

Brownfields

Success Story

Ludlow Mills

Ludlow, Mass.

A 200-year-old mill complex that once provided an economic engine in western Massachusetts is now being redeveloped into one of New England's largest brownfield mill redevelopment projects.

The Ludlow Mills site, covering about 170 acres along 1.5 miles of the Chicopee River, has already been redeveloped into housing, a hospital and greenspace along the river. Future plans for the 50 historic mill buildings include a \$50 million mixed-use project that is expected to create 2,000 jobs, attract \$300 million in private investment, and increase annual municipal property tax revenues by \$2 million per year.

Located in the Ludlow Village Historic District and listed on the State and National Register of Historic places, the site is being redeveloped in one of the most economically disadvantaged regions in Massachusetts.

Priming the Property for Redevelopment

New England has an industrial legacy dating back to the 18th century. Many cities and towns were originally built to supply workers for the manufacturing mills. A great many of these mills remain today, some successfully redeveloped, but the majority abandoned or underutilized, posing a significant health and safety risk and dragging down the local economy.

New Englanders still feel a connection with their old mills, and often prefer to restore them rather than tearing them down. The mills are as much a part of their heritage as the fieldstone walls that wind throughout the landscape. The brick and carved-stone walls, massive wood timbers and steel I-beams, and wide-planked wood flooring lend an architectural quality and historical authenticity that cannot be reproduced in new buildings.

The challenges to restoring and modernizing these buildings are magnified in large mill complexes with many buildings of varying sizes and types of construction, as is the case in Ludlow. Further complicating matters, information on the early operations may be hard to come by, making it difficult to identify the types and locations of any contamination. The Ludlow Mills site is among those mills with these added complications.

WESTMASS Area Development Corporation, a private, not-for-profit development corporation, proposed a mixed-use, sustainable building complex with residential, office, retail, commercial and industrial uses. To be viable, the project, announced in 2018, would need considerable involvement of other public and private partners, which in addition to EPA, included HealthSouth, Winn Development, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Mass Development, Mass DOT, U.S. Economic Development Administration and the Town of Ludlow. EPA's Brownfield Program was key.



EPA Grant Recipient:
WESTMASS Area Development Corporation

Grant Types:
Assessment, Cleanup, Targeted Brownfields Assessment

Current Uses:
Housing, Hospital and Greenspace

Former Use:
Mill





“EPA involvement, funding, and support has been instrumental to the success of this project. If it wasn’t for EPA’s commitment to our project, we wouldn’t be able to attract the type of private and public investment into the Mills that we are now experiencing.”

Jeff Daley, President/CEO

WESTMASS Area Development Corporation

EPA’s involvement spanned many years, beginning with a \$231,000 assessment grant and continuing to this day. The assessments gave WESTMASS both the liability protection and the environmental information it needed to negotiate a purchase with the private owner; which was critical in moving the redevelopment forward. EPA’s initial investment led to an additional \$275,000 in EPA assessment funding, including a recent \$150,000 targeted brownfields assessment, and \$800,000 in EPA cleanup grant funding; bringing the total to \$1.3 million.

Because of the complexity of the site, the project team needed to understand first-hand the environmental site conditions in relation to the overall redevelopment.

Today

Major redevelopment projects completed to date include:

- Senior Housing: Winn Development has spent \$24 million rehabilitating the 109-year-old Mill # 10 into 75 senior independent living apartments, which were finished in 2017.
- HealthSouth Hospital: The \$27 million rehabilitation hospital opened in 2014 creating 70 high skilled jobs.
- Riverwalk and Greenspace: The 1.5-mile paved walking trail along the Chicopee River was built with \$600,000 from HealthSouth & WESTMASS, completed 2016, and 50 permanently protected acres.
- Riverside Drive: The Department of Commerce through the US Economic Development Authority awarded \$3.1 million for the development of this crucial artery that will run through complex. The town of Ludlow is providing a \$3.1 million match to complete this project.

And this is just the beginning. Winn Development has a purchase & sale agreement and is pursuing tax credits to finance construction of the \$50 million mixed use project that will include apartments, retail and office space. According to WESTMASS, \$1.3 million in EPA funding has already leveraged over \$127 million, 94 percent of it private capital. This represents about \$100 realized for every dollar of EPA investment. Over the next 20 years the project is projected to create 2,000 jobs, attract \$300 million in private investment, and increase annual municipal property tax revenues by \$2 million per year.

For more information:

Visit the EPA Brownfields website at www.epa.gov/brownfields or contact Jim Byrne at 617-918-1389 or byrne.james@epa.gov.