NEW YORK STATE | Department of Environmental Conservation

February 2016

FACT SHEET

State Superfund Program

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Site Name: Gastown MGP Tonawanda
DEC Site #: 915171
Address: 126 East Niagara Street; Tonawanda, NY 14150
Website: http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58387.html

Have questions? See "Who to Contact" Below

Cleanup Nearly Complete at State Superfund Site

Environmental cleanup is nearly complete at the Gastown MGP Site at 126 East Niagara Street, Tonawanda. With winter weather having arrived, the operations will be shutting down for the season in early February. All onsite work is now complete, and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) expects that the property at 126 East Niagara Street will be returned to the owner by late winter. Next spring, work will resume for less than two weeks to complete the few remaining offsite tasks.

Highlights of Cleanup Activities Completed

The goal of the cleanup action for the site is to achieve cleanup levels that protect public health and the environment. To date, those activities completed include:

1. Buildings E, F, G, and H (see attached map) were demolished in order to access the contamination underneath them;

2. Contaminated onsite areas were excavated to approximately 6 feet;

3. Deeper contamination onsite was permanently immobilized in place using in-situ solidification;

4. The foundation of the one remaining gas holder and its contents have been excavated and disposed offsite;

5. Sediment in Tonawanda Creek, along the south shore over an area approximately 80 by 160 feet, has been excavated, put into the previously excavated gas holder hole and solidified using the same in-situ solidification techniques that were used for the rest of the site; and

6. Two underground collection trenches have been constructed immediately east and west of the Sportsmen's Club building, and another has been constructed along the shore of Tonawanda Creek to prevent any contaminants under the remaining buildings and other inaccessible areas from migrating offsite.

Cleanup Activities Remaining

Approximately two weeks' worth of work remains in offsite areas. With the arrival of warmer weather in April, work will resume for less than two weeks to complete the few offsite tasks remaining, which include:

1. Installing two wells to collect coal tar located approximately 20 feet below the ground surface west of the rail line. (This task may be completed over the winter.)
2. Repaving the stretch of the bike path along Tonawanda Creek that was disturbed during the cleanup along the shore;
3. Seeding and planting shrubs along the bank of the creek; and
4. Seeding other offsite areas which were disturbed during the cleanup.

Next Steps

After completion of the cleanup activities, National Fuel Gas will prepare a Final Engineering Report. The Final Engineering Report will describe the cleanup activities completed and certify that cleanup requirements have been achieved or will be achieved.

Since the remedy will result in contamination above unrestricted levels remaining at the site, a site management plan (SMP) will be developed and implemented. The SMP will include the institutional controls and engineering controls to:

1. Address residual contaminated soils that could be excavated from the site during future redevelopment;
2. Evaluate the potential for vapor intrusion for any buildings developed on the site, including provision for mitigation of any impacts identified;
3. Provide for the operation and maintenance of the components of the remedy, including collection of contaminants from the three collection trenches;
4. Monitor the groundwater and soil gas;
5. Identify any use restrictions on site development or groundwater use; and,
6. Provide a groundwater monitoring program including installing monitoring wells and sampling them on a periodic basis.

Institutional controls will limit the use and development of the property to commercial or industrial uses only, and will restrict use of groundwater as a source of potable or process water, without necessary water quality treatment as determined by Erie County Department of Health.

Background

Location: The Former Gastown MGP Site is located in a small industrial area surrounded by residential neighborhoods in the city of Tonawanda, Erie County.

Site Features: The site, which is flat, is occupied by a complex of commercial buildings. The site is bounded to the west and south by a railroad embankment, to the north by the Tonawanda Creek, a part of the Barge Canal system and to the east by The Gastown Sportsmen's Club.

Current Zoning/Use(s): The site is zoned for commercial and industrial use. The buildings on the site are used by a number of small businesses.

Past Use of the Site: A manufactured gas plant (MGP) was operated at this site by the Tonawanda Gas Light Company, starting in 1884. Initially, gas was manufactured using the coal carbonization process. The carbureted water gas process was added in 1910, and the plant produced gas using both processes until 1921. Both processes produced an oily byproduct, commonly known as coal tar, as

the gas was cooled prior to distribution. The tar typically accumulated in the bottom of a circular gas storage vessel known as a relief gas holder. This structure remains in the subsurface at the northeast corner of the site. This tar is the principal contaminant at the site today.

In 1993, DEC's Spills Unit responded to a complaint at the Gastown Sportsmen's Club, near the eastern site boundary, where an unknown petroleum product was entering the basement sump of the club. Investigation revealed that the material found in the sump was likely coal tar related to the MGP next door. DEC investigated the site and in 1998 installed a system to: 1) eliminate to the extent possible the continued entrance of coal tar into the sumps, 2) remove coal tar and contaminated water that did enter the sumps, and 3) vent potentially hazardous organic vapors from the sump area. The system remains in operation today.

A State funded remedial investigation (RI) was completed in 2004 and the feasibility study (FS) was completed in 2005. Coal tar was found to have migrated off site to the east, west and north. A Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in March 2007, requiring installation of sub-slab depressurization systems in several buildings near the site, excavation of source areas, collection trenches to control migration, and sediment removal in Tonawanda Creek.

National Fuel Gas signed a consent order in July 2008 to implement the ROD. Sub-slab depressurization systems have been installed and are operating. A metal tank (one of the source areas described in the ROD) was removed in late 2009.

In April 2013 an amendment to the ROD was approved. The amendment includes: (a) Use of in-situ solidification resulting in less excavation and less truck traffic, (b) Substituting less intrusive tar collection wells for a 600-foot-long tar collection trench, and (c) The temporary relocation of only 3 of the 8 businesses onsite with less disruption to those businesses remaining onsite during the remediation.

Site Geology and Hydrogeology: There are four geologic units below the site. The first encountered below the ground surface (bgs) is man-made fill, ranging in thickness from a few inches to 22 feet. A recent alluvium deposit, made up largely of interbedded layers of sand and silt, lies beneath the fill. This unit extends down to a depth ranging from 12 to 24 feet bgs. Underlying the alluvium is a layer of coarser sand and gravel, which in turn is underlain by a red clay, which is the hydraulic base at this site.

The water table is typically 6 feet bgs. Groundwater flow is primarily to the north, towards Tonawanda Creek. There are also components of groundwater flow both to the east and to the west. This groundwater flow pattern has resulted in the migration of contamination in three directions.

Offsite Investigation Results

Last spring, based on reports of possible coal tar in a sanitary sewer line near the corner East Niagara Street and Carney Street, a DEC contractor conducted an extensive camera investigation of sanitary sewer lines east, west, and north of the site. All accessible sanitary sewer lines were videotaped, looking for possible coal tar. The physical condition of the sewer line made video inspection difficult and time-consuming. There were a number of locations where the sections of pipe had been crushed and places where the alignment of the pipe was offset enough so that the camera was not able to pass. The City of Tonawanda cleaned the sewers near the site and during a second attempt an additional 771 feet of sewer was videotaped.

In the more than 3,400 feet of sewer inspected, no clearly identifiable coal tar was observed. However, the camera did produce tentative evidence of tar infiltration at the point where there appeared to be a break in the sewer line under Carney Street. At this location a small sinkhole had formed in the street above the break. This location was approached from both directions, and an oily residue which smelled like coal tar was observed on the camera surface. Unfortunately, there was not enough oily residue to allow a lab to analyze the substance to confirm if it was coal tar.

With the sewer nearly blocked, and with some uncertainty as to whether coal tar contamination was present in the area, DEC agreed to call in a state contractor to conduct the excavation necessary to repair the pipe. On December 11-12, the contractor conducted the excavation and repair. The broken pipe lay approximately 9 feet below the ground surface, and the excavation proceeded two feet farther down to allow inspection of deeper soils.

No coal tar was visually observed in the excavation, and no coal tar odors were detected by those observing the excavation. The air monitoring device onsite did not detect contaminants in the air around the excavated soil. Soil samples collected and sent to a lab for analysis were also shown to be uncontaminated.

All soil removed from the hole was stored temporarily in roll off containers. Once the analytical results were received showing no contamination in the soils, the soil was transported to a local landfill for disposal. At this point we do not know where that oily substance on the camera originated or how it entered the sewer. If not coal tar, it may have been a weathered diesel or fuel oil which can have a similar odor under certain conditions.

Additional site details, including environmental and health assessment summaries, are available on DEC's website at http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58387.html and http://www.dec.ny.gov/cfmx/extapps/derexternal/haz/details.cfm?pageid=3&progno=915171.

State Superfund Program: New York's State Superfund Program (SSF) identifies and characterizes suspected inactive hazardous waste disposal sites. Sites that pose a significant threat to public health and/or the environment go through a process of investigation, evaluation, cleanup and monitoring.

DEC attempts to identify parties responsible for site contamination and require cleanup before committing State funds.

For more information about the SSF, visit: http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8439.html

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Where to Find Information

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

City of Tonawanda Public Library
333 Main Street
Tonawanda, NY 14150

DEC Central Office
Attn: Richard Dana
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233
Richard.dana@dec.ny.gov

DEC Region 9 Office
270 Michigan Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14203
716-847-4501
(call for appointment)

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

Project Related Questions
Richard Dana
Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Environmental Remediation
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233
518-402-9680
richard.dana@dec.ny.gov

Site-Related Health Questions
Matthew Forcucci
New York State Department of Health
584 Delaware Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14202
716-847-4501
BEEI@health.ny.gov

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. DEC 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.

Bldg #	Business Name
A & C	Acme Grinding Service Inc.
B & E	Niagara Construction Co.
D	D.L. Moore
F & G	Holler Carpentry
H	Advanced Electrical Services
I	Great Lakes Gear Co. Inc.
J	P & M Facility Management Service
J	Custom Stone of Western New York LLC.