

For Immediate Release
May 18, 2022

Contact: Dennise R. Casey
dennise@dennisecasey.com

**Community Connection: Local Entrepreneurs Team Up to Revitalize South End Land
with Bathhouse, Bowling and Public Space**

*Former industrial parcel is part of federal and state brownfield reclamation efforts and
new spaces for the community to come together will be created*

Burlington, VT – Burlington residents and local entrepreneurs, Jovial King and Alex Crothers have teamed up on a new project that brings together their decades of experience growing businesses that create economic opportunity and enhance community connection.

Their project consists of two unique businesses and a commitment to create public open space. Silt Botanica, a state-of-the-art Nordic-inspired bathhouse and wellness space, will include indoor and outdoor pools, saunas, cold plunges, steam rooms and botanical gardens. Backside Bowl will be a two-story contemporary bowling alley and community gathering space that embraces the South End Arts District aesthetic. Incorporating local food and beverage offerings, Backside Bowl will provide multiple lanes of traditional and duckpin bowling. Both projects are designed to bring people together, create opportunities for connection and offer the community something new and not currently available in the city.

Lastly, the project includes a commitment to open space through the donation of land, which will be achieved with leadership from the City of Burlington. This process will take place over the next several years and involve inclusive planning and public input. The open and public space could include art installations, walking trails, and Burlington Bike Path access.

The project will turn the once-contaminated “brownfield” on Pine Street south of the Maltex Building into a vibrant new multi-use space, using best practices for environmental reclamation, much like the Burlington Waterfront.

King is an herbalist and founder of Urban Moonshine, a nationally distributed brand of herbal remedies, which she sold to Traditional Medicinals in 2017. Crothers is the founder and co-owner of Higher Ground, the music venue and promoter that has been bringing music and shared experiences to Vermont for decades.

King said this project is about healing the land, and creating places for people to find connection, which is more important today than perhaps any other time in our lives.

“We see this place as an antidote to loneliness at a time when we all need more opportunities to gather. We are committed to building a welcoming, body-positive and inclusive space. Silt Botanica will provide an opportunity to more easily prioritize wellness in our lives. That’s what Urban Moonshine was about as well. I am excited to bring this new and beautiful project to life and we are psyched to see the enthusiasm and support from the community already.”

Crothers added, “Shared experiences have been an endangered species the last two years. As longtime local residents who are raising families here, our simple goal is to add to the vibrancy, creativity and wonder that makes Burlington a special place. The South End is a growing hub of makers, artists, and community spaces that are vibrating with energy. Bowling is affordable, it’s accessible, it’s multigenerational, and it’s pure fun.”

Construction and development details are still being finalized but the team hopes to break ground next spring. Before construction, brownfield remediation will be completed in partnership with the Agency of Natural Resources Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Vermont’s Congressional Delegation, Governor Phil Scott and environmental experts have long supported the redevelopment of once-industrial sites like this for both the economic value and environmental benefits. This project will benefit from state and federal brownfields redevelopment funds, as well as support from other agencies.

“It is gratifying to see this piece of our South End come to life with this great new project,” said Senator Patrick Leahy, who has long championed federal appropriations for brownfields redevelopment work. “Along with places like the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, this is another tangible and practical example of how federal policies can support real world efforts to strengthen our communities.”

Senator Sanders said, “Vermont’s commitment to our environment and our communities has put us at the forefront of brownfield clean-up across the country. Turning these once-polluted sites into community spaces that are affordable and accessible is an important step in our shared goals of protecting our local economies and making the environment safer, healthier and able to thrive. As a member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, which has oversight of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), I will continue to work to ensure the federal Brownfields Program receives the support and funding needed to continue this important work and I look forward to seeing this project move forward.”

Congressman Welch added, “This exciting new project highlights the best of what Vermonters can do by working together to make our communities better. By redeveloping this brownfield, Burlington will gain economic, social and environmental benefits. I want to commend the team who is working hard to turn this project into a healthy and fun place to visit in our community.”

“As I travel around the state visiting sites like this, I see job creation and economic opportunity where it was not possible before and that is absolutely critical to ensuring Vermont is an affordable place to live and raise a family,” said Governor Phil Scott.

Katharine Montstream is a widely respected arts leader in Burlington and maintains a studio at the Soda Plant, also on Pine Street. “Twenty years ago, I painted on the edges of the Barge Canal and always hoped it would be accessible for residents to explore in the future,” she shared. “Silt Botanica and Backside Bowl is the perfect combination to make Pine Street just that much more extraordinary. This is incredible news for the South End and Northern Vermont, for that matter.”

The South End Arts + Business Association (SEABA) serves to bring together artists and businesses to support a thriving city district. “SEABA is thrilled to welcome this great new project to our South End community,” said Christy Mitchell, SEABA’s Executive Director. “We’re excited for a development on this property that will serve as a unique gathering space, while leaving much of the land to nature. SEABA is especially eager to collaborate on art installations to bring opportunities to our creative community, further enhancing the vibrant South End Arts District.”

King and Crothers are committed to continuing to engage with the community as the project moves forward. You can learn more [here](#).

###