

RETURN TO USE INITIATIVE

2006 Demonstration Project

KANSAS CITY STRUCTURAL STEEL

Kansas City, Kansas

THE SITE: Companies refined and manufactured steel at the 22-acre Kansas City Structural Steel site (the Site) for more than a century. Steel fabrication produced byproducts that contaminated soil and ground water with heavy metals, including lead. Site cleanup took place from 1990 to 1995. The Site's potentially responsible party (PRP) implemented cleanup activities under EPA oversight. The PRP removed contaminated soils and used clean fill to backfill excavated areas. In addition to removing bricks contaminated with asbestos, the PRP decontaminated, demolished and removed site buildings.

THE OPPORTUNITY: The Site is located near roads and rail lines in an industrial, commercial and residential area. The community has expressed interest in a variety of services, ranging from a grocery store and restaurants to new recreation facilities and green space. El Centro, a local nonprofit, acquired the property in 1995 after signing an agreement with EPA to ensure the long-term protectiveness of the remedy. El Centro's mission is "strengthening communities and improving lives of Latinos and others through educational, social, and economic opportunities." Since then, the organization has remained committed to supporting local economic development efforts. In 2013, the Lane4 Property Group expressed interest in developing a shopping center at the Site.

THE BARRIERS: Institutional controls limit building construction at the Site. Crawl spaces, but not basements, are permitted. A 4-foot layer of clean fill must remain below the finished grade of any improvements. Special guidelines for handling hazardous materials apply to foundations and support structures extending below areas of clean fill. Additionally, part of the Site, the consolidated fill area,



PICTURED: The cleaned-up Site and adjacent railroad, June 2013. (Source: EPA)

BARRIERS: Uncertainty about site development restrictions and appropriate uses.

SOLUTION: Preliminary reuse assessment by EPA brought local stakeholders together and provided them with site information.



PICTURED: Walmart Neighborhood Market at La Plaza Argentine, September 2014. (Source: EPA)

BEFORE: Cleaned-up site with construction and development restrictions.

AFTER: A new shopping center with 61,000 square feet of commercial retail space.

is fenced off. Given that many development projects need to work below grade, these restrictions deterred developers from pursuing potential reuse opportunities at the Site for several years.

THE SOLUTION: EPA proposed a preliminary reuse assessment to identify feasible and protective future uses, helping El Centro and potential developers understand site conditions and limitations. EPA's site team facilitated a series of discussions with community stakeholders, including local officials, the property realtor and El Centro. With everyone on the same page, reuse planning moved forward smoothly when the Lane4 Property Group approached El Centro. EPA and state officials also helped the developer enroll in the Kansas Environmental Use Controls Program. The program helps parties maintain site remedies and make sure the remedies remain protective during construction and reuse.

THE SITE NOW: The Lane4 Property Group broke ground on La Plaza Argentine shopping center in March 2014. The 61,000-square-foot development includes a new Walmart Neighborhood Market. At the grand opening ceremony held on September 10, 2014, EPA Region 7 presented the Leading Environmentalism and Forwarding Sustainability (LEAFS) award to Walmart and the Argentine Neighborhood Development Association for their efforts to reuse the Site. The Walmart Neighborhood Market provides about 85 new jobs and opportunities for the local community. Four other lots are available for other stores. New retail construction borders the Site to the east, and community efforts are supporting recreation improvements at nearby Vega Park. Looking forward, EPA will continue to work with site stakeholders to address their concerns and support the Site's productive reuse.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: Tonya Howell, Region 7 Superfund Redevelopment Coordinator, at (913) 551-7589 or howell.tonya@epa.gov.