

Frogtown Square Redevelopment Site



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) staff from the Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup (VIC) Program provided technical oversight of the environmental investigation, cleanup and redevelopment of this 1.8-acre site at 615 University Avenue in St. Paul.

The new building is mixed use with businesses on the street level – two restaurants, a halal grocery, beauty salon, salon/laundromat, and cell phone store -- and residences on the upper level. The redevelopment provides more local jobs, an increased tax base, and continued revitalization to the area.

History

The site has been developed since at least 1890 and has been used for various residential and commercial purposes, including restaurants, a police station, a strip club, electronic parts distributors, lumberyard, tire repair shop, barbershop and Schleh Brothers, an ice, fuel and oil business.

Environmental issues

- Fill soils were contaminated with arsenic, lead and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons.
- Fill soils were also intermixed with debris, including brick, glass, steel, clay piping, and plastic wrap.
- Low-level groundwater contamination did not require remediation.

Environmental cleanup process

- The former buildings were demolished.
- Approximately 1,250 tons of contaminated fill soils and debris materials were excavated and disposed of at a permitted landfill.

Cleanup success

Contaminated urban fill and debris were removed from a site at the bustling corner of University Avenue and Dale Avenue in St. Paul and environmental contamination risks have been managed.



Project dates:

June, 2008 - January 2011

MPCA project identification:

VIC project ID: VP24460
Petroleum Brownfield ID:

Location:

615 University Avenue
in St. Paul

Legislative Dist. 65A
Congressional Dist. 4

Ramsey County
Property Identification
Numbers.
322923230268,
362923230279,
362923230280,
362923230281,
362923230282

Redevelopment of the site

- A four-story building with underground parking was constructed, with the street level occupied by businesses and the remaining levels occupied with 49 senior apartments.
- At one of the restaurants in the building, the Daily Diner Frogtown, the Union Gospel Mission conducts its Our Daily Bread vocational-training program. The program offers individuals a bridge between the mission's in-house recovery programs and the outside working world. Over the course of 12 weeks, trainees experience every aspect of restaurant operations. Each student receives training in front- and back-of-the-house positions, including prepping, cooking and service. It also provides opportunities to learn important skills, such as time management, customer service, and multitasking. Upon graduation, each trainee has gained the skills to find and keep a job.

Environmental and economic benefits

- Contaminated fill soil and debris materials were removed from the site and environmental contamination risks have been managed.
- Increased tax revenue for the city.
- The new businesses provide approximately 40 jobs.
- Continued revitalization of the Frogtown Neighborhood.

Assurances received

July 3, 2008: Response Action Plan Approval.

January 19, 2011: No Further Action Determination for Soil. No institutional controls were required.

Project partners

- MPCA VIC program staff included Allan Timm and Shanna Schmitt.
- The developers were Beverley Hawkins with NEDU, LLC/Model Cities and Marvin Plakut with Episcopal Homes of Minnesota.
- The environmental consultant was Bruce Schaepe with Peer Engineering, Inc.
- Public funding sources included the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

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