



Former Citizens Gas and Light, Jackson, Tennessee

The former Citizens Gas and Light property in Jackson, Tennessee was a manufactured gas plant that operated from 1871-1931. This property is located on the northern fringe of downtown Jackson, between a farmers market and an underserved community. Originally, the facility heated coal to extract gas, which was stored and distributed from this site. Along with the production of gas, several residual constituents were produced. The locations of the former tar well and gasometer were found to contain contaminants of concern, including PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons).

To address these contaminants, the City of Jackson was awarded a \$200,000 EPA 104(k) Brownfields Cleanup Grant in 2007 to remove source contamination areas and put a soil cover system in place. A multi-agency team from the Jackson Energy Authority, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Division of Remediation (TDEC DoR), the City of Jackson, US EPA and the private sector worked together to make this cleanup grant a success. A Brownfields Voluntary Agreement was put in place with the Jackson Energy Authority, City of Jackson and the TDEC DoR Voluntary Oversight, Cleanup and Assistance Program. From this downtown property, 610 tons of coal-tar impacted soils were removed.

The property is now an urban pocket park and outdoor amphitheater that complements the vision of downtown Jackson's revitalization. This property also houses the farmer's market office, adjacent to the West Tennessee Farmer's Market. Addressing the former Citizens Gas and Light property was one of the first steps in neighborhood revitalization, acting as a catalyst site to spur further re-investment.

In 2009, the city adopted a long-range development plan for the Center City District which would become Jackson Walk, a 20-acre redevelopment district around Central Creek and the former Citizens Gas and Light property. The City of Jackson selected a master developer for the project and in 2011 construction on Jackson Walk began. \$40 million was leveraged in private investment from Healthy Community, LLC (the master developer). The development has 149 market-rate apartments and ten



Photo Credit: Paula Middlebrooks

Before the former Citizens Gas and Light property was cleaned up through an EPA grant, it sat vacant and derelict.



Photo Credit: Paula Middlebrooks

After the former Citizens Gas and Light property was cleaned up through an EPA grant, it was transformed into an outdoor amphitheater.

single-family homes. Six of the homes were sold through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, a grant-funded, affordable housing program from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Five other homes in the development were sold with first-time homebuyer incentives. For the affordable home construction,

acquisition and rehabilitation of existing homes, \$1 million in HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds were leveraged. Additionally, \$1.5 million in HUD funds in the form of Section 108 loan guarantees were also leveraged to invest in public infrastructure in the area including street reconstruction, sidewalks, drainage and street lighting.



Photo Credit: Healthy Community, LLC

In 2013, the anchor of Jackson Walk, an 84,000 ft² facility called “Living in a Fit Tennessee” (LIFT) opened. LIFT is a space where citizens can exercise and visit an urgent care clinic and outpatient rehabilitation center. The center was designed to increase residents’ accessibility for health care and a healthy lifestyle and includes a pool, indoor track, climbing wall, café, and fitness equipment. The LIFT building is a LEED certified building and the area’s only medical fitness center.

The Jackson Walk community contains 149 market-rate apartments, with more planned for the future.

This Jackson Walk neighborhood is within walking distance to retail shops, a dog park, the outdoor amphitheater, and the farmer’s market. In 2012-13, a 1.5-

mile long downtown walking trail was funded by a \$17,100 Tennessee Department of Health *Eat Well, Play More* grant. An additional \$5,000 sponsorship was funded through the local Jackson High School Class of ’63 Living Legacy Fund, bringing the total trail leveraging to \$22,100. From 2012 to 2014, more than 30 new businesses opened in the neighborhood, bringing many new jobs. The LIFT wellness center, urgent care clinic and rehabilitation center brought more than 80 full- and part-time jobs to the area. The banks of Central Creek, which runs through this property and was once an 8-foot-wide-concrete-lined drainage ditch, now have new sidewalks, street lights, trees and landscaping. In 2013-14, the City of Jackson leveraged a Tennessee Department of Agriculture grant for \$8,765 to plant 73 trees in the Downtown Dogs Group Park.

This project is not yet complete. As of 2017, the second phase of the project is scheduled to break ground on 120 additional apartments and 40 lots for single family homes. It is projected that there will be approximately \$10 million in private investment for the apartments alone.

Downtown Jackson has come a long way from being home to a brownfield site that sat derelict, vacant, and contaminated in an underserved area. Today, that catalyst site is home to community concerts and events, and is an amenity for the community.



Photo Credit: Healthy Community, LLC

The Jackson Walk community, a 20-acre redevelopment, grew around the former Citizens Gas and Light Property.