

## Reusing and Revitalizing a Contaminated Former Production and Testing Facility in a Rust Belt City

**Thomas M. Kinney**, CPG (tom.kinney@ghd.com) and Michael J. Coram, CPG (GHD, Plymouth, MI, USA)  
Grant Trigger, P.E., JD (RACER Trust, Detroit, MI, USA)

**Background/Objectives.** The site is located in an area of southeastern Michigan (Pontiac) that flourished for many years until falling into the lower echelon of the socioeconomic ladder. The site was closed in 2005, which further led to economic hardship to the surrounding communities. However, in 2014, the site underwent a fast track re-development and is currently flourishing once again as a car enthusiast playground within the Woodward Avenue Corridor (famous for the Woodward Dream Cruise).

The site's impacted soil and groundwater were a result of its long history as a vehicle production and testing facility beginning in 1906 and operating through 2005. Historical operations include prototype vehicle production, painting processes, research and development and engineering. The primary environmental concerns included LNAPL, dissolved phase VOC plumes, and PCBs in soil.

The RACER Trust (RACER) took over the site in 2011 following the GM bankruptcy with plans to redevelop the site in a manner that would revitalize the community. The prospective sale of the site began in 2012 during which time the site was undergoing US EPA RCRA closure obligations and long-term performance monitoring. The path to re-development from a seller's perspective needed to coincide with US EPA RCRA obligations; therefore, a fast track EI 725, EI 750 and CMP was completed within a 6-month timeline. Following which, the US EPA requested delineation of VOCs in groundwater, elimination of potential preferential pathways for LNAPL and VOC migration, and remediation of PCB-impacted soil. All to be done on a fixed budget as determined during the automotive bankruptcy splitting of assets in 2011.

**Approach/Activities.** The first step to resolution included an updated conceptual site model (CSM) and delineation of impacts both on and off site. This was achieved through traditional installation of soil borings and monitoring wells, plus an LNAPL investigation consisting of LIF borings, fingerprint analysis, and transmissivity testing. The LNAPL CSM (LCSM) concluded the LNAPL recoverability was de minimus. Once the characterization and delineation had been completed and the CSM developed, interim remedies were implemented with the EPAs approval. This included elimination of the potential pathways for off-Site migration of LNAPL and dissolved phase VOC plumes by bulk heading storm sewers present within the areas of impact. Finally, the PCBs in site soils were remediated in a streamlined manner that included utilization of PCB field test kits that increased the timeliness of the excavation activities and reduced the number laboratory samples making for an extremely cost efficient operation.

**Results/Lessons Learned.** Based on the streamlined approach championed by RACER and approved by the US EPA, the contaminated site was sold and redeveloped rapidly. The site was redeveloped as an 87-acre auto enthusiast playground consisting of car condos and a 1.5 mile state of the art racetrack. These efforts have helped to spark a revitalization of a once downtrodden community.