

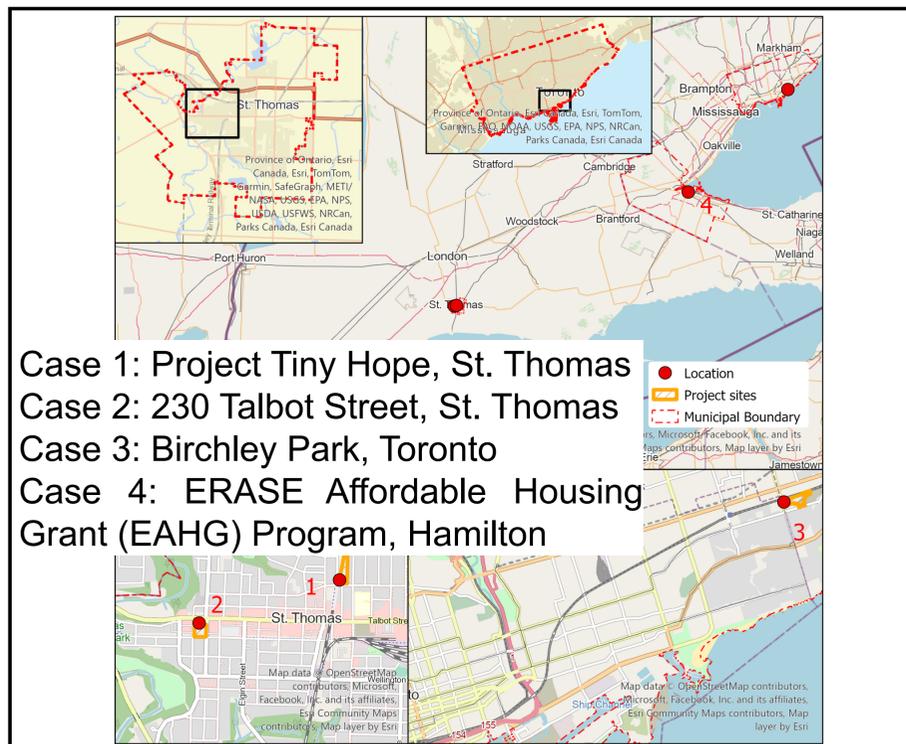
Brownfield Redevelopment for Affordable Housing: An Examination of Not-for-profit Developers and Municipal Projects in Southern Ontario, Canada

What are the barriers and enablers to not-for-profit affordable housing development on brownfield sites?

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Abstract: Brownfield redevelopment has become a strategic tool in addressing urban regeneration, economic growth, and affordable housing provision in Canada. This research examines the role of not-for-profit developers and municipal agencies in transforming brownfields into affordable housing in Southern Ontario. Through a case study approach, four projects/programs are analyzed to identify barriers, enabling factors, and best practices. Findings reveal synergy between urban infill brownfield sites and conditions favourable to residents in affordable housing; obstacles include financial constraints, remediation costs, and disconnection between affordable housing incentives and remediation timelines. Strong municipal support, capacity building through expertise and partnerships, and diverse funding mechanisms facilitate success. The study highlights the importance of aligning brownfield remediation policies with affordable housing initiatives and fostering collaboration between public, private, and non-profit sectors, offering insights for municipalities, policymakers and non-profits aiming for social-oriented outcomes through urban land reuse.

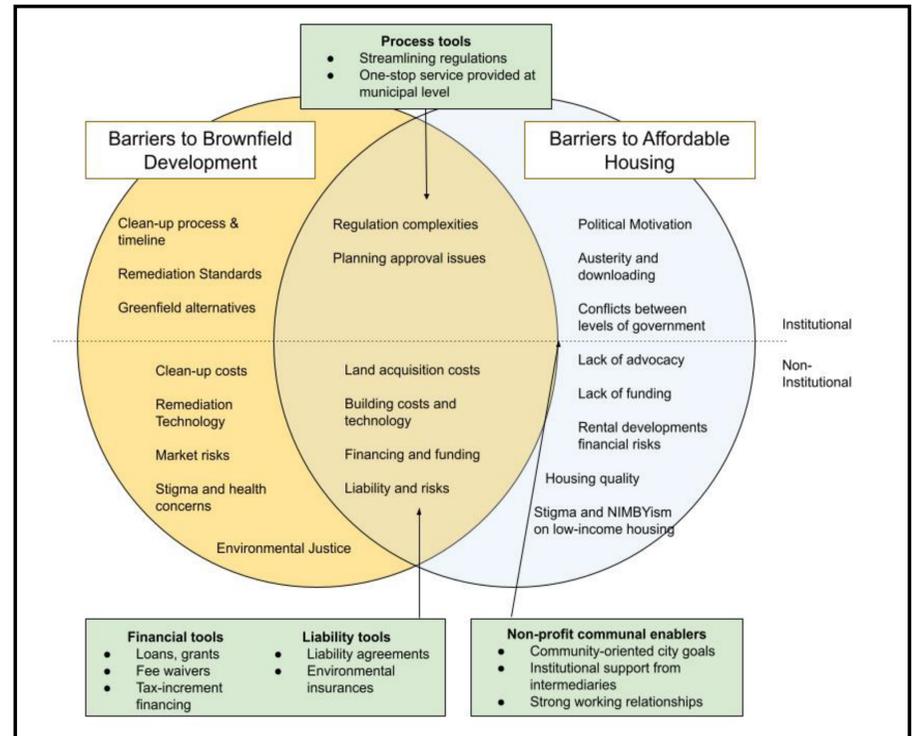


Acknowledgements, final notes:

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Literature Review and Conceptual Framework:

This study identified benefits and developed a conceptual framework to understand barriers and enabling factors associated with brownfield redevelopment and affordable housing development. Case studies were conducted to test the framework, supplement missing pieces and understand the interactions between these elements.



Findings and Recommendations:

- Brownfield sites and affordable housing initiatives have strong synergy: infill sites in historical downtown areas, are usually already well-served by social infrastructure used by potential residents.
- Findings largely align with the conceptual framework derived from literature: similar barriers and facilitation mechanisms were identified in the cases.
- Key barriers pertaining to affordable housing:
 - Additional remediation cost to be paid upfront, and
 - Difficulty of funding affordable housing in a timely manner, as disconnection exists between funding timeline and brownfield redevelopment timeline
- Key enabling factors:
 - Access to diverse, unconventional funding mechanisms: government funding programs, restructuring of municipal assets, philanthropic donations, and complimentary services and goods.
 - Projects were driven by strong political will and community-oriented goals.
 - Support from a strong partnership network of intermediaries to leverage expertise, manage resources and redistribute risks
 - Absence of stigma as a significant barrier
- Recommendations
 - Ensure implementation of the identified enablers
 - Reinstate the opportunities in reusing brownfield sites
 - Align funding timelines to recognize brownfield reuse
 - Streamline and accelerate the Records of Site Conditions (RSC) process
 - Establish community-building goals at municipalities
 - Optimization of government-owned asset portfolio
 - Strengthen capacity of non-profits through partnerships and network building
 - Future research to expand on other cases, policy analysis of incentives, perception of barriers in the industry, and lived experiences of the community.