



Fairmont Coke Works

LOCATION: Fairmont, WV

SIZE: 107 acres

FEATURES: Riverfront, rail service, proximity to interstate, flat parcel

OWNER: Fairmont Coke Works Site Custodial Trust

CURRENT USE: Vacant Land

PAST USE: Coke Works Site

CONTAMINANTS: PCBs, VOCs, PAHs, metals, other

TOTAL ACTUAL COST: specific dollar amount was not obtained

TIMELINE

1920 Coke works facility is constructed by Standard Oil Company

1948 Sharon Steel Company purchases property

1979 Operations at coke works facility stops

1992 Sharon Steel Corporation files for bankruptcy

1996 Site is placed on National Priorities List

1998 ExxonMobil, a corporate successor to Standard Oil is formed

2003 Remediation of site begins

HISTORY

In 1920, Standard Oil Company built the facility to produce coke and refine its byproducts. Sharon Steel Corporation purchased the plant in 1948. The plant itself closed in 1979 due to the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act suits filed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The closing of industrial companies like the Fairmont Coke Works Plant contributed to the City of Fairmont's physical decline. Both the loss of jobs and revenue started the depopulation of the city in the 1980s.

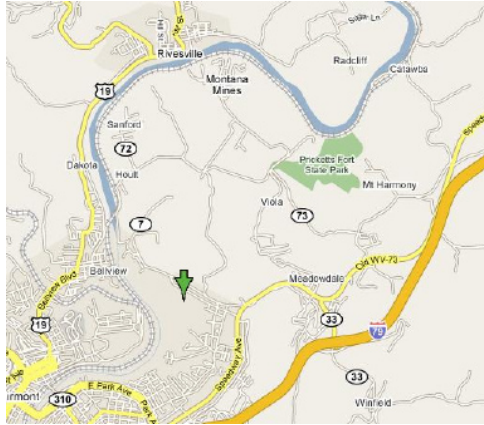
Sharon Steel Corporation developed remediation plans for the site after it shut down. The clean-up of the site eventually became too costly and Sharon Steel Corporation entered bankruptcy in 1992. The EPA initiated a removal action for the property in 1993. In 1996, the Fairmont Coke Works site was placed on the National Priorities List.

TOPOGRAPHY

The Fairmont Coke Works site, which is located in the northeast region of Fairmont, is in the Marion County of West Virginia. The property is halfway between Clarksburg and Morgantown, West Virginia,



Photo courtesy of epa.gov



Picture courtesy of Google Maps

and it also sits along the industrial corridor of Interstate 79. 50 Acres of the site is flat while the remaining area is a woody hillside, which is right next to the Monongahela River. The area to the west of the property is mainly undeveloped. The areas to the east, north and south of the site are a mix of residential and industrial. Railroad tracks and the Monongahela River border the site to the west.

MARKET CONDITIONS

The proposed redevelopment for part of the site calls for the construction of Volcano Island, a water park and family resort. The resort will also include a 30,000 square foot conference center, the largest in the state

of WV. It is projected that the Volcano Island will attract thousand of tourists and create 500 new jobs. Volcano Island is just off Interstate 79 and it is expected to draw conventions and families mostly from the cities of Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Washington and the majority of West Virginia, since all are within a three hour drive from Fairmont.

SITE ASSEMBLY AND CONTROL

Standard Oil Company was the initial owner of the site. Sharon Steel Corporation eventually purchased the property in 1948. In 1992, Sharon Steel filed for bankruptcy. The site is now owned by the Fairmont Coke Works Site Custodial Trust. ExxonMobil is also responsible for the site since it is a corporate successor to Standard Oil.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Remediation began in 2003 and is projected to last till Fall 2008. The clean-up involves excavation of the contaminated soil and recycling of the waste material, which contains coke-making residues such as coal tar and coke breeze. Additives are mixed with the waste to create synthetic fuel. This synthetic fuel is eventually sent to the Grant Town Power Plant where it is used to generate electricity. Approximately 269,000 megawatt-hours of electricity has been generated by the recycled waste; enough to power 25,000 homes for one year. Runoff from the excavation sites are also being captured and treated. Air monitoring is being conducted as well to ensure that no contaminants are released into the surrounding community.

SOCIAL/COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP), EPA and ExxonMobil are responsible for handling the clean-up activities. The Fairmont Community Liaison Panel (FCLP), which is composed of 25 local citizens identified from a wide range of academic, political, private and professional sources, meets monthly with representatives from the WVDEP, USEPA and ExxonMobil in order to receive input on the progress of the site an to act as a channel for communication between the public and those groups involved with the clean-up. All the meetings are well publicized in advance and open to the public.

Representatives from ExxonMobil have also frequented stakeholder meetings in order to explain redevelopment plans and to obtain community input on the future use of the site. The project has received a great deal of support from the local community.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

As part of the clean-up plans, all the pre-existing buildings and structures on the site were demolished. The brick and concrete from the old buildings have been turned into fill material that will be used for future site grading that will occur on the property. Currently, there is no existing infrastructure on the site, although the surrounding area does have complete public infrastructure available.

COSTS & ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The State of West Virginia is being directly reimbursed by ExxonMobil for expenses occurred. By funding the state's involvement in the project, delays in obtaining Federal funding, in pursuing legal action or going into cooperative agreements are avoided.

CURRENT STATUS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Although the site is currently undergoing remediation, redevelopment can already begin on several parcels of land. So far, the only plans for the site involve a water park and resort. The Fairmont Coke Works Site Custodial Trust, which owns the site, is still looking for investors and developers for the property. By involving the surrounding communities in the clean-up of the site, the public has shown a great deal of support for the project.



Photo courtesy of epa.gov

Completed by Ronald Papa, Summer '08

SOURCES

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