

# FACT SHEET: Former Athens Tank Farm

## Upcoming Soil, Soil Gas and Groundwater Investigation

Ujima Village and Earvin Magic Johnson Regional Park

May 2008



Cal/EPA

### INTRODUCTION

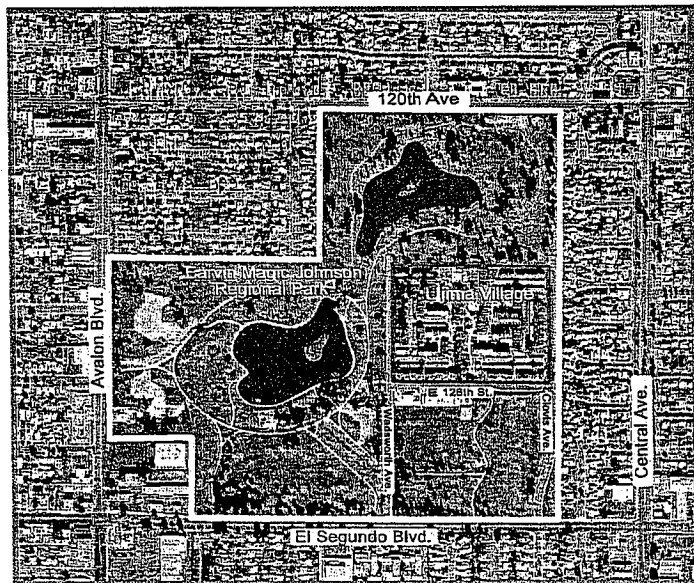
This fact sheet has been prepared to inform residents and other interested community members about an environmental investigation being conducted at the former site of the Athens Tank Farm, located on 122-acres in the Willowbrook area of Los Angeles County. The site is bounded on the north by East 120th Street, the west by Avalon Boulevard, the south by El Segundo Boulevard, and the east by a single family residential development (located to the west of Central Avenue). The area is now occupied by the Ujima Village Apartment Complex, three child care facilities, a Los Angeles Unified School District facility and the Earvin Magic Johnson Regional Park ("Park"). The entire area of the former Athens Tank Farm will be collectively referred to as "the Site."

All environmental work being performed at the Site is under the direction of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board ("Regional Water Board"), with support from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Both the Regional Water Board and DTSC are components of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA).

### SITE HISTORY

The Site was originally purchased in 1923 by General Petroleum Company and was operated by Mobil Oil Corporation-related entities from 1926 to 1963. ExxonMobil Oil Corporation (ExxonMobil) was the last commercial owner of the property. Prior onsite activities included operating a "tank farm" (a facility used for the storage and distribution of petroleum products), a compressor station, a crude-oil storage area, and an absorption plant.

Based on available records, site facilities included twenty-two 80,000 barrel above-ground storage tanks; two concrete-lined crude oil reservoirs, and equipment to pump and circulate the petroleum products to, from, and throughout the facility. Several petroleum products were stored at the former tank farm, including crude oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, and fuel oil.



Between 1962 and 1964, all facilities were removed from the Site and the Ujima Village property was sold to the DeLay Land Company. Ujima Village was constructed in the early 1970s as a private development funded by a mortgage insured by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In the early 1990s, HUD foreclosed on the property due to a mortgage default and took ownership of the property. HUD sold the Ujima Village Apartment Complex to the County of Los Angeles Housing Authority ("Housing Authority") in 1995. The State transferred ownership of the Park to the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks Recreation ("Parks and Recreation") in 1987.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

### Ujima Village

Prior to the sale of the Ujima Village Apartment Complex to the Housing Authority, HUD conducted a limited environmental investigation. This investigation found that the soils underneath the property contained chemicals associated with petroleum products from historical operations.

After analysis of the data collected, HUD determined that the presence of these chemicals did not present a significant health risk to residents. Subsequent testing conducted in June 2006 reconfirmed the presence of petroleum-related chemicals in soils and also detected the presence of petroleum-related chemicals in the groundwater.

*Your drinking water is safe. The water that is used to irrigate the park is safe. Drinking and irrigation water is supplied by the Metropolitan Water District and Golden State Water Company. It is obtained from different sources and is tested regularly to ensure it meets all federal and state drinking water standards before it is distributed to consumers. The contaminated groundwater is an average of 37 feet beneath the surface of the ground, is not used and is very unlikely to come into contact with anyone.*

In June 2007, the Housing Authority advised ExxonMobil that the soil and groundwater beneath the Site contained petroleum-related chemicals. In November 2007 the Regional Water Board issued an Order to the Housing Authority and ExxonMobil directing assessment, monitoring and clean up of the Site consistent with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and Cal/EPA requirements. ExxonMobil developed workplans for these activities, which were conditionally approved by the Regional Water Board during early 2008. Implementation of the workplans began in late April 2008.

### Earvin Magic Johnson Regional Park

In February 2000, a Phase I record review regarding the Park was conducted. It concluded that the subsurface soils may have been impacted by former tank farm operations and recommended that soil sampling be conducted and precautionary measures be taken in those areas of the Site where new construction activities take place. In November 2006, a soil gas survey conducted by Earth Tech on behalf of Parks and Recreation found low levels of methane, a gas that can be associated with petroleum products, in the air space between the soil particles in the southeast area of the Park. Analysis of the data collected determined that the soil gas was at low levels and did not pose a significant risk to human health or the environment.

In January and February 2008, the Regional Water Board issued orders to Parks and Recreation and ExxonMobil to conduct additional testing of the soil, soil gas and groundwater at the Park. This workplan is under final review by the Regional Water Board and DTSC.

## UPCOMING SITE ACTIVITIES



### Ujima Village, Child Care and School Facilities

Investigation activities will consist of 1) collecting soil, soil gas, indoor air and outdoor air samples 2) investigating the location, type and concentration of contamination, and 3) assessing the potential for soil, soil gas and groundwater contamination to have adverse health impacts on residents or child care and school employees, patrons and visitors.

This initial investigation will involve bringing truck-mounted equipment onto the Site, contractors walking through the property with wagon-mounted equipment to determine the location of utilities, installing small tubes into the ground to collect soil and soil

vapor samples, and temporarily placing small canisters in certain buildings to collect indoor air samples.

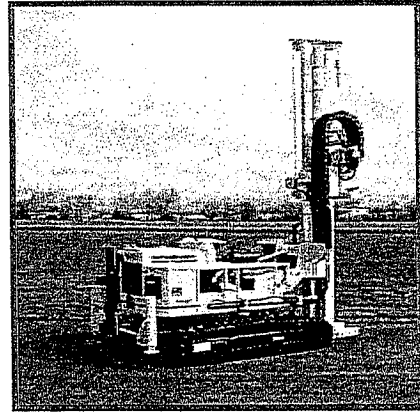
Site assessment activities started in mid-April 2008. Every effort will be made to ensure the safety and to minimize any inconvenience to those living at Ujima Village and those attending and working at the child

care centers and school. Advanced notice of any obtrusive activity will be given whenever possible. Your understanding and support of efforts to conduct an environmental investigation at the Site are very much appreciated.

#### Earvin Magic Johnson Regional Park

Similar site assessment activities will be conducted at the Park. The Park's environmental investigation is expected to start in the spring and continue through summer of 2008. Advanced notice of any disruptive activity will be posted whenever possible. As with the Ujima Village property, every effort will be made to ensure the safety and to minimize any inconvenience of those visiting or working at the park.

Data collection and analysis will be ongoing, with all samples collected and analyzed following US EPA and Cal/EPA approved procedures. Collection of samples will be conducted by contractors licensed by the State of California and testing of samples will be performed by laboratories certified by the State of California. All reports containing test results will be available to the public for review and will be used to identify and evaluate appropriate remediation (cleanup) strategies and technologies. *If test results indicate a significant threat to public health or the environment, immediate protective action will be taken by both state and local government.*



#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

ExxonMobil, Housing Authority and Parks and Recreation are working cooperatively with the Regional Water Board to implement a community outreach and public participation plan. The goal of this plan is to inform interested individuals about environmental conditions and activities at the Site and to identify and accommodate community needs and preferences. As part of this process, local residents, business owners and other interested persons in the community will periodically receive fact sheets, work and meeting notices (the first public meeting was held on April 10) and other site-related announcements.

#### **INFORMATION REPOSITORY**

The Regional Water Board invites and encourages you to learn more about this Site and to comment on its environmental investigation.

Fact sheets, workplans and sampling results for the Site are available for public review. For your convenience, core documents have been placed in the AC Bilbrew Library. The complete administrative file for the Site is available at the Regional Water Board's office.

#### **AC Bilbrew Library**

150 East El Segundo Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90061  
310-538-3350

#### **Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board**

320 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, #200  
Los Angeles, CA 90013  
By appointment, please call 213-576-6600 or fax your request to 213-576-6717

A toll free information line has also been established to provide recorded information and updates on the project. Call 866-278-7207 to access the message, which will be updated regularly.

If you have any questions or would like additional information about the activities being conducted at the Site, please contact:

Stephen M. Cain  
Senior Environmental Planner  
Regional Water Board  
320 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90013  
213-576-6694  
scain@waterboards.ca.gov

Ms. DeAnn Johnson  
Director-Construction  
Management Division  
County of Los Angeles  
Community Development  
Commission  
4800 East Cesar Chavez Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90022  
Deann.Johnson@lacdc.org  
(For Ujima Village inquiries)

Bill Romanelli  
Vice President  
APCO Worldwide  
(On behalf of ExxonMobil)  
1201 K Street, Suite 1200  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-554-3440

Hannah Chen  
County of Los Angeles  
Chief Executive Office  
Capital Projects/Debt Management  
754 Kenneth Hahn Hall of  
Administration  
500 W. Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
hchen@ceo.lacounty.gov  
(For Park related inquiries)