



Community-Led Revitalization: Engagement Strategies for Brownfield Redevelopment

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Engagement Case Studies

Mohawk Valley Brownfield Developer Summit

April 22, 2026

Getting the Word Out

- Printed Materials
 - Translated (as needed)
- E-blasts
- Press Releases
- Social Media Posts
- General Comment Opportunity

Please Join Us at
Public Workshop #1
City of Amsterdam
West End Neighborhood
Brownfield Opportunity Area


April 1, 2023
St. Mary's Healthcare
Carondelet Pavilion Auditorium
480 Gray Park Avenue
10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Bus Tour, Snacks & Kid-Friendly Activities
Open to All

Únase a nosotros en el Taller
Público #1
Ciudad de Amsterdam
Barrio del Extremo Oeste
Área de oportunidad de Brownfield

1 de Abril del 2023
St. Mary's Healthcare
Carondelet Pavilion Auditorium
480 de la Avenida Gray Park
de las 10:00 AM a las 12:30 del mediodía



Tour en Autobús, Refrigerios y
Actividades para Niños
Abierto a Todos



Additional Workshops will be held in the
Spring/Summer and Fall.
Please check the project website for more
information and sign-up to be
added to the project email list.

Se llevarán a cabo Talleres Adicionales en
Primavera/ Verano y Otoño.
Consulte el sitio web del proyecto para
obtener más información e inscribirse
para ser agregado a la lista de correo
electrónico del proyecto.

Learn More/ Aprende más:
<https://www.amsterdamny.gov/225/West-End-Brownfield-Opportunity-Area-BOA>



Please Join Us at the 2023
West End Community Fest

Stop by our table to learn more about the
City of Amsterdam West End Neighborhood
Brownfield Opportunity Area Project

June 29, 2023
Pine Street between Cedar Street and Division Street
2:00 - 6:00 PM

Por favor Únete a Nosotros
Al Festival Comunitario del West End 2023

Pase por nuestra mesa para obtener más información sobre el
Proyecto del Área de Oportunidad de Brownfield del Vecindario West
End de la ciudad de Amsterdam


29 de Junio del 2023
Pine Street entre Cedar Street y Division Street
2:00 - 6:00 PM



Please check the project website for more information and sign-up to be
added to the project email list.

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Learn More/ Aprende más:
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Let's develop a vision for the West End together!
*¡Desarrollemos juntos una visión para
el West End!*

City of Amsterdam
West End Neighborhood
Brownfield Opportunity Area


The Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nomination Study looks at existing conditions,
opportunities, and reuse potential for properties within the study area.
The study will identify strategic sites to spark revitalization.

Ciudad de Amsterdam
Barrio del Extremo Oeste
Área de oportunidad de Terrenos Baldíos "Brownfield"

El Estudio de Nominación del
Área de Oportunidad Brownfield (BOA por sus siglas en Inglés)
analiza las condiciones existentes, las oportunidades y el potencial
de reutilización de las propiedades dentro del área de estudio.
El estudio identificará sitios estratégicos para impulsar la revitalización.

What's a Brownfield?
¿Qué es un Brownfield?

Brownfields are abandoned, vacant, or underutilized properties that may be
complicated by the presence or potential presence of environmental contamination.
Los Terrenos Baldíos son propiedades abandonadas, vacantes o subutilizadas que pueden
verse complicadas por la presencia o posible presencia de contaminación ambiental.



Getting out to Events



Advance Amsterdam
June 24 at 6:27 PM · 🌐

The Advance Amsterdam team will be attending the 2023 West End Community Fest on June 29th. We're thrilled to be part of this event, raising awareness about the West End Neighborhood Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nomination Study project. Our presence means we're actively working towards revitalizing our beloved West End community. Together, we can create a brighter future for Amsterdam's West End.

To learn more about the project and sign up for email updates, head over to the website <https://www.amsterdamny.gov/.../West-End-Brownfield...>

#AdvanceAmsterdam #WestEndCommunityFest #AmsterdamNY #WestEndRevitalization #CommunityEvent #NeighborhoodProject

Let's develop a vision for the West End together
¡Desarrollemos juntos una visión para el West End!

City of Amsterdam
West End Neighborhood
Brownfield Opportunity Area

The Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nomination Study looks at existing conditions.

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29 de Junio del 2023
Pine Street entre Cedar Street y Division Street
5:00 - 6:00 PM

Please check this page regularly for more information and sign up to be added to our email newsletter.
Consulte el sitio web del proyecto con frecuencia para más información y suscríbase para ser incluido en nuestro boletín de noticias.

1. Advertise in advance
2. Short and easy activities
3. Giveaways

Virtual Engagement

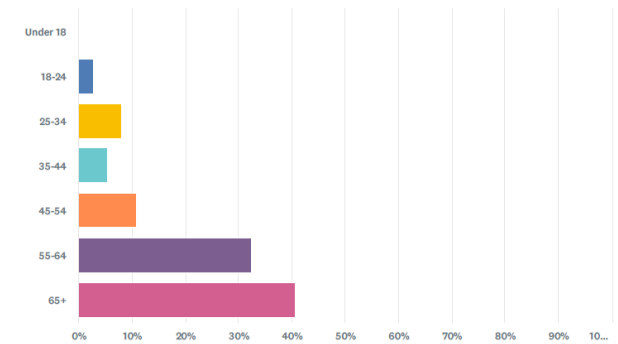
Surveys

Stakeholder Interviews

Open Comment Availability

Q10 What is your age? (optional)

Answered: 37 Skipped: 7



2. What uses would you like to see in the West End? Please check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurants | <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-family homes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery Store | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Trails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Plaza |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single-family homes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

3. What streets or intersections need improvements?



4. Mixed Use Style

These pictures show mixed use buildings (residential and commercial/retail) that are 2-3 stories. Which best represents what you would like to see in the West End?

- A. New traditional brick 3-story
- B. Modern facade - loft style
- C. Traditional stand-alone residence with 1st floor retail
- D. Modern mixed design facade mimicking traditional elements

Please provide any additional comments on specific building materials/style.

Project Websites & Story Maps

What is a BOA?

The BOA program, operated by the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS), provides municipalities and community-based organizations with the tools and structure needed to reactivate neighborhoods impacted by the existence of brownfields. Communities participating in the BOA program develop strategic plans. Goals often include identifying redevelopment priorities, renewing the community, and improving quality of life. Communities with a BOA Nomination have the option to request that the Secretary of State designate the BOA.

A brownfield, as defined by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is "a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." These blighted properties are often abandoned or vacant and located in distressed communities.



Webpage on municipal website or stand-alone project website

Site Tours, Public Workshops, Focus Groups



Best Practices



Continuous Engagement

Beginning, Middle, and End of the Process



In-Person

Daytime, Evening, Weekends



Online

Surveys, Stakeholder Interviews, Project Websites, E-Blasts, Social Media



Accessibility – Location and Language

Accessible location, accessible by walking or bus, translation services



Attend Events

Go to where the people are!



Share what you learned

Summarize stakeholder interviews, focus groups, events, and workshops



THANK YOU!

Katherine Ember, AICP
kember@planning4places.com

**PLANNING**⁴**PLACES**
COMMUNITY PLANNING SPECIALISTS

Barnet Mills

William Barnet & Son began converting old wool rags to textiles in 1898

When the company grew they moved to an old malt factory in 1898 and continued to expand until the company closed in 1976.

Some of the buildings continued to be used by artists and specialty businesses until they were abandoned.




In 1915 the Mill was destroyed by fire and quickly rebuilt



In 2020, despite their deteriorating condition, the Barnet Mills buildings were added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Existing Conditions



 New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

William Barnet & Son Shoddy Mill
Constructed 1915

Listed on the NYS & National Registers of Historic Places

This Project is Supported by
State and Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits

Kathy Hochul
Governor parks.ny.gov/shpo/tax-credit-programs/ Erik Kulesseid
Commissioner

Barnet Mills

2023 Restore NY Project

Built in the 1800s as a malt factory

In 1915 Barnet Mills transformed
old rags into new fabric



BBL Construction[®]
Services

72 apartments and 20,000 sf commercial.

Completion Fall 2026

\$26M Project, \$1.8 M Restore NY Grant in 2023



Barnet Mills Brownfield Clean-up



NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY
Department of
Environmental
Conservation

BROWNFIELD CLEANUP PROGRAM (BCP) APPLICATION FORM

Is this an application to amend an existing BCA with a major modification? Please refer to the application instructions for further guidance related to BCA amendments. Yes No
If yes, provide existing site number: _____

Is this a revised submission of an incomplete application? Yes No
If yes, provide existing site number: C442065

BCP App Rev 13

SECTION I: Property Information					
PROPOSED SITE NAME Former Barnet Mills					
ADDRESS/LOCATION 20 Forbes Avenue					
CITY/TOWN Rensselaer			ZIP CODE 12144		
MUNICIPALITY (LIST ALL IF MORE THAN ONE) City of Rensselaer					
COUNTY Rensselaer			SITE SIZE (ACRES) 6.33		
LATITUDE		LONGITUDE			
42	°	39	'	32.4396	
			"	-73	
				°	
				44	
				'	
				0.2184	
				"	
Provide tax map information for all tax parcels included within the proposed site boundary below. If a portion of any lot is to be included, please indicate as such by inserting "p/o" in front of the lot number in the appropriate box below, and only include the acreage for that portion of the tax parcel in the corresponding acreage column.					
ATTACH REQUIRED TAX MAPS PER THE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS.					
Parcel Address		Section	Block	Lot	Acreage
20 Forbes Avenue, City of Rensselaer, Rensselaer		133.	3	7	6.33



Barnet Mills

Historic Family Connections and Memories of City Residents



Community members were excited about the revitalization of Barnet Mills. Many shared stories and photos of family members working there and children playing in the discarded buttons.



Barnet Mills Apartments



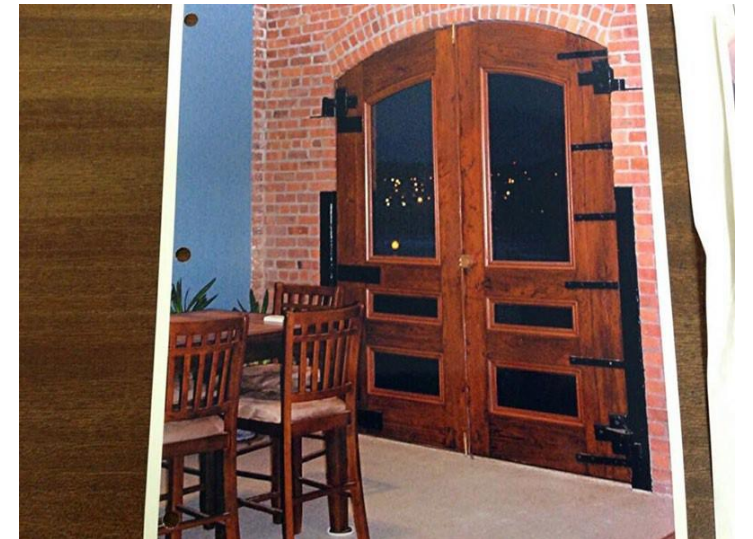
BBL Construction[®]
Services



Barnet Mills

Historic Elements Preserved

BBL Construction[®]
Services



Community Engagement involves being familiar with the history of the community, honoring the residents' pride and addressing their concerns.





Community Engagement Case Study

Presented by the US Environmental
Protection Agency



MOHAWK VALLEY
**BROWNFIELDS
DEVELOPER
SUMMIT**
NETWORK. EXPLORE. INVEST.

Mohawk Valley Brownfields Redevelopment Summit

April 22, 2026

Why Is Community Engagement Important?

- Driver for social transformation
- Ensures access & community empowerment
- Gives everyone a voice in the process
- Makes sure the project works for everyone
- Leads to improved outcomes
- Builds and sustains cohesive communities
- Advocacy and policy change
- Past - present - moving forward
- Bottom-Up/Grassroots Movement
- Intersectionality



Community Concerns and Barriers



- **Distrust in government, organizations, universities, etc.**
- **Presence of other social issues (food insecurity, lack of healthcare, economic inequality)**
- **Gentrification**

How Does Community Engagement Change in Project Phases?



Planning Phase: identifying stakeholders, building interest and knowledge about the project

Activities: Public comment, visioning meeting, talking circles, SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), community mapping, storytelling, surveys, photovoice, etc.

Pre-Development Phase: community members can identify historic site uses, learn about brownfields and contamination, and help finalize plans

Activities: History day, focus groups, community meetings

Construction and Reuse Phase: community outreach, monitoring responses, working to ensure any new job creation is reserved for community members

Activities: Community meetings to allow communities to respond to issues such as noise, dust, vehicle traffic during demolition, etc.

Learn and promote community benefits such as targeted job training and “first source”

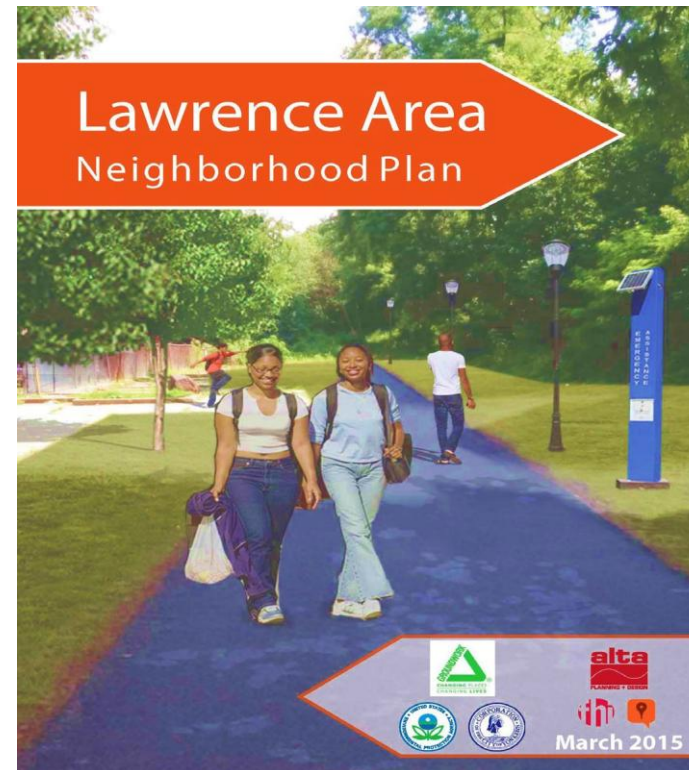
Groundwork Hudson Valley: Yonkers, New York

The abandoned Getty Square Branch of the former Putnam Commuter Railway Line in Yonkers, NY, has been dormant for more than 50 years and is part of a contiguous series of vacant and contaminated properties (3.6 acres) that runs through the heart of the Lawrence Street neighborhood.

The South Yonkers Public Greenway would be a paved, lighted trail for pedestrians and bicyclists to pass through residential and commercial areas on the eastern side of the South Broadway business *district from Caryl Avenue at the northern border* of New York City's Van Cortlandt Park to Getty Square.

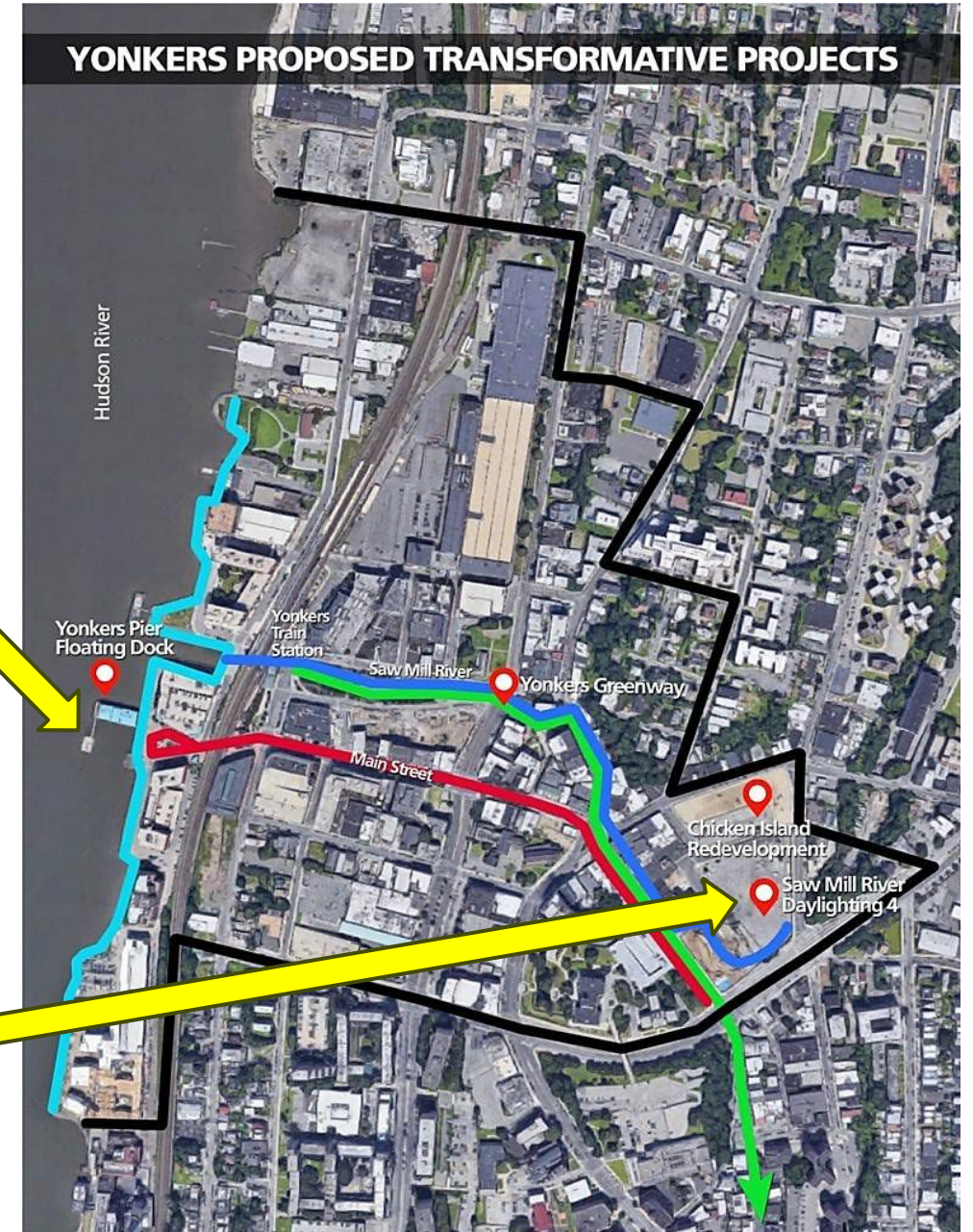


Groundwork Hudson Valley



Project Details

From downtown Getty Square, Groundwork planners hope to extend the trail west to link with the city's new and expanding Saw Mill River walkway and end near City Pier on the downtown waterfront, where Groundwork's popular Science Barge is positioned.



Project Objectives

- The re-use of vacant properties in the Lawrence area is one of the highest priorities. the vacant properties for Phase I of a multi-use path was especially
- Moreover, the idea of using appealing because of:



Potential access to jobs



The path would provide a direct link to NYC subways

The need to address health and obesity issues



The path would provide new recreation space and a link to Van Cortlandt Park from Yonkers which is currently blocked.

The need to revitalize the local economy and housing market



The path would draw visitors more New York City to the South Broadway business district and could be a catalyst for new investors in housing and retail.

Community Engagement Activities

Lawrence Street Festival

The event attracted 200 neighbors to capture resident feelings about their neighborhood, redevelopment strategies, and other pertinent information. Seventy-four people participated in surveys.



Using Support and Technology for Community Engagement



PlaceMatters is a Denver based non-profit think tank for civic engagement and process in planning.

Place Matters visited the project team to discuss several ways they can use technology to increase outreach and civic engagement, through smart phone techniques like Textizen.



HEY LAWRENCE STREET RESIDENTS:

What is **one improvement** you want to see in the Lawrence Area neighborhood **right now?**

- A More retail businesses
- B More restaurants
- C More transportation options
- D Cleaner/Safer
- E More Housing
- F More Community Activities
- G Other

Pick one and text* the letter of your answer to:

914-920-7500



How does this work?

Text your answer to have your response recorded. You'll get a series of **5 quick follow-up questions**.

Why does this matter?

We are soliciting input to identify ways in which a multi-use trail could serve the needs of the community. We want to hear from as many voices as we can to consider improvements that will benefit the residents that live, work, and play in the Lawrence Area community.

Building Capacity Through Community Engagement



A walking tour of the Lawrence Street area targeted for brownfields reuse planning.



A Yonkers, NY community planning meeting



A walking tour of the proposed brownfield-to-greenway redevelopment with the South Broadway Business Improvement District of Yonkers, NY

Additional Community Engagement Features

Tools

Street surveys were developed in English and Spanish. Surveyors fanned out across neighborhood parks and other community spaces where individuals gather. Forty-five (45) surveys were completed during this period.

Business surveys-- 25 local businesses were engaged in surveys directed at business interests in the AWP. This information reinforced data collected during the Business Breakfast in February 2015.

GWHV developed a Community “Wants and Needs” Document. The document highlights the various “wants and needs” of area residents, stakeholders, and the business community.

GWHV created an online bulletin board to keep track of upcoming meetings.

Activities

Recruited 15 local high school students to do block-by-block outreach for the Business Breakfast.

Members of the local business community, Steering Committee members, and BID representatives attended the Business Breakfast. Groundwork presented plans for the greenway and discussed the impact they would have on local businesses. The 36 participants engaged in conversation, sharing their priorities, concerns, and suggestions for moving the project forward.

“Living Room Meeting” – Groundwork organized a meeting at the home of a local area resident who has lived in the community for many years. They gathered important information and garnered support for the project. At the meeting, residents provided more defined requests.



Thank You !



Schenine Mitchell, PhD

Brownfields Section Chief

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2

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