

Trenton, New Jersey—The Crane Site

Key Players

City of Trenton

State of New Jersey

Isles, Inc. (local Community Development Corporation)

Jeffrey Faigle (local developer)

Background

Trenton's 11-acre Crane Site was developed for manufacturing in the late 1800s as the Cook Pottery Company. It was used for pottery production until 1960, when it became Crane pottery and storage, and was abandoned soon after. In 1972, Trenton acquired the site and demolished its buildings. The Crane site was the largest single industrial site in the Trenton's brownfields inventory.

Project Features

In 1995, Trenton signed a memorandum of agreement with New Jersey, entering the site into the state's Voluntary Cleanup Program. The property has been subdivided into two separate sites for purposes of redevelopment. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection issued a no-further-action letter with no restrictions for one of the sites and a portion of the second site so that development could continue. The other portion of the second site was contaminated with petroleum.

Because pumping did not affect the groundwater contamination, a Canadian firm called EcoRemediation offered a new technology to identify the location of the contamination. The technology purges the soil for few minutes to decrease gas or vapor concentrations; when concentrations are stabilized, ventilation is stopped and the amount of gas or hydrocarbons transferred to air soil is then evaluated. The soil then is excavated and disposed, while groundwater remediation continues.

Once areas of contamination were defined, local developer Jeffery Faigle stepped in and purchased a 1.5-acre parcel of the site, which was found to have no contamination. When the city subdivided the rest of the Crane site to create four additional lots, Faigle's company purchased all of them.

The redevelopment has paid careful attention to maintaining the character of the community. The city collaborated with Isles Inc., a local nonprofit community development corporation, to encourage community interest and involvement in the project. Meetings were held and a quarterly newsletter informed the community about the development. As a result, illegal dumping at the site has nearly stopped.

Financing

U.S. EPA awarded Trenton a \$200,000-Brownfields Pilot grant in 1995, which targeted four sites, including the Crane site. The site investigation was partly funded by the State of New Jersey with \$60,409 from the Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund program. Another \$7,150 came from the state's Urban Enterprise Zone Assistance Fund.

The developer paid \$40,000 for the construction of an asphalt cap, and the city paid \$176,000 for subsurface remediation. The Faigle company spent \$4.75 million on the new infrastructure for the Commerce Center, including the construction of new buildings such as the \$300,000, 10,800-square-foot candle-making facility.



The Commerce Center before and after redevelopment

Impact

ANA Candle Design, the first new factory on the Crane site, opened in early 1998, and P & G Trading—a fish processing and distribution facility—was completed at the end of 1998. The Tektite factory, which manufactures underwater lighting, was completed at the end of 1999. The major economic benefits from the facility have been the creation of 60 construction jobs and over 45 permanent manufacturing jobs, mainly employing city residents. In addition, the center is capturing a portion of the region’s retail sales. The candle factory holds popular warehouse sales and the fish plant sells fish, cooking oil, and spices through a retail outlet on the site.

The site also has architectural merit beyond the physical design of the facilities, which has a wider impact on the urban fabric of the neighborhood. In planning the site, the architect and developer were sensitive to the residential environs. They introduced a new street edge that has helped to define the setting of the new buildings in relation to the main street, North Clinton Avenue, including the planting of street trees and landscaping throughout the Center.

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