



City of Yakima

NEWS RELEASE

Subject: Yakima Mill Site Preliminary Environmental Assessment

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Initial Assessment Confirms Assumptions About Mill Site Plywood Plant Property

A preliminary environmental assessment of a portion of the former Boise Cascade mill site that was home to a plywood plant has confirmed that after decades of industrial use, the land will require some cleanup before it is redeveloped.

Landau Associates, a Northwest-based environmental, geotechnical, and natural resources consulting firm, conducted the recently-completed assessment of the 12-acre plywood plant property, which is a small portion of the approximately 220-acre site that was used for more than a century for various wood processing operations. The assessment was paid for with funds provided by the Washington State Department of Ecology and is one of the steps the City of Yakima is taking in order to decide whether to purchase the land that the old plywood plant used to occupy.

“The environmental assessment is part of the City’s due diligence process that needs to be followed before any decisions are made about buying the plywood plant property and potentially qualifying for state and federal cleanup funds,” said City Manager Tony O’Rourke. “Based on the testing that’s been done, we now know for sure that there are some residual contamination issues that exist that have to be dealt with on that 12-acres site. That isn’t a surprise at all given how the property has been used,” said O’Rourke. “The next step is to figure out what needs to be done from a cleanup perspective, how much that might cost, and what is the most feasible way to accomplish it.”

The City is also considering purchasing another 38-acre section of the mill site that once served as a municipal landfill, but is still exploring what buying and cleaning up that part of the property might entail.

In addition to its assessment of the former plywood plant property, Landau Associates also reviewed the results of various tests that have been performed on the rest of the mill site property over the years and concluded that some level of remediation of that land will also likely be necessary prior to redevelopment.

The environmental assessment reports prepared by Landau Associates can be found on the City of Yakima website at <http://www.yakimawa.gov/services/strategic-projects/cascade-mill-district-development-project/>.

“The City is continuing to take a deliberate approach in determining how it can help develop a successful strategy for the future of the mill site property,” said O’Rourke. “We’re on the right path and are looking forward to that land being made available for economic development opportunities that will create jobs for the Yakima community,” said O’Rourke.

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