



In conjunction with



Dear Interested Citizen:

**This fact sheet is to update you on the investigation of the former E. 115<sup>th</sup> Street MGP.**

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# Fact Sheet

April 2009

East 115<sup>th</sup> Street Works

[www.coned.com/mgp](http://www.coned.com/mgp)

**Availability of the Draft Alternatives Analysis Report (AAR) and Draft Site Management Plan (SMP) for public comment**

## 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 environmental investigation being performed at the former East 115<sup>th</sup> Street Works (currently Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics High School and Isaac Newton J.H.S. for Science and Math). This property is the site of a historic manufactured gas plant (MGP). Investigation activities at the site have included a study of indoor air quality, soil and ground water testing. NYSDEC is now releasing the draft Alternatives Analysis Report (AAR) and draft Site Management Plan (SMP) for public review and comment. **A public meeting will be held May 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm at MCSM School at 280 Pleasant Avenue to discuss the draft AAR and SMP.**

## 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.

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.

## Project Status and Schedule

Investigation activities at the site were conducted in June 2002, August 2003 and August 2004 and involved the collection of soil, groundwater, indoor air and soil gas samples within the school property. Sediment samples from the Harlem River adjacent to the site were collected as part of the investigation in January 2005. The investigation results indicate that soil and groundwater contamination is present beneath the site starting generally at depths of approximately 5 feet in the school basement (south wing) and 10 feet in the school courtyard and extending to approximately 40 feet below grade surface.

**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; **Aguilar Branch, The New York Public Library**, 174 E.110<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10029; 212-534-2930; Hrs: Mon/Wed/Fri 10-6, Tues/Thur 12-8, Sat 10-5 (closed Sunday)

Con Edison has conducted multiple rounds of indoor air and soil gas sampling to determine if subsurface MGP contamination was negatively impacting indoor air quality in the building. The NYSDOH has reviewed the data from the soil gas/indoor air sampling and concluded that there does not appear to be any impact to indoor air from MGP impacts in the soil. Con Edison will continue periodic indoor air monitoring until a remedy is implemented.

Based on the investigation results, a draft Alternatives Analysis Report (AAR) and Site Management Plan (SMP) has been prepared and is available for public comment. The draft AAR describes the proposed remedy which the NYSDEC and NYSDOH have found to be approvable for the site. On April 22, 2009 a public notice was posted in the Environmental Notice Bulletin (ENB). The public comment period, will go from May 12 to June 12, 2009. The draft AAR and SMP is available for review at the document repositories listed on the first page of this fact sheet and on-line at [www.coned.com/mgp](http://www.coned.com/mgp). In addition, NYSDEC will hold a public meeting at MCSM (280 Pleasant Avenue) on May 12, 2009 at 6:00pm to present the draft AAR and SMP, answer questions and take comments.

The draft AAR recommends the installation of approximately 500 feet of a low permeability subsurface barrier wall along the FDR. The AAR recommends the excavation of shallow contaminated soils in certain areas of the site that will be further delineated through test pits and soil borings. The AAR recommends the installation of a sub-slab depressurization system underneath the school building foundation. The system will provide a negative pressure below the building to prevent soil vapor from entering the building in the future. The AAR also proposes the development of a Site Management Plan (SMP) to manage contaminated soils that are left in place and provide for proper monitoring and maintenance of the components of the remedy. In addition, the imposition of a deed restriction is recommended which will require compliance with the SMP and notification to Con Edison and NYSDEC if the building use is suspended or changed. Lastly, the AAR contains a provision for an annual certification to the NYSDEC on the institutional and engineering controls that are implemented at the site.

## Potential Exposure

A primary goal of the environmental investigation is to evaluate the potential for exposure to these historical operations. Potential human exposure may come from breathing, eating or touching contaminants. Because the soil contamination was found well below the surface, the public is not exposed through direct contact. As stated above, there are no indoor air impacts from MGP residuals. Exposure to contaminated groundwater through ingestion is also not likely because New York City is served by a municipal water system.

## Site Background

Historic information indicates that the East 115<sup>th</sup> Street Works was built and operated by the Standard Gas Light Company of the City of New York from 1895 to 1936 and was turned over to Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. in June 1937, as a result of the companies' merger. According to historic information, the site was not operated as a manufactured gas plant while under the ownership of Con Edison. The plant was dismantled and in 1941, a public high school was erected on the property and is still present today as the Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics.

## Public Involvement

NYSDEC will accept written comments from May 12 to June 12, 2009. The comments may be submitted to William Ottaway, P.E. NYSDEC, 625 Broadway, 11th Floor, Albany, NY 12233-7014. Phone: (866) 520-2334. Email: [wsottawa@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:wsottawa@gw.dec.state.ny.us). In addition, a public meeting will be held on May 12, 2009 at 6:00pm at MCSM School at 280 Pleasant Avenue, New York, NY.

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/mgp](http://www.coned.com/mgp) or [www.dec.state.ny.us/chemical/8430.html](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/chemical/8430.html).