

## Asarco Smelter

### Site Hazard Assessment and Ranking Process (SHARP) Report

[Go to site contamination history](#)

| Location and land use info                                                               | Ecology Info |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 52nd St & Baltimore St, Tacoma, Pierce County, 98407                                     | CSID 712     |
| Land use mixed use                                                                       | FSID 215     |
| Responsible unit EPA                                                                     | VCP none     |
| Cleanup milestone cleanup implementation                                                 | ERTS none    |
| Parcel numbers 0221231090, 0221231104, 0221231089,<br>0221231088, 0221231092, 0221231091 | UST ID none  |
|                                                                                          | LUST ID none |

| SHARP Results                                           |                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Assessed by John Kirkpatrick                            | <br><b>SHARP Rating: Medium</b><br>Site Points: 580 |
| SHARP Date 05/05/2026                                   |                                                                                                                                       |
| Environmental justice concerns? No EJFlag - No Override |                                                                                                                                       |
| EJ confidence level medium                              |                                                                                                                                       |

| SHARP Media   | Scores | Confidence | Additional Factors       |     |
|---------------|--------|------------|--------------------------|-----|
| Indoor air    | D4     | medium     | multiple chemical types  | yes |
| Groundwater   | C2     | high       | risk to off-site people  | yes |
| Surface water | B2     | medium     | climate change impacts   | yes |
| Sediment      | B1     | medium     | plant/animal tissue data | no  |
| Soil          | C1     | high       |                          |     |

Media score = exposure and severity. Exposure score: A to D, A=current exposure. Severity score, 1 is the most severe. See <https://ecology.wa.gov/SHARP> for more information.

| This section is blank if this is the first SHARP |
|--------------------------------------------------|
|                                                  |

| Sources reviewed                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Environmental Protection Agency. Explanation of Significant Differences, Commencement Bay Nearshore/Tideflats Superfund Site. 2024. |
| Department of Ecology. Acceptance of Change in the Commencement Bay Record of Decision. 2024.                                       |
| Point Ruston, LLC. Environmental Covenant. 2021.                                                                                    |
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|                                                                                                                                     |

| Primary census tract | Associated census tracts |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 53053060300          |                          |

| Local demographics comments |
|-----------------------------|
| None                        |

| Source/source area description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| This site includes the footprint of the old Asarco Tacoma Smelter Facility and Slag Peninsula. The peninsula is now also referred to as Dune Peninsula. Processing and smelting of ore at the smelter, including the production and accumulation of slag material, contaminated area soil with metals and other materials. |

| Soil comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contaminants of Concern (COCs) at the site include the metals antimony, arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury, silver, thallium, and zinc. Organic compounds including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are also COCs. Contaminated soil and slag have been stockpiled at this site (OU2). Stockpiles were capped by 2022 in order to prevent exposure to COCs. |

| Groundwater comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area groundwater is contaminated with metals and other COCs. An environmental covenant was recorded in 2021 which prohibits the extraction and use of groundwater in order to prevent exposure to contamination. Monitoring wells are in place to test the stability of the on-site containment facility and make sure that contaminated groundwater is not migrating off-site. |

**Surface water comments**

The primary concern for surface water is the potential for contaminated soil at the site, especially slag peninsula, to erode or leach into Commencement Bay. Shoreline armoring and wave dissipation walls have been the primary means of preventing these impacts. Upgrades and repairs to shoreline armoring is anticipated in the near future.

**Sediment comments**

Sediment adjacent to the site has historically been impacted by multiple sources of contamination. This site specifically has the potential to impact the marina area, which is known to contain contaminated sediment, as well as Commencement Bay. In an effort to reduce these impacts, EPA has an ongoing groundwater monitoring program as well as a maintenance plan for caps and shoreline armoring.

**Indoor air comments**

Contaminated soils at the site have been capped. Provided they remain intact, capping should prevent volatile compounds from impacting buildings at the site. Most of the COCs at the site are not associated with vapor intrusion concerns.

**Additional factors comments**

Site cleanup included emplacement of shoreline armoring and pilings to reduce future erosion of the peninsula due to wave action, which may be enhanced by sea level rise.

**Site history**[Go to top](#)

Asarco operated a smelter at this location from 1890 until 1985. Numerous by-products of the smelting process were produced at the site, some of which were hazardous. Contaminated materials accumulated at the smelter, nearby properties, and off site. The nearby peninsula, called slag peninsula, Breakwater Peninsula, or Dune Peninsula, was created by placement of slag from the smelter. By the 1990s, Asarco was cleaning up the site under supervision by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Washington. The site being assessed in this report is also referred to as "OU2", or Operable Unit 2, under EPA's Commencement Bay Near Shore/Tide Flats Superfund site. This assessment is distinct from that of other sites impacted by the smelter, including Commencement Bay, the city of Ruston, the smelter plume, and others.

Activities at the site were summarized in EPA's Explanation of Significant Differences report in 2024 as follows:

"By January 1987, Asarco completed two phases of demolition activities at OU 02. Facilities in the stack area associated with copper smelting and the production of both arsenic trioxide and metallic arsenic were demolished in 1987-1988. The majority of the remaining building and structures, including the smelter stack, were demolished in 1992-1994. In 1995, EPA selected a remedy for the Site, and Asarco subsequently undertook performance of that cleanup. However, before remedial action could be completed, Asarco entered into bankruptcy proceedings.

On December 8, 2005, Asarco entered into an agreement with MC Construction Consultants, Inc. ("MC Construction"), to sell the company approximately 97 acres of the Site, which included parts of the former Asarco Smelter Site, Operable Unit 02. MC Construction subsequently assigned to Point Ruston, LLC ("Point Ruston") its rights under the Tacoma Purchase Agreement. Point Ruston has been performing the remediation of the site in conjunction with development of a residential and mixed-use development project that includes condominiums, apartments and other residential units along with commercial, retail, recreation, entertainment and public use facilities.

The 23-acre Breakwater Peninsula, now known as Dune Peninsula at Point Defiance Park, is owned by Metro Parks Tacoma (MPT). Due to Asarco's bankruptcy, remedial design and remedial action (RD/RA) at the Breakwater Peninsula was not completed. In 2015, EPA entered into a cooperative agreement with MPT to complete the Breakwater Peninsula cleanup. Asarco bankruptcy settlement funds were used for the RA construction, and MPT funding was used to complete other non-RA activities at the Breakwater Peninsula. The project began in 2016 and was completed in 2020."

**Overflow - Site contamination and cleanup history**

No overflow

## Asarco Smelter

712 Asarco Smelter 20260505

First SHARP

SHARP rating — Medium

## SHARP Report — Part 2 of 2

Conceptual site model

05/05/2026



### Assessment scores by environmental medium

