

HERCULES

RE: DEVELOPMENT



CITY OF HERCULES REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY NEWSLETTER VOLUME 2 ISSUE 3 Q2 2009

MEETING CALENDAR

■ **Redevelopment Agency/
City Council**
Second and fourth Tuesday at 7:00
p.m.

■ **Planning Commission**
First and third Monday at 7:00 p.m.

■ **Community and Library
Services Commission**
Second Monday at 7:00 p.m.

*All meetings are held in the Hercules
City Council Chambers, 111 Civic Drive,
unless otherwise noted.*

FEATURED EVENTS

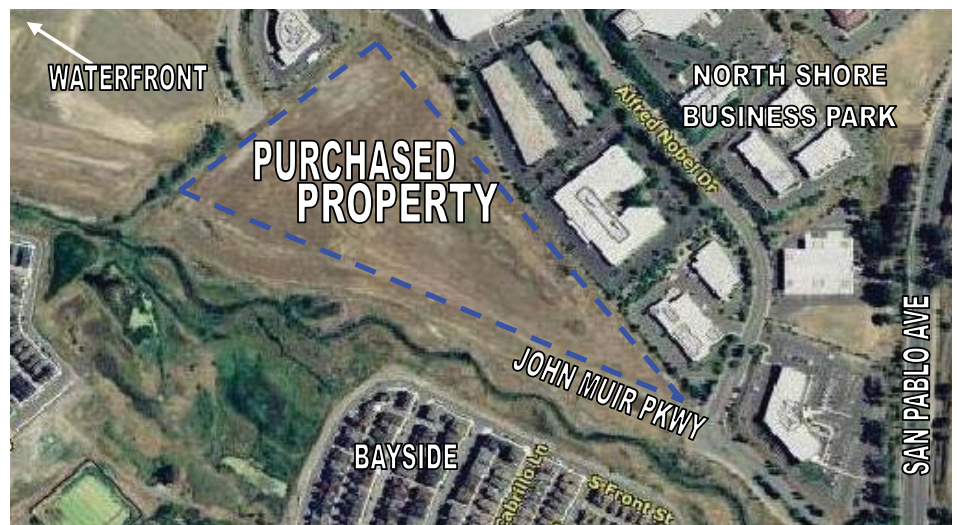
■ **Cultural Festival**
Saturday and Sunday, June 6-7, 2009
10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.
Refugio Valley Park
Call 510-799-8230 for more info

■ **David Baily Hope Lives Tour**
Saturday, June 6, 2009, 7:00 p.m.
Concert and Silent Auction to benefit
T.H.E. BRAIN TRUST
Valley Bible Church
For tickets call 510-724-2494

In this issue

- 2009 Updated Redevelopment Project Area Info
- Refugio Creek Vision Planning
- HMHS Teacher Cadet Program
- Economic Development Plans for Two Recently Purchased Parcels

City To Purchase 17 Acre Parcel From Wal-Mart



Next month, the City of Hercules is scheduled to close escrow on the Wal-Mart property for a purchase price of \$13.8 million. The property purchase is funded by the Redevelopment Agency. Earlier this year, Wal-Mart decided to sell the property and the Agency seized the opportunity.

The property's location is key as it sits on the main corridor between Interstate 80 and the Waterfront. In addition, the property backs up to the North Shore Business Park providing additional land use possibilities.

In reference to several parcels the Agency has recently acquired, City Manager Nelson Oliva said, "We [the City] want to be at the table. We want to have a say in what happens in our

Community." Owing property is one of the many ways the City can "be at the table" and ensure our Community's vision comes to fruition.

According to Special Projects Director Raj Pankhania, "An agreement has been reached between the Agency and Wal-Mart, but we do not yet own the property. Once escrow closes in June, then we will officially own it."

The Agency is looking into several options as to what could be developed on the site, however, these ideas are still preliminary. "The primary concern at this point is to secure the property," said Pankhania. As the project develops, information will be posted on our website at www.ci.hercules.ca.us.

2009 Updated Redevelopment Plan

Public Invited to Attend Forum & Public Hearing to Discuss Redevelopment Actions

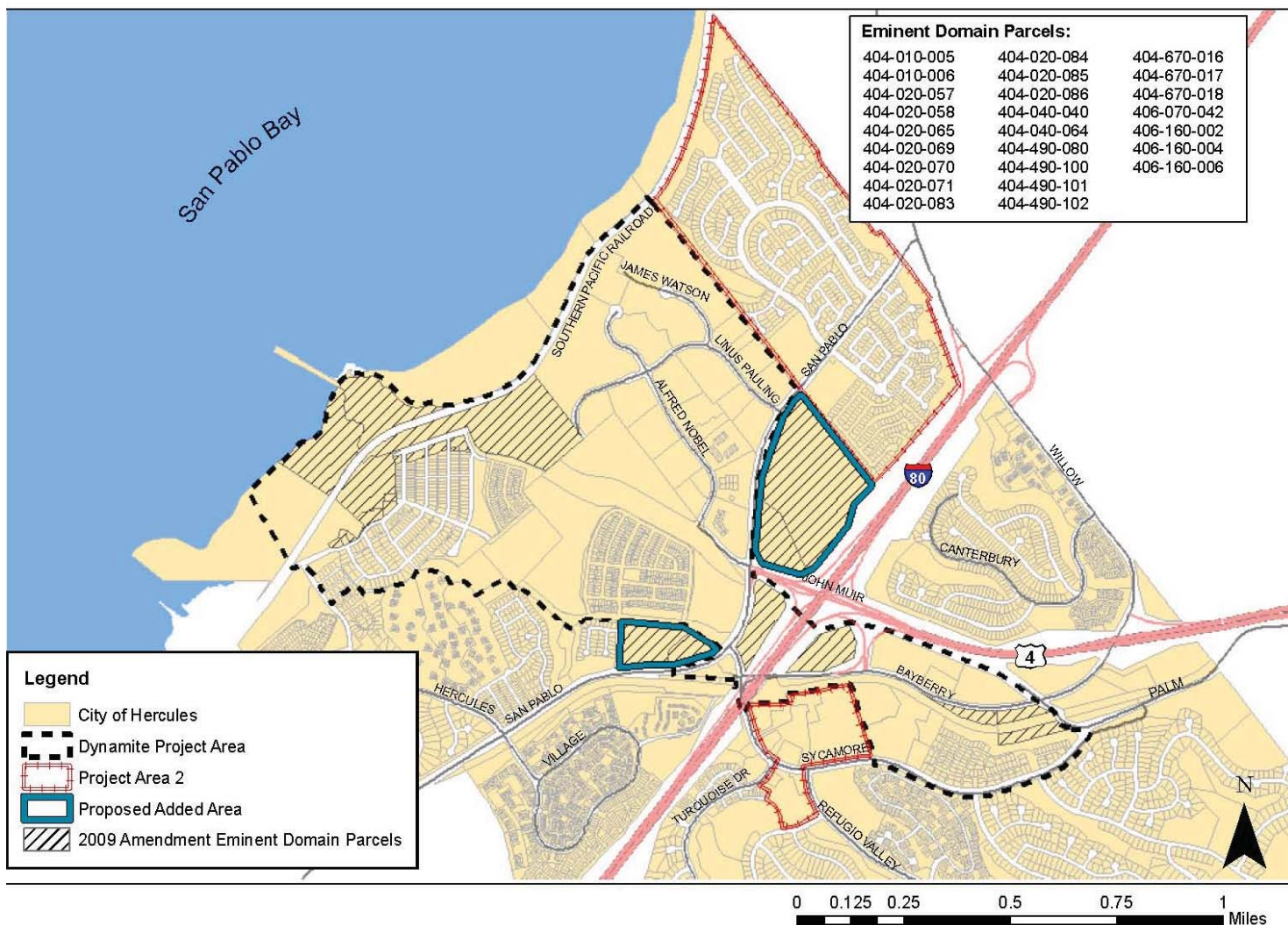
On May 13, 2009, the Hercules Redevelopment Agency will be hosting a public forum at City Hall to discuss the proposed Amendment to the Agency's current Redevelopment Plan. The purpose of the meeting is to answer any questions community members may have regarding the project and provide an opportunity to talk with the consultants that have been assisting the City through the process. The project will then head to the City Council for approval on May 26, 2009.

Proposed Project Area Changes

Currently, the City has two Redevelopment Project Areas known as the Dynamite Project Area and Project Area No. 2 (see map below). As part of the Amendment process, the City is proposing to extend the life of the Dynamite Project Area from 2026 to 2036 and to add the Hill Town and Sycamore Crossing sites to the Project Area. The City is also proposing to reinstate the Agency's eminent domain authority

on selective parcels of land that are either undeveloped or underutilized. The City would like to have the tools to acquire these undeveloped or underutilized parcels (at fair market value) should the Agency need to do so, to ensure their ultimate development.

It should be noted that no parcels proposed for the reinstatement of eminent domain authority are currently being used for residential purposes. ■ See Redevelopment, page 2



Map of Current and Proposed Project Area Boundaries and Parcels Subject to Eminent Domain as Result of 2009 Amendment

■ **Redevelopment from page 2**



Historical structures are valuable resources to the community but can also be considered “blight” for Redevelopment purposes

Amending A Project Area Takes Time and Planning

The first step in amending the current Plan was to conduct an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to study the impacts of the Amendment on the community. The Draft EIR was published in January of this year with the City receiving 10 comments to the draft. Those comments were then incorporated into what’s known as the Final EIR. This final document is available at City Hall and can also be found on the City’s website at www.ci.hercules.ca.us under the “Hercules Projects” link.

The major environmental impacts outlined in the EIR were related to the development of the Hill Town and Sycamore Crossing sites. While many of the impacts outlined were considered significant, most of them, including traffic, were able to be reduced through what’s called “mitigated measures,” such as installing a traffic signal or placing a structure away from a noise source, like Interstate 80.

Even though the EIR will require the project proponents of both Hill Town

and Sycamore Crossing to follow strict mitigation measures, there are a few impacts which cannot be completely eliminated to a level considered “less than significant.” These impacts include aesthetics, noise and air quality. While this is a serious concern, the Redevelopment Agency believes that the economic, social, and other benefits of the Amendment and related RDA projects, outweigh the negative impacts to the community. At the Public Hearing on May 26, 2009 the Agency will ask the City Council to make that same finding.

Redevelopment Projects Planned For Amended Project Area

Hill Town will be adding 640 residential units to the community in an attractive compact hillside setting with 13 acres of open space and park land. Sycamore Crossing will be a compact mixed-use development that will complement the already approved development on the north side of Sycamore Avenue, known as Sycamore North. It will also provide employment, shopping and living opportunities in a centralized location close to State Route 4, Interstate 80, the future Inter-modal Transit Center, and the Hercules Transit Facility. Since it is a mixed use project, it will generate fewer auto trips than a single-use suburban counterpart. Projects such as this

will allow Hercules to do its part in reducing auto dependence, gasoline consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, noise pollution and have the long term impact of improving congestion on local and regional roadways. Both projects further Hercules’ efforts toward smart growth – a goal not only of our immediate community, but of the entire Bay Area.

Two Upcoming Public Meetings You Can Get Involved In

In the next few weeks, the Agency will be mailing a notice to every property owner, business tenant, resident and interested person within the current and future Project Area, encouraging them to attend the Public Forum and Public Hearing that will take place in May. However, even if you are not in the project area, you are welcome to attend.

If you would like more information on the history of the 2009 RDA Amendment, check out the January 2009 Re:Development Newsletter (Vol. 2, Iss. 2 Q1) or contact Liz Warmerdam at: lwarmerdam@ci.hercules.ca.us.



Sycamore North is set to break ground this month, join us for the ground breaking celebration on May 12, 2009

250 Attend 2009 Community Update

On Saturday, April 4, 2009, the City of Hercules hosted the 4th Annual Community Update event at the Hercules Community/Swim Center. There were representatives from over 30 projects, programs, and community organizations. A 30 minute video recapturing the event is now available on HCTV and the website. The video includes interviews with several project managers including Assistant City Manager Lisa Hammon, Anderson Pacific representative Shanthini Black, and Recreation Program Manager Greg Dwyer.

This year, there were so many presenters that the City changed the set up to accommodate more booths and even had more presenters outside. The presentation at the beginning was also shortened so attendees had over two hours to meet with project and program managers and get the information they wanted.

Much of the information presented at the 2009 Community Update is now available on our website at www.ci.hercules.ca.us. From the homepage, click on the Hercules Projects link, then 2009 Community Update to view the information.

Close to 250 people attended the event and had the opportunity to speak directly with City officials, project managers, and community leaders. The City received numerous positive comments about the 2009 Community Update including “Awesome event” and “This event was great for the community.” Other attendees commented about the projects themselves, telling us “I love the dog park idea!” and “Open that ball park.”

Despite an outpouring of positive feedback from attendees and presenters, City officials are dedicated to making the event even better. One idea being considered is having the event every 18 months, instead of every year. Allowing for a greater amount of time between events would mean more project progress and consequently more to report to the community. However, some of the smaller projects such as Palm Center or the dog park, may be completed within the 18 month period and would therefore not be included in a Community Update.

The City would like to hear what you think. Is once a year too often? Did you attend this year’s event and if not, why? Do you feel the Community Update provides good information? You can submit your comments to feedback@ci.hercules.ca.us or call Michelle Harrington at 510-245-6533.



At the Community Update, attendees are free to walk around the Community Swim Center and go to the tables that interest them



An interested resident picks up information from the Affordable Housing table, one of the many programs and projects who distributed information at the event



Baseball legends Bill Russell and Vida Blue sign autographs and provide information on Big League Dreams Sports Parks

Shaping the Future of the Refugio Creek Watershed

Just as water is essential for all life, so too can watersheds be the lifeblood of communities. A watershed is an area of land in which all water drains to a single point, with creeks and streams branching and combining like the veins in a leaf. In Hercules, the primary watershed is the Refugio Creek Watershed. Although watersheds do not follow political boundaries, the Refugio Creek Watershed is distinctive in that nearly all of it is within Hercules, and almost all of Hercules is within the watershed. Extending from its headwaters just beyond the eastern edge of the City, Refugio Creek heads downstream to Refugio Lake, then under San Pablo Avenue and through various wetlands and flood plains before it empties into San Pablo Bay.

Over the past few years, the watershed's impact on residents of Hercules has become ever more apparent as various groups—including schools, conservationists, homeowner associations, and public agencies—have expressed their interests and concerns about the waterways and wetlands within the City. In the fall of 2008, the City applied for and was awarded a \$25,000 grant from Common Sense California (a non-profit organization that promotes civic engagement) to create a vision plan for the Refugio Creek Watershed.

With an additional \$25,000 from the City's Redevelopment funds, the City selected Restoration Design Group (RDG) to lead a series of community meetings and workshops. RDG has extensive experience fostering civic engagement, as shown by the firm's prior success working with the public to create vision plans for the neighboring watersheds of Pinole Creek and Rodeo Creek.



Drew Goetting of Restoration Design Group explains the vision plan process to the public

The Refugio Creek Watershed Vision Plan is currently being developed through a series of community workshops that began in February and will conclude in September. During the workshops, members of the public meet with local officials and experts to share information, interests, concerns, and design ideas on topics that have been identified as the community's primary areas of interest: access, education, wildlife and nature, water quality, and watershed management.

The Vision Plan will be community based, respectful of private property rights, involve only voluntary actions, and represent consensus views. Once completed, the Vision Plan will play a key role in protecting the creek as a natural resource and sustainable amenity for the entire community, and could ultimately serve as the guiding basis for updating the General Plan and designing capital improvement projects.

Community involvement is critical for the success of the watershed project. If you would like to be a part of the Vision Plan, please join us for the remaining meetings as we shape the future of Refugio Creek.

- May 13, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- June 10, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- Sept. 9, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Meetings are held in the Hercules Library Conference Room (109 Civic Dr.)

For more information, including updates and project presentations, please visit the Refugio Creek Watershed Vision Plan web page on the City's website at: www.ci.hercules.ca.us/index.aspx?page=523, or contact the Planning Department at 510-245-6531.



Small groups discuss their ideas for the Refugio Creek Watershed at a vision planning meeting

Hercules High Teacher Cadet Program Leaves Lasting Impression

Hercules students have many unique opportunities at our local schools. One very unique program, the Teacher Cadet Program, offered only at Hercules High, is one such example. Traditionally, Regional Occupational Programs (ROP) benefit high school juniors and seniors by offering hands on training to prepare students for their chosen career. The Teacher Cadet Program (also called Careers in Education) does give students hands on experience like a traditional ROP class, however it is quite unique in that the program touches the lives of young people of all ages.

The Program is simple. Students interested in education, or just interested in working with kids, are given the opportunity to work in a classroom or day care during their junior and/or senior year. Exceptional sophomores can also receive special permission to participate. Students spend one period, two days a week, or 'field days', working with a teacher, called Mentor. The second semester students spend three days a week in the

field. On the days cadets are not in the field, they receive instruction at the High School. Hercules Middle/High School teacher, Janet Headington, has been involved with the Teacher Cadet Program for 15 years. "The Program helps students discover if teaching is for them. Students get real hands on experience and can judge wisely before investing too much."

Strong Teachers Attribute to Program Success

Principal Zakrevsky attributes much of the program's success at the high school to Ms. Headington saying "One of the main reasons we have such a strong program is because of Ms. Headington." Strong support from the administration is also a clear factor of the program's success. "The schools invest in us and trust us, and the Principals have been so supportive," says Headington.

This year, Headington has 93 students going to five different sites: Babylove Bilingual Preschool, Ohlone Elementary, Hanna Ranch Elementary, Revea's Daycare, and Hercules Middle/High School. Many students come to the program with a specific age or Mentor in mind. "Amazing Mentors are a draw for students," says Headington. HMHS junior, Glynnis Bonifacio chose Ms. Sarah Creeley as her



Teacher Cadets such as Jose Garcia serve as role models for young students in addition to helping with reading, writing and math skills

mentor because of her positive experience when Ms. Creeley was her second grade teacher. "Ms. Creeley is a really good teacher and has always been a favorite," says Bonifacio.

Cadets Inspire Future Cadets

Another draw for students, having had Cadets in their class. In Ms. Creeley's class, the second graders write letters to the cadets to help develop their writing skills. The letters express appreciation and admiration for the cadets, with multiple students writing, "I would like to be a teacher cadet when I grow." The Teacher Cadets also work with students on their reading and math skills. "There is a lot of pressure for this grade level to increase their reading fluency. Cadets can read with students one on one, which greatly increases the amount they read at one time. The Cadets make a big difference," says Creeley. Hanna Ranch Elementary School Principal Anita Hayward agrees, "The cadets bring enthusiasm, positive learning energy, and individual attention to our students."

See Teacher Cadet, page 7



Cadets are greeted with hugs when they arrive

■ **Teacher Cadet from page 6**

In addition to helping students learn, cadets serve as role models. “Kids click with kids. The Cadets garner respect like an adult, but still connect at a unique level,” says Headington. In Ms. Creeley’s class, the Cadets are greeted with hellos, hugs and stories when they arrive. Within minutes, HMHS senior, Jose Garcia had a group of six boys reading a comic book together. “I really like working with the kids,” says Garcia. Plus, Cadets learn from the students. “I’ve learned how to talk with kids and how to be patient,” adds Garcia. Bonifacio agrees, patience is key.

Program is Win, Win, Win

The Teacher Cadet Program also has a tremendous long term impact. Young students become cadets, cadets often become teachers, and teachers then become mentors. Michelle Thibault and Jessica Steinberg are two such cadets who are now teaching at Hercules Middle/High and Thibault is also a mentor for the program. “Michelle Thibault is a treasure. What a gift it is to have such a brilliant, kind product of WC-CUSD inspire future generations to teach,” says Headington.



Hercules High Junior Glynnis Bonifacio reads one on one with a student as part of the Teacher Cadet Program

Although, regardless of a cadet’s chosen career, the Teacher Cadet Program has benefits for everyone: students, cadets, and teachers. “By the end of the year, Cadets come to realize how reciprocal teaching really is...actually, they think they have received far more than they have given. Naturally, their tutees believe otherwise.” says Headington, “It’s a win-win-win.” Ms. Creeley agrees adding, “The cadets make a big difference. I will never be cadet-less again!”



Teacher Cadet Sarah Iturbe works with student on writing

Staff and resources

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■ **Affordable Housing Program**

Walter McKinney, General Manager
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■ **Engineering/Public Works**

Erwin Blancaflor, Public Works Director
799-8241

City Hall is located at 111 Civic Drive.

Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

website: www.ci.hercules.ca.us

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Hercules Re:Development provides an update on projects funded by the Redevelopment Agency and/or projects located within the Redevelopment Project Areas.

At times, updates on projects that are not located within the Redevelopment Project Areas will be featured, as these projects are anticipated to serve all areas of the community.

Plans Progress on Two Development Projects

The Hercules Redevelopment Agency recently acquired approximately 6.8 acres of land at the corner of San Pablo and Victoria Crescent East. The parcel was purchased in March and the Agency intends to bring a compatible private development to the site.

The specific plan for Victoria By the Bay zoned this parcel as “residential/retail flex” but no further residential uses can be accommodated. Therefore, the uses on this site will most likely be retail and other commercial.

Another parcel, near the intersection of Sycamore Avenue and Palm, called “Palm Center” is also moving forward. The City had originally acquired the 2.5 acre parcel with the intent to relocate the City’s corporation yard to the property. However, after further review it was determined that the Palm Center could be better used as retail and commercial space and that the corporation yard could be located in a more remote location.

In October 2008, the City contracted with Michael Woldemar and Associates, Inc. to create a site

plan (below) which contains three buildings totaling approximately 47,000 square feet of retail and commercial space. Before construction can begin, a section of Palm Avenue east of Sycamore, must be relocated slightly south to allow for greater development area. The road work is anticipated to begin this summer and take approximately four months. Once this is complete, construction can begin on the first phase of the project. Specific tenants have not yet been identified, however the Agency is considering using this space as an automotive repair center.

For more information, please contact Special Projects Director Raj N. Pankhania at 510-799-8208.



CITY OF HERCULES REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY NEWSLETTER



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