

Celebrating Success: Boomsnub/Airco Superfund Site Vancouver, Washington



Superfund
Redevelopment
Initiative



The undeveloped site prior to construction of the Luke Jensen Sports Park (Source: EPA)

Vancouver, Washington, is a small city with big ideas. For more than a decade, it has focused on community revitalization. As part of these efforts, local leadership and partnerships with EPA Region 10 and the Washington State Department of Ecology have led to the successful cleanup and reuse of part of the Boomsnub/Airco Superfund site (the Site). Today, the area remains home to commercial and industrial businesses and residences. It also now hosts part of Luke Jensen Sports Park. The 20-acre park includes sports fields, trails, playgrounds and meeting space. Other redevelopment projects in the city include hotels, a shopping complex and a new library. Looking forward, the community is staying true to its motto – “A colorful past, a bright future.”

“There’s nothing else like it in the area, and I don’t know anything like it in [the area], as nice as it is.”

Bud Van Cleve, Northeast Hazel Dell Neighborhood Association



Construction of Luke Jensen Sports Park (Source: The Columbian)

The future did not always look so bright. Chrome-plating and gas manufacturing operations responsible for the Site’s soil and ground water contamination began in the 1960s. EPA listed the Site on the Superfund program’s National Priorities List for cleanup in 1995. Cleanup included soil removal, building demolition and enhanced ground water treatment. Today, human exposure is under control. EPA will continue to pump and treat ground water until it meets drinking water standards.

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As cleanup progressed, local governments expressed interest in developing a park on a property located in industrial/residential area above the Site’s contaminated ground water plume. The property sits a quarter of a mile from the Site’s source and removal areas. The City of Vancouver and Clark County consulted with EPA Region 10 and the Washington State Department of Ecology to ensure people would be protected and the planned park would be compatible with the Site’s remedy. With contamination located 50 to 90 feet below the ground surface, EPA determined that people would not be exposed to the contaminants during construction or use of the property. The community broke ground on Luke Jensen Sports Park in 2011, with Clark County Public Works and Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation spearheading the effort. Funding for the \$9.1-million park came from property taxes collected by the Greater Clark Parks District and real estate taxes. The park’s name honors a local child who died of leukemia.



Aerial view of the Luke Jensen Sports Park, including the five fields and the Bud Van Cleve Community Room (Source: City of Vancouver)

Luke Jensen Sports Park opened in 2012. It includes synthetic turf fields for baseball, soccer and lacrosse, two natural turf baseball fields, batting cages, walking trails, a playground, parking and other amenities. The 2,200-square-foot Bud Van Cleve Community Room provides meeting space for more than 100 people. Since its opening, the facility has been a smash hit. It has received a Community Pride Design Award as well as the Best New Sports Complex Award from the Washington Recreation & Park Association.