

## Ionia City Landfill

Cleveland Street  
Ionia, Michigan 48846

### Property Overview

#### Size

20 acres

#### Current Site Uses

- Harper Municipal Park
- Right of way for Fred Thwaites Grand River Rail Trail

#### Use Restrictions

- Land use restriction prohibits any construction or digging at the site's source area.
- Groundwater use is restricted in the broader area impacted by the site.

#### Surrounding Population

**3,390**  
1 MILE

**14,997**  
3 MILES

**18,623**  
5 MILES

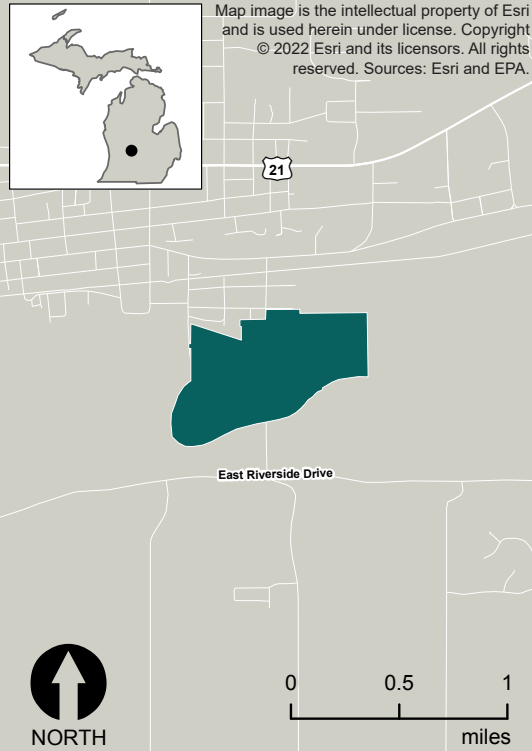


Figure 1. The location of the Ionia City Landfill site in Michigan

### Site History and Redevelopment Timeline

#### 1950s-1969

Site used as a disposal area for municipal, commercial and industrial wastes.

#### 1983

EPA added the site to the Superfund program's National Priorities List (NPL).

#### 1983-1999

EPA oversaw cleanup activities, including removal of drums and contaminated soil, construction of a protective clay cap and installation of groundwater treatment system.

#### 2008

EPA deactivated the groundwater treatment system after the successful removal of contaminants.

#### 2010

The site achieved EPA's Sitewide Ready for Anticipated Use (SWRAU) performance measure.

#### 2012

EPA established a long-term monitoring plan to ensure the site remains protective of human health and the environment.

#### Present

The site supports ongoing reuses, including a park and a throughway for a local rail trail.

## History and Cleanup

The Ionia City Landfill was owned and operated by the city of Ionia (the City) from the mid-1950s until its closure in 1969. Activities at the site contaminated surrounding soil and groundwater. EPA added the site to the NPL in 1983. Following a site investigation, EPA established a cleanup plan that included removing contaminated soils and drums, fencing the source areas and installing a groundwater monitoring system. Under direction from EPA, the City first targeted the source areas of contamination. The City removed contaminated soils and drums, fenced source areas and installed a clay cap in 1985. The City completed installation of a water treatment system in 1999. The groundwater treatment system was shown to be effective and was deactivated in 2008.

Other cleanup components include institutional controls, which are land use restrictions to help prevent the further spread of contamination. These restrictions prevent any construction or excavation on the site's two source areas and use of groundwater in a broader area.

In 2010, the site achieved EPA's SWRAU performance measure, indicating that all cleanup goals have been met, there are no unacceptable human health risks and land use restrictions are in place.

## Redevelopment

The site provides beneficial recreational reuses to the nearby community. A 3-mile rail trail, the Fred Thwaites Grand River Rail Trail, passes through the site. This paved trail traverses through wooded areas, across restored railroad bridges and follows the Grand River. It provides recreational access for running, walking and biking. Fences along the site's source areas provide a barrier between recreationalists and the source areas. This allows reuse that remains protective of human health and avoids disruption to the site's capped area.

The site area is also home to Harper Municipal Park. The 5-acre park includes a range of amenities for the local community, including a playground, a picnic area with grills and covered seating, a baseball field and parking. EPA's remedy and the City's cleanup have ensured that activities at the park are protective of human health. In 2020, the park received a major upgrade with the help of a state grant. Upgrades included more inclusive and accessible equipment on the playground, revamping the picnic area, paving the parking lot and connecting the park to the Fred Thwaites Grand River Rail Trail.

With coordination among local, state, and federal stakeholders, the Ionia City Landfill Superfund site provides a great example of how once-contaminated areas can experience new life. The site is now a recreation corridor that allows opportunities for the community to gather and be active.



Figure 2. Rail trail



Figure 3. Harper Municipal Park, including playground and baseball field, as seen from the rail trail

## Contacts

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