

Topps Cleaners

Fair Lawn Borough, Bergen County

September 2005

Background

Topps Cleaners is located at 22-02 Fair Lawn Avenue in Fair Lawn Borough. Several companies conducted dry cleaning operations at the facility between 1950 and 2004. The one-half acre property consists of a vacant one-story building, parking lots and grassy areas. It is situated in a mixed residential, commercial and industrial area and is bordered by an Exxon service station to the east, a soccer field known as Archery Plaza to the south, railroad tracks to the west and Fair Lawn Avenue to the north. The ground surface in the area slopes to the south-southeast, which is also the general direction of ground water flow.

Topps Cleaners is one of three sites in the immediate area where the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is overseeing environmental investigations/cleanups. The two other sites are the Exxon service station and the former Cole Engineering facility. Ground water is being treated at Exxon to remove gasoline contaminants due to leaking underground gasoline storage tanks. The Cole Engineering facility, located approximately 500 feet south of Topps Cleaners, has been under review by NJDEP since 1987, when a cessation of operations triggered a cleanup. Operations by Aeridye, a previous occupant of the site, had contaminated the soil and ground water with non-chlorinated volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile organic compounds and metals. BASF, a successor to Aeridye and the responsible party for the site, has excavated soil containing semi-volatile compounds and metals and recently finished treating volatile contamination in the soil and ground water using air sparging/soil vapor extraction. Limited soil contamination remains that will require further action.

**For more information about the Topps site,
please contact Heather Swartz,
NJDEP Community Relations Coordinator,
at (609) 984-7135.**

Investigation of Topps Cleaners began in 1990, when an environmental consultant evaluating ground water contamination at the Exxon service station installed several monitor wells at the dry cleaning facility. Sampling of the wells revealed the ground water was contaminated with tetrachloroethylene (also known as perchloroethylene, or PCE), a dry cleaning solvent, as well as trichloroethylene (TCE) and dichloroethylene (DCE), which are breakdown products of PCE. PCE was detected at 510 parts per billion (ppb) at one well, significantly higher than the ground water cleanup standard of one (1) ppb for this compound. A former operator of the dry cleaners subsequently entered into an NJDEP Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to conduct a Preliminary Investigation and a Site Investigation (PA/SI). In 1993 the report on that work concluded other properties in the area were likely sources of the PCE in the ground water. NJDEP determined the data did not support this conclusion and issued letters recommending additional actions, however the operator did not perform any further work.

Between 1998 and 1999, consultants for Exxon, BASF and the Radburn Association sampled the soil and ground water at various locations at Topps Cleaners and Archery Plaza. The sampling revealed the soil beneath the Topps building and ground water at both properties were contaminated with PCE. Based on this information BASF determined that Topps Cleaners was the likely source of PCE in the ground water at its site and NJDEP agreed with this conclusion.

In 2003 the Topps property owner hired Anderson-Mulholland Associates Inc. (AMAI) to prepare a Site Investigation and Remedial Investigation Workplan (SI/RIW) to implement the next steps of the remediation. The property owner subsequently signed an MOA authorizing NJDEP's Site Remediation & Waste Management Program (SRWM) to review the SI/RIW and provide oversight for the Remedial Investigation phase.

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In the Remedial Investigation Workplan (RIW) section of the document, AMAI proposed continuing to delineate soil and ground water contamination under the building. The RIW also proposed evaluating the soil near the sanitary sewer (which may have received discharges containing PCE), as well as removing the two underground fuel storage tanks and investigating the soil and ground water in these areas.

Since recent sampling showed PCE and its breakdown products are in the ground water at a nearby residential area, NJDEP asked AMAI to submit a separate Workplan to investigate whether vapors might be migrating into and accumulating in overlying homes (a process known as vapor intrusion). NJDEP approved AMAI's Vapor Intrusion Workplan (VIW) in March 2005.

Current Status

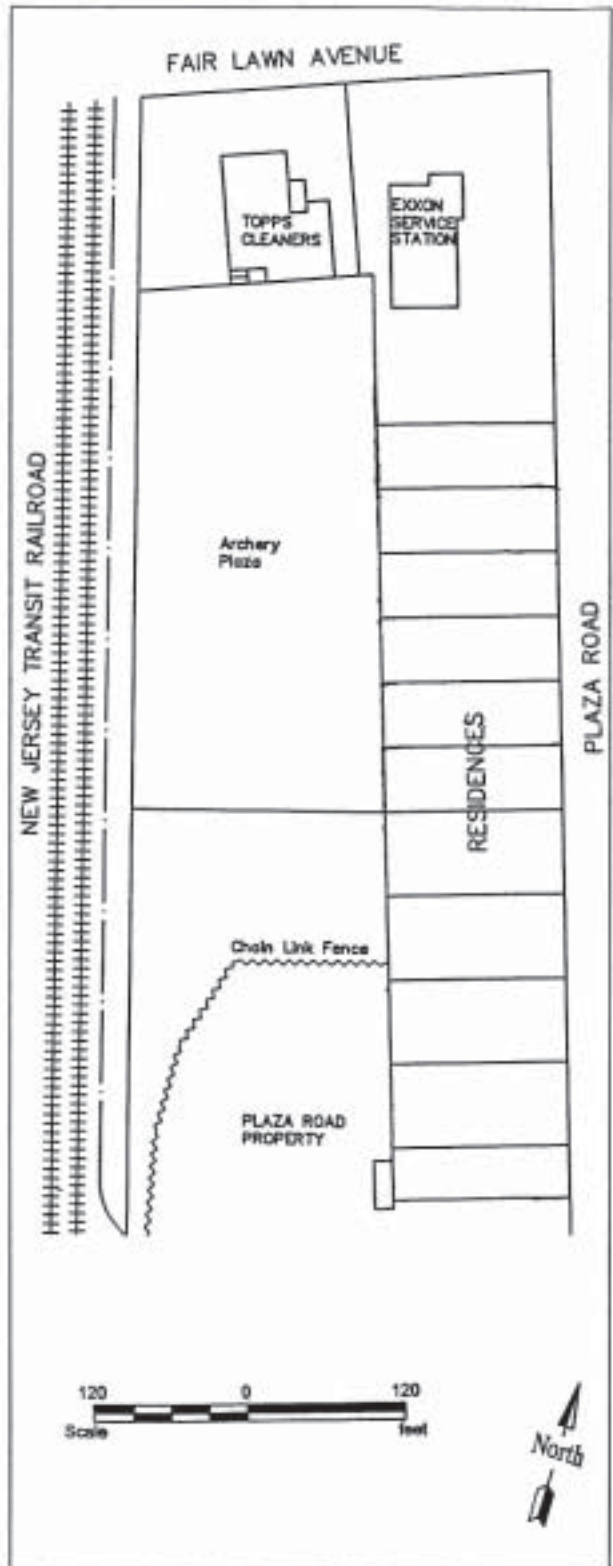
In May 2005 AMAI conducted sub-slab and indoor air sampling at 11 homes to determine whether vapor intrusion was occurring. AMAI subsequently re-sampled six of these homes to confirm the previous results. The results from the confirmation sampling indicated that one of the 11 homes required remedial action to prevent vapor intrusion. The ten other homes will undergo quarterly indoor air sampling as a precaution.

In September 2005 NJDEP approved AMAI's Phase II Vapor Intrusion Evaluation Workplan to expand the vapor intrusion study area to include more homes, establish quarterly sampling in the original ten homes, and address the one home with the confirmed vapor intrusion. AMAI recently attempted to conduct more ground water sampling in the expanded vapor intrusion study area to help determine which additional homes to sample for vapor intrusion. The results of the ground water sampling were inconclusive due to fact that the Geoprobe drilling met refusal prior to reaching ground water. This was due to a low ground water table (drought) and the density of the subsurface material.

AMAI has started the quarterly sampling of the original ten homes. They have also contacted residents in the expanded vapor intrusion study area to arrange sub-slab soil gas sampling and indoor air sampling. NJDEP will continue to provide oversight in these matters.

Future

AMAI continues to delineate the PCE contamination in the soils at Topps Dry Cleaners and in the ground water in the area. AMAI will submit a report detailing the findings of the Remedial Investigation to date to NJDEP at the end of September. This report will be accompanied by recommendations for future work.



Map of Topps Cleaners and adjacent properties. Cole Engineering (BASF) is located south of the Plaza Road property.