EXPLANATION OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE
NATIONAL GRID ONEIDA SCONONDOA STREET

Former Manufactured Gas Plant

Oneida (C) / Madison County / Registry No. 7-27-008 / November 2007

Prepared by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Environmental Remediation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Explanation of Significant Difference (ESD) is to document a change in the selected remedy for the Oneida Sconondoa Street Former Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP). Based on the increased availability of off-site treatment facilities and lack of available space at the site due to recent construction, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has approved a change in the disposal method for excavated soils from on-site treatment and backfilling to off-site treatment and disposal.

The Oneida Sconondoa Street site includes the 1.84-acre former MGP operations area, which is currently a National Grid service center, and the adjacent and extended sections of the Tailrace Channel, a tributary to Oneida Creek. Both areas are located in the City of Oneida, Madison County. In June 2000, the NYSDEC issued a Record of Decision (ROD) which selected a remedy to address MGP tar and associated contaminants in site groundwater, soils and sediments. The 2000 ROD selected excavation and off-site treatment of contaminated soils and dredged sediment.

Following the June 2000 ROD, a pre-design investigation was performed by National Grid to provide additional information for the remedial design. The results of this investigation indicated that the extent of soil requiring remediation was significantly greater than the volume estimated in the ROD. Based on the additional characterization of the site, the estimated volume of soils to be excavated increased from approximately 11,890 cubic yards to 61,500 cubic yards. This finding resulted in a request by National Grid to reconsider the feasibility of the site remedy. Based on this request, the selected remedy was re-evaluated and an Amended Record of Decision (AROD), was issued in January 2002. In addition to the greater volume of soil to be excavated, the AROD specified on-site treatment of contaminated soils using a low temperature thermal desorption (LTTD) unit, to be located at the City of Oneida Department of Public Works (DPW) property, as the preferred disposal method.

This preference was based on concerns for short term truck traffic which were raised by the City and the then-limited availability of off-site LTTD treatment facilities to accept the increased volume of material at that time. The limited number of commercial LTTD facilities in the region was a concern due to both potential delays to the project schedule and the uncertainty of project costs. Since the AROD was issued, however, additional off-site LTTD facilities have been developed, and off-site treatment capacities and costs have become more reliable and competitive. In addition, the amount of available space on the DPW property for the operation of an LTTD unit and supporting activities has decreased due to the recent construction of a salt shed. Further, the City of Oneida has withdrawn their previous request for National Grid to treat the material on-site and limit truck traffic on city streets in the vicinity of the site.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND ORIGINAL REMEDY

The National Grid Sconondoa Street site is a former manufactured gas plant (MGP), where gas for lighting and heating homes and businesses was produced. The Sconondoa Street MGP operated from 1899 to 1930. Gas manufacturing operations at the site were phased out between 1928 and 1930. The 25,000 cubic foot gas holder, cistern, oil tanks, and purifiers were removed in 1930. The carbureted gas production room was demolished in 1942. In the first half of the 20th century, a series of consolidations of utility companies ultimately resulted in the acquisition of the site by Niagara Mohawk in 1950 and National Grid in 2001. Final demolition of MGP structures, including the 100,000 cubic foot distribution holder took place between 1963 and 1964 to make way for the Niagara Mohawk Corporation Service Center. The current site has remained essentially unchanged since the construction of a service center addition in 1974 and recent construction of an additional building on neighboring City-owned property.

The production of manufactured gas created many by-products, some of which remained on the site. A dense, oily liquid known as MGP tar would condense out of the gas at various stages during its production, purification, and distribution. Although much of the tar produced by plants was typically reused or sold, recovery of the tar was incomplete. Significant amounts of tar leaked or was discharged from storage and processing facilities over the life of the plant, contaminating subsurface soils and groundwater on the site.

The NYSDEC and Niagara Mohawk entered into a Consent Order in 1992. A revised Consent Order was mutually agreed to on November 7, 2003. These Orders require National Grid, successor to Niagara Mohawk, to implement a full remedial program for 23 former MGP sites located across New York State.

3.0 CURRENT STATUS AND SCHEDULE

National Grid has developed a remedial design work plan to implement the remedy specified in the 2002 AROD. This design includes detailed plans and specifications for the first phase of excavation in the source area located behind the service center. Remediation of the Phase 1 area is scheduled to begin in December 2007. The work plan also contains a schedule for National Grid to submit design plans for, and perform the remediation of, the Phase 2 and 3 areas. Phase 2 remediation includes excavation of the tail race channel, which is scheduled to begin in November 2008. Phase 3 construction will follow in 2010.

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE

The result of this ESD is to change the disposal method for contaminated soils and sediments from on-site LTTD with on-site backfilling of the treated soil to offsite LTTD and disposal of the soil. Although this change in the remedy will result in some increase in the short term impacts to the community through increased truck traffic, these impacts will be mitigated by the phased approach and schedule outlined above. National Grid, in consultation with the City of Oneida and the NYSDEC, has also developed a specific truck route (see attached figure) to minimize disruption to local residents and businesses.

This Explanation of Significant Difference will become part of the Administrative Record for this Site. The information here is a summary of what can be found in greater detail in documents that have been placed in the following repositories:

Oneida Public Library 220 Broad Street Oneida, NY 13421 Attn: Reference Librarian (315) 363-3050	NYSDEC Region 7 Office 615 Erie Blvd. West Syracuse, NY 13204 Attn: Gregg Townsend (315) 426-7551	NYSDEC 625 Broadway, 11th Floor Albany, NY 12233-7014 Attn: Anthony Karwiel (518) 402-9662

5.0 MORE INFORMATION

Interested persons are invited to contact the Department's Project Manager for this site to obtain more information or have questions answered. The project manager for this site is Anthony Karwiel, who can be contacted in writing at 625 Broadway, Albany, New York, 12233-7014; by telephone at (518) 402-9662; or by email at alkarwie@gw.dec.state.ny.us . For site-related health information, please contact Melissa Menetti at (800) 458-1158 ext. 27860.

11/5/2007
Date

Anthony Karwiel, Project Manager
Section D, Remedial Bureau C

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Date

George Heitzman, Section Chief
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11/5/07
Date

Robert W. Schick, Director
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Salvatore Ervolina, Assistant Director
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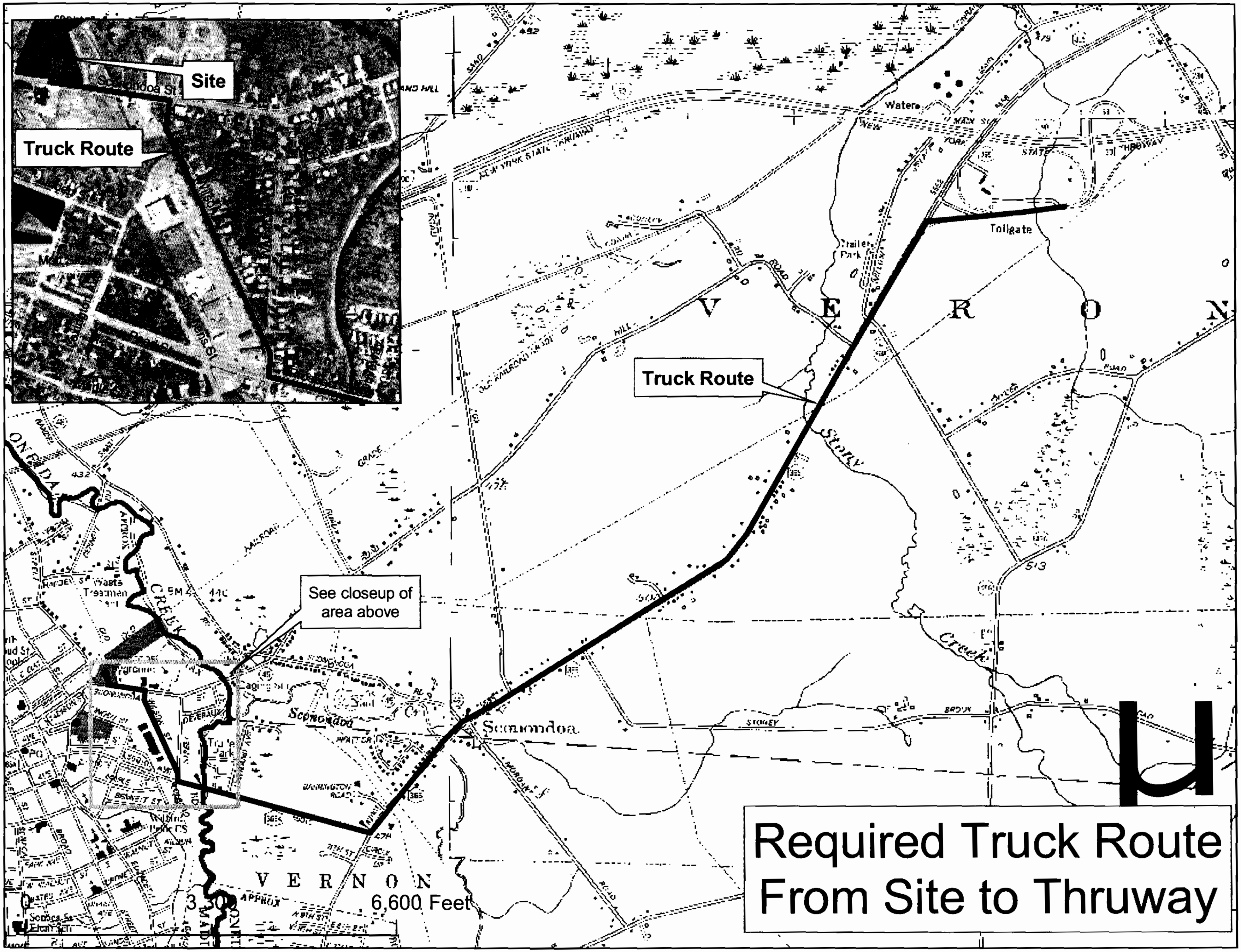

Required Truck Route From Site to Thruway