

## **CCS participates in another cleanup project:**

Published September 30, 2009

### **State Avenue cleanup at midway point**

JOHN DODGE; The Olympian

OLYMPIA-Environmental cleanup of a property owned by the City of Olympia on State Avenue reached the midway point this week. What the city will do with the property when the cleanup is complete is still somewhat up in the air, but it's emerging as a preferred site for a downtown parking garage, city officials said.

In the past three weeks, approximately 6,500 tons of contaminated soil have been removed and shipped to a hazardous waste disposal site in McMinnville, Ore., from the property between Franklin and Adams streets next to the Intercity Transit Center. Chemicals in the soil requiring removal under state toxic cleanup standards include arsenic, heavy metals, solvents and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are cancer-causing byproducts from the burning of fossil fuels and wood.

The contamination occurred over more than 110 years of property use as a foundry and later a state Department of Transportation materials testing lab and auto and machine shed, explained Sheri Zinny, project manager for the city of Olympia.

In 1936, the then-state Highways Department building burned down on site, but was later rebuilt. "The PAHs are probably from the debris from the burned building," Zinny said.

The city purchased the roughly 1-acre lot from the DOT in 2008 for \$1.28 million. The money was placed in escrow pending completion of a cleanup overseen by the city and conducted by Cowlitz Clean Sweep Inc. of Longview.

If the cleanup cost doesn't exceed the sale price, the state highway agency will pocket the difference. But there is a chance the cleanup cost could exceed the purchase price, Zinny said. In that case, the purchase agreement gives the city the right to seek reimbursement from the state agency, city attorney Tom Morrill said.

The cleanup has moved from soil removal to gravel and soil replacement in the gaping hole a long State Avenue that is about 10 feet deep.

The State Avenue soil cleanup, along with the nearby East Bay Redevelopment Project, has led to traffic delays and sidewalk and parking closures in the vicinity since early September. The State Avenue project should be wrapped up in about three weeks, said Garrett Leaque, an environmental scientist for GeoEngineers, an environmental consulting firm hired by the city to develop and monitor the cleanup plan. The city recently sent out a request for potential developers of a downtown parking garage for three sites, including the State Avenue property.

Nine of the 10 responses received by the city last week favored the State Avenue site, noted city of Olympia principal planner Steve Friddle. Any development on the property would also have a commercial use on the street level, Friddle said. "We should have a recommendation for the City Council to consider by the end of October," he said.