

Environmental Report—June 19, 2017

Submitted by Joan Licari

Quemetco:

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control has not yet released the results of the soil testing completed in the ¼ mile radius around the Quemetco Inc. lead/acid battery recycling plant located at 720 S 7th Ave, City of Industry, CA 91746 to determine if lead contamination has accumulated in soils around the plant. These results have been expected for several months and are now reported to be out in June.

On June 4th, U.S.C. Keck Medical Center in conjunction with the Clean Air Coalition of Avocado Heights held an event at the Hacienda Heights Community Center at which parents could bring their children, ages 5-12, who have lived within 2.5 miles of the plant for 2 years to be tested for lead that might have accumulated within their bodies. Parents were also asked to participate in a dietary survey since some foods such as rice based products and fish may contribute metal concentrations. Samples of fingernails and urine were taken; fingernails can show longer term exposure to lead and urine that can indicate recent exposure.

The Keck study will ultimately involve 100 children. **You can still participate in the METALS study led by USC scientists if you couldn't make June 4th event! Please contact Professor Jill Johnston to ask that researchers come to your home to collect samples from your children. It takes about 30 minutes per child and you will get a \$30 Target gift card for each child.**

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Results from this study will ultimately be compared to similar investigations in New Hampshire and Texas. Health risks of lead for children not known well. Also, a part of this study will include investigations on the route metals take to be included in human tissues.

Sale of La Subida and Glenelder School Sites

The Hacienda La Puente Unified School District is considering sale of two school sites—La Subida and Glenelder. A consulting firm Lee Andrews, a community outreach and development company, held public meetings at each of the sites in June. Also presenting, was a broker from Tierra Co. contracted by the District for the possible sale.

Attendees were concerned about the adequacy of the community outreach program to gather input from community members on potential sale of these properties. At both of the meetings, many attendees heard about the meeting by word of mouth—not flyers or personal contact.. I received my mail notice two days before the La Subida meeting and one the day of that meeting.

The outreach representative said they knocked on doors to alert residents near the schools about the meetings. However, people attending the meetings asked “How many people are home during

the day? They have to work.” Also, the times for the meetings were believed to be designed to limit participation. Meeting times between 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. do not allow many people to even get home from work to participate. It was pointed out that this is prime dinner time for families and at La Subida for soccer practice. Many attendees felt late notice and timing to indicate an effort by the consultants to limit public participation. It also led to the impression that the Board has already made a final decision.

Community outreach was concentrated in a ½ mile radius of the schools. Attendees pointed out that the properties belong to the whole HLP Unified School District. Some attending the La Subida meeting were from La Puente. They were there because their children used the La Subida field for AYSO soccer and would be affected by the sale, an indication that the entire District will be impacted by the sale. Additional meetings were suggested with more advance notice and convenient times before any final decision by the HLPUSD Board is made.

Many attendees, due to the presentation, felt that the decision has already been made to sell. The Tierra representative tried to indicate this was not the case. However attendees were concerned about the contract with a broker, the discussion of a request for bids to go out, and a desire to select successful proposals by July (according to the Tierra broker) .

The Tierra representative indicated the history of the proposed sale of these sites goes back to 2010. Attendees pointed out that demographics change with younger families coming in and asked where children in homes built on these sites would go to school. It also was pointed out by speakers that school and park bonds have recently been passed. Numerous temporary classrooms are on campuses within the district. Speakers asked if these two sites are really surplus? And if homes are built on these school sites, will there be space for the children in those homes to attend school or will they just impact other local schools to a greater degree

Things the public should consider:

Does the District need to sell the sites for money?

There are no open space areas of any size remaining in the Heights. These school properties are the last opportunities for park sites left. Sale of these sites for development would eliminate forever any possibility of additional parkland for our area or their potential use as school sites should changing demographics of our area result in an increase in school-age children and a demand for additional school classrooms.

Last year, Los Angeles County did an assessment of park needs for the unincorporated areas in its jurisdiction (<http://lacountyparkneeds.org/>). HHIA participated in the assessment process by studying all our community parks.

The county found Hacienda Heights to be lacking in parks. This was particularly true of the area around the Glenelder site. The top ten projects residents requested were: 1. dog park, 2. an indoor aquatic center, 3. additional covered picnic areas, 4. Acquire land for a new park, 5. a local gymnasium, 6. improved ADA access in existing parks, 7. a skate park, 8. a community garden, 9. replacement of picnic tables, 10. perimeter paths at existing parks. The two school properties could

provide some of these needs, if cooperation with the Los Angeles County Dept. of Parks and Recreation could be arranged.

What other possibilities exist that would provide funds for the District and meet community needs at the same time? Is there a possibility that the sites could be leased to or managed in cooperation with the Los Angeles County Dept. of Parks and Recreation? The properties would then be available for future school use if needed or would remain open long-term for recreational use. It was indicated at the meeting that L.A. County Parks and Recreation were approached in 2010 and they were not interested in purchase. With the passage of the park bonds at the recent election that decision could have changed. Has this opportunity been explored recently? Perhaps some sort of joint management could be arranged. Have these options been investigated?

Local youth organizations need more fields for soccer, little league baseball, softball etc. At the community meetings held in association with the County parks assessment, residents expressed needs they felt the community had for recreation. Is there a possibility that an arrangement with Mount San Antonio Community College could be made to use the sites as satellite campuses as they have done in cities near by?

A study completed in May, 2017 by the Trust for Public Lands indicates the many benefits of parks for people in the City of Los Angeles). We, in the unincorporated County, would receive these same benefits outlined in this study:

- Parks increase the value of residential property nearby and increase property tax revenues.
- Research indicates that park use translates into increased physical activity and a reduction in medical cost to the population.
- Residents need safe places to walk, picnic etc. Our local trails in the Puente-Chino Hills are heavily impacted. It is often not that people do not want to walk, jog, exercise their pets, but that there are no places available. Those that are may be overcrowded or parking is a problem.
- Parks are a place for people to socialize and meet your neighbors, get groups together, to play pickup or organized sporting events/training.
- There are environmental benefits that will be lost by development for housing.
 - Vegetation removes air pollutants that damage health and cost of maintaining structures.
 - Storm water is captured slowing runoff, increased infiltration, and reduction in the amount of water that must be handled by the sewer systems. Hard surfaces of homes, driveways etc. provide runoff, flooding--not infiltration.

https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/files_upload/CA_LA%20Economic%20Benefits%20Report_LowRes.pdf.)

If community members are concerned about the loss of these sites to houses and/or condos, be sure to attend the school board meetings to present their views on these sales.

