

# Tacoma Port Earley Business Center Public Comment Period

## Comments accepted

July 17 – August 18, 2025

## Submit comments



### Online:

[go.ecology.wa.gov/  
comment2395](https://go.ecology.wa.gov/comment2395)

### Or by mail/email:

Sandy Smith, Site Manager  
WA Department of Ecology  
PO Box 47775  
Olympia, WA 98504-7775  
[Sandy.Smith@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Sandy.Smith@ecy.wa.gov)

## Review documents

### Online:

[go.ecology.wa.gov/2395](https://go.ecology.wa.gov/2395)

### In-person:

- Tacoma Public Library -  
Main Branch  
1102 Tacoma Avenue South  
Tacoma, WA 98402  
Phone: 253-280-2800
- Ecology Lacey Office  
(by appointment only)  
300 Desmond Drive SE  
Lacey, WA 98503  
Phone: 360-407-6365

## Site information

📍 401 East Alexander Avenue,  
Tacoma, Pierce County  
Facility Site ID: 9762715  
Site Cleanup ID: 2395

## Public Comments Welcomed on Cleanup Documents

The Department of Ecology invites you to review and comment on documents for the Tacoma Port Earley Business Center cleanup.

### We seek your input on the following two documents:

**Draft Interim Action Plan:** This is a plan to remove pollution from petroleum products like gasoline, oil, and diesel. This plan has background information about the site, a design of the proposed cleanup, and next steps. This isn't the full cleanup plan for the site. The full plan is still in progress and will be available for public comment when ready.

### State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination of Non-

**Significance:** Ecology determined the proposed cleanup is not likely to cause significant environmental harm. We considered environmental, historical, and cultural factors in this process.

## Why We Are Holding This Public Comment Period

A 2013 legal agreement requires the Port to study the site, explore cleanup options, and develop a cleanup plan. In 2023, we updated the agreement to include additional work. While a full cleanup plan is still in progress, the proposed interim action will address risks to people and the environment.

No final decisions have been made yet. This public comment period is your opportunity to learn more and share your input. Another comment period will happen before the next phase of cleanup.



Figure 1: Area of the site where proposed cleanup actions would take place.

### Background

Back in the 1910s, the higher (upland) part of the property was created by filling in what used to be tidal flats. During both World War I and World War II, the site was used as a Naval shipyard. Ships were built along docks adjacent to the shoreline, while the upland areas were used for support work.

Around 1960, the Port of Tacoma bought the property. Since then, the site has been used by various industries.

The Port is planning to redevelop the site to update it for modern marine-related industries. The area is zoned for industrial use, and will be for the foreseeable future.



Figure 2: Aerial photo of the site and surroundings taken in 1950.

### Contamination Concerns

This interim action focuses on cleaning up **petroleum-based contamination** that comes from fuels such as gasoline, diesel, and heating oil. The source of this contamination is likely past spills and leaks from **underground storage tanks (USTs)** that were installed and used during shipyard operations. Four of these USTs remain on the property and will be removed as part of the interim action. This contamination is present in soil and groundwater at levels higher than what state safety standards allow. They must be cleaned up to protect both people and the environment.

There are four USTs still in place at the site. These USTs have been there for decades and may have started to corrode. Removing the tanks and nearby contaminated soil as soon as possible will prevent future leaks and further contamination.

Part of the cleanup will also target nearby petroleum hydrocarbon contamination referred to as the **LNAPL (Light Non-Aqueous Phase Liquid)** source area. This contamination likely came from nearby heating oil USTs that were removed in the past. LNAPL is contaminating the groundwater at the site. LNAPL doesn't mix with water and 'floats' on the surface of the groundwater.



Figure 3: Non-Aqueous Phase Liquid. Photo credit to Edublogs.org 2017.

### Cleanup Details

The Interim Action cleanup work will take place at the **LNAPL source area** and at the locations of **four in-place USTs**. The LNAPL source area and USTs are located under paved surfaces in the center of the Earley Business Center site. The portable building that overlies part of the area will be removed before excavation begins. Please see **figures 4 and 5** for an overview of where these locations are within the site.

After excavation, contaminated soil will be transported off-site to a permitted landfill. All excavated areas will be re-filled with clean soil, compacted, and repaved as needed.



Figure 4: An overview of the site. The area where the Interim Action cleanup will take place is circled in red.

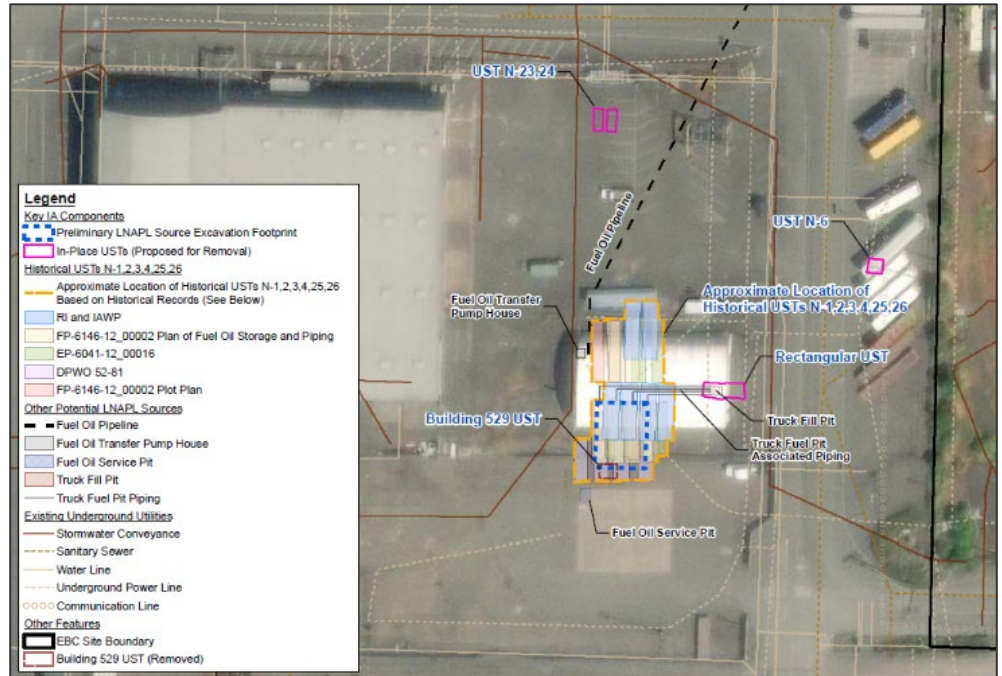


Figure 5: A map showing where the Interim Action cleanup activities will take place. The preliminary LNAPL source area is outlined by a dashed blue border. The USTs to be removed are outlined by a solid pink border.

## Cleanup Next Steps, Estimated Timeline, and Costs

- **July 17 – August 18, 2025:** Public comment period on the Interim Action Plan, SEPA checklist, and SEPA determination.
- **Late summer 2025:** Ecology will review and respond to public comments. We may update the interim action plan based on public feedback.
- **Fall 2025 to Summer 2026:** Interim cleanup design, permitting and construction is expected to take up to four months. Schedule adjustments may be made as the cleanup progresses.

The Port of Tacoma is responsible for the costs of this interim cleanup action. An Ecology oversight remedial action grant will help the port pay for the interim action.

**Stay informed by subscribing to the Earley Business Center cleanup page.**<sup>1</sup> Those subscribed will receive a weekly automated email update whenever there is a comment period, a new document, or an update to the cleanup details. Visit Ecology's blog<sup>2</sup> to learn more about this new feature.

<sup>1</sup> <https://go.ecology.wa.gov/2395>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/may-2025/updates-on-cleanup-sites-in-your-inbox>



Toxics Cleanup Program  
PO Box 47775  
Olympia, WA 98504-7775

## **Comment Period for Earley Business Center Interim Action Plan & SEPA Determination**

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**Submit comments online:**

[go.ecology.wa.gov/comment2395](https://go.ecology.wa.gov/comment2395)

### **Contact Information**

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### **ADA Accessibility**

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 564-250-0561 or email at [Abby.Zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Abby.Zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov), or visit [ecology.wa.gov/ADA](https://ecology.wa.gov/ADA).

For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.

