



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Environmental Quality

Western Region

165 East 7th Street

Eugene, OR 97405

(541) 686-7838

December 27, 2016

Re: Ashland Railroad Yard Cleanup Expected to Begin in Mid-2017

Dear Resident,

Union Pacific Railroad recently submitted an updated cleanup plan to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality for the 20-acre railroad yard in your neighborhood. You are invited to attend a public meeting on Thursday, Jan. 19, 2017 in the Community Center at 59 Winburn Way at 7:30 p.m. Representatives from DEQ and Union Pacific Railroad will be at the meeting to share information and answer questions about the project.

DEQ expects to approve the plan in February unless information is provided during the public comment period that changes the technical basis for DEQ's approval. The cleanup work, which should begin during spring 2017, is expected to take place in several phases and should be finished in 2018.

At the request of Ashland residents and the City Council, Union Pacific Railroad has agreed to use railcars to remove contaminated soil from the property, and bring clean soil backfill with trucks travelling on Oak Street and Clear Creek Drive. The city agreed to modify the property's deed restrictions to be consistent with DEQ's expected requirements of Union Pacific and future owners of the railroad yard property.

DEQ's project fact sheet is attached for more information. Key project documents regarding this project are available on DEQ's website at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/ecsi/ecsi.htm>, by searching for site ID No. 1146 or Site Name "UPRR - Ashland".

Union Pacific has agreed to provide the local community with frequently updated information about project status and a specific schedule for possible heavy equipment noise and traffic that might occur during the cleanup. This information will be posted on the city's website at <http://www.ashland.or.us/uprr>.

If you need additional information, please contact Project Manager Greg Aitken by email at aitken.greg@deq.state.or.us.

Sincerely,


Greg Aitken
DEQ

Ashland Railroad Yard Cleanup

What's happening?

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is recommending implementation of Union Pacific Railroad's plan to begin clean up of the Ashland Railroad yard in mid-2017. The cleanup plan satisfies the requirements of DEQ's 2001 Record of Decision and responds to community requests to use railcars rather than trucks to haul contaminated soil from the railroad yard.

The railroad yard cleanup will remove most of the contamination from the site and enable Union Pacific to potentially sell all, or a portion, of the property at some point in the future. The plan was presented to the Ashland City Council during its Oct. 6, 2015 meeting.

Public information meeting Jan. 19, 2017

DEQ will host a public meeting to discuss the plan at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19, 2017 at the Ashland Community Center, at 59 Winburn Way. DEQ is also accepting public comments on the cleanup plan through Jan. 31, 2017.

Overview of the 2016 cleanup plan

Union Pacific's 2016 cleanup plan and other documents are available electronically at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/eeci/eeci.htm> by searching for site ID No. 1146 or Site Name "UPRR-Ashland".

The plan includes the following key actions, consistent with DEQ's 2001 Record of Decision:

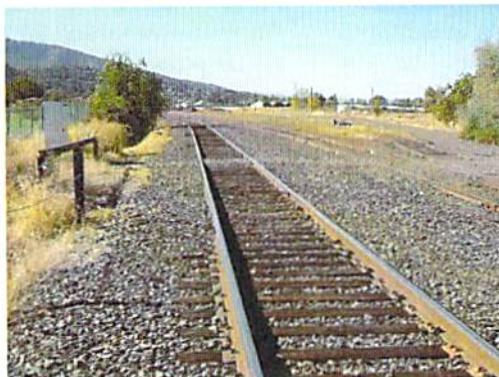
- Excavate about 17,500 cubic yards of shallow contaminated soils from two contaminated areas.
- Remove and dispose of contaminated soil and debris from two man-made ponds and a former locomotive drip slab.
- Transport contaminated materials to a permitted landfill using railcars.
- Backfill and re-grade excavated areas using clean soil brought into the railroad yard from offsite using trucks.
- Stockpile clean soil and contaminated soil temporarily onsite in order to coordinate with excavation activities and the delivery of railcars.

The work will take place in several phases and is currently scheduled to begin in mid-2017 after Union Pacific retains contractors and builds a temporary rail spur to allow for railcar loading at the center of the site.

Background

The Ashland railroad yard is a vacant 20-acre parcel owned by Union Pacific, which is responsible for environmental cleanup under DEQ's supervision. The railroad yard was operated by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company between 1887 and 1986 as a locomotive fueling, maintenance, and railcar repair facility near downtown Ashland. Most buildings were removed from the yard in the 1980s. A small portion of the railroad yard is currently leased to the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad and is used on occasion for switching and storing railcars.

Environmental investigations in the 1990s revealed that shallow soil and groundwater in portions of the railroad yard are contaminated with petroleum hydrocarbons, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, lead and arsenic. Contaminant levels are higher than DEQ's cleanup standards for human health if the property were to be developed for residential or commercial uses.



Vacant Ashland Railroad Yard

In 2001, after reviewing cleanup options for the property and soliciting public comments about the preferred cleanup method, DEQ decided that excavating contaminated soils and disposing of the soils at an approved landfill would be the best cleanup alternative for the site and would make future development possible for commercial and residential uses allowed under city zoning.

In 2006, Union Pacific proposed to excavate about 35,500 cubic yards of contaminated soil to meet DEQ's criteria for unrestricted residential use. DEQ did not approve the 2006 plan due to concerns raised by Ashland about the use of trucks to haul contaminated soil on city streets.



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Environmental Cleanup and Emergency Response

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www.oregon.gov/DEQ

In 2013, Union Pacific submitted a new cleanup plan following updated DEQ guidance to redefine cleanup objectives and assume future residential use of the property as a single parcel.

Under the new plan, 17,500 cubic yards of soil would be excavated and railcars would be used to carry the contaminated soil to an approved landfill. Union Pacific delayed implementation of their cleanup plan until Ashland modified a deed restriction on the property requiring it to be cleaned up to unrestricted residential use standards.

In early 2016, Ashland modified the deed restriction as a result of a unanimous vote by the City Council. Union Pacific advised DEQ in September 2016 that it would implement the cleanup plan in 2017, after approval by DEQ.

Union Pacific has agreed to provide the local community with frequently updated information about project status and a specific schedule for possible heavy equipment noise and traffic that might occur during the cleanup. This information will be posted on the city's website at www.ashland.or.us/uprr.

What will happen after railroad yard cleanup?

Implementation of the cleanup plan will enable Union Pacific to sell all or a portion of the property if they so choose, allowing it to be redeveloped.

If the site is eventually sold, there are certain residential redevelopment scenarios where remaining soil contamination on a subdivided parcel could exceed the DEQ cleanup standard. Therefore, DEQ will prohibit any subdivision or development of the property until after environmental conditions and risks are re-examined and DEQ is satisfied that any proposed new use of the property meets its cleanup standards.

Opportunity to comment

Written comments should be sent 5 p.m. Jan. 31, 2017 to:

Greg Aitken, project manager
Oregon DEQ
165 E. 7th Street
Eugene, OR 97401

Or emailed to:

Aitken.greg@deq.state.or.us

DEQ intends to provide formal approval to Union Pacific in February 2017, unless information is provided during the public comment period that changes the technical basis for DEQ's approval.

After the cleanup is completed in 2018, Union Pacific will submit a final report for DEQ's review and approval in early 2019. At that time DEQ will provide another public review and comment opportunity, before making a formal determination that no further action is necessary for the property, until subdivision or development of the railroad yard occurs.

After the cleanup is completed in 2018, Union Pacific will submit a final report for DEQ's review and approval. At that time DEQ will provide a public review and comment opportunity, before making a formal determination that no further action is necessary for the property, until subdivision or development of the railroad yard occurs.

For more information please contact:

Greg Aitken at DEQ at 541-687-7361, or aitken.greg@deq.state.or.us

Alternative formats

Alternative formats of this document can be made available. For more information call 503-229-5696, Portland, or call toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696. Hearing-impaired persons may call 711.