



DTSC cleanup project leading to new school site in Martinez

The [Department of Toxic Substances Control](#) (DTSC) is overseeing a plan to remove lead-contaminated soil near the Martinez Junior High School in Martinez this summer to make way for two new educational facilities.

Martinez Unified School District (MUSD) plans to replace a maintenance and operation facility on Susana Street with the Vicente Martinez Continuation High School and the Briones Alternative High School. To accomplish this, the school district will have to remove lead-contaminated soil at the site.

“Having this property available is a win-win for everybody,” said Bruce Leslie, Bond Coordinator for the MUSD. “It’s the cleanup of a site that had been polluted a long time ago – and it was an unknown hazard. And now we have a clean site for this brand new campus.”

The public is being asked to weigh in on a Draft Removal Action Workplan (RAW) for the Contra Costa County site. A [30-day public comment](#) period will close on July 3.

As part of the project, DTSC sent out a community survey on April 15, 2015 to residents near the site of the new schools. By the end of April, the survey had generated about 190 responses, which is an exceptionally high rate for a DTSC survey. In reaction to that response, DTSC held a public meeting at the MUSD office in Martinez on June 17 to help the community understand the process of the cleanup which is scheduled to begin in late July or early August.

DTSC Project Manager Bud Duke and DTSC Public Participation Specialist Wayne Hagen presented at the meeting.

“We want this process to be as transparent as possible,” Duke said.

Questions about dust mitigation and air monitoring were raised in the community surveys and during the public meeting. Some of these concerns could lead to changes in the final version of the RAW, Duke said.

Following the close of the public comment period, DTSC will put together its response to comments document, finalize the RAW and then begin the cleanup.

“We plan to complete the work before the school year begins,” Duke said, pointing out that there will be no children at the junior high school or at a child-care center across the street. “The goal



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is to finish the cleanup before the first day of school which is August 24.”

Four cleanup alternatives were considered and excavation and disposal of the contaminated soil was selected as the most appropriate method. Approximately 455 cubic yards of soil will be excavated and disposed of at a permitted disposal facility. Soil sampling will be completed to verify that cleanup levels have been achieved and then the excavated area will be filled with clean soil.

Alhambra High School was on the site from the early 1900s until the 1950s when the school was demolished. Lead contamination was found in the soil in the area of the former school buildings. DTSC said this contamination is likely from lead-based paint.

DTSC became involved in this site in September of 2014 when MUSD contacted the department because it was interested in redeveloping the site for a school.