

MERRIMACK STREET PROJECT LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS



Property Details

Property Address:	290 Merrimack Street; Lawrence, MA 01840
Property Size:	4.45 acres
Former Uses:	Former power station (boiler house) and fuel/coal storage facility and fabric storage unit in Worsted Mill Complex
Contaminants Found:	Lead and PAHs in soil
Current Use:	Vacant, under redevelopment construction
Current Owner:	Riverwalk Properties

Project Partners

City of Lawrence; State of Massachusetts; Environmental Protection Agency; Riverwalk Properties

Drivers for Redevelopment: This property's location is prime real estate along the river banks of the Merrimack River. The boiler house was in the heart of industrial activity, providing power to the entire Worsted Mill Complex. The site sat idle and vacant for decades when the developer, Riverwalk Properties, saw the potential of the property and wanted to change the persona of the downtrodden, economically hard pressed area into a desirable commercial real estate location. Mr. Salvatore Lupoli, owner of Riverwalk Properties, wanted to give back to the community and realized that creating a safe campus setting along the riverfront would entice new businesses and residents to the area. Therefore, he and his company are developing this property as greenspace and a community center, a place for workers and community members in the nearby area to go outside and relax.

Property History: The City of Lawrence, known as the Immigrant City, is about a 30 miles north of Boston and sits along the Merrimack River. The city thrived during the industrial revolution in the mid-1800s by opening textile mills—including the world's largest textile mill American Woolen Company—and other forms of industry. However, the textile industry fell during an economic decline in the 1970s leaving the city with many abandoned buildings, vacant homes, and unused incinerators and waste treatment facilities. This site housed the boiler, fuel and fabric storage for the former Worsted Mill Complex, which sat vacant for over 20 years. The boiler facility contained a 100,000-gallon #6 heating oil tank, a 1.5-million gallon fuel tank, and asbestos piping insulation and floor tiles. In early 2003, Mr. Lupoli, a pizza shop owner looking to expand his business into a first class, world renowned chain of pizzerias, realized the prospect of converting the old textile mill in the Merrimack River Valley, including the former boiler house, to a mixed-use property under Riverwalk Properties. The City of Lawrence funded the Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) and initiated momentum for brownfields redevelopment on the property.

Funding Details

- EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment funded Phase I and II ESAs totaling **\$39,833.00**
- Private developer, Riverwalk Properties, spent **\$5 million** for cleanup and demolition.
- As part of Phase I of redevelopment, Riverwalk Properties will spend an estimated **\$15 million** to redevelop the site for a multi-use complex along the riverfront, including a community center and river park (subject property)

Project Highlights

- The demolished boiler house/fabric storage building will become a 30,000-square foot park and community center, a keystone between two large office complexes.
- Redevelopment along the waterfront, including this parcel, through this public/private partnership has spawned economic growth and a growing population in the city.

Project Results: Working closely with the city, the private developer funded the cleanup of the former boiler house. The cleanup included removal of asbestos, fuel tanks, and lead and PAH-contaminated soil. After completion of the cleanup and removal process in the summer of 2009, demolition and construction began on the parcel with the building of a community center and the preservation of greenspace as a river park. The project will be finished in summer of 2011. The 290 Merrimack Street site is an integral part of a much larger redevelopment of Merrimack Street that has created 1.2 million square feet of retail space and leveraged 2,000 jobs for the city from the 200 companies now located there. The park and community center are donations to the neighborhood that will enhance the state-funded riverwalk through the area.

Project Timeline

2003	Riverwalk Properties purchased the property
2007	EPA awarded the Brownfields Assessment grant; assessments commenced
2009	Completed cleanup and broke ground in the summer for Phase I of redevelopment
2011	Construction shall be complete for Phase I of the multi-use complex, including the community center and park