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March 23, 2026

Los Angeles City Council
% Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, California 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

**REPORT RESPONDING TO BROWNFIELDS RISKS AND SAFETY HAZARDS MOTION; CF
24-1521**

On May 15, 2025 Council adopted the [Planning and Land Use Management Committee's Report](#) via Council File 24-1521 to:

1. Prepare a report with the following recommendations:

a. Require coordination with any County, State, or Federal agency with jurisdiction over contaminated sites...and creation of a clearance for the issuance of any permits for development projects on private property seeking to repurpose existing brownfield sites (i.e., contaminated sites listed on a State database) into other proposed land uses.

b. Update City databases, such as but not limited to ZIMAS, with zoning information or overlay tools that can be used to identify brownfield sites to ensure appropriate clearances are included when developers are seeking a permit.

c. Revise the LADBS Information Bulletin "Procedures When Hazardous and Contaminated Materials are Encountered During Construction or Geotechnical/Geological Exploration" to reflect any changes.

2. Report back on the City's current role, responsibilities, and strategies to remediate City-owned brownfield sites, along with requirements for private developers. The report should also provide recommendations for enhancing or streamlining processes to conduct City-owned remediation efforts, including potential strategies on collaborating with community stakeholders to remediate brownfield sites.

Introduction

This is a joint reportback from DCP and LADBS in consultation with the City Attorney in response to these instructions. LA Sanitation is submitting a separate reportback. To address the issues and instructions enumerated in the motion, City Planning recommends amending the Environmental Protection Measures (EPM) Handbooks. Accordingly, this reportback begins by providing background on the EPM Handbooks and subsequently provides recommendations responding to the requests of the PLUM report.

Environmental Protection Measure Handbook Background

In February 2025, alongside the effectuation of the New Zoning Code through Council File 22-0617, the [Chapter 1A Environmental Protection Measures \(EPM\) Handbook](#) came into effect within the Downtown Community Plan Area. Within the same month, the [Chapter 1 Environmental Protection Measures Handbook](#) was enabled by the Citywide Housing Incentive Program (CHIP) ordinance through Council File 21-1230-S5 and went into effect across the remainder of the City. The EPM Handbooks are documents enabled by Chapter 1 and 1A of the LAMC that require by-right and discretionary projects of certain thresholds to comply with standardized environmental protections. Consistent with Sec. 4C.13.1.A. (Intent) of Chapter 1A of the LAMC, the EPM Handbook standards are intended to: a) ensure that development does not result in detrimental impacts, b) provide an implementation mechanism for mitigation measures adopted pursuant to CEQA for City plans, policies, or regulations; and c) provide a flexible mechanism to adopt and amend uniformly applicable development standards, enabling streamlined environmental review.

Below is an overview of the Hazardous Materials Site standards currently in effect through the Environmental Protection Measures (EPMs) handbooks for both Chapter 1 (Original Zoning Code) and Chapter 1A (New Zoning Code). The Hazardous Materials Site standards described below apply to both by-right and discretionary projects.

Chapter 1 EPM Handbook

The Chapter 1 EPM Handbook applies citywide, except where property has been rezoned with Chapter 1A zoning. (Currently, only the Downtown Los Angeles Community Plan area is zoned with the New Zoning Code, which is governed by the Chapter 1A EPM Handbook.) Here is a summary of the handbook and the City procedures for its administration and enforcement. See Appendix A for the full text of the Chapter 1 EPM Hazardous Materials standards with proposed revisions.

LAMC Sec. 11.5.15 (Environmental Protection Measures) authorizes the Director to adopt and amend the Chapter 1 EPMs. The EPMs adopted in the Chapter 1 EPM Handbook apply to New Construction, Major Remodel, Site Modification, or Demolition as defined in Sec. 14.2.15. (Project Activities) of Chapter 1A of the LAMC. Failure to comply with an EPM is enforceable as a violation of the Code, including as a misdemeanor.

Every project requiring a building or grading permit (including but not limited to excavation) is required to include the EPM Standard Sheet ([Chapter 1](#) or [Chapter 1A](#)) at Plan Check, which includes the EPMs and all notices in the EPM Handbook. The notices in the handbook include a statement that owners and applicants are responsible for complying with all federal, state and local hazardous waste and materials laws and are pointed to best practices in an appendix to the handbook for complying with those laws. On the standard sheet, the applicant and owner are required to sign an acknowledgement that they have read the EPM handbook and notices and failure to comply with EPMs is enforceable as a violation of the LAMC. Applicants and owners are also responsible for maintaining proof of compliance with applicable EPM standards for a minimum of five years after the Certificate of Occupancy is issued. The applicant and owner must produce records of compliance upon request of a City inspector immediately, while construction activities are on-going at the site, and within 72 hours' notice at any other time.

The Hazardous Materials Standards within the Chapter 1 EPM Handbook were introduced to implement policies from the Citywide Housing Incentive Program (CHIP) ordinance through Council File 21-1230-S5, and are therefore applicable only to Housing Development Projects. Specifically, the standards require that any Housing Development of 5 or more units that requires a grading permit (including but not limited to excavation) must do the following:

- (1) If suspected Hazardous Materials, contamination, debris, or other features or materials that could present a threat to human health is found during grading or excavation, work must cease immediately until the area is evaluated by a Qualified Environmental Professional (as defined) and a remediation plan prepared if necessary. Work cannot resume until any remediation plan is completed.
- (2) If it meets any of the following criteria, prior to commencing work, prepare a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), and if necessary a Phase II ESA and a remediation plan and if remediation is necessary, the applicant / owner shall not pull a permit, and no work may commence until a Qualified Environmental Professional verifies completion of the remediation plan:

- a. located on or within 500 feet of a Hazardous Materials Site listed in databases of State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Toxic Substances (DTSC), LA County and City of Los Angeles Fire Department, or Los Angeles County Fire Department, or
- b. located on or within 500 feet of a Hazardous Materials Site designated as a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) site, or
- c. Located:
 - 1000 feet from property with an active oil well or oil field,
 - 200 feet from property with an idle oil well or field,
 - 100 feet from property with a plugged oil well or field, or
- d. The Applicant or Owner is aware the Project site was previously zoned industrial or used for an industrial use, gas station, or dry cleaner.

(3) Sites within 100 feet of an active, idle, or plugged oil well or oil field shall have a Phase I ESA reviewed by City Planning with the potential for a Phase II ESA, and shall also be referred to the appropriate regulatory agency for any applicable review, as determined by DCP, prior to the applicant pulling a permit. Sites within 100 feet of an idle or plugged oil well also have to submit a Soils Management Plan approved by a Qualified Environmental Professional.

The EPM Handbook contains an Appendix of Best Environmental Protection Practices including practices to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and local hazardous materials and waste regulations.

Chapter 1A EPM Handbook

The Chapter 1A EPM Handbook applies in any area that has been rezoned with Chapter 1A zoning. At present, this includes the Downtown Community Plan Area. It is anticipated that the Boyle Heights Community Plan Area, the Harbor Gateway Community Plan Area, the Wilmington-Harbor City Community Plan and the Cornfield Arroyo Specific Plan areas will be rezoned with Chapter 1A in 2026. The Chapter 1A EPM Handbook contains similar hazards standards as the Chapter 1 EPM Handbook except that many of the Hazardous Material Site standards apply to all projects requiring grading or building permits and are not limited to housing projects of 5 or more units. See Appendix B for the full text of the Chapter 1A EPM Hazardous Materials standards with proposed revisions. In addition, the Chapter 1A EPM Handbook contains protections for Air Quality Standards, Biological Resources, Cultural Resource Standards, and Noise and Vibration Standards.

Other CPIOs and Specific Plans include hazardous material requirements, similar to the EPMs, including but not limited to:

- Hollywood CPIO
- South Los Angeles CPIO
- Southeast Los Angeles CPIO

- West Adams CPIO
- Warner Center SP
- Expo Corridor TNP

Additionally, the Boyle Heights Community Plan Implementation Overlay District, which is currently being reviewed by the City Attorney's Office, includes standards to address the potential impacts from the Exide battery plant contamination, which require that all sites in the community plan area either demonstrate they have been cleared by DTSC for lead and arsenic or be tested for lead and arsenic contamination and potentially cleaned up before any ground disturbing activities can be undertaken.

Response to Instruction 1a. (Interagency Coordination and Clearance for Development on Brownfield Sites)

This section of the report discusses Planning and the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety's (LADBS) response to request 1a of the May 15, 2025 [Planning and Land Use Management Committee's Report](#) via Council File 24-1521, reiterated below for reference:

Require coordination with any County, State, or Federal agency with jurisdiction over contaminated sites, including but not limited to the Department of Toxic Substances Control, California Air Resources Board, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, and the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, and creation of a clearance for the issuance of any permits for development projects on private property seeking to repurpose existing brownfield sites (i.e., contaminated sites listed on a State database) into other proposed land uses.

All projects (including By-Right projects) submitting plans to LADBS are required to include a dedicated plan sheet containing the full text of the Environmental Protection Measures (EPM) and all notices included in the *EPM Handbook*. These notices inform owners and applicants of their responsibility to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local hazardous waste and materials regulations, and reference best practices—outlined in the Handbook's appendix—for meeting those requirements. On this plan sheet, both the applicant and property owner must sign an acknowledgment statement confirming they have reviewed the EPM Handbook and related notices. Failure to comply with EPMs constitutes a violation of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) and is subject to enforcement by the City.

For housing developments involving five or more residential units that require grading or excavation, LADBS plays a critical role in enforcing the Environmental Protection Measures (EPM) outlined in ZI 2536, particularly concerning proximity to oil wells. For sites located within 100 feet of an active, idle, or plugged oil well or field, LADBS adds a clearance for "Oil Well Review". Critically, LADBS shall not issue any permit associated with the development unless the Department of City Planning first reviews and verifies that the project has complied with the EPMs, which typically necessitate a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and/or additional studies.

Projects located 101 feet or greater from an active, idle, or plugged oil well or field proceed with review based on the standards described in the applicable EPM Handbook.

The requirements detailed under ZI-1195 concern the necessary oil well clearance process for projects located on lots identified as being in proximity to an oil well. For projects such as new construction, additions, alterations, grading, and uses of land, excluding minor work that does not involve foundation work or enlarging the existing building footprint, applicants must navigate a clearance procedure prior to permit issuance. This process involves the Geological Energy Management Division (CalGEM), the state body responsible for overseeing the drilling, operation, and closure of oil and gas wells. Specifically, the applicant must first obtain a Construction Site Well Review (CSWR) report from CalGEM. After CalGEM completes its review, the CSWR report becomes available for download through the WellSTAR database. This report is crucial because the applicant needs it to request the final review and approval of the oil well clearance from the Los Angeles Fire Department before a permit can be issued.

As described in the EPM Background section above, the EPM Handbooks require applicable projects located on Hazardous Materials Sites as identified through specific datasets or meeting certain applicability thresholds to have a Qualified Environmental Professional prepare a Phase I, and if necessary, a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) and a remediation plan if remediation is necessary, prior to the applicant or owner pulling a permit. The EPM Hazardous Material Sites standards further require that the Phase I and/or Phase II ESA(s) are made available for review and inclusion in the case file by the appropriate regulatory agency, such as the State Water Resources Control Board, the State Department of Toxic Substances Control, or the LAFD Hazard Mitigation Program. Further, any remediation plan recommended in the Phase II or by the appropriate regulatory agency is required to be implemented and, if required, a No Further Action letter shall be issued by the appropriate regulatory agency prior to the applicant or owner pulling a permit, unless the regulating agency determines that remedial action can be implemented in conjunction with excavation and / or grading. If no oversight or approval by a regulatory agency is required, the Qualified Environmental Professional is required to provide written verification of compliance with and completion of the remediation plan, which the applicant and owner are required to maintain pursuant to the proof of compliance requirements of the EPM Handbooks. Should another agency, such as LASAN Citywide Brownfields Program, have the capacity to take on the role of verifying completion of the remediation plan, that would help strengthen the standard.

A clearance is currently required from City Planning for Housing Development Projects resulting in the construction of five or more dwelling units on sites within 100 feet of an active, idle, or plugged oil well or field pursuant to the EPM Handbooks, and these sites are mapped on ZIMAS; Additionally, sites within 200 feet of an idle oil well or field, or 1,000 feet of an active oil well or field are mapped on ZIMAS (under the "Additional" header, see "Oil Well Adjacency"). The "Oil Well Adjacency" field on ZIMAS links to an associated [Zoning Information \(Z.I.\) File \(No. 2536\)](#) to inform the public, applicants, owners, and the City about oil well adjacency and required compliance with the Environmental Protection Measures.

City Planning does not have capacity to review an additional subset of ESAs. Should another City agency, such as LASAN Citywide Brownfields Program, have capacity to review Phase I ESAs for hazardous materials sites beyond those that Planning already reviews, such review would strengthen the enforcement of the EPM hazardous materials standards. City Planning recommends that the agency could review the Phase I ESAs for all hazardous material sites (as specified in the EPM Handbooks and proposed for modification in Appendix A) that Planning does not review. If a smaller subset of projects would be more appropriate for the agency to review due to capacity or other constraints, City Planning recommends prioritizing the following sites:

1. *Any non-Housing Development Project, or any Housing Development Projects resulting in the construction of less than five dwelling units; that involves grading, excavation or building activity on sites within 100 feet of an active, idle, or plugged oil well or field.*
2. *Any Project that involves grading, excavation or building activity and which is located on or adjacent to an active and open Hazardous Materials site listed in any of the following databases:*
 - [State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker](#)
 - [DTSC Cleanup Sites](#)

Should there be capacity for an agency, such as LASAN Citywide Brownfields Program, to review the Phase I ESA's for an additional subset of projects, it would be appropriate to then also require a clearance from that agency before the applicant / owner would be able to pull a permit. In this scenario, the Hazardous Materials standards of the EPM Handbooks should be updated to reflect the requirement for this review.

Response to Instruction 1b. (Update City Databases)

This section of the report discusses Planning and the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety's (LADBS) response to request 1b of the May 15, 2025 [Planning and Land Use Management Committee's Report](#) via Council File 24-1521, reiterated below for reference:

Update City databases, such as but not limited to ZIMAS, with zoning information or overlay tools that can be used to identify brownfield sites to ensure appropriate clearances are included when developers are seeking a permit.

City Planning will expand the sites mapped on ZIMAS from those described in the response to request 1a above to include all sites that would require compliance with the Hazardous Materials Standards of the EPM Handbooks (HM1-2 and HM1-3, with proposed modifications as shown in Appendix A). The current Z.I. 2536 could be updated similarly to describe the full applicability of the Hazardous Materials standards HM1-2 and HM1-3, rather than being limited to its current focus of oil well adjacency, and an additional field on ZIMAS could be added for "Potential Hazardous Materials Site" where any site triggering compliance with HM1-2 and HM1-3 would be mapped. The Potential Hazardous Materials Site data would be updated monthly.

In order to expand the sites mapped on ZIMAS to include all sites requiring compliance with the Hazardous Materials standards of the EPM Handbooks, City Planning will revise the Hazardous Materials standards, as specified in Appendix A. By way of background, in undertaking the effort to map the hazardous materials sites referred to in the EPM Hazardous Materials Site standards, City Planning identified that roughly 43% of the City's parcels would have been required to comply and that the datasets and required buffers listed were overinclusive and in need of refinement to more accurately identify hazardous materials sites. In summary, the modifications shown in detail in Appendix A:

- 1) **Add sites on the US EPA Brownfields / EPA Registry Service - Assessment Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) dataset to more comprehensively capture brownfield sites in response to this request.** According to [Epa.gov](https://www.epa.gov), "ACRES is used to report assessment, cleanup and redevelopment activities at properties where EPA Brownfields funding was expended under Assessment, Cleanup, Revolving Loan Fund, Multipurpose and 128(a) State and Tribal Grants."
- 2) **Add sites on the California Environmental Reporting System database to the EPM hazardous materials standards applicability to more comprehensively capture hazardous materials sites.** According to cers.calepa.ca.gov/about-cers "Unified Program information required to be submitted and reported electronically to CERS includes, but is not limited to, facility data regarding hazardous material regulatory activities (such as, hazardous materials business plans, site maps, and chemical inventories), underground and aboveground storage tanks, hazardous waste generation, and inspection, compliance and enforcement actions."
- 3) **Add sites on the US EPA's National Priorities List to more comprehensively capture hazardous materials sites.** According to [epa.gov/superfund/superfund-national-priorities-list-npl](https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-national-priorities-list-npl) "The National Priorities List (NPL) is the list of sites of national priority among the known releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants throughout the United States and its territories."
- 4) **Refine the applicability of the standards to remove redundant or irrelevant datasets and right-size the buffers around Hazardous Material Sites.**
 - a) Rather than listing all sites on DTSC EnviroStor, specific EnviroStor datasets are proposed that relate specifically to hazardous materials sites.
 - b) Additionally, City Planning proposes to no longer trigger compliance for the standard within 500' of sites on State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Toxic Substances (DTSC), City of Los Angeles Fire Department, or Los Angeles County Fire Department, but instead to only require the 500' buffer around sites on the State Water Resources Control Board Geotracker that involve dewatering, as environmental consultants advised the buffer would only be necessary for the purposes of identifying and mitigating potential ground water contamination.

- c) City Planning recommends removing the LA County Fire Department Health Hazardous Materials Division as a separate listed datasource as the dataset is contained within the DTSC Cleanup sites and / or State Water Resource Control Board Geotracker sites, so is redundant to include.
 - d) City Planning recommends removing the SCAQMD Facility Information Detail dataset from the Chapter 1A EPM Handbook for consistency with the Chapter 1 EPM Handbook, as the dataset is not specifically used to identify hazardous materials sites, but instead includes information on "facilities that are required to have a permit to operate equipment that releases pollutants into the air" according to www.aqmd.gov/nav/find.
- 5) **Broaden the applicability for the Hazardous Materials Standards to refer to grading, excavation, or building activity, rather than referencing grading permits.** Excavations for basements, footings, caissons, piles, swimming pools or underground structures authorized by valid building permits do not require grading permits except within Hillside Areas pursuant to Chapter IX (Building Regulations), [Sec. 91.106.1.2. \(Grading Permits\)](#) of the LAMC. Therefore, by referring to grading activity, rather than grading permits, the standards will more comprehensively apply to relevant projects.
- 6) **Include Oil Drilling Districts in Chapter 1 EPM Handbook applicability for alignment with the Chapter 1A EPM Handbook.** According to [Sec. 13.01. \("O" Oil Drilling Districts\)](#), of Chapter I of the LAMC, Oil Drilling Districts are intended to be applied in, "districts where the drilling of oil wells or the production from the wells of oil, gases or other hydrocarbon substances is permitted."
- 7) **Include sites within 50 feet of Oil Fields and sites within 1000 feet surrounding oil wells.** Regarding oil fields and wells, the Chapter 1 and 1A EPM Handbooks both currently require Housing Development Projects with five or more dwelling units located within the following buffers to prepare a Phase I ESA. If remediation is necessary a Phase II ESA and a remediation plan and if remediation is necessary, the applicant/owner shall not pull a permit, and no work may commence until a Qualified Environmental Professional verifies completion of the remediation plan:
- 1000 feet from property with an active oil well or oil field,
 - 200 feet from property with an idle oil well or field,
 - 100 feet from property with an plugged oil well or field,
- Within the Chapter 1A EPM Handbook, this requirement also applies to all projects requiring grading (including but not limited to excavation) or building permits within 50 feet of a property identified as having an oil well or field.

Additionally, in both the Chapter 1 and 1A EPM Handbooks, sites within 100 feet of an active, idle or plugged oil well or oil field shall also have a Phase I ESA reviewed by City Planning with the potential for a Phase II, and shall also be referred to the

appropriate regulatory agency for any applicable review, as determined by DCP, prior to the applicant pulling a permit. Sites within 100 feet of an idle or plugged oil well also have to submit a Soils Management Plan approved by a Qualified Environmental Professional.

- a) City Planning will maintain the buffers around oil *wells* described above, but remove the 1000, 200, and 100-foot buffers around oil *fields described above* from sites needing to meet these standards and instead require sites within 50 feet of oil fields (active or inactive) to comply. For context, citywide, there are 69,132 parcels within active oil fields, and 100,723 within 1,000 feet of an active oil field (roughly 11% of parcels within the City).
- b) Further, due to capacity constraints, City Planning will remove references to oil fields from the projects requiring a clearance from City Planning. City Planning recommends that the subset of projects within active oil fields that is outside the 100' buffer surrounding oil wells be reviewed by another agency, such as LASAN Citywide Brownfields Program. Per the discussion in the response to request 1a above, if another agency has capacity to review this subset of projects, the EPM Handbooks could be updated to reflect such a requirement for review.

8) Pull the standards and applicability for projects City Planning reviews into its own standard for clarity.

Collectively, the changes described in this section will allow for the accurate mapping of hazardous material sites and clarity in the regulations.

Response to Instruction 1C (Revise LADBS Information Bulletin)

This section of the report discusses Planning and the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety's (LADBS) response to request 1c of the May 15, 2025 [Planning and Land Use Management Committee's Report](#) via Council File 24-1521, reiterated below for reference:

Revise the LADBS Information Bulletin "Procedures When Hazardous and Contaminated Materials are Encountered During Construction or Geotechnical/ Geological Exploration" to reflect any changes.

LADBS currently uses Information Bulletin (IB), *Procedures When Hazardous and Contaminated Materials are Encountered During Construction or Geotechnical/ Geological Exploration*, to inform applicants of the procedures when contaminated materials are discovered during construction. This protocol ensures that potential hazards are promptly reported to the appropriate authorities for assessment and mitigation.

In revising the IB to reflect any changes regarding brownfield properties, LADBS proposes to change the title of the Bulletin to reflect the changes added in reference to potential brownfield properties. The IB will include providing applicants with clear direction as to which departments to contact and how to reach them should site contamination be identified at any stage of a project.

The revised IB will refer the applicant to the EMP Handbook, the EPM Standard Sheets, as well as contact information for the California Environmental Protection Agency ([CALEPA](#)), DTSC and RWQCB. The revised IB will also highlight the EPM requirement for five or more dwelling units relative to brownfield properties.

The current IB references properties that are in proximity to oil wells. The revised IB will include databases that can be used to help identify proximity to contaminated sites as well as if their proposed site has already been identified as being contaminated. The state of California presently maintains two databases for identifying brownfield properties: EnviroStor, accessible at www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov, and GeoTracker, accessible at geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov. Additionally, the revised IB will include references to the federal database, US EPA's Assessment Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) which is publicly viewable through Cleanups in My Community (CIMC), a platform that enables users to map and list hazardous waste cleanup locations.

EnviroStor is DTSC's main database for tracking properties with known or potential hazardous substance contamination, including Brownfield sites, state response sites, voluntary cleanup sites, Federal Superfund sites, and schools undergoing environmental review. Its key features include search functionality by address, city, ZIP code, or map, display of site status (e.g., active, certified clean, undergoing cleanup), and access to site documents and historical reports.

GeoTracker compiles data for sites concerning water quality, encompassing Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUSTs), Spills, Leaks, Investigations, and Cleanup (SLIC) sites, landfills, military cleanup sites, and certain brownfield and redevelopment properties. Its key features include map-based and address-based search functionalities, thorough site histories, remediation statuses, and direct access to pertinent environmental documents.

The revised IB will include changes to clearance procedures involving the LASAN and which types of projects will be affected due to the changes. It will also reference the process for obtaining a Phase I environmental review.

These revisions are intended to enhance public safety, inform applicants of the proper regulatory agencies regarding brownfields, and facilitate more efficient inter-agency coordination in addressing environmental contamination. By providing applicants with standardized contact information and procedures, LADBS aims to reduce delays, improve compliance, and ensure that contaminated materials are managed consistently and effectively.

Response to Instruction 2 (Remediation on City-owned Brownfields Sites)

This section of the report discusses Planning and DBS's response to request 2 of the May 15, 2025 [Planning and Land Use Management Committee's Report](#) via Council File 24-1521, reiterated below for reference:

INSTRUCT the LADBS, DCP, BOE, BOS, LAFD and LADOT, in consultation with the City Attorney, to report back on the City's current role, responsibilities, and strategies to remediate City-owned brownfield sites, along with requirements for private developers. The report should also provide recommendations for enhancing or streamlining processes to conduct City-owned remediation efforts, including potential strategies on collaborating with community stakeholders to remediate brownfield sites.

Any project on City-owned properties meeting the applicability thresholds for the hazards standards within the EPM Handbooks would need to comply. The improvements described in the Sections above regarding mapping the hazardous material sites on ZIMAS and refining the datasets within the standards to include hazardous materials sites on the US EPA Brownfields / EPA Registry Service - Assessment Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) Dataset would improve brownfield remediation on City-owned properties as well as non City-owned properties.

Please see the LA Sanitation and Environment report back dated January 21, 2026, under the section "*Current Role, Responsibilities, and Strategies for City-Owned Brownfield Sites.*"

Conclusion

City Planning and LADBS recognize the importance of mitigating the impacts of hazardous materials sites on communities and will take the following steps in response to the requests described in this report:

1. City Planning will update the EPM Handbooks with the modifications described in response to Request 1b, subject to further modifications and refinements pursuant to Sec. 11.5.15. (Environmental Protection Measures) of Chapter I of the LAMC or by Sec. 4C.13.1. (Environmental Protection Measures) of Chapter 1A of the LAMC.
2. City Planning will map the full applicability of the hazardous materials standards of the EPM Handbook on ZIMAS, and will reflect that applicability in an associated Zoning Information File (ZI) to strengthen the implementation of the hazardous materials standards.
3. LADBS will update the Information Bulletin "Procedures When Hazardous and Contaminated Materials are Encountered During Construction or Geotechnical/ Geological Exploration" as described in response to Request 1C.

We suggest LASAN Citywide Brownfields Program assume responsibility to review the Phase I ESA's for an additional subset of projects, recommended in the response to Request 1a and 1b in this report. If this occurs, it would be appropriate to then also require a clearance from that agency before the applicant / owner would be able to pull a permit. In this scenario, City Planning would update the Hazardous Materials standards of the EPM Handbooks to reflect the requirement for this review pursuant to Sec. 11.5.15. (Environmental Protection Measures) of Chapter I of the LAMC or by Sec. 4C.13.1. (Environmental Protection Measures) of Chapter 1A of the LAMC.

Recommendation

As discussed in the Environmental Protection Measures Handbook Background Section of this Report, the Hazardous Materials Standards within the Chapter 1 EPM Handbook were introduced to implement policies from the Citywide Housing Incentive Program (CHIP) ordinance through Council File 21-1230-S5, and are therefore applicable only to Housing Development Projects. If the PLUM committee has the policy intent of aligning the Chapter 1 EPM Handbook Hazardous Materials Standards applicability with that of the Chapter 1A EPM Handbook, which includes certain standards applicable to all types of Projects involving grading, excavation or building activity regardless of use, (see HM1-2 Environmental Site Assessment(s), a.ii within Appendix B), PLUM could request City Planning to implement this policy.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Erin Coleman, Acting Senior City Planner, at Erin.Coleman@lacity.org, in the Department of City Planning.

Sincerely,



VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning
Los Angeles City Planning

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APPENDIX A- RECOMMENDED REVISIONS TO THE CHAPTER 1 EPM HANDBOOK HAZARDS STANDARDS

Proposed additions are shown in underline and proposed deletions are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

2. HM1-2: Environmental Site Assessment(s)

a. Applicability Threshold

Any Housing Development that results in the construction of five or more residential units, and requires involves grading, or excavation, or building activity (excluding Adaptive Reuse Projects as defined in Chapter 1, Sec. 12.03 (Definitions)) ~~from LADBS;~~ and which is:

i. Located on ~~or within~~ 500 feet of a Hazardous Materials site listed in any of the following databases:

- State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker (refer to <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov>);
- DTSC EnviroStor (refer to <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public>); sites listed under the following categories:
 - Cleanup Sites (<https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public>);
 - Hazardous Waste Facilities Sites (<https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public>);
 - Inspection, Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) Sites (<https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public>);
 - Active Transportation Facilities (<https://hwts.dtsc.ca.gov/transporters/>);
 - Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) Facilities (<https://dtsc.ca.gov/caltrip/>);
 - DTSC Active Hazardous Waste Tracking System Facilities (refer to <https://hwts.dtsc.ca.gov>);
- California Environmental Reporting System (<https://cers.calepa.ca.gov/>);
- LAFD Certified Unified Program Agency (refer to the active, inactive, and historical inventory lists at <https://www.lafd.org/fire-prevention/cupa/public-records>);
- ~~Los Angeles County Fire Department Health Hazardous Materials Division (refer to the active and inactive facilities, site mitigation, and California Accidental Release Prevention inventory lists at <https://fire.lacounty.gov/public-records-requests>); or~~
- US EPA Brownfields / EPA Registry Service - Assessment Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES); or
- US EPA National Priorities List.

ii. Located on ~~or within 500 feet of~~ a Hazardous Materials site designated as a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Small Quantity Generator or Large Quantity Generator (refer to the USEPA Envirofacts database at <https://enviro.epa.gov/index.html>);
or

iii. Located within the following buffers as identified by the California Geologic Energy Management Division (refer to <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/WellFinder.aspx>);

- 1,000 feet of a property identified as having an active oil well ~~or an oil field~~; or
- 200 feet of a property identified as having an idle oil well ~~or field~~; or
- 100 feet of a property identified as having a plugged oil well ~~or field~~; or
- 50 feet of a property identified as having an oil field (active or inactive); or

iv. ~~Located on land currently or previously used for a gas station or dry cleaning facility.~~
Located in an Oil Drilling District (O) or within an active oil field boundary as identified by the California Geologic Energy Management Division (refer to <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/WellFinder.aspx>);

v. Requires dewatering and is located on a site that is on or within 500' of a site on State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker (refer to <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov>); or

vi. Located on land currently or previously designated with industrial zoning, in whole or in part; or

vii. The Applicant or owner are aware or have reason to be aware that the Project site ~~previously had industrial zoning; or was previously used for an industrial use, gas station, or dry cleaner.~~

And:

viii. The site that meets any of the criteria in paragraphs i. through vii., above, has not been previously remediated to the satisfaction of the relevant regulatory agency/agencies for any contamination associated with the above uses or site conditions, or the site was not previously assessed in a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) in accordance with All Appropriate Inquiries standards by the federal Environmental Protection Agency the prior two years, which found no Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC), or a subsequent Phase II that concluded there are no RECs.

b. Standard

i. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment shall be prepared by a Qualified Environmental Professional in accordance with State standards/guidelines and current professional standards, including the American Society for Testing and Materials' (ASTM) Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments, to evaluate whether the site, or

the surrounding area, is contaminated with hazardous substances from any past or current land uses, including contamination related to the storage, transport, generation, or disposal of toxic or Hazardous Waste or materials.

If the Phase I identifies a Recognized Environmental Condition (REC) and/or if recommended in the Phase I, a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment shall also be prepared by a Qualified Environmental Professional. The Phase I and/or Phase II Environmental Site Assessment(s) shall be maintained pursuant to the proof of compliance requirements in Section i.D.6 and made available for review and inclusion in the case file by the appropriate regulatory agency, such as the State Water Resources Control Board, the State Department of Toxic Substances Control, or the LAFD Hazard Mitigation Program. Any remediation plan recommended in the Phase ~~iii~~ Environmental Site Assessment or by the appropriate regulatory agency shall be implemented and, if required, a no Further Action letter, or equivalent letter, shall be issued by the appropriate regulatory agency prior to obtaining a permit for construction from LADBS ~~issuance of any permit from LADBS~~, unless the regulating agency determines that remedial action can be implemented in conjunction with excavation and/or grading. If oversight or approval by a regulatory agency is not required, the Qualified Environmental Professional shall provide written verification of compliance with and completion of the remediation plan, such that the site meets the applicable standards for the proposed use, which shall be maintained pursuant to the proof of compliance requirements in Sec. 1.D.6. (Additional Requirements).

~~ii. Additionally, sites within 100 feet of an active, idle, or plugged oil well or field shall have a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and/or additional studies reviewed in consultation with the Department of City Planning. After this initial review, the Department of City Planning reserves the right to request a Phase ii Environmental Site Assessment, and/or additional studies, for a more extensive review of hazardous substances on the project site. Sites within 100 feet of an idle or plugged oil well shall be required to submit a Soils Management Plan approved by a Qualified Environmental Professional. Sites within 100 feet of an active, idle, or plugged oil well shall also be referred to the appropriate regulatory agency for any applicable review, as determined by the Department of City Planning, prior to issuance of any permit from LADBS.~~

3. HM1-3: Environmental Site Assessment for Residential Projects in close Proximity to Oil Wells

a. Applicability Threshold

Any Housing Development that results in the construction of five or more residential units, and involves grading, excavation or building activity (excluding Adaptive Reuse Projects as defined in Chapter I., Sec. 12.03 (Definitions)) and which is:

i. Within 100 feet of an active, idle or plugged oil well ~~or field~~; and

ii. The site has not been previously remediated to the satisfaction of the relevant regulatory agency/agencies for any contamination associated with the above uses or site conditions, or the site was not previously assessed in a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) in accordance with All Appropriate Inquiries standards by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, which found no Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC), or a subsequent Phase II that concluded there are no RECs.

b. Standard

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and/or additional studies shall be reviewed in consultation with the Department of City Planning. After this initial review, the Department of City Planning reserves the right to request a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment, and/or additional studies, for a more extensive review of hazardous substances on the project site. Sites within 100 feet of an idle or plugged oil well shall be required to submit a Soils Management Plan approved by a Qualified Environmental Professional. Sites within 100 feet of an active, idle, or plugged oil well shall also be referred to the appropriate regulatory agency for any applicable review, as determined by the Department of City Planning, prior to obtaining a permit for construction from LADBS.

APPENDIX B- RECOMMENDED REVISIONS TO THE CHAPTER 1A EPM HANDBOOK HAZARDS STANDARDS

Proposed additions are shown in underline and proposed deletions are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

2. HM1-2: Environmental Site Assessment(s)

a. Applicability Threshold

i. Any Housing Development Project that results in the construction of five or more dwelling units, and involves grading, excavation, or building activity; and which is:

a). Located on or within the following buffers as identified by the by the California Geologic Energy Management Division (refer to <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/WellFinder.aspx>):

- 1,000 feet of a property identified as having an active oil well ~~or an oil field~~; or
- 200 feet of a property identified as having an idle oil well ~~or field~~; or
- 100 feet of a property identified as having a plugged oil well ~~or field~~.

And:

b). The site has not been previously remediated to the satisfaction of the relevant regulatory agency/agencies for any contamination associated with the above uses or site conditions, and the site was not previously assessed in a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) in accordance with All Appropriate Inquiries standards by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, which found no Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC), or a subsequent Phase II that concluded there are no RECs; or

ii. Any Project that ~~involves~~ ~~requires~~ a grading, excavation, or building activity permit from LADBS and which is:

a) Located on ~~or~~ within 500 feet of a Hazardous Materials site listed in any of the following databases:

- State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker (refer to <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>);
- DTSC EnviroStor (refer to <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>); sites listed under the following categories:
 - Cleanup Sites (<https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>);
 - Hazardous Waste Facilities Sites (<https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>);
 - Inspection, Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) Sites (<https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>);
 - Active Transportation Facilities (<https://hwts.dtsc.ca.gov/transporters/>);
 - Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) Facilities (<https://dtsc.ca.gov/caltrip/>);
 - DTSC Active Hazardous Waste Tracking System Facilities (refer to <https://hwts.dtsc.ca.gov/>);
- California Environmental Reporting System (<https://cers.calepa.ca.gov/>);
- LAFD Certified Unified Program Agency (refer to the active, inactive, and historical inventory lists at <https://www.lafd.org/fire-prevention/cupa/public-records/>);
- ~~Los Angeles County Fire Department Health Hazardous Materials Division (refer to the active and inactive facilities, site mitigation, and California Accidental Release Prevention inventory lists at <https://fire.lacounty.gov/public-records-requests/>);~~
- ~~SCAQMD Facility Information Detail (refer to <https://xappprod.aqmd.gov/find/>); or~~

- US EPA Brownfields / EPA Registry Service - Assessment Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES); or
- US EPA National Priorities List.

b) ii. Located on ~~or within 500 feet of~~ a Hazardous Materials site designated as a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Small Quantity Generator or Large Quantity Generator (refer to the USEPA Envirofacts database at <https://enviro.epa.gov/index.html>); or

c) iii. Located in an Oil Drilling District (O) or located on or within 50 feet of a property identified as having an oil well or an oil field (active or inactive) by the California Geologic Energy Management Division (refer to <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/WellFinder.aspx>); or

d) iv. Located on land currently or previously designated with an ~~i~~Industrial or Industrial-Mixed Use District use class or industrial zoning, in whole or in part; or

e) v. ~~Located on land currently or previously used for a gas station or dry cleaning facility. Requires dewatering and is located on a site that is within 500' of a site on State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker (refer to <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov>); or~~

Or:

f) vi. The Applicant or Owner are aware or have reason to be aware that the Project site was previously used for an industrial use, ~~gas station or dry cleaner.~~

And:

g) vii. The site that meets any of the criteria in paragraphs a) through f), above, has not been previously remediated to the satisfaction of the relevant regulatory agency/agencies for any contamination associated with the above uses or site conditions, and the site was not previously assessed in a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) in accordance with All Appropriate Inquiries standards by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, which found no Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC), or a subsequent Phase II that concluded there are no RECs.

b. Standard

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment shall be prepared by a Qualified Environmental Professional in accordance with State standards/guidelines and current professional standards, including the American Society for Testing and

Materials' (ASTM) Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments, to evaluate whether the site, or the surrounding area, is contaminated with hazardous substances from any past or current land uses, including contamination related to the storage, transport, generation, or disposal of toxic or Hazardous Waste or materials.

If the Phase I identifies a Recognized Environmental Condition (REC) and/or if recommended in the Phase I, a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment shall also be prepared by a Qualified Environmental Professional. The Phase I and/or Phase II Environmental Site Assessment(s) shall be maintained pursuant to the proof of compliance requirements in Section I.D.6 and made available for review and inclusion in the case file by the appropriate regulatory agency, such as the State Water Resources Control Board, the State Department of Toxic Substances Control, or the LAFD Hazard Mitigation Program. Any remediation plan recommended in the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment or by the appropriate regulatory agency shall be implemented and, if required, a No Further Action letter, or equivalent letter, shall be issued by the appropriate regulatory agency prior to obtaining a permit for construction from LADBS ~~issuance of any permit from LADBS~~, unless the regulating agency determines that remedial action can be implemented in conjunction with excavation and/or grading. If oversight or approval by a regulatory agency is not required, the Qualified Environmental Professional shall provide written verification of compliance with and completion of the remediation plan, such that the site meets the applicable standards for the proposed use, which shall be maintained pursuant to the proof of compliance requirements in Sec. 1.D.6. (Additional Requirements).

3. HM1-3: Environmental Site Assessment for Residential Projects in close Proximity to Oil Wells

a. **Applicability Threshold**

Any Housing Development Project that results in the construction of five or more dwelling units, and involves requires a grading, or excavation, or building activity (excluding Adaptive Reuse Projects as defined in Div. 14.3. (Glossary) of Chapter 1A of the LAMC) ~~permit from LADBS~~; and which is:

i. ~~Located on or within the following buffers as identified by the by the California Geologic Energy Management Division (refer to <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/WellFinder.aspx>);~~

- ~~1,000 feet of a property identified as having an active oil well or an oil field; or~~
- ~~200 feet of a property identified as having an idle oil well or field; or~~
- ~~100 feet of a property identified as having a plugged oil well or field.~~

And:

i. Within 100 feet of an active, idle or plugged oil well, and

ii. The site has not been previously remediated to the satisfaction of the relevant regulatory agency/agencies for any contamination associated with the above uses or site conditions, and ~~or~~ the site was not previously assessed in a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) in accordance with All Appropriate Inquiries standards by the federal Environmental Protection Agency ~~the prior two years~~, which found no Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC), or a subsequent Phase II that concluded there are no RECs.

b. Standard

~~i. The Project shall comply with the standard of HM1-2 (Environmental Site Assessment(s)) above.~~

~~ii. Additionally, sites within 100 feet of an active, idle, or plugged oil well or field shall have a A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and/or additional studies shall be reviewed in consultation with the Department of City Planning. After this initial review, the Department of City Planning reserves the right to request a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment, and/or additional studies, for a more extensive review of hazardous substances on the project site. Sites within 100 feet of an idle or plugged oil well shall be required to submit a Soils Management Plan approved by a Qualified Environmental Professional. Sites within 100 feet of an active, idle, or plugged oil well shall also be referred to the appropriate regulatory agency for any applicable review, as determined by the Department of City Planning, prior to obtaining a permit for construction from LADBS ~~issuance of any permit from LADBS.~~~~