



*In conjunction with*



# Fact Sheet

July 2005

## East 21st Street Works

**Results of site characterization study at East 21st Street Works Site and future activities.**

### Dear Interested Citizen:

**This fact sheet is to inform you of the results of the site characterization and future activities for the former East 21st Street Works.**

**If you have questions or would like more information, please contact:**

Laura Mascuch  
Con Edison  
4 Irving Place  
New York, NY 10003  
Toll-free (877) 602-6633

**For site-related environmental questions, please contact:**

Joseph Moloughney, P.E.  
Project Manager  
NYSDEC  
625 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12233  
(518) 402-9662

**For site-related health questions, please contact:**

Dawn Hettrick, P.E.  
NYSDOH  
Bureau of Environmental  
Exposure Investigations  
Flanigan Square  
547 River Street, Rm 300  
Troy, NY 12180  
(518) 402-7880

## 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 21<sup>st</sup> Street Works (currently part of Peter Cooper Village), a historic manufactured gas plant (MGP). Initial activities at the site included a study of indoor air and soil gas. In January 2004 a site characterization study was conducted to investigate soil and groundwater. These activities have been completed and now a remedial investigation (RI) will be implemented to further investigate soil, groundwater and soil gas. The RI will further define the MGP impacts identified during the site characterization.

## Project Status and Schedule

Initial efforts at the site included collection of historic data and a soil gas/indoor air monitoring survey. The NYSDOH has reviewed the data from the soil gas/indoor air monitoring and concluded that it is unlikely that the soil gas has a discernable impact on indoor air.

The results of the site characterization study indicate that there are remains from the MGP operations in the soil and groundwater. However, the soil impacts that were identified are below the ground surface and therefore the residents and the public are not being exposed to the materials. Exposure to contaminated groundwater through ingestion is also not expected because the areas around these sites are served by municipal water systems. Given the results of the site characterization study, Con Edison, NYSDOH and NYSDOH agree that an additional investigation is required.

In order to gain a greater understanding of the MGP impacts, Con Edison will conduct a second round of soil and groundwater sampling. A majority of the work will be conducted off the Peter Cooper Village property along E. 23<sup>rd</sup> and E. 20<sup>th</sup> Street, First Avenue and under the FDR Drive. This work is anticipated to start in early summer. There will be some additional work at Peter Cooper Village that will be conducted in the winter of 2005/2006 in order to minimize any inconvenience to the residents. The results of this ongoing investigation will be used to help determine the scope and basis for a remedial plan at the site, which will be presented to the public for review and comment.

### Documents related to this project are available at the following locations:

**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).

## Potential Exposure

A primary goal of these investigations is to evaluate the potential for exposure to these historical operations. Because the soil contamination was found many feet beneath the surface, the public is not exposed through direct contact with the contaminants. Exposure to contaminated groundwater through ingestion is also not expected because New York City is served by a municipal water system. The NYSDOH has reviewed the data from the soil gas/indoor air monitoring survey that Con Edison conducted at the site and has concluded that it is unlikely that the soil gas has a discernable impact on indoor air within the buildings.

During the ongoing site investigation activities, extensive efforts will be made to prevent exposure to potential hazards, including the use of real-time air monitoring in accordance with the NYSDOH's Community Air Monitoring Plan.

## Site Background

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

Gas manufacturing and gas storage began at the E. 21<sup>st</sup> Street Works in the 1840's and continued until the mid 1940's. Con Edison sold the site to Stuyvesant Town Corporation and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in 1944 and 1945, respectively, for development of the Peter Cooper Village housing project.

## What are former Manufactured Gas Plants?

Manufactured gas plants were operated between the 1800s and mid-1900s, before the development of natural gas systems, to convert coal and oil into gas for heating, lighting and cooking. Byproducts of this early production process included contaminants such as tar and purifier wastes. Tar is a dark, viscous fluid with a distinctive acrid odor. Purifier wastes are materials formed during removal of other unwanted chemicals from the gas before it was sent out to customers.

The substances of concern related to these operations include BTEX compounds, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and metals. BTEX compounds are benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene. These are volatile hydrocarbons that evaporate easily and are found in most petroleum products such as gasoline. PAHs are also found in MGP byproducts as well as 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.

## Public Involvement

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 at [www.coned.com/publicissues](http://www.coned.com/publicissues). Information can also be found at the NYSDEC website at [www.dec.state.ny.us/website/der/mgp](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/der/mgp). In addition, a Citizen Participation Plan has been approved by NYS DEC that outlines the steps to be taken to provide for public participation in the remedial program for the site. Document repositories for site related documents have also been established so that concerned citizens can review available information. An updated fact sheet will be distributed before the remedial investigation begins.