

# Canadian Brownfields Case Study

## Station 20 West Redevelopment



Source: Wright Construction, 2024.

Figure 1: Station 20 West redevelopment opened in October 2012, after 6 years of the initial completion of the redevelopment plan.

### PROJECT SUMMARY

Station 20 West is a significant brownfield redevelopment project in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, located on two sites at 219 Avenue K South and 230 Avenue L South. The area, once home to a Mohawk Gas Station, Revelstoke lumber yard, and railway spur, was historically industrial<sup>1</sup>. The City of Saskatoon acquired both sites and demolished existing buildings to address environmental contamination. The project focused on revitalizing a community that is predominantly low-income and urban Indigenous with limited services. Station 20 West, which was developed with the majority of its funding from NGOs and community fundraising, aims to provide a vibrant community hub. The site at 219 Avenue K was transformed into a 55-unit affordable housing project with library and open office spaces, while 230 Avenue L South has been redeveloped into a Community Enterprise Centre<sup>1</sup>. This center features services that benefit the surrounding area such as office community spaces, a food store, health outreach, early childhood development, and housing support. The development also spurred further local revitalization including the Askîy Project, which earned a 2017 Brownie Award<sup>2</sup>. Station 20 West stands as a prime example of how community-focused urban redevelopment can address social gaps such as health, food, and housing while inspiring additional grassroots projects.

### QUICK FACTS

#### Location

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

#### Project type

Petroleum hydrocarbon and heavy metal contamination remediation

#### Site size

28,000 sq ft

#### Land uses

Mixed-Use: Residential, Commercial, and Community Services

#### Keywords/special features

Community-Led Development, Affordable Housing, Multi-Use Hub, Sustainability & Revitalization, Funding Challenges

#### Website

<https://station20west.org/>

#### Project address

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#### Please Note:

Case studies were prepared as a course assignment by students enrolled in PL8312/PLE845: Brownfields & Sustainable Development, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Toronto Metropolitan University (Winter 2023). Information for the case studies was obtained from online sources, available reports, and, in some cases, site visits and direct communication with stakeholders.

If you are aware of any errors or updates to the case studies, please contact [chris.desousa@torontomu.ca](mailto:chris.desousa@torontomu.ca)

The opinions expressed in this case study are those of the authors only and do not represent the opinions and views of either Toronto Metropolitan University, the School of Urban and Regional Planning, or the Canadian Brownfields Network.



## Site Characteristics and History

The lot of Station 20 West is approximately 28,000 sq ft encompassing two sites: 219 Avenue K South and 230 Avenue L South, located near 20th Street and Avenue K South<sup>3</sup>. The site 219 Avenue K South (Site 1) was formerly industrial, dating back to the early 1900s, with past uses including a Mohawk gas Station, Revelstoke lumber yard, and a railway spit<sup>1</sup>. The 230 Avenue L South site (Site 2) was formerly a commercial property. Both sites were acquired by the City of Saskatoon through tax enforcement and purchase. Prior to the redevelopment, all existing buildings and structures, including underground storage tanks, pump islands, and piping from the former gas station, were demolished to accommodate environmental remediation efforts<sup>1</sup>. The area has since been redeveloped for residential and commercial use.

## Cleanup

Both sites had environmental contamination, as the soils were affected by the former occupants of the land<sup>1</sup>. Site 1 had arsenic and metals like lead and zinc in the soil at levels above safe limits for residential use. Site 2 had petroleum hydrocarbons (like xylenes) in the soil at levels above commercial safety standards. Cleanup involved excavating and disposing of the contaminated soils<sup>8</sup>. At Site 1, the arsenic contaminated soil was sent to a City of Saskatoon containment cell, and the metal contaminated soil was stored at City owned land for later use as landfill cover. At Site 2, hydrocarbon contaminated soil was treated or disposed of at the City of Saskatoon Landfill, using lab tests to confirm remediation<sup>8</sup>. The remediation followed provincial guidelines, including the Saskatchewan Environmental Quality Guidelines (SEQG). The site cleanup was conducted to meet the SEQG (2005) Tier 1 Commercial criteria for coarse-grained soils, ensuring compliance with Saskatchewan's environmental



Source: Station 20 West Facebook, 2025

Figure 2: The site began undergoing construction in July 2011. Pictured above is the process of piling in the early construction phase to ensure the soil can support the building's weight. regulations and supporting future commercial redevelopment<sup>9</sup>.

## Planning and Regulatory Issues

The redevelopment of Station 20 West faced several planning and regulatory challenges that come along with brownfield projects. Since the site had known environmental contamination, it had to comply with Saskatchewan's Environmental Management and Protection Act of 2002 and associated regulations<sup>1</sup>. The City of Saskatoon played an important

role in ensuring that zoning, planning approvals, and building permits were correct and in place, while the Ministry of Environment oversaw the environmental assessment and remediation aspect of the project<sup>1</sup>. Key stakeholders included the City of Saskatoon, which managed zoning and approvals, the Ministry of Environment, and community organizations like the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which provided financial support after the

Figure 3: Satellite images of Station 20 West, the left image is 2005 prior to redevelopment and the right is 2024 post-redevelopment.



Source: Google Earth, 2025

provincial government withdrew funding. Zoning changes were required to transition the land from industrial and commercial use to mixed-use residential and commercial, which helped to ensure that the project aligned with urban development goals<sup>1</sup>. Community involvement was crucial, as grassroots organizations provided financial support after the provincial government withdrew funding, as explained in the following section.

### Financing

The financing of the Station 20 West project was largely driven by community fundraising and support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The project was originally going to be \$11.5 million dollars, billed as a central space to serve the low-income community<sup>5</sup>. The project initially had \$8 million in pledged funding that was cut in 2008 following the election of a conservative government under Brad Wall<sup>5</sup>. Despite the loss of provincial support, the community rallied to secure alternative funding sources to ensure the project's continuation. The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses donated \$100,000 with a loan guarantee of \$250,000, while the Canadian Union of Public employees committed \$100,000 with a \$150,000 loan Guarantee<sup>5</sup>. The City of Saskatoon also entered into a Urban Development Agreement with the Provincial and Federal governments to cost-share the land acquisition

and environmental remediations<sup>1</sup>. Once the city took ownership of the sites, remediation occurred at a cost of approximately \$480,000. There were two incentive programs provided to the project; the Enterprise Zone, offering a five year tax abatement upon completion and the Affordable Housing Initiatives allowing Capital Funding Assistance (10% of the project's total cost) totalling \$1,596,018 dollars<sup>1</sup>. This collaborative funding approach allowed Station 20 West to transform into a thriving community enterprise center, demonstrating the power of grassroots initiatives and multi-level partnerships in driving urban revitalization.

### Building Development

The building development of Station 20 West in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan transformed two former brownfield sites into a vibrant community hub. After the demolition of all its existing structures, the site was remediated to residential standards and sold to the Saskatchewan Housing corporation, leading to the construction of a 55-unit affordable housing complex with a public library and office spaces<sup>6</sup>. Meanwhile, the other site was remediated to commercial standards and sold to Station 20 West Development Inc for the creation of a Community Enterprise Centre<sup>6</sup>. The centre features an auditorium style room (2,788 sq ft) and a board room (1,012 sq ft). The facility is the home of numerous non-profit organizations, offices, a food store, and healthcare

centre<sup>6</sup>. Their development serves as a catalyst for community revitalization, addressing critical needs for housing, health, food, and social services.

### Key Challenges

One of the key challenges for Station 20 West was that the remediation cost was originally meant to be funded by a shared cost through the City of Saskatoon, the Province of Saskatchewan and the federal government. However in 2008, the provincial government changed leaders and they pulled the funding for the project<sup>4</sup>. As a result, Station 20 West had to scale down their project, but was able to receive funding from the wider Saskatoon community that came together to support this redevelopment<sup>4</sup>.

### Benefits

The redevelopment of this brownfield site into the Social Enterprise Centre has provided significant social benefits to the community. It has enhanced food security with non-profit organizations like CHEP Good Food Inc which provides affordable food options<sup>7</sup>. Access to public health services has improved with organizations like KidsFirst and Our Neighbourhood Health Clinic offering immunizations and child health services<sup>1</sup>. The development has also supported affordable housing by establishing a co-op where 55 affordable housing units were built<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the centre has a grocery store and various other non-profit organizations like a new mothers support group, fostering a more connected and resilient neighbourhood<sup>7</sup>. Station 20 West is also located at the edge of several inner-city neighbourhoods and has played an important role in revitalizing that area. It has spurred further redevelopment and has created a much-needed connection between the two sides of the track, strengthening the community's sense of place and identity<sup>4</sup>.

Source: Station 20 West Facebook, 2014



Figure 4: 3000 people came out to the community walk to support Station 20 West in April 2008 after the new provincial government withdraws \$8 million dollars from the project in March 2008.

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## Lessons Learned

The case study of Station 20 West highlights the importance of community advocacy in driving urban redevelopment. The success of the project was largely due to grassroots support, highlighting how community-driven initiatives can overcome political and financial setbacks. The project underscores the importance of securing diverse and resilient funding sources. When provincial funding got withdrawn, the ability to pivot and engage with other funding sources allowed the project to continue. All of which highlights the importance of financial adaptability in urban redevelopment. Additionally, Station 20 West serves as a model for how brownfield redevelopment can act as a catalyst for broader neighbourhood revitalization. The project not only addressed urgent needs in the community (affordable housing, food insecurity, and healthcare), but it also spurred additional redevelopment in the area which helped to strengthen the neighbourhood's social and economic fabric.

## Endnotes

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