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## Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

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**Mill Pond Park, Pier 5  
65 East 149<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bronx, New York 10451  
Block 2356, Lot 02**

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*Prepared for:*

New York City Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation  
253 Broadway, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

*Prepared By:*

Parsons Brinckerhoff, Inc.  
One Penn Plaza, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10119  
Tel.: (212) 465-5000  
Fax: (212) 631-3770

**PARSONS  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

At the request of the New York City Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation (OER), Parsons Brinckerhoff, Inc. (Parsons Brinckerhoff) completed a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) of property consisting of land formerly used as a rail yard. The Site is located north of the East 145<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, south of Mill Pond Park, east of the Harlem River and west of Exterior Street and the elevated Major Deegan Expressway, in the borough of Bronx, New York. The study was completed in accordance with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standard E1527-05 "Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process."

### **Site & Vicinity Description**

The Site is composed of a 191,500 square-foot parcel that contains no building structures. Based on information provided by the New York City Department of Finance (NYCDOF) Real Property Tax Assessment Bureau, the Site is located within Block No. 2356, Lot No. 2. The Site is owned by The New York City Parks and Recreation and the Site location is shown in Figures 1 and 2.

The Site is located in the West Concourse section of the Bronx and is bounded to the north by Mill Pond Park, to the west by railroad tracks and the Harlem River, to the east by Exterior Avenue and the elevated Major Deegan Expressway, and to the south by the 145<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge.

The Site is situated in an urban-commercial setting with surrounding properties consisting primarily of commercial and open space uses. Properties adjacent to the east of the Site, across Exterior Street, primarily include commercial identified as the Gateway Center at Bronx Terminal Market and properties adjacent to the north include Mill Pond Park. Properties adjacent to the south include the 145<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and to the west the Harlem River.

### **Historical Resource Review**

To study the past uses of the Site and the surrounding area, Parsons Brinckerhoff retained Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR) of Milford, Connecticut to perform a search of historical Sanborn fire insurance maps, historical USGS topographic maps, historical aerial photographs, and city directories.

Based on review of the available Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, the Site was developed with multiple buildings in 1891 and was vacant in 1903. From 1908 to 1922 the majority of the Site was utilized as a lumber operation and a coal yard. In 1928 the Site is depicted as the Erie R.R. Freight Station which includes associated buildings and railroad tracks and the coal yard is still visible on the northern portion of the Site. The coal yard is no longer present in the 1944 Sanborn Map. The Site use remains unchanged until 1984 when the railroad tracks are no longer present and the Site is no longer identified as a freight station. From 1984 to 2007 the Site use remains consistent.

The property to the south was depicted as the "Lehigh Valley Railroad Yard" from 1908 to 1980 when it was depicted as a vacant lot with a small building. From 1935 until 1980 this property also had a coal company located on the western portion of the property. The property adjacent to the north was developed with small buildings and operations until 1944 when it was developed as an open city market. The eastern bank of the Harlem River was partially filled in around the piers in 1908 and in the canal by 1928. Increased development is noted to the east and the Major Deegan Highway construction began in 1977.

The review of Historical USGS Topographic Quadrangles did indicate that the Site formerly contained railroad tracks. Review of the available aerial photographs indicates that the Site was a rail yard from 1966 to 1984. From 1984 to 2006, the number of buildings on the Site varied, although the large building on the eastern portion of the Site remained visible. The surrounding area to the north and east generally remained the same, with some changes in density and building configurations. The property to the south of the East 145<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge was originally developed as a rail yard with large structures until 1977. From 1977 until 2006 this property appeared to be undergoing redevelopment.

The City Directory did not provide any information regarding potential historical uses of the Site. However, information was provided for the surrounding properties and includes the following:

- 49 East 149<sup>th</sup> Street – Administrative Office (1940)
- 63 East 149<sup>th</sup> Street – Mapes & Sprowl Steel Co. (1940)
- 85 East 149<sup>th</sup> Street – Posner Isidor (1940)
- 71 East 149<sup>th</sup> Street – Simmons Albert v (2005)



### **Regulatory Database and Record Review Evaluation**

The regulatory database search report was provided by EDR and was reviewed for information regarding documented and/or suspected releases of regulated hazardous substances and/or petroleum products on or near the Site. The report identified 204 listings within the ASTM-specified search ranges. The Site was not identified in any of the databases; however, several surrounding properties were identified in numerous federal, state, and local databases and is presented in Section 5.

### **Site Reconnaissance**

The Site reconnaissance was completed on April 16, 2012 by Parsons Brinckerhoff's Senior Environmental Scientist, Ms. Susan Bianchetti, CPG. Ms. Bianchetti was provided approval to perform the Site inspection by Mr. Shawn Cargill, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (through OER). During the site visit, Ms. Deborah DeGregorio, Park Supervisor, arrived and was able to confirm some of the information regarding the Site. The Site visit was performed at approximately 10:00AM. Weather at the time the Site visit was sunny, approximately 70 degrees Fahrenheit, and no precipitation. A Site photo log documenting the Site visit is included as Appendix H.

The Site contained no habitable structures and consists of a large open parking lot enclosed with a chain-link fence on all sides except on the north, which is a wrought iron fence. There are a number of locked gates in the chain-link fence. The surface of the Site is predominantly broken concrete and asphalt. Minimal staining was present and most likely resulted from former use of the Site for parking.

Weeds and miscellaneous trash were noted along the fence line. The bulk of this trash was discarded clothing and general debris. However, an unidentified canister was noted along the west fence line. Next to this canister was an unattached lock/tag with printing that stated "Do Not Operate." Two mulch piles and a number of mounds of soil mixed with construction debris are present on the Site. Neither of these appeared to contain suspect material, such as discarded containers or drums. Damaged concrete barriers and planters were located throughout the Site, although mainly along the fence line. The concrete planters either contained soil, standing water or were empty.

In the center of the Site is a large steel structure that was likely associated with the former use of the Site as a rail yard. Historical information has identified this structure as a traveling gantry used for loading/unloading trains. The structure appears to be structurally sound, however the metal surface is

rusted and portions of the mechanics are missing. There is no evidence of staining in the vicinity of this structure and there did not appear to be any associated motors.

In addition to this structure, a fire hydrant is also located in the center of the Site. The hydrant was rusted and did not appear to have been used within the recent past.

The elevated Major Deegan Highway is located to the west and is partially located over the western portion of the Site. A number of large diameter, vertical drainage pipes were noted that appeared to be related to drainage from the highway. No discharge from these drainage structures was noted. A fire hydrant hook-up was noted behind one of the highway steel support columns located near the northwest corner of the Site. Miscellaneous piping was also noted and did not appear to be related to site drainage.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The Phase I identified the following on-site and offsite Recognized Environmental Condition (RECs) in addition to two environmental concerns. A REC is defined as a known or observed environmental condition of a hazardous waste or petroleum origin, which may pose a risk to human health and the environment. Environmental concerns represent indirect evidence of a potential environmental condition that may require further investigation to determine its inclusion as a REC.

#### **On-site RECs**

Based on the Site reconnaissance and the database review the following are considered on-site RECs:

- **Historic Use** – Historic use of the Site as a rail yard from 1908 to 1928. The main concern is the potential impact of soil and groundwater from petroleum products.
- **Former Coal Yard** – Part of the Site was used as a coal yard from 1908 to 1944. As a result, soil may be impacted with contaminants associated with coal fines (polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons and metals).
- **Historic Fill** – Parts of the eastern shoreline of the Harlem River was filled in between 1908 and 1928. The concern is the types of material used as fill and whether it contained potentially contaminated material.

#### **On-site Environmental Concern**

Based on the database review, the following is considered an on-site environmental concern.

- **Major Deegan Expressway** – Part of the elevated Major Deegan Expressway is located over the eastern portion of the Site. The likely presence of lead-based paint (LBP) and the possibility of chips of paint falling onto the Site could result in lead contaminated soil.

#### Offsite RECs

Based on the Site reconnaissance, historical use of surrounding properties, proximity, and database review, the following three E-designated sites are identified as offsite RECS based on their designation for hazardous waste:

- Lot 112, Block 2349
- Lot 35, Block 2351
- Lot 25, Block 2351

#### Offsite Environmental Concern

One site represents an environmental concern:

- **99 East 149<sup>th</sup> Street** – This address, which is located 17 feet southeast of the Site and is upgradient based on presumed groundwater flow direction, was identified on a number of databases and under multiple tenant names. BP West Coast is listed as a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Non-Generator but was listed as a former Large Quantity Generator (LQG); Mobil is listed on the Underground Storage Tank (UST) and Petroleum Bulk Storage (PBS) databases; River Gas and Wash Corp. and Bronx Terminal Market Waterfront Park are listed on the PBS database; and Amoco is listed on the Aboveground Storage Tank (AST) and LTANK (closed spill) databases. Based on the proximity of this site and the multiple tenants and associated databases, this site is considered an environmental concern.

Based on the identification of on-site and offsite RECs, PB recommends performing a Phase II environmental site investigation, which should consist of the following:

- Installation of ten soil borings on the Site. Soil borings should focus on the former coal yard area and the area underneath the Major Deegan expressway.
- Collection of up to two soil samples from each soil boring and analyzed for volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides/herbicides, and metals. Depending on the proposed development and the



depth of excavation, one soil sample should be surficial and the other one should be subsurface.

- The installation of four monitoring wells (temporary piezometers) and the collection of four groundwater samples analyzed for VOCs, SVOCs, PCBs, pesticides/herbicides, and metals.