

DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington

## **Public Participation Plan**

**Carson Cleaners  
Cleanup Site  
Seattle, WA**

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*Facility Site ID: 15518216*  
*Cleanup Site ID: 14878*

April 2021

## Publication and Contact Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's Carson Cleaners website at:  
<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=14878>

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*To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 425-649-7000 or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. People with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.*

**Public Participation Plan  
Carson Cleaners Cleanup Site  
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Washington State Department of Ecology  
Northwest Regional Office  
Toxics Cleanup Program  
Shoreline, Washington

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## **Introduction**

The Department of Ecology (Ecology), Tahn Associates LLC and Carson Cleaners are addressing contamination discovered in the area by conducting a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study and preparing a Draft Cleanup Action Plan for the Carson Cleaners cleanup site (Site). The Site is located at 4701 Brooklyn Ave NE in Seattle's University District neighborhood.

Ecology developed this public participation plan (plan) as required under the MTCA, to promote meaningful community involvement in the Site cleanup process. The plan first discusses the MTCA and the cleanup process, then provides information about the Site. Next, it describes planned public involvement activities, plan updates, and amendments.

## **Washington's Cleanup Law**

Ecology derives its authority to require cleanup of contamination from the state Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA; [Chapter 70A.305 Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\)](#)<sup>1</sup>). The MTCA provides requirements for contaminated site cleanup in Washington State and sets standards to ensure the cleanup protects human health and the environment. Standards for sediment cleanup are established in the state Sediment Management Standards, [Chapter 173-204 Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\)](#)<sup>2</sup>.

The MTCA began as a grassroots citizen's initiative in 1988 and started the process of systematically cleaning up contaminated sites in Washington. Under the MTCA, anyone with a current or past relationship with a contaminated site may be held responsible for cleaning it up to standards established to protect human health and the environment.

Ecology enacts the MTCA and oversees cleanups in the state and issues regulations and guidance governing those cleanups. The regulations are found in [Chapter 173-340 WAC](#)<sup>3</sup>. Ecology investigates reports of contamination, and if it poses a significant threat to human health or the environment, the site is placed on the Confirmed and Suspected Contaminated Sites List for further assessment. The cleanup process can begin at any time after a release of a hazardous substance to the environment has been discovered.

Public participation is an important part of cleanup under the MTCA. Participation needs are assessed at each cleanup site according to the level of public interest and the degree of risk posed by the contamination. Individuals who live near the site, community groups, businesses,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.305>

<sup>2</sup> <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-204>

<sup>3</sup> <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-340>

## *Washington's Cleanup Law*

government, other organizations, and interested parties have the opportunity to get involved by commenting during the cleanup process.

Under the MTCA, the cleanup process generally includes multiple steps (see Figure 1 on page 3), with opportunities for the public to review and comment on cleanup documents. In addition, a partial cleanup (called an interim action) can occur at any time during the cleanup process. The public is provided an opportunity to review and comment on planned interim action work as well.

MTCA cleanups also require evaluation under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA; [Chapter 197-11 WAC](#)<sup>4</sup>). Under SEPA, the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts from a project or action must be evaluated by state and local agencies when making decisions. This evaluation is subject to public review and comment in parallel with cleanup documents.

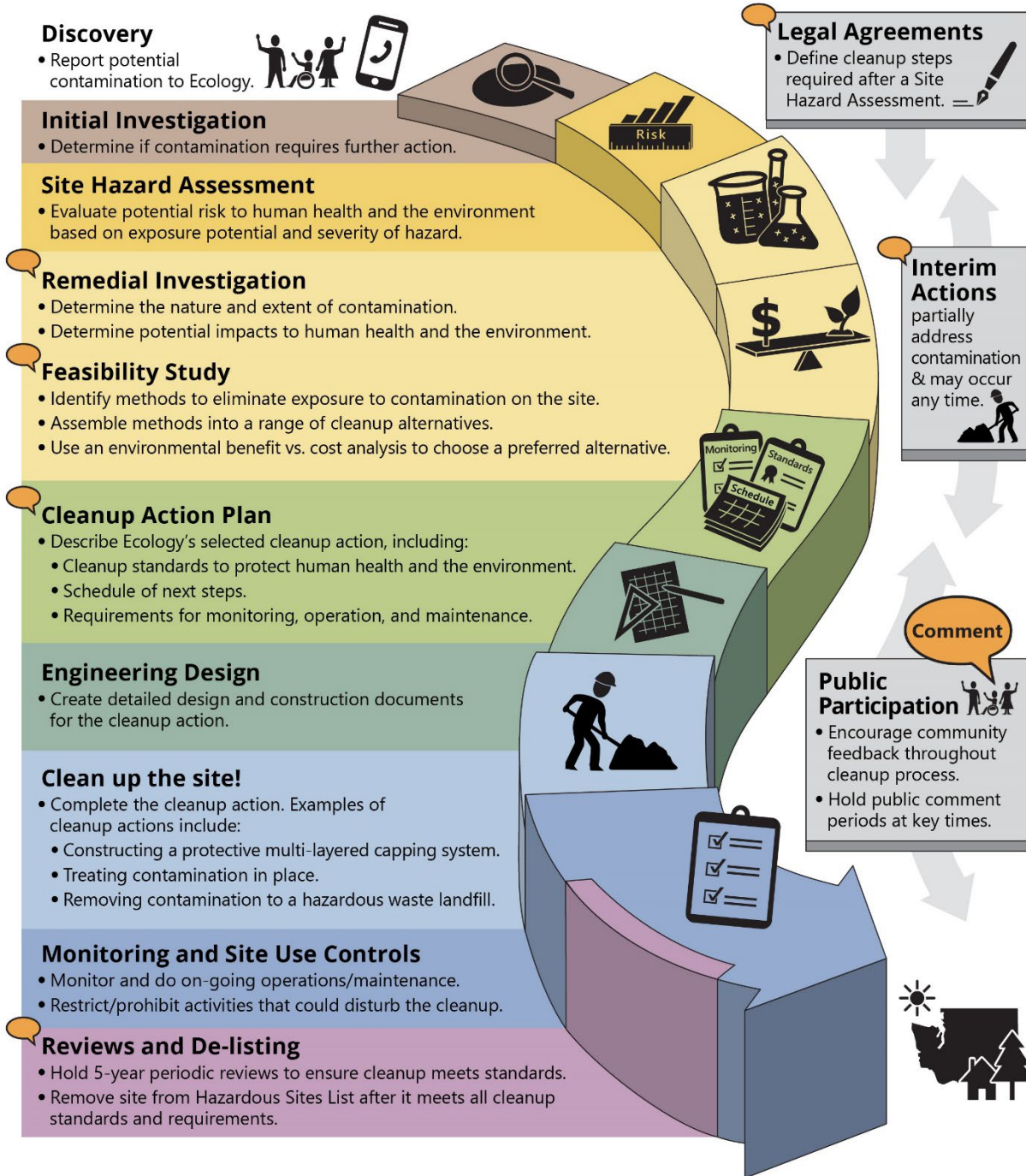
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<sup>4</sup> <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=197-11>





# Washington's Formal Cleanup Process



## Washington's Cleanup Law

Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA)

MTCA defines the cleanup process. This public-initiated environmental law directs upland cleanups (on land or in groundwater) and sediment cleanups (in freshwater or marine environments). Ecology enacts MTCA and regulates the cleanup process.

September 2019  
Ecology Publication 19-09-166

Figure 1: Steps in Washington's Cleanup Process<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/1909166.html>

## Site Information

### Background

The former Carson Cleaners operated a dry-cleaning business as a tenant on the property from the early 1960s until 2014. During the 2018-2019 environmental cleanup of the [Chevron 90129 Site](#)<sup>6</sup> across the street, chemicals commonly used in dry cleaning operations were discovered in the southwestern portion of the Chevron property and along the edge of NE 47<sup>th</sup> Street. These chemicals were in the form of halogenated volatile organic compounds (HVOC). After studying the groundwater flow direction, it was determined that these chemicals may have come from Carson Cleaners.

Tahn Associates LLC purchased the property in 2012 and is the current owner. As the owners of the property, Ecology determined that Tahn Associates LLC is a PLP in this cleanup.

### Contamination

Chemicals present in soil and groundwater:

- Halogenated Volatile Organic Compounds (HVOCs)
  - Trichloroethylene (TCE),
  - Tetrachloroethylene (PCE),
  - Vinyl Chloride (VC),
  - 1,1-Dichloroethene and 1,2-Dichloroethene, known collectively as Dichloroethene (DCE)

### Status of cleanup

The Site is in the beginning steps of the formal cleanup process shown in Figure 1 on page 3. The draft Agreed Order available for public comment in this comment period is a legal agreement between Ecology, Tahn Associates LLC, and Carson Cleaners requires the Potentially Liable Persons (PLPs) to conduct a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study, and prepare a Draft Cleanup Action Plan.

The PLPs will to investigate and describe contamination (Remedial Investigation), analyze cleanup options (Feasibility Study), and develop a draft Cleanup Action Plan (dCAP). The dCAP describes how the selected cleanup alternative will be performed. The public will have a chance to make public comments after these documents are created.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=10632>

## Site Area

### Land use and zoning

The Site is located near the University of Washington's Seattle campus. Much of the area directly around Carson Cleaners is zoned for multifamily housing or mixed-use residential and commercial buildings. As you move away from the university, the neighborhood zoning shifts and becomes detached, single-family homes. For detailed zoning information, visit the [Seattle Department of Construction & Inspection GIS zoning map](https://seattlecitygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f822b2c6498c4163b0cf908e2241e9c2)<sup>7</sup>.

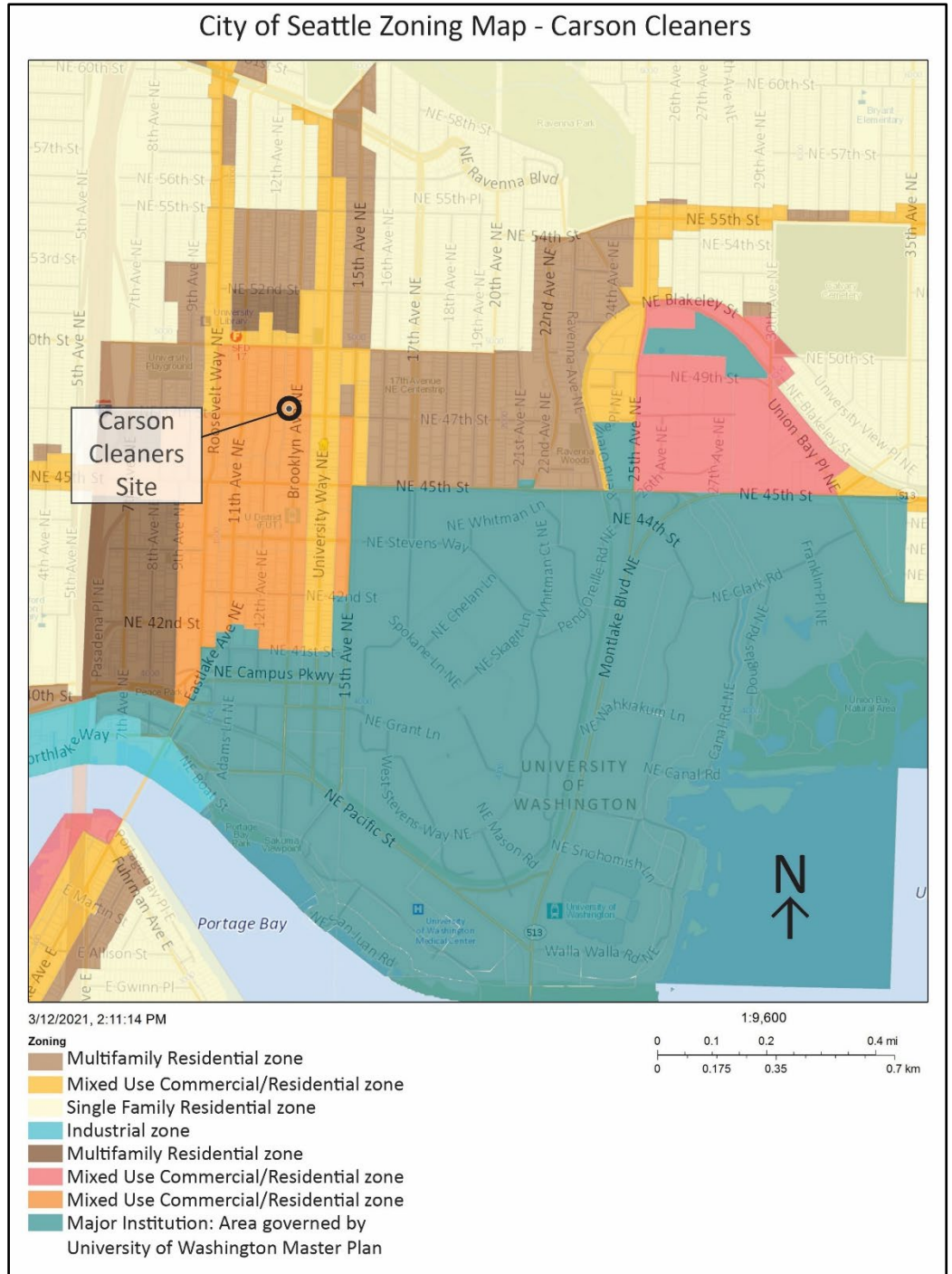


Figure 2: City of Seattle Zoning Map for Seattle's University District.

<sup>7</sup> <https://seattlecitygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f822b2c6498c4163b0cf908e2241e9c2>

## Environmental Justice Screening Results

Ecology screened a half-mile area around the Site to gain a better understanding of the needs of the community.

### Rented or Owned

Households in this area are more likely to be renter-occupied than owner-occupied.

- 86% are rented
- 14% are owned

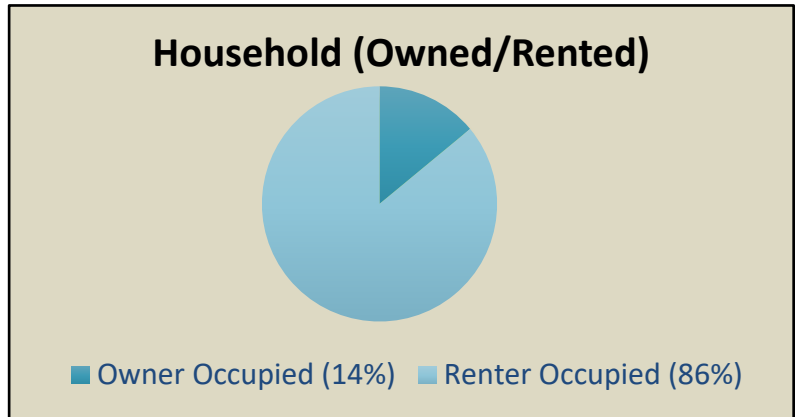


Figure 3: The percentage of homes owned and rented within a half-mile of the Site area.

### Population by Race

The percent of the population in the Site location that identifies with each racial group is as follows:

- White (66%)
- Asian (23%)
- Population reporting two more races (6%)
- Black (3%)
- Some other race (2%)
- American Indian (1%)

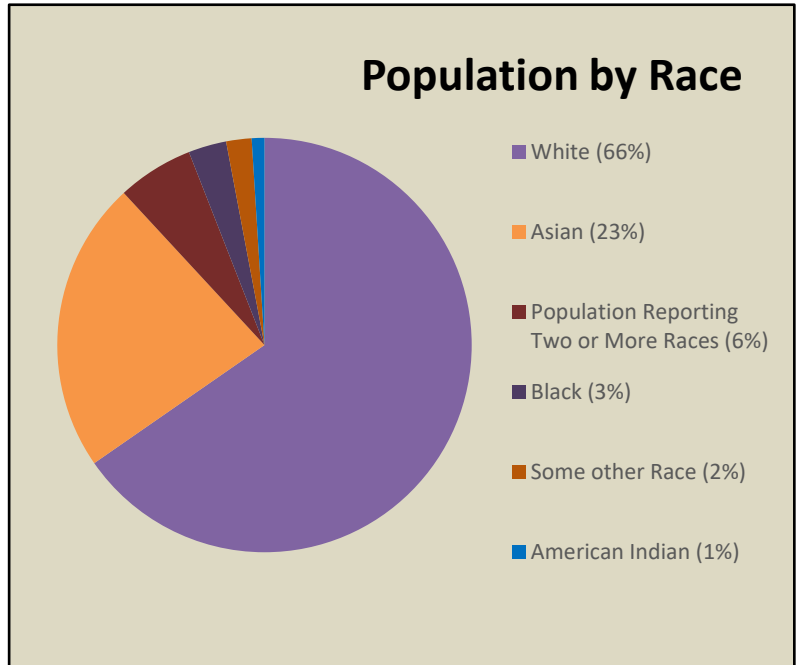


Figure 4: Population by race.

### Spoken Language Information

The percent of the population in the Site location by language they speak is as follows:

- English (67%)
- Chinese (13%)
- Other Indo-European (5%)
- Korean (4%)
- Spanish (3%)
- Other Asian (3%)
- Vietnamese (2%)
- French (1%)
- German (1%)
- Arabic (1%)

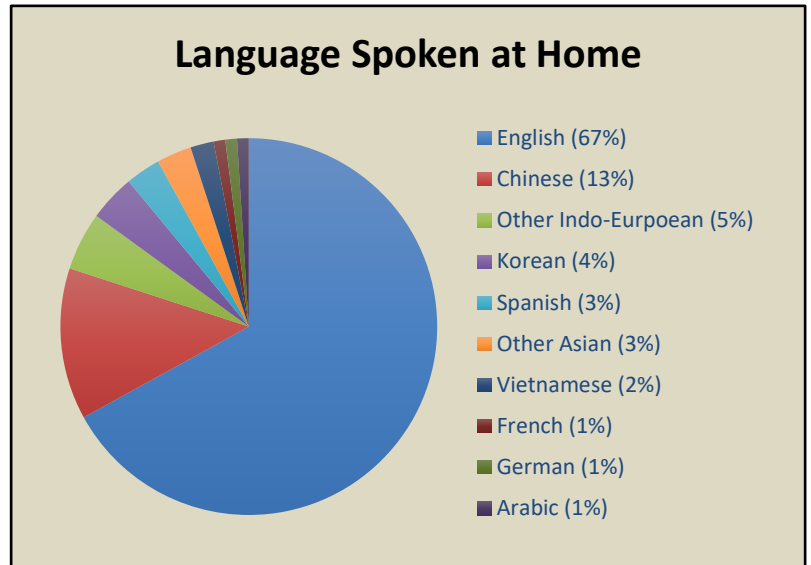


Figure 5: Languages spoken at home within a half mile of the Site.

Ability of the population, above the age of five, to speak English is as follows:

- Speak only English (67%)
- Speak English “very well” (22%)
- Speak English “well” (8%)
- Speak English “not well” (2%)
- Speak English “not at all” (0%)

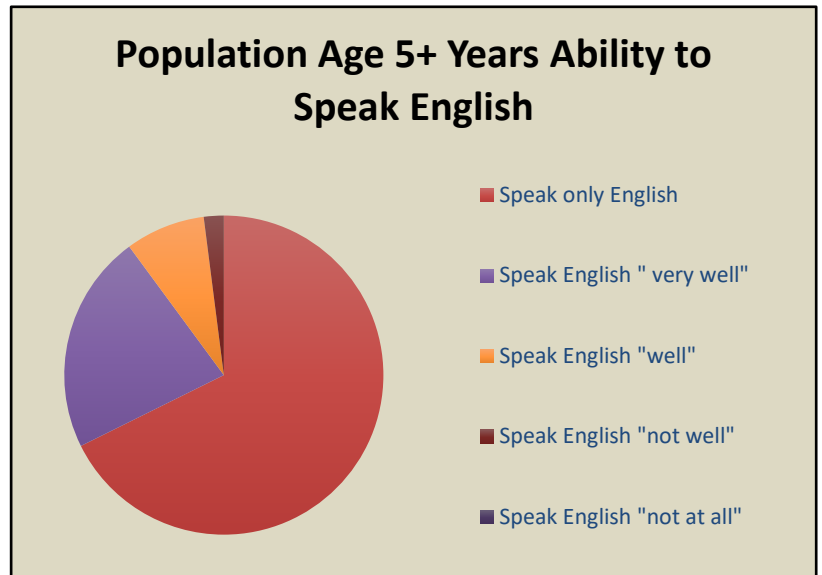


Figure 6: Population age five plus ability to speak English within a half-mile of the Site.

## *Public Involvement Activities*

Demographic data above is from the [US Census Bureau's American Explore Census Data](#)<sup>8</sup> and Washington State Department of Health's [Washington Tracking Network A Source for Environmental Public Health Data](#)<sup>9</sup>.

The [Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool](#)<sup>10</sup> reports no significant demographic indicators above the EPA 80<sup>th</sup> percentile threshold for the half-mile area surrounding the Site. The [US Census Bureau's American Explore Census Data](#)<sup>11</sup> reports a significant Chinese-speaking population (13% of population, 2472 people).



Ecology will reach out to cultural community organizations as part of our public involvement efforts and provide information in other languages as appropriate following federal guidance.<sup>12</sup> The non-English language most widely spoken in the Site area is Chinese. When appropriate, Ecology will provide interpretation and translation in Chinese. We strive to involve the whole community in our public participation efforts and welcome your input on additional measures we can take to reach the nearby community.

There are no federally recognized tribes that own land that could be affected by the project work. However, Ecology will ensure that tribes with an interest in natural and cultural resources will be engaged with any decision-making process for this Site and have ample opportunity to be involved throughout the process on a government-to-government basis.

## **Public Involvement Activities**

This section describes how Ecology will share information with the community and how you can share information with us. In addition, this section provides information about state grants that are available to help the community understand and participate in the cleanup process.

### **How we share information with the community**

During specific steps of the cleanup process, Ecology will mail notices about upcoming public comment periods to residences and businesses near the Site. The mailing list area may vary depending on the type of contamination and where it is located, but at a minimum, it will include addresses within a quarter-mile radius of the Site, and other interested organizations and individuals. The notices will provide general information about the Site, contact information for

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<sup>8</sup> <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtnibl/WTNIBL/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/index.html?wherestr=47.505875%2C+-122.290814>

<sup>11</sup> <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

<sup>12</sup> Guidance to Environmental Protection Agency Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, 69 Fed. Reg. § 35602 (June 15, 2004).

submitting comments, and times and locations of public meetings or hearings, or how to request one if one is not yet scheduled.

Ecology may also develop documents outside of comment periods to keep the community updated on the Site's status. We will make these informational documents available online and, if warranted, by US mail.

Comment period notices and other Site announcements may also be posted in various locations throughout the community (for example, local businesses, schools, libraries).

## Notification lists

Ecology maintains an email list and a mailing list that includes: postal addresses within a quarter-mile radius of the Site; relevant local, state, federal, and tribal government contacts; and, other interested parties.

We will use these lists to send notices when cleanup documents are available for public review and comment or for other Site communications. Printed notifications are being sent along United States Postal Routes 98105-C022 (1585 deliveries), 98105-C033 (968 deliveries), 98105-C043 (1112 deliveries), and 98105-C063 (950 deliveries). Routes are highlighted in blue in Figure 7.

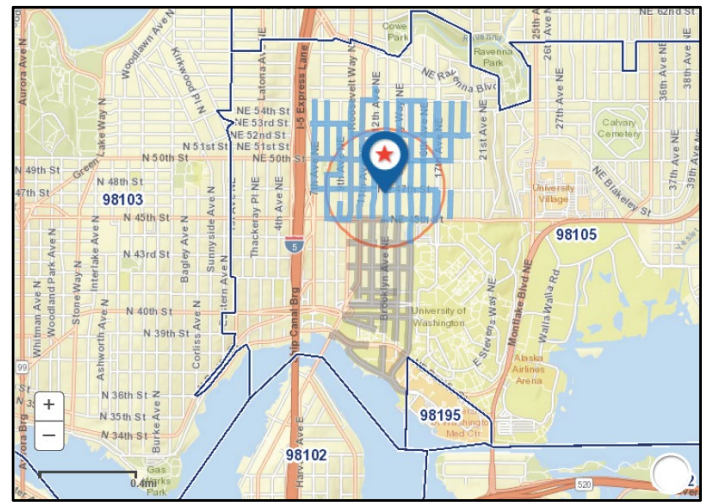
If you would like to be added to the email or mailing lists for this Site, please contact Meredith Waldref at 425-229-3683 or [Meredith.Waldref@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Meredith.Waldref@ecy.wa.gov).

## Site Register

Public comment periods, events, and other cleanup notices are published in Ecology's [Site Register](#).<sup>13</sup> To receive the *Site Register* by email, please contact Sarah Kellington at 360-208-3167 or [sarah.kellington@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:sarah.kellington@ecy.wa.gov).

## Newspaper display ads or legal notices

We announce public comment periods and events in ads or notices published in the *Seattle Times*. We will also publish notice on our [Public Input & Events Listing](#).<sup>14</sup>



**Figure 7: Mailing routes used for printed notifications related to this site are highlighted in blue. The red star is the location of the Site. The red circle is 1/4 mile radius around the former Carson Cleaners.**

<sup>13</sup> [ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data](http://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data)

<sup>14</sup> [ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing](http://ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing)

## **Ecology's website and social media platforms**

We maintain a [website for the Carson Cleaners site](#).<sup>15</sup> The website provides Site information, including current status, public comment period information and documents, and other Site documents.

We may also share information about cleanup sites through [news releases, our ECOconnect blog, and social media](#).<sup>16</sup>

## **Document repositories**

During public comment periods when review locations are accessible, you can find print documents at the following locations:

### **Seattle Public Library-University Branch**

5009 Roosevelt Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98105  
Phone: 206-684-4063

*Note the University Branch of the Seattle Public Library system is temporarily closed due to COVID-19. Reopening of this branch may occur in the coming months.*

### **Washington Department of Ecology**

Northwest Regional Office (Until May 1)  
3190 160<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE  
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452

Northwest Regional Office (After May 1)  
15700 Dayton Ave N.  
Shoreline, WA 98133

To schedule an appointment, please contact the Northwest Region Office Central Records staff at 425-649-7190 or [nwro\\_public\\_request@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:nwro_public_request@ecy.wa.gov).

When locations listed above are not accessible, please contact Ecology for document review assistance: Meredith Waldref at 425-229-3683 or [Meredith.Waldref@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Meredith.Waldref@ecy.wa.gov).

## **Signs at the Site**

We may also install signs displaying information about cleanup status, traffic impacts, and health risks at the Site.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=14878>

<sup>16</sup> [ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News](https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News)



## **How to share information with us**

Interested persons may ask questions, submit informal comments, or share Site information with Ecology at any time. However, to be included in the formal Site record, comments must be submitted in writing during designated comment periods. These written comments can be submitted via:

- Ecology's online comment form
- Email or mail to the Ecology Site Manager

We may also meet with interested community members and organizations to gather information and identify public concerns. To collaborate with us about this Site, please contact Meredith Waldref at 425-229-3683 or [Meredith.Waldref@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Meredith.Waldref@ecy.wa.gov).

## **Public comment periods**

At minimum, the MTCA requires 30-day public comment periods for cleanup documents. Ecology may hold longer public comment periods based upon the complexity of the documents, level of public interest, or other compelling factors.

For related SEPA documents, these are typically issued for public review with the cleanup documents and follow their public comment period.

Following a comment period, we publish all the input we received and respond to significant comments and questions, as appropriate. We will place our responses on [Ecology's Carson Cleaners webpage](#)<sup>17</sup>. If the comments result in significant changes to the cleanup documents, then the documents will be revised and re-issued for public review. If the comments do not result in significant changes, then they become final.

## **Public events**

We hold in-person or online public meetings, workshops, open houses, and public hearings based on community interest. If we have not scheduled a meeting, we will hold one if we receive 10 or more written requests.

Events are held at locations close to the Site that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Public meetings, workshops, open houses, and hearings are always announced in advance using a variety of methods.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=14878>

## **Public participation grants**

Qualified individuals and not-for-profit public interest organizations are eligible to apply for a Public Participation Grant (PPG) from Ecology. For contaminated sites, these funds may be used to:

- Contract with an expert to help interpret technical jargon and information.
- Conduct activities that enhance the public's understanding of, and participation in, the site cleanup process.

For more information about PPGs, please contact Lynn Gooding at 360-407-6062 or [lynn.gooding@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:lynn.gooding@ecy.wa.gov). You may also visit Ecology's [Public Participation Grant website](#).<sup>18</sup>

## **Plan Amendments/Updates**

Ecology will review this plan as the cleanup progresses and amend/update it as necessary.

The public involvement activities presented herein describe Ecology's current plans for keeping the public informed and for receiving information and comments from the public.

If you feel the public involvement activities described in this plan are insufficient, or need modification, please contact Meredith Waldref at 425-229-3683 or [Meredith.Waldref@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Meredith.Waldref@ecy.wa.gov).

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<sup>18</sup> [ecology.wa.gov/About-us/How-we-operate/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Public-participation-grants](http://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/How-we-operate/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Public-participation-grants)