



In conjunction with



Dear Interested Citizen:

This fact sheet is to update you on the investigation of the former West 45th Street Works.

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

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Fact Sheet

April 2011

West 45th Street Works

OU-1 Remedial Investigation Report Approved

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 activities involving the former West 45th Street Gas Works, a historic manufactured gas plant (MGP). This site has been divided into Operable Unit One (OU-1) and Operable Unit Two (OU-2) for investigation purposes.

Project Status and Schedule

Between January and May of 2003 the OU-2 site characterization study was performed to investigate the former gas holder located in what is now the Intrepid parking lot (12th Avenue between West 45th and 46th Streets). The results of the site characterization study indicate that there are residuals from the MGP operations in the soil and groundwater, but at depth where exposure is not anticipated. This study was approved by NYSDEC.

Between 2006 and 2007, Con Edison conducted a comprehensive remedial investigation of the OU-1 area, which included the blocks between West 43rd and West 46th Streets and 11th and 12th Avenues to determine the presence and extent of MGP residuals. Work was performed in the UPS truck parking lot and surrounding sidewalks. The work included soil borings, test pits to identify former MGP structures and the installation of ground water monitoring wells. This investigation identified that there is MGP related contamination in the subsurface at depths of 16-30 feet below the surface.

A Remedial Investigation Report presenting a summary of the work performed and results obtained from this work has been approved by NYSDEC. The report is available in the document repositories or on-line at www.coned.com/mgp.

Now that the investigative work is complete, work is progressing on evaluating and selecting a final remedy for both of the operable units.

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

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer's Office, 1 Centre Street, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10007; 212-669-8300, Hours: M-F 9am-5pm; Mid-Manhattan Library, 455 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016; (212) 340-0833; Hours of Operation: Mon /Wed/Thurs 9-9, Tues 11-7, Fri/Sat 10-6.

Potential Exposure

A primary goal of these investigations is to evaluate actual and potential risk to the public through exposure to contaminants from these historical operations. Because the soil contamination was found below the paved ground surface, the public is not currently being 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.

During the investigation, extensive efforts were made to prevent exposure to potential contaminants, including placing physical barriers to prevent access to work areas and the use of real-time air monitoring in accordance with the NYSDOH's Community Air Monitoring Plan.

What are former Manufactured Gas Plants?

Manufactured gas plants (MGP) 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 found in MGP byproducts and also found in most petroleum products such as gasoline. PAHs are also found in MGP byproducts as well as many petroleum products, such as asphalt.

Site Background

The West 45th Street Gas Works formerly existed on portions of two city blocks (Blocks 1092 and 1093) and the adjacent waterfront in the Borough of Manhattan, New York City and New York County, New York. The West 45th Street Gas Works operated from 1887 to 1913. The western fourth of Blocks 1092 and 1093 were taken by the City of New York in 1913 for the reconfiguration of roadways in association with inland pier extensions. The Gas Works stopped operation in 1913 and most of the buildings were razed. A large gas holder which existed on a portion of Block 1093 continued to be used until 1965 when it was demolished and the area was used by Con Edison as a maintenance yard. This area was recently taken over by New York State and is being utilized as parking for the nearby Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum. The property on Block 1092 is presently used for warehouses and a parking lot. The rest of the former Gas Works is under 12th Avenue and the West Side Highway. The extreme eastern ends of Piers 84 and 86 (currently numbered City Piers 21 and 30) were part of the site, but likely were only used for unloading coal from docked barges along the waterfront. No structures were built on the piers during occupancy by the MGP.

Public Involvement

Public understanding and involvement are integral to 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/mgp. Information can also be found at the NYSDEC website at www.dec.state.ny.us/chemical/8430.html. In addition, a Citizen Participation Plan has been approved by NYSDEC 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. The document repositories are listed on the bottom of the front page.