

# Community Engagement Plan

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GARAPAN BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT &  
REVITALIZATION PLANNING

Office of Planning and Development  
USEPA BROWNFIELDS 104K GRANT PROGRAM | BF-98T23601

# Community Engagement Plan

## Garapan Brownfields Assessment and Revitalization Planning

### Plan and Project Overview

The purpose of this Community Engagement Plan (CEP) is to raise awareness about and support stakeholder involvement in the Garapan Core Brownfields Assessment and Revitalization Planning project. This assessment grant proposal will support data collection and planning needs of community redevelopment priorities in Lower West Takpochao Planning Area which encompasses Garapan and the surrounding Ports and Industrial Area. Sites that are typical of the dozens of brownfield sites in the Target area include (i) abandoned textile facilities that may contain hazardous substances remaining from garment factory operations, (ii) automotive repair properties and associated commercial / industrial sites, and (iii) old staging areas and right of ways that are likely to contain asbestos pipes and upon which machinery and construction debris have routinely been piled. Several priority sites have been identified in high demand for reuse for commercial development and environmentally sensitive redevelopment areas. This project, supported by funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Assessment Grant Program will result in redevelopment plans for priority brownfield sites that will be consistent with and incorporated into the Garapan Revitalization Plan Update, Garapan Watershed Management Plan Update and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands' (CNMI) Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan (CSDP) revision and implementation action and prioritization efforts by informing land reuse and redevelopment needs including required clean-up costs and next steps identified by this assessment.

Planning recommendations outlined in the draft redevelopment report that will be one deliverable of this activity will include discussion of remediation and reuse values and priorities identified by the "Garapan Brownfields Project Team" led by the Office of Planning and Development with support and coordination from the Planning and Development Advisory Council. Project team representatives will include staff from the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality, the Department of Public Lands, the Department of Commerce, the Saipan Office of Zoning, as well as representatives from the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors, and the Garapan Revitalization Taskforce. Supported by an experienced contractor or firm, the Garapan Brownfields Project Team will gather community feedback to identify stakeholder priorities and values for Garapan Core. These values and priority actions will align with the CNMI's Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan, reflect Smart, Safe Growth Guidance, and may include emphasis on "green growth" themes such as:

- providing access to community services, education, and health care options;
- improving efficiency in resource consumption and service provision;

- distributing services and costs equitably;
- encouraging infill development and prioritization of infrastructure improvements within Garapan in alignment with CSDP guidance and development standards, and
- improving water quality through education and best management practices for surface water runoff.

This CEP will serve as guidance for this Brownfields Assessment initiative and support integration of this project and its outcomes with complementary planning efforts and incorporation into updates of the Garapan Revitalization Plan, Public Land Use Plan, and CSDP as applicable.

In addition to environmental site assessments and a draft and final redevelopment planning recommendations report, benefits of the project and resulting redevelopment strategies will include (i) aligning environmental and economic revitalization and redevelopment efforts in a priority investment area through identification of brownfield sites and reuse priorities; (ii) providing smarter and safer growth opportunities for environmentally and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods; and (iii) supporting planning and infrastructure upgrade projects currently proposed in the target area. These outcomes and benefits will provide a strong foundation for revitalization of the area, the potential to attract significant private investment, and the ability to focus the revitalization on neighborhoods having the greatest social, economic, and welfare needs. Community engagement is essential to ensure this project results in a plan that aligns with current investment efforts and the shared stakeholder vision of Garapan.

## **Community Engagement**

Community-based involvement is an important element of the planning process. Public awareness and input will help identify community priorities for near and long-term cleanup and reuse of brownfield sites. As such, outreach techniques that are employed will target broad participation by local stakeholders. This Community Engagement Plan serves as a guide for community outreach efforts in the project study area. The following public participation tools and techniques will be used during the study process; however, it is important that this plan remain flexible for adjustments that may be needed to ensure the public is sufficiently informed and engaged.

Goals of this CEP include:

- Providing timely, project specific information to community members to solicit participation and closely follow project related activities to the maximum extent they desire and the process allows;

- Providing opportunities for community input that are tailored to the needs and concerns of the community; and
- Ensure that community members are well informed, so that they are knowledgeable about site activities and the Brownfields process.

As detailed further here, these goals will be achieved by ongoing support and coordination from the Garapan Brownfields Project Team, regular and transparent stakeholder outreach, at least four public meetings or “workshops”, and sharing of materials online through the OPD website and social media to support expanded information sharing and engagement.

### **Garapan Brownfields Project Team**

The Office of Planning and Development (OPD) is directly coordinating this assessment and revitalization planning effort with the Department of Public Lands (DPL), the Office of Zoning, and the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ) and other Planning and Development Advisory Council (PDAC) and additional planning partners including the Garapan Revitalization Taskforce. OPD will ensure further alignment with disaster risk reduction and “smart, safe growth” planning efforts underway that further complement these efforts. The “project team” will support implementation of this CEP.

### **Stakeholder Outreach**

A key method for informing the project and soliciting input will be public meetings. The project team will meet on approximately a quarterly basis throughout the duration of the project. Meeting locations will be published in the local newspapers and online as well as posted at local shops. Once a contractor has been selected and the project is moving forward, OPD will also host additional kickoff meetings on the project in each neighborhood in conjunction with completion of the site assessment inventory to solicit input on the prioritization process as well as on brownfield sites in Garapan. The project team will provide feedback and updates at regularly scheduled community partner meetings (one/partner/year) of the grant term. Finally, updates will be provided at meetings of the Garapan Revitalization Taskforce and OPD’s PDAC meetings which will ensure information sharing and support from District / Legislative Precinct 3 stakeholders and CNMI’s cabinet-level leadership. At all meetings hosted by OPD, special accommodations will be made available to ensure the participation of people with disabilities and non-English speakers.

Another method used to build community support and engagement as well as communicate progress will be the creation and regular updating of a project webpage on OPD’s website. The webpage will include project updates, fact sheets, and meeting announcements, as well as links to project documents and deliverables as a means of maximizing transparency. The webpage will also include a mechanism for soliciting project input through surveys and announcements of public planning events. The project team, with support of the contractors,

will compile community input on a quarterly basis and circulate the summary to the PDAC and relevant redevelopment planning partners to further develop response options, with prioritized responses being incorporated into the Garapan Revitalization Plan Update and the Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan. Public input and the RPC response will be summarized in the quarterly project progress reports and on the project webpage.

### **Public Workshops**

The project will include a total of four (4) community workshops. The first workshop will be an informational meeting that will provide a project overview and discuss site prioritization that will be used to implement Phase I and Phase II assessments. At the next workshop, several community engagement activities will occur throughout the workshop, including open focus group meetings, “pin-up” activities, and community presentations. In a follow-up meeting the contractor and project team will recap “meeting 1” kick-off activities and support additional visioning and scoping discussions. Through iterative feedback the project team and project contractor will hold two addition scoping meetings to discuss and obtain feedback on initial findings as well as draft and revised draft recommendations. A final public meeting introducing the design concept(s) will be conducted to confirm the support of the BAG and affected public. The final concept(s) will be placed on display on the project web page.

The format of these meetings may be a virtual / in-person hybrid or virtual only depending on current COVID-19 protocols and restrictions. Meeting notes will be taken, and presentations shared on the project website. Advertising for all workshops and meetings will include a variety of techniques such as media, flyer distribution by hand to public locations, e-mail, door-to-door, and social media where appropriate. All advertising will occur at least two weeks in advance. Members of the project team will also assist with bringing awareness to scheduled events.

### **Website, Listserv and Contact Database, and Social Media**

The project will take full advantage of the broad reach offered by the Internet and social media to ensure the public is informed and has meaningful opportunities to be involved, particularly with the youth in the study area. Public notices, maps, reports, and other relevant documents for public review will be posted on a dedicated project page and in new release posts on the OPD website, and project announcements will be shared on social media platforms. A project email address will be established to encourage ongoing feedback with the community.

As the process progresses, a database of contacts will be developed and maintained to assist with communications. This database will contain an email distribution list including local and regional officials, local businesses, and organizations, advocacy groups and the general public. The list will be updated during the course of the process with contact information provided by sign-in sheets from public meetings, phone calls, emails, and other correspondence.

## **Documentation**

Documenting all aspects of the community engagement process will help to maintain continuity in project decision-making. Outreach tasks will be documented to ensure the integrity of the project memory, and documents will be posted to the project web page on the city's website.

The following deliverables will be included:

- Community Engagement Plan
- Meeting Summaries
- Charrette and Workshop Summaries
- Presentations and Meeting Notes
- Website Content

Sites documentation for completed Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments will be kept on file at OPD and shared with BECQ, DPL, Zoning, and USEPA, and will be available as part of the public administrative record.