

Chatsworth Council Objects to Santa Susana Cleanup Plan

By [Matt Thacker](#) on Oct. 2, 2014
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The Chatsworth Neighborhood Council voted unanimously Wednesday to submit a letter to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control objecting to the truck routes proposed for the removal of soil from the Santa Susana Field Laboratory.

The DTSC presented the “preliminary transportation route options” – 10 truck routes and two conveyance routes – at public meetings in August and asked for feedback from the community.

Linda van der Valk, chair of the Land Use Committee, wrote in the letter that the three routes which travel through or near Chatsworth are “unacceptable.” Under the proposal, trucks would travel along Woolsey Canyon Road, Plummer Street and Lake Manor Drive.

According to the council, the trucks would go through four public parklands, including Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park and Chatsworth Park South, and pass near Chatsworth Park Elementary School and several private schools and daycare centers.

“The road through Lake Manor is not well-suited to high volume truck traffic, since it has one lane in each direction, multiple curves causing limited visibility, and cannot be expanded practically,” the council states in the letter.

The U.S. Department of Energy plans to remove nearly 1.7 million cubic yards of contaminated soil. The operation will require more than 104,000 truckloads over 12 years. NASA has identified 500,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil. The two agencies and Boeing are responsible for cleaning up contamination at the 2,800-acre Santa Susana site.

The Santa Susana Field Laboratory between Simi Valley and the western San Fernando Valley was developed in the late 1940s for rocket-engine development and testing. The

site was also used for nuclear research and development from 1954 until 1989. Radioactive isotopes and toxic chemicals remain at the site.

The Chatsworth Neighborhood Council also encourages the DTSC to change the level of cleanup required from the “background” standard to a suburban residential standard. The lower requirement would still provide safety for human health but would reduce the amount of soil being removed by two-thirds, according to the council.

The letter states NASA’s proposal, which includes replacing only a third of the removed soil and using gravel in other areas, would create “its own environmental nightmare.” Chatsworth residents are also concerned about contaminants falling off the trucks as they pass through the neighborhood, although NASA claims this is highly unlikely due to their safety measures.

“We do not believe this community should bear the brunt of an artificially excessive cleanup with unnecessary contaminants from truck emissions, traffic and accident risks involving these excessive cleanups,” the council states in the letter.

The agencies have agreed to clean up the site by 2017, but the Chatsworth council states the deadline is unrealistic. They have urged the DTSC to push back the deadline and conduct environmental reviews of the proposed truck routes.

Chatsworth Park South Cleanup Delayed

A separate cleanup effort at Chatsworth Park South will be delayed by at least two months after the city rejected the only bid submitted for the project.

Megan Cottier, district director for City Councilmember Mitch Englander, said they were hoping for multiple bids, and the one they received was higher than expected. The city plans to reopen bidding to a wider pool.

The park was closed in 2008 after lead pellets and other contaminants were discovered on the property which had been used as a skeet shooting range before 1978. The park is expected to reopen next summer.

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