Vasquez Boulevard & Interstate 70 (VB-I70) Superfund Site

Quarterly Update July 2020

EPA listed VB/I-70 on the National Priorities List of Superfund Sites in 1999 because of the potential for heavy metals in some residential soils. Smelters that operated in the area a century ago left a legacy of heavy metals contamination in some area soils and groundwater. EPA divided the site into three distinct parts, called Operable Units (OUs): the residential soils, the Omaha & Grant former smelter location, and the ARGO former smelter location. A description and update on each OU is presented below.

OU1 Site Update: OU1 included the yards with unacceptable levels of lead and/or arsenic among the more than 4,500 residential yards surrounding the former smelter locations. The affected neighborhoods included all or part of six northeast Denver neighborhoods, including Cole, Clayton, Swansea/Elyria, southwest Globeville, and a small section of Curtis Park/Five Points. OU1 was the priority concern at VB/I-70 because of the potential health risk to people living at properties with contaminated yard soils. Some of the yards (about 1 in 5, or 20 percent of the total) contained soils contaminated by lead and/or arsenic at levels that posed an unacceptable risk. EPA lead a yard by yard investigation and soil removal and replacement effort. The good news is that today all yard soil investigation and cleanup is complete. EPA was able to minimize risk and even "delist" OU1 from the National Priorities List of Superfund Sites in 2019.

At the 50 or so properties (less than one percent of the total) where EPA was not able to gain access from the property owner to either sample or cleanup, measures are in place to assure residents and future buyers of these properties are fully informed of the known or potential risk. These measures are called Institutional Controls and they include the state of Colorado mailing an annual notice to the owners and residents at those properties as well as an EPA Notice of Environmental Conditions placed on those property files at the city and county of Denver assessor's office.

2019 Five Year Review Report: Despite being completed and delisted, EPA continues to do a review of the OU1 remedy every five years to ensure that the Institutional Controls (described above) remain effective. The 2019 Five Year Review Report of the completed remedy for OU1 (2019 VB/I-70 Five Year Review) noted that the remedy for OU1 is protective of human health and the environment. However, the

review recommended that EPA evaluate ways to ensure that the notices are discoverable in the Denver property database and that the annual letters be sent out in Spanish and English. Going forward, the Five Year Review Reports will also include a review of the protectiveness of OUs 2 and 3 as soon as the remedies for those operable units are finalized.

Update to the Community Involvement Plan: EPA conducted interviews with a variety of site stakeholders to inform our update to the site Community Involvement Plan. The plan is intended to describe community concerns and communication preferences with regard to the site. The final plan has been delayed due to many factors including contractor delays and COVID – 19 disruption. We apologize for the delay and expect to finalize and distribute to you the updated plan very soon.

Operable Unit 2 Site Update: Operable Unit 2 is the location of the former Omaha & Grant smelter. OU2 encompasses roughly where the Denver Coliseum is located as well as some surrounding businesses. EPA has conducted numerous environmental investigations of soils and groundwater at the site due to heavy metals contamination from the former smelter operations. We are still in the remedial investigation phase of the Superfund process at OU2, determining the nature and extent of contamination. In 2009 and 2010, EPA finalized two risk assessments for OU2 - Human Health and Ecological risk – as well as a remedial investigation report and a feasibility study report. These are milestones in the Superfund process toward a Record of Decision outlining a final cleanup plan. However, EPA determined that further environmental investigations were necessary. Recently the city and county of Denver (who are landowners and potentially responsible parties at OU2) submitted a draft scope of work to EPA and the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment for additional remedial investigation at OU2. EPA is reviewing the document. The final scope of work will be made available to the public.

Operable Unit 3 Site Update: OU3 is the location of the former ARGO smelter and comprises a non residential, commercial, and industrial area at the northwest corner of where I-70 and I-25 intersect. EPA conducted a remedial investigation, developed a feasibility study of cleanup alternatives, and presented a proposed plan with our preferred cleanup alternative to the public for review in 2007. However, similar to OU2, groundwater data proved to be insufficient, which required EPA to conduct additional groundwater sampling before issuing a final cleanup decision. Currently, EPA is preparing a contract necessary to direct crews to conduct additional environmental sampling.

Community Involvement and Contacts: EPA will continue to issue these quarterly written updates to our stakeholder list. They will also be available to the public on our website at: [HYPERLINK "http://www.epa.gov/superfund/vbi70"]. All new, final documents and site information will also be shared with these updates, put up on our website, and placed in the Valdez Perry Library. EPA will continue to provide updates to neighborhood groups upon request or when site activity warrants. If you hav questions re informatManager, 303-312- , aviles.jesse @epa.gov.

VB/I-70 Site Timeline and Upcoming Public Involvement

OU1

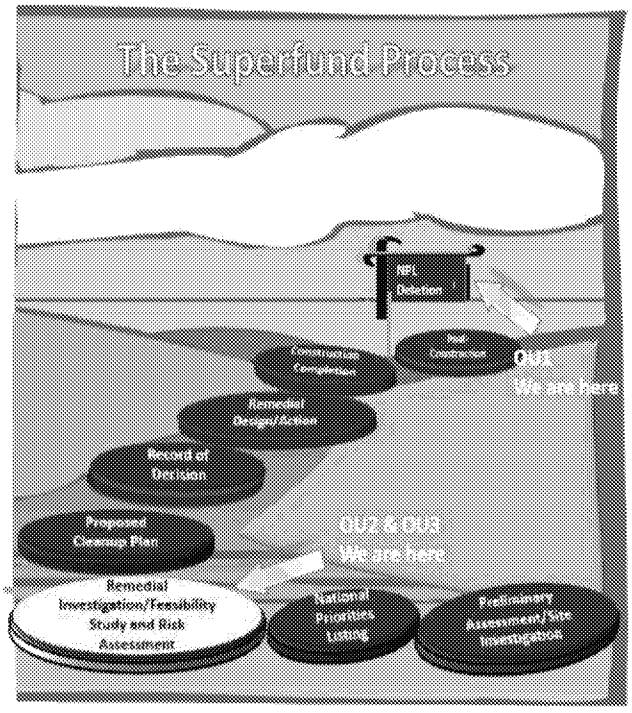
- **Status:** Completed. Delisted from the National Priority List of Superfund Sites in 2019.
- **Next Steps:** Institutional Controls to be reviewed every five years. Next five year review will be in 2024.
- **Upcoming Public Participation Opportunities:** None.

OU2

- **Status:** Remedial Investigation Phase
- **Next Steps:** Finalize Scope of Work for new round of environmental sampling to inform the final remedial investigation report.
- **Upcoming Public Participation Opportunities:** The final scope of work will be released to the public by fall 2020. There is no formal public comment on this document, but any member of the public will welcome to provide input on it to EPA.

OU3

- **Status:** Remedial Investigation Phase
- **Next Steps:** Secure contract for crew to conduct additional groundwater sampling to inform the final remedial investigation report.
- **Upcoming Public Participation Opportunities:** The final scope of work for additional sampling will be released to the public in ? There is not formal public comment on this document, but any member of the public will be welcome to provide input on it to EPA.



OU2 and OU3 are in the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) phase of the Superfund Process. During this phase, EPA evaluates of the nature and extent of contamination at a site and assessing potential threats to human health and the environment. This stage of the process also includes evaluation of the potential performance and cost of the treatment options identified for a site. Once the RI/FS is final for OUs 2 and 3, EPA will develop a Proposed Plan which will describe cleanup alternatives for each OU, and offer our preferred alternative for public formal public comment.