

Reilly Tar and Chemical Corp. Superfund Site

Louisiana Street and Walker Street, St. Louis Park, Minnesota 55426

SITE SIZE: 80 acres

SITE REUSES: The site is now home to condos and townhouses, a restaurant and bowling alley, an office building and a recreational park with athletic fields, walking paths, recreation center, pond, and playground.



INTRODUCTION

From 1917 until 1972, Reilly Industries operated a coal tar distillation and creosote wood preserving plant on an 80-acre site in St. Louis Park, known as the Republic Creosoting Company. According to Scott Anderson, the City of St. Louis Park's former Superintendent of Utilities (and lifelong resident): "everyone who grew up in the City remembers the smell of creosote." Today, the same Superfund site that was responsible for the pervasive creosote smell has been redeveloped, and now features townhouses, an office building, and a park – complete with recreational fields, a playground, and walking trails.

SITE HISTORY

From 1917 until 1939, wastes containing coal tar and its distillation byproducts were discharged directly into a ditch that ran the length of the site. These wastes then flowed into a peat bog on the southern portion of the site. An oil-water separator was installed in 1940, but Republic Creosoting Company continued to discharge contaminated waste into the peat bog for the duration of the company's operations at the site.

The soil elsewhere on the site also became contaminated from coal tar and creosote that dripped from leaky pipes, various process materials that spilled during transport and creosote wood preserving chemicals that washed off freshly treated lumber. Unfortunately, historical records suggest there were more than a dozen wells on the site, with depths varying from 50 to more than 900 feet. Over time, creosote and waste materials likely seeped down several of these wells (either directly from the surface or via multi-aquifer transfer) and contaminated the groundwater.

CITY OWNERSHIP

The City of St. Louis Park purchased the site from Reilly Industries in 1972. At the time, the State of Minnesota was suing Reilly Industries over pollution discharge issues. The sales agreement included a "hold harmless" clause for soil and water impurities, partially indemnifying Reilly Industries from liability. By this time, creosote and creosote wastes had migrated directly into four underlying aquifers, contaminating the groundwater with polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). The contaminants eventually spread to private wells and municipal ground water sources.

After acquiring the site in 1972, the City of St. Louis Park razed the Republic Creosoting Company buildings and constructed residential buildings on the northern end of the site over the next 8 to 10 years. A major north-south boulevard (Louisiana Avenue) and storm water drainage improvements were also constructed. No redevelopment occurred on the site from 1984 until 2002 due to the fear of significant environmental costs associated with cleaning up the site.

Beginning in 1978, the State of Minnesota shut down several public drinking water wells in the vicinity of the site, and the City of St. Louis Park instituted a water conservation program due to daily shortages of clean, drinkable water. In 1979, 28 multi-aquifer wells were either reconstructed or abandoned to prevent the spread of contamination in the ground water. By this time, many community residents had become extremely concerned about the quality of the drinking water.

THE CLEANUP PROCESS

In 1982, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided funds to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to clean out two contaminated wells. The site was listed on the National Priorities List in 1983. In 1984, a record of decision was issued, requiring Reilly Industries, the potentially responsible party, to construct a granular-activated carbon (GAC) treatment plant for two existing contaminated municipal wells and assist with containing the contaminant plume from reaching other municipal wells by constructing a source control system in the upper aquifers.

Reilly Industries eventually came forward with a practical, cost-effective remediation plan that expedited the cleanup and reuse process. Reilly's plan led to settlement of the lawsuit over liability and a 1986 agreement between all parties for remediating the site. Under the settlement, the city agreed to share the responsibility for operating and maintaining the municipal water treatment plants and performing long-term ground water monitoring. Construction of the required pump and treat system was finished in 1997.

Redeveloping the former contaminated property was important to the city's growth as a Minneapolis suburb, primarily because St. Louis Park has little land available for new construction other than previously used property. Ultimately, a strong commitment to redevelopment and a willingness to take risks by investing in a contaminated property were key factors to overcoming impediments to reuse. These efforts culminated in a large apartment complex being built on the south end of the site and an office complex being built on the east side of the site.

A NEW RECREATIONAL PARK

In 2002, the city built a recreational park to complement the residential housing on the north and south ends of the site. Today, community members enjoy walking trails, a playground, athletic fields, a new recreation pavilion, and a pond that provides wildlife habitats. The site is now a place where community members can gather to enjoy the amenities that the city worked so hard to create.



Approximate Costs:

- *Clean Up Studies/Efforts - \$5 Million (1970s)*
- *Park Improvements - \$3.2 Million (2000s)*
- *Development - \$55 Million (present value)*
- *Water Treatment, Capital - \$4 Million (1980/90s)*
- *Water Treatment, Annual - \$650,000 (present value)*



Map adapted from ESRI Basemap: World Street Map.

Explanation

- CJDN; OPDC; PCJ
- CMSH
- IGV
- siteoutline



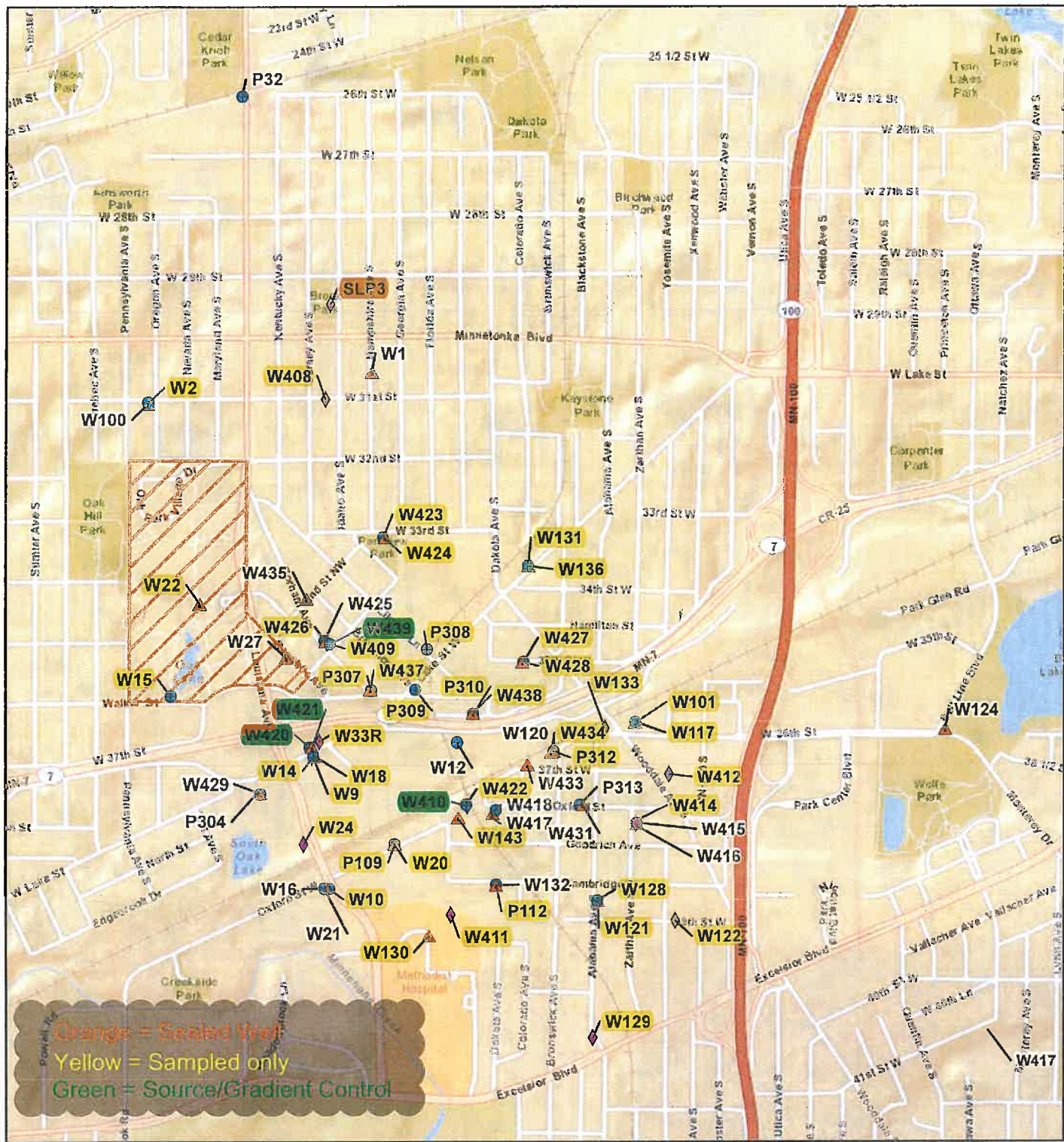
0 3,500 Feet
1 inch = 3,500 feet



WELL LOCATION MAP (PCJ/MTS/IGV) Reilly Site St. Louis Park, Minnesota

Figure 1





Map adapted from ESRI Basemap: World Street Map.

Explanation

- Drift
- Platteville
- St. Peter
- Site Outline

0 1,500 Feet
1 inch = 1,500 feet

Site Location

**WELL LOCATION MAP
(DRIFT/OPVL/OSTP)**
Reilly Site
St. Louis Park, Minnesota



Figure 2