TO: City Council

FROM: Nick Warner and Brian Pine, CEDO

DATE: May 16, 2013

RE: Public Hearing on Corrective Action Plan for Environmental Remediation of 151 South Champlain Street – Requirement for Vermont Brownfield Revitalization Loan Fund Application

We write to provide background on the Public Hearing scheduled as part of the City Council’s June 10 agenda. The purpose of the hearing is to allow public comment on the implementation of a Revised Corrective Action Plan (2008) for 151 S. Champlain Street, Burlington, VT. The Revised Corrective Action Plan (2008) has already been reviewed and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (“VT DEC”). The owner and developer of the property is South River, LLC, (“South River”) based in Vergennes, VT.

This hearing is being held in accordance with the application requirements of the Vermont Brownfields Revitalization Loan Fund. No City Council action is required except to allow the hearing to occur as part of the scheduled meeting.

The property at 151 South Champlain Street is a Brownfield site,- contaminated property that is slated for redevelopment. The contamination issues at the site are well-documented, and the developer is working proactively with the EPA, VT DEC, the City of Burlington’s Community & Economic Development Office (“CEDO”) on implementing the Revised Corrective Action Plan (2008), and to create a redevelopment plan for the property. The developer anticipates receiving a Certificate of Completion for the Revised Corrective Action Plan (2008) from VT DEC in the near term.

The cause of the contamination was a small release of dry-cleaning chemicals in the late 1940s that migrated down-gradient to adjacent properties. As part of the Revised Corrective Action Plan (2008), all contamination issues have been documented extensively, and basement vapors are presently being monitored and remediated via radon-style venting systems. There was also a legal settlement between several down-gradient owners and the estate of the past owner of the subject property.

The principals of South River have prior experience with Brownfield redevelopment, both in Vermont and in other states. The first phase of the redevelopment involves the rehabilitation of the historic Blinn House into four market-rate rental units. In addition to other sources of funding, South River anticipates receiving federal and State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits for the rehabilitation of the historic Blinn House; South River has already received approval from the National Park Service for the rehabilitation plan for the Blinn House. The second phase of the redevelopment will involve new construction of a to-be-determined number of rental units on the undeveloped portion of the property. This project will have no negative impacts on the past contamination. In fact, this development will deal effectively with on-site contamination issues, and improve the site from an environmental perspective.

Dating back to 2003, considerable CEDO staff time has been invested in the redevelopment of this property, and CEDO’s Brownfields funding was used to conduct numerous Environmental Site Assessments. Overall, the City’s staff is supportive of this project, as it involves the rehabilitation of a historic structure, the environmental remediation of a contaminated site, and provides new housing on a blighted downtown site. Ultimately, this project will also increase the grand list.

