NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF

ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSERVATION

This fact sheet serves to announce a Public Meeting regarding the beginning of Remedial Action for the Rockaway Park Manufactured Gas Plant site.

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Public Meeting

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Scholars Academy
320 Beach 104th Street
Queens, New York 11694

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Peninsula Branch
92-25 Rockaway Beach Blvd.
Rockaway Beach, NY 11693
(718) 634-1110

New York State DEC
Region 2 Headquarters
1 Hunters Point Plaza
47-40 21st Street
Long Island City, NY
11101-5407
(718) 482-4900

Community Board 14
1931 Mott Avenue
Far Rockaway, NY 11694
(718) 471-7300

FACT SHEET

October 2008

Rockaway Park MGP SITE
SITE No. 2-41-029
Beach Channel Drive
Queens, NY 11694

Remedial Action for the Rockaway Park MGP Site

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Public Meeting Announced

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The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Department), working cooperatively with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), seeks to inform the public about the implementation by Keyspan/National Grid of a remedy to address soil and groundwater contamination at the Rockaway Park Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) site (also known as "the Site") in Queens, NY.

On Wednesday, October 15, a Public Meeting will be held from 6:30 pm - 9 pm in the auditorium of the Scholars Academy, 320 Beach 104th Street . This meeting is being held to provide further information to the community about the remedy, particularly regarding the transportation of contaminated material from the site. As prescribed in the Department's Record of Decision (ROD), issued in October of 2004, the main components of the remedy are:

- Removal of soil and any fill material to an approximate depth of eight feet below grade over most of the site to remove coal tar wastes.
- Installation of Dense Non-Aqueous-Phase Liquid (DNAPL) migration barriers to prevent the migration of any remaining contamination towards Jamaica Bay. One barrier will be installed along the northern perimeter of the site, south of Beach Channel Drive. A second barrier will be installed on the bulkhead property north of Beach Channel Drive.
- Installation of DNAPL collection wells at various locations around the site and on the bulkhead property.
- The placement of two feet of clean soil across the entire site.

The construction will begin with the installation of onsite support facilities (trailers, etc.). After that, some pre-excavation work will occur. This will include finding and capping any subsurface utilities, and the erection of a large "tent" – a temporary fabric enclosure that will completely contain the active excavation area. The purpose of this enclosure is to minimize both the offsite odor and dust effects. The tent will be moved on a regular basis to follow the excavation work as it progresses.

Transport of Contaminated Material

One goal of this project is to minimize the impacts of the transport of contaminated material from the site. As part of an effort to minimize these impacts, the Department requested an analysis of all potential options, including barging. Only one potentially feasible mooring location for barge loading was identified, a Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) owned by the City of New

York, which is presently used for the loading of sewage sludge from the plant.

Because of significant technical and logistical challenges, barging the contaminated soil from the site would not be a viable option. In response to requests from the public and elected officials that barging be examined further, the Department has compiled more detailed information evaluating the potential for the removal of contaminated soil via barge.

This evaluation has determined that barging would not be feasible at this site for the following reasons:

- The dock area does not have sufficient space to allow for the maneuvering and unloading of the heavy duty trucks carting the contaminated soils.
- Significant erosion is undermining portions of the dock area creating structural deficiencies.
- The bulkhead area owned and maintained by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection would require major upgrades to handle the loading and unloading process.
- Significant street work and curb cuts would likely be necessary to allow trucks safe access to the WWTP.
- Absent such street modifications, trucks would be forced to use a turnabout near Beach Channel High School and could have a detrimental impact on traffic patterns.
- Loading times could be lengthy, taking as much as one business day to fully load a barge.

Given these constraints, trucking remains the only feasible option for removing contaminated material from the site. Trucking has proven to be a safe transportation method with thousands of truckloads of MGP contaminated soil being transported from various remedial projects across the state.

All trucks transporting contaminated fill from the site will be lined, covered, and an odor control foam will be used when necessary. Each truck will be inspected before leaving the site. All trucks will follow a set route, using City-designated truck routes to minimize impact to residential areas. Truck drivers will only be on site during a limited time and will be required to follow a strict set of rules to help minimize their impacts on the community.

Site Investigation

From 1999 through 2002, field work was performed to define the nature and extent of the contamination at the Rockaway Park MGP site. This work included the collection of surface and subsurface soil, groundwater, soil vapor, and ambient air samples for analysis.

The two main contaminants at MGP plants are coal tar and purifier waste. Coal tar is a thick black substance which was a byproduct of the gas production process. The coal tar was precipitated out of the gas before it was sent to homes. The coal tar typically appears as a Dense Non-aqueous Phase Liquid (DNAPL) that is a flowable product which does not mix with water and is denser than water. Purifier waste was produced when the gas was passed through purifiers to remove certain chemical impurities. The main chemical of concern of purifier waste is cyanide. Both coal tar and purifier waste are subsurface soil contaminants and are sources of groundwater contamination.

The chemicals of concern at this site are residues of the former MGP process and include Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's), Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds (SVOC's), and cyanide. The VOC's of concern are benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene. Together they are known as BTEX. The SVOC's of concern are polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). BTEX and PAHs are the primary constituents of coal tar.

For More Information

call or write the following staff about:

Technical Issues:
Douglas MacNeal, P.E.
Environmental Engineer
NYSDEC
625 Broadway
11th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-7014
Phone: (518) 402-9564
E-mail: dkmacnea@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Health-Related Information:
Stephanie Selmer
NYSDOH
Flanigan Square
547 River Street
Troy, New York 12180-2216
Phone: (800) 458-1158 ext. 27880