Renew Harbor Island
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# Harbor Island Remediation Alternatives Q&A

Questions and Answers about Cleanup, Future Use, and Next Steps

### Q01 What would happen if we dug all the contamination out?

**A** The liabilities and cost significantly outweigh the benefits. Safely removing the contamination, and transporting it to a certified landfill presents significant risks to the environment, specifically the water ways and our communities drinking water source. Additionally, once the contamination is placed in a landfill, the City/BLP are forever liable for any future costs associated with the contamination at the landfill. Future costs would be controlled by the landfill owner, not the City.

### Q02 Why was the Coal Pile Clean-Up and now the North Channel Remediation project handled separately?

**A** These two projects were of significant size and specific scope that they should be completed outside the scope of the main remediation project. These projects also brought economies of scale that made the costs reasonable. City Council and BLP Board have also supported making progress in areas that were feasible and economical.

### Q03 Will any of the current wells eventually be removed once the remediation is completed?

**A** Potentially. The current well network is specifically laid out and designed to identify the contamination location and track any changes. There will be a monitoring well network installed once the island is remediated and any wells that can be reused for that purpose would, to save costs. Any wells that were no longer needed could be removed if desired.

### Q04 How does each alternative affect the future use of the Island?

**A** Each alternative has unique impacts to the future use of the island. Excavation and disposal allows for full redevelopment of the island, however, it is the most risky and costly. The remaining 4 alternatives provide varying levels of redevelopment opportunity, as each alternative would have different sized portions of the site that will have significant restrictions on redevelopment. The preferred alternative allows for the second smallest area with restrictions at the most cost effective price.

### Q05 Can vegetation be put on top of the capped areas?

**A** Yes, shallow vegetation can be grown on top of the cap if the roots do not penetrate the cap itself. Cap design will consider what the City desires to build on top of the cap. Cap design is part of the overall remediation design that will occur in the next steps.

### Q06 Is housing an option on the Island after it is remediated?

**A** Housing would not be an option for the capped area. Housing could be allowed if desired by Council in areas that are excavated and not capped. Previous public engagement efforts, however, indicated a strong opposition to any housing on Harbor Island in the future.

### Q07 What can be placed on top of the cap?

**A** The cap design will determine what can be placed on top of it. Options include hard surfaces like pavement or concrete, turf, shallow rooted vegetation or trees or surface mounted structures like solar panels or utilities.

### Q08 How did the lowest cost alternative also include one of the best future use option?

**A** Strategic planning. The preferred alternative utilizes numerous approaches to gain the most cost-effective option as well as keeping the containment area the smallest. The alternative with the smallest containment area allows for the second largest redevelopment footprint.

### Q09 How big will the cap be?

**A** The cap shown for Alternative 5 will encompass a total of 27 acres. The thickness and materials used to cap the containment area will be designed in an upcoming design phase.

### Q10 What happens next?

**A** Once an alternative is selected, City staff and engineering firm will develop official state and federal remediation plans and submit them to EGLE and EPA for approval. These official plans are expected to take up to 3 months to develop. Once submitted, anticipated to be around April 1, 2027, permitting with EGLE and EPA is anticipated to take 6-9 months. While permitting is occurring, additional site data will be collected to complete the remediation design. Construction could occur as early as 2028, most likely in 2029 or as late as 2030 depending on costs and funding.

### Q11 What can we do with the island after it is cleaned up?

**A** The capped areas will certainly have restrictions based on cap design. Areas outside of the capped areas will be able to be redeveloped with limited restrictions. The island can be redeveloped within these parameters at the discretion and direction of City Council.

For additional information, please visit HarborIsland.org. For specific questions, please contact Derek Gajdos, Project Management Director at dgajdos@grandhaven.org