



Department of
Toxic Substances
Control

*Preventing
environmental
damage from
hazardous waste,
and restoring
contaminated
sites for all
Californians.*



State of California



California
Environmental
Protection Agency

Fact Sheet, January 2007

Remedial Investigation Report for Watson Park Site Is Available For Review



Watson Park Site

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is providing this fact sheet to inform you about the results of the Remedial Investigation (RI), known as the Preliminary Waste Characterization Report for the Watson Park Site (Site) located in San Jose, California. A RI is an in-depth study designed to gather data needed to determine the nature and extent of contamination at a Site. You are invited to attend a public meeting on January 24, 2007 to discuss the results of the investigation. (See meeting box below for meeting details.)

DTSC is a department within the California Environmental Protection Agency. DTSC is responsible for overseeing groundwater and soil investigations and ensuring that cleanup activities are conducted in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations that are protective of public health and the environment.

At Watson Park in 2004 during the construction of a new skate park, ash and other debris were uncovered from a former burn dump and landfill that was closed in the early 1930s. After a soil investigation, elevated levels of lead and other contaminants were found in soil samples taken throughout Watson Park and several private residential properties. As a precautionary measure to protect public health, the Park was closed and fenced off in August 2005.

Since that time, extensive investigations at the site have determined that elevated levels of contamination (primarily lead) exist in soil in the southern portion of Watson Park, under Empire Gardens Elementary School and on some adjacent residential properties along Terrace Drive. Contamination was not found in the dog park, the soccer bowl, in Coyote Creek, along 21st Street or Jackson Avenue. Elevated levels of contamination were not found in groundwater or surface water at the Site.

Public Meeting - January 24, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

We invite you to attend the public meeting and hear the results of the Remedial Investigation report. The meeting will be conducted at:

Empire Gardens Elementary School
1060 East Empire Street
San Jose, CA 95112

Traducción Española Incluida.



This Fact Sheet Provides You Information About:

- History and Background
- Summary of the Remedial Investigation
- August 2006 Expedited Removal Action
- Next Step

History and Background

The Site is located approximately 2 miles northeast of downtown San José immediately west of Highway 101. The surrounding areas north, west and south of the park and elementary school are primarily single-family residential homes. Properties east of Coyote Creek have commercial and industrial uses.

The City of San José purchased the southern parcel that is now in the park in 1913. An incinerator operated from 1914 to 1934 to burn trash. Following demolition of the incinerator, the Site and vicinity remained undeveloped. As time proceeded, rural agricultural activities yielded to additional residential development in the area. The City purchased the northern parcel of the park in 1959. By 1961 the Empire Gardens Elementary School had been constructed on the southern end of the City-owned property. In approximately 1970, the City opened Watson Park and subsequent improvements were made.

The two City-owned parcels are currently developed as Watson Park and Empire Gardens Elementary School. Watson Park includes soccer fields, a community center and other ancillary structures, parking areas, a children's playground, community gardens, a tree nursery (Our City Forest), basketball courts, and a dog park.

Summary of Remedial Investigation

The Site was sub-divided into eight (8) Areas of Concern for investigation (see Map). The areas are Watson Park North (01), Watson Park South (02), Empire Gardens Elementary School (03), Children's Playground(04), San Jose Unified School District Property (05), Off-site Residential Properties (06), Levitt Property (07), and Santa Clara Valley Water District (08).

The investigation included more than 157 borings in which holes were bored into the ground and samples removed. Field observations and analytical results were used to determine and identify the



Geoprobe used to collect soil samples

size, shape and depth (lateral and vertical extent) of the contamination. Burn ash residues look like the ash from a fireplace and contain other debris such as fused glass and small pieces of metal.

Lead is the main contaminant of concern. Other elevated levels of contaminants found included other metals and organic compounds such as polynuclear aromatic compounds (PNAs), organochlorine pesticides (OCPs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins and furans, and total recoverable petroleum hydrocarbons. The lead most likely came from glass, ceramic glazes, and paints that were contained in the trash and burned.

The contamination does not extend to the north of East Jackson Street, west of North 22nd Street or west of the residences on Terrace Drive involved in the Expedited Removal Action (see below). Contamination was not found to extend onto Watson Park North (01), the Levitt Property (07), or the Santa Clara Valley Water District property (08).

Soil gas was monitored in open borings at the Empire Gardens Elementary School where the Site is covered with asphalt. Methane was not identified beneath the asphalt at levels that pose a risk to public health and the environment.

Additionally, groundwater and storm water data were collected and evaluated to identify whether the burn ash-containing materials beneath the Site may have affected groundwater quality. Groundwater sampling and analyses were conducted from borings that were selected to represent the investigation area. Storm water samples were also collected for analysis. Storm water and groundwater analyses included metals, PNAs, OCPs and PCBs. Groundwater and storm water analytical results indicated that the contaminants have not affected groundwater or storm water quality at the Site.

August 2006 Expedited Removal Action

Based on the soil sample results collected in the backyards along Terrace Drive an Expedited Removal Action was conducted in July and August 2006. With DTSC's approval, the City removed three to five feet of soil from eight backyards adjacent to Empire Gardens School and backfilled the yards with clean soil. The City and DTSC obtained permission from the San Jose Unified School District to use the private school road to stage the soil removal activities. A total of 5,000 cubic yards of soil and 200 cubic yards of debris were removed and placed in covered and secured stockpiles at Watson Park. Samples were collected to document the concentrations remaining in the backyards and the yards were then backfilled with clean soil. The work was conducted between July 31 and August 22. Disposal of the stockpiled soil will be addressed as part of the cleanup plan for Watson Park.

Next Steps

Based on the RI report, the next step in the process is the development of the draft cleanup plan called a draft Remedial Action Plan (RAP). A draft RAP identifies cleanup goals and alternatives for cleanup of projects that are projected to cost more than one million dollars to implement. The Draft RAP also identifies a preferred alternative. After DTSC approval of the draft RAP for release, the community will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft RAP during a 30-day public comment period and during a public meeting. You will receive a fact sheet that will summarize the draft RAP and announce details of the public meeting.

For More Information

Please contact any of the following individuals with any questions or concerns you may have about this project.

For questions regarding the RI, please contact Ms. Katharine Hilf, DTSC Project Manager, at (510) 540-3817 or by e-mail to Khilf@dtsc.ca.gov.

For questions regarding the public participation process, please contact Ms. Kim Rhodes, DTSC Public Participation Specialist, toll-free (866) 495-5651 or (916) 255-3651 or by e-mail to Krhodes1@dtsc.ca.gov.

For questions from the media, please contact Ms. Angela Blanchette, DTSC Public Information Officer, at (510) 540-3732 or by e-mail to Ablanche@dtsc.ca.gov.

Information Repositories

The draft RI and other related documents may be viewed at the following locations:

Northside Community Center
488 North 6th Street, San José
(408) 977-4005
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Empire Gardens Elementary School
1060 E. Empire St., San Jose
(408) 535-6221

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library
2nd Floor Reference Desk
150 East San Fernando Street, San José
(408) 808-2000

Department of Toxic Substances Control
8800 Cal Center Drive
Sacramento, California
File Room:
By appointment only (916) 255-3758

Notice to Hearing Impaired

TDD users can use the California Relay Service at 1-888-877-5378 and ask to speak with Ms. Kim Rhodes at (916) 255-3651.

To view the Remedial Investigation Report for the Watson Park Site, visit the DTSC website:
http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report.asp?global_id=70000112