



# Sites in Reuse

## Arlington Blending and Packaging Superfund Site

12121 Highway 70, Arlington, Tennessee 38002



Images from left to right: Entrance sign at Mary Alice Park, playground equipment and flower beds, and exercise equipment on site.

**Site Size:** 2.3 acres

**Current Site Uses:** Mary Alice Park

### INTRODUCTION

The Arlington Blending and Packaging Superfund site, once an abandoned industrial site, is now a valued local resource. The community identified potential future uses for the site and the local government acquired the property and secured a grant to fund the construction of a park, which opened in 2006. The town of Arlington has worked with EPA to ensure that the recreational uses at the site are compatible with the remedy.

### SITE HISTORY

The site is located about 25 miles northeast of Memphis in a rapidly growing area of Shelby County. From 1971 to 1978, Arlington Blending and Packaging operated a pesticide processing facility at the site. Spills and leaks from operations resulted in contaminated soils, sediments, and groundwater. In 1990, EPA investigations identified contaminants concentrated around the concrete pad at the processing facility. The site's remedy included monitored natural attenuation for groundwater contamination and the excavation, stockpiling, treatment and backfilling of over 41,000 tons of contaminated soil. Groundwater monitoring is ongoing; Shelby County ordinances prevent groundwater use or well construction within a half-mile of the site.

### LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD: THE REUSE PLANNING PROCESS

In 2004, Arlington officials started considering the site's reuse potential. The blighted, vacant area was a highly visible eyesore along the U.S. Highway 70 corridor. With support from EPA, a group of citizens and local government representatives worked to address a range of site-related concerns and developed a community vision for a neighborhood park. The town of Arlington then purchased the site property and secured a federal grant to fund park design and construction.

Initially, the site's history presented barriers to its reuse. Elected officials in Arlington were hesitant to reuse a former Superfund site. Additionally, the town's legal staff expressed concerns about the town taking on potential liability for site contamination. EPA officials worked with the town of Arlington to address the community's reuse and liability concerns. EPA provided the town of Arlington with two documents – a comfort letter and a Ready for Reuse (RfR) Determination.

The comfort letter described the liability protection provisions available to the town as the site's prospective purchaser. Highlighting specific steps the town could take to limit its liability, the comfort letter satisfied the town's legal counsel and helped the locality qualify as a bona fide prospective purchaser for the site. The RfR

Determination summarized EPA's cleanup activities at the site, and stated that the site had been cleaned up to a standard that would permit recreational reuse. According to Town Superintendent Ed Haley, "without the Ready for Reuse Determination, there's no way we could have ever convinced people that here's a property that was once a Superfund site, and we're going to put it to use."

Area residents had previously expressed a desire for a new public park in town. EPA funded a reuse planning effort that helped the community consider recreation opportunities for the site and ensure the protectiveness of its remedy. Residents from the Mary Alice neighborhood and town officials worked with a consultant team to develop a reuse plan. The group expressed a shared interest in a combination of active and passive recreation opportunities. A series of design alternatives integrated the group's vision with site characteristics and remedy constraints. The final design selected by the group included a half-court basketball court, exercise stations, trails, gardens and tree buffers to separate park activities from nearby land uses.

Town officials then moved forward with plans to acquire the site property and fund park construction. Town officials acquired the tax-delinquent property from the site's former owner and received the adjacent 0.6-acre Helena Chemical property as a donation. In the fall of 2005, Arlington received a \$300,000 community development block grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to fund the park's final design and construction.

Mary Alice Park, named for the nearby subdivision, opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on November 15, 2006. The park includes a playground, half-court basketball court, field space, walking and biking trails, and exercise stations. It also includes signs that explain the history of the area and celebrate its successful redevelopment. In 2009, EPA Region 4 recognized

*Disclaimer:* EPA does not warrant that the property is suitable for any particular use. Prospective purchasers must contact the property owner for sale potential.



A historic marker on the site discussing the site's history.

the town's leadership with its Excellence in Site Reuse award.

Reuse planning and community outreach at the Arlington Blending and Packaging site have led to remarkable outcomes. Public perceptions of the area changed over time, residents participated in the development of site reuse plans, and Mary Alice Park now provides a valuable recreation resource for the community. Today, EPA continues to monitor the effectiveness of the site's remedy to ensure its long-term protectiveness.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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Site Summary: [www.epa.gov/superfund/arlington-blending](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/arlington-blending)



In May 2017, EPA established a task force to restore the Superfund program to its rightful place at the center of the Agency's core mission to protect health and the environment.

[epa.gov/superfund/superfund-task-force](http://epa.gov/superfund/superfund-task-force)