

SECTION 2
INTRODUCTION



A. APPLICANT INFORMATION

LAND OWNER

Union Oil Company of California
6001 Bollinger Canyon Road, V1336B
San Ramon, CA 94583-2324



APPLICANT/OWNER'S AGENT

Chevron Land & Development Company
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CONSULTANT PROJECT MANAGER

RRM Design Group
Debbie Rudd, AICP, LEED AP – Principal Planner



B. AGENCY REVIEW TEAM

The Avila Tank Farm has been the object of extensive environmental assessment over the last 15 years. Ground water, surface water, soil gas and soils have been investigated thoroughly through the placement of numerous monitoring wells and collection of data from soil borings. Ground water monitoring has been performed quarterly or semi-annually for more than 12 years and this information has been summarized and provided to the appropriate regulatory agencies.

To further understand the environmental conditions on the site, Union Oil/Chevron also has undertaken two collaborative processes with local, state and federal regulators. The purpose of these collaborative processes has been to reach a common understanding of environmental conditions on the site in order to lay the foundation for determining appropriate remediation actions.

The first collaborative process was conducted under the direction of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and included representatives from other agencies. This expert panel, referred to as the Remediation Technology Panel (RTP), carefully evaluated the completeness and conclusions of Union Oil's site characterization efforts. The RTP's guidance ensured that Union Oil and the regulatory community shared a common understanding of the site conditions. Their work was completed in 2004.

As the first process ended, a second cooperative effort commenced that continues today. The Avila Tank Farm Collaborative Assessment Team (ATCAT) is focused on assessing ecological and human health risks due to the past industrial uses at the site and identifying appropriate remediation actions taking into account proposed land use and regulatory requirements. This collaboration provides a forum to consider the various and sometimes conflicting interests of each organization through which a consensus on future actions is reached.

The ATCAT is comprised of representatives from Chevron and local, state, and federal agencies including:

- Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- San Luis Obispo County Planning
- San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District
- San Luis Obispo County Environmental Health Services
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Coastal Commission and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (attended some meetings)

The consultant preparing the project CEQA document will participate in ATCAT conference calls and meetings. At least one member of the CEQA consultant team will be the regular representative during these meetings. The consultant will be required to have sufficient qualifications and knowledge to effectively guide the group in determining the project description details needed for evaluation of both the remediation and development aspects of the project.

C. INTRODUCTION

Chevron is preparing a remediation and reuse plan for the former Avila Tank Farm located adjacent to the unincorporated community of Avila Beach, California (Figure 1). The project presents a unique opportunity to transform a former industrial property into a destination that complements the existing community of Avila Beach, supports local businesses, restores ecological function and recognizes the historical and cultural significance of the site.

An extensive project team has been working on this site leading the environmental studies (site characterization), engineering, archaeology, architecture, landscape architecture and planning. This team is focused on preparing the studies and information for the forthcoming Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and full application package that will be used to permit remediation activities and entitle the reuse of this property.

D. 2012 APPLICATION PURPOSE AND APPROACH

The purpose of this initial 2012 application package is to provide County staff with a preliminary overview of the remediation and entitlements required for the proposed project and to initiate the County selection of a CEQA consultant. The application proposes a zone change of the entire 95-acre Chevron property from industrial (IND) land use to recreation (REC) land use.

Primary goals are to remediate the site and to create compatible development that will make the site accessible for public recreation use and enjoyment, generate new jobs and complement other existing and planned uses in town. The project team looks forward to working closely with County staff, the Regional Water Quality Control Board and other ATCAT representatives, Coastal Commission Staff, and the community during the project review and approval process to lay the groundwork for a development of which the community will be proud.

Additional project application materials, anticipated for submittal in 2013, will include a detailed project description, an Avila Beach Specific Plan amendment, Local Coastal Program (LCP)/ General Plan Amendment, Zone Change Vesting Tentative Tract Map (VTTM), and a Remedial Action Plan/Development Plan Permit for the remediation work, and any other discretionary actions and permits that may be required. Analysis in the CEQA document will cover the land use entitlements and the remediation project.



FIGURE 2-1 Project Location Map

E. PROJECT LOCATION

Avila is located between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Pismo Beach, approximately 7.9 miles south and 3.5 miles west, respectively. As seen in Figure 2-1, the site is situated on approximately 95 acres adjacent to the unincorporated community of Avila Beach, California, and a little over one mile west of California Highway 101. It is within the County of San Luis Obispo. Directly to the east is an undeveloped hillside and to the north is the valley of San Luis Obispo Creek, where there are high-end single family residences, a few small resorts and the Avila Beach Golf Course. The southern boundary of the property includes approximately 4,000 feet of coastline.

F. SITE HISTORY

Union Oil purchased land that became the Avila Tank Farm from Luigi Marre in 1906. The Avila Tank Farm was built and used by Union Oil Company of California (Union Oil) to store, transfer, and partially refine petroleum. In the 1920s and early 1930s Avila was the biggest oil shipping port (by volume) in the world. During the 1980s operations were transferred to other facilities in California and the site was decommissioned in 1998 when the last of the above-ground petroleum storage tanks were dismantled. The property, acquired by Chevron in 2005 as part of its purchase of Unocal, has stood idle for more than a decade. The remaining tanks on the site include two owned by the Avila Beach Community Services District that store water for the community of Avila Beach and two owned by Union Oil/Chevron that store water used for on-site fire fighting. The following milestones summarize the site’s history:

- 1906: Union Oil purchased land that became the Avila Tank Farm from Luigi Marre. The Avila Tank Farm was built and used by Union Oil Company to store, transfer, and partially refine petroleum.
- 1920s/30s: Avila was the biggest oil shipping port (by volume) anywhere in the world.
- 1940s: During WWII, Union Oil’s Avila Beach operation supplied the U.S. Pacific Naval Fleet with fuel.
- 1998: The site was decommissioned when the last of the above-ground petroleum storage tanks were dismantled.
- 2002: The in-town cleanup of Front Street--Unocal’s “Project Avila”—was deemed complete by the Regional Water Quality Control Board and County of San Luis Obispo.
- 2005: The property was acquired by Chevron as part of its purchase of Unocal. It has stood idle since 1998.
- 2005 to Present: Site assessment monitoring and remediation/reuse planning are underway.



1940 Aerial - UCSB Department of Geography aerial photographic collection



December 17, 1931 - UCLA Department of Geography fairchild collection



US Geological Survey Map - 1895