



WEST MILLER SAVE A LOT OFFERS FRESH OPTIONS IN FOOD DESERT

Address:	25 West Miller Avenue, Akron, Ohio
Property Size:	2.4 acres
Former Uses:	Grocery store, gasoline station, machine shop
Current Use:	Vacant building in a transitional but intact residential neighborhood
EPA Funding Source:	Project Partners:
The Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning & Development Organization (NEFCO) used funds from a U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition grant for Summit County, Ohio.	NEFCO, City of Akron, CenterMark Development



Project Background

A building which once served as a grocery store and later as a machine shop had been vacant. To complicate its reuse, adjacent to the facility were a former dry cleaner and a former gasoline station with historical maps showing six possible underground storage tanks (UST) on the property, one tank very close to the building’s west side. A previous ground-penetrating radar study had not conclusively ruled out the presence of these USTs. Despite these changes, the surrounding neighborhood remains largely intact, but had been without a nearby grocery store for decades, making the economically-distressed area a known food desert. NEFCO’s environmental consultant recommended the investigation of a portion of this large site, since the building was to be remodeled for use by an urban grocery store, and no other parts of the property would be redeveloped. The assessment included the northern part of the property, which had been in use for a number of years as a neighborhood community garden.

Key Developments

- Test pits installed found no signs of underground storage tanks.
- Volatile organic compounds and most RCRA 8 metals were present but did not exceed Voluntary Action Program standards.
- Lead found in a sample from beneath the concrete floor indicated the need for a risk mitigation or soil management plan for excavation activities.
- Because no excavation was planned and the floor would be undisturbed, no remediation was needed. The concrete floor was kept intact to prevent exposure to lead.

Outcomes

The City of Akron sold the building to a developer, who immediately began the rehabilitation of the vacant building. Less than one year after completing the assessment, the Save a Lot grocery store opened to the public, providing the area’s first grocery store. Inner city residents now have a source of fresh produce.

Public/Private sector investment: \$1,400,000

Jobs created: 11