



# FACT SHEET

## Manufactured Gas Plant Program

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Site Name: NFG – Hornell MGP

DEC Site #: 851032

Address: Corner of Franklin St and Canisteo St  
Hornell, NY 14843

Have questions?  
See  
"Who to Contact"  
Below

### **Investigation Completed at Former Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) Site; Results Will Help to Evaluate Ways to Address Contamination**

National Fuel Gas (NFG), under the oversight of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), has completed an environmental investigation at the NFG – Hornell Manufactured Gas Plant site (“site”) located at the corner of Franklin St and Canisteo St, Hornell, Steuben County. Please see the map for the site location.

NYSDEC has approved a report, called a “Remedial Investigation (RI) Report,” that describes the results of the site investigation and calls for the development of a remedy to address the contamination that was found. The RI Report and other documents related to the investigation and cleanup of this site can be found at the location identified below under “Where to Find Information.”

#### **Highlights of the Remedial Investigation Report**

The RI was conducted between late 2011 and 2013. Field investigations included the collection and analysis of samples from surface and subsurface soil, soil vapor, indoor air, and groundwater.

Coal tar is the primary contaminant of concern for former MGP sites. This is an oily black liquid with a distinctive and unpleasant odor that was formed as a byproduct of the gas manufacturing process. Visible coal tar was found in subsurface soils in the central area of the site, associated with the foundations of the former MGP structures, which are still present in the subsurface. The most heavily impacted interval on-site was from 4 to 20 feet below ground surface (bgs). Some of the tar has moved downward to depths of approximately 30 feet.

Tar has also migrated laterally a short distance off site to the south, where it is present in a roughly one foot thick layer at a depth of approximately 30 feet. Human exposure to this contamination at depth is highly unlikely. The tar has spread laterally to the east but has not reached as far as the Maple City Inn (the Inn), (formerly the Comfort Inn).

Groundwater which comes into contact with the tar becomes contaminated by dissolving some of the chemicals contained in the tar. The highest concentrations of groundwater contaminants are found in the immediate vicinity of heavily contaminated soils, near the central portion of the site. Although this contaminated groundwater has migrated along with ordinary groundwater flow, it has not gone very far. Off-site groundwater impacts were found immediately south of the site boundary, but do not extend as far as the residences along Albion Street.

Contaminated groundwater is not being used for drinking water, since the area is served by a public water supply, and there are no known domestic water supply wells in the area. Consequently, human exposures to the contaminated groundwater are considered unlikely.

Surface soil at the site is generally covered with grass, with the Inn and its parking lot covering the eastern portion of the site. A small area of surface soil along the northwest side of the site, where hardened tar was observed in 2010, was excavated and restored with topsoil to prevent exposure to underlying MGP contamination. One surface soil sample obtained from the west side of the site exhibited chemical concentrations above a cleanup guidance level. However, the rest of the surface soil samples, including one right next to this one, showed concentrations well below that guidance level so exposures are not expected at a level of concern.

Minor soil vapor impacts were found in the subsurface at the site and beneath adjacent properties. However, no MGP-related impacts were found in indoor air of several adjacent homes, or at the Inn.

The RI Report includes a human health exposure assessment, which indicates that a subsurface utility worker performing excavation work at the site could potentially be exposed to coal tar contaminants in soil or groundwater. Subsurface work should only be performed by properly trained and equipped personnel.

### **Next Steps**

A Feasibility Study will be conducted based on information obtained during the investigation to achieve the following:

- 1) define the objectives of the site cleanup program;
- 2) develop cleanup alternatives; and
- 3) analyze the alternatives and recommend a cleanup strategy.

Following review and approval of the Feasibility Study, NYSDEC will develop a draft cleanup plan, called a “Proposed Remedial Action Plan,” which will describe the remedy preferred by NYSDEC to address contamination related to the site. The draft cleanup plan will discuss the cleanup alternatives which were considered and explain the reasons for choosing or rejecting each one. The goal of the plan will be to ensure the protection of public health and the environment. NYSDEC will announce the draft cleanup plan in a future fact sheet and present it to the public for review and comment during a 30-day comment period. A public meeting will be held during the comment period.

NYSDEC will keep the public informed throughout the investigation and cleanup of the site.

### **Background**

The NFG – Hornell MGP site is one of approximately 300 former MGP sites that existed across New York from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to the early-20<sup>th</sup> century. These plants provided combustible gas for lighting, heating, and cooking, which was used in much the same way that natural gas is used today. Freshly manufactured gas had to be cooled and purified before it could be used. The cooling and purification process produced coal tar, an oily black liquid, some of which was released to the environment from subsurface tanks and piping. The coal tar contains a number of chemical contaminants, primarily benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene (BTEX) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

The Hornell plant, operated by NFG’s predecessor companies, operated during two distinct time periods. The plant first operated from approximately 1873 through 1898. Manufactured gas production was then replaced by natural gas from the nearby oil fields, and the plant stood idle for a

period of roughly two decades. In approximately 1926, manufactured gas production resumed at the site and continued until 1932, when larger supplies of natural gas from deep wells in the area became available and manufactured gas production ceased permanently. Thereafter, the site was used for natural gas storage and distribution until about 1969, when the last gas holder was removed from the site.

The soil and groundwater impacts which were found by the investigation appear to be associated with the oldest generation of gas production in the 1800's. Shallow soils in the areas of the newer, 1920s-era MGP structures are generally not impacted, implying that the deeper MGP impacts are due to migration from the older MGP features at the upgradient, or west, side of the site.

Additional site details, including environmental and health assessment summaries, are available on NYSDEC's website at:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/cfm/external/derexternal/haz/details.cfm?pageid=3&progno=851032>

**About the Manufactured Gas Plant Program:** NYSDEC has one of the most aggressive Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) site investigation and remediation programs in the country. Since the problems associated with the former MGP sites were identified, NYSDEC has been working with all the utilities on a state-wide basis to identify and address the issue of MGP sites for which they may have responsibility. This effort has resulted in approximately 235 sites identified for action by the eight utilities operating in New York State.

Currently we have multi-site orders or agreements with six utilities, including NFG, and several other individual site volunteers, to address 222 MGP sites in NYS. Multi-site agreements are under negotiation with a seventh utility and several other responsible parties which have newly-identified sites.

NYSDEC continues to seek to identify any other possible MGP sites throughout the State.

For more information about the NYSDEC's MGP program, visit: [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8430.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8430.html)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Where to Find Information

Project documents are available at the following locations to help the public to stay informed.

Hornell Public Library

64 Genesee Street

Hornell, NY 14843

(607) 324-1210

Monday-Thursday 10 AM – 8 PM

Friday 10 AM – 5 PM

Saturday 10 AM – 2 PM (closed June – August)

Sunday Closed

NYSDEC

625 Broadway, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor

Albany, NY 12233-7014

By appointment, contact William Wu

(518) 402-9662

NYSDEC Region 8 Office

6274 Avon-Lima Road

Avon, NY 14414-9519

(585) 226-5324

Monday – Friday 8 AM – 5 PM

## Who to Contact

Comments and questions are always welcome and should be directed as follows:

### Project Related Questions

William Wu  
Project Manager  
NYSDEC  
625 Broadway, 11th Floor  
Albany, NY 12233-7014  
(518) 402-9662  
william.wu@dec.ny.gov

### Site-Related Health Questions

Wendy Kuehner  
New York State Department of Health  
Bureau of Environmental Exposure Investigation  
Empire State Plaza  
Corning Tower, Room 1787  
Albany, NY 12237  
(518) 402-7860  
beei@health.ny.gov

### To direct questions to NFG, please contact:

Ms. Karen Merkel  
NFG Corporate Communications  
(716) 857-7654

**We encourage you to share this fact sheet with neighbors and tenants, and/or post this fact sheet in a prominent area of your building for others to see.**

### **Receive Site Fact Sheets by Email**

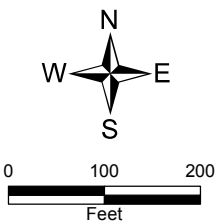
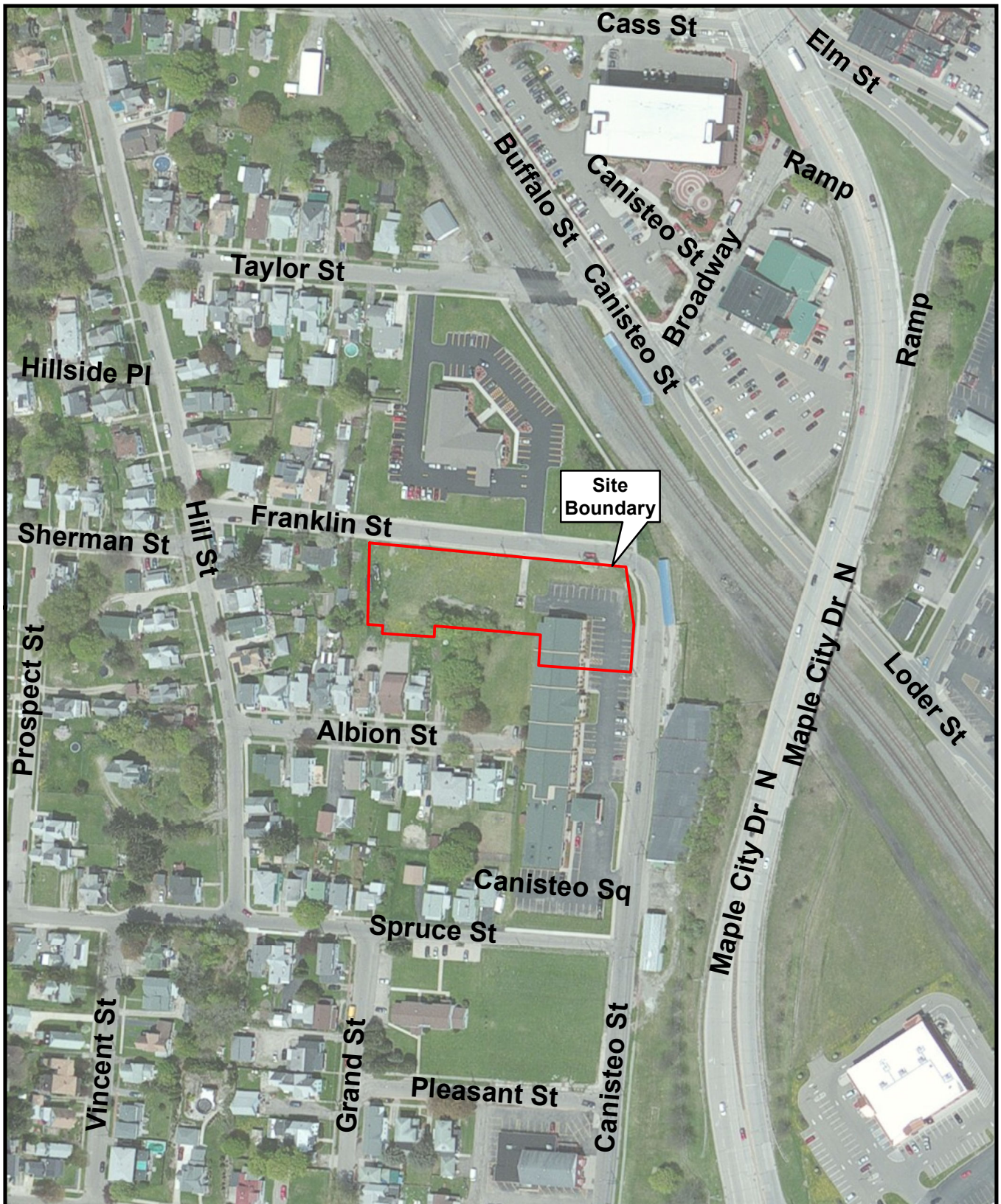
Have site information such as this fact sheet sent right to your email inbox. NYSDEC invites you to sign up with one or more contaminated sites county email listservs available at the following web page:  
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html>. It's quick, it's free, and it will help keep you *better informed*.



As a listserv member, you will periodically receive site-related information/announcements for all contaminated sites in the county(ies) you select.

Note: Please disregard if you already have signed up and received this fact sheet electronically.





**Figure**  
**Site Map**  
 NFG - Hornell MGP  
 City of Hornell, Steuben County  
 Site No. 851032



**Department of  
 Environmental  
 Conservation**