

# Ouachita Candy Company, Monroe, LA

EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant

Grant Number (FAIN): 02F44801

211-305 Walnut Street, Monroe, Louisiana

Monroe, Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, 71201

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN



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## 1. Overview of the Community Involvement Plan

The City of Monroe is committed to fostering community engagement throughout the environmental cleanup and redevelopment of the former Ouachita Candy Company site. This Community Involvement Plan (CIP) establishes clear methods for sharing information, gathering input, and ensuring meaningful participation from residents, businesses, and stakeholders in the project's decision-making process. The City recognizes the value of open communication and will ensure that all updates, concerns, and opportunities for involvement are shared in a transparent and timely manner.

## 2. Project Background

The **Ouachita Candy Company** site consists of three contiguous, vacant buildings covering approximately 112,000 square feet. Originally developed in the 1920s as a candy and soft drink bottling company, it has since housed various industrial and commercial operations. The site was added to the **National Register of Historic Places** in 2013. The **City of Monroe acquired the property in 2021** for redevelopment as a mixed-use facility with retail, dining, and commercial spaces. However, before redevelopment can begin, environmental cleanup efforts must be completed to ensure public safety and compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.

The site's strategic location in the **Downtown Economic Development District** makes it a high-priority project that aligns with Monroe's long-term economic development goals. The City's investment in this site underscores its commitment to revitalizing the downtown area by preserving historic structures while also addressing environmental and economic concerns.

## 3. Environmental Cleanup and Redevelopment

The following remediation activities will be undertaken to prepare the site for future use:

- **Asbestos abatement** to remove asbestos-containing materials (ACM) from the buildings.
- **Removal of hazardous materials** stored on-site, including old containers and potential contaminants.
- **Selective demolition** of structurally unsafe sections of the buildings.
- **Implementation of air and dust control measures** to protect public health during cleanup activities.
- **Ongoing environmental monitoring** to ensure compliance with safety regulations and mitigate potential risks.

Upon completion, the site will be transformed into a **vibrant mixed-use development**, serving as a catalyst for further economic growth and enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors. The City envisions a space that will house retail, dining, office, riverfront views/access, and community spaces that will contribute to the vibrancy of the downtown district.

## 4. Community Involvement Objectives

The City of Monroe aims to ensure the community is informed and engaged throughout the cleanup and redevelopment process. The objectives of this CIP include:

- **Providing clear and timely information** about project activities.
- **Encouraging community participation** through meetings, surveys, and public events.
- **Addressing public concerns** about environmental safety and site reuse.
- **Incorporating community input** into redevelopment plans.
- **Building trust and transparency** between the City and community members to encourage long-term support and engagement.

## 5. Point of Contact

For project-related inquiries, residents and stakeholders can contact:

### **Will Kirkland, Strategic Programs Manager**

City of Monroe, Louisiana

400 Lea Joyner Expressway, Monroe, LA 71201

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Email: [will.kirkland@ci.monroe.la.us](mailto:will.kirkland@ci.monroe.la.us)

### **Kelsea McCrary, Chief Economic & Cultural Development Officer**

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## 6. Community Engagement Activities

To ensure transparency and accessibility, the City of Monroe has planned the following community outreach efforts:

### **Public Meetings and Engagement Events**

The City will host and participate in a series of public meetings to inform and involve residents in the project. These meetings will provide opportunities for community members to ask questions, express concerns, and offer input on the site's future use.

- **March 10, 2025:** Downtown Merchants Meeting – 717 Venue, 110 Hall Street, Monroe, LA 71201 (*PPM representative attended*)
- **April 6, 2025:** Downtown Gallery Crawl – Downtown Monroe/West Monroe (*Informational tables with QR code for survey participation*)
- **April 19, 2025:** RiverMarket Day 1 – 316 S. Grand St., Monroe, LA 71201 (*Community engagement table with survey and project information*).
- **May 10, 2025:** RiverMarket Day 2 – 316 S. Grand St., Monroe, LA 71201 (*Community engagement table with survey and project information*).
- **March 16-30, 2025:** QR codes on residents' water bills for public survey participation.

## Digital Engagement and Information Distribution

In addition to in-person engagement, the City is committed to leveraging digital tools to enhance public participation.

- **Project Website:** [oneroe.city/candyco](http://oneroe.city/candyco) (Regular updates, reports, and opportunities for public input.)
- **Survey:** Available at community events, on water bills, and online at [oneroe.city/candyco](http://oneroe.city/candyco) for residents to submit feedback.
- **Social Media & News Updates:** The City will utilize social media, local news outlets, and newsletters to share project updates, distribute the survey, and ensure broad community outreach.

## Information Repository

Project documents, reports, and updates will be accessible at:

- **Monroe City Hall, 400 Lea Joyner Expressway, Monroe, LA 71201.**
- **Online via the City of Monroe's official website:** [oneroe.city/candyco](http://oneroe.city/candyco).

## 7. Monitoring and Reporting Progress

The City of Monroe will track community engagement efforts and incorporate feedback into project planning. Updates will be provided through public meetings, social media, and the project website. The completion of the cleanup phase and redevelopment milestones will be celebrated with a public event to acknowledge community involvement.

Additionally, the City will:

- **Maintain a log of community interactions, feedback, and concerns** to ensure all voices are heard and considered.
- **Provide quarterly updates** to EPA on cleanup progress, funding allocation, and redevelopment milestones.
- **Encourage continued participation** through follow-up meetings and surveys to assess community satisfaction and address ongoing concerns.

## 8. Acronyms & Definitions

- **ABCA:** Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives – describes cleanup options and the selected plan.
- **ACM:** Asbestos-Containing Material
- **CIP:** Community Involvement Plan – this document
- **LDEQ:** Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- **Brownfield** – A property where expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. (EPA)
- **Brownfields Cleanup Grant** – EPA grants awarded to eligible applicants to fund environmental cleanup activities at brownfield sites.
- **Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA)** – An initial environmental investigation that includes a historical review, site inspection, and records search to determine potential contamination.
- **Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA)** – A more detailed investigation that involves sampling and laboratory analysis to confirm the presence and extent of contamination at a site.

- **Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA)** – A required document for EPA brownfield cleanup grants that outlines the evaluation of remediation options and the selected cleanup strategy.
- **Risk-Based Corrective Action (RBCA)** – A decision-making process that evaluates contamination risk and considers land use, exposure pathways, and remediation methods.
- **Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP)** – A state-administered program that encourages property owners to clean up contaminated sites by providing regulatory oversight and liability protections.
- **No Further Action (NFA) Letter** – A document issued by regulatory agencies stating that no additional cleanup is required based on site conditions and assessments.
- **Asbestos-Containing Material (ACM)** – Any material with more than 1% asbestos, which requires abatement before redevelopment due to health risks.
- **Lead-Based Paint (LBP)** – Paint containing lead, commonly found in older buildings, which poses health risks and requires proper removal or encapsulation.
- **Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)** – Also known as Superfund, this federal law provides authority for cleaning up contaminated sites and holding responsible parties liable.
- **Environmental Justice (EJ)** – The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, income, or background, in environmental decision-making.
- **Land Use Controls (LUCs)** – Legal or administrative restrictions on the use of a property to prevent exposure to contamination.
- **Institutional Controls (ICs)** – Non-engineered restrictions, such as zoning laws or deed restrictions, used to prevent exposure to contamination at a site.
- **Engineering Controls (ECs)** – Physical barriers or systems, such as capping or groundwater treatment, used to mitigate environmental hazards at a site.
- **State Brownfield Program** – A state-run initiative that provides funding, tax incentives, or technical assistance for brownfield redevelopment.
- **Environmental Site Liability Protection** – Legal protections available to property owners, developers, or investors to limit liability for existing contamination under certain conditions.
- **Groundwater Contamination** – The presence of pollutants in underground water sources, often requiring remediation to prevent exposure.
- **Soil Remediation** – The process of removing, treating, or containing contaminated soil to make a site safe for reuse.
- **EPA Brownfields Program** – A federal initiative that provides funding and guidance for assessing, cleaning up, and redeveloping brownfield sites.

## 9. Contact Information

### Federally Elected Official

**U.S. Representative:** Julia Letlow

1900 North 18th Street, Suite 501, Monroe, LA 71201

Phone: (318) 570-6440

[Contact](#) | [Representative Julia Letlow](#)

**US Senator:** Bill Cassidy, M.D.

1651 Louisville Ave. Suite 123

Monroe, LA 71201

Phone: (318) 324-2111

**US Senator:** John Kennedy

1651 Louisville Avenue, Suite 148

Monroe, LA 71201

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<https://www.kennedy.senate.gov/public/email-me>

### State Elected Officials

**State Representative District 14:** Michael Echols

300 Washington Street, Suite 203, Monroe, LA 71201

Phone: (318) 598-4010

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**State Senator District 35:** John C. “Jay” Morris III

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### Local Officials

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**State Environmental Agency Official**

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**Jennifer Schatzle**, Brownfields and VRP Technical Liaison

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Phone: 225-219-3039

**Media/Local Newspaper**

**The News-Star**

411 N 4th St, Monroe, LA 71201  
Phone: (318) 322-5161  
<https://www.thenewsstar.com>

**Ouachita Citizen**

Ferriday, West Monroe and Winnsboro, LA 71291  
(318) 396-0602  
[The Ouachita Citizen | hannapub.com](http://hannapub.com)

**Environmental Consultant**

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**10. Conclusion**

This Community Involvement Plan ensures transparency, encourages participation, and aims to make the Ouachita Candy Company redevelopment a success that benefits all Monroe residents. By actively engaging with the community, the City of Monroe seeks to revitalize a historic property while fostering economic growth and sustainability in downtown Monroe.

The City remains dedicated to making the redevelopment of the Ouachita Candy Company a model project that balances economic opportunity, environmental responsibility, and community engagement. With a collaborative approach, this effort will ensure a lasting positive impact on Monroe's future.