited for illegal activities by both state and local agencies. Redevelopment was driven by the goal to clean up a previously contaminated piece of property in Bridgeport that was an eyesore and not bringing in tax revenue. In addition, the City was concerned about potential public health threats and the long-term effect of the scrap yard's appearance on the surrounding neighborhood, which would discourage investment. Turning the property into a commercial development that would generate new tax revenue for the City of Bridgeport became a priority. This property is located in an Enterprise Zone, which offers economic development and property tax incentives.

Property History: In 1997, the City of Bridgeport started foreclosure proceedings on this former scrap yard, which had \$1.5 million in back taxes. The purchase agreement called for the fair market value purchase price, determined by independent appraisal, to be adjusted by the buyer's environmental testing and remediation expenses. Preliminary estimates of cleanup costs were \$400-800K, but rose dramatically after the former owners were evicted from the site and extensive testing could be done in areas that were not previously accessible. Environmental assessments determined that the property was contaminated with petroleum, PCBs, lead, PAHs and other metals. After 10 years of assessment activities by the City of Bridgeport and Northeast Builders Supply, the developers assumed ownership of the property on May 14, 2007. On August 2, 2007, EPA awarded Bridgeport a \$1.3 million Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund grant, which was lent to Northeast Building Supply and Community Capital Fund to conduct remediation activities at the project site.

Funding Details

Northeast Builders Supply:	\$3,000,000
	for assessment and testing
EPA Brownfields RLF Grant Loan:	\$2,300,000
	for cleanup
New Alliance Bank:	\$2,850,000
	for construction costs

Project Highlights

- The largest RLF loan in New England with a total of \$2.3 million loaned
- Construction of 80,000 square feet of commercial and light industrial flex space
- Expected to leverage 100 jobs

Project Results: Cleanup activities began in 2007. Because PCB contamination was more extensive than expected, EPA funding received for this project ultimately grew to a total of \$2.3 million. The cleanup activities included removal of approximately 6,000 tons of contaminated soil, which included 510 tons of PCB-contaminated soil, and replacement with clean fill. Approximately 4,000 tons of soil were encapsulated on the site; final soil capping was complete in March 2009. As a result of cleanup activities, the property is now available for light industrial activities. Industrial space—ranging in size from 1,500 square feet to 85,000 square feet with 24' ceiling heights—may be purchased or leased through Colonial Realty of Fairfield, a local commercial broker. The units offer modern, efficient construction. The property is located in an Enterprise Zone, which offers economic development and property tax incentives. So far, 45,000 square feet has been constructed, of which 30,000 square feet is already sold or leased; there are two sites left for additional construction. The project is generating approximately \$45-50,000 in tax revenues and could ultimately generate \$200,000 for Bridgeport.

Project Timeline

January 1, 2001	Phase I Assessment Completed
February 1, 2002	Phase II Assessment Completed
February 1, 2002	Phase III Assessment Completed
June 2007	First Property Pre-leased
March 2009	Cleanup Completed
July 2009	45,000 Square Feet of Building Space Constructed