

Transforming 318 State Avenue NE in Olympia



Figure 1. The Billy Frank Jr. Place, a former cleanup site, offers affordable housing. *Photo: Low Income Housing Institute.*

Olympia and LIHI partnership creates affordable housing

The City of Olympia and the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) partnered to create the [Billy Frank Jr. Place](#).¹ The affordable housing provides well-designed, attractive apartment homes for homeless veterans, disabled individuals, and homeless youth. An added benefit was revitalizing an undeveloped and underutilized Brownfields property on downtown Olympia's State Avenue corridor.

The housing offers 43 one- and two-bedroom apartments and studios, including one for an onsite resident manager. The design includes support spaces for activities to help the residents become more self-reliant, such as a community room, classroom, kitchen, computer lab, outdoor seating and gardening areas, and counseling space for case-management staff. The Billy Frank Jr. Place is near the Olympia Transit Center, parks, shopping, and schools.

A number of public and private grants and loans contributed to this project. LIHI purchased the land for \$100,000, about one-third of its market value, from the city of Olympia to complete the \$13-million project. The [Washington State Brownfields Program](#)² provided \$79,250 of public funding. The Washington Department of Commerce provided a \$3-million Housing Trust Fund Loan in 2016 and a \$378,512 Housing Assistance Grant in 2017.

Property history and contamination

The 318 State Avenue NE property was undeveloped until at least 1888. Prior to this, it was on the shore or partially underwater in Budd Inlet. In the late 1800s, Budd Inlet was dredged, and the dredged sediment was used to extend the peninsula to the north and east. Former commercial and industrial activities included

¹ <https://hatc.org/collaborative-housing/billy-frank-jr-place/>

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/Brownfields>

foundry operations, machine shops, automotive repair and maintenance, automotive/truck storage, and testing laboratories.

The City of Olympia had potential contamination at the property investigated in 2009. Contaminants requiring cleanup were the following:

- Arsenic, lead, tetrachloroethene (PCE), trichloroethene (TCE), cis-1,2-dichloroethene (DCE), trans-1,2-DCE, vinyl chloride, and carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (cPAHs) for soil
- Arsenic, PCE, TCE, cis-1,2-DCE, trans-1,2-DCE, and vinyl chloride for groundwater

Cleanup

The City of Olympia is cleaning up contamination with assistance from the Washington Department of Ecology's [Voluntary Cleanup Program](#).³

In 2009, contaminated soil was excavated and removed from the site. Soil samples taken at the boundaries of the excavation showed the soil was safe for residential use. However, contaminants were still found in groundwater, so monitoring began in 2010. By 2016, five of the monitoring wells were consistently producing groundwater that met state standards. To allow the redevelopment to progress, the property was sub-divided, and Ecology issued a no further action letter stating cleanup is complete for the Billy Frank Jr. Place property. Cleanup continues on the rest of the site.

In January 2019, groundwater was treated by injecting bioremediation chemicals underground to break down contaminants. By June 2019, vinyl chloride was only detected in three monitoring wells. Vinyl chloride is a breakdown product of TCE, so TCE decreasing in all wells with only vinyl chloride remaining at levels requiring cleanup showed evidence the treatment is working.

Related Information

- Ecology cleanup site name and property address: [318 State Ave NE Olympia](#)⁴
- ACRES ID: 218961
- Ecology Cleanup Site ID: 2010



Figure 2. A studio apartment and the community room. *Photos: Low Income Housing Institute.*



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³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/VCP>

⁴ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/2010>