The RACER Trust:
Empowering America's Auto Communities

Pontiac, MI

RACER Site 10010

Employee Development Center
65 University Drive
Pontiac, MI 48342

Site Description

Located in downtown Pontiac, this vacant 3.66-acre parcel includes a paved parking lot in an area zoned for commercial buildings. Electric, water, sanitary and storm sewer infrastructure are available at the property.

According to historical references, several residences and associated garages existed on the site from 1909 through 1950. Most structures were demolished in the early to mid-1950s, and an auto dealership was built at the property, operating from the early to mid-1950s to 1978. The property then operated under GMC's Truck and Bus Division as an engineering center for the construction of prototype vehicles and associated engineering development activities. These activities ceased in 1992. The building was remodeled in 1994 for use as a joint GM/UAW training and employee development center, and operated as such until 2007. After three years as a vacant building, the structure was taken down in 2010, and the basement was backfilled.

Cleanup activities are performed by the RACER Trust, with the approval and oversight of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) under Part 201 of the Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. The Settlement Agreement that established the RACER Trust set aside approximately $1,213,426 for cleanup work at this property.

Environmental History

Sources of contamination and a significant amount of impacted soil have been removed from the property, and follow-up groundwater monitoring is in progress.

Former operations and activities at the property resulted in the release of gasoline constituents, motor and hydraulic oils, and low concentrations of chlorinated solvents. Contributing sources included a former gasoline underground storage tank (UST) and associated dispenser station, a former waste oil/spill UST, automobile service area trench drains and an oil/sand separator, underground hydraulic lifts, and a dynamometer.

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The two 1,000-gallon USTs were located outside of the north-northeast portion of the former site building. During removal of the tanks in 1990, soil samples identified a number of contaminants, including benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes and a release was subsequently reported to MDEQ. Closure of the tanks was achieved in 1995, but in November 2006 additional gasoline contamination was discovered in the area of underground piping and former dispenser associated with former gasoline UST. Investigations conducted in November and December 2006 also identified petroleum and limited solvent contamination in areas under and around the building. Given the presence of co-mingled contamination, in February 2007 the property was entered into the Michigan Part 201 program.

From 2006 through 2012, soil borings and groundwater sampling wells were installed to delineate the extent of soil and groundwater contamination underground at the property. Based on an evaluation of remedial alternatives, soil excavation with post-excavation groundwater monitoring was selected as a preferred remedy. An excavation work plan was completed and approved by MDEQ in 2011.

Excavation activities were completed at the property in May-June 2012. The excavation was approximately 14,480 square feet, and impacted soil was excavated to depths ranging from nine to seventeen feet below ground level. Activities included removal and off-site disposal of 9,243 tons of impacted soils and 756 tons of asphalt and concrete, as well as removal and off-site disposal of abandoned underground hydraulic lifts and portions of service area trench drains within the bounds of the excavation. A total of 9,152 tons of Class II sand was backfilled, compacted, and finished to grade with 268 yards of 21AA crushed stone.

Post-excavation groundwater monitoring activities commenced in January 2013 with the installation of additional monitoring wells and performance of periodic groundwater sampling events and continue. In September 2014, additional subsurface investigation activities were conducted to better characterize residual soil and groundwater impacts at the property. In addition, groundwater monitoring activities were supplemented with storm sewer sampling activities in 2014 and 2015 to evaluate the potential for migration of residual contaminants to surface waters.

Next Steps

Next steps include continued post-excavation monitoring, placement of land and groundwater use restrictions on the property and the adjacent Mill Street Right of Way, request to MDEQ for a no further action determination, conclusion of groundwater monitoring activities, and abandonment of monitoring wells.

More detailed information on the site can be viewed at the RACER website at www.racertrust.org.

For More Information

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