

COMMUNITY UPDATE

The mission of DTSC is to protect California's people and the environment from harmful effects of toxic substances through the restoration of contaminated resources, enforcement, regulation and pollution prevention.

New Murray Middle School Cleanup Plan for Contaminated Soil Available for Public Comment

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) invites you to review and comment on the draft Removal Action Workplan (RAW) for the Sierra Sands Unified School District's New Murray Middle School (Site). The New Murray Middle School will be constructed at the northwest corner of East Drummond Avenue and East French Avenue, adjacent to the city of Ridgecrest in Kern County, California.



New Murray Middle School Site

Site Background and History

The roughly 38-acre Site lies along the southern boundary of the Department of Defense's Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake (NAWSCL) adjacent to Ridgecrest, Kern County. The Site was undisturbed until it was acquired by the Navy around 1943. The Navy built houses and supporting infrastructure (i.e., streets, curbs, gutters, and subsurface utilities) on the northern portion of the Site between 1959 and 1961. The houses were demolished and removed in 2002, with the supporting infrastructure being abandoned in place. The Site is currently vacant land.

Why Cleanup is Necessary

The Sierra Sands Unified School District (District) plans to build a new middle school to replace Murray Middle School. Site investigations have discovered soil contamination that requires cleanup before the new school can be built. DTSC is the state regulatory agency responsible for overseeing environmental reviews and cleanup actions of contaminated soil and groundwater throughout the state. DTSC evaluates cleanup plans proposed or expanding school sites for potential hazardous materials or contamination that may pose a risk to school children, the staff or faculty. If contamination is found, DTSC oversees the cleanup of the property.

Public Comment Period



August 26, 2015 – September 25, 2015

Your participation is encouraged. The 30-day public comment period begins August 26 and ends September 25, 2015.

DTSC will make a final decision on the cleanup plan after public comments have been reviewed.

Comments submitted during this period should be related to the draft RAW. Public comments must be **postmarked or emailed by September 25, 2015 and sent to:**

Aslam Shareef
DTSC Project Manager
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, 90630-4732

aslam.shareef@dtsc.ca.gov



Environmental Investigations

Environmental investigations conducted at the Site between 2014 and 2015 found pesticides in shallow soil at depths of 3 feet or less. The two pesticides detected at the highest concentrations were dieldrin and Aldrin, commonly used to control termites and ants from the 1950s until the early 1970s. Due to environmental concerns, use of the pesticides ended in 1988.

The contaminated soil was limited to the northern area of the Site where the base housing was located. Using the analytical data from the investigations, four areas containing an estimated 20,077 total cubic yards of contaminated soil were identified and targeted for cleanup. The cleanup areas are indicated with color in the figure of the Site.

Proposed Cleanup Plan (Draft RAW)

To clean up the contaminated soil, the draft RAW evaluated the following three options:

- **Option 1 – No Action.**

Cleanup would not be done, and the contaminated soil would be left in place. This option is given as a baseline to evaluate the other options.

- **Option 2 – Soil Excavation and Off-Site Disposal**

Contaminated soil would be excavated, loaded into trucks, and transported off-site to an appropriate disposal facility. Clean soil would be imported to the Site to backfill the excavations created by the soil removal.

- **Option 3 – Soil Excavation with On-Site Burial, Capping, and Land Use Restrictions.**

Contaminated soil would be excavated, loaded into trucks, and transferred to an on-site burial cell. Clean soil generated to create the burial cell would be used to backfill the soil removal excavations and soil would not need to be imported. The burial cell would be covered with a 2-foot thick protective soil cap. Land use restrictions would be formally recorded to prevent the burial cell from being disturbed and the cap would be monitored and maintained.

The preferred alternative for the contaminated soil is Option 3 – Soil Excavation with On-Site Burial, Capping, and Land Use Restrictions. This option was chosen because of its effectiveness and ease of implementation.

Once the draft RAW is approved, DTSC will oversee the cleanup and ensure it is done in a way that is protective of human health and the environment. Work is expected to begin during October 2015 and be completed by the end of the year.

Safety Measures During Cleanup

During cleanup activities, the following measures will be taken to ensure the safety of the public and the community:

- For general safety, work areas will be fenced and access will be controlled.
- Water will be sprayed on soil to keep dust down.
- Soil stockpiles will be covered with plastic sheeting to control dust and stop runoff during storms.
- Air quality will be monitored to ensure dust levels remain protective to the community.
- All trucks with soil leaving the site will be covered and the tires brushed and cleaned to keep excess soil from being tracked into the street.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a state law that requires state and local agencies to identify the environmental impact of their actions. Prior to approval of the RAW, DTSC will perform its environmental review obligations under CEQA to ensure consistency with the provisions of the Act and accompanying Guidelines.

An Initial Study has been prepared that analyzes the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed soil removal action, including noise, traffic, and air emissions associated with soil excavation, handling, and disposal. The Initial Study concluded that the project will not have a negative effect on human health or the environment, as long as specific measures are taken to reduce certain impacts to less than significant levels (Mitigated Negative Declaration).

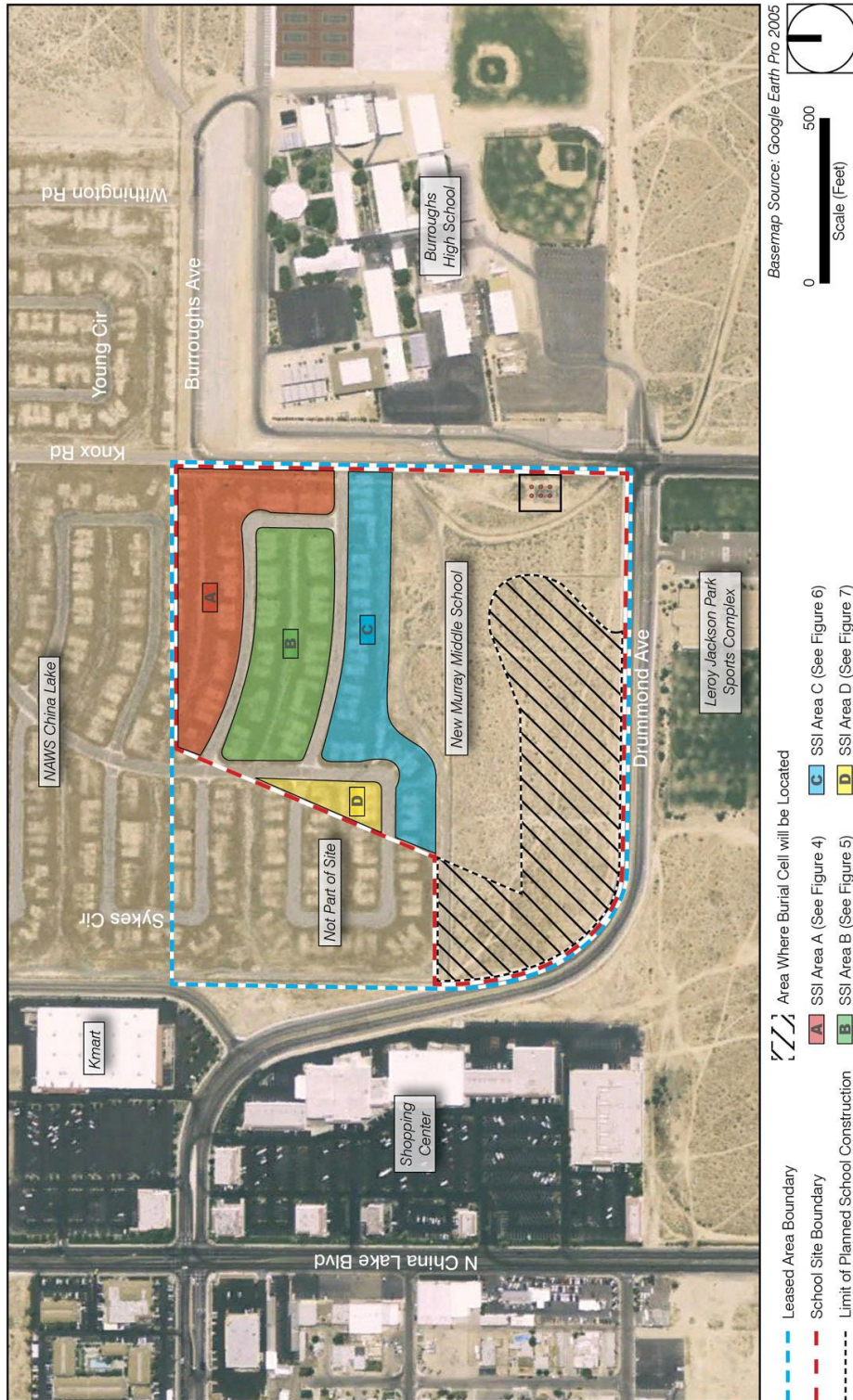
Next Steps

- The public may comment on the draft RAW during the Public Comment Period for 30 days, August 24 through September 25, 2015.
- DTSC will review all comments received and make any necessary revisions to finalize the RAW.
- DTSC will approve a final RAW.
- DTSC will provide a “Response to Comments” document to anyone who submitted comments during the Public Comment Period and provided contact information.
- The District will implement the final RAW.



New Murray Middle School Site - Ridgecrest

Soil Removal Areas



Where To Find Project Documents And How You Can Participate

You can find the draft RAW, Community Profile, and CEQA documents at the following locations:

Sierra Sands Unified School District

113 West Felspar Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Contact: Pamela Pence at (760) 499-5300

Ridgecrest Community Library

131 East Las Flores Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Phone: (760) 384-5870
Hours: Tues. to Thurs.: 11:00 am – 7:00 pm
Fri. & Sat.: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Mon. & Sun.: Closed

**Former Vieweg Elementary School
(Current Project Offices)**

348 Rowe Street
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Contact: Pamela Pence at (760) 499-5300

Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake

429 E. Bowen Road, Stop 4001
China Lake, CA 93555
Contact: Tim Fox at (760) 939-9438

Department of Toxic Substances Control

Regional Records Office
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630
Contact: Jone Bario at (714) 484-5336 for
appointment
Hours: Mon. to Fri.: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Documents for the New Murray Middle School project, including previous environmental reports, are also posted on the DTSC's on-line website at:

http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report.asp?global_id=60001985

DTSC CONTACTS

Project Information

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