



City of Cincinnati

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Clean Up Makes Way for New Jobs

Former landfill to become Center Hill Commerce Park

After six years of environmental investigation and remediation, the City of Cincinnati has obtained a Covenant Not to Sue (CNS) from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) for the former Center Hill landfill site. With the clean-up complete, the site is now safe and shovel-ready for new light industrial businesses.

Located in Winton Hills, the new Center Hill Commerce Park site is more than 60 acres and sits less than a mile west of the Towne Street Exit off I-75. The property is bounded by Mill Creek on the southeast, Dan's Creek on the northeast, the Center Hill Business Park on the northwest, and Center Hill Road on the southwest.

In 1946, the first landfill operations began at the site. Previously, the property was surface mined for sand and gravel. The City purchased the site in 1953 as its primary landfill. Used for the disposal of residential, commercial, and industrial waste, in addition to incinerator ash, the landfill operations ceased in 1977. As was normal practice for the time, no constructed liners, either synthetic or natural, were placed before filling operations began.

At capacity, the 60-acre Center Hill Commerce Park can accommodate up to 500,000 square feet of new light industrial space. "We're promoting a dense, light industrial business park, but recognize that some aspects of the site may not cooperate with this vision," admitted Michael Cervay, Director of the City's Department of Community Development. If this density is realized, the site would leverage private investment of approximately \$50,000,000 and 500 new jobs. Annually, this translates into just over \$1 million in new property tax revenue and just under \$500,000 in new City earnings tax revenue.

In 2002, the City's Strategic Program for Urban Redevelopment (SPUR) team recognized the redevelopment opportunity the site could provide. The SPUR team oversaw the project and hired an environmental consultant with expertise in landfill redevelopment. In order to fund a portion of the cost, the City partnered with the Port Authority who received a Clean Ohio Fund grant of \$350,000. The most significant remediation needed was the abatement and demolition of the old incinerator facility. The project also included the transfer of approximately 6 acres of land from Elmwood Place to the City. This portion of the site required more basic remediation, such as the installation of a leachate collection system and bank stabilization measures, which Elmwood Place could not afford. The City has paid approximately \$1.7 million and leveraged more than \$2.4 million in assessment and clean-up costs to date. The City is currently conducting a geotechnical analysis of the property at this time to further ensure prospective end-users that the site is ready for construction.

A CNS provides liability relief for future owners of the property. "This liability relief and the clean up required to obtain it are critical to unlocking more affordable financing and insurance options for businesses interested in the location but wary of implications of locating on a brownfield," explained Mr. Cervay. "The CNS essentially provides that no additional investigation or remedial activities are required at the site and that it is environmentally safe for commercial/industrial users," says Larry Falkin, Director of the Office of Environmental Quality.

The project is managed through the City's Strategic Program for Urban Redevelopment. Project partners include the following City Departments: Community Development, Budget, Former Buildings & Inspections, City Planning, Environmental Quality, Finance, Law, MSD, Real Estate, Transportation & Engineering, Water Works, as well as the Winton Hills Community, the Village of Elmwood Place, Hamilton County, Water Quality Systems, O'Rourke Wrecking, Nelson Stark Co., SCS Engineers, the Mill Creek Restoration Project, and Mill Creek Watershed Council.

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