



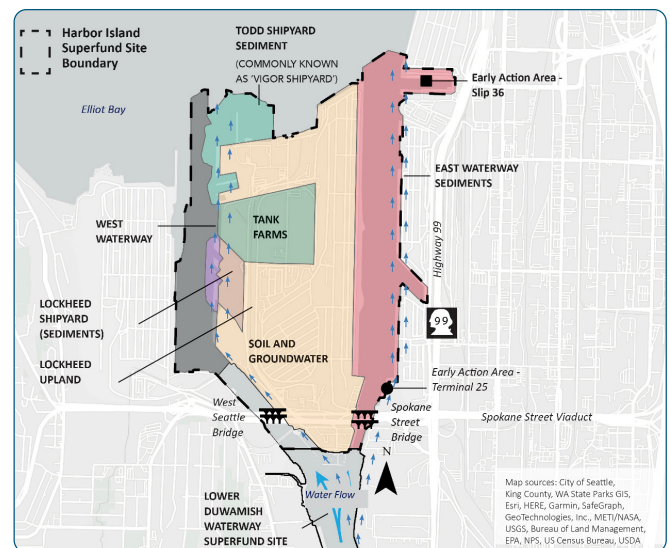
## Interim Record of Decision Fact Sheet

After carefully considering over 200 public comments, the United States Environmental Protection Agency issued an Interim Record of Decision (IROD) that selects a comprehensive cleanup plan for the East Waterway Operable Unit of the Harbor Island Superfund Site. Through a combination of the active cleanup of 121 acres and other actions, the IROD marks a significant step forward in the restoration of the East Waterway and Duwamish River. EPA addressed all public comments in the responsiveness summary section of the IROD. Please visit EPA’s website ([www.epa.gov/superfund/harbor-island](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/harbor-island)) for the most up-to-date details.

### The Preferred Cleanup Alternative

The EPA’s *Proposed Plan for Cleanup of the East Waterway Operable Unit* was released for public comment on April 28, 2023. The proposed plan was the result of many years of work to investigate the East Waterway contamination and develop potential cleanup alternatives. It outlined the different cleanup alternatives and presented a preferred alternative to address risks to people and the environment from contamination in the East Waterway Operable Unit.

The Proposed Plan also outlined that the effective control of sources of contamination throughout the Green/Duwamish River Watershed by federal, state, and local governments, as well as the cleanup of the adjacent Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund Site, will be essential to achieving the EPA’s long-term objective of reducing sediment concentrations to be protective of both human health and the environment. These combined efforts may allow the Washington State Department of Health to minimize associated seafood consumption advisories and will advance the possibility of reaching concentrations of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in sediments that are at or near concentrations measured in non-urban background for Puget Sound (2 parts per billion).



**Figure 1.** Map of the Harbor Island Superfund Site, including the East Waterway Sediments Operable Unit.

### How EPA Sought Public Comments

The EPA understands that community input was critical during the Proposed Plan phase to ensure a better interim cleanup decision. Additionally, federal law requires that the public be given the opportunity to read and provide comments on the EPA’s proposed cleanup alternatives and the supporting administrative record. The EPA made a fact sheet summarizing the Proposed Plan available on-line in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Khmer and held a virtual public meeting on May 25, 2023 and an in-person public meeting on June 3, 2023 in South Seattle (Georgetown). Due to high community interest, the EPA initially released the Proposed Plan with an extended public comment period of 60 days and then, per community request, extended the comment period to 90 days. The EPA accepted comments by email, regular mail, and both verbally and in writing at public meetings, with interpretation provided at the June 3, 2023 meeting. At these public meetings the EPA also presented a [short video of the preferred alternative and the cleanup technologies](#).

## Responding to Public Comments

The EPA received 228 public comments between April 28 and August 11, 2023. Most submissions had multiple comments and all comments were read, categorized and entered into the administrative record for the East Waterway Operable Unit and responded to in the responsiveness summary section of the IROD.

The four most commonly received comments about the cleanup were:

- Overall support for the preferred alternative.
- EPA’s Proposed Plan understates the importance of fishing at the Spokane Street Bridge.
- Enhanced natural recovery should not be used in the Sill Reach at the Spokane Street Bridge.
- A source control action plan needs to be developed and included with the East Waterway IROD.

Based on review of these public comments, the IROD now includes:

**Increased recognition of fishing at the Spokane Street Bridge.** The importance of the Spokane Street Bridge within the East Waterway for recreational and subsistence fishers is now better clarified.

**EPA will evaluate different design considerations to potentially optimize Enhanced Natural Recovery (ENR) under bridges.** As EPA oversees the design of the cleanup, we will explore how to best use ENR and limited dredging in the area beneath the bridges. However, dredging in these areas may be difficult because of low clearance and the need to maintain structural integrity of the bridges.

## Selecting an Interim Cleanup Plan

Based on the comments received, the EPA evaluated modifications to the preferred alternative. The resulting interim cleanup plan addresses many of the public concerns, is protective of public health and the environment and is cost-effective. Specifically, this interim cleanup plan includes:

**Protection of Human Health and the Environment:** Removal of contaminants makes it safe for all but the most sensitive populations to eat more fish from the river more often and is also protective of wildlife. Additionally, this cleanup plan reduces the potential for direct contact with contaminants in the sediment.

**Actively cleaning up approximately 121 acres of contaminated sediments, to include:**

- Dredging 99 acres (or 63 percent) of the East Waterway Operable Unit.
- Capping 7 acres (this may include dredging to address final elevation needs).
- On-site (or in situ) treatment of 12 acres under piers and docks using activated carbon or other organic amendments to contain and absorb contaminants.
- Enhanced natural recovery of 3 acres for a portion of the East Waterway under the Spokane Street, West Seattle, and Railroad Bridges.

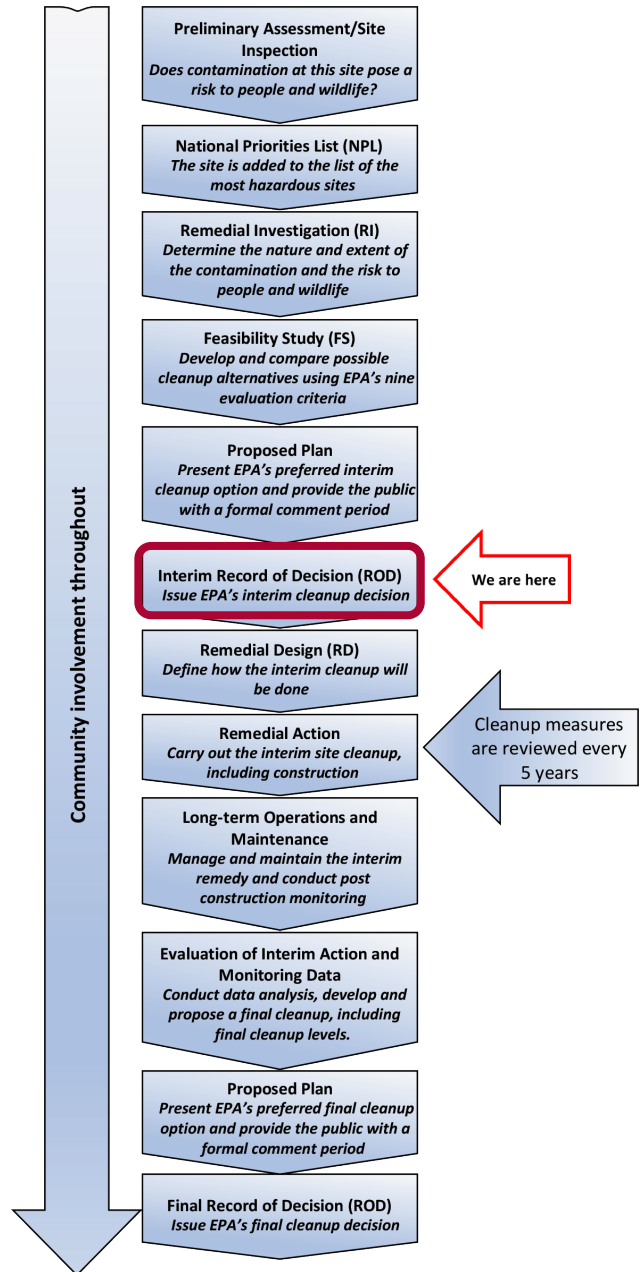


Figure 2. Superfund Process for an Interim Record of Decision

(Source: EPA)

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## Selecting an Interim Cleanup Plan

- **Applying monitored natural recovery in 36 acres** where there would be no dredging, capping or treatment, to allow natural processes to reduce sediment concentrations.
- **Implementing institutional controls** including fish advisories, educational outreach, waterway and land use restrictions to prevent exposure to contamination and protect the integrity of the remedy.
- **Conducting short-term monitoring** during and after construction to measure the cleanup progress and effectiveness, and until cleanup levels are set in a future decision document and ultimately achieved.
- **Conducting Five-Year Reviews** to assess whether the cleanup remains protective.
- **Cost:** The current estimated cost of this interim cleanup is \$401 million.
- **Economic Benefits:** This interim remedy will create jobs during active cleanup.
- **A Commitment to a Larger Watershed Approach:** Throughout this interim remedy for the East Waterway, the EPA remains committed to reducing sources of contamination throughout the Green/Duwamish River Watershed by both continuing the cleanup of the Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund Site, and supporting work outside of Superfund by other federal, state, and local entities.

## Finding East Waterway Information and Documents

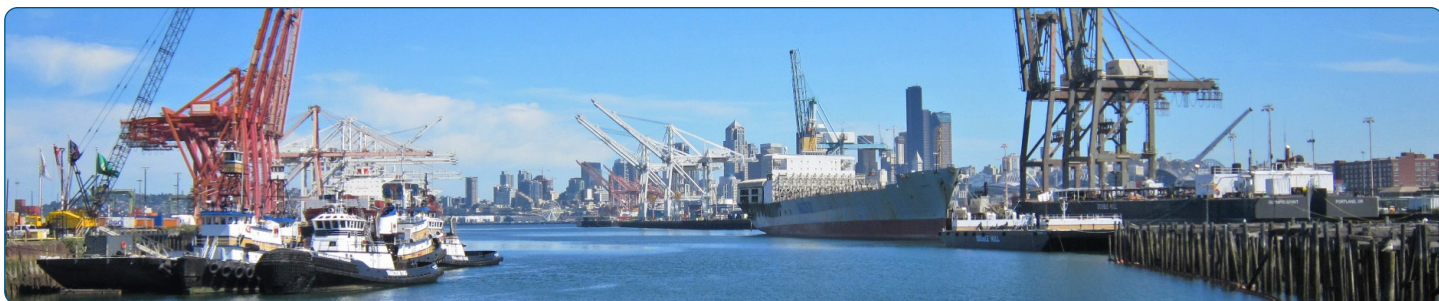
East Waterway Operable Unit documents such as the full Interim Record of Decision, Remedial Investigation, Feasibility Study, Proposed Plan as well as other information and materials are available on the EPA's website ([www.epa.gov/superfund/harbor-island](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/harbor-island)). **For more information, please contact:**

- **Ravi Sanga, EPA Remedial Project Manager, [sanga.ravi@epa.gov](mailto:sanga.ravi@epa.gov), 206-553-4092**
- **Laura Knudsen, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, [knudsen.laura@epa.gov](mailto:knudsen.laura@epa.gov), 206-553-1838**

*If you need materials in an alternative format, please contact **Laura Knudsen** at 206-553-4092.*

**Stay Connected:** *If you would like to receive information about this site in the future, please email Laura at [knudsen.laura@epa.gov](mailto:knudsen.laura@epa.gov) and tell us if you prefer updates to your email or mailing address — or wish to be taken off our mailing list.*

## Harbor Island Superfund Site - East Waterway Cleanup - Interim Record of Decision Fact Sheet



Region 10  
1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 155  
Mail Stop 12-D12  
Seattle, Washington 98101