



# Partnerships and Critical Funding Turn Contaminated Land into Recreational and Residential Centerpieces

## Worcester, Massachusetts

**T**he Main South Community Development Corporation (CDC) in Worcester, Massachusetts worked with neighborhood residents and community stakeholders to create a redevelopment vision that would aid in the recovery of a blighted, low-income minority community. With the help of project partners and a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Cleanup grant, the CDC redeveloped the former Rice Barton industrial factory and surrounding underutilized properties into a new Boys & Girls Club of Worcester. Replacing a 100-year-old building in need of major renovations, the Boys & Girls Club facility is the centerpiece of a public/private revitalization project that will produce affordable housing for first time buyers and athletic fields for Clark University.

Once a prospering industrial neighborhood, the Kilby Gardner Hammond Street (KGHS) area suffered economic decline associated with businesses closing in the area. Subsequently, the area became known as a dangerous location, often involving gang and illegal activity. The 30-acre KGHS target area contained many underutilized and vacant properties with dilapidated industrial or residential structures last used during the 1980s. One of the most contaminated properties was the former Rice Barton facility which, at the height of operation, was the largest manufacturer of paper-making machinery in the world.

At the request of the city and community, the CDC helped the community craft a development vision for the future use of the property and surrounding neighborhood. The resulting plan included affordable, green housing for first time buyers, adjacent to surrounding neighborhoods; new athletic fields to meet the need of neighboring Clark University (a long-standing partner with the CDC); and a new state-of-the-art Boys and Girls Club to replace the existing facility across town.

In 1999, the CDC used an EPA Brownfields Assessment grant to determine the extent of contamination for the Kilby Gardner Hammond Street area, the largest wildcard in the development vision. Contamination revealed at the former Rice Barton site included petroleum products, hazardous materials including transformers, PCBs, solvents, and lead paint. Asbestos was also found inside the main building. After characterizing the contamination, the CDC was comfortable moving forward with cleanup. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection issued a Beneficial Use Determination, which allowed the CDC to move construction materials and debris between parcels within the target area and reuse building



*The completed Boys & Girls Club facility.*

## JUST THE FACTS:

- Replacing a 100-year-old building in need of major renovations, the Boys & Girls Club facility is the centerpiece of a public/private revitalization project that will produce affordable housing for first time buyers and athletic fields for Clark University.
- In order to address cleanup of the area, the Boys & Girls Club, Clark University, and the Main South CDC formed the Kilby Gardner Hammond LLC in 2000 to oversee the cleanup and redevelopment project and to protect the partners from potential liability.
- Including funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, federal earmarked funds, private foundations, and city support, the project leveraged more than \$5,965,000 in cleanup and redevelopment costs.

*Featuring an aquatic center and a gymnasium, the \$9 million, 50,000-square-foot facility is the centerpiece of the \$30 million public/private revitalization project of the Kilby Gardner Hammond Street neighborhood. When the entire Kilby Gardner Hammond Street project is completed, it will generate an estimated \$180,000 per year in tax benefits.*

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materials as fill—a tremendous cost-saver for the project. In 2003, the CDC was awarded a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Cleanup grant for petroleum and hazardous materials to address the most significant contamination at the former Rice Barton property. As the keystone to moving the project forward, this grant helped to generate momentum and leverage additional funding.

The entire project area consists of 30 individual properties, seven of which comprise the new Boys & Girls Club and athletic fields complex. The CDC acquired all 30 parcels within the target redevelopment area through negotiated sale and purchase and without using eminent domain. In order to address cleanup of the area, the Boys & Girls Club, Clark University, and the Main South CDC formed the Kilby Gardner Hammond LLC in 2000 to oversee the cleanup and redevelopment project and to protect the partners from potential liability. The CDC maintained ownership of the properties throughout cleanup and acted as the managing partner. Once cleanup was completed in March 2005, a two-acre parcel was transferred to the Boys & Girls Club; the parcels being converted into athletic fields will be sold to Clark University for the cost of land once the fields are completed.

The Boys & Girls Club facility opened at 65 Tainter Street on September 16, 2006, with more than 800 people attending. The new facility will support the Worcester club's current 2,300 members and will hopefully attract new ones.

Featuring an aquatic center and a gymnasium, the \$9 million, 50,000-square-foot facility is the centerpiece of the \$30 million public/private revitalization project of the Kilby Gardner Hammond Street neighborhood. When the entire Kilby Gardner Hammond Street project is completed, it will generate an estimated \$180,000 per year in tax benefits.



*Demolition underway before construction of the new facility.*

EPA Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup grants provided momentum and security for the project, which helped to leverage additional funding. Steve Teasdale from the CDC stated, "The cost of remediating some sites located in inner city neighborhoods can be greater than the existing market value of the property. However, by subsidizing the development of those sites with public funding, the sites can be successfully redeveloped and become catalysts for the redevelopment of the surrounding

area and overall growth of the city tax base. This end result warrents the initial subsidy investment." Including funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, federal earmarked funds, private foundations, and city support, the project leveraged more than \$5,965,000 in cleanup and redevelopment costs.

The Boys & Girls Club redevelopment provided the needed incentive for additional development projects in the area. The Kilby Gardner Hammond Street project will include 80 affordable houses for first time buyers and will incorporate green design components. Currently, half of the houses are occupied. These homes include solar panels, EPA Energy Star rated windows, and no vinyl siding. Families are moving back into the area and will be able to walk to the Boys & Girls Club and athletic fields. Among the area's new developments are two condominium projects that will create 136 units and return more than \$325,000 in annual tax revenues. The Kilby Gardner Hammond Street development project has greatly benefited the local community and now serves as a revitalization model for the Worcester region.

## **CONTACTS:**

For more information contact  
U.S. EPA REGION 1  
(617) 918-1432

Visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at:  
[www.epa.gov/brownfields/](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/)