



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 Purdy Street Station property. 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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NYS NYSDEC
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Albany, NY 12233
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For site-related health questions, please contact:

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Fact Sheet

August 2002

Start of Investigation of a Former Manufactured Gas Plant at the site of St. Raymond High School

Purdy Street Station

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 planned for the former Purdy Street Station (currently St. Raymond High School), a property which is the site of an historic manufactured gas plant (MGP). While initial activities at the site included a study of indoor air, the site characterization will investigate soil and ground water.

Con Edison has entered into a voluntary cleanup agreement with the NYSDEC to identify, investigate and remediate, if necessary, this and other historic sites that were previously operated by Con Edison or its corporate predecessors. The proposed work includes testing and monitoring for materials remaining from these historic sites and is being coordinated with the NYSDEC 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, to convert coal and oil into gas for heating, lighting, and cooking. 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.

Con Edison, NYSDEC and NYSDOH are committed to keeping the community informed during every step of this project. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate office listed on the left.

Site Background

The Purdy Street Station former manufactured gas plant and holder site are located on the west side of Purdy Street and the north side of St. Raymond Avenue in the neighborhood of Parkchester, Bronx. Today, the northern portion of the site is occupied by a running track and grass playing field. A storage building is located on the northwest portion of the site. The east-central portion of the site is occupied by an asphalt playground and parking area. The southern and western portions are occupied by the school building.

Site maps suggest the plant began operation sometime between 1870 and 1895. Because of the size of the plant and its location near a Catholic Protectors, the plant may have mainly supplied gas to the protectors. The company of Bronxdale & Westchester Gas Company sold the plant to Bronx Gas & Electric in December of 1895. The site was a holder station until the 1920's when the holders were taken down. Con Edison sold the property to the Roman Catholic Church of Saint Raymond in 1960 to be used as a high school.

Project Status and Schedule

This summer two activities are scheduled for the site. Samples of indoor air will be collected and analyzed to determine whether air quality in the school has been affected by the former facility. This work will likely be conducted in August. Samples of soil and groundwater will also be collected and analyzed. Results of these tests will be provided to the NYSDEC, NYSDOH, and representatives from the school and the surrounding community.

During the investigation, extensive efforts will be made to protect the community from disruptions and potential hazards, including the use of real-time air monitoring in accordance with the NYSDOH's Community Air Monitoring Plan. If any contamination 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.
