

SITE No. C915353

Summer 2020

NYSDEC REGION 9

# RIVERVIEW INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS

## Proposed Remedial Investigation Available for Public Comment

Brownfield Cleanup Program

3875 River Road, Town of Tonawanda, Erie County

### WHO TO CONTACT



Comments and questions are always welcome and should be directed as follows:

#### PROJECT-RELATED QUESTIONS:

Benjamin McPherson, Project Manager NYSDEC  
 270 Michigan Avenue  
 Buffalo, NY 14203  
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#### HEALTH-RELATED QUESTIONS:

Angela Martin NYSDOH  
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 Corning Tower, Room 1787  
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NEW YORK'S BROWNFIELD  
 CLEANUP PROGRAM, SITE  
 NO. C915353:

Visit [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/37554.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/37554.html)

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is strictly overseeing the investigation and cleanup of the Riverview Innovation & Technology Campus Brownfield Cleanup Site. DEC's top priority is ensuring a thorough and careful cleanup that is fully protective of human health and the environment while continuing to keep the Tonawanda community informed of our progress and actions. Public involvement will be a critical part of the development and implementation of the former Tonawanda Coke's site cleanup. DEC will continue to work closely and transparently with the Tonawanda community throughout the cleanup process.

This update announces the public comment period on the site investigation that will be completed this summer. The results of the investigation will help DEC evaluate cleanup alternatives to address contamination.

A Remedial Investigation Work Plan (RIWP) to define the nature and extent of contamination in soil, surface water, groundwater, and any other parts of the environment that maybe affected was recently submitted to DEC. The investigation will be performed by Riverview Innovation & Technology Campus, Inc. (RITC) with oversight by DEC and the New York State Department of Health (DOH).

DEC will accept written comments on the Draft RIWP from **July 1, 2020 through July 31, 2020**.



# Highlights of the Proposed Remedial Investigation

The key components of the investigation work plan include:

- Collecting surface soil samples;
- Digging and sampling test pits to identify possible on-site sources of contamination;
- Installing and sampling groundwater wells across the site;
- Sampling of surface materials left on-site from former coking operations;
- Sampling of water in former process sumps and secondary containment areas;
- Sampling on-site sediment; and
- Implementing a Community Air Monitoring Program to ensure protection of air quality while work takes place.

In addition to the Remedial Investigation Work Plan, the applicant submitted the following focused reports, which are available for review in the project repositories: Interim Site Management Plan, Light Oil Area Secondary Containment Testing, Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, Stormwater Sewer Interim Remedial Measure Work Plan, Mixing Pad Interim Remedial Measure, Powers Coke and Coal Excavation Work Plan.

Access the RIWP and other project documents online through DECinfo Locator:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/C915353>

Comments may be submitted in writing by July 31, 2020, to DEC Project Manager Benjamin McPherson, 270 Michigan Ave., Buffalo, NY14203 or email to [benjamin.mcpherson@dec.ny.gov](mailto:benjamin.mcpherson@dec.ny.gov).

## Next Steps: Work Plan

DEC will review public comments and DOH input and revise the RIWP as necessary before approving the work plan. After the RIWP is approved, activities detailed in the work plan will be implemented.

[www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)

When the investigation is completed, a report will be prepared and submitted to DEC that summarizes the results. DEC will review the report and make necessary revisions prior to approval.

The proposed cleanup plan, called a “Draft Remedial Work Plan,” will then be developed. This cleanup plan will include evaluating and selecting the best remedy for the site that is protective of public health and the environment. DEC will present this proposed cleanup plan to the public for review and comment during a 45-day comment period.

## Site Description & History

The Riverview Innovation & Technology Campus (RITC) site encompasses about 86 acres of the 102-acre former Tonawanda Coke Corporation (TCC) facility at 3875 River Road, Town of Tonawanda. The site was used for more than a century as a coke manufacturing and byproducts recovery facility – most recently by TCC between the late 1970s and 2018.



*Coke ovens, by-products, storage tanks, stacks and other above-grade infrastructure remain on site today, but will be demolished during the Brownfield Cleanup Program. (DEC photo)*

In 2018, environmental violations involving air and water pollution, as well as faulty equipment, resulted in swift enforcement actions against TCC by DEC and the U.S. Department of Justice. These actions directly contributed to TCC’s closure in October 2018. TCC declared bankruptcy a short time later. Its property and assets were sold at auction in 2019.

Riverview Innovation & Technology

Left behind at the former coke processing facility are numerous buildings, process equipment, piping and underground infrastructure. Most of these structures will be demolished as part of RITC's plans for redeveloping the site.

In February 2020, [DEC accepted RITC's application](#) to investigate and remediate a portion of the former facility under New York State's Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP). Under the BCP, RITC is required to fully investigate contamination, mitigate contamination in buildings, properly decommission process and storage tanks, and remediate the site to ensure human health and the environment are protected.

The remaining areas of the former TCC property will be investigated and remediated under the New York State Superfund Program (SSF) by Honeywell under DEC oversight. Honeywell is preparing remedial investigation workplans for three SSF operating units. These plans are expected to be submitted to DEC this summer.

The former TCC facility is bordered by the Huntley fly-ash landfill and vacant property to the north, railroad and utility property to the east, the Allied Chemical-Tonawanda remediation site (No. 915003) and utility property to the south, and Vancour Refractories and Swift River Associates to the west.

Additional site details, including environmental and health assessment summaries, are available on DEC's Environmental Site Remediation Database (by entering the site ID, C915353) at:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/cfm/external/index.cfm?pageid=3>

RITC maintains an independent website about the BCP cleanup with various public documents associated with the projects being undertaken.

## NYS Superfund Cleanup

Outside of the boundaries of the main facility comprising the BCP footprint are three operable units that will be fully remediated by Honeywell International. In February 2020, [DEC executed a consent order](#) with Honeywell International, the corporate successor to a prior facility owner, to investigate and remediate each operable unit in a manner that is fully protective of public health and the environment.



*OU3, also referred to as Site 108, (shown above) is an operable unit nearest the Niagara River where an abandoned tank farm was located. (DEC photo)*

These three operable units were in various stages of the remedial process when TCC declared bankruptcy.

Preliminary work at one of the areas, named OU3 (also known as site 108), was previously completed by Honeywell under U.S. Environmental Protection Agency oversight. Work included the demolition and removal of three above-ground tar storage tanks and piping along with asbestos abatement and excavation of impacted soil. All of the materials were disposed of at approved facilities off-site.

Further site investigations at the three operable units, including OU1 (also referred to as site 110), OU2 (site 109), and OU3 (site 108) are scheduled to begin in 2020. Refer to the diagram on Page 5 for OU locations.

## Citizen Participation Plans

Citizen Participation Plans have been completed for the BCP and SSF portions of the site. These plans are a roadmap to the remedial programs and designate the document repositories for the RITC property. For a copy of the Citizen Participation Plans, please visit each of the respective links.

Brownfield Cleanup Program:

[https://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/C915353/WorkPlan.BCP.C915353.2020-04-08.Citizen20ParticipationPlan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/C915353/WorkPlan.BCP.C915353.2020-04-08.Citizen20ParticipationPlan_FINAL.pdf)

State Superfund:

[https://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/915055/WorkPlan.HW.915055.2020-05-01.CitizenParticipation0Plan\\_Final.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/915055/WorkPlan.HW.915055.2020-05-01.CitizenParticipation0Plan_Final.pdf)

## Accomplishments

Immediately upon TCC's closure in 2018, DEC and federal partners secured the site and conducted emergency activities to stabilize the site and its contents. The site was turned over to RITC following the bankruptcy sale in 2019. RITC continued around-the-clock security of the site and remote site monitoring. On-site staff manage surface water, treat stormwater accumulating in process areas, and sample surface water and sewer discharges.

Additional work on the site includes:

- Coal and coke inventories left on-site from TCC's operations are being removed for reuse elsewhere; and
- Loose materials containing asbestos are being prioritized for abatement and safe removal for proper off-site disposal.



*Coal and coke inventories left on-site are being removed for reuse elsewhere. (DEC photo)*

[www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)

A licensed surveyor created a topographical map for the property to provide a baseline for site-monitoring activities. Baseline air quality and weather data are also being collected and will supplement RITC's Community Air Monitoring Plan.

## Brownfield Cleanup Program

The BCP has a proven track record of success in western New York and statewide ensuring sites are cleaned up expeditiously and comprehensively and returning them to productive use-and back on tax rolls to help strengthen local economies. The BCP encourages the voluntary cleanup of contaminated properties known as "brownfields" so that they can be reused and redeveloped. These uses may include recreation, housing, business or other uses. A brownfield site is any real property where a contaminant is present at levels exceeding the soil cleanup objectives or other health-based or environmental standards, criteria or guidance adopted by DEC that are applicable based on the reasonably anticipated use of the property, in accordance with applicable regulations. New York's brownfield cleanups must meet the same stringent standards as federal or state Superfund sites. For more information about the BCP, visit:

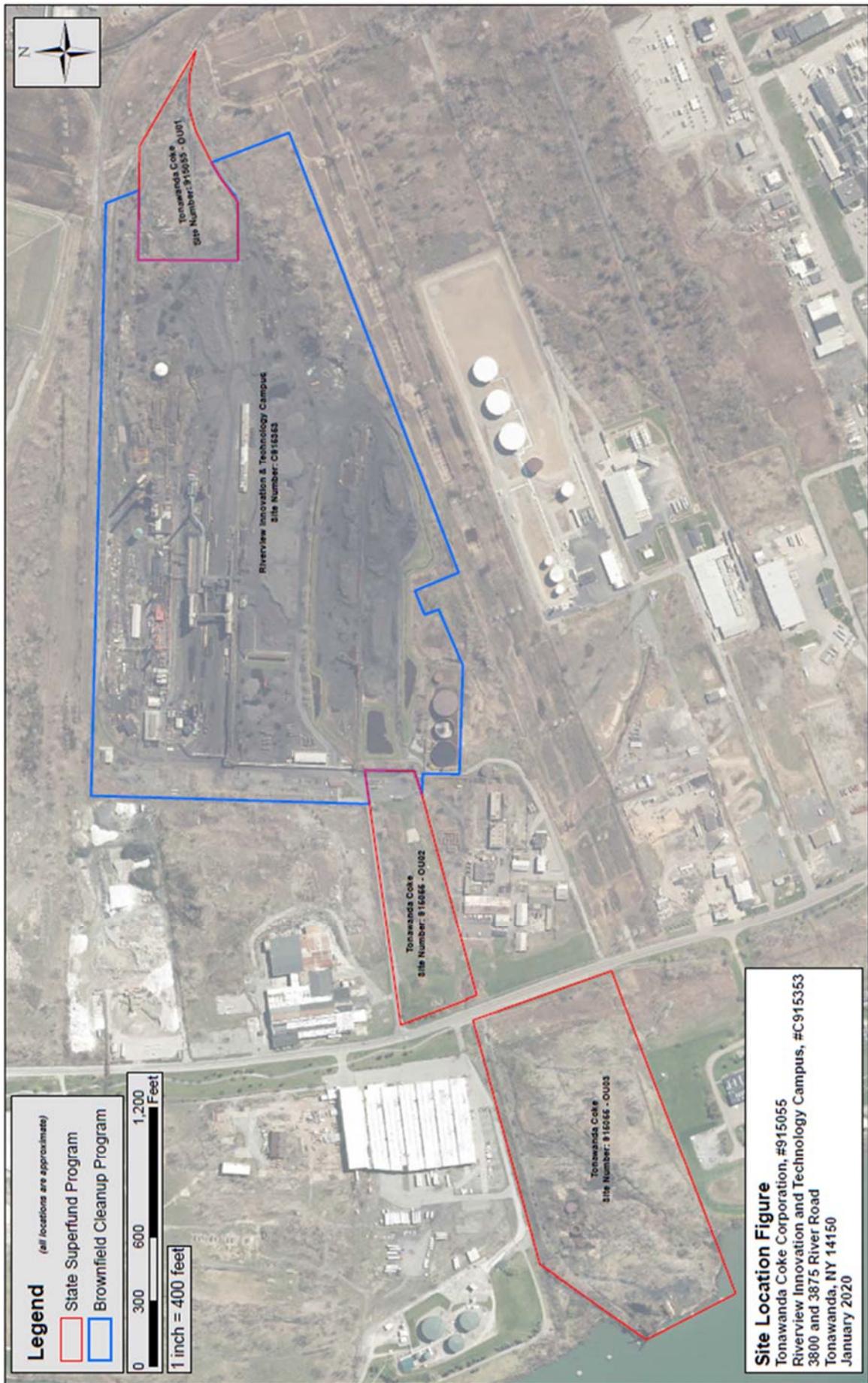
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8450.html>

## State Superfund Program

The SSF identifies and characterizes suspected inactive hazardous waste disposal sites. Sites that pose a significant threat to public health and/or the environment go through a process of investigation, evaluation, clean-up and monitoring.

For more information about the State Superfund Program, visit:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8439.html>



## WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION



Project documents are available at these locations to help the public stay informed.

Document Repositories:  
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library – Central Library  
One Lafayette Square  
Buffalo, NY 14203

Buffalo and Erie County Public Library – Kenmore Branch  
160 Delaware Road  
Kenmore, NY 14217

*\*\* Note: Repositories are temporarily unavailable due to COVID-19. If you cannot access the online repository, contact the DEC project manager listed for assistance.*

NYSDEC Region 9 Office  
270 Michigan Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14203  
(716) 851-7220  
Contact: Benjamin McPherson  
(Please call for an appointment)

Project documents also are available through DECinfo Locator at:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocsC915353>

Additional site details, including environmental and health assessment summaries, are available on DEC's Environmental Site Remediation Database at:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/cfmx/extapps/derexternal/haz/details.cfm?pageid=3&progno=C915353>

For more information about the State Superfund, visit:  
[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8439.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8439.html)

## SIGN UP TO STAY INFORMED



Have site information such as this fact sheet sent right to your email inbox. NYSDEC invites you to sign up for one or more email listservs at: [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html)

As a listserv member, you will periodically receive site-related information/ announcements for all contaminated sites in the counties you select. If you already have signed up for the listserv for the county in which the site is located, you need do nothing.

If the listserv is not an option, call or write to the DER project manager identified in this newsletter and indicate that you need to receive fact sheets through the U.S. Postal Service. Include the site name in your request. The option to receive paper is available to individuals only. Groups, organizations, businesses, and government entities are assumed to have email access.