

Citizens for a Better Plan
Lakeview Amphitheater Project:
How Safe is Safe Enough?

The Lakeview Amphitheater Project is proposed to be built on a portion of the Onondaga Lake Superfund site, known as Wastebeds 1–8. Inviting the public to recreate on a Superfund site raises lots of questions:

❖ **What contaminants are on the site?**

- Wastebeds 1–8 were a dumping ground for Solvay waste, other industrial wastes produced by the Solvay Process Company and Allied Chemical, hazardous and non-hazardous material from the Crucible Steel facility, and biosolids from County sewage.
- Studies of the site have found dangerously elevated levels of benzene, toluene, xylene, hexavalent chromium, PCBs, phenols, mercury, arsenic and other heavy metals. These contaminants are probably from other industrial wastes that the Solvay Process Company disposed of on the site (“co-disposed wastes”), Crucible wastes, and biosolids.

❖ **How contaminated is the site?**

- Hazardous chemicals are not distributed evenly across Wastebeds 1-8. In some areas, there may be no significant danger from coming into contact with the surface of the wastebeds. Other areas, including some near the amphitheater site, have levels of contaminants that exceed standards set for surface soils in commercial or residential areas as well as standards set to protect ecological resources. Contamination also runs deep underground, affecting subsurface soils and groundwater.
- Because co-disposed wastes containing hazardous chemicals were randomly dumped along with Solvay wastes, “hot spots” of contamination have been found in unexpected areas of Wastebeds 1-8. Unfortunately, there has been limited testing in the interior of Wastebed 6, where amphitheater lawn seating and the smaller community theater are currently proposed. Thus, contaminant “hot spots” in these areas may not have been fully mapped.

❖ **Are contaminant levels dangerous?**

- Human Health Risk Assessments (HHRAs) conducted by Honeywell and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that construction or utility workers – any workers that might disturb the soil surface – should wear protective equipment to prevent exposing their skin to contaminants or breathing them in.
- Honeywell and U.S. EPA concluded in the HHRAs that most site visitors would not be exposed to unsafe levels of contamination. However, visitors engaged in activities that would kick up dust – particularly around the Crucible Landfill, which is currently proposed as a “festival site” – would be at unacceptable risk.

- In the HHRAs, neither Honeywell nor the U.S. EPA considered potential exposure and related risk for young children (0 – 6 years old), since they were not expected to visit the site in its undeveloped state. This assumption is no longer valid if the amphitheater and related amenities are built.

❖ **Will the site be safe after remediation?**

- Since the remediation (“clean up”) plan has not yet been developed for this site, we simply don’t know.
- One likely model for “cleaning up” the site is to cover contaminated soil with additional dirt and/or vegetation. The safety of this alternative will depend on maintaining this cover – a task that will be made more difficult by intensive human use of the site. In addition, initial designs estimate that this alternative won’t be fully protective for at least 3 years. The County plans to bring thousands of people to the site in less than 2 years.
- In some areas within the proposed amphitheater site, contaminants volatilize (i.e., evaporate into the air) at levels that could exceed indoor air quality standards. Extra precautions may be needed to protect against dangerous exposures inside buildings that are constructed on the wastebeds.

WHAT CAN I DO?

SUBMIT COMMENTS BY SEPTEMBER 5, 2014

ASK THE COUNTY TO:

- Conduct soil sampling in lawn seating, picnic areas or other spaces where public visitors or maintenance workers could have direct contact with the ground.
- Expand the HHRA analyses to include young children.
- Consider alternative construction sites that would avoid potential exposure.
- Wait for details of the final remediation plan before finalizing the design of the amphitheater project.

Email your comments to:

- David Coburn, Onondaga County Office of the Environment, DavidCoburn@ongov.net
- Ryan McMahon, Onondaga County Legislature Chairman, jryanmcmahon@gmail.com
- Mike Plochocki, Onondaga County Legislature Environmental Protection Committee Chairman, mikeplochocki@hotmail.com

Please also call or email your County Legislator:

<http://www.ongov.net/legislature/members.html>

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