

**DRAFT
MEMORANDUM**



Date: December 10, 2008

To: Sal Boccuti, Chair, Future Plans Group, BoRit CAG
Eduardo Rovira, OSC, EPA Region 3
Amelia Libertz, CAG Coordinator, EPA Region 3
Carrie Deitzel, TASC WAM, EPA Region 3
Michael Lythcott, TASC WAM, E² Inc

From: Miranda Maupin, E² Inc.
Alisa Hefner, E² Inc.

Re: BoRit Future Use Site Visit Summary

Introduction

At the request of the BoRit CAG and the EPA Region 3, E² Inc. conducted a site visit of the BoRit site in Ambler, Pennsylvania on December 3 and 4, 2008 to gather information regarding the site and future use goals. On December 3rd, E² Inc. facilitated a discussion with the Future Plans Group to identify future use goals, options and considerations. On December 4th, E² Inc. toured the site with the OSC, Eduardo Rovira. This memo summarizes key findings and next steps.

Background

The BoRit Asbestos Site is a 38-acre site that was used to dispose of asbestos containing material from the 1930s to the 1970s. The site is currently undergoing a removal action by EPA Region 3 which primarily includes bank stabilization along the Wissahickon Creek and its tributaries, the Rose Valley Creek and Tannery Run. The removal action is expected to be completed in the winter of 2009. The site is also currently proposed for the NPL.

The site contains three parcels each under separate ownership and municipal jurisdiction. The parcel characteristics are summarized below:

Parcel	Acres	Character	Owner	Jurisdiction
Wissahickon Park	17 acres	Vacant, flat, site mostly un- vegetated with steep side slopes	Whitpain Township	Whitpain Township
Ambler Reservoir	18 acres	Primarily reservoir with surrounding vegetated berm	Wissahickon Waterfowl Preserve	Primarily Upper Dublin Township
Kane Core Pile	6 acres	Extremely steep, vegetated topography	Kane Core, Inc.	Ambler Borough

Future Use Goals and Considerations

E² Inc. facilitated a discussion with the Future Plans Group to identify future use goals, options and considerations. Meeting participants included:

- Sal Boccuti, Ambler business representative
- Fred Robinson, American Legion Post
- Beth Pilling, Montgomery County Planning Commission
- Steve Ware, Ambler Borough Planning Commission
- Bernadette Dougherty, Ambler business representative
- Mary Maxion, Citizens for a Better Ambler
- Bob Adams, Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association
- Roman Pronczak, Whitpain Township Deputy Manager
- David Froehlich, Wissahickon Waterfowl Preserve
- Sharon McCormick, Citizens for a Better Ambler
- Carol DiPietro, interested citizen
- Michael Lythcott, TASC WAM, E² Inc.

Future Use Goals

The participants identified the following future use goals:

- Develop unified plan for the parcels as one unit
- Support a mix of uses
- Support regional greenway network
- Support recreational reuse such as youth activities/facilities and performance space
- Support compatibility with habitat preserve and riparian buffers
- Support economic development and compatibility with adjacent TRID¹ zone
- Support compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods

Future Use Considerations

Through the Future Plans Group discussion and preliminary information gathering, E² Inc. identified several future use considerations outlined in more detail below:

Site Ownership – Implementing future use plans will depend on the cooperation of the three site owners. The CAG has made several attempts to contact Kane Core, Inc., the owner of the southern parcel, so that they might participate in the ongoing discussions related to the site. So far, the company has been non-responsive. Returning the site to productive future use will require cooperation from an active and engaged site owner.

Regional Greenway – The Wissahickon Valley Watershed Trail runs adjacent to the site on the western side of the Wissahickon Creek. This trail borders several designated open spaces owned

¹ Transit Revitalization Investment District

by the WVWA, Pennsylvania DOT, and Montgomery County. In addition, the site includes the Wissahickon Waterfowl Preserve which has been designated an Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA). Due to habitat goals, the Preserve would like to discourage public access to most of the site, but plans to install an observation deck on Maple Street for bird watching. According to meeting participants, all the local jurisdictions are in support of implementing a regional greenway system that connects habitat and open space through a trail or greenway network.

Ambler Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) – The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission has applied for a TRID grant to address the area just south of the BoRit site, including the areas adjacent to Butler Pike and the SEPTA line. SEPTA plans to construct a new station platform South of Butler, the gateway to downtown Ambler. This station is a 35 minute train ride to Philadelphia and the area is experiencing some condo development and adaptive reuse. Future Plans Group meeting participants noted that the future use of BoRit site should compliment and support this Ambler Station mixed-use development zone.

West Ambler Neighborhood – The West Ambler Neighborhood bordering the east side of the site has been historically impacted by both the close adjacency to the site and the closure of the Wissahickon Park in the 1980's. The neighborhood is isolated from the surrounding community by both the site and the SEPTA rail line to the east. Meeting participants noted the importance of supporting the viability of this neighborhood by ensuring compatibility with residential use in the future use of the site.

White Mountain Site – The Ambler Asbestos Piles NPL site (known locally as the White Mountain Site), located south of Butler Pike, was remediated by EPA in 1993 and delisted in 1996. This site is currently not in active use, however the future use of the White Mountain Site could be an important consideration in the future use of the BoRit site and surrounding neighborhoods.

Next Steps

TASC assistance has been requested for E² Inc. to develop a reuse assessment for the site. Based on the information collected during the site visit, E² Inc. will develop a work plan that includes tasks, deliverables and a timeline for review by the Future Plans Group and EPA Region 3. The work plan will likely include 1) a site characterization that outlines the relevant features of the site and surrounding context that could influence future use options and 2) a summary of future use considerations. This characterization will be shared with the Future Plans Group for review and discussion before developing a final report.