

# Kendall Yards



*This former railyard offers housing, restaurants, shops, and pedestrian access to downtown Spokane and trails overlooking the Spokane River.*

## Ecology Cleanup Site Name

River Front Properties

## ACRES ID #

56021

## Ecology Cleanup Site ID #

1317

## Property Address

Summit Boulevard  
Spokane, WA

## ADA Accessibility

To request Americans with Disabilities Act accommodation, including materials in a format for the visually impaired, contact the Ecology at 509-329-3546. People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. People with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

## From railyard to walkable, river-view community

Kendall Yards is a vibrant addition to Spokane, with small businesses, restaurants, public art, housing, and condos, all in a walkable setting with spectacular views of the Spokane River below. The 77-acre property is near downtown and directly south of one of Spokane's oldest neighborhoods, West Central.

The Washington Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Commerce, and City of Spokane worked together to help redevelop this property, using Commerce's Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund.

## A locomotive legacy

In 1914, the North Pacific and Milwaukee Railroad (later Union Pacific) constructed bridges across the Spokane River and purchased the property from Spokane College to create a new rail line operational facility. Great Northern Railroad also brought its main line along the northern edge of the property. With miles of tracks, a roundhouse, a steam locomotive repair and passenger car servicing complex, fuel storage, and refueling facilities, Union Pacific's West Spokane Yard supported millions of dollars of commerce and thousands of passengers in their journey across America.

The main complex was located on the western portion of the site and included a railroad turntable, above-ground oil storage tanks, and oil distribution pipelines. Coal- and oil-fired steam engines were serviced here. These railroads operated until 1955. Between 1955 and the late 1980s, both railroad corridors were abandoned, portions of the elevated Union Pacific corridor were removed, and the sunken Great Northern corridor was filled to grade. The central portion of the property had little usage, except for railroad tracks. The eastern portion of the property included warehousing, a plating operation, perishable goods storage, and several municipal facilities.

## Contamination

Given the railroad history, bunker C fuel and metals-containing ash were found over large portions of the western part of the property. The eastern portion contained metals, solvents, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and petroleum from the plating and municipal uses.

## A long, but worthwhile, road to redevelopment

The beginnings of what we now know as Kendall Yards came in fits and starts. In 1990, a company purchased the property for potential redevelopment. However, the extent of contamination on the property was not fully known, and attempts at cleanup were unsuccessful. By 2004, the company had gone bankrupt.

The following year, another developer bought the property and rebranded it Kendall Yards with an intent to clean up the property completely. Working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields program and Ecology's Voluntary Cleanup Program, this effort planned to clean the property to an "unrestricted use" level for future residential development — clean enough for parks and housing without any environmental restrictions.



Figure 1. The Kendall Yards area before cleanup and redevelopment.



Figure 2. Removing contaminated material from an ash trench at Kendall Yards.

The developer received a \$3.4 million loan and a \$375,000 grant from the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund to finance the cleanup. Washington State has a little-used Tax Increment Financing (TIF) type tool called Local Revitalization Financing (LRF) (Ch. 39.104 RCW). It functions similarly to other state's TIF programs, but it is not nearly as robust as TIFs in other communities. Kendall Yards is an LRF and a Multi-Family Tax Exempt area. These economic development incentives are two of the largest at work in the Kendall Yards area.

By 2006, the cleanup was complete. In less than one year, more than 200,000 tons of contaminated soil was removed from 20 acres of the site, including bunker C, cadmium, lead, and arsenic. Dust control was a major component given the dry nature of the soils and the proximity to residential homes. Ecology and EPA were satisfied with the cleanup, and the project was given a letter of "No Further Action." Kendall Yards was removed from the state's Hazardous Sites List after taking comments from the public in April 2006.



The economic shocks at the start of the Great Recession in 2007–2008 again derailed the project, forcing it into bankruptcy and uncertainty. The project was revived in 2010. Building quickly commenced, and the first housing units went on the market by 2012.

### A growing, green community

Today, [Kendall Yards](https://www.kendallyards.com/)<sup>1</sup> is a thriving, multi-use walkable community with easy connectivity to downtown Spokane and Spokane Transit bus routes. Street-level commercial businesses are intermixed with public spaces, public art, Centennial Trail connection, and single- and multi-family housing. A locally owned grocery store was also constructed to serve the community.

In 2021 and beyond, all new homes in Kendall Yards will include solar panels. Solar panels already provide power to lighting in the shared public spaces and parking lots in the business district.



Figure 3. As of 2021, all new homes in Kendall Yards will include solar panels.

### Kendall Yards redevelopment by the numbers

Accomplishment	Amount
Revolving Loan Fund loan	\$3.4 million
Revolving Loan Fund grant	\$375,000
Contaminated soil removed	200,000+ tons
Land remediated	20 acres
Land redeveloped	77 acres
New businesses created	34
Housing units built during initial construction (more coming)	1,500
<a href="http://kendallnightmarket.org/">The Night Market</a> <sup>2</sup> attendance (May – September)	4,000 – 5,000 at peak times

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kendallyards.com/>

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