

Former Lawrence Metals Site, Chelsea, Massachusetts



Figure 1: Site before cleanup

Site Description: The former Lawrence Metals site in the City of Chelsea, Massachusetts is a 1.8- acre property close to a hotel, Chelsea High School, and a community swimming pool.

Background: The site had been previously used for various commercial and industrial uses, such as textile production, since the late 19th century. The most recent uses of the site included the manufacturing and custom fabrication of various metal products. In 1999, the City of Chelsea acquired the property under an Urban Renewal Plan, and in December of 2000 demolished the Lawrence Metals building leaving only the foundation and floor slab. The site remained vacant for over a decade

Contamination: During the planning stages of a Brownfields cleanup, PCBs were detected in soil samples at the site at levels as high as 208,000 mg/kg. Concentrations at the site exceeded the default cleanup standards considered protective of public health (1 mg/kg; 10 to 100 mg/kg if a compliant cap is used).

Cleanup: In July 2012, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) requested EPA assistance to conduct a removal site evaluation for a cleanup action. EPA mobilized in July 2013 and began the excavation and removal of over 9,000 tons of PCB- contaminated soil from the site. The cleanup was completed in August, 2014.

Because of the location of the site in Chelsea and the importance placed by EPA on the cleanup, when MassDEP sought EPA's assistance, a multi-agency team was formed to coordinate the cleanup actions in preparation for redevelopment of the property. The team consisted of EPA, the city of Chelsea, the developer (Lawrenceville LLC), MassDEP, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and MassDevelopment.



Figure 2: Site after cleanup.

EPA achieved a far more protective level of cleanup by working closely with all the parties, government and private, who contributed funds and expertise to the overall cleanup. EPA funded \$1.5 million in cleanup dollars; Lawrenceville LLC contributed \$1.4 million, and the city contributed \$250,000 in a MassDevelopment loan. The EPA team included a coordinated effort by its cleanup programs: TSCA PCB Program, Brownfields, and Superfund. With a construction cost of more than \$30 million, the new hotel and event center built on the site will serve the demand for area lodging; provide much needed meeting and function space, currently absent in the community; expand the community tax base; and provide permanent jobs to local residents.

In 2017, all the federal, state, local, and private entities involved in the transformation of the former Lawrence Metals site were recognized with the James D.P. Farrell Award for Brownfields Project of the Year from the Environmental Business Council of New England, for "outstanding environmental and energy accomplishments in the promotion of a sustainable, clean environment" and for serving as "an example of excellence notwithstanding the social, economic, technical and institutional challenges imposed."*

***Website announcement:** <http://ebcne.org/events-programs/ebec-awards-ceremony/award-categories-nominations/brownfields-project-of-the-year/>

Press release: <http://ebcne.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/EBC-EBEES-Press-Release-2017-James-Farrell-Brownfields-Project-of-the-Year.pdf>