

Stillwater Holdings Chevron cleanup site

 Public input opportunity

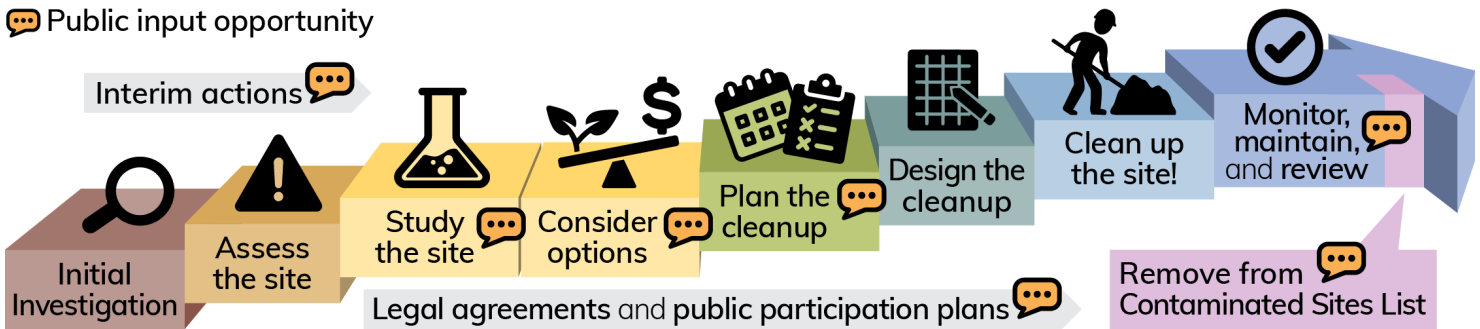


Figure 1. The steps in Washington's environmental cleanup process.

Comments accepted:

June 18 – August 16, 2024

Submit comments

Online:

<https://bit.ly/commentSHC>

Mail:

Beth Kercher, site manager
Washington Dept. of Ecology
4601 N. Monroe St.
Spokane, WA 99205

Email:

Beth.Kercher@ecy.wa.gov

Questions: 509-385-5443

Review documents

Online:

<https://bit.ly/EcologySHC>

In print:

Please contact Erika Beresovoy at Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov or 509-385-2290.

Site info

Stillwater Holdings Chevron
7 E. Rose St.
Walla Walla, WA 99224

Facility Site ID: 70525886
Cleanup Site ID: 16913

Documents ready for public review and comment

You are invited to review and comment on the following documents for the Stillwater Holdings Chevron cleanup site:

- Enforcement Order, which requires Stillwater Holdings Chevron to continue work to reduce harmful vapors and remove contaminated water from nearby buildings until a permanent treatment system is installed. This order went into effect on June 18, the day we issued it. We planned a 60-day comment period to allow for more than 30 days after people receive the notice in the mail.
- Public Participation Plan, which describes how you can be involved during the cleanup process.

Site history

The incident began last September when the Marcus Whitman Hotel in downtown Walla Walla was evacuated due to gasoline odors. Testing identified potentially harmful vapors and gasoline in the basement, and in two nearby buildings. The buildings were ventilated to eliminate the risk of an explosion, and the buildings' drainage systems, also known as sumps, were pumped to reduce vapor concentrations.

An investigation found that gasoline from a Stillwater Holdings' underground tank had leaked and was pooling in adjacent buildings' sumps. The leaking tank was taken out of service and has been emptied.

The site continues to impact two neighboring properties. The owner began negotiating an agreed order with Ecology in early 2024 to clean up contaminated soil and groundwater under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), Washington's environmental cleanup law.

Toxics Cleanup Program

Area safe and monitored

Local, state, and federal agencies, along with third-party contractors, have deemed the area safe for residents and visitors with protection measures and air quality monitoring in place. Testing of Walla Walla's municipal water and wastewater systems and nearby Mill Creek has shown no evidence of contamination.

Funding issues

Stillwater Holdings' insurance policy includes up to \$1 million to cover potential spills and leaks. After being identified as the spill source, the owner hired an environmental consultant and contractor to investigate and help create a cleanup plan. Last November, the owner informed Ecology and local officials that they were working with their insurance company to fund and remove the leaking tank, and then clean up the contaminated soil.

In May, Stillwater Holdings told Ecology that they could pay for little or no more work, and that Ecology would need to take over. By law, Stillwater Holdings is responsible for the pollution, responding to the emergency, and cleaning up the contamination.

Generally, Ecology does not use taxpayer funds to pay cleanup costs when the company has money available. Ecology is prepared to take over and fund the Walla Walla cleanup if needed because the spill poses significant risks to the community.

The enforcement order ensures that work will not stop while financial issues are resolved.

Taking over the cleanup

Ecology is preparing to take over and fund cleanup when Stillwater has exhausted all its funds because the site poses significant risks to the community. Ecology has started an emergency contracting process to continue

cleanup after Stillwater Holdings' insurance is depleted.

Mitigating potentially harmful vapors in the hotel and nearby building remains the highest priority, which is why Ecology issued an enforcement order so it will continue until we take over. Because the leaking tank has been emptied, removing the underground tanks will be postponed.



Figure 2. A cleanup contractor preparing to drill a monitoring and recovery well to find and pump spilled gas from groundwater during the spill response.

Next steps

Ecology will hold a public meeting if 10 or more people request one. We will consider and respond to all comments we receive during this public comment period. We will post our response to comments on our Stillwater Holdings Chevron cleanup site webpage and send the document to people who submitted comments.

Ecology's cleanup process

MTCA provides requirements for contaminated site cleanup and sets standards that protect people and the environment. Ecology implements the MTCA cleanup process (Figure 1).

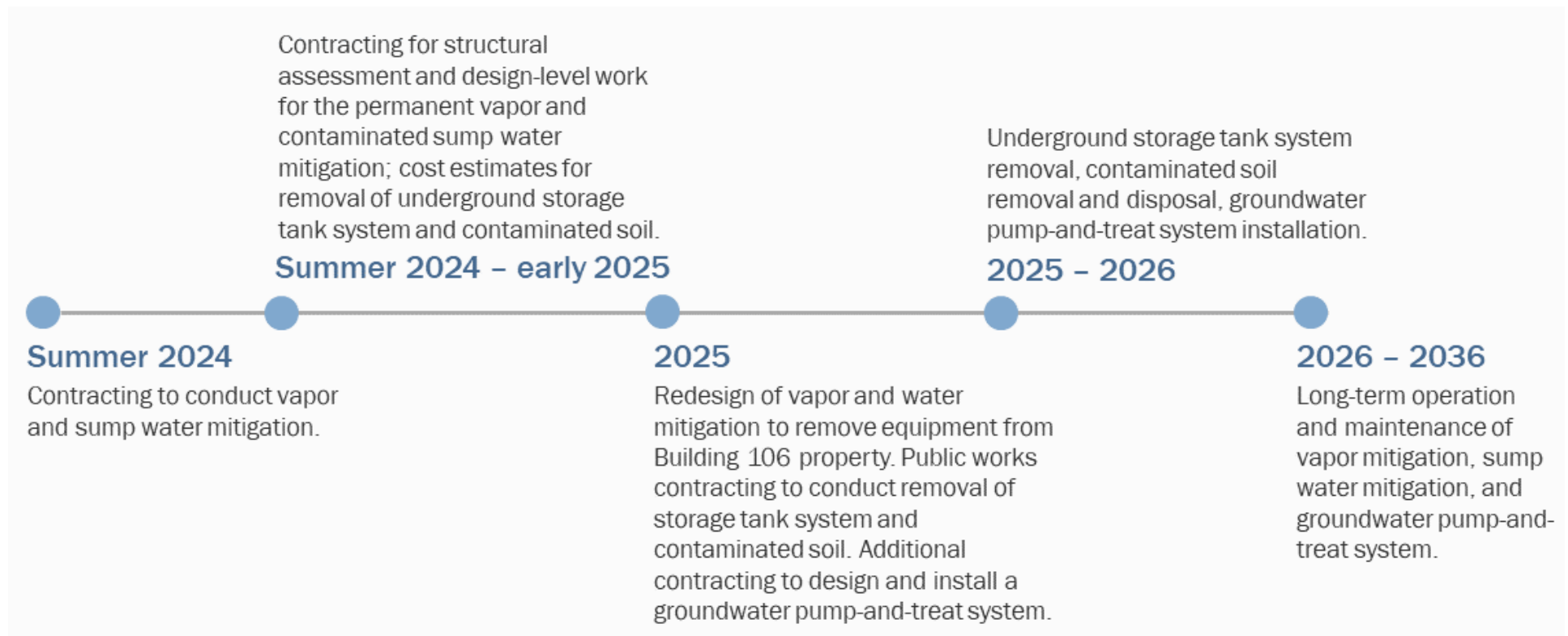


Figure 3. Estimated timeline for Stillwater Holdings Chevron cleanup.



Toxics Cleanup Program
4601 N. Monroe St.
Spokane, WA 99205



Stillwater Holdings Chevron cleanup Documents for public review and comment

You are invited to review and comment on an Enforcement Order and Public Participation Plan for the Stillwater Holdings Chevron cleanup site. The order requires Stillwater Holdings Chevron to continue work to reduce harmful vapors and remove contaminated water from nearby buildings until a permanent treatment system is installed. The plan describes how you can be involved during the cleanup process.

Public Comment Period

June 18 – August 16, 2024

<https://bit.ly/EcologySHC>

ADA accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6831 or email at ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov, or visit ecology.wa.gov/Accessibility. For Relay Service or TTY, call 711 or 877-833-6341.