

Draft Legal Agreement Available for Public Comment

The Washington Department of Ecology is leading an effort to clean up groundwater contamination found under the University of Washington (UW) Tacoma campus. Ecology and the UW are entering into an agreed order (legal agreement) to further study the extent of contamination and develop a cleanup plan.

Ecology Wants Your Comments

Ecology will accept comments on the draft agreed order from March 17—April 18, 2016. The new agreed order requires UW to:

- Describe the types and extent of contamination, and weigh cleanup options through a remedial investigation report/feasibility study (RI/FS).
- Choose cleanup methods through a draft cleanup action plan.
- Describe how cleanup will continue on the Howe Parcel through an interim action groundwater monitoring plan.

The agreed order also allows UW to use additional interim remedial actions, which partially address the cleanup of the site. If there is an opportunity for interim remedial actions, a public comment period will be held for the proposed actions.

You may also review a draft public participation plan. The plan describes the tools Ecology will use to inform the public and gather feedback.

The box to the right shows where to find the documents and how to submit comments. You can learn more at our **April 5th public meeting** (see back cover for details).

Background

The UW Tacoma site is about 46 acres between South 21st Street and South 17th Street, and between Pacific Avenue and Tacoma Avenue. It includes a mix of historical and current building development.

In 1997, UW and Ecology signed a Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) Agreed Order (AO) to start site cleanup. Under the terms of this new AO, UW accepts responsibility as the liable party and agrees to perform the actions described above.

Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program is the lead for the site and will move forward with this new AO to include the expanded site footprint and focus on area-wide groundwater contamination, now considered the principal environmental issue.

Comments Accepted

March 17—April 18, 2016

Submit Comments and Questions to:

Marv Coleman
Cleanup Project Manager
WA Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47775
Olympia, WA 98504-7775
Phone: (360) 407-6259
Marv.Coleman@ecy.wa.gov

Public Involvement Questions:

Megan MacClellan
Public Involvement Coordinator
Phone: (360) 407-0067
Megan.MacClellan@ecy.wa.gov

DOCUMENT REVIEW LOCATIONS

UW Tacoma Library
Tioga Library Building
1907 Jefferson Ave
Tacoma, WA 98402
(253) 692-4440

Citizens for a Healthy Bay
535 Dock St., Suite 213
Tacoma, WA 98402
(253) 383-2429

WA Department of Ecology
Southwest Regional Office
300 Desmond Drive SE
Lacey, WA 98503
By appointment only:
Contact Susie Baxter,
(360) 407-6365 or
PublicDisclosureSWRO@ecy.wa.gov

Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Website
<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=141>

Facility Site ID #: 1325
Cleanup Site ID #: 141

Known Site Contamination

This area has a long industrial legacy that, in this case, caused polluted groundwater. As the UW campus expanded, more contamination was found on parcels within the campus footprint. Studies found groundwater polluted with:

- Petroleum hydrocarbons and benzene
- Trichloroethene (TCE)
- Perchloroethene (PCE)

Groundwater studies from 2007 to 2009 found two TCE plumes above state cleanup levels beneath the site. More studies showed PCE and petroleum hydrocarbon plumes in the groundwater (see map on page 3).

The site studies to date have identified, but not fully characterized, the extent of site contamination. The investigation work called for under the new agreed order will help define the types and extent of site contamination.

Why Cleanup Matters

PCE, TCE, and petroleum hydrocarbons can be harmful to human health and the environment.

Although we understand the potential risk to human health at the UW Tacoma site to be very low, it is important to understand the full extent of contamination and clean it up to reduce risk to both people and the environment.

For example, the impacted groundwater is near the Thea Foss Waterway, which is part of Commencement Bay, a federal Superfund site. Both water bodies have undergone wide spread cleanup. This cleanup will help protect the bay by reducing nearby pollution.

This cleanup can also support UW Tacoma's potential growth and development.

Interim Action on the Howe Parcel

A partial cleanup, formally called interim action activities, began on the Howe Parcel of the UW Tacoma cleanup site in 2013. Groundwater there is contaminated with PCE. The cleanup of that contamination has started, and a long term monitoring plan is now in place.

Conditions were right at the Howe Parcel to treat groundwater in a way that minimizes impacts for students and area businesses.

A slurry that breaks down solvents like the PCE found at the Howe Parcel was injected into the soil. Wells were also installed to monitor the success of the treatment over the long term, and alert us if more cleanup actions are necessary.

Different tools may be used to clean up the contamination at the UW Tacoma campus. However, the cleanup at the Howe Parcel can serve as a small scale example of the process for the UW Tacoma campus in general.

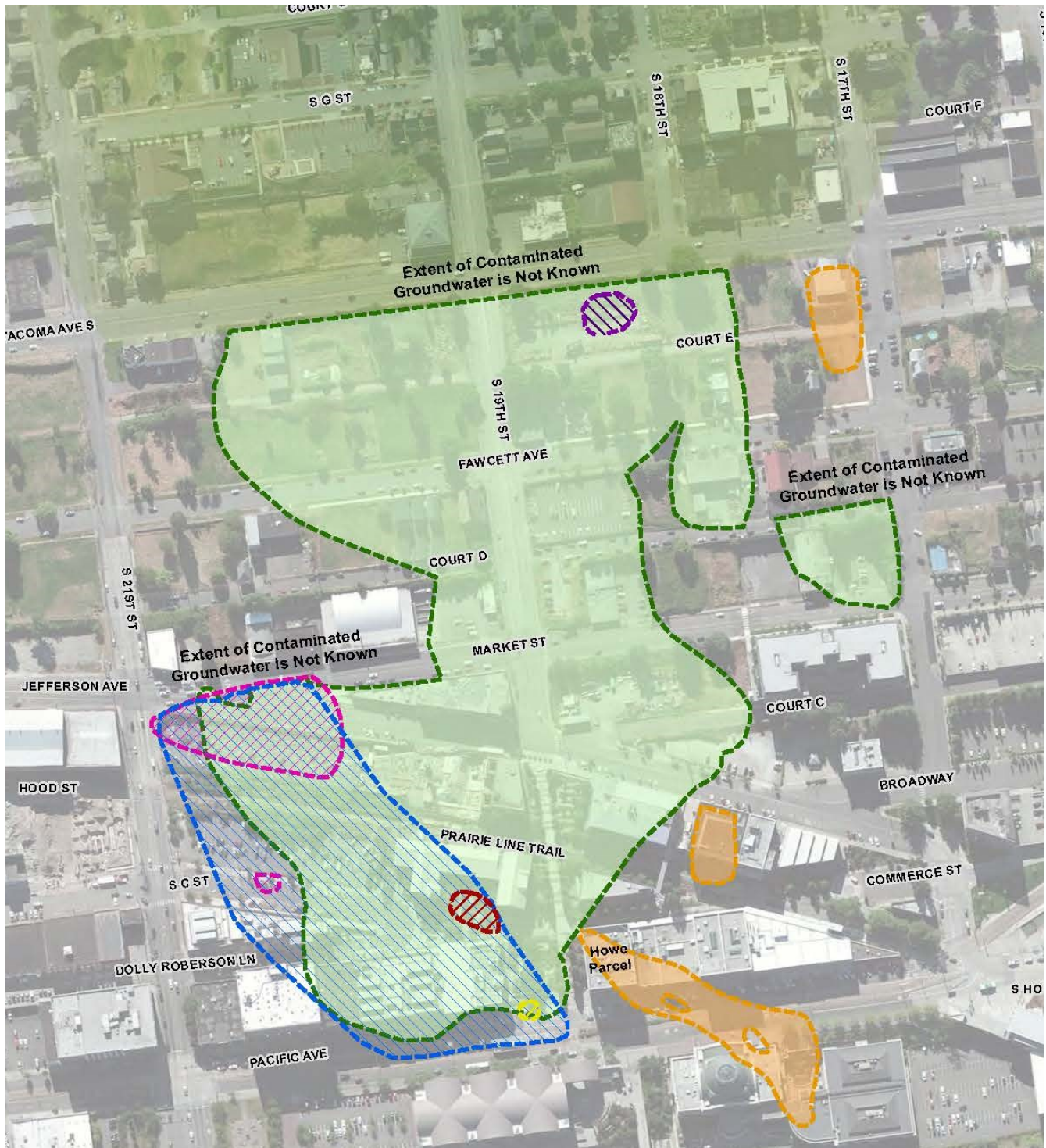
Under this agreed order, UW will continue with the interim actions detailed in the 2012 Interim Action Work Plan.

What Happens Next

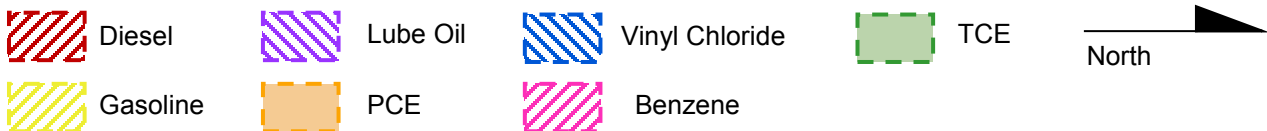
After the comment period ends, Ecology will reply to comments. We will then finalize and sign the agreement. UW will begin site studies.

You will be invited to review and comment on documents as investigations and cleanup moves forward.

Site Area and Groundwater Plume



Legend






DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

PO Box 47775

Olympia, WA 98504-7775

 Please recycle.

UW Tacoma Cleanup Site Pierce County, WA

Draft legal agreement available for public comment

**Public Comment Period:
March 17—April 18, 2016**

Facility Site ID #: 1325

Cleanup Site ID # 141

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at (360) 407-6300.

Persons with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. Persons with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

¿Habla Español? Si necesita esta información en español, contáctenos a preguntas@ecy.wa.gov.

Public Open House

April 6th, 2016, 5:30—8:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church of Tacoma
621 Tacoma Avenue South
(253) 627-0129

Ecology invites you to a public open house on the UW Tacoma cleanup site. Staff will be present to talk one-on-one during the open house sessions. Staff will give a presentation at 6:00 p.m., followed by a question and answer session.

5:30-6:00 p.m.	Open house session
6:00-7:30 p.m.	Presentation & Question and answer session
7:30-8:00 p.m.	Open house session

Light refreshments will be provided.