

Responsiveness Summary
Two Comments Received

Sauros Cleanerama Tacoma

Cleanup Site ID: 3310
Facility ID: 4339824
Address: 1401 S Pacific Ave, Tacoma
County: Pierce

This report was prepared by:

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Toxics Cleanup Program
Southwest Region Office
Lacey, Washington

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Visit **ecology.wa.gov/ADA** for more accessibility information.

[1] www.ecology.wa.gov/contact

2026 Periodic Review Public Comment Period

Ecology held a public comment period from April 6 at 8:00 AM to May 6 at 11:59 PM, 2026, for public review and comment on the draft periodic review report.

Ecology mailed a postcard with information about the public comment period to 362 addresses within a quarter mile of the site. Ecology emailed information about the public comment period to potentially interested parties, including nonprofits and local government. In addition to updating the project webpage, Ecology also added information about the public comment period to Ecology's main website, under "Public Input and Events". Ecology published notice of the comment period in the *Contaminated Site Register* on April 2, April 16, and April 30, 2026. Lastly, Ecology provided information about the comment period at our table at the South Sound Sustainability Expo held at UW Tacoma on May 2, 2026.

We received two comments. Our responses to the comments are on pages 4-6. After reviewing comments, Ecology determined no changes to the periodic review report are necessary. The periodic review report is now final.

Site Background

Sauro's Cleanerama, a dry-cleaning business, was located at 1401, 1407, and 1409 Pacific Avenue, in downtown Tacoma. During operations, Sauro's used a wastewater drainage pit (called a sump) in the basement. Over time, dry cleaning solvents leaked from this sump into soil and groundwater on the Sauro's property and underneath other nearby properties, creating a groundwater contamination plume.

The boundary of the cleanup site includes areas that this groundwater plume moved under, which includes public parking lots, roads, and City of Tacoma rights-of-way. The Sauro's property is currently owned by the City of Tacoma and is used as a public parking lot.

Outcomes of the Periodic Review

The 2026 draft periodic review found that while the cleanup action is protective of human health and the environment, data suggests that groundwater might not reach cleanup levels in the expected timeline. Therefore, more cleanup might be needed in the future at this site.

As a potentially liable person (PLP) for the Sauro's cleanup, the city, in coordination with Ecology will:

- Implement institutional controls, called administrative procedures, to make sure any future redevelopment at the site is done safely.
- Continue groundwater monitoring.
- Conduct a vapor intrusion evaluation for an underground parking garage on the site. The evaluation will look into the possibility of contaminated vapor entering air in underground garage from nearby contaminated soil and groundwater.
- Analyze if the site needs more monitoring wells to better define where groundwater is contaminated.

The next periodic review will be in about 5 years.

Comment from Shoko Yoshikawa

Date: April 11, 2026
Submit method: Website

This is a comment on Sauros Cleanerama, Clean up Site ID 3310, Facility ID: 4339824

I am a resident of the Esplanade Condo (1515 Dock St, Tacoma, WA), now retired but used to be a chemist/material scientist. I have lived here since 2014, but did not know about Sauros Cleanerama Toxic Cleanup Program until I received your mailer.

Since I moved when I walked along the north side of our condo at the bottom of the stairway from E15th St bridge toward waterway, I smelled VOC. Since I was a chemist, I recognized the smell, though I cannot pinpoint exactly what it is. I asked our building manager but of course she has no clue. I now know the cause of the smell I noticed.

Again, the smell is not there all the time, but if a human nose detects the smell from the air, the level of contamination must be high enough as the water report suggested even though the location I smelled was not the tested locations in the report.

I suggest addition of the ground water test location, if possible, near where I smelled VOC, north side of the Esplanade, bottom of E15 St bridge.

Ecology's response

Thank you for your comment.

After receiving your comment, we reviewed previous investigations and sampling data in your area. Based on our understanding of the Sauro's Cleanerama site (Sauro's) and your location, it is unlikely the chemical odors you notice are from Sauro's.

Most Sauro's contamination is near the former dry cleaner. Sauro's contamination was caused by releases of the dry-cleaning solvent tetrachloroethene (PCE), a chlorinated volatile organic compound (CVOC), during dry cleaner operations. Most of the remaining CVOC contamination at the Sauro's site is in groundwater near the former dry cleaner location at 1401 South Pacific Avenue, and more than 35 feet below ground surface.

Groundwater along Dock Street was tested in 2013. As part of Sauro's investigations in 2013, the City of Tacoma sampled groundwater from five borings (LAI-B6 through LAI-B10) and two monitoring wells (MW-JS and MW-JS2) near your location. CVOCs were either not detected or detected at concentrations below cleanup levels in groundwater samples from these locations. Concentrations of CVOCs in these locations also were less than what people can smell.

Near your location, Sauro's CVOC concentrations are also lower than what people can smell. At Dock Street and closest to your location, concentrations of CVOCs from Sauro's are lower than near the former dry cleaner. Occasionally, CVOCs have been detected in groundwater samples from monitoring well LAI-MW-4, located in Dock Street northwest of the Fish Peddler restaurant. However, only one CVOC, vinyl chloride, has infrequently exceeded Ecology established site cleanup levels for groundwater in LAI-MW4. Concentrations of vinyl chloride in groundwater from LAI-MW4 are still much too low for people to smell.

Additional Information

While it is unlikely that the odor you smell is from Sauro's, there are several industrial facilities and cleanup sites near Dock Street that might be related. The following resources have more information:

- EPA's Toxic Release Inventory (TRI)[2] map identified chemical releases from eleven industrial facilities within two miles of your location.
- Ecology's What's in My Neighborhood[3] map identified seventeen cleanup sites within ¼-mile of your location, including the property on which you live. Of these seventeen cleanup sites, seven have the status of cleanup started, one has the status of awaiting cleanup, one (Sauro's) has the status of construction complete performance monitoring, and 8 have the status of no further action required.
- A 2005 environmental investigation near your location found soil contamination in the area. This contamination is not associated with Sauro's but may be associated with a former industrial facility that operated as a lumberyard, brickyard, warehouse, and truck repair facility that operated south of 15th Street in the past. This property is part of Tacoma Redevelopment Prop, CSID 3677.[4]

Reporting environmental issues

If you would like to report the odor, you can submit a report to Ecology's Environmental Report Tracking System (ERTS).[5] ERTS is our initial intake database for environmental issues voluntarily reported by the public, business, and other local, state and federal agencies. People who believe there could be an environmental issue can report this information to ERTS.

[2] https://edap.epa.gov/public/extensions/newTRisearch/newTRisearch.html
[3] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/neighborhood/?lat=47.250148&lon=-122.437465&zoom=15&radius=false
[4] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/3677
[5] https://ecology.wa.gov/footer-pages/report-an-environmental-issue

Comment from Anonymous

Date: May 6, 2026
Submit method: Website

Sauros Cleanerama Tacoma Public Comment: It is my understanding that the City of Tacoma is involved with this property and is responsible for monitoring soil contaminant levels, including conducting an annual site retesting and submitting results to the Washington State Department of Ecology.

As a nearby resident, and given the site's proximity to the community, it is critical to continue monitoring contaminants and to take appropriate measures to prevent any migration into surrounding businesses, residential areas, or Commencement Bay.

I support continued monitoring and proactive measures to prevent contaminants from impacting surrounding properties or Commencement Bay.

Ecology's response

Thank you for your comment and support of continued annual monitoring at this site.

Your understanding is correct: the City of Tacoma is a potentially liable person (PLP) responsible for cleanup at the Sauro's Cleanerama site. The city removed accessible soil contamination during an interim action cleanup in 2009-2010. The agreed order between the city and Ecology requires the city to monitor groundwater annually at the site and submit monitoring reports to Ecology each year. These reports are saved to our website[6] and available to the public. The agreed order also allows Ecology to require additional cleanup at the site as necessary to protect human health and the environment.

If you would like to be notified when documents about this site are added, please click the blue "Subscribe to this site" button at the top right corner of the Sauro's Cleanerama webpage.[7] Subscribers receive a weekly automated email whenever an open comment period or a new document (such as an annual monitoring report) is uploaded to this webpage. Read more about this feature on Ecology's blog.[8]

Recent monitoring data shows that groundwater contamination at the site is stable or decreasing, and therefore unlikely to migrate into other areas in the future, including businesses, residential areas, and Commencement Bay.

[6] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/3310
[7] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/3310
[8] https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/may-2025/updates-on-cleanup-sites-in-your-inbox