

## Environmental Report: November, 2015

Submitted by Joan Licari

### **Puente Hills Landfill Park**

Two meetings were held in November at which the consultants for the Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation presented a “Preferred Park Concept” to Hacienda Heights and surrounding community residents for their consideration. The “Concept”, the consultants said, was derived from responses given at Workshops 1 and 2 as to what types of activities were desired in the new regional park. The Preferred Park Concept can be viewed on-line at: [http://static1.squarespace.com/static/554abf7ce4b00e750a7ce232/t/563a7baae4b0de39d58a59d4/1446673322106/Preferred+Park+Concept\\_web.pdf](http://static1.squarespace.com/static/554abf7ce4b00e750a7ce232/t/563a7baae4b0de39d58a59d4/1446673322106/Preferred+Park+Concept_web.pdf).

The presentations offered by the consultants at previous workshops can be viewed at: <http://www.puentehillslandfillpark.org/workshops>.

Residents are asked to submit comments to Comments may be emailed to Michelle O'Connor, Departmental Facilities Planner I - Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, Planning & CEQA Section at: [moconnor@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:moconnor@parks.lacounty.gov)

After publication of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study (IS), the consultant team will organize and conduct a Scoping Meeting. This meeting will serve as the kick-off for the public process for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The next community meeting will likely take place in January on a date to be determined.

### **Palm Trees on Hacienda Boulevard**

A meeting of residents living in the Landscape Maintenance District of Hacienda Height in which the palm trees along Hacienda Blvd. have been infected was held on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>. The first 35 that presented a risk of falling had been removed at that time. Another 56 remain that will likely be removed over the next year as needed. Concerns were raised about difficulty in contacting residents in the district for input.

Several types of possible replacement were presented.

Option 1-Total replacement of the plant palette. This would include removal of all remaining plants and replanting with a new water-saving palette.

Option 2: The Mexican palms will remain; these are not infected. However, the lost California palms cannot be replaced with new Mexican palms due to regulations that now prohibit the use of palms in divider areas. Shrubs instead would be planted on the empty spaces.

Option 3: Develop a totally new landscape design that would involve bringing water to the median, an alternative that may be financially prohibitive.

Residents in attendance supported option 2. The Dept. of Public Works offered to possibly design and plant a demonstration area at one point along Hacienda Blvd to show residents how this would look. They also offered to come to HHIA meetings to discuss this matter.

### **Quemetco lead/acid battery recycling plant in City of Industry**

Now that the Department of Justice has forced Exide to close its facility in Vernon because of years of criminal violations of safety regulations, only one lead-acid battery recycling plant remains west of the Rocky Mountains: Quemetco, in the City of Industry. This facility has been in our community since 1959, now entirely surrounded by homes and schools—Hacienda Heights, Avocado Heights and La Puente together comprise about 140 000 mostly Latino residents. Some Hacienda Heights residents live as close as 400 feet from Quemetco.

On March 12, 2015, The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) received the permit renewal application from Quemetco, Inc. (Quemetco). Quemetco is requesting authorization from DTSC to continue the storage, treatment and disposal of hazardous wastes at the facility located at 720 South 7th Street in the City of Industry, California 91746 (Facility). DTSC will evaluate the application to determine if it is complete. DTSC may request additional information from Quemetco before determining completeness. If the application is determined to be complete, DTSC will then prepare a draft permit for public review and comment.

Quemetco is in the hazardous waste battery recycling business. The used or unwanted batteries are received at the Facility in packed pellets. The batteries are processed by separating the liquid acid and the leaded materials from the battery casings. The wastewater flows to the wastewater treatment plant for wastewater treatment and reuse; while the leaded contents are transferred to the in-house smelters for lead recovery. The battery casings are crushed into small pieces, and washed and dried prior to the transfer to awaiting trucks for transportation to KW Plastics of California in Bakersfield, California for plastic recycling. If DTSC renews the Permit, DTSC would continue to allow Quemetco to store, treat and dispose of hazardous wastes during the next ten years after the Permit is approved.

The Clean Air Coalition of Avocado Heights held a meeting on Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> to discuss actions concerning Quemetco Co. At that meeting it was reported by the Californian Dept. of Toxic Control Substances (DTSC) that they have rejected four protocols Quemetco Company has submitted for testing the surrounding areas. DTSC is in the process of developing its own testing program to determine lead and arsenic concentrations in soils surrounding the site including residential properties, school and park areas, possibly up to a one-mile radius from the plant.

Testing may begin soon; Quemetco will be billed for the project. The South Coast Air Quality Management District is in the process of developing new regulations that are specifically aimed at Quemetco since that company is the only one that will be affected. DTSC is also coordinating with the State Water Board to develop plans for the facility.

Currently the local Clean Air Coalition of Avocado Heights is also conducting a door to door health survey to try to determine what, if any, indications there may be of cancer clusters in the

area. These studies are not scientific but might indicate the possibility of a problem. There have been anecdotal reports by residents of human cancers in the area and early deaths of pets.