



Hamilton Health Center Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

2017 Region 3 Winner

Key Project Lesson: Vision, persistence and determination transformed a blighted area into a state-of-the art medical mall that services low-income residents and is a keystone for additional economic growth in the area.

Overview

The **Hamilton Health Center (HHC)** is a Federally Qualified Health Center located at 110 S 17th Street, in Harrisburg Pennsylvania, on 5.25 acres of a former remediated automotive brownfield. HHC is now in the heart of Harrisburg's most distressed neighborhood, South Allison Hill, fulfilling its mission as a medical home for low to no income constituents, and providing walkable access for medically underserved residents. HHC is a state-of-the-art-facility; a "medical mall" hosting adult medical, pediatric, dental, WIC, OBGYN, HIV/AIDS, medical case management, with leasing space for pharmacy, lab, imaging and behavioral health services, with 80,000 patient visits annually. The Center has produced nearly \$15,000,000 in value added construction and operations while bringing out of area visitor and business to the amount of nearly \$300,000. HHC brings to the area 190 jobs due to the scale of its operations and is a catalyst for further related development.

In contrast, the project remediated and redeveloped the Allison Hill Automotive Center that was unused with blighted facilities and open lots used for illegal dumping. The automotive center had four underground storage tanks along with surface soil and water contaminated with chromium, lead, nickel, selenium, zinc, benzo(a)pyrene, PCBs, and more. Vapor intrusion risks required engineering and institutional controls, and the site's five dilapidated buildings required asbestos and hazardous material abatement prior to demolition.

The Center is surrounded by multiple brownfields from smokestack industries in the 1800s, known as South Allison Hill Industrial Park. The project's success and continued momentum anchored a 2017 EPA Brownfield Area-Wide Planning grant for further remediation and neighborhood revitalization. Industrial Park has major corridors that connect directly to the Capital, to a network of interstates that make Central PA a crossroads for commerce and travel, and to passenger and commercial rail. The potential for business, jobs, and labor supply to benefit this location and its residents is bright.

Featured Partners

- Redevelopment Authority of the City of Harrisburg
- City of Harrisburg
- County of Dauphin
- Hamilton Health Center
- PA Department of Environmental Protection
- South Allison Hill Residents Association
- Tri-County Community Action

- Environmental Protection Agency

Primary Reason for Redevelopment

The site was selected primarily to remove the health contaminants of a brownfield in order to redevelop it into a major Health Center for a medically underserved community with the highest community needs index. The region's singular Federally Qualified Health Center, Hamilton Health, needed a new headquarters to improve access and accommodate growth. The Center would consolidate its multiple, disparate services into a one-stop "medical mall" with comprehensive medical, dental and related social services, in the heart of where the largest concentration of its constituents reside. The site required a footprint large enough to accommodate growth with enough sublease space for pharmacy, vision, and behavioral health.

This site is also identified as a catalyst for further development upon which a successful application for an EPA grant for Brownfield Area Wide Planning was granted. Community health and the potential for full neighborhood and economic revitalization were primary drivers for this opportunity.

Approach

The Automotive Center was recognized in the community-owned South Allison Hill Neighborhood Action Strategy as a key site that if remediated and redeveloped could meet neighborhood need and spur revitalization. The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Harrisburg (HRA) served as the lead agency for brownfield project administration and related conduit financing. HRA acquired the property in April 2004 and conducted Phase I ESA immediately the following month and Phase II in November that same year.

HRA, the City of Harrisburg, Dauphin County, and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) partnered together to obtain the funding needed for remediation. DEP designated the project as a Brownfield Action Team (BAT) status that could leverage other "team" state agencies funding such as PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Housing and Redevelopment Assistance. The financing for remediation was assemble from State funding from DCED, DEP, and a State Weed and Seed community based revitalization grant to the Community Action Commission and SAH Resident Association.

Remediation involved removing four (4) Underground Storage Tanks and contaminated soil. Thirty-three (33) tons and twenty-two (22) cubic yards of affected soil was removed. Asbestos-containing materials was abated and hazardous materials removed from five dilapidated buildings which were then demolished. Vapor intrusion risk to future facilities constructed on the property required a sub-slab depressurization system as institutional control for any building constructed on the site, and for engineering control asphalt covers over sample locations.

The property was then sold to the Hamilton Health Center as the identified as the site use and developer. BAT status and the collaborative effort of all the partners mentioned catapulted the capital campaign and financing which included larger scale DCED grants and New Market Tax Credits. After the Health Campus was built and operational in 2012, other related businesses and small developments appeared. An area wide and neighborhood owned planning grant was needed to address the multiple surrounding brownfields from historic rail-spur smokestack factories built in what is known as South Allison Hill Industrial Park. HRA received the 2017 EPA Brownfield Area-wide Planning Grant to continue this success story into its next phase.

Innovative Techniques

Economic Development: The project developed a Federal Qualified Health Center that is of a scale large enough to be a major employer, bringing to the neighborhood out of area visitors and ancillary satellite business. The project also leverages further brownfield development interest and funding such as EPA AWP award.

Financing Techniques: DEP “BAT” designation leveraged critical DCED funding. EZ/EC designation helped secure New Market Tax Credits, and relocating a major FQHC leveraged Department of Health funds and a capital campaign.

Marketing Strategy: The project utilized Penn State University graduate students’ Geo-mapping Capstone Project along with community feasibility studies to help Hamilton Health determine the site in Allison Hill that would be an optimum location and footprint for its Center. The mapping and studies provided the specifications needed to know what land assembly and square footage of the available site and surrounding would be needed, and was a unique and important marketing tool.

Land Conservation: This project is the catalyst for further area wide planning that involve residents’ needs for recreation and residential space. Storm water management planning with Capital Region Water’s innovative strategic open spaces initiative that double as residential beautification and storm water collection rain gardens. All of these unique considerations will be part of the Brownfield Area Wide Planning that this project leveraged.

Sustainable Development: The facility utilizing geothermal and green technology which leveraged a green grant to finance it, thereby mitigating a large HVAC development cost, as well as being a sustainable and cost saving means of facility operation.

Public Policy Initiative: The project has significant economic development potential for locating job producing industries. The City will adopt the findings and results of the Brownfield Area Wide Planning Grant into its Comprehensive Planning. This project also garnered the support and involvement of the Regional Chamber and Capital Region Economic Development Center (CREDC) and the local Workforce Investment Board (South Central PA-Works).

Challenges

The primary challenge was obtaining the financing for assessment, demolition, and remediation, prior to identifying the specific land use and buyer.

Benefits

The Hamilton Health Center provides a medical home to low income residents in a neighborhood with the highest need, South Allison Hill, Harrisburg, PA. The Center brings high quality Pediatrics, Adult medical, OBGYN, Dental, HIV/AIDs, X-Ray, WIC, Case Management, and Social Services under a single state-of-the-art one stop shop medical mall. The project expanded the number of exam rooms and with electronic records in the exam room; improved patient safety by using electronic prescribing with lab results available at the point of service; and increased economic efficiency by incorporating green design and energy efficient concepts into the building design and operation. The scope of the finished project was large enough to locate 190 jobs, generated \$15 million in construction and operations and \$300,000 of value added spending from outside.

The project has become a catalyst around which neighborhood and economic revitalization can occur. The Center spurred other related industries and health services to situate and serve in the community, such as Pennsylvania’s Counseling Service’s behavioral health complex. Small businesses, investment and grants for future redevelopment planning, such as the EPA Brownfield Area Wide Planning award are all benefits for the community’s present and future revitalization.

The multi-party team approach of DEP, the City of Harrisburg, the Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority, the Allison Hill Community and community based agencies, and Hamilton Health structured innovative methods to secure financing to make this project a reality. It was unique and significant enough of project to be the spring board for obtaining an EPA Area-wide planning grant to optimize its effects as a catalyst for complete neighborhood revitalization in an efficient way.

The project has been a showcase by PA DEP for its Brownfield to RX and BAT accomplishment, and the engineering consultants, Skelly and Loy, Inc., were nominated for the American Council of Engineering Companies of Pennsylvania’s (ACEC) “Diamond Awards” for Engineering Excellence.

“Before”



“After”



Project Address: Hamilton Health Center, 110 S. 17th Street, Harrisburg, PA 17104

Contact Person: Bryan Davis, Executive Director, Redevelopment Authority of the City of Harrisburg (HRA).

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Names of Participants: HRA, City of Harrisburg, Dauphin County, PA Department of Environmental Protection, Hamilton Health Center.

Number of Acres: 7.62 acres total, of which 5.25 acres was redeveloped.

Former Uses: Automotive Center

Current Uses: Federally Qualified Health Center

Former number/Types of jobs: Auto-mechanic. Less than 10 employees.

New number/Types of jobs: 190 Employees: Physicians, Nurses, Medical Support, Dental Staff, Social Workers, Radiologists, Laboratory Technicians, Medical Clerical, Customer Service, Pharmaceutical Staff

Type of Site: Brownfield

Regulatory Program: Act 2 Land Recycling

List of Major Contaminants: USTs, naphthalene, toluene, chromium, lead, nickel, zinc, benzo(a)anthracene, benzo(a)pyrene, benzo(a)fluoranthene, benzo(g,h,i)perylene, indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene, thallium, PCB-aroclor 1242, cadmium, chrysene, asbestos, mercury.

Magnitude of Contamination: 7.62 acres

Greatest Challenge(s): Assembling remediation financing prior to identifying use/buyer.

Length of Time to Remediate Site: 8 years

Primary Reason for Redevelopment: Catalyst site for redevelopment and to build a Health Center.

Years Abandoned or Challenged: 7 years.

Cleaned up under Consent Decree: No

List of Financial Assistance: PA Department of Environmental Protection; New Market Tax Credits; Department of Health; PA DCED Housing and Redevelopment Assistance; CDBG; PA RACP; Geothermal Grant; State Weed and Seed Grant; Loans and Cash Reserves

Other Financial Techniques Utilized: PA DEP designated project as Brownfield Action Team (BAT) to leverage other state BAT department e.g. DCED grants.

New Tax Revenues: PILOT agreement of \$16,518 annually.

Community Outreach Activities: Neighborhood Action Strategy, Tri-County Community Action and Weed and Seed programs for neighborhood input.

Innovative Environmental Reg. Techniques: Brownfield Action Team Status.

Innovative Remediation Techniques: Penn State Geomapping, geothermal infrastructure, unique sampling techniques.

Innovative Economic Development: Spurred Health Corridor of related businesses. Anchored a Brownfield Area Wide Planning grant with market analysis.

Land Conservation: AWP will include storm water innovation with Capital Region Water.

Sustainable Development: Geothermal, Major FQHC.

Federal Partners: EPA (AWP), HUD CDBG pass through.