



DUQUESNE CITY CENTER (DUQUESNE STEEL WORKS)

LOCATION: Duquesne, PA

SIZE: 250 acres

FEATURES: Size, Riverfront Location, Transportation, and Potential Accessibility

OWNER: Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC)

CURRENT USE: None (Vacant Land)

PAST USE: Steel Works

CONTAMINANTS: Heavy Metals & PFCs

TOTAL ACTUAL COST: n/a

TIMELINE

1984 Duquesne Steel Works stops production.

1987 Duquesne Steel Works closes its doors.

1990 RIDC purchases the site.

2004 Hurricane Ivan floods the area.

HISTORY

The City Center of Duquesne lies on the 250-acre site of the former Duquesne Steel Works. With the collapse of the steel industry, the region lost half of its manufacturing base, and the real property tax base and population in the Valley plummeted by 75 percent. The Duquesne Steel Works abandoned production in 1984 and closed its doors in 1987 when Allegheny County took control of the former steel mill site.

TOPOGRAPHY

The steel works elevated the Duquesne City Center above the river with slag fill to prevent flooding, making the river difficult to access.

The surrounding neighborhood is very close to the site; however, active railroad tracks run between the community and the property.

MARKET CONDITIONS

This site is large in an area with an economically disadvantaged population. The attack of Hurricane Ivan in 2004 placed the area in a state of emergency with a reported \$3 million in flood-related damage.





Picture courtesy of Google Maps

SITE ASSEMBLY AND CONTROL

Allegheny County took control of this site and later sold it to the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) in 1990.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

RIDC did not pursue environmental insurance for the City Center of Duquesne.

The City Center of Duquesne's primary contaminants were heavy metals and PFCs. The environmental assessments found that the site would require at least 12 inches of fill spread over the entire site in order for approval as a light-industrial commercial property. Dredged material from a nearby construction project, the Braddock Dam, was deemed an acceptable source of this fill. The 12-inch buffer would limit incidental human exposure to any surface contaminants.

Also, demolished blast furnaces that are laden with asbestos have presented a large obstacle to redevelopment of the site's southern end.

SOCIAL/COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Because railroad tracks run between the community and the property, the community seems to maintain the feeling of separation from the site. Though that may be the case, community input is key in deciding the future purpose of the site. The conclusions of the community and RIDC have not been reached.

The West-to-West Coalition was formed in order to serve as an economic developer for this and many sites. The Coalition represents 21 communities and has been selected to receive various EPA grants.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Additional improvements at the Duquesne site include filling and covering a large iron ore pit near the blast furnaces, renovating several buildings, and demolishing an obsolete pedestrian bridge across State Route 837.

Access to the site is available via water and rail. One transportation dilemma at this location results from trains blocking access to PA-837. RIDC welcomes the newly proposed funding for flyover ramps. Their construction would improve vehicular access over extremely active rail lines. The City Center of Duquesne is currently accessed by an at-grade crossing on the Norfolk Southern Railroad, which creates significant traffic, pedestrian delays, and safety risks. Transportation by ground, specifically trucking access, is a key issue for this site.

COSTS & ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gave \$8 million in loans and grants to redevelop the City Center of Duquesne as well as the Industrial Center of McKeesport. The demolition of fifteen blast furnaces on the Duquesne site used a combination of Section 108, Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) and Commonwealth Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) funds, and the environmental assessments were funded by the Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Industrial Sites Reuse Program.



A partnership forged between RIDC, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and Pittsburgh District allowed for the local allocation of over 400,000 cubic yards of dredged materials from the Monongahela River to be used as fill. The deal was mutually beneficial and saved the government over \$4 million in allocation of grants.

To date, a total of \$31 million has been committed to the Duquesne and McKeesport projects. The funding includes: \$8.0 million in loans and grants from HUD; \$4.5-million grant from the RACP; \$1.0-million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and \$17.5 million in earmarked federal transportation funding.

The Allegheny County Department of Economic Development worked with the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County (RAAC) and the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) to take advantage of HUD's Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program, which enables public entities to leverage Community Development Block Grants into additional funding. HUD awarded the County a \$2.0-million BEDI grant and a \$6.0-million Section 108 loan.



Photo courtesy of <http://www.coalcampusa.com/>

CURRENT STATUS AND LESSONS LEARNED

There are current talks of more revitalization within the area. Also, its easy accessibility by rail via the Norfolk Southern Railroad creates heavy traffic, long delays, and hazardous risks to pedestrians and motorists. RIDC will have to overcome this obstacle and establish trucking routes for this site.

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY IMPACT

The redevelopment of this site is expected to generate more than 450 jobs.

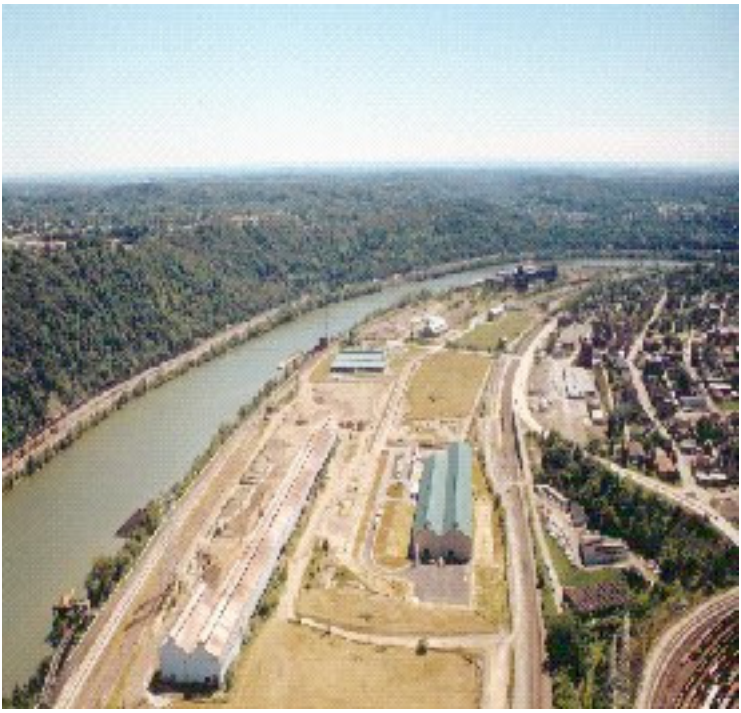


Photo courtesy of www.pasitefinder.state.pa.us

Case Study Completed Summer 2007

SOURCES

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Interview with William E. Burroughs, Vice President of Development – RIDC. Conducted via telephone, 9 May 2007

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