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Tighe & Bond and Boston Community Capital's brownfield clean up paves way for Mill Street Solar success

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Earlier this summer, Boston Community Capital completed its Mill Street solar project. The resulting one megawatt ground mounted solar array, which was developed in conjunction with the city of Gardner and the Gardner Redevelopment Authority, is part of Gardner's Mill Street Urban Renewal Plan. Located on a remediated brownfield site (the former Bent Mill furniture mill), environmental cleanup and demolition were critical in paving the way for this solar project that is slated to help offset local energy costs.

For more than 10 years, Tighe & Bond has provided brownfields assessment, environmental cleanup services, demolition engineering, and other related services to the city of Gardner for the Mill Street Corridor, which is comprised of 55 acres. The former Bent Mill facility totals 27 acres, and is located at one end of the corridor. The Bent Mill consisted of more than 25 interconnected buildings that need to be assessed and demolished as part of the Mill Street Urban development plan, and site preparation to make way for the new solar array.

Tighe & Bond's work included comprehensive Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments, and assisting the city of Gardner with securing additional remediation grants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for this site. In 2012, Tighe & Bond assisted Boston Community Capital with their development of the Urban Renewal Plan for the Mill Street Corridor by developing an Existing Conditions and Cleanup Plan for that area.

According to Trevor Beauregard, director of the city of Gardner's Department of Community Development and Planning, "The Mill Street solar project has been a perfect example of how the public and private sectors can partner to achieve the goals of our community. The Gardner Redevelopment Authority, along with the Mayor's Office, worked in concert with Tighe & Bond to remediate this brownfields site, and develop it into a revenue generating success."

In addition to the Mill Street Solar site preparation, Tighe & Bond has assisted the city of Gardner with the development of other solar projects throughout the city. This includes conducting solar feasibility studies at a variety of other municipal sites including the Gardner Airport, the Gardner Wastewater Treatment Facility, the Summit Industrial Park, and the Gardner Sludge Drying Facility. Tighe & Bond also assisted the city of Gardner with the development of a Request for Qualifications for a private solar developer to construct the projects, and enter into a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with the city for the sale of the power. Borrego Solar Systems, Inc. - which also constructed the Mill Street Solar project - was ultimately selected following the city's review of proposals.

Founded in 1911, Tighe & Bond is one of the most experienced engineering firms in New England, with offices in Pocasset, Westfield, and Worcester, Mass.; Middletown and Shelton, Conn.; and Portsmouth, N.H.

Engineering News Record annually ranks Tighe & Bond among the top design and environmental engineering firms nationally. ZweigWhite also has recognized Tighe & Bond several times as one of the best engineering firms to work for in the nation.

With a team of more than 250 employees, Tighe & Bond provides engineering and environmental services for clients in government, industry, healthcare, education, real estate, energy, and water/wastewater markets.

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