



**EPA Residential Groundwater and Vapor Intrusion Update #1**  
**Middlefield-Ellis-Whisman (MEW) Superfund Site, Mountain View, CA**  
**December 2012**

**Notice to Homeowners and Residents in the Residential Area**

In November and December 2012, groundwater samples were collected along Evandale Avenue and Devonshire Avenue as part of a groundwater investigation to determine the extent of the MEW Site regional groundwater contamination in the residential area. Preliminary groundwater results indicate high levels of the chemical TCE (trichloroethene) in shallow groundwater at several locations along Evandale Avenue (see figure below).

**What is vapor intrusion?**

Vapor intrusion is the migration of volatile chemicals from the subsurface into buildings. Volatile chemicals (those that evaporate readily in air) may migrate upward through the soil and soil gas and enter buildings through cracks in the foundation and floors, and utility piping conduits.

TCE has the potential to migrate from shallow groundwater and upwards through subsurface soil into overlying buildings by a process called **vapor intrusion**.

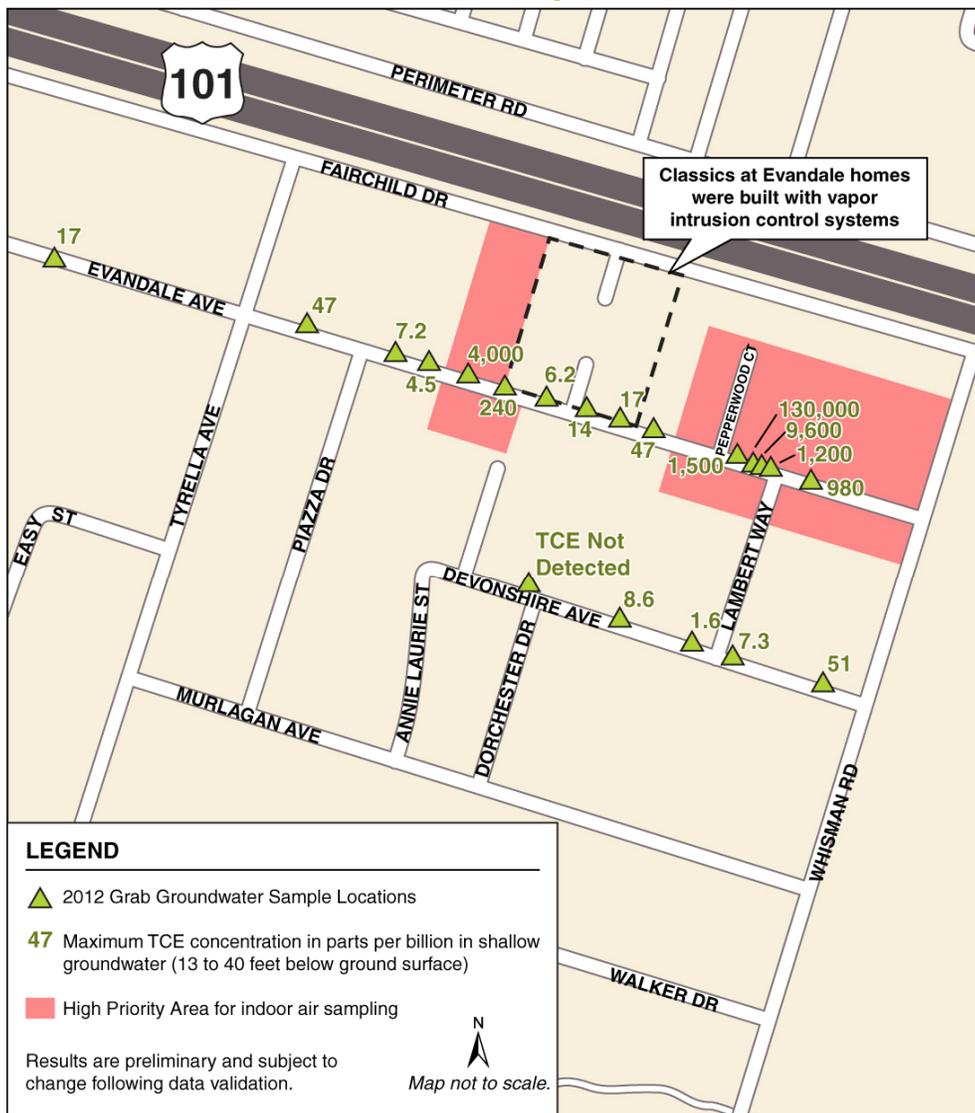
While the groundwater sampling results are still preliminary, EPA is taking action based on the preliminary results, and we will continue to keep residents in the area informed as the results are validated. It is important to know that the contaminated groundwater in the area is not used as a source of drinking water or other household uses.

**What is EPA Doing?**

EPA has prioritized the assessment of the vapor intrusion pathway in this area and we are seeking access to sample indoor air in homes in the immediate vicinity of the high concentrations of TCE in shallow groundwater (see high priority areas in figure above). EPA has begun

contacting homeowners requesting permission to sample residences in the high priority areas; however, if you have not been contacted and are in one of these high priority areas, please contact EPA. (See EPA contact information on next page). EPA plans to begin air sampling in mid-January 2013 in the high priority areas.

In addition, subsurface work to investigate the source and extent of the TCE contamination will continue in 2013.



**2012 Preliminary Groundwater Results - TCE in Shallow Groundwater**



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### **What are the Next Steps**

Based on the residential air testing results in the high priority areas, EPA will determine the appropriate next steps and update the residents and community. The indoor air results for each home will be shared with each individual homeowner and resident. A summary of the data will be made available. Due to privacy concerns, EPA will not publicly disclose the indoor air results for individual addresses.

### **Frequently Asked Questions about Indoor Air Testing**

#### **How is indoor air testing done?**

Air samples are collected in sampling canisters that slowly draw air over 24 hours, and are placed in the living space and crawlspace, if one is present. EPA will assess TCE concentrations and other MEW Site-related volatile chemicals inside residences by comparing the sample results with outdoor air results, crawlspace air results, if present, and with EPA's health-protective residential indoor air cleanup levels.

#### **Who pays for the testing?**

The MEW responsible parties are paying for the costs of the sampling in the area.

#### **What if there is a Vapor Intrusion Problem?**

If TCE indoor air sampling results from vapor intrusion exceed EPA's residential TCE indoor air cleanup level of 1 microgram per cubic meter of TCE, then the installation of a vapor intrusion control system to reduce indoor air levels will be recommended.

With the consent of the homeowner, EPA and the MEW responsible parties will work with the homeowner/resident to lower the TCE indoor air levels and to prevent the contamination from building up in the residence. This would generally include sealing any potential conduits and the installation of a sub-slab or sub-membrane vapor intrusion control system. There is no cost to the homeowner for the vapor intrusion control system selected to mitigate the home. Note that EPA is not requiring residential owners to complete these response actions themselves.

### **Contacting EPA - For More Information**

EPA is committed to meaningful public involvement and keeping residents, owners, and community members informed and updated about the ongoing groundwater and vapor intrusion work. EPA will provide periodic updates as we obtain more information during the groundwater and air investigation in the neighborhood. EPA is also available to meet with residents/owners to answer any questions you may have.

Please contact the following EPA staff:

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See also EPA's websites for more information on the MEW Superfund Site and vapor intrusion:

[www.epa.gov/region9/mew](http://www.epa.gov/region9/mew)

[www.epa.gov/oswer/vaporintrusion](http://www.epa.gov/oswer/vaporintrusion)