

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Land & Community Revitalization

BROWNFIELDS SUCCESS IN NEW ENGLAND

RAILROAD SQUARE

KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE



PROPERTY DETAILS	Address:	Railroad Street Keene, NH 03431
	Size:	9.3 acres
	Former Use:	Railroad right-of-way & switchyard
	Contaminants:	Lead, petroleum, arsenic, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), trichloroethylene (TCE)
	Current Use:	Mixed-use commercial and residential
PARTNERS	Owner:	Railroad Land Development, LLC (MEDC)
	City of Keene; Monadnock Economic Development Corporation ; Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC); Southwestern Community Services, Inc.; New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES)	

Motivation for Redevelopment: Redevelopment of abandoned and underutilized industrial properties in downtown Keene has been the cornerstone for this New Hampshire city's current 'Smart Growth Initiative.' The property's proximity to Keene's central business district and connection to residential neighborhoods makes it a desirable location for redevelopment.

Property History: Between 1853 and the late 1880s, Cheshire Railroad owned this land now known as Railroad Street. Boston & Maine Railroad Company (B & M) subsequently bought the property and operated an active railroad right-of-way and switchyard, complete with railroad tracks, freight yards, and loading docks, until 1983. A portion of the property had also been used for loading and/or unloading petroleum products for the abutting property owner. Since purchasing the property in 1988, the City of Keene attempted to facilitate redevelopment with little success. During this time, the City did, however, conduct environmental assessments which were funded by the Southwest Regional Planning Commission's EPA Assessment Grant. Testing found that the soil was composed mostly of PAH-impacted urban fill and petroleum and TCE-impacted soil and groundwater that needed to be contained or disposed of offsite.

Project Results: In 1997, the City organized this property as a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) to encourage investment and to provide a source of revenue for utility upgrades. After buying the property in 2006, Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) utilized New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services's EPA Revolving Loan Fund for cleanup work. MEDC then sold a one-acre parcel to Marriott Courtyard Hotel for a 100+ room LEED-silver hotel. As a way to circumvent traditional subdivision regulations, the remaining eight acres is managed "condominium-style." A diverse range of uses makes up Phase I of construction, including the MEDC headquarters, a 24-unit service-enriched senior housing development, medical facilities, a fiber optics company, eight market-rate condominium units, a fine dining restaurant, a commercial food preparation facility, and office space for Southwest Community Services (SCS) that supports four Head Start classrooms. Combined with initial infrastructure

FUNDING DETAILS	EPA Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (from NHDES):	\$300,000
	EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant (from SWRPC):	\$42,970
	HUD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) (4):	\$2,000,000
	USDA Community Facilities Loan (2):	\$6,700,000
	US Dept. of Health and Human Services: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grants (multiple):	\$1,000,000
	State of NH Business Tax Credit Equity:	\$635,000
	NH Business Finance Authority:	\$825,000
	Northern New England Housing Investment Fund (NNEHIF):	\$9,000,000
	NH Housing Finance Authority:	\$500,000
	Monadnock Food Co-op Fundraising:	\$1,000,000
	City of Keene Sewer Reinvestment:	\$350,000
	Private loans (various):	\$16,412,000
	City of Keene (TIF):	\$2,000,000

- Currently supports an estimated 125 jobs; hopes to generate between 200 and 250 upon Phase III completion.
- Supports the first installation of pervious asphalt in New Hampshire, effectively reducing surface runoff.

improvements, this portion of construction added \$31.8 million in taxable value to the City. Phase II will include a cooperative food market (20,000 sf) and additional infrastructure, which will total \$10.9 million. The three remaining lots will be developed during Phase III, which is projected to cost \$18.5 million. The development also retains an important section of the City's east-west commuter bikeway. This connection contributes to the City's effort toward an integrated alternative transportation network. For further site work, Capital Region Development Council (CRDC) committed to fund a \$300,000 combined loan and subgrant out of their 2011 EPA Revolving Loan Fund to address PAH-impacted soils.

Today, Railroad Square is essential to efficient downtown living in Keene. Already, TIF revenue has been used in adjacent roadway improvements and a nearby new parking garage. In ways socially, environmentally, and economically, Railroad Square is emblematic of how walk-ability and low impact design principles can enrich small cities.

TIMELINE	
1988	City acquires property
1997	Property becomes a TIF District
Sept. 2005	Phase I ESA completed
May 2006	Phase II ESA completed
Aug. 2006	MEDC acquires property
July 2007	Groundbreaking
Jan. 2009	Cleanup completed
Sum. 2011	Phase I construction complete
Fall 2013	Phase II construction complete (projected)
Fall 2014	Phase III construction complete (projected)