

Community Involvement Plan Former Fashion Tannery Site

PROJECT: STABILIZATION AND REMOVAL OF ABANDONED DRUMMED
WASTE CONTAINERS

FORMER FASHION TANNERY SITE, 108 VAN ROAD,
JOHNSTOWN NY

May 14, 2026

Overview

This Community Involvement Plan (CIP) outlines strategies and actions for involving community feedback in the characterization and disposal of abandoned drummed wastes left behind at the abandoned former Leather Tannery located at 108 Van Road in Johnstown, Fulton County, New York, (tax parcels 149.-1-36.11 and 149.-1-36.2), owned by the County of Fulton. The environmental consultant on the project is HRP Associates, Inc., and Fulton County manages the project.

Site Description

The 13.3-acre Site consists of four unoccupied buildings totaling 59,159 square feet. Building A is a warehouse building totaling 19,050 square feet on the western portion of the Site which was reportedly constructed in 1980. Building B is a warehouse/office building totaling 38,679 square feet on the southeastern portion of the Site which was reportedly constructed in 1980. Building C is a 330 square foot metal pump house near the center of the Site which was constructed sometime between 1978 and 1985. Building D, a 1,100 square foot water treatment building, is located adjacent to Building C which was constructed between 1978 and 1985. Each of the on-site buildings are in a state of disrepair, including unsecured doorways and damaged roofing. Site buildings currently contain various abandoned equipment, chemical storage drums, and aboveground storage tanks (ASTs). The remainder of the Site includes wooded wetlands north of the buildings, a 288,000-gallon capacity open-top steel wastewater treatment tank, several metal-construction storage containers, a wastewater lagoon, and a surface impoundment. A Site Plan depicting the building locations is provided as Figure 2.

Community Profile

Fulton County is a rural area spanning over 550 square miles with a population of 53,324 residents. Since the 1970s, the community has been grappling with significant job and population loss, leading to a decline in the local tax base. Many residents of Fulton County can trace their ancestry to the glove and leather trades. Today few glovers, tanners, and leather dressers remain in the area, although some companies have adapted to the changes in the market to remain competitive.

Diverse stakeholder groups support the community, each playing a vital role in its development and sustainability. Residents are at the heart of Fulton County, contributing to its social fabric and culture. Johnstown has a strong sense of community and small-town charm with its rich industrial heritage, family-friendly atmosphere, and convenient location in the Mohawk Valley. Environmental

advocacy groups work diligently to preserve the area's natural resources and promote sustainable practices. Local government officials are tasked with making decisions that impact the county's future, while business owners strive to invigorate the local economy and provide employment opportunities. Together, these groups form the backbone of Fulton County, working collaboratively to address the challenges and leverage the community's strengths.

Community Needs and Concerns

Johnstown is an economically stressed community that is enduring low-income households living below the poverty level (14%) of the Region and State (each 13%). The County also has the highest percentage of households with a disability (30%). More than 21% of the population in the County and Region is over the age of 65, making seniors a higher portion of the population than in NYS as whole, where the younger age distribution is driven by larger urban areas. (In 2010, only **16% of the County's** population was aged 65+.) The 10% of households in Fulton County that do not have a vehicle maybe be considered vulnerable because, unless they live near a bus route, these households may struggle to access employment, fresh foods, recreation, and healthcare. The 2023 Point-in-Time Count recorded 49 homeless individuals in 2023, close to the 2022 figure. 57% of them were unsheltered—a higher portion than neighboring counties served by the New York State Balance of State Continuum of Care. Nineteen were considered chronically homeless. Homelessness is notoriously difficult to see and quantify in rural areas **like Fulton County. The PIT Count report notes that Fulton County's Street Outreach** program located dozens of people sleeping in abandoned buildings and helped connect them to housing and social services.

Fulton County's economy is expected to add more than 1,900 jobs over the next decade, an expansion of 11%. This will be driven by gains in the Transportation and Warehousing; Health Care and Social Assistance; Retail Trade; Government; and Manufacturing sectors. Only two sectors are projected to contract: Accommodation and Food Services; and Information. This projected expansion after a decade of contraction mirrors similar growth expectations for the Mohawk Valley Region and Upstate New York more broadly. This project would serve to begin preparing this property for warehousing or similar uses in the county.

Overall, the local disparities suggest an urgent need for targeted interventions to improve environmental conditions, enhance economic opportunities, expand access to education and healthcare, and elevate the overall quality of life for Johnstown residents. The removal of these drummed wastes will serve to prevent them from releasing chemical wastes and contaminating the environment, presenting health and safety concerns to community members, and complicating or prohibiting further cleanup, demolition and redevelopment of the site.

Action Plan

The EPA funded work will begin to stabilize an abandoned blighted property in a highly visible commercial location among productive commercial properties that can provide significant economic and health benefits to the community. The Site is targeted for redevelopment, for commercial business uses, which will remove blight and restore productive business use of this discarded and dangerous property.

The top priority of the community involvement plan is to maintain ongoing communication and active engagement with community members about the project. This involves creating opportunities for dialogue and ensuring that the community is informed and involved every step of the way. To achieve this, Fulton County will conduct public meetings and information sessions. Fulton County will hold these meetings to provide updates on project developments, answer questions, and gather input from community members. Recognizing the diverse preferences of the community, the county will also utilize multiple communication channels, including the county web site and local media outlets, to disseminate information.

Addressing environmental concerns is a critical component of this plan. The county is committed to remediating site contamination and mitigating health risks to create a safer and healthier environment for residents. Our strategy includes implementing a comprehensive site cleanup plan to address the immediate hazards by removing and safely disposing of drummed chemicals abandoned on the property. This plan effectively protects public health, and begins to restore the Site for safe future uses. Transparency is essential to building trust so that we will provide updates on remediation progress and results.

The draft Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and the overall remediation approach to the drummed chemical characterization and disposal will be presented and discussed at the following forums:

By engaging the community, addressing environmental concerns, and promoting active involvement, we aim to create a transparent, inclusive, and collaborative process that leads to the successful revitalization of Fulton County properties. Our commitment to these principles will foster trust, build strong partnerships, and ensure that the project meets the needs and aspirations of the community it serves.

The draft Alternative Brownfield Cleanup Analysis (ABCA) will be available for review at the MVEDD office located at 26 W. Main St, Mohawk, NY 13407 between **the hours of 8AM and 4PM or on MVEDD's website <https://mvedd.org/>.**

The public may send written comments to Scott Henze, Fulton County Planning Director at 1 East Montgomery Street, Johnstown, NY 12095 or emailed to SHenze@fultoncountyny.gov.

Timeline of Activities:

Timing	Tasks	Lead or Forum
6:00 PM, May 19, 2026	Initial community meeting Johnstown Town Hall	Fulton County
May 19, 2026	Public release of remediation plan (ABCA)	Fulton County
May 19, 2026	Feedback collection and analysis	Fulton County
Pending, 2026	Implementation of cleanup activities – 30 days minimum	HRP: County, Consultants

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