

Planning for Sustainable Brownfield Redevelopment

REDEFINING AN INDUSTRIAL IMAGE

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, EPA REGION 5

The former P.R. Mallory Campus is one of the most prominent brownfields in Marion County. This 10-acre site is comprised of five parcels. It is located within the IndyEast Promise Zone of Indianapolis and is designated as a Historic Landmark by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission.

From 1929 until the turn of the 20th century, the P.R. Mallory company used the Campus to produce electronic components and batteries, employing thousands of people. Redevelopment and reuse of the Campus is impeded by identified environmental impacts to soil, groundwater, and soil gas, primarily associated with chlorinated volatile organic compounds (cVOCs).

The city of Indianapolis bought the property in 2015 to conduct further environmental assessments, secure and maintain existing structures, pursue acquisition of a privately-owned adjacent parcel, engage with counsel to pursue responsible parties for remediation costs, and facilitate community-led planning efforts. Both the Near East Area Renewal Community Development Corporation and the Purdue Polytechnic High School expressed interest in Campus redevelopment. Given the complexity of the Campus in terms of parcels and conditions of buildings, the city determined that additional information on the real estate market and infrastructure was needed to focus future environmental assessment and cleanup efforts, as well as inform local discussions about site reuse options.

In September 2017, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Land Revitalization Team worked with the city to conduct a reuse assessment for the Campus, including a market assessment overview and evaluation of site opportunities and constraints for redevelopment planning.

The EPA Land Revitalization Team traveled to the Campus in November 2017 to meet with key stakeholders and assess the site's opportunities and constraints, including its location in relation to other properties and businesses. The Team reviewed past environmental, planning, and building assessment files to understand environmental concerns, opportunities for collaborating as part of larger comprehensive planning efforts, and the conditions and limitations of the Campus buildings. Additionally, the Team reviewed primary and secondary data sources to develop a market research and analysis overview of the project area.

The Team developed a Reuse Assessment for the Campus based on information from the past documents and data from market research. The existing environmental investigations revealed limitations to future reuse, including several environmentally restrictive covenants and several historic buildings with limited or cost prohibitive reuse opportunities. The Team identified two primary redevelopment opportunities:

- Reuse the Administration Building for the Purdue Polytechnic High School & Mixed Use: The high school could utilize 60,000 square feet on the top two floors of the Administration Building, leaving 52,500 square feet for mixed-use development on the first floor (22,500 square feet) and lower level (basement) (30,000 square feet).
- Construct a new Purdue Polytechnic High School & Reuse the Administration Building for Affordable Housing: Build a new 80,000 square foot building for the high school in the northwest corner of the property. Of this, 20,000 square feet could either be used for future school expansion, or to attract a retail/commercial establishment as a revenue generator. The Administration Building could be reused for affordable residential units on the top two floors (60,000 square feet), subsidized for teachers and non-profit workers.

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Figure 1. Proposed site plan for new construction of the high school.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Site reuse options may be constrained by existing covenants put in place to reduce impact to human health and the environment.
- Redevelopment for large historic buildings can be cost prohibitive.
- Market data can identify supporting uses on a site once a primary redevelopment concept is identified.

PLANNED POST-TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

- Address environmental concerns through the installation of a vapor mitigation system, and soil and groundwater management plan(s).
- Work with community partners to select the best reuse option for redevelopment and seek community input.
- Develop a schedule for redevelopment with project partners to ensure community expectations can be met.