

Downtown Camas Association – Public Participation in the Georgia-Pacific Mill Site Clean Up Project



Meeting minutes: Community Advisory Group Meeting #5

Thursday, November 10, 2022 | 4 – 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Attendees

Community Advisory Group (CAG) Members:

- Caroline Mercury, Chair
- Leslie Lewallen, City of Camas
- Marty Snell
- Randal Friedman
- David Ripp
- Commissioner Larry Keister, Port of Camas Washougal
- Steve Young
- Timothy Hein

Maul Foster & Alongi (MFA) Members:

- Emily Hess
- Will Henderson
- ZZ Lundburg
- Abbi Russell

Downtown Camas Association (DCA) Members:

- Carrie Schulstad, Executive Director

Meeting Purpose and Topics:

Meeting objectives included:

- Provide updates on the Washington State Department of Ecology process
- Discuss Winter/Spring 2022/2023 outreach activities
- Discuss next steps

Agenda

Opening

- Welcome and introductions
- Agenda review
- Approve minutes of the September 8, 2022, meeting

Washington State Department of Ecology process updates

- RI workplan comment update

Discuss Winter/Spring 2022/2023 outreach activities

- Engagement activity options
- Partner packet updates

Next steps and open discussion

[The full meeting agenda can be found online.](#)

Meeting Minutes:

Meeting began at 4:03 p.m.

Opening: Will Henderson, MFA, welcomed meeting attendees and walked through the proposed agenda for the meeting.

The CAG members reviewed the minutes of the September 08, 2022, meeting.

The CAG members approved the minutes of the September 08, 2022, meeting.

Washington State Department of Ecology process: Emily Hess, MFA and Caroline Mercury, CAG Chair

Emily Hess, MFA, updated the group on the process to date. This process began August 2021 when GP and Ecology finalized their agreed order. GP submitted a draft remedial investigation work plan to Ecology on January 3, 2022. The DCA reviewed the work plan and provided over 50 comments on it to Ecology on February 2, 2022. The Yakama Nation also contributed comments to Ecology on October 13, 2022, with seven overarching comment themes. On November 4, 2022, Ecology provided its comments on the work plan to GP. Of the 80 comments Ecology included, the majority of DCA's comments were incorporated. One item Ecology noted in their cover letter it that additional work is needed to adequately define the nature and extent of contamination at the site, and that they will have another review of the work plan once updated by GP. Ecology also requested a more in-depth look into the site history and history of contamination, sampling locations and associated constituents need to be expanded to include the full list of constituents of potential concern, and also that sediments need to be included in the work plan.

Timothy Hein, CAG member, asked who is receiving the draft comments at GP.

Caroline Mercury, CAG chair, explained that Ecology's comment letter is addressed to Shawn Thomas Wood, VP Operations Manager for GP in Camas.

Emily said that the next step is for GP to submit their second draft to Ecology for their review.

Carrie Schulstad, DCA, asked if the kind of response that Ecology gave to GP is normal or more than usual.

Emily explained that each process is different based on site, but Ecology clearly wants to ensure that this investigation and cleanup is comprehensive. Caroline asked if there is an opportunity for GP to decline suggestions from Ecology and Emily responded that while that could happen, because the site is in an Ecology formal cleanup program with an Agreed Order, there is more certainty that Ecology's directives will be followed as it has more implications than

a voluntary process. Randy Friedman, CAG Member, added that in the formal dispute process, Ecology has the final say under the Agreed Order.

Caroline explained that she has asked previously about what would prompt the Ecology to instruct the property owner to a higher level other than that which is currently zoned. Ideally, the CAG would like it to be cleaned up to a level that would allow for more options for future uses. The current zoning includes commercial establishments, but not residential. Caroline indicated that she would raise this question with Ecology to understand what would trigger that change in expectations. There is a long way to go and the DCA would like to hear what the community may want in the future use for the site.

David Ripp, CAG member, mentioned that his thought would be that it should be brought back to the level of cleanliness prior to any use by GP. Caroline replied that the clean-up currently needs to meet the industrial use requirement under Washington's Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), based on her understanding.

Leslie Lewallen, CAG member, mentioned capping the site as one way to clean up the property to the level needed. She continued that it would be helpful to know what would trigger the increased cleanup level, as the future potential could be considered in the city's downtown subarea plan zoning. Carrie asked what capping was and Dave explained the process, adding that the Port had done a cleanup with capping at the former Hambleton Lumber Mill property. Emily added that what the group is discussing are called environmental covenants, which are the restrictions recorded on the property deed due to contamination. These covenants add restrictions to the property that protect human health and the environment, despite the remaining contamination below the cap. A covenant is generally placed on the property following completion of a feasibility study and implementation of cleanup actions.

Timothy Hein, CAG member, noted that it would be important to understand where the financial burden for an elevated cleanup level would lie.

Steve Young, CAG member, pointed out that while capping is a common technique, it may not be possible to address the complications of the particular site as it does not prevent groundwater contamination. Due to the hydrogeology of the area around the mill and the slough, it is likely that there would be a groundwater issue.

Caroline said that she understands the zoning may not need to be changed to drive a higher level of requirement. However, the City may need to make clear their desires for the future, which could drive the cleanup level. David agreed.

Carrie asked if there was a difference in requirements for residential built on the ground level versus above commercial establishments. Emily responded that the cleanup levels for industrial versus unrestricted use apply specifically to the soil cleanup levels. There are specific requirements to be able to use industrial cleanup levels for a site, including how the site currently is zoned and that it cannot be open to public use.

Marty Snell, CAG member, said that as he was sifting through guidance under the Model Toxics Control Act (Reference: admin code, WAC 173 340, part 7), there is a list of administrative rules to guide some questions to GP and understand what rules apply in these standards. Leslie responded that these questions are valuable as the remediation laws are strict and there are liability questions for future owners.

Randy reminded the CAG that the site is not a Superfund site, and to avoid confusion, it should not be addressed as such.

Debrief Winter 2022 and Spring 2023 Outreach: Abbi Russell and Will Henderson, MFA

Abbi Russell, MFA, led a discussion with the CAG around the upcoming in-person outreach opportunities. Will Henderson, MFA, introduced the topic and noted that MFA staff has been working closely with Carrie and Caroline to determine the most appropriate mix of outreach tactics based on previous CAG input, investment, and feasibility. Staff also incorporated the successes and lessons from the past year of engagement into the tactics they chose.

Abbi walked the CAG through a tactic matrix that listed the engagement opportunities by priority, with the immediate focus being on the top 3.

1. Partnering with local schools: This tactic was discussed with the CAG previously. The hope would be to partner with STEM or green programs that would reach families and communities. Tactic uses minimal resources and would incorporate a large element of future possibilities.
2. Informational mailer: This tactic is beneficial as it ensures that it is in everyone's mailboxes, and we can set specific targets for the audience. As there are not a lot of action items right now, this is a good informational tactic.
3. Tabling at First Fridays: This tactic follows a similar set-up to our previous events, which have been successful. While the December event will be holiday focused and therefore not the best time, MFA staff suggests starting tabling in January with a booth staffed by CAG volunteers as the event is very popular and well attended.

Caroline Mercury, CAG Chair, remarked that even if there wasn't a CAG member present at all events, there is still an opportunity to have materials on display, though ideally a CAG member would be present.

Carrie Schulstad, DCA, said that for the mailer, she is hoping that the CAG will have more information to share with folks shortly. She also appreciates that the mailer distribution is targeted and can reach east Vancouver, which is also affected by the mill.

David Ripp, CAG member, mentioned that previous events like the farmers market were very productive and he was amazed by the turnout and how many folks wanted to be informed.

Caroline asked the group if they were comfortable with these tactics being the top three that the DCA will move forward.

Timothy Hein, CAG Member, mentioned that HOAs could be a good target as they are currently electing in new boards and have quorum requirements. With this group, the CAG would be getting a focused audience where they are currently drumming up attendance and looking for agenda items. City Public Works may have a contact list because of the nexus of requiring stormwater features that are managed by HOAs.

Caroline mentioned that they could talk to Steve Wall for help getting that. She also asked if the CAG and GP mill clean-up would be an appropriate discussion item for city council.

Tim responded that it would be a good potential workshop item. Leslie added that she agreed, especially if the city decides to move ahead with the subarea plan. She also suggested a Camas-Washougal Rotary Club presentation. Randy mentioned that he is on the program

committee and is always looking for speakers, including on the upcoming meeting on Dec 8. Caroline confirmed that they would discuss this option more outside the meeting.

Caroline, Tim, and Leslie will discuss a city council meeting option outside the meeting, though Tim mentioned that due to the budget season, it may be better to wait until after the new year.

Leslie Lewallen, CAG member, suggested the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4278, which may have a different demographic though she was not sure who plans. Tim suggested Sonny or Shannon Roberts and added that they meet every Wednesday at 9:30 AM and incorporate Camas and Washougal.

Abbi introduced the next tactic: social services as connectors. She explained that this tactic would be effective in reaching different demographics. Potential connectors would include faith-based organizations or community health centers. There was some discussion around materials which have already been translated as well as the initial push being connecting with organizations and making sure the information provided is relevant.

Abbi introduced the next tactic: bill stuffers. She mentioned that between the bill stuffing tactic and the mailer, the mailer seems like the better option as not everyone receives physical bills. Leslie suggested using a recycling bill. Caroline asked the group how they receive their bills and there was discussion about differences. It was mentioned that while everyone may not receive a bill, there are some documents that everyone receives from their utility provider physically, though this may be redundant with a mailer also going out.

David Ripp, CAG member, suggested putting some information and a blurb in the port newsletter, which is delivered to both cities and rural areas within the port district. Abbi agreed this would be a good idea and David explained that the newsletter goes out in spring so he would need information early in the year to include it.

Caroline moved onto the next tactic: open houses. She explained that now may not be the best time for a tactic like this as it is early in the process and there is not another public comment period or other action to push folks toward. Abbi agreed that while its important to get in front of people, due to the outreach being mostly informative as of now, it is more effective to piggyback off other events. One example mentioned is the Port of Camas-Washougal Christmas Ships event. David mentioned that while the port is doing the Christmas Ships celebration in December, it will not be outdoors and largely independent of the port, so that is likely not a good event for tabling.

Randy Friedman, CAG member, said that the next significant upcoming milestone is probably when the group receives an answer on cleanup levels as that has wide interest among the public and might be an opportunity for them to get involved. Abbi agreed and said that staff is expecting movement on that milestone next spring.

Abbi brought up the next tactic: social media ads. She explained that while the ads would require limited effort, the concern is that currently there is not an action item to direct people to. The DCA Facebook page has a great following and the group can hopefully utilize that audience later in the process. Caroline agreed.

Abbi said that delivering rack cards to local faith organizations would be fairly easy and something that could be done at any time. Carrie agreed, but suggested that rather than rack cards, they leave something more permanent on bulletin boards as the rack cards they currently have distributed are being taken very quickly. If the messaging is more permanent and has a

QR code, it will hopefully reach more people with less investment from DCA to restock. She suggested 8.5 X 11-inch sizing.

Abbi explained the next tactic: an online open house. She said that while they can be effective for certain demographics, it is not the right timing for this tool as there is not a set action or ask. She suggested saving this for later.

Abbi explained the final tactic: surveys. She said that its something the group has discussed a few times, but similarly to the open houses and social media advertising, the process is not far enough along for this to be effective. Randy suggested that this tactic could be used later to collect future land use recommendations or thoughts.

Abbi thanked the group for their input and continued work.

Next steps and open discussion: Will Henderson, MFA

Will Henderson, MFA, introduced a discussion around the partner packet that was shared earlier in the year. He reminded the group that the packet contains project messaging (i.e. social media posts, newsletter texts) and has been shared a few different ways, including as an attachment to the meeting information sent out bi-monthly. He said he hoped to resurface this info to ensure that it was still meeting the group's needs, along with the FAQ document, and if any tweaks could be made to make it more effective.

David Ripp, CAG member, said that he could not think of anything at this point.

Marty Snell, CAG member, suggested that when the group were expecting to be at an upcoming event, if they could be prompted to repost on LinkedIn or other social media avenues to remind people and potentially boost attendance and public participation. He added that his calendar is vital to his scheduling, so prompts would be helpful.

Randy Friedman, CAG member, suggested using the partner packet for sending information to be included in any HOA newsletters. Abbi added that it would also be a good start for the Port newsletter. David said that it goes out in May, so will need the information in the beginning of March.

Will asked the group if they had any more thoughts. Larry Keister, CAG substitute, replied that he appreciated the questions regarding the incentive of requiring a higher cleanup standard. Will thanked the group and reminded them that MFA staff are always available with any resources.

Next Steps: Abbi Russell, MFA, wrapped up the meeting and went over next steps:

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- MFA will work on engagement and incorporating feedback from the CAG.
 - The next CAG meeting will be on January 12, 2023, from 4 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
 - MFA will continue to coordinate with DCA and the CAG.
 - Thank you for presence and ideas, have a great holiday season!

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Sign up for email updates and learn more at: www.downtowncamas.com/camaswamillinfo

Email questions and comments to Caroline Mercury, DCA Past President:
camaswamillinfo@downtowncamas.com

Read and review the draft Remedial Investigation Work Plan:
<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?%20csid=15156>