

brownfields

Success Story

REVITALIZING THE TOWN OF FLETCHER TO CONSTRUCT A NEW DOWNTOWN

Fletcher, North Carolina

With the assistance of EPA Brownfields funding, the Town of Fletcher is in the process of converting the grounds of a former log home manufacturing facility into a downtown area.

HIGHLIGHTS

After the EPA Brownfields Cleanup grant (\$200,000), the EPA RLF (\$50,000), and town funding (\$175,000) paid to clean up the former log home manufacturing plant previously contaminated with dioxin and PCP, the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) granted liability protection in the form of a Brownfields Agreement.

Plans are in place to develop a new downtown area for the Town of Fletcher, creating new jobs and bringing revenue to the town. The town rezoned the site for downtown development, put tax incentives into place to attract developers, and is working towards broadening the vision of the “Heart of Fletcher” to promote future development.



Disassembling underway at the former log home manufacturing facility

When looking to expand the local school system, North Carolina’s Henderson County and the Town of Fletcher, (the current site owner), chose a 28-acre former log home manufacturing facility site. It was chosen primarily due to its location just off the main highway and adjacent to the town park, which includes playgrounds, ball fields and walking trails. Shortly after the purchase, the town funded and performed a limited Phase II investigation where it learned that the site was contaminated with dioxin and pentachlorophenol (PCP) and therefore, not suitable for building a school.

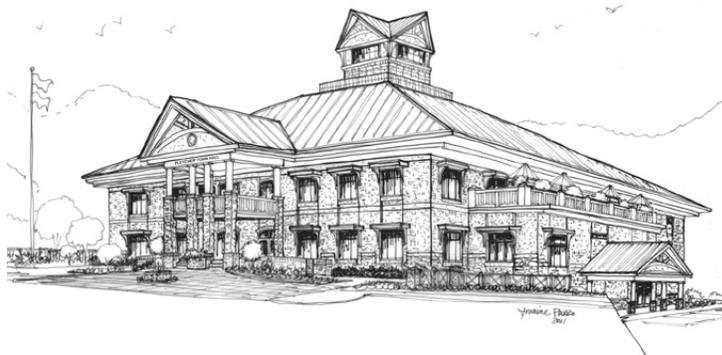
The town shifted its vision from expanding the school system toward building a vibrant downtown area; the widening of Highway 25 had displaced the original downtown in 2003. The small town of 4,200 people indicated their desire for a walkable downtown area with a city hall, municipal buildings, small business, residences and walking trails to enhance the greenspace. The community believes the redevelopment and creation of a downtown will generate new jobs, create a meeting place for the community, and become the “Heart of Fletcher.”

The site was agricultural land composed of residences prior to 1971 when the Carolina Log Home Building Company purchased the site. The main building was the processing plant where logs were debarked, cut to size, and treated with a preservative that was 95 percent varsol (mineral spirits) and 5 percent PCP. Treated logs that cured outside on a pad were then stored on the site; this is the source of PCP contamination in the soil and groundwater. Timberpeg Co. purchased the site in the mid-1980s, and operated as a construction business. They leased the other buildings to smaller businesses, such as a plastics recycling company that operated from 1992 to 1996.

Prior to the purchase of the site, a Phase I investigation suggested no further action was warranted, and in 1997, the town purchased the property. The site sat vacant until 2000 when the town paid for and performed a limited Phase II investigation prior to any school development plans. However, the investigation indicated that the ground water was contaminated with PCP. The Town of Fletcher worked alongside with the Land of Sky Regional Council (regional planning and development organization), who pursued funding from EPA, to learn about the extent of the contamination. In 2004, a more detailed investigation followed, revealing that soils and ground water in the location of the drip pad were contaminated with both dioxin and PCP.

The site entered into the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) Voluntary Cleanup Program in 2001. The town was awarded a Brownfields Cleanup grant, and using a subgrant of Land of Sky Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) monies in 2005, cleanup began. After 950 cubic yards of source soil within the drip pad location were removed and disposed of off-site (300 cubic yards were deemed suitable to remain onsite), the location was restored to grade with clean fill. Additional ground water monitoring wells were installed in accordance with the long-term ground water monitoring plan for the site to allow for monitored natural attenuation. It continues to be monitored on an annual basis with provisions to cease monitoring if plan requirements are met.

Artist's rendition of the proposed Town Hall



Fletcher is a family town regaining a valuable piece of property to reestablish a community-centered downtown described as the "Heart of Fletcher"

When the initial vision of expanding the school system at the site ended, the town held a charette in 2004 and asked the residents for feedback about the redevelopment of the property, envisioning the "Heart of Fletcher." The vision includes a walkable and centralized downtown with commercial, residential and recreational uses as well as a Town Hall. After soil excavation and complying with the long-term ground water monitoring plan, a Brownfields Agreement with NCDENR was completed providing liability protection to the town.

The town received a \$350,000 grant from North Carolina Department of Transportation to build a better access road to the site. The site sits a quarter of a mile back from Highway 25 which connects Asheville to Hendersonville. Currently, the site is vacant and the Town of Fletcher is actively seeking developers by offering property tax incentives. The town was recently awarded a \$5 million loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development to build the Town Hall adjacent to the site.

*Brownfields Success Story
Carolina Log Home Building Company Site
Fletcher, North Carolina*

*Solid Waste
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