

Kenosha Harbor Redevelopment

PUB-RR-762

November, 2006

Kenosha Harbor Park Redevelopment (Former Simmons Mattress and American Motor Corporation)

55th St. and 5th Ave.
Kenosha, WI
Kenosha County

69 Acres

**Location: Near downtown Kenosha on
the shore of Lake Michigan**

A former brownfield serving as a mattress factory, foundry and an automobile plant is cleaned up and redeveloped, helping revitalize Kenosha's waterfront.

History

From 1870 to 1960, this large brownfield site operated as the Simmons Mattress manufacturing plant. After 1960, American Motors Corporation (AMC) began manufacturing cars there until 1988. Portions of the site were also used for a power plant, coal yard and dock. An adjacent 26.5-acre parcel of the property was also used to dispose of contaminated sediment for more than 15 years.

In the late 1980s, the manufacturing plant was decommissioned and demolished and



The former American Motors plant, circa 1960s. Numerous industrial activities occurred on this 70-acre site for nearly 100 years, including a mattress manufacturer and power plant (DNR photo).

investigation and cleanup of the property began. The property was sold to the city of Kenosha in 1994.

Investigation & Cleanup

Spills on the site had occurred for many years due to loading activities, chemical storage and underground storage tanks (USTs) located on the property. Solvents, petroleum and lead were present in the soil, posing public health concerns. Eleven USTs were removed and approximately 6,000 cubic yards of excavated contaminated soil were disposed off the site.

Several thousand gallons of groundwater were pumped from the excavations and also disposed off site. A layer of soil and pavement, which incorporated redevelopment features, was placed on the property.



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr>



Redevelopment

The former industrial site now offers a wide variety of residential and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of Kenosha. Kenosha Harbor Park provides one-quarter mile of a lakefront promenade with courtyards, fountains and public seating areas. A separate recreation trail connects the park to a 250-boat marina.

In addition to regular bus routes, city officials also added an electric street car system that runs through the development, linking it with nearby downtown Kenosha and rail service to Milwaukee and Chicago.

Commercial properties include condominiums, outdoor cafes and a farmers market. The new Kenosha Public Museum also draws people to the lakefront and houses numerous exhibits, including the remains of a woolly mammoth discovered in Kenosha County.

The park has also opened up new access to Lake Michigan, created housing and business opportunities as well provided a year-long gathering place for Kenosha residents.

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

Along with funding from the city, more than \$2.5 million in state and federal funds were also provided, including an \$850,000 brownfield grant from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce and \$880,000 in brownfields grants and environmental assessments from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The city also receive three Certificates of Completion (COC's) from the DNR through the agency's Voluntary Party Liability Exemption (VPLE) process. An additional three more COC's are pending.

Thanks to these efforts, property values at the site increased \$50 million from 1989-2003, nearby property values increased by more than



Part of the new Kenosha Harbor redevelopment, which includes electric street car service from the lakeshore to downtown Kenosha, connecting residents to train and bus service to Milwaukee and Chicago (DNR photo).

\$13 million, 22 jobs were created, and the improved harbor redevelopment helped increase property taxes by nearly \$900,000 in 2003.

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