



Maryland
Department of
the Environment

7340 Wisconsin Avenue (MD1554)

What You Need to Know

Site Location

The 7340 Wisconsin Avenue Property, formerly Bainbridge Bethesda Metro Property, is located at 7340 Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda, Montgomery County, Maryland. The 0.43-acre site is located in a mixed use area of downtown Bethesda. The property is bounded by Wisconsin Avenue to the east, Montgomery Lane to the north, and Hampden Lane to the south. To the west, the property is bounded by a vacant commercial property. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) subway tunnel is located along the eastern boundary at a depth of approximately 90 feet below ground surface and the Bethesda Metro Station Elevator is located to the north of the property across Montgomery Avenue.

The 7340 Wisconsin Avenue Property is zoned as Commercial Residential (CR) and currently consists of a fenced vacant lot with a single story 1775 square foot building surrounded by concrete and gravel areas. The nearest surface water body is an unnamed tributary of the Willet Branch approximately 3,600 feet to the west-southwest. Groundwater flow appears to be towards the northeast possibly influenced by the dewatering system for the WMATA tunnel. The site is served by public utilities.

Site History

According to environmental site assessments (ESAs), prior to 1937 the property was undeveloped land. Between 1937 and 2009, the site served as a fueling station owned by Gulf Oil, Chevron and finally Exxon. The station layout changed several times over this time but the current configuration with building on the western property line dates to 1991. The canopy, dispensers and fuel lines were removed along with the final underground storage tanks (USTs) when the station closed in 2009. The property was transferred to the Exxon Mobil Foundation in 2011 via a Donation Deed requiring (1) no water use or consumption; (2) legal sealing and closure of all exploration locations; (3) installation of an “appropriate” vapor ventilation system below the lowest garage level; (4) installation of an impervious liner below the lowest level foundation system or engineering alternative; and (5) capping of possible contaminated soil in any common areas. The property was then sold to Bainbridge Wisconsin Avenue Apartments, LLC in 2013.

Environmental Investigation

USTs were removed from the site on at least two occasions. In 1994, Handex removed 6 USTs from the property. In 2009, the gas station was permanently closed and 4 USTs (3 gasoline and 1 diesel) were removed by Kleinfelder.

Several Phase I environmental site assessments (ESAs) were conducted at the property in 2009, 2013 and 2022. The ESAs identified impacts from the long history as a gas station as well as a historic laundry facility that operated southwest of the site for 40 years.

Several Phase II ESAs were conducted at the property in 2009, 2013 and 2022 to investigate the impacts of the onsite fueling operations and the offsite laundry facility. The 2009 investigation focused primarily on groundwater and involved the installation of 4 monitoring wells on the property which were then abandoned in 2011. Analysis of groundwater samples revealed volatile organic compounds (VOCs), including both petroleum-derived VOCs and chlorinated VOCs, and total petroleum hydrocarbons diesel range organics (TPH-DRO) and gasoline range organics (GRO) above the MDE Groundwater Standards.

The 2013 Phase II ESA included the installation of three monitoring wells for groundwater sampling as well as soil sampling. Analysis of the groundwater from these wells confirmed the presence of GRP, DRO and VOCs above MDE Groundwater Standards. Soil sampling revealed widespread TPH contamination, in some cases extending the whole depth of the soil profile. The 2022 Phase II ESA entailed re-developing the existing monitoring wells and installing 2 additional wells and 4 new soil borings. Those samples confirmed earlier findings of TPH and VOC impacts to soil and groundwater.

Current Status

On September 11, 2013, Bainbridge Wisconsin Avenue Apartments, LLC submitted a Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) application for the property with plans to develop the property. On October 23, 2013, the Department accepted the 0.43-acre property for future restricted residential use and a Response Action Plan (RAP) was requested to address the contamination in the soil and groundwater at the site. The initial RAP was submitted on April 17, 2014, and the final RAP was accepted by MDE on July 30, 2015. The RAP was never implemented, and the site has been vacant since that time.

On May 5, 2023, a VCP application was submitted by Greystar Development East, LLC seeking a Certificate of Completion as an inculpable person. On June 27, 2023, the property was accepted for future restricted residential use and the inculpable person status was confirmed. Greystar submitted a proposed RAP on July 7, 2023. The Department is currently reviewing the proposed RAP and a public information meeting will be held at the Connie Morella Library on August 14, 2023, at 6 pm. Written comments will be accepted until August 19, 2023.