UW Mount Baker Laundry Public Participation Plan

2901 27th Ave S
Seattle, WA

Toxics Cleanup Program

Washington Department of Ecology
Shoreline, Washington

May 2026

Publication #: 26-09-165

Publication information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's UW Mount Baker Laundry cleanup site page.[1]

Related information

- Cleanup site ID: 17017
- Facility site ID: 19911937

Contact information

Toxics Cleanup Program[2]

Northwest Region Office
15700 Dayton Ave N
Shoreline, WA 98133
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(425) 533-5537, augie.nuszer@ecy.wa.gov

Zak Wall, Site Manager
(425) 758-5231, zak.wall@ecy.wa.gov

ADA accessibility

The Department of Ecology is committed to providing people with disabilities access to our information and services by meeting or exceeding the requirements of state and federal laws.

To request an ADA accommodation, email augie.nuszer@ecy.wa.gov, call (425) 533-5537, or call Ecology through the Washington Telecommunication Relay for services including text telephone (TTY) at 711 or through your preferred relay service provider. Visit Ecology.wa.gov/ADA for more accessibility information.

Language access

The Department of Ecology offers free translation and interpretation services. If you need help in your preferred language, please call Augie Nuszer at 425-533-5537 and request an interpreter, or email augie.nuszer@ecy.wa.gov.

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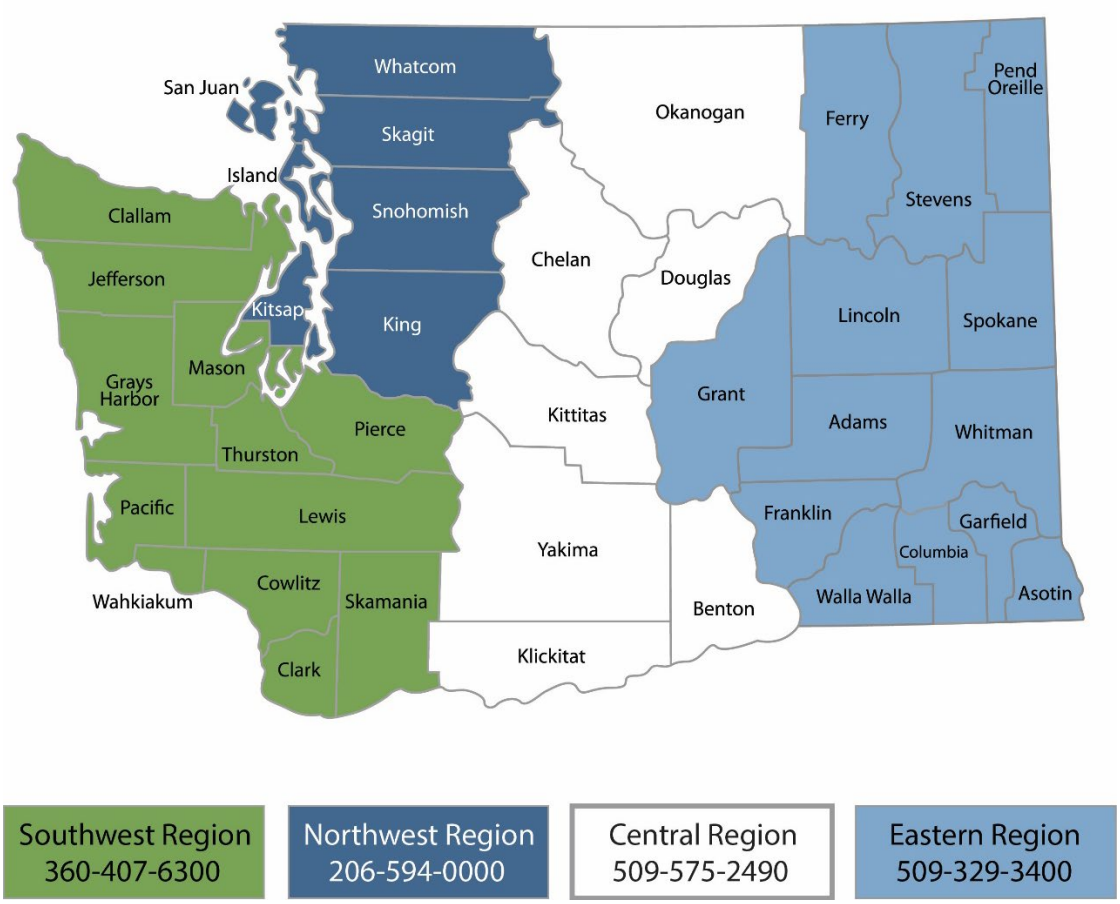
[1] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/17017
[2] https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Who-we-are/Our-Programs/Toxics-Cleanup

Department of Ecology's region offices

Map of counties served



Region	Counties served	Mailing address	Phone
Southwest	Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum	PO Box 47775 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6300
Northwest	Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom	PO Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133	206-594-0000
Central	Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima	1250 W Alder St Union Gap, WA 98903	509-575-2490
Eastern	Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman	4601 N Monroe Spokane, WA 99205	509-329-3400
Headquarters	Across Washington	PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6000

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Public involvement in contamination cleanup

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) developed this public participation plan in collaboration with Mercy Housing Northwest and El Centro de la Raza, the parties responsible for cleanup costs. The goal of this plan is to ensure meaningful community involvement throughout the cleanup of the UW Mount Baker Laundry site.

This plan outlines how we will keep the public informed about contamination investigations and cleanup options at each stage of the process. Please review the appendix for more information about the cleanup process. The plan also details when and how the community can participate in the cleanup process. We encourage the public to engage with the decision-making opportunities and provide input.

Site contacts

To be included in the site record, comments about the cleanup process must be submitted during comment periods. Questions and informal comments or information about the site's history are welcome anytime.

Ecology

Northwest Region Office
15700 Dayton Ave N
Shoreline, WA 98133

Zak Wall, Site Manager
zak.wall@ecy.wa.gov
(425) 758-5231

Augie Nuszer
Public Involvement Coordinator
augie.nuszer@ecy.wa.gov
(425) 533-5537

Potentially liable persons (PLPs)

Mercy Housing Northwest
6940 Martin Luther King Jr Way S, Seattle, WA 98118

Jonathan Smith
Project Developer
Jonathan.Smith@mercyhousing.org
(206) 602-2729

Potentially liable persons (PLPs)

El Centro de la Raza
2524 16th Ave S
Seattle, WA 98144

Miguel Maestas
Associate Director
Mmaestas@elcentrodelaraza.org
(206) 957-4650

If you are unable to reach these contacts, please visit the cleanup site page[3] for up-to-date contact information.

[3] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/17017

Public participation activities

Members of the public may ask questions, submit informal comments, or share site information at any time. Interested parties do not need to wait for a formal public comment period to contact us.

However, to be included in the formal site record, comments about the site investigation, cleanup alternatives, or cleanups must be submitted during formal comment periods. In addition, the public is invited to review site documents before they become final. This is the most direct and influential way to learn more about the site and be involved in the cleanup's decision-making.

How we share information with the community

During specific stages of the cleanup, we will mail notices about public comment periods to addresses surrounding the site. The mailing list area will vary depending on the type of contamination and where it's located. However, the list will include at least addresses within a 1/4-mile radius of the site and other interested organizations and individuals. These notices will provide general information about the site, contact information for submitting comments, and times and locations of public meetings or hearings, or how to request one if not yet scheduled.

Comment period notices will be available online and at document repositories (for example at the library closest to the site). Notices may also be posted in various locations throughout the community (for example, local businesses, schools, or post offices).

We may also develop documents outside of comment periods to keep the community updated on the site's status. These informational documents will be available online and print copies may be mailed to the nearby community if we feel the message warrants the associated cost and resources.

Postal mailing list

We maintain a mailing list that includes addresses within a 1/4-mile radius of the site and relevant local, state, and federal government contacts. These routes may include 98144-C022, 98144-C025, 98144-C026, 98144-C036, 98144-C045, and 98144-C054 (see figure 1). Due to the density of the area and the way the USPS postal routes are designed, Ecology may use a mailing vendor to create a custom list that extends a 1/4-mile radius around the site to better reach the targeted audience (see Figure 2). When a site is along a water body, Ecology may mail to a 1/2-mile radius around the cleanup site to reach more community members.

People on the mailing list receive public comment notices when draft documents are available.

We will add additional individuals, organizations, and other interested parties to the mailing list as requested. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for this site, please contact Augie Nuszer at 425-533-5537 or augie.nuszer@ecy.wa.gov.

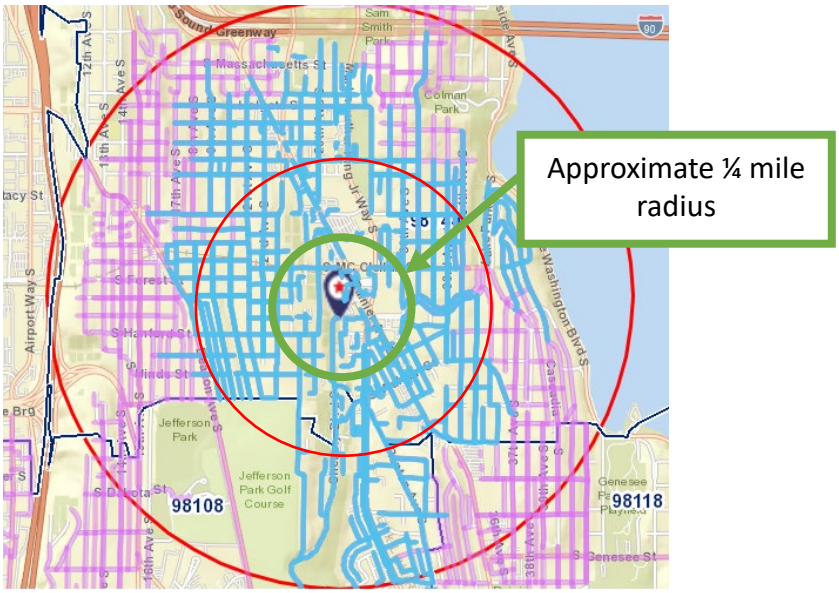


Figure 1: The approximate 1/4 mile area[4] where fact sheets may be mailed to announce public comment periods. The blue highlighted routes are postal routes that are located within that ¼ mile area. However, to ensure that people within the ¼ mile area around the site receive mailers, all the selected routes must be used despite reaching a far wider audience.

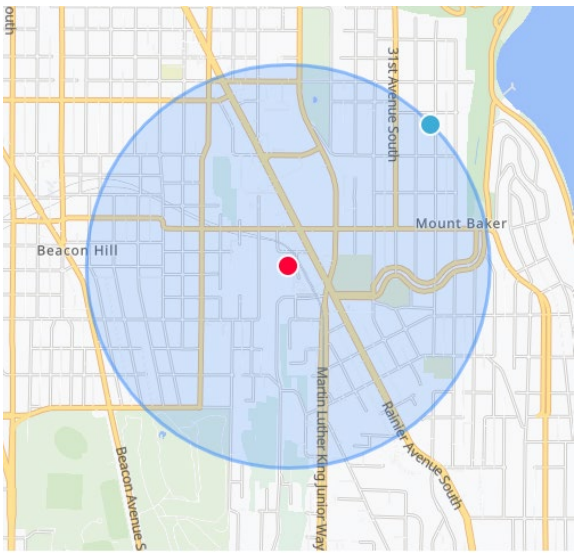


Figure 2: A ½ mile radius from the cleanup site that was used to generate a mailing list for the 2026 public comment period.

[4] https://eddm.usps.com/eddm/select-routes.htm

Contaminated site register

Public comment periods, events, and other cleanup notices are published in our *Contaminated Site Register*.[5] To receive the *Contaminated Site Register* by email, please subscribe online,[6] or contact Sarah Kellington at sarah.kellington@ecy.wa.gov or 360-280-3167.

Newspaper display ads or legal notices

We announce public comment periods and events for this site in ads or notices published in *The Seattle Times*. We will also publish notice on our Public Input & Events Listing.[7]

Email lists

Ecology maintains an email list to update interested persons about this site. If you would like to be added to the email list for this site, please subscribe online,[8] or contact Augie Nuszer at 425-533-5537 or augie.nuszer@ecy.wa.gov.

Ecology's website and social media platforms

We maintain a website for the UW Mount Baker Laundry site.[9] The website provides site information, and you may download cleanup documents.

We may also share information about cleanup sites through news releases, our blog, and social media.[10]

Automatic site updates

You can subscribe to this site from our UW Mount Baker Laundry webpage. You'll receive a weekly email if we change the site's status, add documents to the site's webpage, or open a comment period.

Places to see print documents

During public comment periods, you can find print documents at the following locations:

Seattle Public Library – Beacon Hill Branch
2821 Beacon Ave South
Seattle, WA 98114
(206) 684-4711

Washington Department of Ecology
Northwest Region Office
15700 Dayton Ave N.
Shoreline, WA 98133

[5] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data
[6] https://ecology.wa.gov/site-register
[7] https://ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing
[8] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/17017
[9] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/17017
[10] https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News

To schedule an appointment with the us to review records in person, please contact Michael Hart at 206-833-8973 or michael.hart@ecy.wa.gov.

If you would like to be mailed print documents, please contact Augie Nuszer at 425-533-5537 or augie.nuszer@ecy.wa.gov.

Signs around the cleanup site

We may also install signs displaying information about project status, traffic impacts, and health risks around the cleanup site.

How you can share information with us

We hold public comment periods and sometimes public events to learn your thoughts, opinions, and concerns about cleanup at a site. We may also identify public concerns and cleanup goals by meeting with and soliciting information from interested community members and organizations. To collaborate with us about this site, please contact Augie Nuszer at 425-533-5537 or augie.nuszer@ecy.wa.gov.

Public comment periods

At a minimum, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA, see page 12 for more information) requires 30-day comment periods to allow interested members of the public to comment on draft documents, legal agreements, and proposed cleanup actions. If there is significant interest, we may extend the public comment period.

When we oversee State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) determinations (see page 13 for more information), we hold comment periods for at least two weeks and may extend to 30 days or more when other cleanup documents are concurrently available for review.

Following a comment period, we publish all the input we received and respond to significant comments and questions, as appropriate. If the comments result in significant changes to the cleanup documents, then the documents will be revised and re-issued for public review. If the comments do not result in significant changes, the documents will become final.

Public events

We hold public meetings, workshops, open houses, and hearings based on community interest. At meetings, workshops, and open houses, attendees can ask questions, learn more about the site, and submit written comments when a comment period is open. At a public hearing, verbal comments are transcribed for the record, and Ecology responds to them after the comment period in our response to comments.

If we have not scheduled an event, we will hold one if 10 people request it. This may cause us to extend a public comment period, so the event occurs during it.

Events are held at locations close to the site that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Public events are always announced in advance using a variety of methods.

Public participation grants

Grants may be available to neighborhood committees, non-profits, and other groups interested in the site. For contaminated sites, these funds can be used to:

- Hire an expert to help interpret technical information
- Conduct activities that enhance the public's understanding of, and participation in, the cleanup process

For more information about public participation grants, please contact Laura Busby at 360-280-5088 or laura.busby@ecy.wa.gov and Wendy Kovach at 564-250-2909 or wendy.kovach@ecy.wa.gov. You may also visit the Public Participation Grant webpage.[11]

Site information

Background

The site is in Seattle's Rainier Valley next to the Mount Baker light rail station. The site is owned by the City of Seattle and currently includes a parking lot, a concrete slab, and one vacant building. The site has been used for a few different purposes over the past century. A home built around 1916 was removed by the mid-1900s. A bowling alley operated here from the 1950s to the early 1980s, and the University of Washington later used the building as a large laundry facility until 2009. Another building on the property previously housed several grocery and retail businesses before being demolished in 2025 to prepare for redevelopment.

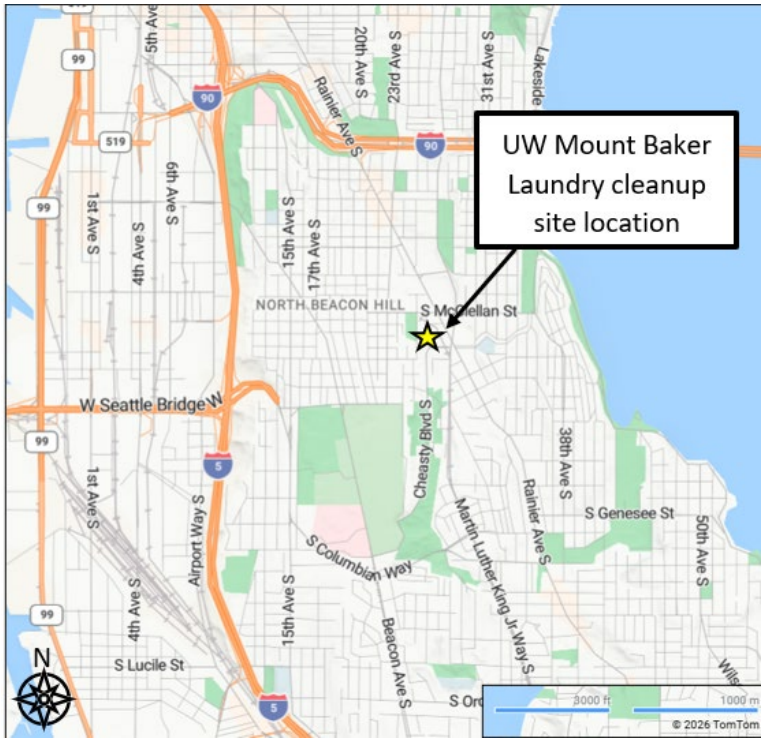


Figure 3: Map of the site in Seattle (2901 27th Ave South)

[11] https://ecology.wa.gov/PPG

El Centro and Mercy Housing have partnered to redevelop the property into a community-focused project. El Centro and Mercy Housing are both Washington-based organizations with long histories of providing affordable housing and community services. Together, they plan to build a mixed-use affordable family housing development that will also include community space and the University of Washington's Rainier Valley Early Learning Campus. The project received an affordable housing cleanup grant from Ecology to support cleanup before redevelopment into affordable housing, and El Centro and Mercy Housing plan to lease this property from the city and then clean it up. The first phase of construction is expected to begin in 2026. Cleanup and redevelopment will happen at the same time. For more information about the redevelopment project, please visit: https://www.elcentrodelaraza.org/mtbaker.

Contamination

Historical activities on the property, including fill placement and a former underground storage tank (UST), have led to contamination above state cleanup levels.

The contamination is in the soil and groundwater. The Site includes the following contaminants of concern:

- **Soil**: Petroleum hydrocarbons in the diesel and oil ranges; lead

These contaminants were found at levels above what is allowed by the state's cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), and require cleanup activities.

Area community

Neighborhood and zoning

The UW Mount Baker Laundry site is in a dense area of south-central Seattle located very close to the Mount Baker light rail station. Mount Baker Park and Jefferson Park are nearby. Within walking distance of the site are grocery stores, coffee shops, banks, and many eateries. There are multiple schools and other green spaces nearby.

According to the City of Seattle zoning map, the area is zoned[12] SM-NR 95 (M) (see Figure 4) for mixed-use residential and commercial needs. This generally allows housing and certain commercial uses, providing opportunities for affordable housing development that supports the workforce (City of Seattle, 2025).

[12] https://data-seattlecitygis.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/SeattleCityGIS::current-land-use-zoning-detail/explore?location=47.618825%2C-122.349615%2C15.00

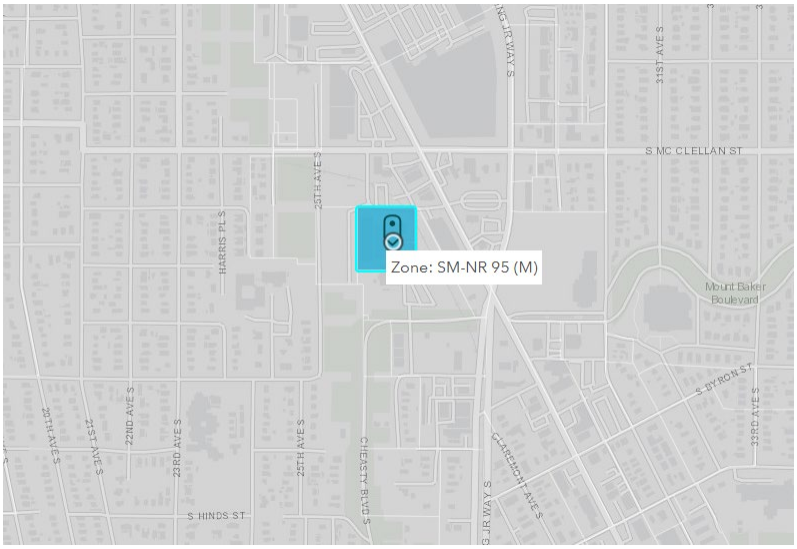


Figure 4: The City of Seattle zoning map. The blue polygon around the site is SM-NR 95 (M) zoning. For more detailed information visit the zoning map linked above.

Area demographics

Seattle is a city in Washington located in King County. According to the United States Census Bureau, the population of Seattle in 2024 was estimated to be 780,995 people. These data illustrate Seattle as a fast-growing area with a population growth rate over double the national rate. Around 10% of the population lives in poverty and the median household income of the city is $121,984. The cleanup site is in an area with low population density (see Figure 5). The housing density here reflects 0-5 households per acre (see Figure 6). Racially, the area around the cleanup site is 75% Black, Indigenous, & People of Color (BIPOC), with Asian making up the largest proportion at 39% (see Figure 7). More demographics are available on the US Census Bureau QuickFacts webpage[13] (US Census Bureau, 2025).

[13] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/seattlecitywashington,US/PST045216

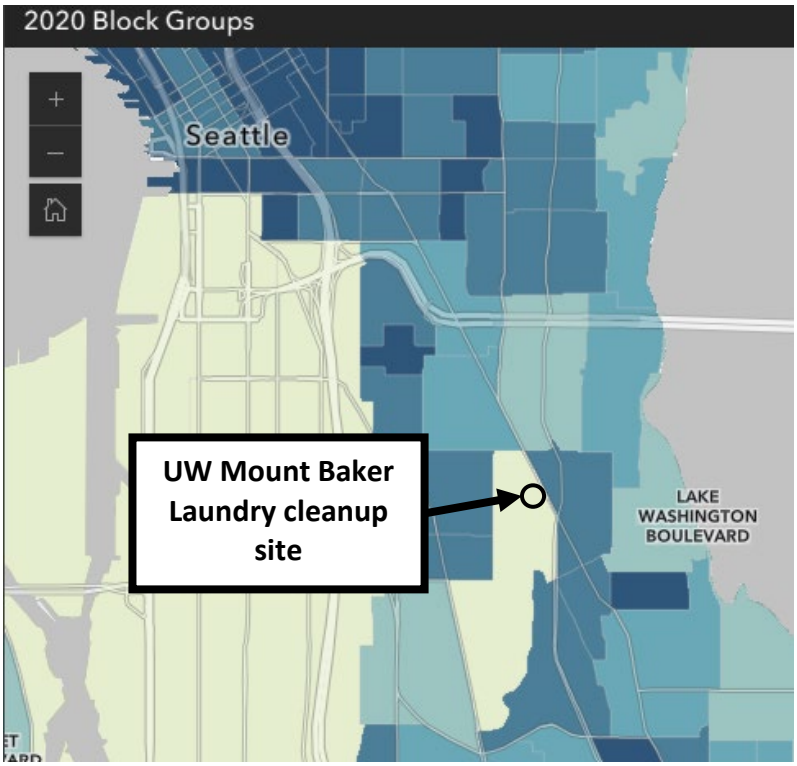


Figure 5: Population density around the cleanup site. The darker the blue, the denser the population. The lighter the area, the less dense the area.

Figure 6: Housing unit density. The darker the orange/red color the denser the housing.

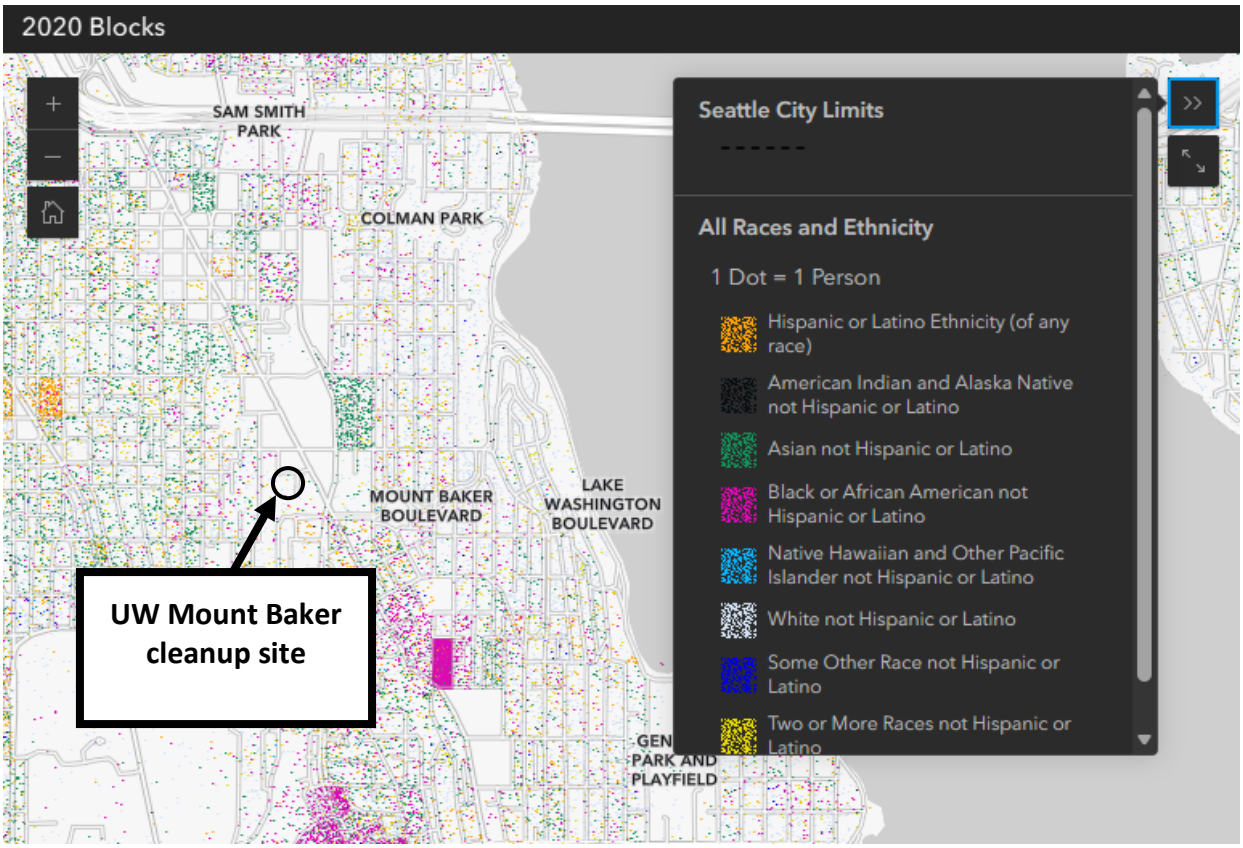


Figure 7: 2020 Census Map Viewer results for race for Seattle. Each dot represents one person on this map.

Language services

The Safe Harbor provision recommends translating vital documents for any limited English proficiency group that is 5% or more of the population served, or 1,000 people, whichever is less. The four languages that meet the translation threshold for the area around the site are Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Somali (see Figure 8). If you would like to request the fact sheet in an additional language, you may reach out to Augie Nuszer at augie.nuszer@ecy.wa.gov or 425-533-5537.

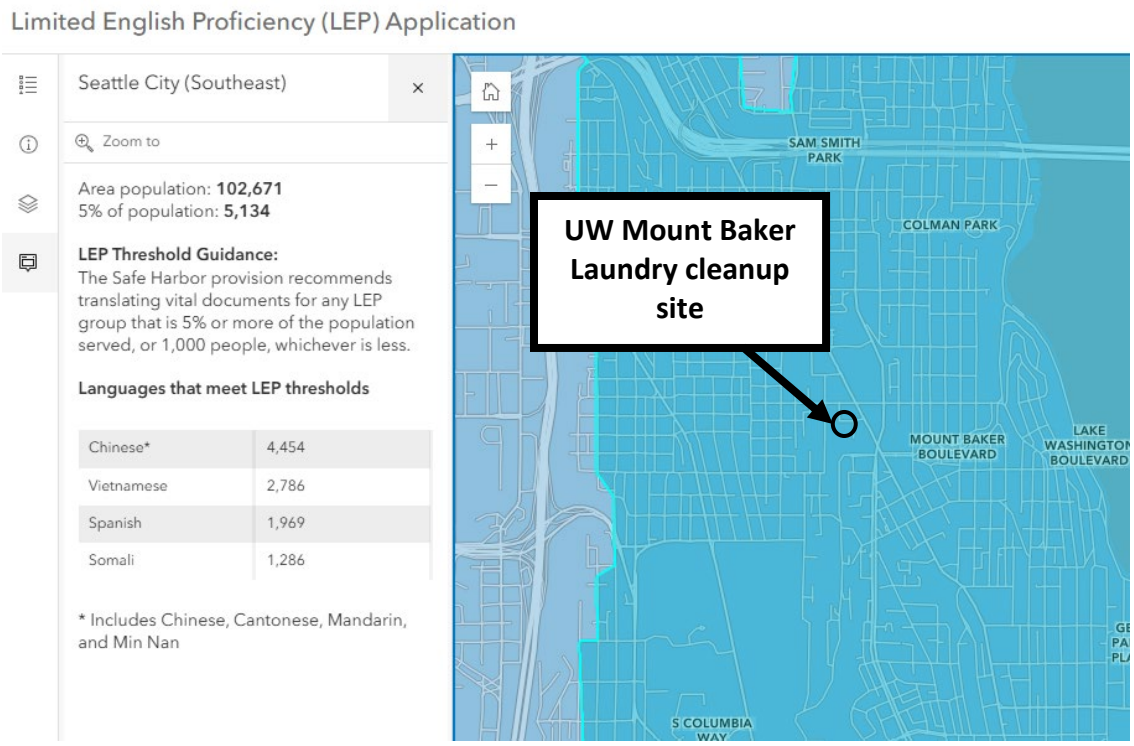


Figure 8: Our Limited English Proficiency map[14] shows the ¼ mile area around the site as having four languages that meets the translation threshold.

We will reach out to cultural community organizations as part of our outreach and provide information in other languages according to federal guidance.[15] The non-English languages most widely spoken in the ¼ mile area are Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Somali. When appropriate, we will provide outreach in these languages. To request information in another language, call Augie Nuszer at 425-533-5537, and wait on the line while we connect an interpreter.

We strive to make our public participation efforts as inclusive as possible and welcome your input about how to best reach the nearby community.

Tribal engagement

The Stillaguamish, Snoqualmie, Suquamish, Muckleshoot, Tulalip, and Squaxin Tribes' area of interest overlay with the location of the cleanup site[16] and could be affected by the contamination (see Figure 9). The cleanup process may also uncover cultural resources.

[14] https://gis.ecology.wa.gov/portal/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=c0a212e59e1643c79f0631c29864d7d
[15] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2004/06/25/04-14464/guidance-to-environmental-protection-agency-financial-assistance-recipients-regarding-title-vi
[16] https://dahp.wa.gov/archaeology/tribal-consultation-information

We will reach out to Tribes to offer opportunities to engage in the cleanup process that is separate from the public involvement process. This engagement is described in a site-specific Tribal Engagement Plan, as required by WAC 173-340-620.[17] We invite Tribal members and other indigenous peoples to engage in the public involvement process as well.

Figure 9: Map showing screening results from the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation for Tribes' area of interest in this site's area.

Washington's Cleanup Laws

Ecology uses the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA)[18] and accompanying regulations for cleanup activities. Passed in 1989, MTCA provides guidelines for contaminated site cleanup in Washington state. This law sets standards to ensure the cleanup protects people and the environment. MTCA requires the creation of this plan.

Model Toxics Control Act

MTCA began in 1988 as a citizen-led effort to clean up contaminated sites in Washington state. The law holds property owners or operators responsible for cleaning up contamination on, or coming from, their property.

[17] https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-340-620
[18] https://www.ecology.wa.gov/mtca

Ecology carries out MTCA, making sure cleanups happen according to state rules and regulations. These rules are found in Chapter 173-340 Washington Administrative Code (WAC).[19] Ecology investigates reports of contamination, and the property is placed on the Contaminated Sites List[20] if the pollution is determined to pose a serious risk to human health or the environment. This starts the cleanup process at the site.

The cleanup process under MTCA includes several steps (see appendix). Public involvement is a key part of MTCA's cleanup process.[21] Nearby residents, businesses, community groups, and other interested parties can review and comment on documents related to steps that make crucial decisions or plans about the cleanup.

State Environmental Policy Act

MTCA cleanups also require evaluation under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).[22] Under SEPA, the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts from a project or action must be evaluated by state and local agencies when making decisions. This evaluation is subject to public review and comment in parallel with cleanup documents.

Plan amendments

We developed this plan following MTCA regulations (WAC 173-340-600). We review it as the cleanup progresses and amend it as necessary. You may suggest amendments to Augie Nuszer at 425-533-5537 or augie.nuszer@ecy.wa.gov.

We intend for this plan to provide the public with information on opportunities for public involvement and comment. The outreach activities discussed reflect Ecology's current plans to keep the public informed. It also provides ways for those interested in the site to communicate their concerns and questions to us.

If you feel the planned outreach activities and mechanisms found in this plan are insufficient or would like to modify them in some way, please contact us. We will work to find solutions. We can implement new activities or outreach tools right away, with or without amending this plan.

[19] https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-340
[20] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/reports/cleanup/contaminated
[21] http://www.ecology.wa.gov/MTCA-process
[22] https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=197-11

Appendix

Steps in the MTCA cleanup process

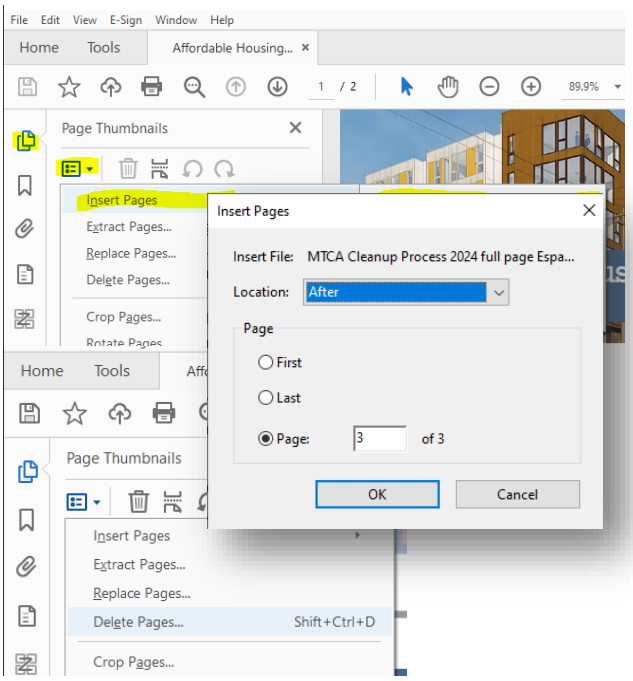
The cleanup process is defined in the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), Washington's cleanup law. See the accessible PDF on the next page for details.

The PDF full-page graphic is navigable and readable by screen-readers. All visible text is properly structured, with headings. The icons, arrows, and stairs are individual images with their own alt-text.

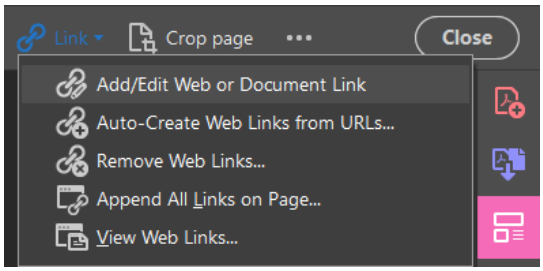
Note: "Public input opportunity" and the associated comment bubble icon are intentionally artifacted. Do **not** add them back into the tags.

To include the full-page graphic in the PPP, you need to combine them at the PDF stage to retain all the accessibility features.

1. This is your 'placeholder' page where you want the graphic in Word.
2. The figure label on this page is needed for the table of contents, so don't delete it. This will include the graphic in that list.
3. Complete the rest of your document normally and export it to PDF.
4. Download the full-page graphic from Biblio.
5. Before you do other accessibility work in Acrobat, open the **Page thumbnails** pane.
6. Click the drop-down arrow in the upper left and choose **Insert Pages** then **From File…**
7. Navigate to where you saved the full-page graphic PDF and select it.
8. Select **Page** and enter the page number of your placeholder page.
9. Still on the **Page thumbnails** pane, click the drop down again and select **Delete Pages…**
10. Select **Delete Pages…** from the same drop-down menu to delete the placeholder page.



11. Scroll to the table of contents.
12. Select **Edit PDF** from the Tool bar on the right.
13. Select **Link > Add/Edit Web or Document Link** from the ribbon at the top.
14. Drag the cursor to create a box around Appendix A. Steps in the MTCA cleanup process in the table of contents.



15. In the dialog box under Link Action, select **Go to page view**. Click **Next**.
16. Scroll to the top of the Appendix A page and click **Set Link** in the dialog box.

The graphic should be in the right place, with tag structure intact. This page won't have a header or footer, and that's fine.