



# South Tacoma Field: Superfund Cleanup Status and Redevelopment Activities

April 2024

This fact sheet summarizes how the redevelopment currently underway at South Tacoma Field, or Operable Unit 4 of the Commencement Bay/South Tacoma Channel Superfund Site, affects and maintains the cleanup, and also explains the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's role and history at this site.

## What is the status of South Tacoma Field?

The property developer, Bridge Industrial, in cooperation with EPA, is taking steps to ensure that redevelopment activities at the site, which started in February 2024, maintain the protectiveness of the Superfund remedy (see "Site background"). The focus of this fact sheet is on the first four months of the redevelopment activities where construction activities will involve excavating and consolidating contaminated soils. The planned activities include:

- Consolidating and moving contaminated soils from across the development for placement beneath new building foundations and roadways to maintain, and in some instances, improve the existing soil covers.
- Bridge Industrial providing regular construction progress/environmental monitoring reports to EPA and EPA participating in regularly scheduled update/coordination calls.
- Bridge Industrial deploying a network of monitoring equipment to:
  - Collect air data from active construction zones to represent "worst case" conditions, as well as from the site perimeter.
  - Monitor, record, and report airborne particulate counts and meteorological data (wind speed/direction, temperature, relative humidity) in real time.
  - Collect and submit air samples for quantitative laboratory analysis using EPA approved analytical methods.
- Bridge Industrial will also take proactive steps to control dust and minimize soil being tracked off the site during construction. These steps include wetting soils during earthwork and the use of vehicle washes and street sweepers at and near the property entrances.
- EPA conducting regular site inspections while earth moving construction activities (i.e., cutting, filling, grading) are underway.
- At the end of the construction process, Bridge Industrial will record updated covenants on the land title so future owners or operators will know where the contaminated soils are located.



South Tacoma Field cleanup area, looking North.

EPA photo

## What is EPA's role in this redevelopment?

In 2021, EPA was notified of Bridge Industrial's intention to purchase and develop 150 acres of South Tacoma Field into a warehouse complex, parking lots, and roadways. While EPA is not involved with any local land use decisions, EPA is working to ensure that the redevelopment activities maintain the protectiveness of the cleanup remedy. More details about EPA's role are summarized below:

### ***EPA's Position on Superfund Redevelopment***

*EPA takes no position on whether the property should be redeveloped and when such redevelopment should occur. However, a redeveloper must cooperate fully with EPA in protecting and maintaining the cleanup and refrain from using the property in any manner that would interfere with or adversely affect the implementation, integrity, or protectiveness of any past or future action.*

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## What is EPA's Role in the redevelopment?

- **2021:** Bridge Industrial requested a comfort/status letter from EPA. The comfort/status letter, which is available on the [CB/STC webpage](#), provided Bridge with information on the South Tacoma Field Superfund site, and potentially applicable legal and policy implications for Bridge Industrial as an owner of the property. As part of the comfort/status letter discussion, Bridge Industrial also provided a soil management plan and a health and safety plan for EPA's review. EPA noted in the comfort/status letter that any development must maintain the protectiveness of the cleanup actions and existing Superfund site use restrictions.
- **2022:** Separate from the Superfund cleanup process, EPA Region 10's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) program reviewed documents associated with the Bridge Industrial permit application to the city of Tacoma, as part of the Washington State Environmental Policy Act review process. EPA noted that the project had the potential to cause or result in disproportionate impacts to communities with [environmental justice concerns](#) and offered [recommendations](#) for consideration.
- **2023:** EPA resumed discussions with Bridge Industrial to ensure that the remedy at the site would remain protective after redevelopment, and that measures put in place during construction were sufficient to protect against risk of exposure.
- **2024:** EPA continues to coordinate with Bridge Industrial to ensure that the Superfund cleanup remains protective of human health and the environment throughout the redevelopment at the site.

## Site background

South Tacoma Field is a 260-acre area historically used by the Burlington Northern Railroad Company for rail car manufacturing, repair, and maintenance activities from 1892 to 1974. Two foundries, known as Amsted and Pioneer Builders Supply, also operated at the site to produce rail car parts. Tacoma City Light operated a facility on the northern end of the site. Additional industrial facilities operated on the southeast portion of the site. These activities caused soil contamination and localized groundwater contamination.



South Tacoma Field cleanup area, looking north.

EPA Photo.

In 1994 EPA issued a final cleanup plan (a Record of Decision, or ROD) that required on-site soil consolidation and treatment, selective removal and off-site disposal of soils, addition of soil cover, land use restrictions prohibiting residential use, and monitoring of natural processes to clean up groundwater. In 1999, EPA completed active cleanup work and started long-term monitoring to ensure the cleanup remains protective of human health and the environment. In 2005, EPA partially deleted the soils portion of South Tacoma Field from the National Priorities List (also known as the NPL; the national list of Superfund sites).

Every five years, EPA conducts a review of the site to make sure that the cleanup continues to be protective of human health and the environment. All previous five-year reviews for this site confirm that contaminated media, especially soils, remaining on the site continue to be isolated and covered, and that the cleanup remains protective of human health and the environment. The most recent [Five-Year Review](#) is available for download and review in the [site's webpage](#).

## How can I get more information?

- Visit EPA's webpage for the Commencement Bay/South Tacoma Channel Superfund Site: [www.epa.gov/superfund/commencement-bay-stc](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/commencement-bay-stc)
- Contact **Derek Pulvino**, EPA's Remedial Project Manager (RPM) or **Rafi Ronquillo**, EPA's Community Involvement Coordinator (CIC) for this Site.
  - **Derek Pulvino** (RPM): 206-553-9057, [Pulvino.Derek@epa.gov](mailto:Pulvino.Derek@epa.gov)
  - **Rafi Ronquillo** (CIC): 206-553-7051, [Ronquillo.Rafi@epa.gov](mailto:Ronquillo.Rafi@epa.gov)

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