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report

## **DRAFT - Community Relations Plan**

**Former Hart Wool Combing Site  
aka Farr Alpaca Site  
216 Appleton Street  
Holyoke, MA**

March 2014

Funded through  
United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund # BF 97119201-3  
On behalf of Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and  
City of Holyoke

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## 1.0 OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

The purpose of the Community Relations Plan (CRP) is to describe the strategy that the City of Holyoke, the owner and party that has voluntarily undertaken the cleanup of the property known as of the former Hart Wool Combing property (the “Site”), will use to address the needs or concerns of residents in the vicinity of the Site. The Site is located at 216 Appleton Street (formerly erroneously described as 130 Appleton Street), see Figure 1. The Site was also known as the Farr Alpaca site. This CRP outlines how the City will involve the public, particularly potentially affected residents, City officials, nearby business owners, and local community based organizations in the decision-making process regarding the environmental cleanup at the Site.

The city acquired the Site through tax foreclosure in November 2011. The cleanup of the Site is to be funded by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) through their United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund.

Active members of the community are essential resources for the success of the CRP. The City has the view that its residents and community-based organizations are key stakeholders and points of contact within the local neighborhood whose opinions and concerns need to be strongly considered.

As part of its ongoing redevelopment efforts, the City intends to either renovate or demolish the buildings, or do a combination of both based on the condition of the buildings and the amount of contamination in the building. This project will assist with the City’s redevelopment plans to reuse this unused and vacant property, and contribute to the economic revitalization of the surrounding area. Several mixed use redevelopment scenarios have been conceptualized for the Site. All scenarios involve demolition of some or all of the buildings to make room for parking and because of the structural condition of the building, to support the project and/or the development of greenspace, the redevelopment of portions of buildings, and the development of a public pedestrian walkway along the adjacent canal.

## 2.0 SPOKESPERSON AND INFORMATION REPOSITORY

The spokesperson for this project is project manager Claire Ricker, Senior Planner with the City of Holyoke. Ms. Ricker’s contact information is provided below:

Ms. Claire V. Ricker, Senior Planner  
Office of Planning & Economic Development  
City of Holyoke  
City Hall Annex, Room 406  
20 Korean Veteran's Plaza  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
Phone 413.322.5575  
Fax 413.322.5576  
[rickerc@holyoke.org](mailto:rickerc@holyoke.org)

Mr. Marcos A. Marrero, Director of Planning and Economic Development for the City of Holyoke is listed as a back-up contact for the project. Mr. Marrero’s contact information is provided below:

Mr. Marcos Marrero  
Director of Planning & Economic Development  
City Hall Annex, Room 406  
20 Korean Veterans Plaza  
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040  
(413) 322-5575  
[marreroma@holyoke.org](mailto:marreroma@holyoke.org)

The Information Repository is also located at in the City of Holyoke’s Planning and Economic Development office at the listed address. To conduct a review of the Information Repository, contact the Planning & Economic Department Office (413) 322-5575 to make an appointment during normal business hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Any questions regarding the cleanup approach should be sent in writing to Ms. Ricker at the address or email listed above.

### 3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

#### 3.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The Site is located at 216 Appleton Street which is in the center of downtown Holyoke. The Site is located on the west side of the First Level Canal between Appleton and Cabot Streets. The Site consists of approximately 1.15 acres with two parcels of land (020-02-007 and 020-02-008) which are almost entirely occupied by six (6) interconnected brick mill buildings (+/-168,000 square feet). The site is currently vacant and abandoned. A locked chain-link fence along Appleton Street restricts access to the Site. A Locus Map showing the location and general surroundings of the Site is included as Figure 1 and a Site Plan showing the property boundary and other significant Site features is shown in Figure 2.

#### 3.2 HISTORY OF OWNERSHIP & OPERATIONS

The City of Holyoke is the current owner of the Site. According to available on-line records, the previous owner of the Site is listed as Up With Downtown, Inc. The City acquired the Site through tax title foreclosure in 2011.

According to previous reports reviewed for the Site, the Site was used as a wool combing operation to support the local textile industry and for the manufacturing and storage of wool products until Hart Wool Combing ceased operations in early 1990. The buildings are currently vacant, but have been used a warehouse and most recently were utilized by an artist as storage and work space.

#### 3.3 PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL WORK

The following known environmental work has been conducted at the Site:

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) – Nobis Engineering, Inc. (Nobis) conducted a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment as a part of EPA approved Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) work. The work was conducted in 2012 and identified several Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) in connection with the Site including:

- The historical industrial use of the Site including the use and storage of oil, coal, metals, and industrial process chemicals,
- The historical industrial use of adjacent parcels in the vicinity of the Site, and
- The presence of oils and unknown chemical currently stored in tanks and containers located throughout the interior of the Site buildings.

#### Hazardous Building Materials Survey

On November 19, 2012, SAK Environmental, under contract to Nobis Engineering, Inc. (Nobis), conducted a Hazardous Building Materials (HBM) Survey to determine the presence of and estimate the quantity of hazardous and/or regulated materials within the buildings located on-site. The HBM Survey was performed as part of a Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) that was conducted by Nobis for the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was also conducted by Nobis in 2013 as part of the TBA. Based on the findings of the Phase I ESA, RECs still exist at the Site. Additionally, the HBM Survey indicated the presence of asbestos containing materials (ACM), lead-based paint (LBP), hazardous building components (e.g., fluorescent light tubes/ballasts, and thermostats), bulk hazardous material, and chemical storage containers in the building. Fungal growth was noted on wood members within the buildings such that Nobis indicated that a “more extensive”

study of microbial populations throughout the building was warranted. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) above regulatory thresholds were not identified within the building materials sampled. The PCB sampling work was limited in extent and did not include any paint samples. Additional sampling of PCBs in building materials will be conducted to support the cleanup design.

### **3.4 NATURE OF THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT**

The presence of asbestos, lead-based paint, and universal and hazardous waste in the Site buildings poses a threat to future site occupants (or trespassers). Certain asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint in the buildings are in poor condition which could cause the release of asbestos fibers to the air, and lead paint chips to building floors and surfaces. Lead dust can be created by walking on and disturbing lead-based paint chips on the floors of the buildings. Universal wastes (e.g. out of service tanks, residuals material in floor trenches, PCB containing light ballasts, and mercury containing switches and fluorescent bulbs) can become an exposure threat if they are broken or leaking.

The City has controlled the risk of exposure by controlling access to the buildings, which are boarded and locked. Site access is permitted to authorized entrants only.

To address the long term risks associated with these environmental site conditions, an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) has been prepared for the proper removal/abatement of these materials from the building which will serve to mitigate the exposure pathway. The contractor will take measures to control exposure to their workers during the abatement of contaminated materials. Asbestos abatement work will be conducted under negative pressure in a sealed environment, in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) protocols. Demolition or cleanup work will be controlled utilizing a dust control program to eliminate fugitive dust emissions.

## 4.0 COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

### 4.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Holyoke contains many residents who have low and moderate incomes, and as such is highly vulnerable to the effects of Brownfields (i.e., underutilized or abandoned properties with environmental impacts). According to the 2010 Census, of the 39,880 residents, 4.7% identify as Black or African-American, while 48.4% identify as Latino. The 2008-2012 American Community Survey data indicate that 30.6% percent of residents live below the poverty line and 46% of all Holyoke children are living below the poverty line. The City median household income is \$31,948.

According to the “areavibes” website and based on 2010 data, the income per capita in Holyoke is 44.8% less than the Massachusetts average and 27.3% less than the National average. The median household income in Holyoke is 51.9% less than the Massachusetts average and 38.9% less than the National average. The median household income in Holyoke for owner occupied housing is 185.7% greater than the median household income for renter occupied housing in Holyoke. The poverty level in Holyoke is 242.7% greater than the Massachusetts average and 114.6% greater than the National average. The median earnings for males in Holyoke is 43.3% greater than the median earnings for females in Holyoke. The website also indicates that 36% of the population speak Spanish.

According to USDA records, approximately 34% of Holyoke residents receive some level of assistance from the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program. In addition, approximately 25% of Holyoke residents have not completed high school, have limited employable skills, rely on government benefits, and face significant childcare responsibilities. According to unemployment data, the rate of unemployment in Holyoke is higher than the state and national rates.

There are a large number of Brownfields in the target community of Holyoke. The MassDEP lists more than 264 sites with reported releases in Holyoke. The vacant properties in the downtown area similar to the Hart Wool Combing Site typically have high levels of asbestos, lead, and petroleum products. In addition, depending on when these older building were constructed and/or renovated, they may also contain PCBs in associated paints and caulks.

## 5.0 CONTINUED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### 5.1 OUTREACH OVERVIEW

The City of Holyoke will be scheduling a public meeting to present the ABCA outlining the proposed cleanup alternative and this CRP to the community. The meeting will be held during the required 30 day comment period for the ABCA. The City of Holyoke will accept comments on the ABCA during the comment period and will provide written responses which will become part of the administrative record. The information repository will be updated with the inclusion of all meeting minutes, status reports, and other communications.

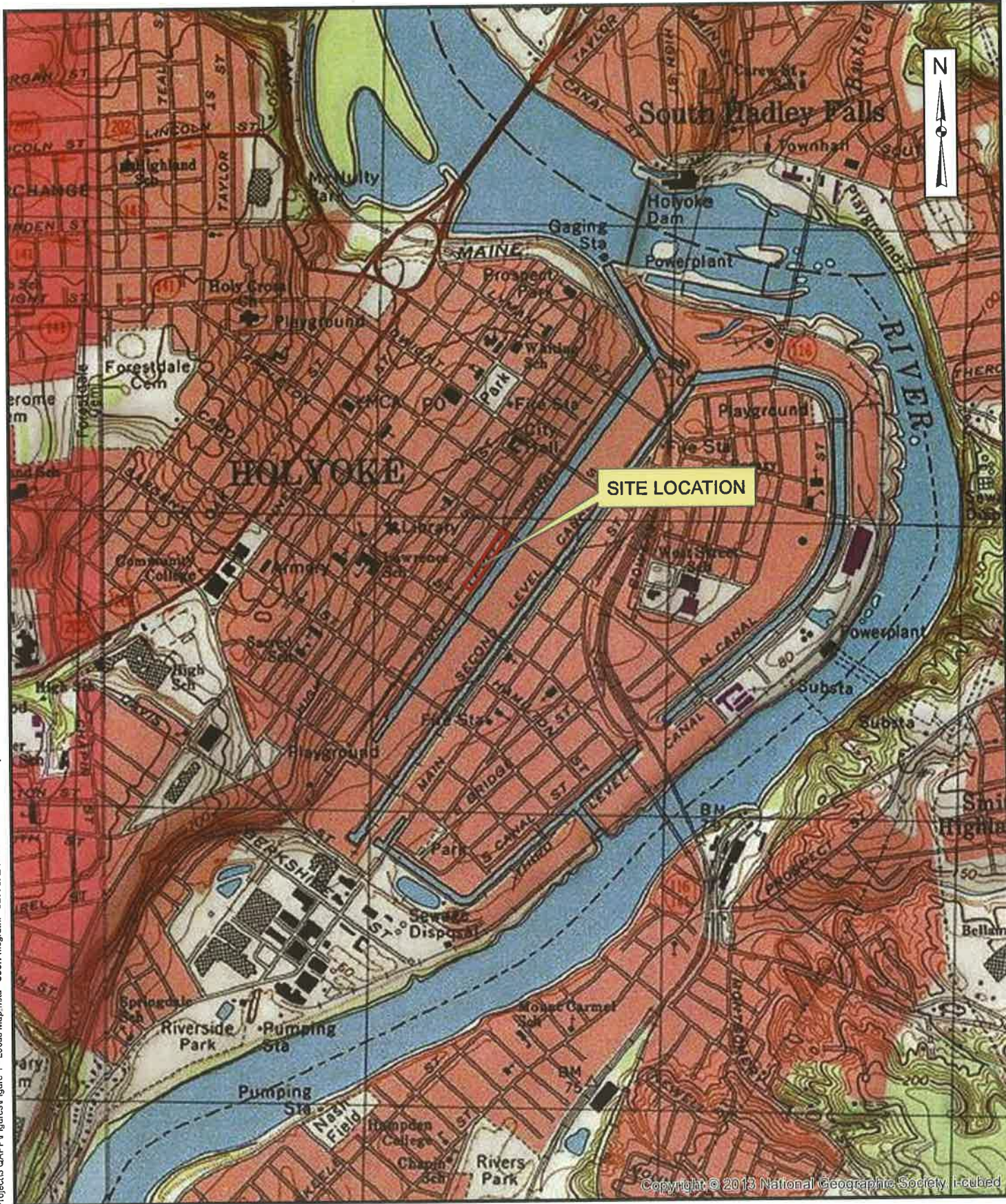
Public notices will be placed on the City website and run on social media announcing the remediation and redevelopment activities at the Site, and to notify residents of upcoming public meetings. The City will also run an advertisement on the local cable access TV channel, send a notice/flyer to immediate abutters and to City-identified stakeholders such as key community groups, historical commission and local politicians. The public notice will announce that prior environmental assessment reports and other pertinent environmental information are available for review in the information repository. The public notice will also announce the start of any required public comment periods and the dates of scheduled public meetings.

### 5.2 ANTICIPATED PROJECT SCHEDULE

| Task   | Estimated Start Date | Estimated Completion Date |
|--|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Publish Public Notice (which will announce public meeting, timing of 30-day public comment period, and availability of information repository) | March 26, 2014       | March 26, 2014            |
| 30-day Public Comment Period for Draft ABCA  | March 26, 2014       | April 26, 2014            |
| Public Meeting to discuss ABCA   | April 7, 2014        | April 7, 2014             |
| End of Public Comment Period   | April 26, 2014       | April 26, 2014            |
| Respond to Comments Received   | April 27, 2014       | April 27, 2014            |
| Finalization of ABCA   | April 29, 2014       | April 29, 2014            |
| Implementation of Remedial Alternative   | May 2014             | June 2014                 |

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**FIGURE 1**  
**FORMER HART WOOL COMBING SITE**  
**216 APPLETON STREET (FORMERLY 130 APPLETON STREET)**  
**HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS**

**LOCUS MAP**

0 2,000 4,000 Feet

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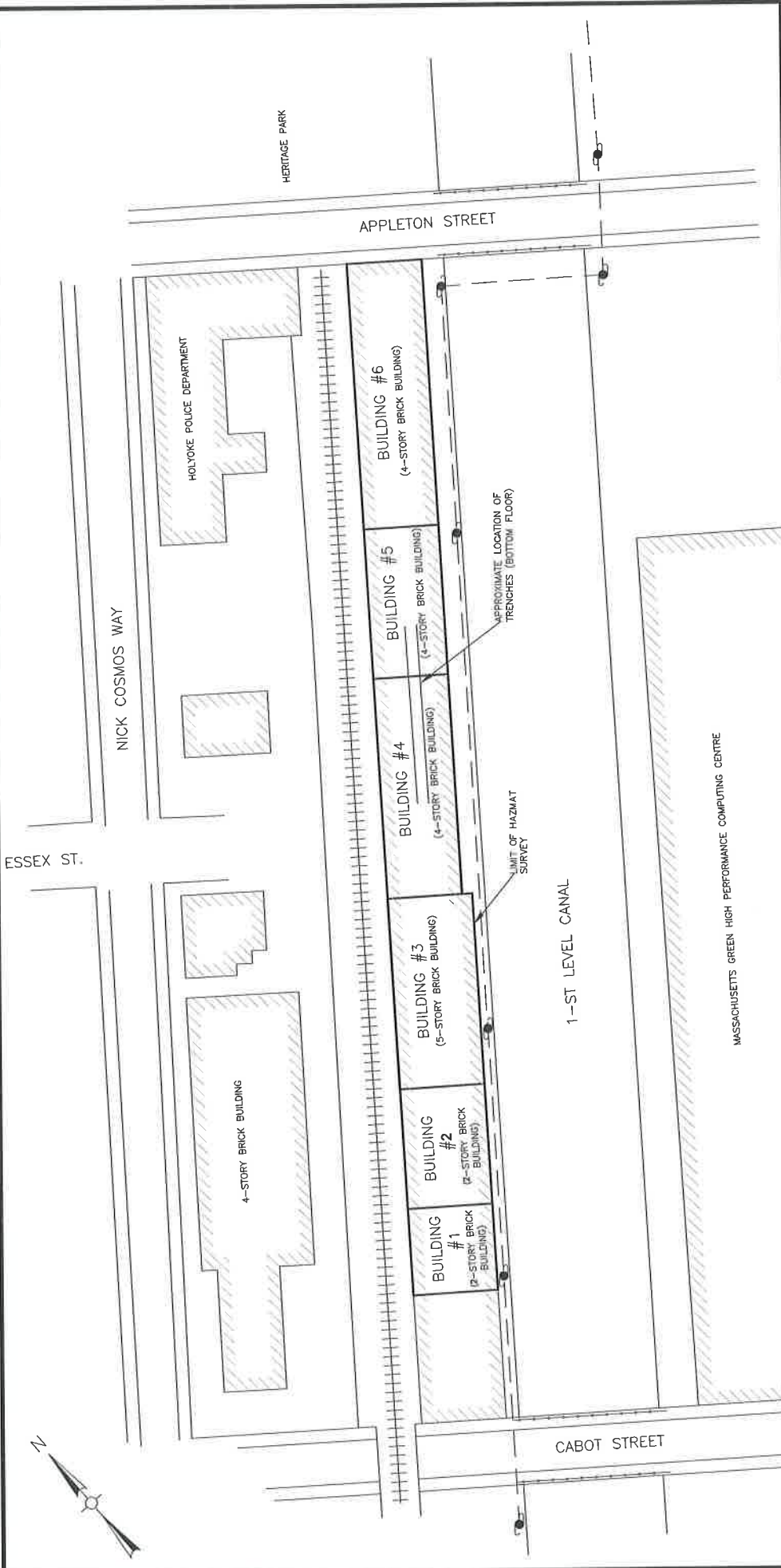


FIGURE 2

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 216 APPLETON STREET (FORMERLY 130 APPLETON STREET) |                                       |
| HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS                             |                                       |
| <b>SITE PLAN</b>                                   |                                       |
| <b>HART WOOL COMBING</b>                           |                                       |
| DESIGNED BY: SQ                                    | CHECKED BY: LEM   DATE: FEBRUARY 2014 |

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- LEGEND**
- OVERHEAD WIRE
  - ++++ RAILROAD TRACKS

**NOTES**  
 THIS SITE PLAN WAS BASED ON INFORMATION TAKEN FROM PREVIOUS SURVEYS MADE BY NOBIS AND TIGHE&BOND.