

# HERCULES

RE: DEVELOPMENT



CITY OF HERCULES REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY NEWSLETTER VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3 Q2 2008

## 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 Services Commission

Second Monday at 7:00 p.m.

### ■ Library Commission

Third Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

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

## FEATURED EVENTS

### ■ Farmer's Market

Saturdays, May 3 through Oct. 25, 4-8 p.m., Creekside Shopping Center

### ■ Cultural Festival

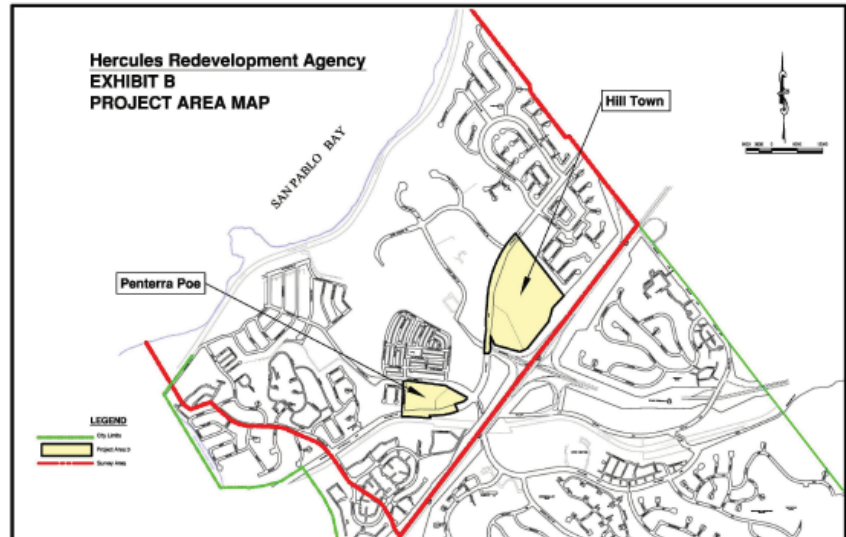
Sat., June 7, 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.  
Sun., June 8, 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

### ■ 4th of July Celebration

Parade - 10:30 a.m.  
Fireworks - 9:00 p.m.

## *In this issue*

- Frog Pad Park Project
- Chelsea Wetlands Restoration
- 133 Railroad Avenue
- Teen Center Grand Opening
- John Muir Parkway Extension



Redevelopment Project Area 3 Boundaries

# Redevelopment - How Does It Happen?

Part 2 in a series.

Reflect back on an area of your community that was once plagued by blight intermingled with open space. Currently, this same area is populated by the shopping centers and businesses you have come to know so well. How exactly does one morph into the other? This transformation is courtesy of your city's Redevelopment Plan, designed to ensure these deteriorated areas are utilized in a manner that will meet the needs of a bustling community.

Blighted areas are placed under the microscope of the City's Planning Commission, City Council,

and Redevelopment Agency Board. The first step in determining whether a particular site is a likely candidate for redevelopment, a survey area must be identified and adopted by the local governing body. In identifying the survey area, it must be determined how redevelopment of this area would benefit the community. Once the survey area is identified, feasibility studies are conducted within the area in order to determine if there are any constraints to

## *Staff and resources*

### **REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD**

Chair Joanne Ward

Vice Chair Joe Eddy McDonald

Board Member Ed Balico

Board Member Charleen Raines

Board Member Kris Valstad

### **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

#### ■ **Executive Director's Office**

Nelson Oliva, Executive Director  
799-8206

Phyllis Decena, Redevelopment Analyst  
799-8254

#### ■ **Agency Counsel**

Alfred Cabral, Agency Counsel  
262-2100

#### ■ **Affordable Housing Program**

Walter McKinney, General Manager  
245-6517

#### ■ **Engineering/Public Works**

Erwin Blancaflor, Interim Public Works Director/Assoc. City Engineer  
799-8241

#### ■ **Building Department**

John McGuire, Chief Building Official  
245-6525

#### ■ **Community Development**

Steve Lawton, Director  
799-8233

#### ■ **Community/Swim Center**

Greg Dwyer, Recreation Manager  
799-8293

#### ■ **Teen Center**

Pedro Jimenez, Recreation Manager  
799-8228

*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](http://www.ci.hercules.ca.us)*

## ■ **Redevelopment from page 1**

development and what would be the highest and best use for the site. Once the survey area is proven to be viable, the City Council designates the survey area as the project area.

The project area is where the work will actually take place. Should a designated project area include residential units and citizens who will face displacement, a Project Area Committee (PAC) is recruited in order to ensure the best possible outcome for individuals that may possibly be displaced. The PAC is composed of project area residents and representatives. They consult with residents, business and property owners, as well as other community organizations, providing the Agency Board with concerns and recommendations before a Redevelopment Plan is actually adopted. A PAC is only required if the site selected for revitalization contains residential units and citizens facing displacement.

In any case, the Planning Commission presents the Redevelopment Agency Board with a preliminary plan, outlining the goals and objectives for the reconstruction of the site, as well as a legal description of the project area.

Once this plan is adopted, the Redevelopment Agency prepares documents required by state law, such as preliminary reports and environmental documentation. These documents must be approved before a Redevelopment Plan can be implemented.

Subsequently, a draft Redevelopment Plan and a draft Environmental Impact Report are prepared. These drafts outline the purposes, goals and limitations of a potential project. Detailing the state of the blighted areas, how these areas will be revitalized, and the impact it will have on environmental conditions. Following the circulation of these drafts, the agency consults with taxing agencies and the community.

After the Agency completes these necessary steps and gathers all appropriate reports and documents, a public hearing is held. The proposed Redevelopment Plan is presented to the community, inviting input from citizens. The Redevelopment Plan and five-year implementation plan are adopted after the public hearing, and after all required environmental documents are certified.

In conclusion, the resources that have provided the community with convenience and opportunity would be entirely obsolete without the implementation of a Redevelopment Plan. While it is a lengthy process executed by the dedicated staff of your city, it is also an experience that invites residents to contribute to the establishment of a community they would like to see flourish.

# Neighborhood Park Under Construction

Summer will be a bit sweeter for the families in the Baywood and Promenade neighborhoods. In just a few months, the beautiful Frog Pad Park will open at the corner of Sycamore Avenue and Willet Street. Frog Pad Park will be a haven for residents of Hercules. Imagine kids playing tag on a grassy area or climbing on the play structure. Toddlers will marvel at quacking ducks from the nearby creek while preschoolers ride their trikes on cement walkways. Families will picnic at tables shaded by a trellis pergola.



Future Site Of Frog Pad Park

The City recognized the benefits of a park for the young Baywood and Promenade neighborhoods. They see it as a vital part of keeping residents healthy and connected. The park project is funded by Development Impact Fees.

Residents of Baywood and Promenade have been anticipating the park's opening since 2002. They are thrilled that it is nearly ready. Chris and Lorraine Remigio of Avocet Drive plan to be there every day with their two children, Kealani and Kyle. The park is just across the street from their home. "I think the park is a great idea, as is the Multi-Modal Transit Center that is being planned for our community," Chris says. "I think it is going to be a big selling point when it's time to sell our house, but that won't be for a long time."

The park's landscape will incorporate the creek and protected wetlands that surround the area. This will provide a lovely view for adjacent residences. Children will gain a greater sense of appreciation of the environment with the park's proximity to the natural elements.

Safety was a big consideration in the design process. Beneath the school-age play structure will be a rubberized surface.

Design, Community, and Environment of Berkeley, the landscape architects for the project, were inspired by the nearby creek, designing circular play areas to resemble lily pads and resulting in the name "Frog Pad Park". It is also a playful match to the adjacent Duck Pond Park.

McNabb Construction, Inc. has been awarded the contract to construct the park which is currently underway.



# Chelsea Wetland Restoration Project Underway

Bringing back Chelsea Wetlands to  
its natural state.

*Honor all with whom we share the Earth:  
Four-leggeds, two-leggeds, winged ones,  
Swimmers, crawlers, plant and rock people.  
Walk in balance and beauty.  
~ Native American Elder ~*



Chelsea Marsh in the Spring.

After decades of neglecting our wetlands, people throughout the Bay Area are finally realizing the many benefits of these marshy areas. Wetlands are home to a mix of terrestrial and semi-aquatic animals, as well as migratory birds. They provide protection from flooding and act as a natural filtration system for water before it hits the Bay.

## The benefits of healthy wetlands

We have an opportunity in Hercules to preserve the Chelsea wetlands near Chelsea by the Bay and Hercules by the Bay communities, a 12-acre parcel of land. The wetlands are a vital part of our ecosystem. Egrets once nested there and it remains the habitat of some endangered species such as the California clapper rail and the Saltmarsh common yellowthroat.

The past century took its toll on the Chelsea Wetlands. As the area was developed, tons of soil was dumped in the wetlands. A similar practice occurred throughout the country. By 1950, an estimated 45 million acres, or 35%, of all wetlands in America had been drained.

Restoring the Chelsea Wetlands has several benefits. By dredging the unnatural soil in Chelsea Wetlands, the water storage capacity will increase by 4 feet, helping to reduce flooding in nearby neighborhoods. This is particularly important to the communities of Chelsea by the Bay and Hercules by the Bay.

A healthy wetland also prevents pollutants from running into the bay. Ecologists call wetlands “the kidney” of the ecosystem because of the natural cleansing functions they perform. They do this by retaining sediments and toxic pollutants attached to the sediments. Wetland plants also reduce algae blooms and fish kills.

## Restoring Chelsea Wetlands

According to Liz Warmerdam, Consultant for Chelsea Wetlands Restoration Project, 90% of residents are very supportive of restoring the wetland to its natural state. Currently, Chelsea Wetlands turn bone dry and brown in the summer.

A healthy wetland and creek would cycle water year round, providing a place for wildlife. Native vegeta-

tion would return naturally or be reintroduced.

This project is still in the early planning stages, but a vision is taking shape. This could be a scenic place with an observation platform, and benches. “There needs to be a balance of enjoyment as well as respect for our environment,” says Liz Warmerdam.

Some of the current goals of the restoration project include:

- Restore transition area between flood plain and Pinole Creek
- Restore the wetland aquatic and wetland transitional habitat for wide range of species
- Prevent pollutants and sedimentation from entering the bay
- Provide an additional 4 feet of water storage capacity to reduce flooding

The Redevelopment Agency has committed to reviewing the county’s work on flood control to make sure that we are protected and that future efforts will not aggravate

See Chelsea Wetlands, page 6



## Agency Undertakes Restoration of Historic Building

Hercules is a diverse city rich in history. During World War I it was home to the largest TNT producer in the country. A cluster of the structures remnant of the Hercules Power Company Town still exist at the waterfront in what is known as Hercules Village.

In an effort to honor the city's heritage, the Redevelopment Agency is attempting to preserve and rehabilitate these historical buildings within Hercules Village, a section of the City that has been listed on the National Registry of Historic Places since 1980.

This registry is the National Park Service's list of sites worthy of preservation. According to the National Park Service, preservation is about deciding what is important, figuring out how to protect it, and passing along an appreciation for the next generation.

Although most of the remaining unoccupied historical build-

ings in Hercules Village are developer-owned, Building 133 is one structure the Redevelopment Agency has the opportunity to preserve, if feasible. In addition, the Civic Arts Building is currently undergoing renovation as well.

Building 133, often referred to as, "the house on stilts," is an approximately 1,500 sq. ft. historical house currently situated near the Chelsea Wetlands and the Bay Trail. Due to its close proximity to the Civic Arts Building it was necessary to move Building 133 to this new temporary location.

### *Where are we now?*

The Redevelopment has retained Cody Anderson Wasney Architects, Inc. to prepare a feasibility study of Building 133 to determine the value of the home, evaluate its possibility of accommodating a public use, and examine some future permanent locations. Although the old home will need upgrading and seismic retrofitting, it has poten-

tial to be a centerpiece of Hercules.

### *Uses for Building 133*

There are many possible uses for a restored Building 133. One concept is to convert it into a Hercules historical museum. An alternative is to move the home to the Chelsea Wetlands and establish an educational center focused on wetland preservation and the environment. Exhibits on the wetlands' habitat, conservation, endangered species, and environmentalism would attract visitors to Hercules. Children would recognize the value of restoring and preserving these open spaces. Many local and federal organizations interested in wetland or historical preservation could be sources of funding for this type of use.

There will be many opportunities to discuss the best ways to bring value to Building 133 and our community. Hopefully, many will take the time to voice their opinions about the future value of this hidden gem.

## Chelsea Wetlands from page 4

what is currently in place. Meanwhile, Warmerdam has applied for a \$1.5 million state grant to fund this project. She will be notified of a decision in June. (Pinole recently received a \$2.5 million grant to restore the lower part of Pinole Creek).

The plans for the project are not finalized and there are diverse opinions about how to proceed. Some are most concerned about protecting the wetlands and its inhabitants while others are more interested in creating a place where people would interact with the wetlands more closely.



**2006 Chelsea Flooding**

### How you can help

Volunteers are needed to form a grass roots group dedicated to planning and coordinating the restoration effort. Rodeo, for example, has a group called Friends of Rodeo Creek Watershed. This is a critical component of success, in part because funding agencies like to see community involvement before funding a project.

If you are interested in getting more involved in the wetland restoration, contact Liz Warmerdam, Consultant for the Chelsea Wetlands Restoration Project at (510) 799-8231.



**Salt Marsh Common Yellow Throat - special status species that would benefit from restoration.**



**Aerial View of Chelsea Wetlands**

# Grand Opening Held for Hercules Teen Center

The grand opening of the Hercules Teen Center on April 12, 2008 was a success. The new Teen Center will house several programs for our teens including the Teen/Youth Council (T.Y.C.) and T.H.E. S.P.O.T. (Teens of Hercules Empowering thru Spirit, Perseverance, Outreach and Teamwork). Enrollment in these teen programs has grown dramatically over the last few years and the opening of the Teen Center will increase enrollment even more. The current enrollment for TYC is approximately 125 and T.H.E. S.P.O.T. has approximately 75 students enrolled. A drop in program is also in the works in addition to these programs and will further the number of young people involved.

The Teen Center provides a safe environment for young people to work on homework or come and play. The Teen Center has been stocked with both entertaining and educational equipment including wireless computers, big screen TVs, a game room, and a basketball and volleyball court. The game room has all the latest gaming systems, a pool table, air hockey table and even a karaoke machine. Tutoring is also offered for different subjects and age groups; as well as an all day summer program for 6th to 9th graders.

Since the Teen Center is located directly across from the Hercules Middle/High School and adjacent to the Community Swim Center, teens can easily access it. While the property is not in a redevelopment area, the Teen Center will benefit all Hercules teens, including those who do live in redevelopment areas.

For more information on teen programs or to enroll, contact Janine Shaheed, Teen/Youth Coordinator at 510-799-8294 or visit our website at <http://www.ci.hercules.ca.us/New/Rec/teen.htm>



Opening Ceremonies for Teen Center Grand Opening



**Council Member Raines, Council Member Valstad, Vice Mayor McDonald, Mayor Ward and Council Member Balico performing ribbon cutting.**



**Teens enjoying some of many activities available.**

---

### *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.

Publications are distributed City wide in January, May and July.

For additional information about this publication, contact the City Clerk's Office at 799-8215.

# **John Muir Parkway Extension Continues**

Phase 1 of the John Muir Parkway extension is almost complete. John Muir Parkway is located just off of San Pablo Avenue across from Interstate 80 and Highway 4. The final paving was finished on April 15, 2008, while the lighting and landscaping will be completed in approximately one more month.

The road will eventually service the Bayside, Baywood, and Promenade neighbors from Tsushima to Interstate 80. The ultimate goal will allow for easier access to the Waterfront district and the Inter-modal Transit Center. While Phase 2 and the Tsushima Bridge

still must be developed before the extension is complete, finishing Phase 1 is a great milestone for the project. The Tsushima Bridge will be a two lane passenger road with pedestrian access and will connect Tsushima Road to John Muir Parkway. The extension and bridge will also provide additional relief to the intersection of Sycamore Avenue and San Pablo Avenue. Until the completion of the entire project, the John Muir Parkway extension will remain closed.