



LOWER NEPONSET RIVER COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN



November 2023

WELCOME

Dear Reader,

This Community Involvement Plan (CIP) is a “living” document. This means the CIP can be updated or revised as:

- Cleanup progresses.
- Site conditions change.
- EPA receives significant input from area communities or other stakeholders on cleanup work.

For more information about the Lower Neponset River Superfund site, please visit EPA’s site webpage at www.epa.gov/superfund/lowerneponset. You can also access site documents in person at one of the three information repositories listed on page 22. You may access site documents online from any computer or mobile device with Internet access. You can also access EPA’s site webpage using the QR code to the right. To use the QR code, open your smartphone’s camera. Center the code on the screen until you see a notification pop up. Click on the notification to go to EPA’s site webpage.

The CIP is also posted on EPA’s website. EPA invites the community to provide input and feedback on its work at the site.



Use this QR code to access EPA’s site webpage.

EPA Wants to Hear from You!

EPA is looking for community feedback about:

- The information in this CIP.
- Your site-related communication needs.
- Concerns and expectations about the cleanup.
- How you prefer to receive information from EPA.

To submit comments, please reach out to the contacts below:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction• Community Involvement at the Lower Neponset River Superfund Site	5
ABOUT THE SITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site Overview• Site Timeline	6
THE COMMUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• About the Communities• Community Demographics• Past Community Involvement Activities• Environmental Justice• Overview of the CIP Process• Community Issues and Concerns	8
THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTION PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the Action Plan• Ongoing Communication• Community Involvement Tools and Activities	15
APPENDICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Superfund Remedial Process• Key Contacts• Local Media Outlets• Information Repositories• Community Technical Assistance Resources• Site Reuse and Redevelopment• Community/Stakeholder Interview Questionnaire• Community Comment Summary• Reuse Assessment Community Survey• Cultural Resources Management	19

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	NCP	National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	NPL	National Priorities List
BCYF	Boston Centers for Youth & Families	PCB	Polychlorinated Biphenyl
CAG	Community Advisory Group	PM	Particulate Matter
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act	RI/FS	Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study
CIP	Community Involvement Plan	ROD	Record of Decision
CPS	Collaborative Problem-Solving	SARA	Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act of 1986
DPM	Diesel Particulate Matter	TAG	Technical Assistance Grant
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency	TASC	Technical Assistance Services for Communities
HRS	Hazard Ranking System	USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
MA	Massachusetts	USGS	United States Geological Survey
MassDEP	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection		

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this Community Involvement Plan (CIP) is to encourage and facilitate community engagement throughout the cleanup of the Lower Neponset River Superfund site (the Site). The CIP describes how EPA will involve area communities and address local needs during the Superfund process. EPA and area communities will work together using the tools described in this plan. Active public involvement is crucial to the success of any project. EPA's community involvement activities at the Site are designed to inform the public of all cleanup activities and include area communities in the decision-making process.

EPA defines the "community" as those people and entities who have an interest in or are affected by the Site. EPA also recognizes that other stakeholders, including local, state and federal agencies, may have an interest in the Site. This CIP is based on a series of focus groups and community interviews conducted between summer 2022 and winter 2023 with the affected community and stakeholders in accordance with EPA's Superfund community involvement and cleanup guidance. Feedback from community meetings also informed the CIP. The CIP is a "living document," meaning that it can be updated or revised over the course of the cleanup to reflect long-term changes in area communities.

Community Involvement at the Lower Neponset River Superfund Site

Active and participatory community involvement is an important part of the cleanup process. It is also regulated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as "Superfund." Superfund allows EPA to clean up contaminated sites. It also forces the parties responsible for the contamination to either perform cleanups or reimburse the government for EPA-led cleanup work. The goal of Superfund community involvement is to advocate and strengthen early and meaningful community participation during Superfund cleanups.

This CIP follows community involvement requirements in the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA) §117 and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) §300.430. EPA's Community Involvement Program facilitates participation of community members throughout the cleanup process, including the investigation phase and the remedy selection phase. EPA works closely with state and local agencies to provide community involvement throughout the Superfund process.



EPA held one of its November 2022 Superfund workshops at the Mildred Avenue K-8 School in Mattapan.

ABOUT THE SITE

Site Overview

The Site consists of a 3.7-mile section of the Neponset River between its confluence with Mother Brook in Hyde Park, Massachusetts, and the Walter Baker Dam in Dorchester/Milton, Massachusetts. The Lower Neponset River channel ranges from about 40 feet to 300 feet wide and includes an estimated 40 acres in or bordering the city of Boston (the Hyde Park, Mattapan and Dorchester sections) and the town of Milton. The 3.7-mile riverbed segment includes several areas where sediments contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) have accumulated, from both suspected and unknown sources. Contamination is the result of industrialization and urbanization of the greater Boston area. Historically, mills along the Lower Neponset River used dams to generate power, initially to turn mill grinding wheels and later to operate the larger industrial facilities. The Site's current surroundings include residential, commercial, industrial and public-use areas, including the Neponset River Greenway.

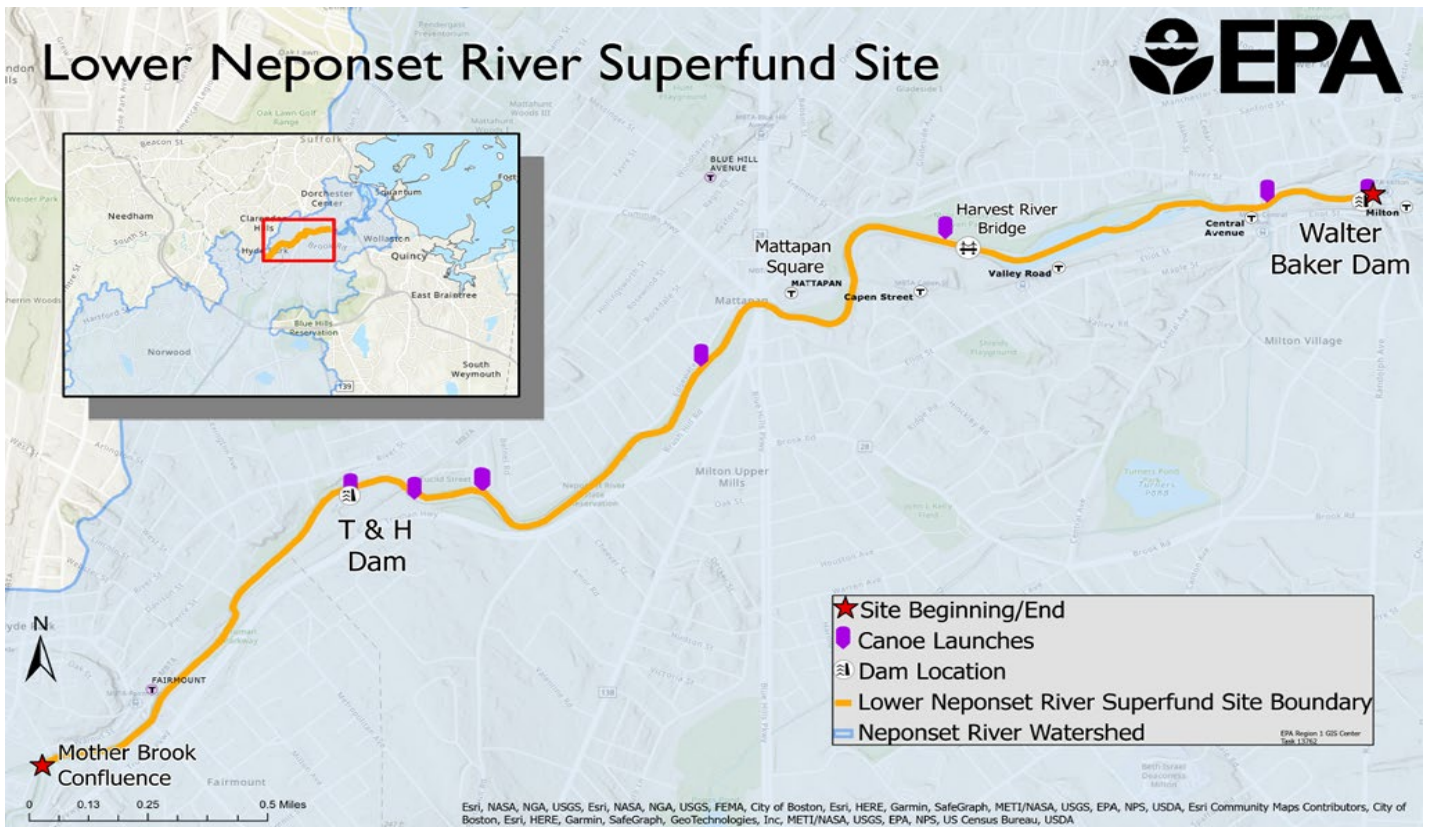
In October 2015, MassDEP requested that EPA evaluate the Lower Neponset River for potential listing on the Superfund program's National Priorities List (NPL), recognizing that surface water, sediment and fish in the river and estuary are contaminated with PCBs. EPA proposed the Site for listing on the NPL on September 9, 2021. EPA finalized the Site's listing on the NPL on March 16, 2022.

Throughout the cleanup process, EPA is committed to involving the public and keeping area communities informed about cleanup activities and how these activities may affect them. This CIP has been developed to facilitate two-way dialogue between EPA and area communities, and to identify tools that encourage participation throughout investigations and cleanup. This plan is based on input from local government representatives, residents, community organizations and other stakeholders.

For more information and site updates, please visit www.epa.gov/superfund/lowerneponset.

Other Resources

- MassDEP: www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-environmental-protection
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health: www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-public-health
- Massachusetts Lower Neponset River: www.mass.gov/info-details/lower-neponset-river-site



The Site includes the part of the Lower Neponset River from its confluence with Mother Brook to the Walter Baker Dam.

Site Timeline

2002	United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) led sampling efforts.
2002 – 2006	The United States Geological Survey (USGS), in cooperation with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Riverways Program and EPA, conducted studies that included the Lower Neponset River in Boston and Milton.
2006 – 2009	MassDEP oversaw a large removal of contaminated sediments from Mother Brook, which feeds into the Neponset River.
2013	MassDEP performed sediment core sampling to further evaluate PCBs in Neponset River sediments at four areas along the Neponset River.
2015	MassDEP referred the Site to EPA for consideration for NPL listing.
2017 – 2019	EPA led site assessments and investigations.
September 2021	EPA proposed the Site for listing on the NPL.
October 2021	EPA hosted a virtual public meeting.
March 2022	EPA finalized the Site's listing on the NPL.
June 2022	EPA hosted a virtual public meeting.
August 2022 – February 2023	EPA hosted virtual community interviews and focus-group sessions in preparation of the CIP.
November 2022	EPA hosted both in- person and hybrid ¹ Superfund workshops in Milton and Boston's Mattapan and Hyde Park communities.
March 2023	EPA hosted virtual site reuse focus group discussions with area communities in preparation of the Baseline Reuse Assessments.
April 2023	EPA began conducting site investigation and sampling activities along the first mile of the Site (from the confluence of the Mother Brook and the Neponset River downstream to the Tileston and Hollingsworth Dam).
June 2023	EPA hosted a hybrid public meeting.

THE COMMUNITIES

About the Communities

Hyde Park, Mattapan and Dorchester are neighborhoods in Boston. Milton is on the southern side of the Neponset River, across from the City of Boston neighborhoods.

Hyde Park was the last town to be incorporated into Boston, in 1912. The area was a hub of paper and cotton manufacturing in the eighteenth century. The extension of rail lines from Boston in the 1850s spurred residential development in the area. Today, Hyde Park offers a unique blend of accessible city amenities and a quiet suburban lifestyle. Hyde Park is home to an increasingly diverse group of people who live in historic buildings and mid-twentieth-century single-family homes. Significant natural and green space resources in the area include the Neponset River, the municipal George Wright Golf Course and the Stony Brook Reservation. Cleary Square and Logan Square anchor local commercial activities.

The Neponset Band of the Indigenous Massachusetts Tribe gave the Mattapan neighborhood its name in the 1600s. The name means "a good place to be" or "a good place to sit." Incorporated into Boston in 1870, Mattapan grew rapidly beginning in the early twentieth century, as streetcars and railroads improved access to downtown Boston. Today, Mattapan is a residential area with growing commercial centers. It is also home to a diverse group of people, including Haitians, other Caribbean immigrants and African Americans. The housing mix includes small apartment buildings, single-family homes, public housing and Boston's traditional "triple-deckers." Mattapan residents enjoy green spaces such as Harambee Park, the Franklin Park Zoo, the Boston Nature Center and Wildlife Sanctuary, and the historic Forest Hills Cemetery. Blue Hill Avenue and Mattapan Square are the neighborhood's main commercial districts, home to banks, law offices, restaurants, shops, health centers and places of worship.

Dorchester is Boston's largest and most diverse neighborhood. It was incorporated in 1630 and annexed by Boston in 1870. Dorchester includes more than nine miles of waterfront, neighborhoods, commercial corridors and the University of Massachusetts' Boston campus. It includes long-time residents as well as more recent arrivals from Ireland, Vietnam and Cape Verde. Neighborhoods in Dorchester include Codman Square, Jones Hill, Meeting House Hill, Pope's Hill, Savin Hill, Harbor Point, Lower Mills and Port Norfolk. Recreation resources and natural areas in Dorchester include Malibu Beach and Tenean Beach as well as many parks.

Milton was settled in 1640 by Puritans who started the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630. Originally part of Dorchester, Milton was incorporated as an independent town in 1662. For over two centuries after its founding, it remained a primarily agrarian community with farms and open lands, as well as industrial activity along the Neponset River at Milton Village; it included a gristmill, a gunpowder mill, a paper mill and a chocolate mill – each among the first of their kind in New England. After the Civil War, Milton's population increased rapidly, with the Milton and Dorchester branches of the Old Colony Railroad providing easy access to Boston.

¹ The workshop hosted in Milton was accessible to the public via Zoom as well as in-person.

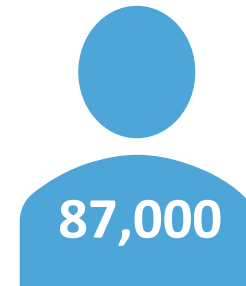
Community Demographics

Demographic Data Within a 1-Mile Radius of the Site

EPA EJScreen and the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2016-2020*

One Race	93%
White	31%
Black or African American	55%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%
Asian	3%
Some Other Race	5%
Two or More Races	7%
Hispanic or Latino (of Any Race)	3.1%
Population 65 Years and Older	15%
Population with Less Than a High School Degree	13%
Households with Income Base Less Than \$50,000	36%
Renter Occupied Units	46%
Population Speaking a Non-English Language at Home	36%

* Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



About 87,000 people live within a 1-mile radius of the Site.

EPA EJScreen and the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2016-2020

Past Community Involvement Activities

EPA is committed to engaging area communities throughout Superfund investigations and cleanup. In October 2021, EPA held a virtual public meeting to discuss the Site’s proposed NPL listing. After EPA finalized the Site’s listing on the NPL in March 2022, EPA hosted a virtual public meeting in June 2022. In November 2022, EPA hosted three Superfund workshops in Milton and Boston’s Mattapan and Hyde Park communities. The Milton workshop offered a hybrid Zoom option for attendees wishing to attend virtually. EPA has been conducting outreach to residents and coordinating with the city of Boston and town of Milton. EPA has also coordinated with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to put up more fishing advisory signs around the Site to keep the public safe and well informed. Starting in 2023, EPA is also working with area communities to understand local reuse priorities for the Site (see page 24 for more information).



EPA held one of its November 2022 Superfund workshops at the Milton Council on Aging building.

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income, with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

EPA Region 1 programs collaborate closely to make sure underserved, low-income and tribal communities facing disproportionate environmental risks have opportunities for meaningful participation in environmental decision-making. Region 1 also coordinates closely with EPA Headquarters and States to support initiatives that provide all people living near Superfund sites with technical assistance, training opportunities and other services. EPA has a variety of environmental justice resources available at www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice, including:

- The [Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving \(CPS\) Cooperative Agreement Program](#) provides funding for eligible applicants for projects that address local environmental and public health issues in affected communities. The program assists recipients in building collaborative partnerships to help them understand and address environmental and public health concerns in their communities.
- The [Environmental Justice Small Grants Program: EPA's Environmental Justice Small Grants Program](#) supports and empowers communities working on solutions to local environmental and public health issues. The program helps communities understand and address exposure to multiple environmental harms and risks.

EJScreen

EJScreen is an environmental justice mapping and screening tool. It uses environmental indicators for a community to show potential exposures and demographic factors to show potential susceptibility.

"Percentiles" are an important part of EJScreen. Every indicator in EJScreen is put into perspective by showing its associated percentiles. Instead of just showing numbers out of context, EJScreen lets the user compare a community to the rest of the state and nation by using percentiles. The national percentile tells the user what percent of the U.S. population has an equal or lower value, meaning less potential, for exposure, risk or proximity to certain facilities. The state percentile tells the user what percent of the state population has an equal or lower value, meaning less potential, for exposure, risk or proximity to certain facilities. If an environmental justice indicator is higher than the 80th percentile, that means a community is more exposed or has a higher risk of environmental justice concerns in that specific indicator of interest.

A 2023 EJScreen analysis for a 1-mile radius of the Lower Neponset River Superfund Site found environmental justice concerns in surrounding communities; 10 of the 12 indicators were at the 80th percentile or above, compared to the rest of the commonwealth of Massachusetts. The 10 indicators are as follows: Particulate Matter 2.5, Ozone, Diesel Particulate Matter, Air Toxics Cancer Risk, Air Toxics Respiratory HI, Traffic Proximity, Lead Paint, Superfund Proximity, Hazardous Waste Proximity, and Underground Storage Tanks (as seen in Figure 1).

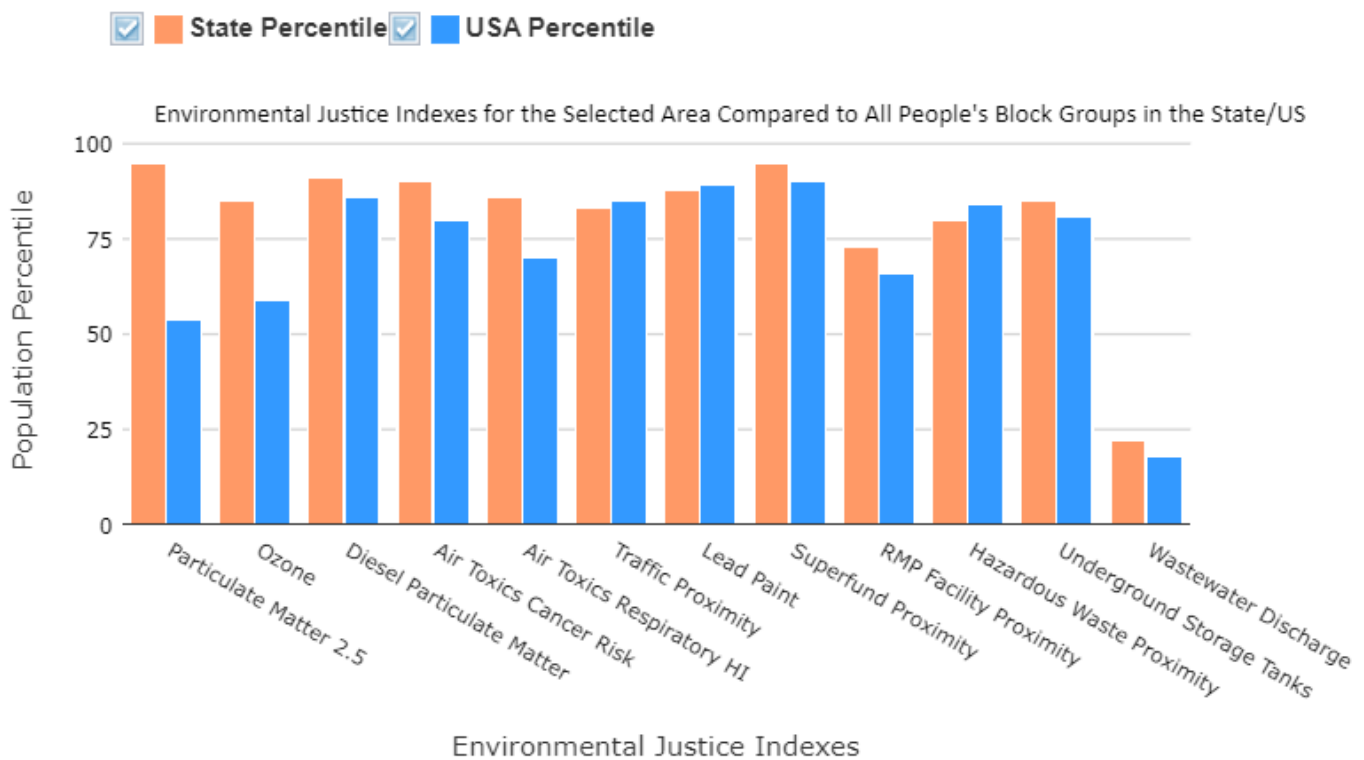


Figure 1: EJScreen Findings for the Lower Neponset River Superfund Site

EJScreen Quick Facts

To summarize how environmental indicators and demographics come together in the same location, EJScreen uses EJ Indexes. EJScreen has 12 EJ Indexes that reflect the 12 environmental indicators below. In the EJ Indexes, environmental indicators are combined with information about the low income and minority population in a Census block group. EJScreen presents results in terms of percentiles, allowing a community to be compared to the rest of the state, EPA Region or nation.

- National Scale Air Toxics Assessment Air Toxics Cancer Risk
- National Scale Air Toxics Assessment Respiratory Hazard Index
- National Scale Air Toxics Assessment Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM)
- Particulate Matter (PM2.5)
- Ozone
- Lead Paint Indicator
- Traffic Proximity and Volume
- Proximity to Risk Management Plan Sites
- Proximity to Hazardous Waste Facilities
- Proximity to Superfund (NPL) Sites
- Underground Storage Tanks Indicator
- Wastewater Discharge Indicator

Overview of the CIP Process

In summer of 2022 and winter of 2023, EPA conducted virtual interviews and focus groups with stakeholders in area communities, including a local elected official, a representative of a state elected official, representatives from local organizations, contractors and many residents. EPA conducted some interviews individually, and some in focus groups. EPA advertised the opportunity to participate in a focus group interview through website updates, coordination with local officials, emails and during the June 2022 virtual public meeting and November 2022 Superfund workshops held in Milton and Boston's Mattapan and Hyde Park communities. EPA shared a draft of the CIP with area communities for review and comment in spring 2023. Feedback from community meetings and workshops is also incorporated into the CIP. The following sections summarize the feedback provided to EPA.

Community Issues and Concerns

During the interviews and focus groups, community members and stakeholders shared their concerns and perspectives about the Site and the area, including the cleanup's burden on residents, river access and safety, health and ecological concerns, preferred methods of communication, community involvement and partnerships, information needs, equity and environmental justice, site reuse, and agency coordination and transparency. The sections below summarize the feedback that EPA received for each of these categories.

CLEANUP BURDEN ON RESIDENTS



Interviewees expressed concern about the length and disruptiveness of the cleanup process, and how it would affect nearby residents. Some people noted specific concerns about cleanup noise, traffic disruptions, property value fluctuations, downstream cleanup costs and access to the river. Interviewees said that having clear and consistent communication about the cleanup would help make sure people are well prepared and well informed.

RIVER ACCESS AND SAFETY



Interviewees were interested in greater public access to the river. They said that physical barriers, overgrown vegetation and under maintained trails prevent them from enjoying the river and feeling safe near it. Interviewees noted several items that could help with accessibility and safety, including more lighting, benches, paved trails, parking and other amenities, as well as regular maintenance. Two commenters suggested that QR codes on signs that address site safety may be necessary to ensure equitable access to safety information for non-English speakers.

HEALTH AND ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS



Interviewees noted that some people rely on fish from the river as a food source. They also shared concerns about potential exposure to contamination from rowing in the river. Interviewees were interested in river restoration and accessibility for migratory fish.

People also expressed interest in having more signs posted about how people can be on the river safely.

One commenter was concerned about the downstream impacts of the cleanup on critical habitat in the Neponset estuary and suggested expanding the Site.

PREFERRED METHODS OF COMMUNICATION



While most interviewees preferred digital forms of outreach, they said that a mix of digital and paper outreach would be most beneficial. Effective communication methods identified include fact sheets, door-to-door outreach, social media, newspaper and radio advertising, information shared on cable and local television stations, community meetings that are also recorded for later viewing, hybrid meeting options, flyer posting in high-traffic areas, text messaging alerts, guided walks at the Site and improved signage around the Site.

People also noted the need for translations to reach the area's diverse communities, including translations of materials into Spanish, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole and Portuguese, among other languages. They advocated for EPA providing language interpreters at public meetings.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS



Interviewees said that many people get information from their neighborhood associations, and that perhaps neighborhood association leaders should be the ones sharing site information instead of EPA.

They also identified other groups and entities that EPA could partner with to reach wide-ranging audiences, including local churches and religious centers, city hall liaisons, high-school groups, a farmers market, the Boston Nature Center, Action for Boston Community Development, the Neponset River Watershed Association, the Boston Chapter of the AMC Paddling Committee, Hyde Park Neighbors Facebook, Urban Forest Plan, Climate Ready Boston, charter schools and day-care centers.

People also said that providing childcare at EPA meetings would likely increase attendance.

People also advocated for engaging one-on-one with residents who live on properties next to the Site.

INFORMATION NEEDS



Most interviewees said they have some knowledge of the Site. They also identified several information needs. People asked for more information on cleanup activities, including disposal plans for contaminants, downstream habitat impacts, disposal locations and potential risks remaining after cleanup. They would also like to know what will happen to the site area during cleanup, why dam removal is not included in the remedial design and what the area will look like after cleanup.

EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



Interviewees said they do not want the cleanup to result in gentrification, and they noted existing inequities regarding access to the river and access to information.

Interviewees shared concerns about flooding in neighborhoods with environmental justice concerns and health inequities in communities of color.

Interviewees said they wanted to make sure there are equal opportunities for all community members to use the river, including people with disabilities, and that information is made available in multiple languages.

Some people suggested hosting in-person meetings, primarily in communities with environmental justice concerns, or at rotating locations to allow equal access to engagement.

One person recommended involving all indigenous communities, rather than only involving federally recognized tribes.

SITE REUSE



Interviewees discussed what they would like the Site to look like after cleanup. Some people focused on river access improvements for safe recreation, including boat launches and rentals, bridges, access enhancements, exercise equipment, better lighting, emergency call boxes, more shaded spaces, public restrooms and wildlife viewing stations.

Some people said they see opportunities for the Site to provide more community programming and community connections, such as walking and fishing clubs, open-air music classes, boating lessons, programs for youth and seniors, pop-up outdoor events and education opportunities.

Overall, interviewees said they are looking forward to a better quality of life after cleanup.

AGENCY COORDINATION AND TRANSPARENCY



Interviewees asked for better coordination and communication among site agencies during cleanup.

They are interested in agencies collaborating to accomplish conservation goals during cleanup, and said the community is already experiencing some cleanup-related disruptions.

People also identified a need for transparency regarding the cleanup timeline and cleanup impacts.

THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTION PLAN

Introduction to the Action Plan

Using information gathered during community interviews and focus groups, EPA developed this Action Plan to address community needs, concerns, questions and expectations, as well as local communication styles and preferences.

Ongoing Communication

EPA will continue to work with Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the city of Boston, the town of Milton, the Neponset River Watershed Association, and local organizations, neighborhood associations, and community members to make sure site information and important updates are shared directly with the public.

To sign up for the site email list, please send a message to r1neponset@epa.gov or contact EPA's community involvement coordinator ZaNetta Purnell at purnell.zanetta@epa.gov.

Community Involvement Tools and Activities

EPA has identified and developed a variety of tools and activities to better engage with and involve area communities.

Webpage

EPA will continue to maintain the Site's webpage. For past, current and future site updates, please visit www.epa.gov/superfund/lowerneponset.

The webpage:

- Shares an overview of the Site and EPA's involvement.
- Provides updated information about the Superfund cleanup process to the public.
- Shares site-related reports and documents with the public as they become available.
- Provides links to more site-related resources.

EPA also has other online resources available that provide information about the Superfund program and EPA Region 1:

- National Superfund program: www.epa.gov/superfund
- EPA Region 1: www.epa.gov/aboutepa/epa-region-1-new-england
- Superfund Community Involvement: www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-community-involvement
- Superfund Redevelopment: www.epa.gov/superfund-redevelopment

Other organizations with webpages that provide information about the Site include:

- MassDEP: www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-environmental-protection
- The Neponset River Watershed Association: www.neponset.org/projects/superfund-lower-neponset-river

Community Meetings

Based on availability, EPA staff may attend meetings held by community groups, local governments and other organizations upon request to share information about the Site and to address community questions, concerns, ideas



Please use this QR code to access EPA's site webpage. To use the QR code, select your smartphone's camera. Center the code on the screen until you see a notification pop up. Click on the notification to go to EPA's site webpage.

and comments. To identify appropriate opportunities and venues to share information about the Site, EPA will work with area communities to coordinate the meetings.

EPA-hosted Events

EPA staff may host meetings, workshops and/or open houses to share information with area communities. Meetings will be held at a central location that is Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible and close to public transportation. Examples of area facilities include the Milton Council on Aging, the Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) Hyde Park Community Center, and the Mildred Avenue K-8 School. As possible, meeting locations will rotate to different areas of the community to provide equitable access. In-person or hybrid meetings will be held when possible. When necessary, EPA staff may host meetings virtually. To ensure accessibility, EPA staff will provide options for people to participate by phone if they are not able to join a web-based meeting and closed captioning will be provided. Wherever possible, EPA staff will share meeting materials on the site webpage in advance of meetings and/or provide recordings of the meetings afterward.



EPA held one of its November 2022 Superfund workshops at the BCYF Hyde Park Community Center.

Interviewees indicated an overall preference for weeknight meetings, starting around 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. Many community groups meet on the first or second week of the month, so turnout may be higher for meetings later in the month.

Meetings will be advertised through the site email list and mailing list, and in coordination with city and town officials and local organizations. Flyers may be provided for posting in high-traffic areas in the community. Meeting advertisements may also be provided in a format that can be shared easily by community members and stakeholders via text message or social media. EPA will also reference the list of local media outlets on page 22 of the CIP.

Briefings with Local Officials

EPA staff works closely with the City of Boston and Town of Milton officials to collaborate and distribute relevant site information. In addition, EPA will continue to work closely with Congressional staff to brief them on major site milestones and areas of interest.

Periodic Updates, Fact Sheets and Educational Materials

To help address community concerns about the Site, EPA staff will provide site updates and information in plain language, in both print and electronic formats, and translated into appropriate languages. EPA will collect, prepare and share documents to help people better understand site conditions and the cleanup. Updates will be shared regularly and as significant activities take place. Updates, fact sheets and materials may be shared by email, targeted physical mailings and site webpage postings. Information materials will include contact information to enable direct access to EPA staff. When appropriate, EPA will provide key site updates in a format that can be easily shared by community members and stakeholders via text message or social media.

Outreach with Local Organizations and Schools

EPA staff may work with area organizations, schools, school board members, teachers and parents to explore opportunities to share site information as part of community and school events and curricula. The focus will be on environmental education opportunities as well as public health and safety.

Formal Public Comment Periods

During the Superfund process, EPA announces and opens public comment periods and encourages people to submit information. EPA accepts formal comments on several types of documents, including Proposed Plans, as well as when EPA proposes a site for listing on or deletion from the NPL. EPA considers all public comments in the Superfund decision-making process.

Public Comment Tips

Commenting is an important way to make your voice heard. Public comments can strengthen an environmental decision by providing the authoring agency with facts or perspectives lacking in the original draft. Commenting helps EPA create an accurate and comprehensive document to support appropriate and informed decision-making.

- Prepare for commenting by familiarizing yourself with the scope of the issue and relevant laws.
- Identify your key issues and concerns.
- Identify allies who can help with the document review and understanding of the report and coordinate your comments with them to strengthen your message.
- Be specific with your comments, including what you think could improve the document, what you think is missing from the document, what you like about the document, and what parts you want to remain in the document.

Community Advisory Group (CAG) Formation

CAGs provide a forum for community discussion of site-related issues and are made up of representatives of diverse community perspectives. The purpose of a CAG is to provide a public forum for community members to present and discuss their needs and concerns related to the Superfund decision-making process. A CAG can assist EPA in making better decisions on how to clean up a site.

EPA can assist with CAG formation, including providing the following services:

- Informational meetings about CAGs.
- Assistance in determining CAG size and membership.
- Trainings for CAG members.
- Administrative support, translation, and meeting facilitation services.

For more information about CAGs, please visit www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-community-advisory-groups or contact EPA's community involvement coordinators (see page 21 for contact information).

EPA began discussions with community members regarding formation of a CAG for the Site in spring 2023. More information is to come regarding this public participation opportunity.

Translations

EPA may provide written information about the Site in English, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese. Signage posted throughout the site will link to translated written information available online. Other language interpretation needs will be provided as requested and coordinated by EPA's community involvement coordinators. Translated site documents can be found on the Lower Neponset River website under "Publicly Available Documents" at www.epa.gov/neponsetriver.

Mailing List

EPA will continue to build and maintain a site mailing list. The list has been developed based on meeting sign-in sheets, community interviews, and email and telephone inquiries. To be added to the mailing list, please send a request by email, telephone or regular mail to EPA community involvement coordinator ZaNetta Purnell at purnell.zanetta@epa.gov.

Fish and Health Advisories

When contaminant levels in fish or shellfish are unsafe, advisories help people make informed decisions about where to fish or harvest shellfish. Advisories recommend that people limit or avoid eating certain species of fish and shellfish caught in certain places. They may be issued for the general public or for specific groups of people at risk. EPA will work with Massachusetts Department of Public Health to continue to update advisories and develop outreach materials about the advisories.

Current Fish Advisory

Anyone can catch fish, but not everyone should eat the fish in the Neponset River and Mother Brook. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has specific advice about who can safely eat the fish that is caught from the Neponset River.

Eating freshwater fish that you catch from the Neponset River may be harmful because of chemicals in the fish. It is important to follow the information below for:

- The stretch of Neponset River between the Hollingsworth & Vose Dam in Walpole and the Walter Baker Dam in the Dorchester/Milton Lower Mills Industrial Complex.
- The Mother Brook between the Knight Street dam and the Neponset River.

Children under 12, pregnant women, nursing mothers and women that may become pregnant should NOT eat any fish caught from these areas. Chemicals in these fish can harm a developing fetus, infants and young children. These groups may be at higher risk than other people of being harmed.

All other people should:

- NOT eat any American Eel or White Sucker fish from this area. These types of fish have high amounts of chemicals that are not safe for anyone to eat.
- LIMIT eating all other freshwater fish from this area to no more than two meals per month. Other freshwater fish from the Neponset River have lower amounts of chemicals than the American Eel or White Sucker, but they still should not be consumed more than twice a month.

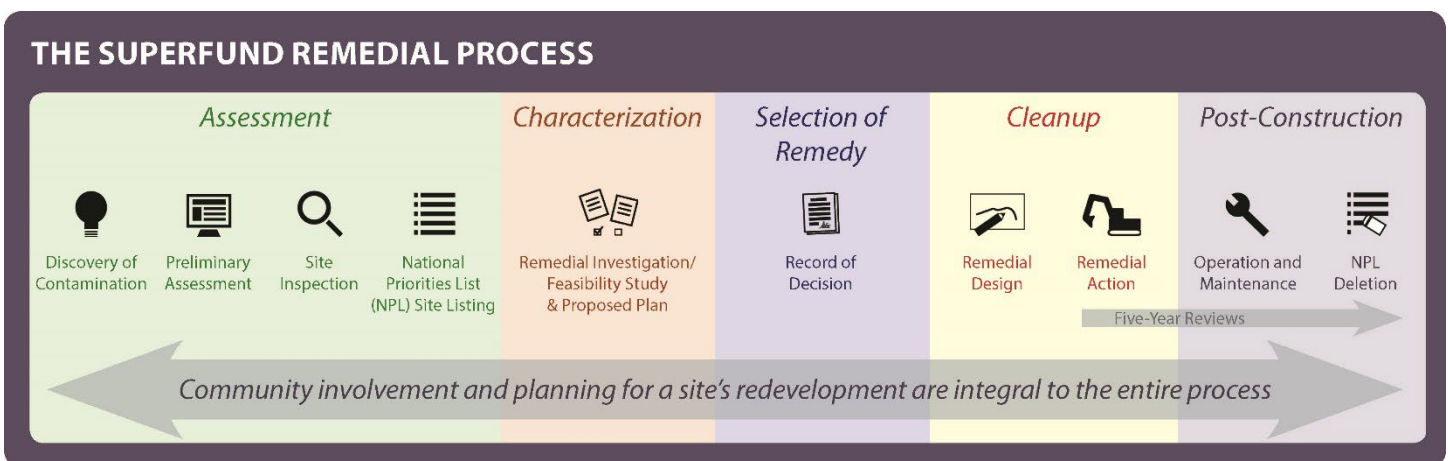
For more information about current advisories and state-wide advice, please visit <https://www.mass.gov/lists/fish-consumption-advisories#advisories>.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health also developed a fact sheet about recreational use of the Lower Neponset River. It is available at semspub.epa.gov/src/document/01/100021302.

APPENDICES

Superfund Remedial Process

After Superfund sites are discovered or identified, EPA uses two basic types of responses to manage polluted sites: removal actions and remedial actions. Removal actions handle emergency oil spills, chemical releases and short-term responses. Emergency actions eliminate immediate risks and ensure public safety. Remedial actions handle complex sites needing long-term responses. Remedial actions manage releases that do not pose an urgent threat to public health or the environment and do not require immediate action. Remedial actions involve complex and highly contaminated sites that often require several years to study the problem, develop a permanent solution and clean up the hazardous waste. These are the sites that most people think of when they hear about the Superfund program. The section below describes the general steps in EPA’s Superfund remedial process. The Lower Neponset River Superfund site is a remedial site and is currently in the Characterization stage.



Assessment

EPA determines if a site poses a threat to people and the environment and whether hazards need to be addressed immediately or if more site information will be collected. EPA uses the information collected during the assessment phase of the Superfund process to score sites according to the danger they may pose to human health and the environment. If a site has a high enough score on the Hazard Ranking System (HRS) and meets all other criteria, EPA may propose it for listing on the NPL.

Characterization

Once a site is on the NPL, further investigation into the problems at the site and the best way to address them is required. This is called the remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS). After development of cleanup alternatives, EPA recommends the option it considers best for the site and offers it to the community for evaluation and comment in a Proposed Plan.

Selection of Remedy

The cleanup method ultimately chosen for the site, and the reasons for the selection, are set forth in the Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD discusses all activities prior to the selection of a cleanup method and describes how the cleanup method will be protective of human health and the environment.

Cleanup

The cleanup phase includes two parts. During the remedial design phase, plans for the cleanup method are carefully designed. The remedial action starts the actual cleanup at a site.

Post-Construction

After EPA determines that the physical remedial cleanup actions at a site are complete, post-construction activities ensure that the cleanup actions will protect human health and the environment over the long term. These activities may include routine maintenance at a site such as making sure signs and fences are intact or soil treatment systems are running smoothly. EPA may delete a site or portion of a site (sometimes called an operable unit) from the NPL if all cleanup goals have been met and no further cleanup action is required to protect human health and the environment.



One of the several Lower Neponset River canoe launches.

Key Contacts

EPA Contacts

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Site Partner Contacts

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)

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Boston, MA 02104

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Elected Officials

- The U.S. House of Representatives. Visit www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative for contact information for your congressional representative. The Lower Neponset River site is in the 7th and 8th congressional districts.
- The U.S. Senate. Visit www.senate.gov/senators for contact information for your current U.S. senators for Massachusetts.
- The Massachusetts State House. Visit malegislature.gov/search/findmylegislator for contact information for your state representative. The Lower Neponset River site is in the 12th Suffolk District, the 14th Suffolk District and the 7th Norfolk District.
- The Massachusetts State Senate. Visit malegislature.gov/search/findmylegislator for contact information for your senator. The Lower Neponset River site is in the 2nd Suffolk, Norfolk, Plymouth and Bristol, and Norfolk and Suffolk districts.

Local Media Outlets

EPA may provide updates and information to local newspapers and radio and television stations and ask them to report on site-related issues. EPA staff will be available for interviews and will respond to media inquiries in a timely fashion. Inquiries from the news media should be directed to JoAnne Kittrell at kittrell.joanne@epa.gov.

EPA may publish public notices about meetings and other events in local newspapers and send notices to other local news outlets. EPA may include the media outlets below as part of outreach and information delivery efforts.



Newspapers

Bay State Banner
Boston Globe (including A Beautiful Resistance, a special report)
Boston Herald
Dorchester Reporter
Hyde Park Bulletin
Milton Times
The Word Boston



Television stations

WBZ-TV
WCVB
WHDH
Boston 25
Milton Access TV



Radio stations

WBUR
WBZ
WGBH
WWOC
Spanish language stations
Haitian Creole language stations
Hyde Park stakeholders podcast



Area bulletins/newsletters

Boston Green New Deal Coalition email list
Boston Mayor's Office
Neighborhood bulletins
Commonwealth Magazine
Milton Connection Newsletter
River Street Association

Information Repositories

EPA has established several locations where the community can review site documents in person. The following public library locations have information repositories, in addition to the EPA Region 1 Superfund Records Center. The public may review these documents during normal library hours.



Milton Public Library
476 Canton Avenue
Milton, MA 02186

Hyde Park Branch of the Boston Public Library
35 Harvard Avenue
Hyde Park, MA 02136

Mattapan Branch of the Boston Public Library
1350 Blue Hill Avenue
Mattapan, MA 02126

Community Technical Assistance Resources

EPA provides additional assistance to communities through a variety of technical assistance resources. These resources include the Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) program, the Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) program and Community Advisory Group (CAG) formation support. For more information on these resources, please visit www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-technical-assistance-communities.

	TAG	TASC	CAG Formation Support
Overview of Program/Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards grants to eligible community groups affected by the Superfund NPL sites and proposed NPL sites to contract with independent technical advisors to provide the services listed below. • Community groups must be able to manage a grant, be an incorporated nonprofit and provide a 20% match, which can include in-kind services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides technical information assistance services through a national EPA contract. Services are provided at no cost to communities. • Suitable for communities with short- and long-term needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAGs provide a forum for community discussion of site-related issues and are made up of representatives of diverse community perspectives. • EPA can help with CAG formation.
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and explanations of site technical documents and information. • Comments on technical documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and explanations of technical sit documents and information. • Comments on technical documents. • Community trainings and workshops. • Educational presentations. • Technical assistance needs assessments. • Facilitation of community meetings. • Technical advisor services during community meetings. • Outreach and educational materials for communities. • Assistance understanding the environmental decision-making process. • Language translations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informational meeting about CAGs. • Assistance in determining CAG size and membership. • Training for CAG members. • Administrative support and translation and meeting facilitation services.

Site Reuse and Redevelopment

EPA's goal is to make sure cleanup is consistent with a site's likely future use. Consideration of reuse at a site can occur at any point in the Superfund process, from investigation activities to deletion from the NPL. At the Lower Neponset River site, EPA hosted reuse discussions with interested community members through virtual focus group interviews in March and April of 2023. EPA provided community members that were not able to attend these focus group interviews with an alternative method of participation through the means of an online survey. The results of that survey will be summarized in conjunction with the focus group interview sessions. EPA hosted site reuse discussions with area municipalities and agencies in spring of 2023.

Community Involvement During Reuse and Redevelopment

EPA works with local governments, community organizations, businesses, residents and partners to consider the reuse of Superfund sites. Reuse planning enhances community engagement during Superfund cleanups by proactively including communities in the decision-making process.

For more information about reuse planning and technical assistance resources available for communities, visit www.epa.gov/superfund-redevelopment-initiative/community-support-superfund-sites.



The Tileston and Hollingsworth dam on the Lower Neponset River.

Community/Stakeholder Interview Questionnaire

EPA used the following questions when conducting community interviews and focus groups about the Site. People's responses to these questions informed the Community Issues and Concerns section of this CIP.

Interviewee Information

1. Do you work, live or frequently visit the area near the Site?
 - a. If yes, for how long or how often?
 - b. What area specifically? Please provide the location where you work, live and/or visit (e.g., neighborhood, street/intersection, landmark, park).
2. Do you belong to a community organization or group? If so, which one(s)?

General Knowledge

3. How much would you say you know about the Site?
4. Do you have any interests or concerns regarding the Site or cleanup?

Your Information Needs and Resources

5. Are you on the Site's email or mailing list? If not, and you would like to be, please provide your email and/or mailing address.
6. What is the best way for EPA to provide more information about the cleanup?
 - a. Fact sheets
 - b. Public meeting/open house
 - c. Through community groups
 - d. Website
 - e. Hard-copy mailer
 - f. Emails
 - g. Social media
 - h. Other
7. What days of the week and what times are best for community meetings?
8. Do you prefer to receive materials (such as fact sheets) electronically by email or paper copies by mail?
9. How do community members typically access information about local issues?
 - a. Newspapers? If so, which ones?
 - b. Radio? If so, which ones?
 - c. Social media? If so, which sites/pages/platforms?
 - d. TV, newsletters or other methods? If so, which ones?
 - e. Other methods? If so, which ones?

Site Use in the Community

10. What do you think are the community's issues and concerns related to the cleanup?
11. Are there any groups of people who use site areas that we should be aware of?
12. If so, how do people use the site areas?
13. After the Site is cleaned up to a level that will reduce risk to human health and the environment, how do you think the Site would be used? Do you think people would use it more or less than it is used now?
14. Do you think that the community's perception of the site area would change after the Site is cleaned up to a level that will reduce risk to human health and the environment? If so, how?
15. Are there specific activities or uses that you would like to see at the Site property in the future?
16. What types of new uses or amenities would the community like to see or access within the site project area in the future?
17. What services or uses are needed in the community? Are there any locations along the site project area that could help to address gaps?

Community Comment Summary

During the public comment period, EPA received feedback on the draft CIP document from five people/organizations. Below is a summary of the additional comments submitted by the community for EPA's consideration. Comments are organized by topic and combined when appropriate for clarity. The CIP has been updated to reflect the comments received.

Equity and Environmental Justice

- More than one respondent recommended that EPA hold hybrid public meetings to increase accessibility and meeting attendance.
- Multiple respondents noted that a large portion of residents speak languages other than English and suggested that EPA generate outreach materials in multiple languages to better address that portion of the population. Another respondent recommended having interpreters available at EPA meetings.
- Two respondents suggested utilizing QR codes to make site signage accessible in multiple languages.
- Several comments suggested that, in order to better serve all community stakeholders, public meetings should be held at a rotating set of locations more evenly distributed across the site.
- Two respondents said that EPA should prioritize hosting public meetings in Environmental Justice communities.
- One respondent suggested that any CAG formed for the site should include a specific sub-group focused on Environmental Justice communities.
- One respondent advocated for increased access to the river and more shaded recreational space, especially for residents on the Milton side of the river.

Updates were made to the Community Issues and Concerns and Community Involvement Action Plan sections to reflect the comments above.

Preferred Methods of Communication

- Some responses from the community focused on the importance of having signage posted across all site areas to provide information about ongoing site activities.
- Many residents in the site area belong to Neighborhood Associations. Two respondents recommended working closely with these groups and perhaps attending Neighborhood Association meetings when EPA has new information to disseminate. These respondents suggested that attending such meetings would allow for one-on-one interactions with EPA staff and possibly build trust in EPA within these communities.
- Two respondents suggested engaging with faith communities to further engage residents.
- Some respondents advocated for EPA to meet with residents on site-abutting properties, especially those in close proximity to the Lewis Chemical and Riverside Square site areas.

Updates were made to Community Issues and Concerns and Community Involvement Action Plan sections to reflect the comments above.

Dams and Dredging

- One comment focused primarily on the ecological and community safety benefits of dam removal and suggested dams be removed as part of the remedial effort.
- One respondent specifically requested TASC assistance in understanding the downstream impact of site contamination on the Neponset estuary.
- In one comment, the respondent advocated for an expansion of the site boundary to include downstream areas with elevated levels of lead, PCBs, and chromium. This respondent recommended the site include areas south of the Walter Baker Dam.
- Concern over costs of cleanup of downstream contamination was cited in one response.
- Two respondents also raised concerns about the health of the salt marsh, the protection of avian and fishery habitats and the potential impact on riverfront development potential.

Updates were made to the Community Issues and Concerns section to reflect the comments above.

Organizations

- Fairmont Hill Neighborhood Association
- Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA)
- AMC Paddling Committee Boston Chapter
- Hyde Park Neighbors Facebook

Updates were made to the Community Issues and Concerns section to reflect the comments above.

Reuse Assessment Community Survey

EPA used the following information and questions for an online survey to gather information about community reuse preferences for the Site. Responses to these questions informed the site's Reuse Assessment.

Introduction

The Lower Neponset River site includes 3.7-miles along the Neponset River in Boston and Milton, Massachusetts. In March 2022, EPA added the Lower Neponset River site to the National Priorities List. Currently, a Remedial Investigation (RI) and Feasibility Study (FS) are underway to determine the extent of contamination. EPA is also conducting a Reuse Assessment for the site. The results of this Reuse Assessment will help to identify reasonably anticipated future land use, guide EPA's cleanup and assist state and local government in their future land use planning activities.

This survey will gather community feedback to be included in the Reuse Assessment. EPA considers future land uses and whether reuse plans and cleanup are compatible, but EPA cannot pay for reuse ideas suggested in this survey. However, participants' answers will be documented and can inform reuse planning discussions with local partners, property owners, local and state governments who are responsible for land use decisions. The results of this survey will be anonymous.

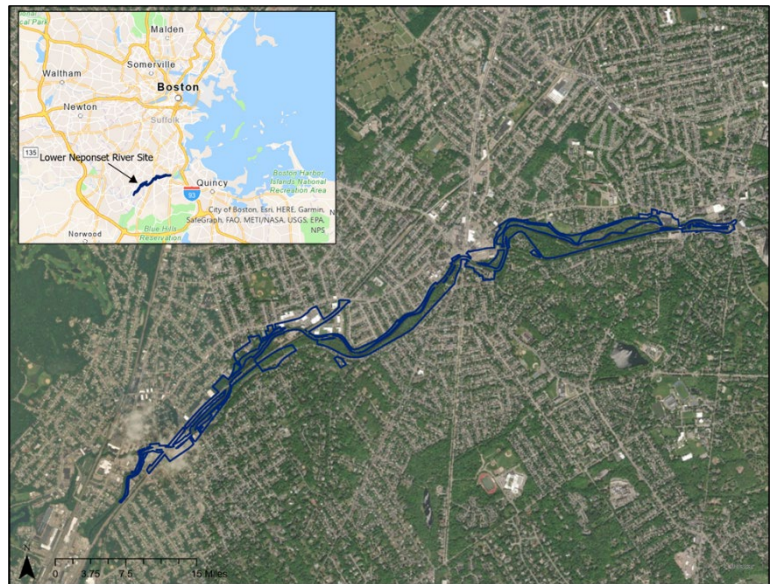
Framing

EPA is also simultaneously conducting a Reuse Assessment for the site. The document collects relevant information about the site's infrastructure, environment, planning and zoning laws to predict the site's reasonable future use. As part of the Assessment, this survey aims to gather the surrounding community's vision for future use of the site area. The EPA cannot promise or fund the reuse suggested in this survey. However, participants' answers will inform reuse discussion with local and state authorities who are responsible for future reuse projects on site. The results of this survey will be anonymous.

Thank you for participating in this survey.

Questions

1. Where do you work, live or frequently visit the area near the site? If yes, for how long or how often?
2. How would community members like to see the site redeveloped in the future? What types of services, uses, or amenities are needed in the community? Where would you like to see these along the river?
3. Recognizing that the site is over 3 miles long, are there particular areas of the site where reuse or redevelopment will be important to consider?
4. Do you have any concerns or see any challenges related to cleanup and land reuse?
5. What would enable you to feel fully engaged in the cleanup of Lower Neponset River Superfund Site? How can EPA and community members support each other in making this happen?



Site Map

Cultural Resources Management

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of Federal “undertakings” on historic properties that are either listed on, or eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, EPA’s policy is to consult on a government-to-government basis with federally recognized tribal governments when EPA actions and decisions may affect tribal interests. Consultation is a process of meaningful communication and coordination between EPA and tribal officials prior to EPA taking actions or implementing decisions that may affect tribes. As a process, consultation includes several methods of interaction that may occur at different levels. The appropriate level of interaction is determined by past and current practices, adjustments made through this Policy, the continuing dialogue between EPA and tribal governments, and program and regional office consultation procedures and plans.

For the Lower Neponset River Site, EPA is at the beginning phases of initiating the Section 106 process, which includes identifying the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), as well as developing a plan to involve the public and identifying other consulting parties. At the Site, there are 3 federally recognized tribes, one non federally recognized tribe, and the state historical commission. Each party was sent a letter pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA. After EPA consults with all applicable parties and stakeholders, if it is established that the undertaking might affect historic properties, then the next step in the Section 106 process will be to determine the scope of efforts, identify historic properties, and evaluate historic significance. Determining adverse effects on historic resources is based on criteria established by the regulations, 36 CFR Part 800 of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) regulations.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA): <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservation/national-historic-preservation-act.htm>.

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) - 36 CFR PART 800 – Protection of Historic Properties:
<https://www.achp.gov/protecting-historic-properties>.

www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-08/documents/r1consultationimplementationguidancedocument.pdf

LOWER NEPONSET RIVER COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

November 2023

www.epa.gov/superfund/lowerneponset

