

U.S. Postal Service Site Cleanup

Summary

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is overseeing the cleanup of the 13.4-acre United States Postal Service - Processing and Distribution Center, referred to as the USPS site. Prosper Portland, the owner of the property, demolished the former Vehicle Maintenance Facility in 2020, and removed about 2,400 tons of petroleum-contaminated soils from the north end of the site.

Prosper Portland is continuing to address contamination in other areas of the site and will eventually demolish the Processing and Distribution Center by fall 2023. See figure below.

Background

The Northern Pacific Terminal Company developed the site as a railyard in the early 1880s. Railcar repairing and cleaning was conducted on the west half of the site, while freight depots operated on the east half.

The Pintsch Compressing Company operated a plant in the northwest corner of the site that manufactured compressed gas from crude oil for passenger rail car lighting from about 1893 to 1934.

The USPS facility was constructed on the site in the early 1960s and USPS purchased the site from the railroad in 1974. The facility processed all outgoing mail for the state of Oregon.

Figure. Prosper Portland's schedule for site work and demolition



Image credit: Prosper Portland

In 1993 and 1994, five underground storage tanks at the maintenance facility were decommissioned by removal and a heating oil tank was removed from the south side of the property. Pockets of petroleum-contaminated soils remained in-place around both excavations, because they could not be removed without compromising the adjacent buildings.

Site Contamination

Contamination at the site generally consists of petroleum products (diesel and heavy oils), along with petroleum constituents known as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), lead and arsenic. Contamination at the site is generally shallow (less than five feet deep), but in the former manufactured gas plant area the contamination extends down 20 feet or more below ground surface.

Conditional No Further Action

In 2012, DEQ determined that there was no risk to public health and the environment if the site remained in its current condition – as a paved industrial facility operated by the USPS.

Now that redevelopment is beginning, DEQ requires areas of highly contaminated soils known as hot spots be removed, along with the pockets of petroleum-contaminated soils. The site redevelopment will serve as a cap, including buildings, pavement and/or a two- to three-foot layer of clean soil.

Broadway Corridor Redevelopment

Prosper Portland, formerly the Portland Development Commission, purchased the site for redevelopment in 2016. The USPS built a new facility near Portland International Airport, and relocated to the new facility in 2018.

When Prosper Portland purchased the site, it signed an agreement with DEQ to clean up the hot spots and other significant contamination before reselling or redeveloping the site.

The site, along with Union Station and the former Greyhound bus terminal, is the part of the City of Portland's [Broadway Corridor project](#), a plan to redevelop and revitalize the area with high density residential and office towers similar to what has occurred in the nearby Pearl District.



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Cleanup Work Specifics and Next Steps

In August 2022, Prosper Portland will be conducting additional [sitework and soil cleanup](#) in the parking lot area. At the same time, Prosper Portland will begin removing hazardous materials from the [Processing and Distribution Center to get it ready for demolition](#), which is expected to begin in early 2023.

Get More Information

You can find more information about the status of this project and links to project files by going to <http://ordeq.org/usps>.

If you have any questions, please contact the DEQ Project Manager, Kevin Dana at 503-229-5369 or . kevin.dana@deq.oregon.gov.

Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.