

June 5, 2020

Project No. 3896-302-02-01

# **PHASE I ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT**

**COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY  
COALITION**

**1715 WENTWORTH AVE  
CHICAGO HEIGHTS, ILLINOIS**

PREPARED BY



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability Coalition (the user) retained **Weaver Consultants Group North Central, LLC** (WCG) to perform a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) of the property located at 1715 Wentworth Ave in Chicago Heights, Illinois (the Property). WCG performed this Phase I ESA in general compliance with the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process (ASTM E 1527-13) in an effort to identify, to the extent feasible, the presence of recognized environmental conditions with respect to the Property as defined in ASTM E 1527-13. Limiting conditions, exceptions to, or deletions from this practice are described in **Sections 1.5** and **10.0** of this report.

The Property is comprised approximately 3.5 acres of land with approximately 900 feet of frontage along Wentworth Ave improved with an approximate 2,000-square foot vacant building and an approximate 450-square foot vacant building. In addition, a scale is located between the two buildings on the western portion of the Property. The Property is currently unoccupied, but appears to be utilized as a scrap yard/junk yard for the storage of materials including, but not limited to, vehicles, building materials (bricks, siding, roofing materials, wood, etc.), used railroad ties, earthen materials (soil, gravel, etc.), tires, metal canisters, 5-gallon and 55-gallon apparent chemical containers, and general debris. The Property is primarily gravel-covered, with the exception of areas along the Property boundaries that appear to be vegetated.

Based on our review of historical records, the Property appeared as undeveloped land as early as 1892. By at least 1901, roads appeared improved on the Property and by 1911, the Property appeared developed as the “The Joseph, Joseph & Brothers Company Railroad Scrap Iron Yard” with four railroad spurs and eight buildings including an office, a building identified as scrap iron, and a blacksmith shop. By at least 1950, the railroad spurs and buildings on the Property appeared to have been razed, with the exception of two spurs transecting the northeastern corner of the Property. The Property appeared improved with a scrap iron yard and five new buildings including a junk warehouse. By at least 1962, the Property appeared to be used for equipment, vehicle, and/or material storage which extended onto the southern portion of the Property. The Property remained generally unchanged through the date of the site visit. According to local street directories, the Property was listed as Chicago Heights Iron & Supply for the range of dates supplied (from 1969 to 2009).

On April 30, 2020, WCG representatives Ms. Allison Fournier and Ms. Paige Adams visually assessed the Property for recognized environmental conditions, including but not limited to, the presence of hazardous substances, hazardous wastes, petroleum products, other wastes, underground storage tanks (USTs),

aboveground storage tanks (ASTs), polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB)-containing equipment, or other potential Findings (i.e., any known or suspect environmental conditions) for the Property.

WCG also performed a review of commercially available government records in an effort to identify recognized environmental conditions in connection with the Property. This records review addressed not only the Property, but also surrounding properties. The records review also included reasonably ascertainable historical data, which can be helpful in identifying the past uses of the Property and surrounding areas, as it may relate to the environmental condition of the Property.

Finally, WCG performed interviews with various government agencies and other parties with possible knowledge of the Property and surrounding properties in an effort to identify current and past uses of the Property and surrounding areas, as they may relate to the environmental condition of the Property.

ASTM E 1527-13 defines a recognized environmental condition as the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products in, on, or at a property: (1) due to any release to the environment; (2) under conditions indicative of a release to the environment; or (3) under conditions that pose a material threat of a future release to the environment. De minimis conditions are not recognized environmental conditions.

Based upon the assessments described in this report, this Phase I ESA has revealed no evidence of recognized environmental conditions in connection with the Property, except for the following:

- The potential presence of surface and subsurface impacts associated with the current and historical use of the Property as a scrap yard.
- The potential presence of surface and subsurface impacts associated with the Nicor mercury spill.
- The potential presence of subsurface impacts associated with the historical operations of the northwestern adjoining property.
- The potential presence of subsurface impacts associated with the historical operations on the northern adjoining property.
- The known subsurface impacts associated with the historical operations on the eastern adjoining property.
- The potential subsurface impacts associated with the operation of a railyard on the southern adjoining property.
- The known and potential subsurface impacts associated with the historical operations on the western adjoining property.
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Based upon the assessments described in this report, this Phase I ESA has revealed no evidence of controlled recognized environmental conditions in connection with the Property, with the exception of the following:

- The known presence of mercury impacts associated with the Nicor mercury spill enforcement action and associated construction worker safety precaution required for the Property.

Based upon the assessments described in this report, this Phase I ESA has revealed no evidence of historical recognized environmental conditions in connection with the Property.

This Executive Summary provides a brief overview of the Findings of this Phase I ESA. Although the Executive Summary is an integral part of the report, it does not substitute for reading the entire report or the appended or referenced documents to fully understand the findings and conclusions of this Phase I ESA.