EPA
United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.
356564

EPA Proposes Cleanup Plan; Requests Public Comment

Celotex Superfund Site
Chicago, Illinois — October 2004

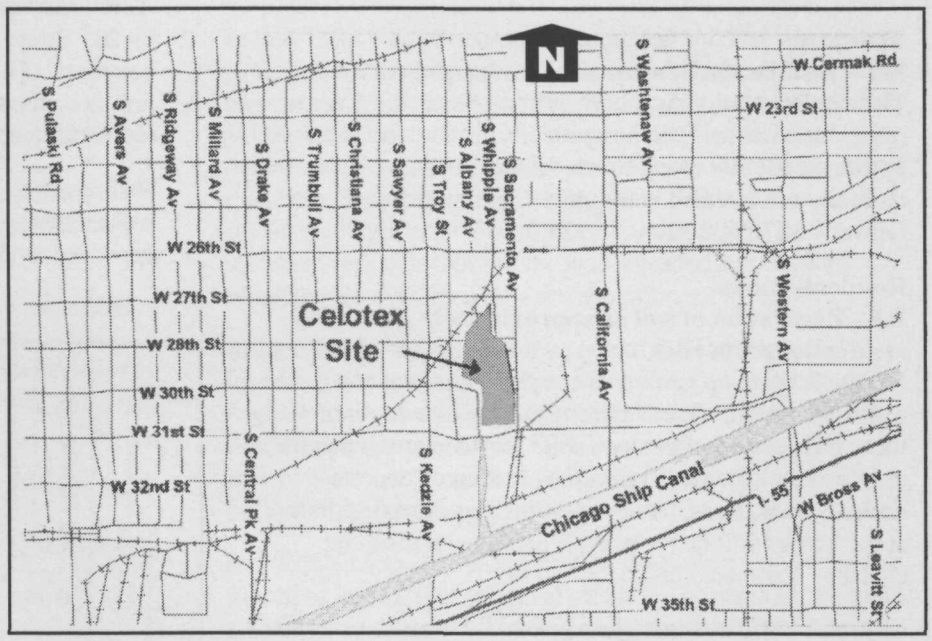
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is proposing to cover contaminated soil from the main site and remove polluted soil from nearby residential areas as a way to clean up the Celotex Corp. Superfund site.[1] Currently, around 22 acres of the 24-acre main site are covered with gravel that prevents exposure to contaminated soil. Under the proposed EPA cleanup plan, the party conducting the cleanup for the pollution will cover the remaining 2 acres (also referred to as the Palumbo property) with porous clay or gravel.

The proposed plan also includes digging up contaminated soil located in some nearby residential yards and disposing of it at an EPA-approved landfill. A report, known as an engineering evaluation and cost analysis, provides details about the site's proposed cleanup plan and is available at Chicago Public Library's Marshall Square Branch.

Polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons

Soil at the main site and surface soils in some nearby residential yards are contaminated with PAHs, short for polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons. PAHs are a group of chemicals that form during burning of coal, wood, oil and gas, and garbage. PAHs attach to soil particles and last a long time in the environment. Some PAHs may cause cancer in humans.

Cleanup of the site will assure that people who work there, as well as area residents, will not be exposed to PAHs through skin contact, breathing, eating and drinking.



The Celotex Corp. Superfund site is located at 2800 S. Sacramento Ave. in Chicago. The plant operated from at least 1918 to 1982.

Tell us what you think

EPA wants your comments on our proposed cleanup plan. Your thoughts and opinions help us to determine the final cleanup plan. This fact sheet includes a form for you to write your comments and mail to EPA.

You may also e-mail EPA Community Involvement Coordinator Joe Muñoz at munoz.joe@epa.gov.

Public comment period

Oct. 26 to Nov. 26, 2004

You have 30 days to comment on EPA's proposed cleanup plan. Your comments must be postmarked or transmitted by e-mail by midnight of the last day in the comment period. Based on your comments and information provided to EPA, the Agency may revise the selected cleanup plan or pick another option.

Public meeting

EPA will hold a public meeting to explain its recommended cleanup plan and answer your questions. We will also accept oral and written comments at the meeting. Please plan to attend.

Tues., Nov. 9, 2004
7-9 p.m.
Auditorium
West Side Technical Institute
2800 S. Western Ave.
Chicago, Ill.

If you need special accommodations in order to attend this meeting, please contact Joe Muñoz at least one week prior to the meeting at (312) 886-7935.

[1] *Section 300.415(n)(4)(ii) and (iii) of the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan requires EPA to provide a brief description of the report in the newspaper and provide the public an opportunity to comment on it.*

Considering risk to people

In 1998, the companies responsible for the pollution and upcoming cleanup did a study to find out the potential health risks PAH exposure presents to people living near the main site. The study, which was approved by EPA, estimated the number of cancer cases that could happen over and above the usual number of cases expected in this part of Illinois.

EPA determined the increased risk of getting cancer from exposure to PAHs. For a worker at the main site the risk was seven excess cancer cases for every 10,000 workers. However, because of the gravel cover, and as long as the gravel cover is maintained, the risk to workers is now zero for the 22 acres already covered. The risk to nearby residents to exposure to the PAHs on the residential soil is 1.8 excess cancer cases for every 10,000 people. This did not meet EPA's risk standard.

EPA considers these risks to the residents as unacceptable. For that reason, the Agency is requiring the company that has agreed to conduct the cleanup for the pollution to perform remedial work on the main site and nearby homes with contaminated yards.

Explaining EPA's evaluation criteria

EPA requires the final recommended cleanup option to meet the following three criteria:

1. **Effectiveness** – The length of time needed to implement a cleanup alternative is considered. EPA also assesses the risks that the selected cleanup action may pose to workers and nearby residents.

2. **Implementability** – A look at how technical or practical the cleanup choice will be to accomplish. Implementability takes into account the availability of goods and services.

3. **Cost** – A comparison of the costs of each option includes equipment and structures as well as long-term operation and maintenance costs expressed in present net worth. Present net worth is a finance term meaning an option's total cost over time expressed in today's dollars.

EPA's recommended cleanup plan for main site, residential areas

EPA evaluated eight cleanup choices against the three criteria described above. As a result of this evaluation, EPA proposes options M2 for the main site and option R3 for the residential area. The engineering evaluation and cost analysis report provides a detailed description of the selected choices as well as the other cleanup options. Four of the choices were for the main site and another four choices were for the residential area.

Main site

M2 – Installation of a permeable clay/gravel cover

This choice would place clay or gravel over the 2 acres, (also known as the Palumbo property) in the northwest portion of the site along South Albany Avenue that is currently not covered with gravel. Estimated cost: Gravel – $270,000, Clay – $328,000.

Residential area

R3 – Excavation of soil at approximately 32 residential properties

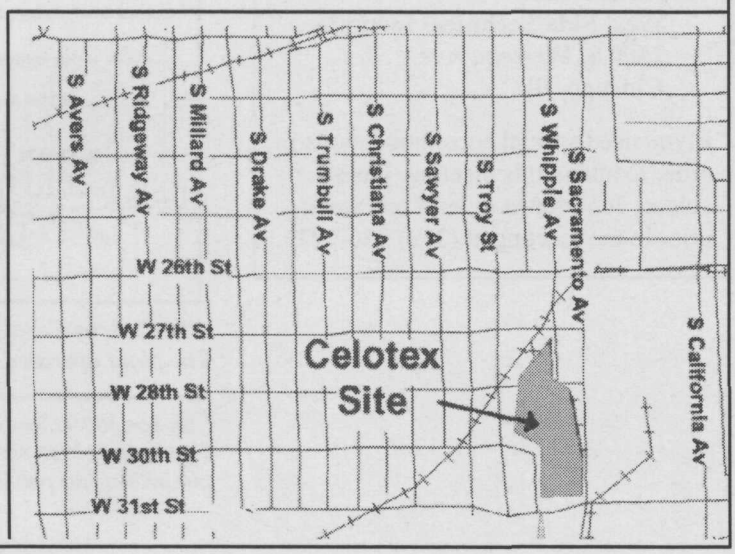
EPA will clean up yards to a standard that protects residents' health. Yards will be dug up to a depth of 1 foot and replaced with clean soil. Residents will be able to live in their homes during the cleanup. Concrete, asphalt, grass, trees, fences and other landscaping present at the homes will be replaced if damaged during the cleanup. Estimated cost: $880,000.

EPA will test yards in certain area residences to establish a link of contamination to the site. Yards that test at or over 10 parts PAHs per million parts soil will be cleaned up. "Part per million" is the measurement of the concentration of a pollutant in a substance such as soil, water and air. The 10 ppm cleanup action level meets EPA's risk standard of not one more additional cancer case per 10,000 people.

Both EPA and the company that is paying for the cleanup agree that contamination from the site has spread to some residences north and northeast from the main site, within a set area. Yards of homes within a set area will be sampled to determine which yards will require a cleanup. The area is within the boundary set by Whipple Avenue, Sacramento Avenue, 28th Street and 26th Street.

Additional sampling will be performed within an area set by 28th Street, Troy Street, 31st Street and the western site boundary. This sampling effort is to find out if there is any link to contamination from the site. Additional homes may require a cleanup if contamination is linked to the site.

Soil removed from homes during the cleanup activities will be transported to and disposed of in an EPA-approved landfill.



Evaluating cleanup choices

Eight cleanup options were selected for further evaluation and described in the technical report. The following is a brief summary of the choices EPA considered:

Main site

1. **No action**
   - No cleanup action taken. PAHs left as is on-site.
   - *No-action option required by law to provide a baseline* against which other cleanup choices can be evaluated.
   - Nothing done to prevent contact with polluted soil.
   - Estimated cost: $0.

2. **Installation of a permeable clay/gravel cover in the 2 acres not currently covered**
   (This is EPA's recommended option.) The following is for a clay cover. A gravel cover that is 1 foot thick or greater will also be acceptable for this cover option.
   - Place 6 inches of topsoil over 1.5-foot layer of clay.
   - Direct runoff from the site through a concrete ditch to the nearest storm sewer.
   - Restrict the main site to commercial or industrial uses.
   - Estimated cost: Gravel, $270,000 and Clay, $328,000.

3. **Installation of an impermeable asphalt cover**
   - Pave 6-inch asphalt cover over 6-inch base.
   - Border the main site with a 6-inch asphalt curb.
   - Direct runoff from the site through a concrete ditch to the nearest storm sewer.
   - Restrict the main site to commercial or industrial uses.
   - Estimated cost: $5.6 million.

4. **Installation of a permeable, 3-foot clay cover along with hot-spot excavation of impacted soil**
   - Dig up polluted soil and dispose of off-site.
   - Cover site with 3 feet of clean porous material.
   - Estimated cost: $48.6 million.

Residential area

This will be done for all of the residential options:
- Dispose of contaminated soil in an EPA-approved landfill.
- Replace the excavated soil with clean soil.
- Replace any concrete, asphalt, grass, trees, fences and other landscaping present on the properties, which are damaged during removal actions.

1. **Excavation of soil at approximately two residential properties**
   - Dig up polluted soil from the two homes identified with pollution over the cleanup action level of 30 ppm.
   - Estimated cost: $58,300.

2. **Excavation of soil at approximately 15 residential properties**
   - Dig up polluted soil from 15 homes identified with pollution over the cleanup action level of 20 ppm.
   - Estimated cost: $499,000.

3. **Excavation of soil at approximately 32 residential properties**
   (This is EPA's recommended option.)
   - Dig up polluted soil from 32 homes identified with pollution over the cleanup action level of 10 ppm.
   - Estimated cost: $880,000.

4. **Excavation of soil at approximately 48 residential properties**
   - Dig up polluted soil from 48 homes identified with pollution over the cleanup action level of 5 ppm.
   - Estimated cost: $1.3 million.

The next step

EPA will evaluate public comments before deciding on the final cleanup plan. Based on new information or public comments, EPA may change its proposed option or select another.

EPA will respond to comments in a document called a responsiveness summary. This summary will be part of the document called an action memorandum, which describes the final cleanup plan.

EPA will place the final plan in the information repository. (See the back page for location of the repository.) After a final plan is chosen, it will be designed and then the actual cleanup will begin.

About the Celotex site

The Celotex site was used for making, storing and selling asphalt roofing products. In 1989, Illinois EPA received citizen complaints about coal tar present on their property due to Celotex. Illinois EPA found pollution at the site.

EPA inspected the site in 1993 and informed the public of the potential health hazards. By late 1993, Celotex had removed all the buildings and visible polluted soils and material. Celotex covered the west side of the property with 2 feet of soil to even out the grade. A concrete trench had been sent off-site for grinding and then returned to the property for fill. EPA did not approve this work done by the Celotex Corp.

In mid-1994, EPA determined that no top soil had been placed over the site and there were no plants to hold the top soil layer together. EPA documented the flooding of residences on Troy Street due to heavy rains in 1995 and later met with the responsible companies to agree on a remedy that would ensure that future flooding would be prevented. EPA held several public meetings in 1995 and 1996. In August 1997, EPA informed residents that the site was regraded and flooding would be resolved by a new sewage drainage system.

In June 1999, AlliedSignal Inc., one of the companies EPA identified as a potentially responsible party, submitted a draft engineering evaluation and cost analysis report to EPA. The draft report was revised per EPA comments. Honeywell International Inc. now owns AlliedSignal and has agreed to perform the cleanup.

In 2002, Sacramento Corp. bought the Celotex property and placed at least 2 feet of gravel on about 22 acres of the main site for company use. The layer of gravel will be incorporated into the cleanup of that portion of the site.

United States
Environmental Protection Agency
Agency

Region 5
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77 W Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

CELOTEX CORP. SITE: EPA Proposes Cleanup Plan

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For more information

For more information about the public comment period, public meeting, proposed cleanup plan or any other aspect of the Celotex Corp. site, please contact:

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EPA Web site

This fact sheet and other site information can be found on this EPA Web site:

www.epa.gov/region5/sites

Click on Illinois and scroll through the list to find Celotex Corp.

Information library

An official government information repository is a file for public review containing documents about the Celotex Corp. site and the Superfund program. The Celotex Corp. information repository is located in the reference section of the:

Chicago Public Library
Marshall Square Branch
2724 W. Cermak Road

An administrative record, which contains all of the information upon which the selection of a cleanup plan is based, is available to the public at the EPA Region 5 records center located on the 7th floor of 77 W. Jackson Blvd. in Chicago. The records center is open Monday -- Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The center's phone number is (312) 886-0900.