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# EXPLANATION OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE

## FORMER PFIZER SITE A

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Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

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New York City / Kings County / Site No. C224284 / April 2021  
Prepared by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
Division of Environmental Remediation

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this notice is to describe the progress of the cleanup at the Former Pfizer Site A Brownfield Cleanup Program Site C224284 and to inform you about a change in the site remedy. The site is located at 243-271 Wallabout Street, Brooklyn, NY. On January 13, 2020, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (the Department) issued a Decision Document which selected a remedy to clean up the site. The Decision Document stated that the selected remedy would be a Track 1: Unrestricted Use remedy. Under the Track 1 remedy described in the approved Remedial Action Work Plan (RAWP) and documented in the January 2020 Decision Document, the selected remedy included excavation and proper disposal of all on-site soil to depths of 5 to 8 feet below grade with deeper excavation for lead hot spots. However, Harrison Realty LLC (the Participant), recently informed the Department that a Track 1 remedy could not be achieved for the southern portion of the site, namely Lots 23 and 122. This determination was based on an engineering analysis of the installation of shoring along Union Avenue necessary to excavate sufficiently to meet Track 1 Unrestricted Use soil cleanup objectives (SCOs) for those areas. This communication provided details on proposed changes to the selected remedy and demonstrated that the amended remedy would achieve a Track 4 Restricted Residential Use remedy.

This Explanation of Significant Difference (ESD), when final, will become part of the Administrative Record for this Site. The information here is a summary of what can be found in greater detail in documents that have been placed in the following repositories:

**Brooklyn Public Library - Leonard Branch**

81 Devoe Street at Leonard St.  
Brooklyn, NY 11211  
+ (718) 486-6006

**Brooklyn Public Library – Bushwick Branch**

340 Bushwick Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11206  
(718) 602-1348

**Brooklyn Community Board 1**

435 Graham Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11211  
(718) 389-0009

**DECinfo Locator**

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/C224284/>

Interested persons are invited to contact the Department's Project Manager for this site to obtain more information or have questions answered:

**NYSDEC Region 2 Office**  
Mandy Yau, Project Manager  
47-40 21st Street  
Long Island City, NY 11101  
(718)-482-4897  
[mandy.yau@dec.ny.gov](mailto:mandy.yau@dec.ny.gov)

## **2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND ORIGINAL REMEDY**

### **2.1 Site History, Contamination, and Selected Remedy**

#### **Site Description:**

The Former Pfizer Site A site is located in the Broadway Triangle section of Brooklyn and is comprised of four tax parcels totaling 71,305 square feet (1.63 acres). The irregular shaped site occupies a full block bounded by Wallabout Street, Harrison Avenue, Union Avenue and Walton Street. The site is identified as Block 2249, Lots 23, 37, 41, and 122 on the Brooklyn Borough Tax Map.

From 1887 through 1918, the site was comprised of mixed commercial and residential properties, including a synagogue, a church, a mission, laundry, tailor shops and bakeries. A portion of the storage yard of an iron works factory that was replaced by a bottling facility by 1904 was also present at the southwestern-most corner of the site. By 1947, an adhesive manufacturing facility operated in the south-central region of the site at 255/257 Wallabout Street (later Pfizer Building 47), and a lumber yard was present at the west end of the site. A taxi garage located at 249 through 253 Wallabout Street (later Pfizer Building 52) maintained two gasoline underground storage tanks (USTs), and a five-story residential building serviced by a 2,000-gallon fuel oil UST.

Pfizer started using the western portion of the site circa 1954 for employee parking and warehousing purposes. The residential buildings along Harrison Avenue were demolished between 1959 and 1961 and replaced by more parking spaces for Pfizer employees. A small sheet metal workshop was also present at 262 Wallabout Street, close to the southeast corner of the site. By 1977, the majority of the eastern part of the site had been redeveloped into a parking lot, and Pfizer used most of the site for parking and warehousing purposes. The small sheet metal workshop was demolished by 1986 and, between 1991 and 1992, the entire block had been razed and has remained vacant to date.

#### **Summary of the Investigation:**

Sampling has identified elevated concentrations of semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) in soil and metals in soil and groundwater. The primary contaminants of concern identified at this site are SVOCs and metals which were associated with fill placed at the site and include: benzo(a)anthracene, benzo(a)pyrene, benzo(b)fluoranthene, chrysene, indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene, and lead. These contaminants are consistent with the previous use of the site.

#### **Elements of the Original Selected Remedy:**

The elements of the site remedy are as follows:

### **1. Remedial Design**

A remedial design program will be implemented to provide the details necessary for the construction, operation, optimization, maintenance, and monitoring of the remedial program. Green remediation principles and techniques will be implemented to the extent feasible in the design, implementation, and site management of the remedy as per DER-31. The major green remediation components are as follows:

- Considering the environmental impacts of treatment technologies and remedy stewardship over the long term;
- Reducing direct and indirect greenhouse gases and other emissions;
- Increasing energy efficiency and minimizing use of non-renewable energy;
- Conserving and efficiently managing resources and materials;
- Reducing waste, increasing recycling and increasing reuse of materials which would otherwise be considered a waste;
- Maximizing habitat value and creating habitat when possible;
- Fostering green and healthy communities and working landscapes which balance ecological, economic and social goals;
- Integrating the remedy with the end use where possible and encouraging green and sustainable re-development; and
- Additionally, to incorporate green remediation principles and techniques to the extent feasible in the future development at this site, any future on-site buildings will include, at a minimum, a 20-mil vapor barrier/waterproofing membrane on the foundation to improve energy efficiency as an element of construction.

## **2. Excavation**

Excavation and off-site disposal of contaminant source areas, including soil exceeding the 6 NYCRR Part 371 hazardous criteria for lead.

Excavation and off-site disposal of all on-site soils which exceed unrestricted SCOs, as defined by 6 NYCRR Part 375-6.8. Approximately 26,500 cubic yards of contaminated soil will be removed from the site.

## **3. Backfill**

On-site soil which does not exceed the above excavation criteria or the protection of groundwater SCOs for any constituent may be used to backfill the excavation or re-grade the site.

Clean fill meeting the requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 375-6.7(d) will be brought in to complete the backfilling of the excavation and establish the designed grades at the site.

## **4. Groundwater Extraction & Treatment**

Dewatering at the site will be required to enable the excavation and subgrade work. Contaminated groundwater from dewatering operations will be treated as necessary prior to discharge to the municipal sewer system.

## **5. Vapor Intrusion Evaluation**

As part of the Track 1 remedy, a soil vapor intrusion evaluation will be completed. The evaluation will include a provision for implementing actions recommended to address exposures related to soil vapor intrusion.

## **6. Local Institutional Controls**

If no EE or SMP is needed to achieve soil, groundwater, or soil vapor remedial action objectives, then the

following local use restriction will be relied upon to prevent ingestion of groundwater: Article 141 of the NYCDOH code, which prohibits potable use of groundwater without prior approval.

### ***Conditional Track 1***

The intent of the remedy is to achieve a Track 1 unrestricted use; therefore, no environmental easement or site management plan is anticipated. If the soil vapor intrusion (SVI) evaluation is not completed prior to completion of the Final Engineering Report, then a Site Management Plan (SMP) and Environmental Easement (EE) will be required to address the SVI evaluation and implement actions as needed; if a mitigation or monitoring action is needed, a Track 1 cleanup can only be achieved if the mitigation system or other required action is no longer needed within 5 years of the date of the Certificate of Completion.

### **Contingent Remedial Elements:**

In the event that Track 1 unrestricted use is not achieved, including achievement of groundwater and soil vapor remedial objectives, the following contingent remedial elements will be required, and the remedy will achieve a Track 2 restricted residential cleanup.

## **7. Institutional Control**

Imposition of an institutional control in the form of an environmental easement for the controlled property which will:

- require the remedial party or site owner to complete and submit to the Department a periodic certification of institutional and engineering controls in accordance with Part 375-1.8 (h)(3);
- allow the use and development of the controlled property for residential use OR restricted residential use as defined by Part 375-1.8(g), although land use is subject to local zoning laws;
- restrict the use of groundwater as a source of potable or process water, without necessary water quality treatment as determined by the NYSDOH or NYCDOH; and
- require compliance with the Department approved Site Management Plan.

## **8. Site Management Plan**

A Site Management Plan is required, which includes the following:

- a. an Institutional and Engineering Control Plan that identifies all use restrictions and engineering controls for the site and details the steps and media-specific requirements necessary to ensure the following institutional and/or engineering controls remain in place and effective:
  - Institutional Controls: The Environmental Easement discussed above.

This plan includes, but may not be limited to:

- an Excavation Plan which details the provisions for management of future excavations in areas of remaining contamination;
- a provision for evaluation of the potential for soil vapor intrusion for any occupied buildings on the site, including provision for implementing actions recommended to address exposures related to soil vapor intrusion;
- descriptions of the provisions of the environmental easement including any land use and groundwater use restrictions;
- maintaining site access controls and Department notification; and
- the steps necessary for the periodic reviews and certification of the institutional and/or engineering controls.

- b. a Monitoring Plan to assess the performance and effectiveness of the remedy. The plan includes,

but may not be limited to:

- monitoring for vapor intrusion for any buildings on the site, as may be required by the Institutional and Engineering Control Plan discussed above.

### **3.0 CURRENT STATUS**

The following components of the site remedy have been completed:

- Excavation and off-site disposal of hazardous lead contaminated materials in Hot Spot “D” (HSD) to a depth of 6 feet below grade and in HSE to a depth of 5 feet below grade in the Lots 37 and 41;
- Excavation and off-site disposal of contaminated soil and fill material exceeding unrestricted use SCOs to a depth of approximately 5 to 8 feet below grade in Lots 37 and 41;

Based on the engineering analysis for the installation of shoring along Union Avenue, it is unlikely that excavation without support would be sufficient to achieve Track 1 Unrestricted Use SCOs at the bottom of the excavation on Lots 23 and 122. However, the removal of lead hot spots (specifically HSA, HSB, and HSC), excavation up to depths of 4 to 5 feet below grade, and the installation of a cover system will be effective for remediating the site and preventing exposure to remaining contamination on-site. Therefore, the Participant proposes to achieve a Track 4 remedy for Lots 23 and 122, in lieu of the Track 1 or contingent Track 2 remedy established in the January 2020 Decision Document. The remedy for Lots 37 and 41 remains unchanged.

### **4.0 DESCRIPTION OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE**

#### **4.1 New Information**

The engineering analysis demonstrated that the installation of shoring along Union Avenue to excavate to a sufficient depth to meet Track 1 Unrestricted Use SCOs on Lots 23 and 122 is not feasible due to complexities associated with the adjacent MTA subway tunnel. The change from Track 1 to Track 4 cleanup for this area of the site will have minimal impact on the scope of the selected remedy. The Track 4 cleanup will reduce the depth to which contaminated soil will be excavated from below the static groundwater table elevation, estimated to be approximately 7 to 9 feet below grade throughout the site. The excavation will be advanced to greater depths in hot spot areas to remove lead-contaminated soil that exceeds the hazardous waste threshold; however, some soil exceeding the Restricted Residential SCOs will be left in-place. This remaining contaminated material will be addressed by a cover system and will be managed under a Site Management Plan and Environmental Easement.

#### **4.2 Comparison of Changes with Original Remedy**

Under the Track 1 remedy described in the January 2020 Decision Document, the proposed excavation would have removed all soil exceeding the Unrestricted Use SCOs. The excavation depth was in part driven by the desire to remove all the contaminated soil from beneath the site, allowing for no property use restrictions. The Track 1 Unrestricted Use SCOs will still be achieved on Lots 37 and 41 (approximately 70% of the overall site area). The remedy modification will achieve the applicable Track 4 Restricted Residential SCOs for Lots 23 and 122.

The following amended remedy for a Track 4 cleanup for a portion of the site includes the following changes to the Track 1 remedy:

- The site-wide excavation will include shallower excavation in the proposed Track 4 cleanup area

(Lots 23 and 122), to depths of 4 to 5 feet below grade;

- A cover system will be installed over the proposed Track 4 cleanup area (Lots 23 and 122); and
- Because of remaining contamination that will be left in-place in the proposed Track 4 area (Lots 23 and 122), an Environmental Easement and Site Management Plan will be required for those areas of the site.

## **5.0 SCHEDULE AND MORE INFORMATION**

This Explanation of Significant Difference is subject to a thirty (30) day comment period to the public, from **April 8 through May 8, 2021**. If you have questions or need additional information you may contact any of the following:

### **Project-Related Questions:**

Mandy Yau  
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
Division of Environmental Remediation  
47-40 21<sup>st</sup> Street  
Long Island City, NY 11101  
(718) 482-4897  
[mandy.yau@dec.ny.gov](mailto:mandy.yau@dec.ny.gov)

### **Project-Related Health Questions**

Stephanie Selmer  
NYS Department of Health  
Bureau of Environmental Exposure Investigation  
Corning Tower, Room 1787  
Albany, NY 12237  
(518) 402-7864  
[bee@health.ny.gov](mailto:bee@health.ny.gov)

# Site Location Map

