



Cleveland plans to market big Flats parcel

After cleanup, site could solve city's lack of industrial space to lure potential employers

By [JAY MILLER](#)

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The city of Cleveland for years has struggled to compete for new plants and warehouses because it didn't have a big, ready-to-use industrial site to offer new or expanding businesses.

It has taken a step to change that situation.

The city last month won control of a 54-acre site in the Flats that it plans to clean up environmentally and make available to show developers, real estate brokers and site selectors. The acreage on the east side of the Cuyahoga River once had a coke oven on it that fed the ArcelorMittal steel mill, but could be home to a large plant or warehouse or could be broken up into parcels for an industrial park.

The plan for the cleanup also should help the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority find a place for river dredgings, a problem that has become a heavy burden for the port operator.

"We're excited to get started," said Tracey Nichols, the city's director of economic development. "We're expecting to be able to put 300,000 square feet of commercial/industrial property onto the market."

Ms. Nichols said it will take a year for contractors to clean up environmental hazards and fill the site. She said such a large piece of land will help keep companies already in Cleveland that need to expand from fleeing for distant suburbs.

Joseph Martanovic, an industrial real estate broker with the Colliers Ostendorf Morris real estate brokerage, agreed.

"This is great for the city," Mr. Martanovic said. "There's a dearth of industrial sites in Cuyahoga County and less in Cleveland."

The lower Flats in the last several years have attracted two steel warehouses that wanted to be near the steel mill. In 2005 Heidtman Steel Products Inc. of Toledo built a 270,000-square-foot service center on what is now Heidtman Parkway near the ArcelorMittal plant. Then in 2009, Steel Warehouse Inc., a steel distributor based in South Bend, Ind., opened an 86,000-square-foot warehouse nearby on 17 acres on Independence Avenue.

The city has secured a \$5 million Job Ready Sites grant from the state to clean up the property, which ArcelorMittal is donating after the city reimburses the company \$1 million for some cleanup costs already undertaken.

Acquiring the property has the added benefit of taking pressure off the Port Authority to find a dump site for material that is dredged from the Cuyahoga River bottom to keep the shipping channel clear. The city will need at least 300,000 cubic yards of material to fill and cover the Flats property. That's at least a year of river dredging material.

The city has three other properties it is redeveloping for its industrial land bank. Two are on the West Side. One is the 22-acre former Midland Steel plant, and the other, called the Trinity site after a building that had been on the property, is 5.6 acres. The city also is marketing three acres in the Flats that once housed a city-owned asphalt plant.

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