



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Public Participation Plan

**Boeing Auburn Fabrication Site
700 15th St SW
Auburn, WA 98001-6533**

Facility Site ID: 2018

Cleanup Site ID: 5049

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Publication and Contact Information

This plan is available on the Department of Ecology's [Document Repository for Boeing Auburn](#).¹

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Español

El Departamento de Ecología está anunciando el periodo de comentario público relacionado a la limpieza ambiental del sitio Boeing Auburn. Para obtener este documento, o más información sobre este sitio, en español, favor de comunicarse con Amelia Min-Venditti al 360-819-0304 o preguntas@ecy.wa.gov.

ADA Accessibility

The Department of Ecology is committed to providing people with disabilities access to information and services by meeting or exceeding the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Washington State Policy #188.

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6700 or email at hwtrpubs@ecy.wa.gov. For Washington Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341. Visit [Ecology's website](#)² for more information.

¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/CleanupSiteDocuments.aspx?csid=5049>

² www.ecology.wa.gov/accessibility

Public Participation Plan

Boeing Auburn

Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program
Northwest Region
Washington State Department of Ecology
3190 160th Avenue SE, Bellevue, Washington

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Public Involvement in Contamination Cleanup

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology, we, our) developed this public participation plan (plan) for cleanup actions at the Boeing Auburn Plant. The purpose of the plan is to encourage meaningful public involvement during cleanup.

This plan describes how we will tell the public about contamination and cleanup options during the cleanup. We encourage you to learn about and get involved in decision-making. This plan tells you how and when you can get involved.

This plan covers feasibility studies, selected cleanup remedies, and the cleanup implementation plan for the Boeing Auburn site in King County.

Public participation grants

Neighborhood committees, non-profits, and other groups interested in the site can apply for public participation grants. You can use grant funds to:

- Hire an expert to explain technical information.³
- Conduct activities that increase your understanding of, and participation in, the cleanup process.

For more information about public participation grants, please contact Lynn Gooding at 360-407-6062 or lynn.gooding@ecy.wa.gov. You may also visit the [Public Participation Grant website](#).⁴

³ Ecology doesn't currently have a citizen technical advisor to provide citizens with technical assistance on issues related to site investigation and cleanup.

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/ppgrants>

Site contacts

To be included in the official site record, you must submit comments about the cleanup during comment periods. We welcome questions, informal comments, or information about the site's history anytime.

Ecology

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State and Federal Cleanup Laws

We use the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) and its regulations for cleanup activities.

This public participation plan is required under MTCA. MTCA guides contaminated site cleanup in Washington State and makes sure that the cleanup protects human health and the environment.

Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA)

In 1988, MTCA began as a grassroots citizen's initiative to clean up contaminated sites in Washington. It became law in 1989. Under MTCA, current or past property owners or operators must clean up contamination on or coming from their property to levels safe for human health and the environment.

MTCA is in [Chapter 173-340 Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\)](#).⁵ We use it to oversee cleanups in our state. First we investigate reported property contamination. If there's a threat to human health or the environment, the property is placed on the Hazardous Sites List and the cleanup process begins.

Public participation is an important part of MTCA cleanup. Outreach needs are determined for each cleanup based on the level of public interest and the amount of risk caused by the contamination. Anyone can comment on the cleanup process.

Under MTCA, the cleanup process includes five main phases, each with a chance for the public to review and comment on cleanup documents.

RCRA and hazardous waste regulations

There are federal and state rules for hazardous waste management. Congress enacted the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) in 1980 to ensure safe waste management and disposal. RCRA requirements were expanded in 1984.

RCRA's goals are to:

- Protect human health and the environment.
- Reduce waste and conserve energy and natural resources.
- Reduce or eliminate generation of hazardous waste.

⁵ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/9406.html>

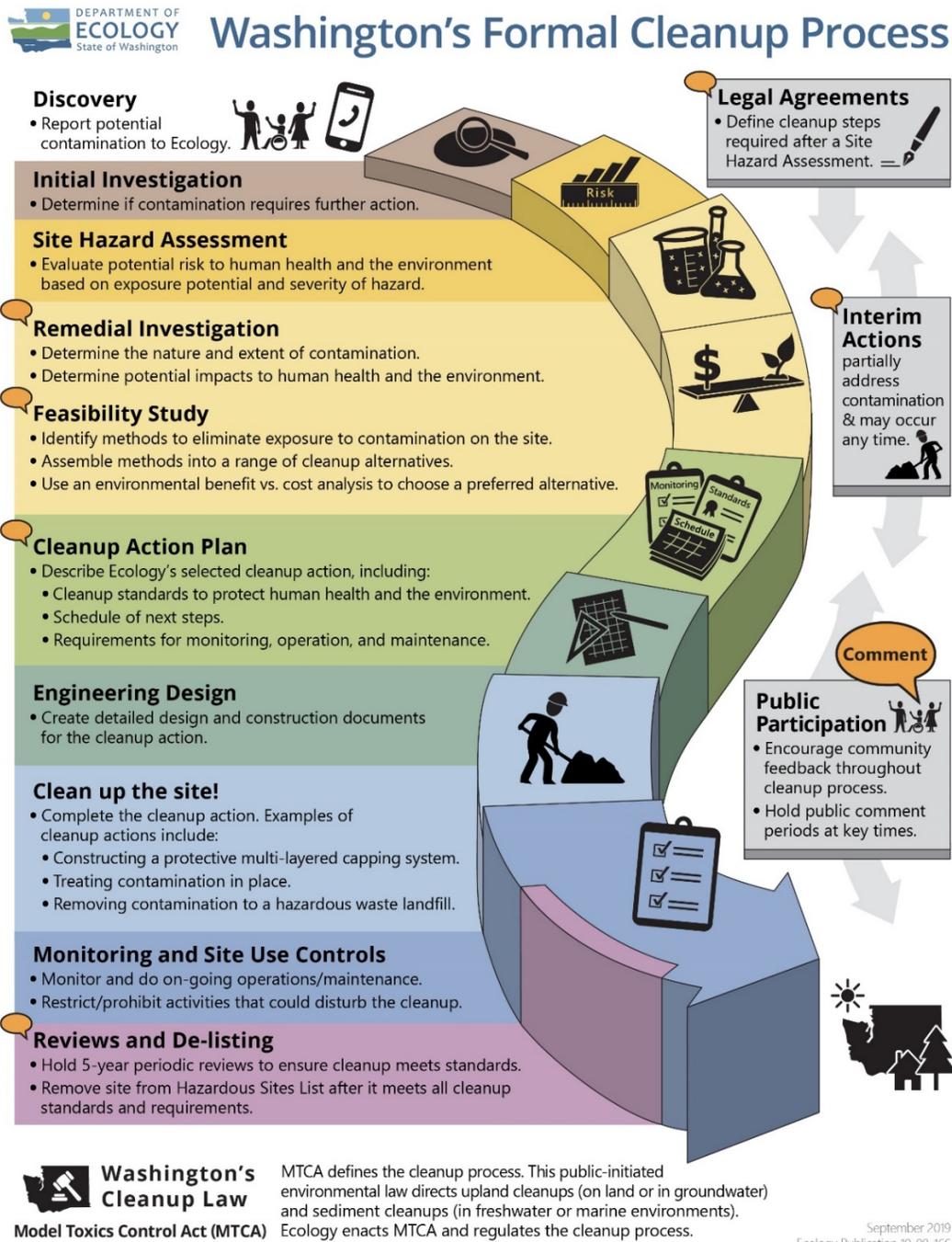


Figure 1: [Washington's Formal Cleanup Process Infographic](#)⁶

[Read a Plain Text version of Figure 1](#)⁷

⁶ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/1909166.pdf>

⁷ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/parts/1909166part2.pdf>

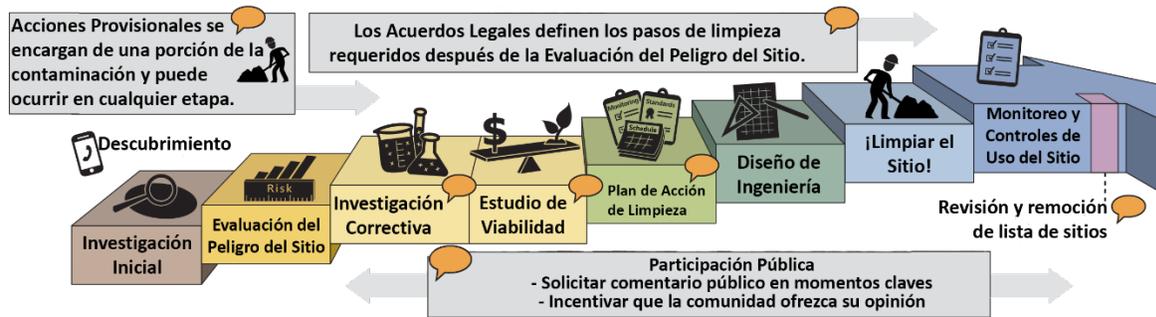


Figure 2: Formal Cleanup Process Infographic in Spanish

State Environmental Policy Act

We follow the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) during site cleanups. SEPA's purpose is to find and evaluate large, negative environmental impacts that could result from a proposed action. For permit renewals, there is no SEPA determination because permit renewals are administrative (paperwork) processes.

Site History

Land use

The Boeing Auburn facility is located at 700 15th Street SW in Auburn, Washington. The facility produces parts, tools, and assemblies for commercial aircraft. During the production process, Boeing generates and manages dangerous waste at their facility. Trichloroethylene (TCE), the primary groundwater contaminant, was used at the facility in the past. Boeing no longer uses TCE.

Since 1966, Boeing has owned and operated the Auburn facility. In the past, Boeing treated and stored dangerous waste at the facility. RCRA requires Boeing to have a permit for these activities. In 1980, Boeing applied for their original RCRA part A permit for the storage of dangerous wastes as required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 1987, Ecology and EPA jointly issued a dangerous waste permit (RCRA Permit) to Boeing that allowed them to continue to treat and store waste at the Auburn facility.

How the site became contaminated

In the late 1980s, Boeing reported a release of TCE from the Auburn facility. In the 1990s, Boeing began sampling the soil and groundwater at the facility. They also did soil cleanup work in some areas. In 2002, Boeing signed an agreed order to fully investigate the groundwater contamination in compliance with state law (MTCA). The agreed order required Boeing to conduct a facility-wide remedial investigation and feasibility study.

Boeing found high levels of TCE contamination on their property. Ecology required an interim cleanup action to bring TCE amounts in one area below state cleanup levels. That interim action is not the final cleanup.

Boeing successfully cleaned up the original TCE release area under the former 17-05 Building. Boeing also closed their permitted treatment and storage units, and they no longer do “permitted” activities at their Auburn site. Ecology tested the treatment and storage areas before they closed to make sure they met the state cleanup standards. Because they didn’t meet the standards throughout the site, Boeing must keep their permit until site cleanup is complete even though they no longer have permitted dangerous waste management units. The cleanup protects human health and the environment from the contamination.⁸

In 2009, we had Boeing investigate whether groundwater was contaminated beyond the Auburn facility’s boundary. Over the next few years, Boeing installed groundwater monitoring wells to the north, northwest, and northeast of the Auburn facility to measure the extent of the contamination. Monitoring wells showed that groundwater contamination was beyond Boeing’s property and Ecology notified water districts and the cities of Algona, Auburn, and Pacific in 2011. A year later, the Department of Health published a report confirming that the public drinking water systems were safe.

In 2013, we held our first public meetings in Algona to discuss the investigation and air quality testing. This began a robust process to inform you, the public, of the contamination. By 2017, Boeing completed the remedial investigation report that identified the boundaries of the groundwater contamination and potential impacts. This

⁸ See corrective action regulations in WAC 173-303-646: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-303-646>.

report was shared with the public for comment. Download an [executive summary of the investigation report](#)⁹ in the Boeing Auburn Document Repository.

In 2018, we issued a new RCRA permit. RCRA Permits are set to expire after ten years. As part of this process, we held a 45-day comment period.

In 2021 we will release the feasibility study and supplemental feasibility study for public comment. The feasibility study identifies and compares cleanup methods. The most effective cleanup methods will be featured in the Cleanup Action Plan. We will put out a cleanup action plan for public comment and Boeing will do the cleanup. We will continue to monitor Boeing's cleanup to make sure human health and the environment are protected.

Contamination

During the remedial investigation, we had Boeing test where people could contact the contaminated groundwater as it enters surface waters (e.g., ditches, ponds, and creeks) or the air (e.g., air in soil pockets or indoor air). We found that chemical levels are low enough that they do not risk human health.

The study found traces of the following chemicals:

- Trichloroethylene (TCE): a liquid chemical once commonly used to remove grease from metal parts).
- Cis-1,2-dichloroethene: a chemical that results from TCE breakdown.
- Trans-1,2-dichloroethene: a chemical that results from TCE breakdown.
- Vinyl chloride (VC): the last toxic chemical created when TCE breaks down. It's the most toxic, but VC degrades to non-toxic end products.

Of these, the most toxic chemicals are TCE and vinyl chloride.

The groundwater flowing away from the Boeing Auburn facility is contaminated with TCE and its breakdown products. The contaminated groundwater flows north and northwest from the Boeing property, into portions of Algona and Auburn.

⁹ Download the PDF: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/DocViewer.ashx?did=68298>

Boeing has a network of monitoring wells to measure the concentrations of contaminants in groundwater over time. The wells are sampled at three depths of groundwater. We refer to these depths as the:

- Deep zone (75 – 100 feet deep).
- Intermediate zone (35 – 75 feet deep).
- Shallow zone (1 – 35 feet deep).

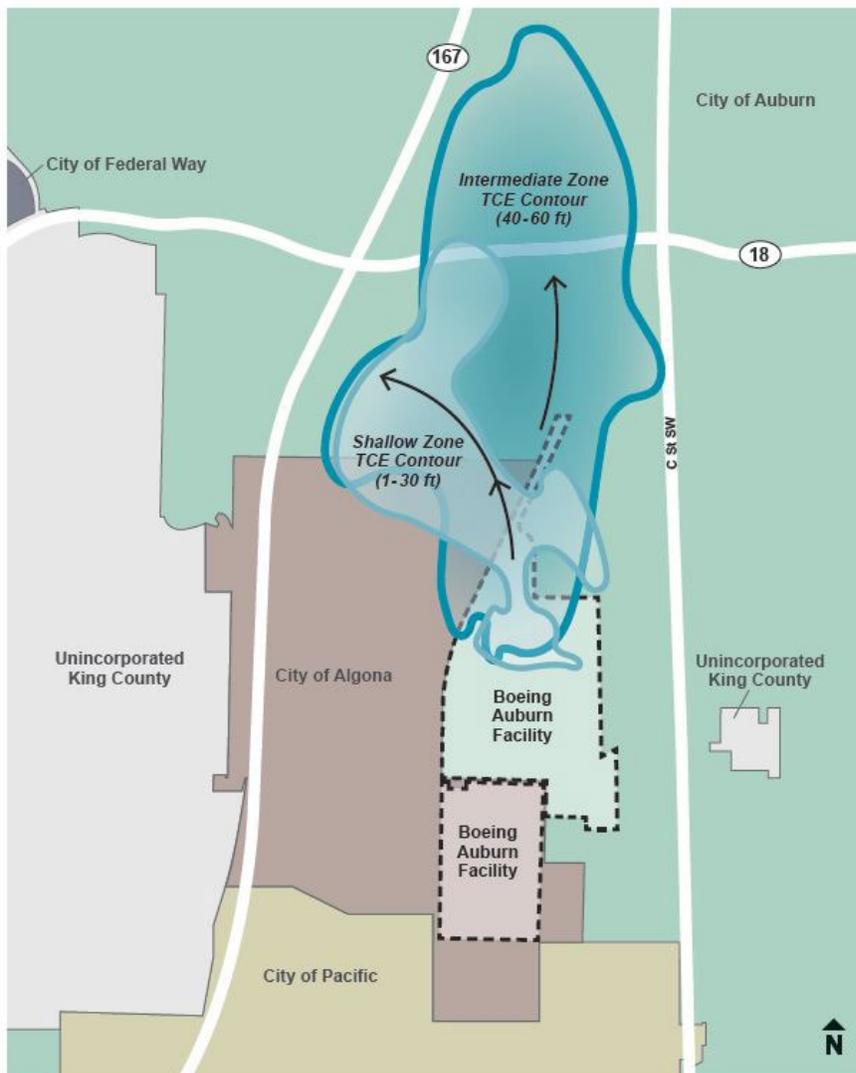


Figure 3. Map of intermediate and shallow TCE zones at Boeing Auburn.

Drinking water

The water in homes and businesses come from public water systems that are regularly monitored by the Department of Health. The contamination hasn't affected drinking water supply wells and the contaminated groundwater flows away from the drinking water wells.

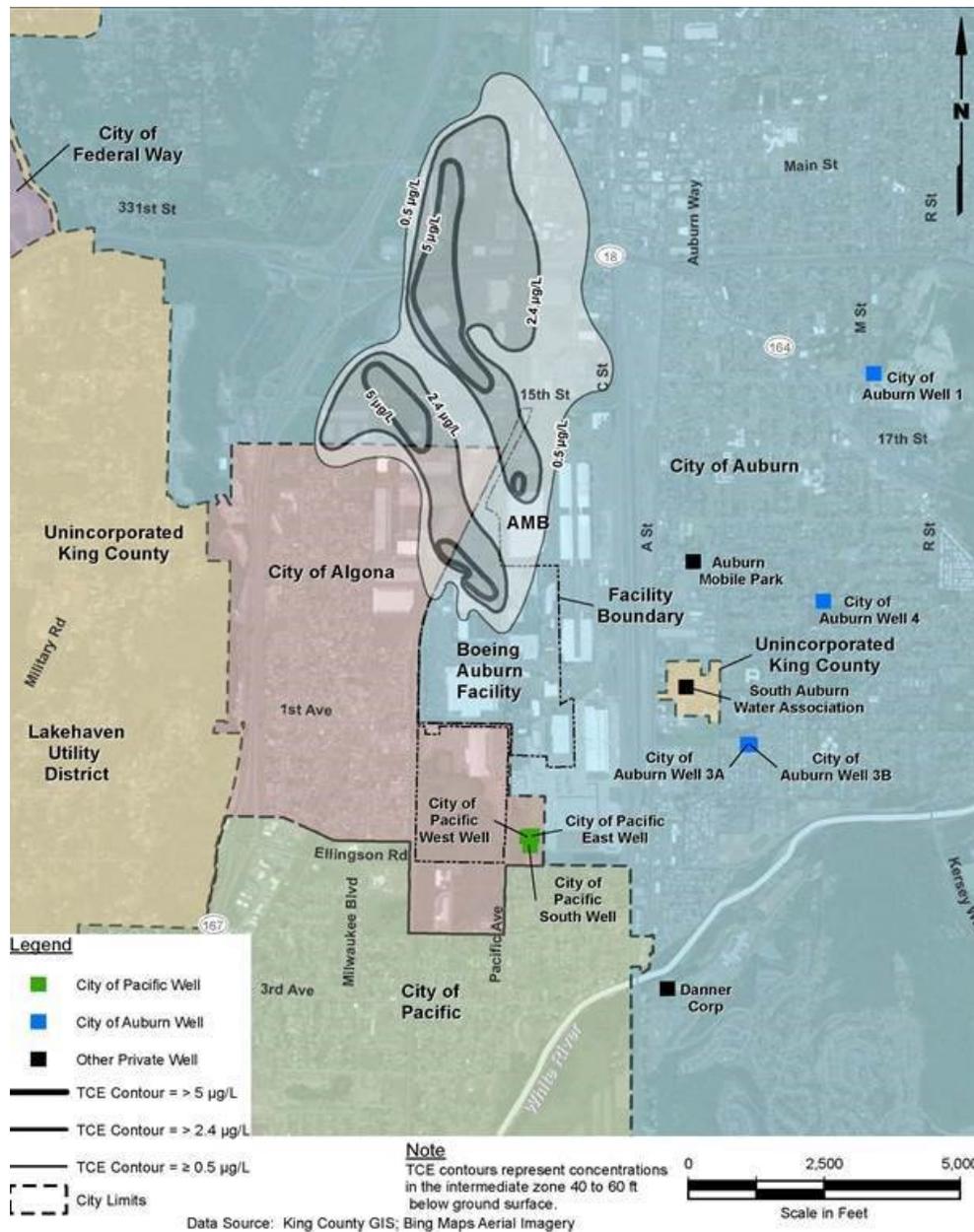


Figure 4. Location of City of Auburn drinking water wells relative to contaminated groundwater.

Cleanup plans

Boeing must clean up the contamination at its Auburn facility. We apply both RCRA and MTCA regulations to clean up hazardous waste sites. The cleanup protects human health and the environment from dangerous wastes and chemicals.

Monitored natural attenuation (MNA)

Bacteria that live in soil and groundwater can break down chemicals into non-toxic end products. We track this natural process until the chemicals in contaminated soil and groundwater are below risk levels set by state law.

Throughout the MNA process, we require Boeing to collect and analyze samples to make sure the concentration of chemicals in the soil and groundwater is declining. Learn more about this in our [Focus on: Boeing Auburn Site Monitored Natural Attenuation](#)¹⁰ publication.

Enhanced bioremediation

Bioremediation is a natural process where bacteria in the soil “eat” the chemical contaminants. “Enhancing” bioremediation involves adding non-toxic food for the bacteria (sugars and carbon) so they grow faster and eat more chemicals.

We asked Boeing to install wells and inject bacteria food into the groundwater to promote faster breakdown of pollutants. Learn more about this in our [Focus on: Boeing Auburn Site Enhanced Bioremediation](#)¹¹ publication.

Area Community

Algona

Algona is a city in King County, Washington, surrounded by Auburn to the north and east, Pacific to the south, and unincorporated King County to the west. The population

¹⁰ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2104020.html>

¹¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2104019.html>

was 3,070 in 2012 according to the Office of Financial Management. Because Algona and Pacific are so close, the two communities are sometimes called Algona-Pacific or Algona/Pacific.

During the 1930s, the valley from Seattle to Tacoma, including Algona, was farmed to grow crops. These farms, run mostly by Japanese and Filipino immigrants, produced large quantities of fruits and vegetables for local sale. The agricultural era ended with the Japanese internment during World War II. In 1955, Algona became a city of 1.29 square miles. In 1966, Boeing purchased several hundred acres of land from the Army and private developers for their Auburn Fabrication Plant (Boeing Auburn).

Some Algona residents live near the Boeing Auburn site and their homes are above contaminated groundwater from the Boeing Auburn facility. As a result, Algona residents are very interested in this cleanup. Some houses above the contaminated groundwater in Algona were tested to make sure chemical gasses weren't polluting the air in their homes (called vapor intrusion).

No homes had unhealthy levels of contaminated air. Many residents first learned of the contamination around 2012 by seeing monitoring well covers or by watching TV news. At that time, Boeing was sampling to find how far the contamination had spread. Many residents in Algona were very upset to learn of the contamination.

The quarterly technical reports we sent to Auburn and Algona city governments at the time didn't describe investigation activities in lay terms. We also should have informed nearby residents and businesses as soon as the investigation moved off Boeing Auburn property. Since then, we have worked with community residents and city governments to provide timely information about investigation activities.

In addition to specific events about the cleanup for Algona residents and the city government, we also attend community events like Algona Days, the Algona Family Social, and the Algona City Hall Grand Opening to share information and answer questions about the cleanup.

Auburn

Auburn is a city in both King and Pierce counties, Washington, with most of its land area in King County. The population was 70,180 during the 2010 census. Auburn is currently the 14th largest city in the state of Washington.

Located 20 miles south of Seattle, Auburn became home to some of the first European settlers in King County. Nestled in a fertile river valley, Auburn has been both a farm community and a center of business and industry for more than 150 years. Auburn is near the original confluence of the Green and White rivers, both of which contain runoff water from the Cascade Mountain range.

The Boeing Auburn Fabrication Plant opened in 1966 and is the largest airplane parts plant in the world. With approximately 11,000 employees, Boeing is the third-largest employer in Auburn.

In addition to hosting events for Auburn residents and the city government about the cleanup, we attend community events such as Auburn Kids Day and City Council meetings to share information and answer questions about the cleanup.

Pacific

Pacific is a city in both King and Pierce counties, Washington. Located mostly in King County, the population was 6,606 during the 2010 census. Pacific was incorporated in 1909 and has a total area of 2.43 square miles.

Originally, we thought Pacific might be impacted by the groundwater contamination. However, sampling during the remedial investigation showed that Pacific is not affected. We keep Pacific city officials informed, but focus our outreach on Algona and Auburn.

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice (EJ) promotes fair treatment of all people under environmental laws and policies regardless of their race, color, national origin, or income.

In Washington (and across the U.S.), more people of color and low-income live and work near industrial facilities, contaminated sites, and in neighborhoods without easy access to fresh food, green spaces, or clean air and water. These conditions negatively and unfairly affect their health and safety.

EJ strategies and compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act are key to addressing these inequities—especially through public involvement. We make every effort to communicate with and involve all people by using demographic information to design our messaging to fit the community.

Demographics

The Environmental Justice Screen (EJSCREEN) tool, created by EPA, uses demographic factors to indicate a community's areas of possible disadvantage.

Demographic indicators for the area around the contamination at the Boeing Auburn Fabrication Plant are below, including a breakdown of the percentages of people of color, low income, and linguistically isolated populations.

Study area: 3.14 square miles (population 7,256)

Demographic Indicators	Value	State Average	Percentile in State
Demographic Index	46%	29%	84
People of Color Population	52%	31%	83
Low Income Population	39%	27%	76
Linguistically Isolated Population	10%	4%	87
Population with Less Than High School Education	18%	9%	86
Population Under 5 Years of Age	8%	6%	72
Population Over 64 Years of Age	8%	15%	19

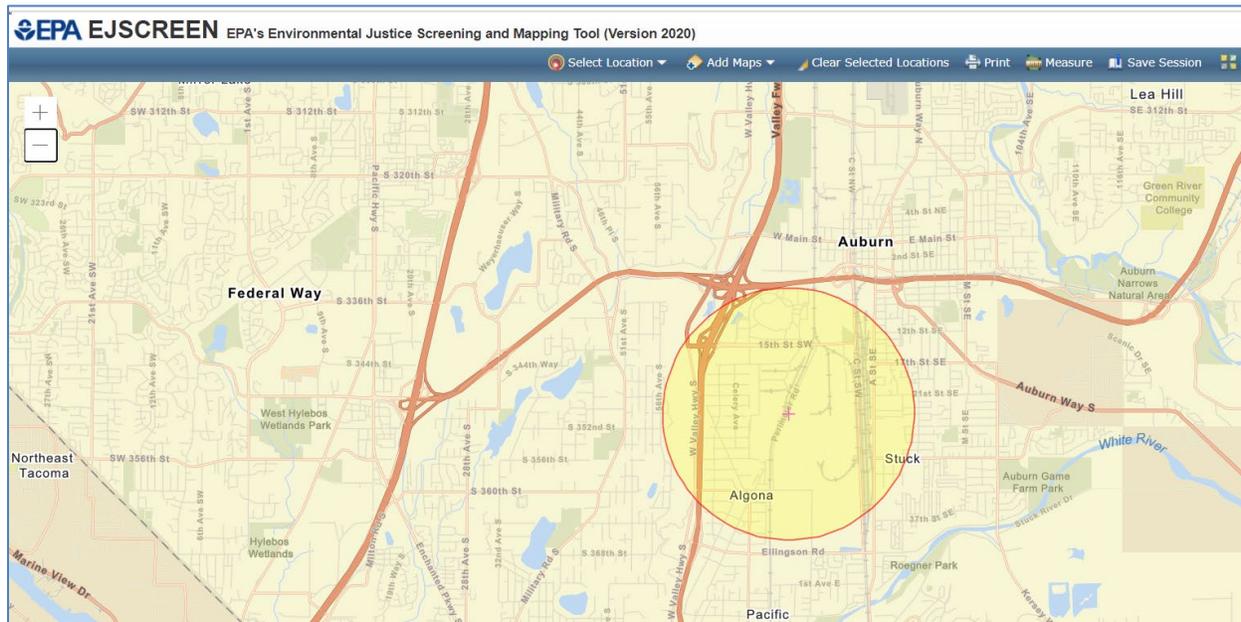


Figure 5: Map showing the Boeing Auburn Plant's Environmental Justice (EJ) demographic screening boundaries.¹²

People of color and minority populations

The EJSCREEN for the Boeing Auburn Plant had demographic indicators above the state's 80th percentile for the following groups. These populations should be evaluated for Environmental Justice concerns:

- Demographic index (DI). DI is the percent of minority population plus the percent of low-income population divided by two.
- People of color population.
- Linguistically isolated population.
- Population with less than high school education.

¹² <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>

Census data from the 2014 – 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) indicates the largest racial and ethnic population near the contamination at the Boeing Auburn Plant is Hispanic (1,887 people), making up 26 percent of the total population.

English language proficiency

According to census data from 2014 – 2018, the population near the Boeing Auburn contamination includes non-English language speakers who speak English less than “very well.” Out of the total 239 linguistically isolated households in this area, 131 (55%) of speak Spanish, 82 (34%) speak Asian-Pacific Island languages, 15 (6%) speak other Indo-European languages, and 12 (5%) speak other languages.

Outreach activities and language access

To help broaden our outreach, we will contact cultural community organizations and provide information in other languages following federal guidance.¹³ Based on the demographic analysis, we will include the following outreach activities for this site:

- Host a webinar about the proposed cleanup methods in the feasibility study.
- Contact cultural organizations and leaders in the communities.
- Provide information about how to request language services for all public materials.
- Provide basic information about this site in Spanish in all outreach materials.
- Translate all documents that are vital or critical to well-being for language groups that are either 5% of the population or more than 1,000 people.

¹³ 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).

To request translation services, please contact:

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Public Participation Activities

You may ask questions, submit informal comments, or share site information at any time. You don't need to wait for a public comment period to contact us.

However, to be included in the official site record, you must submit your comments during formal comment periods. You can review site documents before they become final. This is the most direct way to learn about the site and influence decision-making.

How we share information with the community

At specific stages of the cleanup, we mail notices about public comment periods to addresses near the site. The mailing list area depends on the type of contamination and where it is located, but the list has at least the addresses within a quarter-mile of the site as well as other interested organizations and individuals. These notices give site information, contact information, how to submit comments, and times and locations of public meetings or hearings (or how to request one if not yet scheduled).

We may also develop informational documents outside of public comment periods. Those will be available online and at document repositories. If we believe the message warrants the increased cost, we will mail print copies to the nearby community.

Comment period notices and other site announcements may be posted in the community (for example in local businesses, schools, and libraries).

Tribal communication

The Muckleshoot Tribe, Nisqually Tribe, Puyallup Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, and Yakama Nation are federally recognized tribes in this area that may be affected by the contamination. We will work with the tribes on all decision-making processes for this site on a government-to-government basis.

Postal mailing list

We maintain a mailing list that includes addresses near the site and the local, state, tribal, and federal government contacts. These addresses will receive public notices when draft documents are available for comment.

We will add individuals, organizations, and other interested parties to the mailing list when asked. To be added to the mailing list for this site, please contact Janelle Anderson at 425-301-6454 or janelle.anderson@ecy.wa.gov.

Site register

Public comment periods, events, and other cleanup notices are published in our [Site Register](#).¹⁴ To receive the Site Register by email, please contact Sarah Kellington at 360-407-7466 or sarah.kellington@ecy.wa.gov, or [subscribe online](#).¹⁵

Newspaper display ads or legal notices

We have a website for the [Boeing Auburn site](#)¹⁶ with information. To review cleanup documents please visit our [Document Repository](#)¹⁷ for Boeing Auburn. We may also share information through [news releases](#)¹⁸ and [Ecology's blog](#).¹⁹

¹⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data>

¹⁵ <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=siteregister&A=1>

¹⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Spills-Cleanup/Contamination-cleanup/Cleanup-sites/Boeing-Auburn-Fabrication-Site>

¹⁷ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/CleanupSiteDocuments.aspx?csid=5049>

¹⁸ <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News>

¹⁹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/blog>

We announce public comment periods and public events in newspaper display ads or legal notices. For this comment period, we will post newspaper ads in the [Auburn Reporter](#)²⁰, [Tu Decides](#)²¹, and [La Raza de Noroeste](#).²² We will also publish a notice on our [Public Input & Events Listing](#).²³

Email list for TSD facility updates

We have an email list to update people interested in TSD facilities in Washington, including this site. If you would like to be added to that email list, please contact Janelle Anderson at 425-301-6454 or janelle.anderson@ecy.wa.gov.

Document repositories

In-person document review is not currently available due to Washington state's coronavirus response and Governor Inslee's Stay Home, Stay Healthy order. You may review all documents regarding this site online in our [Document Repository for Boeing Auburn](#).²⁴

How to share information with Ecology

MTCA requires 30-day public comment periods for draft cleanup documents and 14-day comment periods for SEPA documents. When SEPA documents are out for public review with other cleanup documents, we combine the comment periods, and they last at least 30 days. We may hold comment periods longer than 30 days.

We also find public concerns and cleanup goals by talking to interested community members and organizations. To talk with us about this site, please contact Li Ma, Site Manager, at 425-649-7280 or li.ma@ecy.wa.gov.

²⁰ <https://www.auburn-reporter.com/>

²¹ <https://tudecidesmedia.com/>

²² <https://www.larazanw.com/>

²³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing>

²⁴ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/CleanupSiteDocuments.aspx?csid=5049>

While the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order is in effect, we will not be hosting in-person public meetings or supporting physical document repositories. Documents for review are available online only. If you need access to a hard copy document or have any other questions, please contact Janelle Anderson at 425-301-6454 or janelle.anderson@ecy.wa.gov.

Public comment periods

Formal comment periods give the public a chance to review and comment on draft documents, legal agreements, and proposed cleanup actions. If there is enough interest, we can extend the public comment period. When we oversee SEPA determinations, we hold comment periods for at least two weeks and comment periods may last 45 days or more when other cleanup documents are also available for review.

We publish and respond to all comments we receive during comment periods. If comments received during a comment period significantly change the cleanup documents, the documents are revised and re-issued for public review.

If the comments don't result in significant changes, they become final.

Public events

We hold public meetings, workshops, open houses, and public hearings based on public interest. If we haven't scheduled a meeting and 10 or more people request one, a meeting will take place. This may cause us to extend a public comment period so the meeting occurs during it.

All events will meet ADA standards. Public meetings, workshops, open houses, and hearings are announced in advance using a variety of methods.

There is a virtual public meeting scheduled for this comment period. To request additional virtual public meetings, please call 425-301-6454 or email janelle.anderson@ecy.wa.gov.

Americans with Disabilities Act

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6700 or email at hwtrpubs@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.

While the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order is in effect, we will not be hosting in-person public meetings. Online public meetings will meet ADA standards. We will announce any public meetings, workshops, open houses, or hearings in advance.

Plan Amendments

We developed this public participation plan following MTCA regulations (WAC 173-340-600). We review it as the cleanup progresses and update it as necessary. You may suggest changes to Janelle Anderson at 425-301-6454 or janelle.anderson@ecy.wa.gov.

This plan tells the public how to get involved and comment on this site. These are our current plans for keeping the public informed and providing ways for people to share their concerns and questions with us.

If you think the outreach activities planned are insufficient and would like them changed, we want to hear your suggestions. We will work to find solutions and are open to using new outreach activities or tools, with or without updating this plan.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Table 1: List of abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation or Acronym	Definition
ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
DI	Demographic Index
Ecology	Washington State Department of Ecology
EJ	Environmental Justice
EJSCREEN	Environmental Justice Screen
EPA	US Environmental Protection Agency
FS	Feasibility study
MNA	Monitored Natural Attenuation
MTCA	Model Toxics Control Act
Plan	Public participation plan
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
Site	Area where hazardous substances at the facility are currently located
TCE	Trichloroethylene, a chemical compound
TSD	Treatment, storage, and disposal facility
VC	Vinyl Chloride; carcinogenic cleaning chemical
WAC	Washington Administrative Code