

AutoZone

PUB-RR-797

May, 2008

In The Brownfields AutoZone

2475 West North Avenue
Milwaukee, WI
Milwaukee County

1/2 Acre

Location: Near-north side of Milwaukee

A north-side Milwaukee brownfield retained its historic focus on automobiles while getting a city-sponsored face lift at the same time.

History

This former brownfield site was used historically for a wide variety of automotive uses from the 1930s until the 1970s, including an auto supply store, tires and accessories store and an auto sales and service facility for the first 20 years. In 1955 it became a used car dealership and eventually was turned back into an auto service store before becoming a brownfield.

In 1983, the Redevelopment Authority for the city of Milwaukee (RACM) acquired the site, which consisted of two parcels.

Investigation and Cleanup

Investigations revealed two 300-gallon leaded gasoline leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs). After the tanks were removed, soil sampling confirmed contamination occurred from the tanks.

In April 2002, more than 300 tons of contaminated soil was removed and sent to a licensed facility for disposal. Soil sampling indicated all soil contamination was removed down to the groundwater level, which is 4-13 feet below the surface. Groundwater contamination consisted of several contaminants including benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene (BTEX).



The AutoZone site prior to redevelopment. The site had been used extensively for automotive services from the 1930s to the 1970s (photo by John Hnat, DNR).

Monitored natural attenuation, a process allowing natural biodegradation of petroleum contaminants, was chosen as a remedy for the groundwater contamination.

Subsequent monitoring indicated decreased concentrations of contaminants that had initially exceeded state standards. In March, 2005, the



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site was approved for closure by the DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program staff and was added to the program's GIS database of closed, remediated sites, along with requirements to manage soil contamination found during any future property reconstruction.

Redevelopment

In 2002, AutoZone acquired the site from the city, which combined the two lots into one property. The company then constructed a new AutoZone store, with a capacity of nearly 5,000 square feet and increasing the property values to more than \$500,000.

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

In 2001, the city received a DNR Brownfield Site Assessment Grant (SAG) of more than \$18,500 to investigate the underground storage tanks. The city also received more than \$44,000 from the Department of Commerce's Petroleum Environmental Cleanup Fund Award (PECFA) Program for costs associated with the investigation and remediation of the site.

The site had been tax delinquent for six consecutive years before RACM foreclosed on the property in 1983, effectively paying off back taxes of approximately \$5,790.

Contacts

John Hnat
Project Manager
WI DNR Remediation and Redevelopment Program
414-263-8644

Benji Timm
Brownfields Project Manager
City of Milwaukee
414-286-5756

Tom Bauman
Project Manager
Giles Engineering
262-544-0118



The AutoZone property after investigation and cleanup. The redevelopment was aided in part by a DNR Brownfields Site Assessment Grant awarded to the city (photo by John Hnat, DNR).

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