

Dept. of Natural Resources: Statement on Community Within The Corridor

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today released a statement on the Community Within The Corridor indoor air contamination and resulting evacuation.

The Community Within The Corridor project created two housing units on two properties, separated by 32nd Street, just north of Center Street. The two blocks of buildings, referred to as the west and east blocks, historically had different uses and therefore have different contamination concerns. The east block is an approximately four acre property which was contaminated from over 50 years of manufacturing operations.

When soil and groundwater are contaminated with solvents such as trichloroethylene (TCE), indoor air quality hazards can be present within buildings in the vicinity of the plume. These hazards are caused by the ability of TCE to migrate from soil or groundwater to soil vapor and through the basement or foundation of the structure into the indoor air, a process known as vapor intrusion.

Due to the known contamination from the former industrial site, the possibility of vapor intrusion and the health concerns associated with [acute TCE exposure](#), the DNR repeatedly provided written recommendation to the developer that occupancy should be delayed until testing demonstrated that the vapor mitigation system was effective under all conditions and the indoor air was safe for residential use.

The west block of the project was occupied in July 2022, and the latest indoor air testing results from December 2022 showed that occupancy was safe. At the time,

the DNR was informed the east block was still under development and not yet occupied.

On Jan. 12, 2023, staff from DNR and Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) proactively met with staff at the Milwaukee Department of Health and Neighborhood Services to develop a plan for delaying occupancy of the east block if test results for indoor air quality were elevated based on the known contamination levels beneath the building.

The DNR was not notified that the east block was occupied until March 22, 2023, despite requests to the developer for information on the timeline for occupancy.

The DNR received indoor air test data from the developer on the evening of March 23, 2023 and immediately notified DHS.

Staff from DNR and DHS began working with local officials on the morning of March 24, 2023 in response to the test data. Within hours of notification that the east block was occupied and that the indoor air test data was elevated, state and local officials collectively shut down occupancy and began relocating people.

At this time, the DNR is focused on the need to ensure indoor air quality meets levels safe for occupants and is working with the developer and their consultant to determine next steps for addressing the environmental contamination issues.

For questions about the occupancy permit and the information the City of Milwaukee requires to obtain a permit, please contact the City of Milwaukee.