



TOPIC TALK

BEYOND VACANCY:
USING BROWNFIELDS FOR INTERIM
HOUSING, TINY VILLAGES, AND
TRANSITIONAL COMMUNITY USES



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Beyond Vacancy: Using Brownfields for Interim Housing Tiny Villages & Transitional Community Uses



Purpose of our sharing

We're here to share with you today about Tiny Village Spirit and our experience building and promoting Interim Tiny House Villages with and for unhoused people making creative, safe use of brownfields sites.

Our Mission

The mission of Tiny Village Spirit is to work to end the crisis of homelessness through engaging communities in constituent-led development of decent, dignified emergency housing villages and in community organizing for systematic change toward creating housing justice.

Our Strategies

- 1. Committed to leadership and decision making by the people being served.**
- 2. Engage volunteers and constituents in building tiny house villages.**
- 3. Art and beauty.**
- 4. Community organizing for systemic change and housing justice campaigns.**

In Summary: Our Experience to Date

Tiny Village Spirit has been involved thus far in working to build three interim tiny house villages. With each of these villages we have contended with contamination issues.

Today we are going to describe our experiences with one site in Oakland and two sites in Richmond, California.









The Core Challenge of Identifying Land

We soon found that identifying a site became the biggest challenge to helping homeless youth reach their dream of creating an empowerment-focused tiny house village.

Organizing to Secure a Site

In organizing our first tiny house village we found that identifying a city-owned site and working to secure that site saved money and became immediately viable for an interim community.

The Oakland Site: 633 C Hegenberger Rd.

We were able to get the City of Oakland to give us 2.5 acres of a larger 5 acre plot of land at 633 Hegenberger Rd. in Oakland.

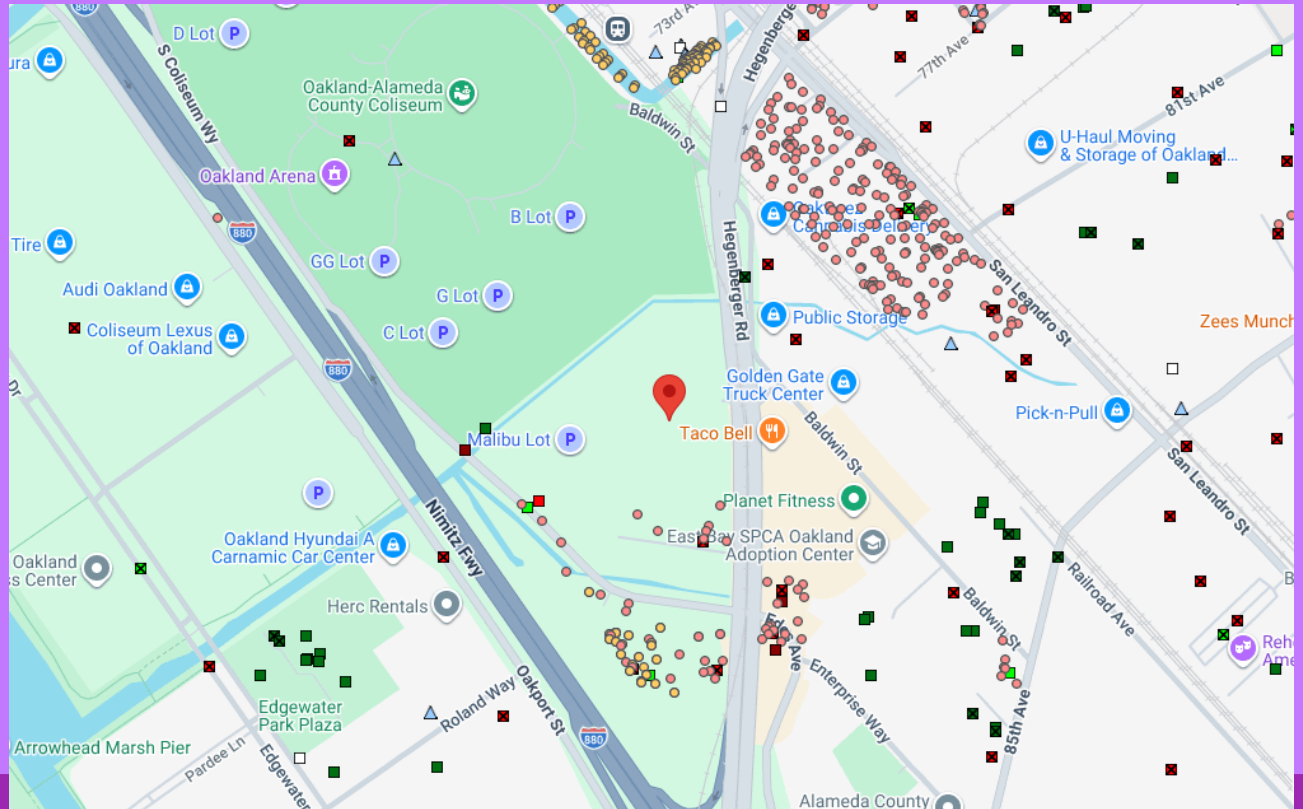
The broader site had contamination in various areas but the area leased to our organization was not contaminated. Our site was 100% paved.



Youth Spirit Artworks Oakland Tiny House Empowerment Village



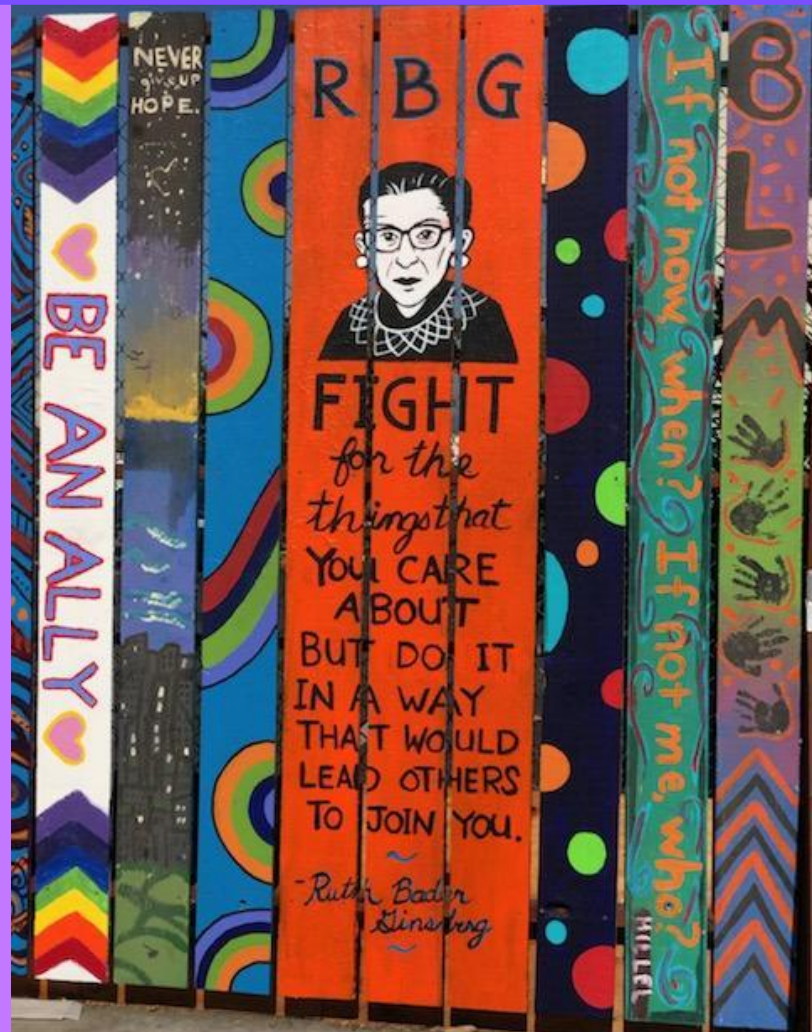
GeoTracker and EnviroStor nearby listings



Oakland Tiny House Empowerment Village: Key Facts

- **Oakland's first legal tiny house village.**
- **First youth tiny house village in the United States.**
- **Located on 2.5 acres of city-owned land adjacent to the Oakland Coliseum in East Oakland.**
- **Opened April 2021.**
- **Operated by Youth Spirit Artworks.**
- **Houses 22 homeless youth.**















Richmond Tiny House Village, Farm & Garden

In the mid-1950s the property was developed for used automobile sales. A 1980 city directory identified the property as being occupied by “Cortese Oldsmobile GMC”. By the early 1990s the property had been cleared.

A Phase I ESA identified the historical use as a REC and an undocumented stockpile as an REC.

Soil samples were collected and contaminants of concern were not identified.

Richmond Tiny House Village, Farm & Garden



Richmond Tiny House Village, Farm & Garden: Key Facts

- **Richmond's first legal tiny house village.**
- **Located on 10,000 sq. ft. of 1.45 acres of city-owned land leased to Richmond Police Activities League in central Richmond.**
- **Doubles emergency housing for unhoused Richmond youth.**
- **Opens Fall 2026.**
- **Operated by Hope Solutions.**
- **Houses 12 homeless youth.**













GRAND OPENING

RICHMOND TINY HOUSE VILLAGE, FARM & GARDEN

Sat. Sept. 26 1pm - 4pm

2200 Bissell Ave,
Richmond, CA 94804

Enjoy Speakers,
Food, Live Music by Benja Soul!

For info, text: 510-282-0396
Tiny Village Spirit/RPAL/Hope Solutions



Richmond Adult Village



Richmond Adult Tiny House Village

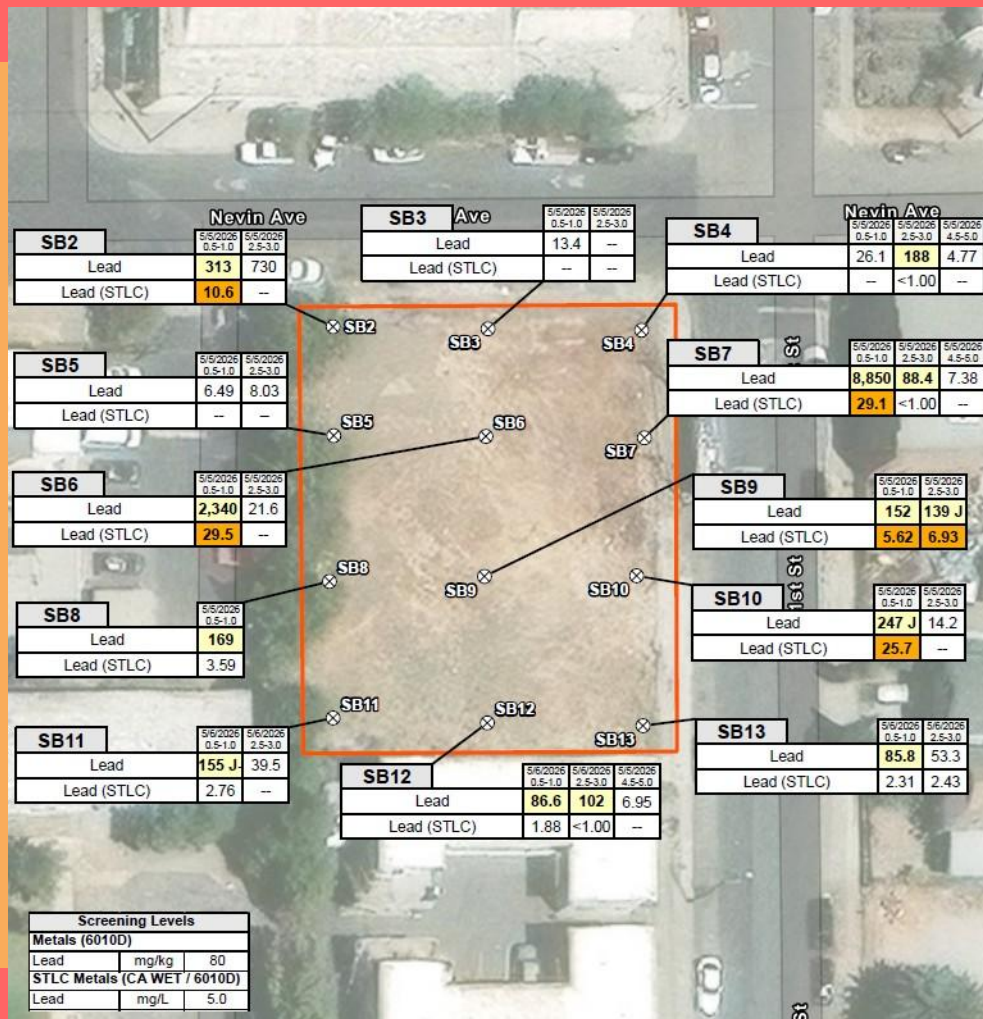
Site was a former hotel.

Phase I ESA identified several nearby potential release sites:

- **Former control valve manufacturer**
- **Former metal plating facility**
- **Historical dry cleaning**

Phase II ESA identified lead impacts in soil, PCE and TCE impacts in groundwater and soil vapor samples above ESLs.

Groundwater was encountered at a depth of 21 feet bgs.





- Approximate Site Boundary
- Groundwater Sample Location
- Detected concentration exceeds SFRWQCB Residential ESL

Sample Type	Units	SFRWQCB Tier 1 ESL
1,1-Dichloroethane	µg/L	5.00
1,1-Dichloroethene	µg/L	3.20
1,2,3-Trichloropropane	µg/L	0.01
cis-1,2-Dichloroethene	µg/L	6.00
Tetrachloroethene	µg/L	0.64
Trichloroethene	µg/L	1.20

1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N
 2. Background: Tied service layer ©
 OpenStreetMap and contributors, CC-BY-SA
 3. µg/L = micrograms per liter
 4. ESL = Environmental Screening Level
 5. SFRWQCB = San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board

San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, Environmental Screening Levels (January 2019)



Project Location
 Parcel: 538-171-001
 1st Street and Nevin Avenue
 Richmond, CA 94804

Client/Project
 Coro Northern California
 Phase II Environmental Site Assessment

Title
 Volatile Organic Compounds in Groundwater

Figure No.
3



- ▲ Soil Vapor Sample Location
 870 Detected concentration exceeds SFRWQCB Residential ESL
 □ Approximate Site Boundary

- Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N
- Background: Tied service area: 6
- OpenStreetMap (land) and contours: CO-BVSA
3. $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ = micrograms per cubic meter
- ESL = Environmental Screening Level
- SFRWQCB = San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
- J = Estimated value

Sample Type	Units	SFRWQCB Residential ESL
Benzene	$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	3.2
Chloroform	$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	4.1
Tetrachloroethene (PCE)	$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	15
Trichloroethene (TCE)	$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	16

(San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, Environmental Screening Levels (January 2019))



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The
 Volatile Organic Compounds in
 Groundwater

Figure No.
4

Proposed Richmond Adult Tiny House Village: Key Facts

- **Richmond's first legal adult tiny house village.**
- **Located on 15,000 sq. ft. of city-owned land in Richmond's Iron Triangle neighborhood.**
- **Increases emergency housing for unhoused Richmond adults—particularly those living in encampments.**
- **Opens Fall 2029.**
- **Operated by Greater Richmond Interfaith Program.**
- **Houses 14 homeless adults.**









Conclusion

To conclude, I hope that we have inspired the thought that tiny villages have significant impact on a community and sites with contamination and lack of funding for redevelopment, can be used as a tiny village.

To Donate

We would love to have your support for our grassroots work.
Gifts can be made via our website in five ways at:

<https://www.tinyvillagespirit.org>

♥ Like, follow, and friend us on FaceBook and Instagram! ♥

Thank you for your passion to
create positive change!
TinyVillageSpirit.org



Stantec



CALIFORNIA LAND RECYCLING CONFERENCE

Imagine | Innovate | Implement
September 29 – October 1, 2026 | Foster City

THANK YOU!

**IMAGINE, INNOVATE, IMPLEMENT
THE FUTURE OF LAND RECYCLING**



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to submit an evaluation form on Whova.

Join the conversation, use #CALRC2026 to share
your photos, insights and highlights!



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