
Cleanup Update: Buildings Removed; Field Tests Run

Buick City

Flint, Michigan

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For more information

- The Buick City website:
<http://www.epa.gov/reg5rcra/wptdiv/sites/buickcity/index.html>

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Contact:

- Rafael P. Gonzalez, EPA Public Affairs Specialist at gonzalez.rafaelp@epa.gov or call Rafael at 312-886-0269, or 800-621-8431, Ext. 60269, 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., weekdays.
- Jill Groboski, EPA Project Manager, groboski.jill@epa.gov, 312-886-3890.
- Read official government documents such as the *statement of basis* containing details about the Southend cleanup plans at the Flint Public Library, Main Branch, 1026 E. Kearsley St.

Although major work waits for spring, cleanup tasks and laboratory tests are under way this winter at the former General Motors manufacturing complex known as Buick City in Flint, Mich. Workers are demolishing buildings on a portion of the site, and scientists and technicians are experimenting with ways to eliminate a stubborn pollutant found floating on top of and dissolved within the underground water supply.

The 452-acre facility at 902 Leith St. is divided into parcels called the Northend and Southend. Motors Liquidation Co. or MLC, the successor company to the bankrupt General Motors Corp., owns the site. The Buick City complex played a major role in American automotive history with vehicles and parts manufactured there from the 1890s to 1999.

Buick City contains soil and ground water (underground water supplies) contaminated with various petroleum products, chemicals and metals. Some of the ground water under Buick City contains free-floating petroleum product called “light non-aqueous phase liquid” or LNAPL, a very persistent and difficult-to-remove contaminant.

Parts of Buick City display elevated contamination levels that fail to meet EPA’s cancer and noncancerous health standards. The goal of the cleanup projects on the property will be to reduce pollution or the exposure to pollution so people’s health will not be harmed and to enhance redevelopment.

Southend update

Local interest in redevelopment of the Southend prompted officials to focus cleanup efforts there first before the more heavily polluted Northend. In 2010, EPA selected an official cleanup plan for the Southend calling for maintaining parking lots and building slabs as an exposure shield to contaminated on-site soil.

In addition, deed restrictions will be placed on the property to warn future construction workers where contamination may be located and to restrict the area to industrial uses. In one part of the Southend, contaminated soil was found off-site on the adjacent CSX Railroad property, and that area of contamination will be excavated. This winter MLC is negotiating with CSX to gain access to railroad property to begin soil excavation.

The LNAPL pollution remains a challenge. EPA originally believed steam injection would be the best technology to use but has tabled that plan. Instead, the Agency is requiring the responsible party, MLC, to test different innovative technologies to see what works best for each different LNAPL plume. Preliminary activities on these LNAPL recovery and treatment studies began in late 2010 and early 2011 with the collection of soil borings for laboratory tests. Also, in one area where the LNAPL is

gasoline, a field test using a technology called multi-phase extraction was performed. At the present time, EPA is evaluating results of that test to see if a full-scale system makes sense.

Northend update

EPA is currently reviewing a corrective measures proposal for the Northend submitted by MLC. A proposed plan containing EPA's recommended cleanup steps will be released for public comment and a public hearing in late spring/early summer 2011. Meanwhile, decommissioning and demolition of the Northend

buildings has started.

Site-wide update

Ground water monitoring continues over the entire property. At two storm sewer outlets called Outfalls 3 & 4, a new oil/water separator system has been installed and is operating as an interim measure in order to lessen oil sheens.

Ineffective, temporary pollution recovery systems located at Buick City have also been shut down pending construction of long-term cleanup steps.