

ROOSEVELT ISLAND STEAM PLANT DEMOLITION Q&As

On Wednesday, April 15, 2026, representatives from the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), NYC Department of Buildings (DOB), NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) held a townhall discussion at Good Shepherd Chapel on the demolition of the city's old steam plant building. **You can learn more about the city's plans for the demolition, public & environmental safeguards, and transparency efforts below.**

1. GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DEMOLITION

- **When were the demolition orders issued?**

A: In July 2024, the DOB issued two Commissioner Orders to HPD. One of the two Commissioner Orders was an emergency order to seal and secure the site, which was completed by HPD. A second order required HPD to address the conditions of the smokestacks and the steam plant building, via a demolition as soon as possible, with five months being referenced in the order.

- **Why is this demolition urgent?**

A: Public safety is of the highest concern. Collapse of these structures would be immediately hazardous to the community due to the collapse itself and the debris/related contaminants that would be released in an extremely uncontrolled manner. This demolition is highly regulated and necessary based on the DOB assessment.

- **Has HPD secured permits for the demolition?**

A: HPD's contractor is in the process of obtaining permit for the demolition of the main structure.

- **What permits has the contractor, Statewide, received for the demolition?**

A: Statewide has received the following approved permits:

- Make ready (interior removals to enable asbestos abatement accessibility) (DOB)
 - Tightboard fence permit (DOB)
 - Oil tank removal/backfill (DOB)
 - Sidewalk shed (DOB)
 - Stack scaffolding permit (DOB)
 - Machine usage (DOB)
 - Demolition of stacks (DOB)
 - Hydrant (DEP)
 - Torches and generators storage and use (FDNY)
- **What infrastructure will be affected by this demolition?**

A: The order that was issued only relates to the smokestacks and the steam plant building. The connected steam tunnels and the sea wall infrastructure are not within DOB jurisdiction and therefore were not included in the scope of the DOB order and will not be addressed by the work currently being done. The steam tunnel will be closed at the property line.

2. QUESTIONS ABOUT PUBLIC & ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS

- **What are the risks of a collapse?**

A: Safety from the collapse of the smokestacks or the building structure is primary. Collapse of these structures would be immediately hazardous to the community due to the collapse itself and the debris/related contaminants that would be released in an extremely uncontrolled manner. Demolition of the structure and the stacks has not yet begun.
- **How will air quality be monitored?**

A: Air sampling related to asbestos will be ongoing daily by a third party, in accord with DOL and DEP regulation, and will be sent to the lab every day once asbestos work begins. Sampling will occur outside the abatement work area near the entrance, near the negative air machines and near the barriers that isolate the area from the surrounding areas. Results are obtained by the air monitor once testing is completed by the lab, generally by the next day. If any issues are detected, the work stops and steps will be taken to identify and fix the problem. Air monitoring results will be released on a weekly basis on the RIOC website.

- In terms of dust related to the demolition itself, workers will manage dust control in accordance with DEP regulations.
 - You can read more on the DEP's rules pertaining to the prevention of the emission of dust from construction related activities [here](#).

- **How will asbestos abatement be controlled?**

A: Asbestos removal will be filed with and enforced in accordance with DEP, DOL and EPA regulations. Our demolition unit has experience understanding the requirements and implementing the asbestos testing and monitoring, and our contractor Statewide is certified as an asbestos company/DOL Asbestos Handling Certificate. Before HPD selected a contractor for demolition, preliminary environmental testing was completed as required by regulation, identifying asbestos in certain areas of the building and none in the smokestacks. The asbestos abatement work is expected to take 6-8 weeks.

- **What is the procedure for asbestos abatement?**

A: Preparation for the asbestos removal, including removing other unnecessary debris from the site and preparing for the containment is currently in progress and expected to be completed by approximately May 8, 2026. During asbestos abatement, the entire area is sealed off with plastic sheeting, and all workers are equipped with the proper safety equipment. Various regulated engineering controls are put in-place to maintain the integrity of the contained work area, as such will be reviewed and approved by DEP prior to being implemented. Clean-up will occur at the end of every day, at which asbestos will be wrapped in bags and placed in a transport vehicle by a certified transport company to bring to the landfill specifically permitted to receive asbestos. PLEASE NOTE: Removed asbestos can be stored at the site for 10 calendar days in a sealed lined container, as per the DOL Industrial Code Rule 56 Sec 8.9(d).

- **What are the measures in place to address potential dust exposure?**

A: Dust control in general is regulated at all demolition sites, where the goal is to minimize any dispersion. Dust dispersion activities are being done as required and materials that are being removed from the site are being removed in a contained manner. During active demolition work, dust

control, which includes controlling potential lead dust, will be managed via a self-irrigation misting system. This code-compliant dust control method will be implemented during all demolition activities requiring such actions..

- **What are the procedures in place for transporting materials from the demolition site?**

A: The hauling of any regulated materials will be in accord with Regulatory Guidelines (I.E. Asbestos – Title 15, Chapter 1). All carting trucks leaving the site carrying debris are covered with an automatic tarp system or are in sealed containers. Since the inception of the project, vehicles hauling debris from the demolition have been fully covered.

- **Was there an oil spill during oil tank removal?**

A: DEC’s initial assessment of the conditions at the site concluded that there was a historic spill that predated HPD’s work at this site. These tanks were no longer filled with oil or in use at the time HPD began managing this work. The tanks were emptied, decommissioned and closed in-place with foam by the NYC Health & Hospital Corporation in 2020. This again pre-dates HPD’s involvement by years. As part of the current progress, Statewide removed residual liquid and foam from the 12 tanks, and the steel tanks were cut and carted offsite for recycling. During the tank removal, Statewide uncovered dirt that appeared discolored and had an odor of oil. Suspected contaminated dirt was piled on heavy plastic to ensure separation from the topsoil; no soil has been removed from the site. Statewide sent the soil for testing. DEC observed conditions on the site and recommended additional precautionary steps to keep the dirt covered until appropriate removal can be contracted. HPD will continue engaging with DEC to ensure that our contractor is following all best practices and recommendations for the soil removal

- **How will road traffic on the island and incoming/outgoing MTA service be affected?**

A: Statewide has been working with RIOC to mitigate any traffic impacts to the extent possible and remains committed to working

cooperatively to address the concerns of the residents.

- **Will the contractor utilize barging to reduce the impact on road traffic?**

A: Statewide is working closely with RIOC and the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to determine the feasibility of barging, including how it would impact the EDC Ferry. Even if barging is feasible, hauling via truck will still be necessary given the types of debris and amount of debris for removal.

3. QUESTIONS ABOUT TRANSPARENCY EFFORTS

- **What are your plans to keep the Roosevelt Island community in the loop on the demolition?**

A: HPD will continue working with RIOC to provide timelines, updates once different workstreams – such as asbestos abatement and demolition – begins. HPD committed to sharing air monitoring reports.

- **I have more questions. Who can I contact?**

A: You can reach out directly to HPD at RIDemolition@hpd.nyc.gov with any additional questions. RIOC also has a dedicated page on their website with details on this demolition.