



## Providence Redevelopment Authority

Angel Taveras, Mayor

February 2012

Dear educators, administrators, students and families:

We are writing to update you on the status of the ongoing environmental cleanup activities that are taking place at and in the vicinity of the Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School (Alvarez School).

### **BACKGROUND**

The property where the Alvarez School is located is part of a larger piece of property that between 1890 and 1985 was home to the Gorham Manufacturing Company (see image of current site use). At the height of its operation, the Gorham Manufacturing Company consisted of over 30 buildings and employed over 2,000 people for the production of silver and bronze pieces that were distributed all over the world. As an unintended result of 95 years of industrial activities, soil and groundwater on the property were impacted with contaminants.

Environmental investigation and cleanup activities conducted under the oversight of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) have been ongoing for several years and will continue throughout the 2011/12 school year and beyond.

The intent of this letter is to inform the Alvarez School community about: 1) The work already completed and controls that are in place at the Alvarez School to prevent any exposure to contamination; 2) The planned work that will occur on properties next to the Alvarez School during the school year; 3) Where reports and correspondence related to the former Gorham Manufacturing facility can be viewed; and 4) Contact information for individuals who can answer any questions you may have in relationship to these issues.

### **WORK COMPLETED/CONTROLS IN PLACE**

When the Alvarez School was constructed in 2007, RIDEM reviewed and approved all plans submitted by the City of Providence to ensure that once constructed, all future students, teachers and staff would not be exposed to contamination. To accomplish this goal, controls were included in the construction of the school that included placing a sufficient thickness of clean soil and pavement over contaminated underlying soil and installing vapor extraction units beneath the floor of the school (which prevent vapors from entering the school). The vapor extraction units are equipped with a continuous monitoring system and as an added measure, the City of Providence samples air within the building 4 times each year. The City successfully completed construction of all required controls, and monitoring performed to date has shown that there is no exposure to site contaminants.

Additional information on other controls and work completed at other areas of the former Gorham Manufacturing site can be viewed at the locations identified below.

### **PLANNED 2011/12 SCHOOL YEAR CLEANUP ACTIVITIES**

During the fall and winter of the 2011/12 school year, Textron has conducted planning and design activities for work that is scheduled to start in the spring of 2012 to address contaminated soils on the property located behind Alvarez School and next to Mashapaug Pond. These activities will consist of clearing trees from certain areas, grading soil, importing clean soil, and planting grass and wetland plant species. Once completed, contaminated soil will be safely isolated and not accessible in the future. During the construction activities, Textron's environmental consultant, AMEC, will implement controls and conduct monitoring to ensure that there is no concern connected to dust that might be generated by the construction activities.

Additional work to address contaminated groundwater that is primarily located under the retail property next to the school will take place in 2012, possibly beginning before the end of the school year.

**WHERE TO VIEW ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Project documents for the former Gorham Manufacturing can be viewed at the following website:

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/waste/gorham.htm>

In addition, project documents are available at the Knight Memorial Library located at 275 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, RI 02907 – (401) 467-2625.

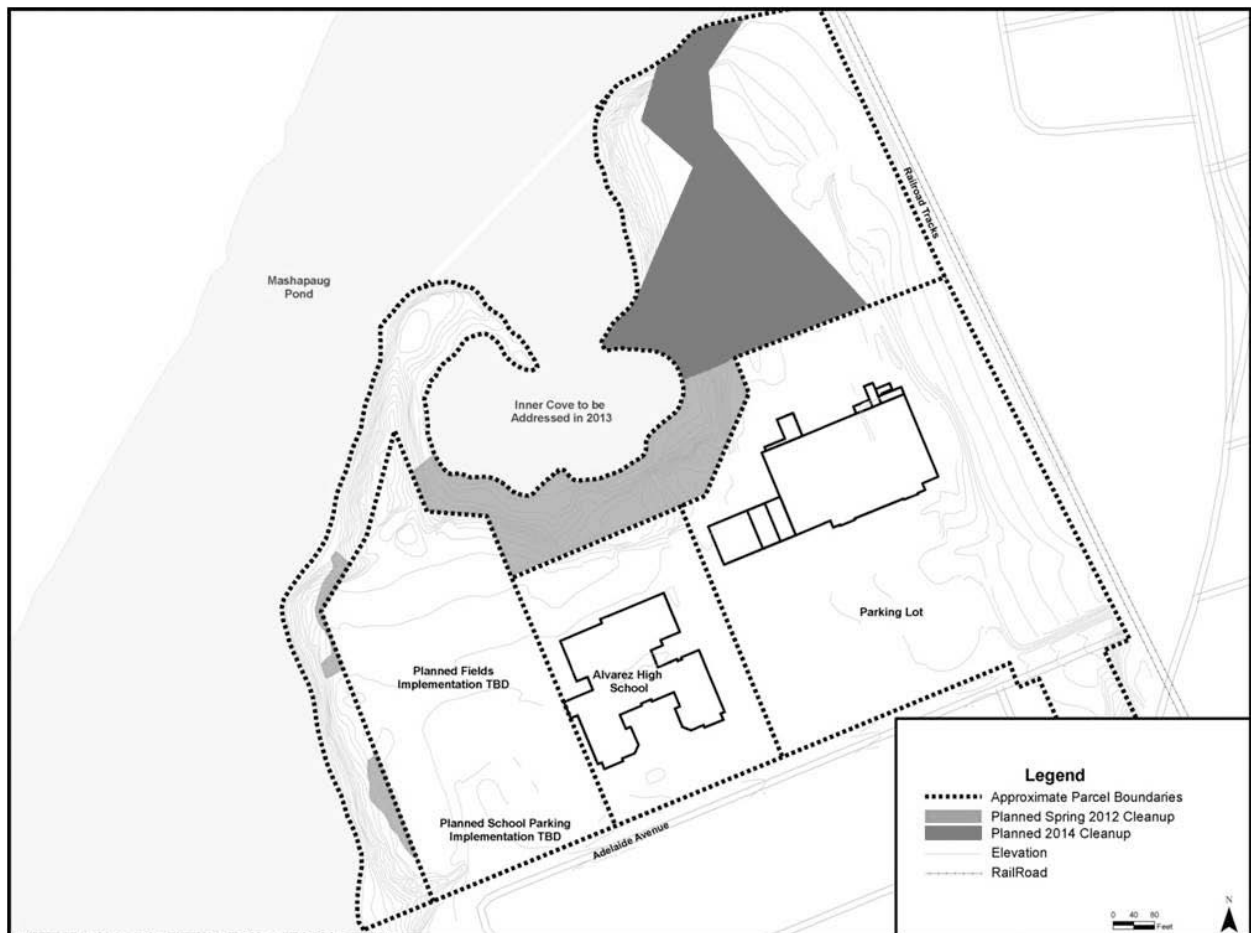
**CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS**

**For questions regarding current monitoring and past cleanup activities at the Alvarez High School property,** please contact: Ronald Mack, EA Engineering, (401) 736-3440 ext. 218 or [rmack@eaest.com](mailto:rmack@eaest.com)

**For questions regarding cleanup activities on properties next to the school,** please contact: Greg Simpson, Textron Inc., (401) 457-2635 or [gsimpson@textron.com](mailto:gsimpson@textron.com); or Joe Martella, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, (401) 222-2797 ext. 7109 or [joseph.martella@dem.ri.gov](mailto:joseph.martella@dem.ri.gov).

**To be added to the contact list for future public meetings regarding the cleanup of the property,** please contact: Amelia Rose, Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island, (401) 383-7441 or [amelia.rose@ejlri.org](mailto:amelia.rose@ejlri.org)

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.



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