



Cleanup underway

School Revitalization

SUCCESS STORY, June 2006

Jordan High School

Site Facts

Site Name:

Jordan High School

Location:

Watts, Los Angeles County

Site Size:

2.1 Acres

Historical Uses:

Adjacent to steel mill and metal recycling yard

Length of Cleanup:

5 months

Contaminants of Concern:

Petroleum hydrocarbons, lead, arsenic, chromium, antimony, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPHs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)

Redeveloped Use:

Jordan High School Baseball Field

In December 2002, an explosion occurred at S&W Atlas Iron and Metal Company, Inc. (Atlas), a recycling facility located adjacent to Jordan High School in the Watts community of Los Angeles. While cutting up old military ordnance, one large shell casing that was improperly decommissioned exploded, hit another shell that detonated and landed near the baseball field, in front of a portable classroom at Jordan High School. Fortunately, there were no injuries. In response to a request from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) investigated contaminant migration from the Atlas facility and subsequently undertook cleanup of the baseball field at Jordan High School.

DTSC investigated the Atlas facility, where automobile engines and various metal parts were brought to the facility for dismantling prior to recycling. Since the 1940's, Atlas had placed non-recyclable debris in two large waste piles, which were located directly behind the fence separating Atlas from the Jordan High School baseball field.

To identify potentially responsible parties for the discovered contamination, DTSC hired a consultant to conduct a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of the Site and adjacent facilities, using DTSC funds. In April 2004, DTSC staff conducted initial surface sampling at the school baseball field, which revealed elevated levels of lead along with other contaminants commonly found at metal recycling facilities. In May 2004, a subsurface investigation was conducted to delineate the extent of contamination.

Based on the available information and data, DTSC issued an Imminent and Substantial Endangerment Determination in May 2004, requiring a removal action at the school baseball field. The school district restricted access to the baseball field by fencing it off to prevent any direct contact by students with contaminated soils. When LAUSD had no funds available for the required cleanup at the school, DTSC identified cleanup funds, developed a scope of work, went through a bidding process, and selected a qualified contractor to conduct the cleanup work under DTSC's oversight. DTSC's public participation staff worked with LAUSD to inform the faculty and community about the investigation and cleanup.

DTSC oversaw a time-critical removal action at the school baseball field, conducted between June 21 and July 5, 2004 when the school was closed for a two-week summer break. This expedited cleanup was necessary in order to prevent exposure to students and school staff, and to avoid impacts to normal school operations.

During excavation activities, DTSC discovered additional areas with burn ash and arsenic contamination, requiring expansion of the cleanup. DTSC's contractor completed all field activities in accordance with the approved Removal Action Workplan on July 2, 2004, including: site preparation; waste soil excavation, transportation, and disposal; fill material supply, grading, and compaction; and site restoration activities, including repair of irrigation lines, sod replacement, and baseball diamond area restoration. Excavation depth in many areas across the baseball field went from two feet, as originally projected, to six feet below grade, until confirmation sampling came back "clean". Approximately 2,000 tons of hazardous waste soils were shipped offsite for proper disposal. On July 6, 2004, the Jordan High School campus reopened with a safe, restored baseball field.



Students enjoying their baseball field



State of California

Department of Toxic Substances Control

