Notable Site Facts/Background:

EPA listed VB/I-70 on the NPL in 1999 due to lead and arsenic contamination in some residential yards due to historic smelter activity in the area.

The site was divided into three operable units: OU1 (residential properties), OU2 (the former Omaha & Grant Smelter site -roughly where the current Denver Coliseum is today), and OU3 (the former ARGO smelter at the northwest corner of I-70 and I-25).

OU1 is 4.5 square miles, and included more than 4,500 residential properties within all of four northeast Denver neighborhoods: Cole, Clayton, Swansea and Elyria, as well as southwest Globeville and the northernmost corner of Curtis Park. The boundaries were mainly selected based on neighborhood boundaries. The OU is 80 percent residential, the rest industrial/commercial which are not included in the OU scope.

Prior to the ROD, EPA conducted approximately 20 emergency removal actions where sampling showed emergency removal levels of lead and/or arsenic. EPA signed the Record of Decision in 2003, which directed soil sampling, 2 inches in depth, in a 30 point grid across each property. Results of lead above 400 ppm and arsenic above 70 ppm required a removal of soil to 12 inches and replacement with new soil. Large trees and vegetation were hand dug around and spared. Most vegetable and perennial gardens were separately tested and spared if levels were below the cleanup standards. Properties were revegetated, including xeric options, and residents were given garden center vouchers for plants that had to be removed. EPA worked with local garden club volunteers to help elderly purchase at garden centers and replant.

The cleanup was completed in 2006. Crews went out again in 2008 to address additional properties. In a 2010 Five-Year Review, EPA identified about 150 properties that never gave EPA access to sample (a subset of those gave EPA access to sample, but did not provide access to clean up). From 2012-2015, EPA embarked on a new effort to gain access to those remaining properties, succeeding at about 100 of those properties). For the remaining ~~47~~45? p~~P~~roperties that still refused access for sampling and ~~<~~10? properties that still refused access for cleanup, EPA place a Notice of Environmental Conditions in their property files to alert future prospective buyers. Further, EPA (now the state in O & M) sends an annual mailing to those property owners, and directly to the residences in order to alert any renters, to inform them of potential or known contamination and how to avoid exposure. Ultimately EPA sampled 99 percent of the residential properties in OU1. In totally, EPA sampled nearly 4,500 properties and replaced soil at more than 800 properties.

Unique/additional aspects to the soils investigation and cleanup at OU1 included:

Community Health Program: EPA provided a grant to the city and county of Denver to train ~~Promatoras~~ Promotoras from the community to go door-to-door throughout the cleanup during 2003-2006 to inform residents about potential health risks of lead and arsenic in soil and from other sources.

Health Clinics: The Community Health Program provided for free clinics to be held on various dates in various locations in the community. Advertised largely by word of mouth by the Promotoras, residents were encouraged to bring their children in for lead and arsenic testing. The state of Colorado conducted the sampling.

Lead Paint Assessment and Abatement Program: Homes that received a soil replacement due to elevated lead levels were eligible for an assessment of the condition of exterior paint. Where conditions showed peeling paint was present to possibly recontaminate the new soil, areas of exterior paint were abated and repainted.

Community Working Group (would be called Community Advisory Group today): EPA worked with this community group and regularly met with them for ten years. EPA provided the group with a Technical Assistance Grant.

Community Outreach: This was a major effort including meeting with neighborhood groups, church groups, flyering efforts by agency staff, city and state staff, and community members, three different proposed plan meetings, each in a different neighborhood, all materials translated into English and Spanish, and much, much more.