



# Cranberry Creek

LOCATION: Hazleton, PA

SIZE: 366 acres

FEATURES: large parcel, rail service

OWNER: Community Area New Development Organization (CAN DO)

CURRENT USE: Vacant

PAST USE: Anthracite Coal Mining

CONTAMINANTS: Acid mine drainage, petroleum, VOCs

TOTAL ACTUAL COST: \$3.5 million for acquisition and reclamation

## TIMELINE

1836 Hazleton Coal Company is formed

2005 Cranberry Creek site is purchased by CAN DO

2006 Reclamation of property begins

## HISTORY

The Hazleton Coal Company, which was the initial owner of the site, formed in 1836. The coal industry in Hazleton attracted many European immigrants during the late 1800s and early 1900s. A decline in the mining industry during the 1950s forced many people to leave the region.

The majority of the property was used for anthracite coal mining by the Hazleton Coal Company and later, the Lehigh Valley Coal Company until 1947. In 1922, the Cranberry Ball Park occupied part of the property until 1965, when State Route 924 was constructed through the property.

## TOPOGRAPHY

The site is located in the Luzerne County of Pennsylvania. The property is just east of Exit 143 off Interstate 81. A 2500 acre industrial park is nearby.

## MARKET CONDITIONS

The property is currently vacant, thus the site does not provide any jobs or revenue for the surrounding

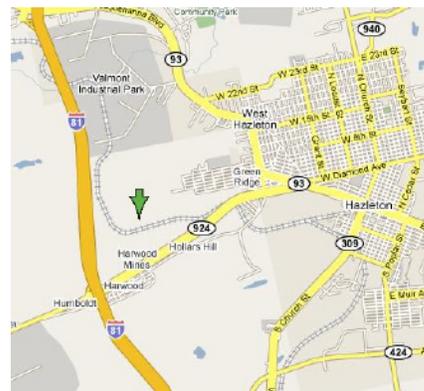


Photo courtesy of googlemaps.com



Photo courtesy of epa.gov

community. The reclamation project, which was conducted in 2006, brought 50 construction jobs to the area.

Based on market analysis and feasibility studies, the plan is to turn the mine scarred land into the Cranberry Creek Gateway Park. The proposal involves converting the blighted area into green space with some residential housing and various recreational facilities such as an 18-hole golf course, an amphitheater, a 5000-seat baseball stadium, an indoor ice skating/hockey rink and various playgrounds and fields.

#### SITE ASSEMBLY AND CONTROL

The Hazleton Coal Company was the initial owner of the site. Pagnotti Coal also owned the property for a certain period of time. The Community Area New Development Organization (CAN DO) purchased the property in 2006. Currently, CAN DO is looking for developers for the mining site.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Phase I environmental assessment occurred in 2004, while Phase II environmental assessment occurred in 2006. It was revealed that contamination on the site was minimal. The reclamation project, which started in 2006, involved excavating and grading approximately 1 million cubic yards of on-site material, eliminating 3500 feet of highwall and filling of the strip mine pits. The creek was also restored to its original location, which was south of the railroad tracks. Grasses, legumes and tree seeds were also planted on site.

#### SOCIAL/COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

CAN DO, the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce, municipal leaders and the surrounding communities such as the City of Hazleton, West Hazelton, Hazle Township and Luzerne County are all involved in the project.

#### PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

There were no pre-existing buildings that existed on the site. There is a freight rail road which is owned by Norfolk Southern that has access to the parcels of land. Electric service is readily available on the property. Public water lines and a public sewer system are also present on the site. Telephone, cable and natural gas lines run adjacent to the site. State Route 924, a 22 mile long state highway, runs directly through the site.

#### COSTS & ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The Local, State and Federal government all provided financing for the old mining site. A PA Rural Community Assistance Partnership provided \$500,000 for acquisition and development. Luzerne County provided a \$500,000 zero percent interest loan for site acquisition. The Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation contributed \$2.5 million for the reclamation project.

## CURRENT STATUS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Cranberry Creek is a gateway to the Hazleton community. Although the projected plans are more geared towards recreational use, the beautification and redevelopment of the barren area is expected to lure more businesses into the Hazleton community itself.



Photo courtesy of CAN DO

Completed by Ronald Papa, Summer '08

## SOURCES

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