A New Life for a Former Brownfield

In November 2017, Topre America Corporation, a supplier of automotive parts to Honda, Toyota, and other major manufacturers, celebrated the opening of its new stamping plant at the Champion City Business Park in Springfield, Ohio. Initially, the 146,000 ft\(^2\) facility housed 85 employees and received a capital investment of $55 million. By the end of 2018, the facility will expand by another 30,000 ft\(^2\) and employ about 140 personnel. The redevelopment is a critical step forward in Springfield's economic revitalization. A Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund grant of $2.2 million played a key role in cleaning up contamination at the site. Part of the site remains available for redevelopment by a future tenant.

History of the Lagonda Avenue Site

The site of the 61-acre Champion Business Park was used for manufacturing for 120 years by a series of major companies, including International Harvester and its successor company, Navistar. By 2002, Navistar closed the aging facility and relocated production. The legacy of continuous industrial use left major contamination that prevented transfer to new private owners due to liability risks and the prohibitive cost of clean-up. Approximately $12 million in public and private funds were spent to repurpose the site, including a

Redevelopment Fast Facts:

- $2.2 million CORF Grant
- $9.8 million investment from private funds
- 61 acre remediation
- New 176,000 ft\(^2\) building
- 140 Employees
- $66M Capital Investment

The Clean Ohio Brownfields Program

Between 2002 and 2013, the Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund (CORF) program invested $400 million in catalytic funds to assist communities in the environmental testing and cleanup of brownfields across the state. Local investments were oftentimes made to complement state investment. The program contributed to the redevelopment of more than 7,600 acres of contaminated land around the state, and placed Ohio as a national leader in brownfields redevelopment. Local communities were given the flexibility to define the best possible reuse of these sites.

Other Clean Ohio project sites in Springfield included a surgical hospital, office building, and a large indoor skating rink.
$2.2 million CORF grant that was awarded in 2007. A public-private partnership was formed to keep the project moving, with support from Navistar, the City of Springfield, the Turner Foundation, and the Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

Topre Automotive Finds The Right Partners in Springfield

In 2016, Topre Automotive sought a potential site to serve Honda and Toyota assembly plants in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. The Springfield Chamber of Commerce took the lead in assisting the company with site selection. The bedrock geological formation of the business park made it ideal to support the weight of large stamping presses. Topre’s initial plans called for leasing 5 acres, but as Topre’s potential customers expressed greater interest due to the planned relocation, the company’s plans evolved to include the purchase of 32 acres. “The Springfield community is the perfect strategic location for us to locate and expand our operations,” said Brad Pepper, Vice President of Topre America at a March, 2017 press conference.

Lessons Learned

The cleanup and reuse of the Navistar site was a multi-year process that required a long-term partnership between public and private sector organizations in Springfield. State investment played a key role moving the project forward by supporting the most difficult early phases of development.

For more information visit: www.greaterohio.org/brownfields