



## Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) Fact Sheet

Edition 1; February 8, 2011

### Background

Mobile Gas owns property that was once the location of a manufactured gas plant (MGP) owned and operated from 1836 to approximately 1931 by Mobile Gas Works, the predecessor of Mobile Gas. The property is located at the corner of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and Broad Street in Mobile.

### What is a manufactured gas plant or MGP?

From the early 1800's to the mid 1900's, gas was manufactured through a process of heating coal and oil in enclosed ovens and extracting gases for use in lighting and cooking - a very different process than the natural gas fuel we know today. Over 1,500 MGP sites operated across the U.S. during this period. One MGP site operated in Mobile.

### What concerns have been raised about the former MGP property in Mobile?

Concerns have been raised regarding possible threats to public health due to potential exposure to byproducts or chemical compounds remaining in the soil from the historic manufactured gas operations process. As will be discussed further below, past studies have found no imminent threat to human health at this property, as it currently exists. However, prior to redevelopment of this property for a new use, an assessment must be made as to what must be done to make the property suitable for a new use.

### What are the chemical compounds of concern?

The primary byproduct of the gas manufacturing process in Mobile was tar. Tar is a dark, thick, insoluble fluid with a distinctive odor. In the first half of the 20th century, cities (including Mobile) and states across the country used large amounts of tar on streets and roads for paving or dust control.

Today, tar may be most recognizable in its use in applications such as roofing and pavement sealing. Tar can also be found in other products such as certain dandruff shampoo and medications for treatment of skin disorders.

### Principal byproducts of tar

Tar contains some chemical compounds that are considered to potentially cause adverse health effects upon long term exposure. It is used safely today in consumer products, such as driveway sealers, but too much direct and prolonged contact with tar or tar byproducts in impacted soil or water could pose a risk.

### Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons

Some of the chemical compounds in tar are polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs. These chemicals are widespread in the environment because they are produced in combustion processes, such as burning coal in a boiler, wood in a fireplace, or gasoline in an automobile.

### Volatile organic compounds

Certain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) can also be found in soil and groundwater at former manufactured gas plant locations. At the surface, these chemicals evaporate readily in the open air and dissipate but may remain underground for a long time. Benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene, and xylenes (BTEX) are the primary VOCs potentially at MGP sites. They are widely used in industry and are components of many consumer products, such as gasoline.

### Pathway to exposure

Importantly, manufactured gas byproducts or chemical compounds only potentially pose a risk to human health when there is a pathway to exposure to the chemicals contained in the soil or groundwater. If such a pathway to human contact exists, then exposure to these chemicals can possibly cause adverse health effects, depending on the degree of the exposure.

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**Are the chemical compounds associated with the manufactured gas operations property in Mobile posing a risk to human health and the environment?**

In cooperation with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), the City of Mobile, and the Mobile County Health Department, Mobile Gas has performed ongoing evaluations of the former gas plant property to determine if the property poses a threat to public health or the environment.

Mobile Gas began testing at the property in 1994, and beginning in 2003, ADEM performed a targeted Brownfield site inspection to assess the potential threat posed to human health and the environment.

Studies concluded that there is no indication of an imminent threat to human health, as the property exists today.

**What about environmental risk?**

Analysis performed on the environmental samples collected from groundwater, surface water, sediments, surface soil, and subsurface soil indicate the presence of or chemical compounds some of which may be attributable to the manufactured gas plant property and others which may be due to some other source. Many of the chemical compounds detected are widespread in the environment and are commonly used in industry and consumer products.

**What is the status of the MGP property and project today?**

Above all, safety and the well being of the people living and working on or near the property is the number one priority with this property and project. The MGP location is an old industrial property that has not been used for decades.

Mobile Gas enrolled the property in the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) Voluntary Cleanup Program in November, as a first step in the process of assessing and evaluating the property for potential new uses.

The Voluntary Clean Program is a structured process, in keeping with the public policies of the state of Alabama.

**Will Mobile Gas begin working on the property soon?**

This is the first step in what is expected to be approximately a 2½ year program of additional testing, review, planning, and construction work.

**What are the plans for future use of the property?**

We are optimistic about the future of the property, but it is too soon to identify a specific end use at this point in the process. Enrolling in the cleanup program is a first and important step that must be completed before final outcomes are determined. Mobile Gas will continue working with the city, local officials, and community stakeholders as future phases of the project take shape.

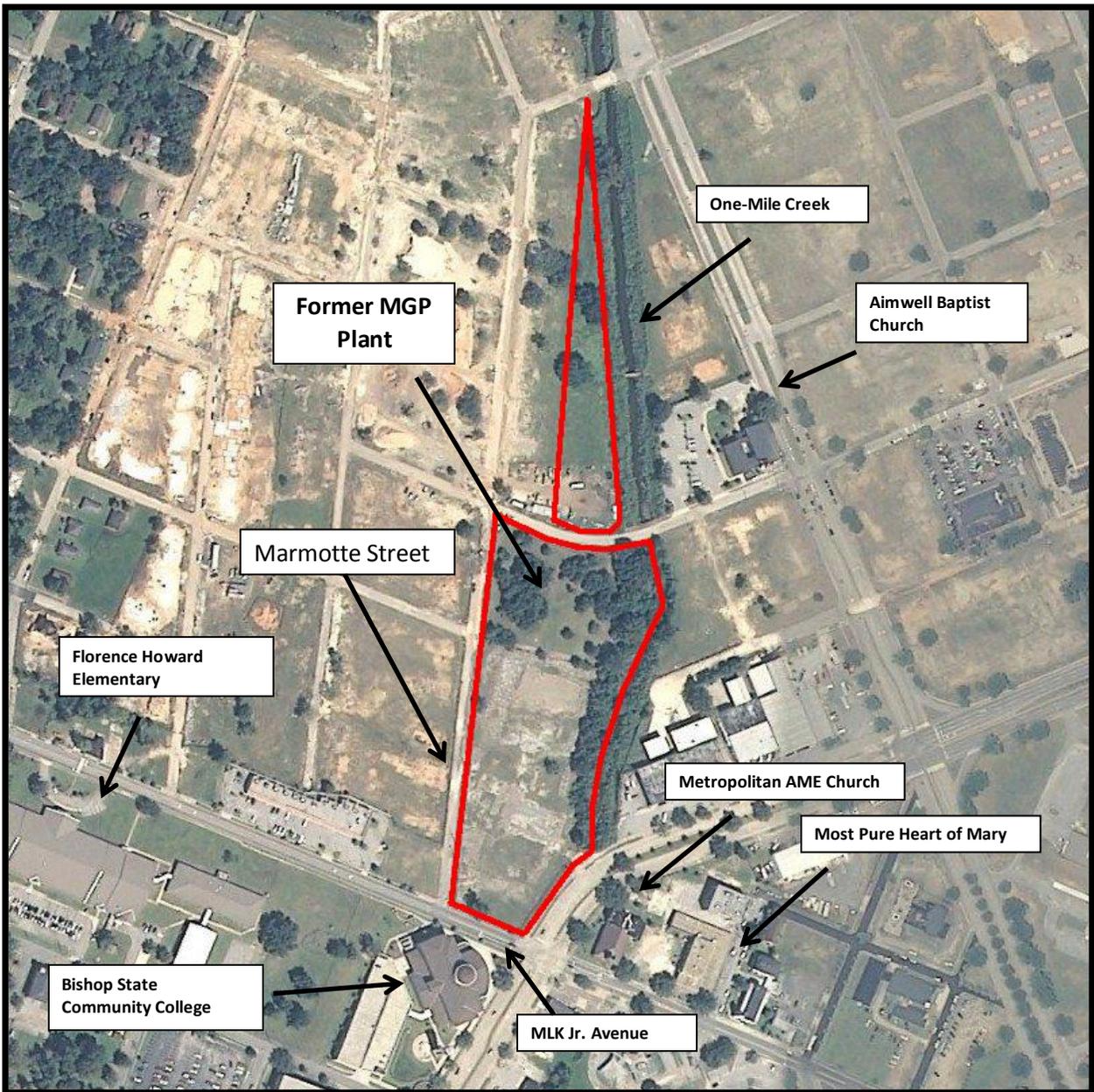
**Where can I get more information?**

Mobile Gas wants to keep you informed about our efforts at this former manufactured gas plant site.

For questions or more information, you may visit our website at [www.mobile-gas.com](http://www.mobile-gas.com) or contact:

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**Property Map & Description**

Location:  
804 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue

Description:  
Two parcels of land (7.4 acres and 3.02 acres)

Bordered By:  
Earle Street (north)  
One Mile Creek (east)  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and Broad Street (south)  
Marmotte Street (west)