

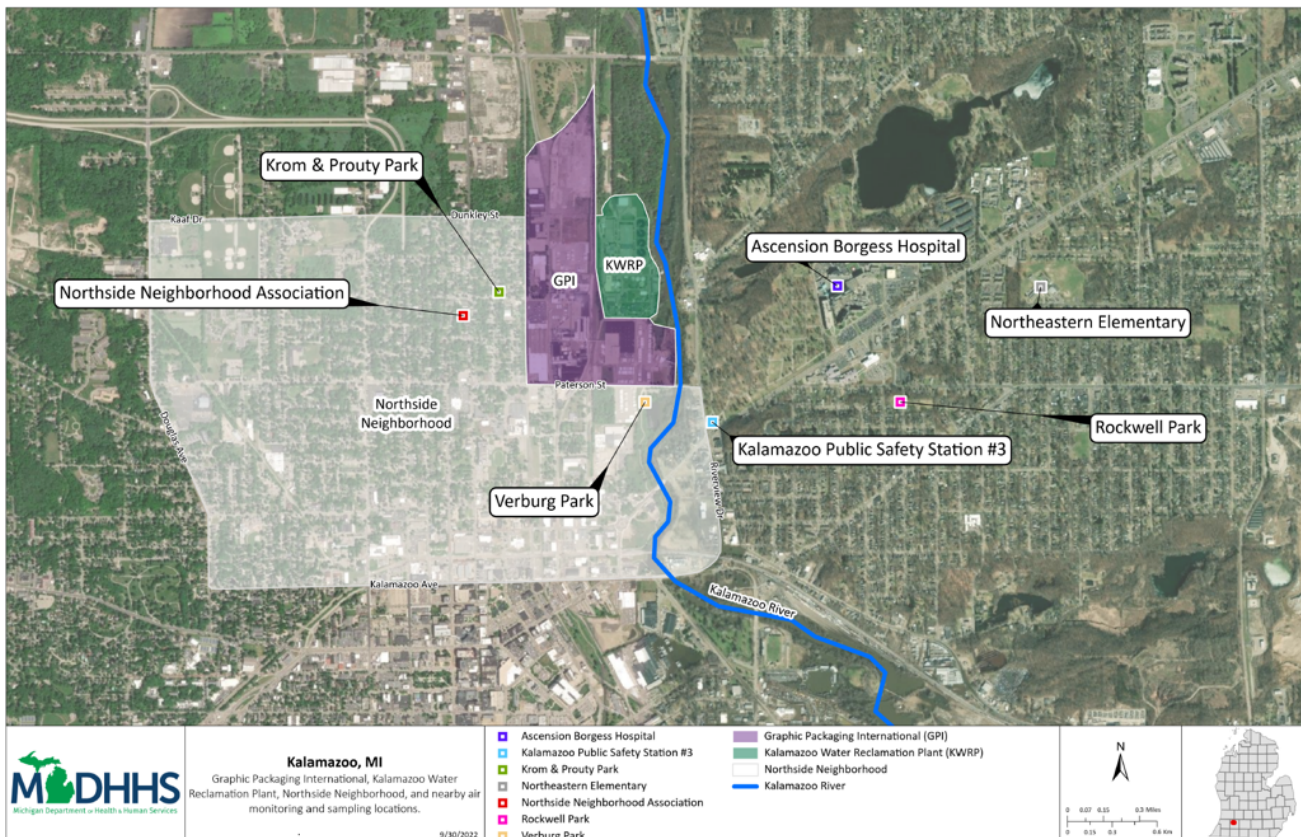
Summary of Community Air Evaluation in Kalamazoo

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) finished the Health Consultation of reduced sulfur compounds (RSCs), including hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the air of communities near Graphic Packaging International (GPI) and the Kalamazoo Water Reclamation Plant (KWRP). This evaluation was done to learn if current levels of RSCs and VOCs in these communities may lead to an increased risk of health effects.

MDHHS has concluded:

- People with a lifetime of exposure to levels of H₂S measured in the air in communities close to GPI and KWRP are at increased risk of developing persistent nasal irritation, such as discomfort or inflammation, in addition to the odors causing more temporary health effects like headaches.
- H₂S and other VOCs were at high enough levels in the air that people may detect odors. Individuals who are sensitive to odors may experience temporary health effects including headaches, nausea and eye irritation in addition to respiratory effects.
- Asthma prevalence and asthma-related hospitalization rates in the communities surrounding GPI and KWRP are not significantly higher than comparable measures for Michigan as a whole, based on available data.

Map of investigation area:



MDHHS Recommendations:

For agencies and businesses...

- Install air sampling equipment at appropriate locations in the community in order to quantify amounts of H₂S attributable to GPI and KWRP.
- Take actions that will lower H₂S released to the community.
- Continue to monitor and sample RSCs, including H₂S and VOCs, specifically formaldehyde, for the purpose of further assessing long-term exposures.

For community members...

- People with asthma should take their control and rescue medications as prescribed by their doctors. If you have questions about your own health, contact your health care provider.
- For community members with existing respiratory problems or sensitivity to odors, stay indoors and avoid outdoor physical activity when environmental odors are noticeable.

What's Next?

MDHHS will:



Provide a copy of this Health Consultation to EGLE.



Continue to keep community members informed of any new findings.



Evaluate new data as it becomes available.



Continue to evaluate the best available science regarding risks associated with RSC and VOC exposure and asthma related outcomes.

To read the full Health Consultation, visit Michigan.gov/EnviroHealth.

If you have questions or concerns about H₂S exposure, call the MDHHS Environmental Health Hotline at 800-648-6942.