New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

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FACT SHEET

Volunteer Cleanup Program

*Receive site fact sheets by *email*. See **For More Information** to learn how.

Site Name: Gastown MGP Tonawanda Site
DEC Site #: 915171
Site Address: 125 East Niagara Street; Tonawanda, NY

January 2013

Gastown Update: Proposed Amended Record of Decision for Gastown Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) Tonawanda Site Released for Comment

By the Numbers:

Brownfield Numbers:
45 days – length of comment period

Public Meeting: Wednesday, 2/6/13 at 7:00 p.m.
Snow date: Tuesday, 2/12/13 at 7:00 p.m.
Court Room, City Hall, Tonawanda

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has released for comment an amended Record of Decision (ROD) document addressing remediation of the Gastown Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) Tonawanda site ("site") located at 125 East Niagara Street in Tonawanda (see **Site Location**). Since the release of the original ROD document, a new technology has been successfully implemented at sites with similar space constraints, which would allow the site to be remediated with significantly less impact to the current site occupants and to the surrounding neighborhood. This amended ROD calls for a far smaller portion of the site to be excavated, with most of the contaminated soils at the site to be solidified in place with a technique known as in-situ solidification (ISS). DEC and DOH have determined the proposed ROD Amendment is equally protective as the original ROD.

A public comment period has been set for January 14, 2013 through February 28, 2013 to provide you an opportunity to comment on these proposed changes. A public meeting is scheduled in the Court Room on February 6, 2013 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at City Hall in Tonawanda, located at 200 Niagara Street. In the event of severe weather conditions on February 6th, the meeting will be rescheduled to February 12th at 7:00 p.m. at the same venue.

At the meeting, a description of the original ROD and the circumstances that have led to proposed changes in the ROD will be presented. After the presentation, a question and answer period will be held, during which you can submit verbal or written comments on the proposal.

We encourage you to review this summary and attend the meeting. DEC may modify or reject the proposed changes based on new information or public comments. Comments will be summarized and responses provided in a Responsiveness Summary. Written comments may also be sent to:
Richard Dana, Project Manager;
NYS DEC, Division of Environmental Remediation
625 Broadway
Albany NY 12233

Background

An MGP was operated at this site from 1884 until 1921, making a combustible gas from coal and petroleum which was used for cooking, heating and lighting. The hot gas was stored in on-site gas holders. As it cooled, the gas released a condensate called "coal tar," which was a black or brown liquid with a strong odor. Coal tar is the primary contaminant at this site. Coal tar is a type of non-aqueous phase liquid (NAPL), an oily substance similar to driveway sealant, which does not readily mix with water.

Site Investigation

In March 1993, the DEC Spill Response Unit responded to a complaint that an unknown oily substance was entering basement sumps at the Gastown Sportsman's Club. This substance was subsequently identified as coal tar, and chemical analysis showed that it contained enough benzene to be defined as a characteristic hazardous waste.

In September 1998, a groundwater/tar extraction and treatment system was installed just west of the Gastown Sportsmen's Club building. The purpose of this system was to intercept the tar and the contaminated groundwater associated with it, before it could enter the basement sumps.

From June 2001 through July 2004, the DEC conducted a Remedial Investigation (RI) to determine the nature and extent of contamination at this site. The RI started with test pits and soil borings in the areas of known coal tar contamination, and then expanded outwards until the limit of the contamination was defined. This primarily involved the use of direct push soil borings to delineate the extent of coal tar and contaminated soil, which was then followed by the installation of monitoring wells to define the extent of groundwater contamination. Soil vapor samples were collected following the delineation of groundwater contamination.

Additional site investigations were performed to refine the remedial approach by National Fuel Gas following the execution of the Consent Order with DEC in 2008. The findings from these remedial design approach investigations were used to evaluate the basis for the proposed ROD Amendment.

Gastown Site Timeline:

1884 – 1921
Site operated as an MGP

1993
March: Coal tar leaks into Gastown Sportsman Club

2001 – 2004
Remedial Investigation

2007
March: original ROD approved

2008
National Fuel Gas entered into a Consent Order with DEC to remediate the site

2009
Phase 1 of the remedy was performed to remove an on-site tank containing tarry-soil, debris, and water.

Summary of the Remedy in the Original ROD

The original ROD, approved in March for 2007, summarized the remedy preferred at the time by the DEC and DOH to remediate the coal tar contamination in the soil, groundwater and sediment. The elements of the proposed remedy include:

- On-site, the contaminated areas would be excavated and the contaminated soil would be transported offsite for treatment or disposal at a permitted facility.
- Structures in the excavation area would be demolished, with the anticipation of phasing to allow relocation of existing businesses.

- Off-site contamination would be addressed by a system of underground trenches which would collect tar. These trenches would prevent tar from migrating further, prevent nearby buildings from being impacted, and would remove the most mobile tar.
- Some buildings west of the railroad tracks would be provided with sub-slab depressurization systems to prevent soil vapor from entering the homes (this work has been completed).
- A small area of contaminated sediment would be removed from the Tonawanda Creek.

Summary of the Revisions to the Remedy in the Proposed Amended ROD

The original remedy proposed in the original ROD involved removing all accessible soils containing visible evidence of MGP tar and/or containing total PAHs greater that 500 parts per million (ppm). The proposed amended ROD requires significantly less excavation - only in the area of the gas holder (see **Figure 1**). Those areas not excavated would be subject to in-situ solidification (ISS), a process where the contaminated soil and a binding agent are mixed to produce a solidified mass resulting in a low-permeability monolith, rendering the contaminants immobile and inert.

The original ROD required the temporary relocation of most or all of the 8 businesses onsite to accommodate the extensive excavation. The proposed amended ROD would require the relocation of only three of the businesses onsite. In addition, there would be less disruption to those businesses remaining in place during the remediation of the site.

The original ROD required the installation of approximately 600 feet of NAPL collection trench to a depth of 22 feet in the area west of the railroad grade to collect tar. Additional data was collected to refine the area to be addressed by the trenches, and it was determined that vertical wells instead of horizontal trenches would be effective at recovering potentially mobile tar at depth west of the railroad. The amended ROD therefore proposes to install two NAPL collection wells, resulting in significantly less disruption to property owners west of the railroad grade.

All other features of the remedy remain the same as in the original ROD.

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.

Volunteer Cleanup Program

New York established its Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) to address the environmental, legal and financial barriers that often hinder the redevelopment and reuse of contaminated properties. The Voluntary Cleanup Program was developed to enhance private sector cleanup of brownfields by enabling parties to remediate sites using private rather than public funds and to reduce the development pressures on "greenfield" sites.

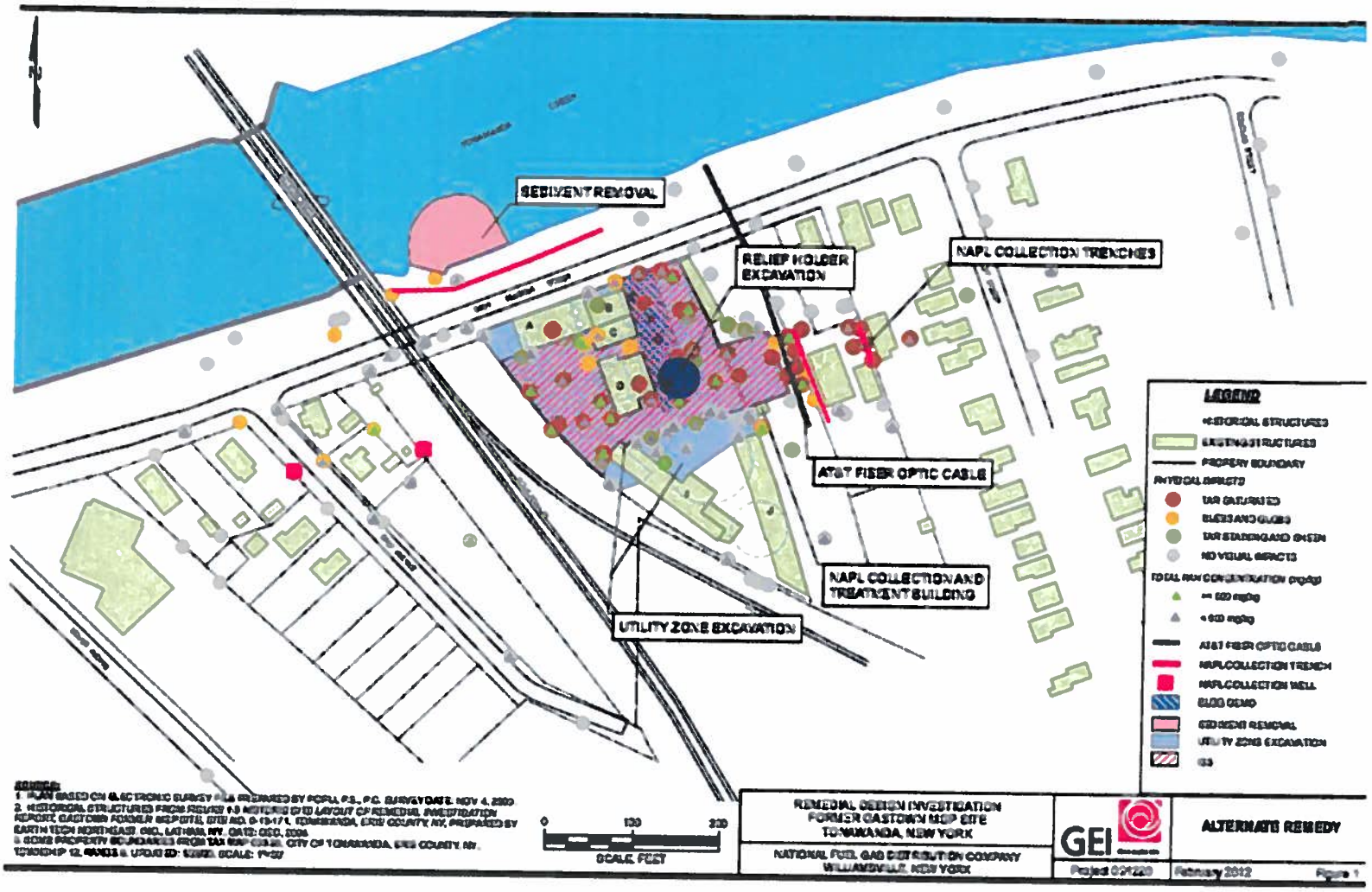


Figure 1 – Proposed amended ROD excavation

Where to Find Information

The information here is a summary of what can be found in greater detail in the Proposed ROD Amendment and other reports that have been placed in the Administrative Record for the site. In addition to the Proposed ROD Amendment, a Citizens Participation Plan can be found at the following repositories:

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

NYS DEC Central Office
Attn: Richard Dana, CPG
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-7014
rhdana@gw.dec.state.ny.us

NYS DEC Region 9 Office
270 Michigan Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14203
716-851-7220
(Call for appointment)

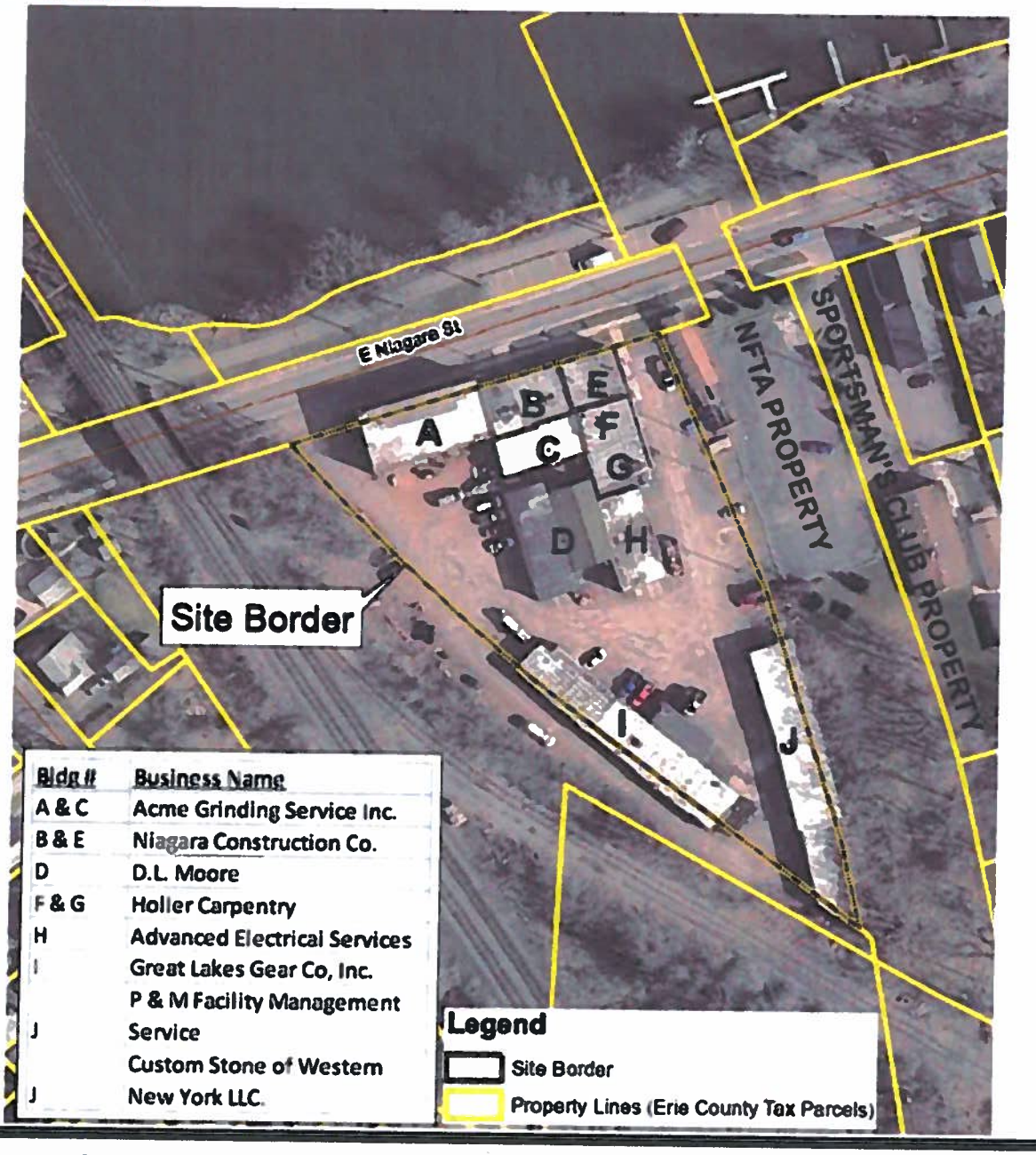
Who to Contact

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

Project Related Questions:
Richard Dana
DEC, Division of Environmental Remediation
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-7014
(518) 402-9662
rhdana@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Site-Related Health Questions:
Matthew Forcucci
NYS DOH
584 Delaware Ave
Buffalo, NY 14202-1295
716-847-4501
beei@health.state.ny.us

Site Location



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.

For More Information

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. You may continue also to receive paper copies of site information for a time after you sign up with a county listserv, until the transition to electronic distribution is complete.

Note: Please disregard if you already have signed up and received this fact sheet electronically.