

South State Street MGP

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SHARP Report — Part 1 of 2

• SHARP first assessment • SHARP Tool Version v2024.04.01 • SHARP rating Critical • SHARP date 4/2/2024 • EJFlagged? ☒ - No Override • LD data confidence level low • Cleanup milestone cleanup action plan • Assessor Jeff Wirtz			This section is blank if this is a SHARP first assessment		
Assessment Media	Scores	Conf	Additional Factors		Ecology Info
Indoor air	D4	high	multiple chemical types	✓	ERTS none
Groundwater	C2	high	risk to off-site people	⊗	CSID 4606
Surface water	A1	high	climate change impacts	✓	FSID 2865
Sediment	A1	high	plant/animal tissue data	⊗	VCP none
Soil	A1	high			UST ID none
					LUST ID none
Location and Land Use Info					
400 Block S State St, Bellingham, Whatcom County, 98226			Responsible unit – NWRO		
Parcel 380236245080, 380236237096, and 370201090495			Land use – Recreational		
Source/source area description					
Historic Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) operations resulted in petroleum hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), cyanide and some metals (selenium and lead) exceeding screening levels in Site media.					
Local demographics comments					
Primary Census Tract: 53073001102					
Associated Census Tracts:					
The hazardous substances from this site remained on the census tract where the release occurred.					
Soil comments					
Since 1980, the Site has been used solely as a public park. In 1975, the City acquired most of the gas plant property from a private owner and the BNRC for use as a park, which opened in June 1980 as previously noted. In early 1979, the City Parks and Recreation Department began development of the park, including construction of trails, parking lots, restrooms, and a picnic shelter. The redevelopment of the Site also included placement of fill with grading, landscaping, and shoreline improvements (e.g., erosion control).					
Groundwater comments					
Ecology has determined that groundwater beneath the State St MGP Site and other waterfront cleanup sites in Bellingham Bay is non-potable; therefore, use of groundwater as drinking water was not considered in the development of cleanup levels.					



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Surface water comments

Several threatened species of fish may occasionally be present in marine areas near the Site.

Sediment comments

The primary contaminant in the marine unit is cPAHs, which drives cleanup needs due to bioaccumulation-based effects on human health and ecological receptors. The boundary of the marine unit coincides with the location where cPAH concentrations in sediment decline to the established regional background concentration of 86 micrograms per kilogram.

Indoor air comments

The only building in which recreational receptors may be exposed to indoor air is a restroom facility in the lower portion of the Site where benzene and other VOCs did not exceed soil vapor screening levels. The City has no plans to construct any additional enclosed buildings at the park; therefore, the vapor intrusion pathway for onsite buildings is not considered a pathway of concern for current or anticipated future Site receptors. However, it is a pathway of concern for unanticipated future property development unless it is addressed as part of the MTCA cleanup.

Additional factors comments

cPAHs exceed cleanup levels in sediment, soil, groundwater, and surface water. The site is on Bellingham Bay and subject to sea level rise.



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Site contamination and cleanup history

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The mainline of the coastal railroad passes through the Site. The active rail line is operated by BNSF and began operation in 1890. Additional railways historically crossed the Site adjacent to the current rail line. These rail operations included the Bellingham Bay & Eastern (BB&E)/Northern Pacific track, the Northern Pacific/Chicago Milwaukee log dump spur, and the State Street railway.

A former lumber mill, constructed in 1884, operated on piers over aquatic lands adjacent to the Site shoreline. The lumber mill operated over most of its time as either the Bellingham Mill Company or the E.K. Wood Lumber Mill. The facility was located almost exclusively on a wood pile-supported wharf that extended approximately 1,200 feet along the shoreline and 400 feet into Bellingham Bay, encompassing tidelands occupied by the present-day lower park (including a portion of the Site) and waters offshore of the present-day park. The mill was closed after a fire burned it to the ground on September 30, 1925. Over the next 50 years, the wharf was removed and most of the remaining pilings were cut at the mudline or removed entirely, and the area was filled and developed into the present-day lower park.

The Bellingham Bay Gas Company began operating an MGP in December 1890 within the footprint of the present-day upper park. Facility operations continued until about 1956. The facility produced gas that was used to heat and light residences and businesses. The facility initially included a coal house bunker, retorts, purifier, barrel sheds, and two gas holders. The facility expanded over the following decades to include an additional gas holder and equipment associated with a propane-air gas manufacturing process. Ownership of the facility changed a number of times between the early 1900s and mid-1950s with Whatcom County Railway and Light Company having ownership in about 1904, followed by Whatcom Fairhaven Gas Company, Puget Sound Traction & Light & Power Company, Puget Sound Power & Light, Bellingham Gas Company, and finally Cascade Natural Gas Corporation.

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04/02/2024

SHARP First Assessment

Critical SHARP Rating

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Conceptual site model



Assessment scores by environmental medium

