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Gas Station Demolished For Health Center Offices

Earlier this month, the Common Council approved \$10,000 in economic development funds to demolish the former Steve's Auto Repair bought by the city earlier this year with a \$400,000 state grant to be used for environmental cleanup of PCBs and asbestos.

By [Cassandra Day](#) | [Email the author](#) | April 26, 2012

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The former Steve's Auto Repair at 645 Main Street, Middletown, was demolished Wednesday to make way for the Community Health Center's opening May 4. Eventually, an office building will be constructed on the site. Today, the city was removing PCBs and asbestos and shipping

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A former auto body and gas station on Main Street was demolished Wednesday to make room for the new health center's administrative offices in the city's North End.

The building, built in 1930, which most recently was occupied [Steve's Auto Repair](#), is a brownfields site as identified by the city's [Downtown Gateway Study](#). The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection conducted testing at the site and discovered a large amount of gasoline in the soil and groundwater.

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[A \\$400,000 state grant](#) is paying for the razing and the cleanup, which includes shipping the scrapped building materials, including polychlorinated biphenyl and asbestos, "out of state to a landfill in Ohio or some other midwestern state," according to [Director of Planning, Conservation and Development William Warner](#).

"PCBs have been demonstrated to cause cancer, as well as a variety of other adverse health effects on the immune system, reproductive system, nervous system, and endocrine system," according to the Environmental Protection Agency. "Once in the environment, PCBs do not readily break down and therefore may remain for long periods of time cycling between air, water and soil."

"The city is working hard to remove environmental contamination," said Mayor Dan Drew, but this is only the first phase of the project. "The next stage is to deal with the underground tanks that are leaking" contaminants. "We want to get Main Street cleaned up for the Community Health Center," which is slated to open for patients in mid-May.

Community Health Center President and CEO Mark Masselli was on hand to watch the bulldozing first-hand. He said although construction on administrative offices is a while off, he wanted to get the site razed and cleaned up in time for the ribbon cutting on the new building on May 5.

"It's a nice step in the continuing revitalization of the North End," Drew said.

"It's similar to what we did with the It's Only Natural Market building," Warner said, a few years ago, the location of another former gas station, also considered brownfields.

When the building design is complete, Warner said, "It'll go before the design and review board and be built up close to the street like other Main Street businesses and have retail on the ground floor."

"This site will go from an eyesore to another gem on Main Street in Middletown," Drew said. "It's one more brick in the beautiful building that is Main Street."

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