



New York State
Department of
Health

in conjunction with



Dear Interested Citizen:

This fact sheet is to inform you of the site characterization planned for the former East 21st Street Works. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact:

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For site-related environmental questions, please contact:

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NYSDEC
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For site-related health questions, please contact:

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Fact Sheet

January 2003

Start of Investigation of a Former Manufactured Gas Plant at Peter Cooper Village

East 21st Street Works

Introduction

Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. (Con Edison), together with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), is providing this update on the investigation activities planned for the former East 21st Street Works (currently part of Peter Cooper Village), a historic manufactured gas plant (MGP). Initial activities at the site will include a study of indoor air and soil gas. After the completion of those activities, a site characterization study will be implemented to investigate soil and groundwater.

Con Edison has entered into a voluntary cleanup agreement with the NYSDOH to identify, investigate and remediate, if necessary, this and other sites that were previously operated by Con Edison or its corporate predecessors as manufactured gas plants or manufactured gas holder stations. The proposed work includes testing and monitoring to determine whether materials from these historic operations are present and is being coordinated with the NYSDOH and NYSDOH. Working closely with state and local agencies, Con Edison will be taking responsibility for coordinating and funding the work and will make every effort to keep public inconveniences to a minimum.

What Were Manufactured Gas Plants?

Manufactured gas plants were operated between the 1800s and mid-1900s, before the development of natural gas systems. Byproducts of this production process included tar and purifier wastes. Tar is a dark, viscous fluid with a distinctive acrid odor. The substances of concern in tar can be divided into two categories: BTEX compounds and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). BTEX compounds are benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene. These are volatile hydrocarbons found in most petroleum products such as gasoline. PAHs are made up of several semi-volatile compounds. These compounds are also found in many petroleum products, such as asphalt. Purifier wastes are materials formed during removal of other unwanted chemicals from the gas before it was sent out to customers.

Documents related to this project are available at the following location:

Manhattan Borough President Virginia Fields Office, 1 Centre Street, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10007; 212-669-8300, Hours: M-F 9am-5pm

Epiphany Branch, New York Public Library, 228 E.23 St., New York, NY 10010; 212-679-2645, Hours: Mon 12-8, Tues/Fri 10-6, Wed 12-6, Sat 1-5 (closed Thurs/Sun) Documents also available at the Ottendorfer Branch 212-674-0947

Potential Exposure Associated with Former MGPs and Holder Stations

A primary goal of these investigations is to evaluate actual and potential risks to the public through exposure to contaminants from these facilities. Exposure to contaminants can potentially occur through direct contact with the waste or through gas contaminants getting into indoor air. Exposure to contaminated groundwater through ingestion is not expected because the areas around these sites are served by municipal water systems. Because these sites have been closed for many years, and, in most cases redeveloped, we do not anticipate exposures to be significant. Much of the waste or contaminated soil will not be at the surface where direct contact exposure may occur. Con Edison and agency staff have developed a soil gas/indoor air survey protocol to determine whether there is a potential for such exposure at former MGPs and manufactured gas holder station sites.

Site Background

The East 21st Street Works was located on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. The former MGP grounds encompassed approximately two-thirds of what is now of Peter Cooper Village. The former site was bound to the north by the former East 22nd Street, south by East 20th Street, east by Avenue C and west by First Avenue.

The MGP was built during the 1840's and was retired from service during the mid-1940's.

Project Status and Schedule

Initial efforts at the site include collection of historic data and a soil gas/indoor air monitoring survey. Con Edison has completed the historical site data collection efforts and is working with the current site owner/management on an acceptable schedule for the soil gas/indoor air monitoring survey activities. Working with the site owner/management, Con Edison will schedule a site characterization study in the near future. Site characterization activities will include the collection of soil samples, installation of groundwater monitoring wells, and collection of groundwater samples.

During the site characterization study activities, extensive efforts will be made to protect the community from potential hazards, including the use of real-time air monitoring in accordance with the NYSDOH's Community Air Monitoring Plan. If any MGP-related contamination of concern is found, a remediation plan will be developed in cooperation with the NYSDEC and NYSDOH.

Public understanding and involvement are an integral part of a successful investigation and remediation program. To provide you with the most up-to-date and accurate information regarding manufactured gas plants, Con Edison has created a series of informational resources including fact sheets, a toll-free hotline, and internet content. In addition a site citizen participation plan will be developed to outline the steps to be taken to provide for public participation in the remedial program for the site and the location of document repositories for site related documents and reports. Your questions and comments are important to us. Please contact us at the phone numbers listed on the front of this fact sheet.
