

Introduction

Waterway 20 is a waterfront space located in the Wallingford neighborhood adjacent to Gas Works Park along Lake Union. Due to its proximity to Gas Works Park and its industrial history, Waterway 20 faces ongoing environmental and access challenges towards gaining public access. This report aims to provide updated information on the mitigation, remediation, and site access design of Waterway 20.

Background

The shoreline surrounding Waterway 20 was historically used for industrial purposes. Nearby facilities included former coal ship loading facilities, tar, and bulk fuel storage facilities. Byproducts produced from former oil and tar production likely leached into surrounding land and water. Contamination has been identified in soil and groundwater at Waterway 20.

Regulatory Framework

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Ecology is the WA agency that reviews cleanups at contaminated properties. Most work is done voluntarily in WA State, and Ecology is brought in when a party wants Ecology's official opinion on the work done at the property. The Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) is Washington's environmental cleanup law, and is enforced by Ecology. MTCA regulations and rules direct the investigation and cleanup of sites that are contaminated by hazardous substances.

Stages of a MTCA investigation and cleanup include:

- Initial Assessment (completed)
- Site Characterization (partially completed)
- Feasibility Study (to review and select preferred cleanup alternative)
- Cleanup Action implementation
- Site Closure (Ecology issues a No Further Action (NFA) determination)

Investigations have been conducted at the Waterway 20 site in accordance with MTCA regulations. Investigations were conducted at Waterway 20 in 2016, 2023, and 2024. The investigations included collection of soil and groundwater samples. Results showed soil was contaminated with Lube oil and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and groundwater with PAHs.

Ecology reviewed the investigation results and has recommended that additional investigations and remedial (cleanup) action is needed at this site. Ecology has specifically recommended installing one more monitoring well, collecting groundwater samples.

Likely next steps will include preparing a feasibility study, in order to select the preferred cleanup alternative. Then the cleanup could be completed.

Grants Status

Ecology grant applications were submitted in 2025 to get funding for public outreach, and for investigation and cleanup.

Public Participation Grant (PPG) - Public Participation Grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations and individuals to increase public involvement in cleaning up contamination and reducing solid and hazardous waste. These grants are worth up to \$60,000 each year for up to two years, with a maximum amount of \$120,000. The program facilitates public participation in the investigation and remediation of hazardous substances. WCC was awarded a PPG, and funding will extend through June 30, 2027

Brownfields Grant - Brownfields are abandoned or underutilized properties that may have environmental contamination. The Brownfields grant is granted to non-profits, local governments and tribes, for Assessments and Cleanups, has zero cost share, and is continuously offered and funded (as available). Ecology's Brownfields Program helps communities put those properties back into use, so they can bring their redevelopment visions to life.

WCC has applied for a Brownfields Grant, and was told the application was complete, and the final Grant approval process would be started. Final approval of the Brownfields grant is pending.

The Brownfields grant will be used to meet Ecology's requirements, including installing one more monitoring well, collecting groundwater samples, and preparing a feasibility study.

Estimated Timeline

2026:

- Install well – within 1-2 months of receiving formal grant approval
- Collect groundwater samples

- Prepare and Submit Feasibility Study
- Ecology reviews FS and issues opinion

2027:

- Cleanup Action Plan (CAP), which describes details for implementing selected cleanup from FS
- Ecology reviews CAP and issues opinion– 90 days
- Cleanup Action implementation – timeline varies based on selection – approximately 1 year
- Cleanup Action Report (CAR) and NFA request – July 2028
- Ecology reviews CAR and issues NFA opinion– 90 days – October 2028
- DNR/City allow public access –

Our next meeting should have updates for Ecology-related items and community outreach progress.