

REDEVELOPMENT  
UPDATE:  
August 2009

ATTACHMENT G-1  
Merced Redevelopment Agency

678 West 18th Street, Merced, CA 95340  
209/385-6827 FAX 209/723-1780

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION NOW:**

Merced Center (Hotel-Office Complex): This project, located on the block bounded by 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, M and N Streets, updates are as follows:

Hotel: Atman Hospitality Group has obtained building permits and is still pursuing construction once financing can be finalized. Financing had been stalled due to soil contamination, however, the Agency received a notice of closure on the site last month. Lead staff: Cahill/Ainslie/Angulo.

Parking Structure: The Agency is continuing to market the structure. Westamerica is the first tenant to move into the space. Westamerica is leasing 6,110 sq. ft. Approximately 4,000 square feet remain available for lease. Lead staff: Ainslie

Merced Theatre: The Foundation and staff are continuing fundraising efforts including pursuing Historic Tax Credits for the restoration. This month, Staff will be meeting with potential tax credit investors. Currently the plans are being reviewed by the City's Building Department. Lead staff: Cahill, Mendoza, Ainslie.

The Playa Merced Shopping Center (Parsons Avenue at Highway 140): Redevelopment staff has received the appraisal concerning the parcel located on the southwest corner of Parsons Avenue and Yosemite Parkway, and is working with property owners to acquire the parcel. As part of the OPA with The Playa Merced, staff is to make best efforts to acquire the property to incorporate the site into the newly constructed shopping center. Lead staff: Quintero.

Former Texaco Station (Costco Area): Provost & Pritchard of Clovis is now the consultant for the remediation on the sites. Due to a former consultant billing error, delays are being experienced in receiving cost reimbursements from the State. The project is moving forward to meet the deadlines established by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Staff is reviewing alternate funding sources including EPA Grants. Lead staff: Angulo.

512 W. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 927 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, 195 S. "T" Street: Habitat for Humanity has been presented a development fee structure for 512 W. 11<sup>th</sup> Street. A lot split was performed on the site to allow for the development of two single family homes. Habitat for Humanity is preparing to either pull building permits or revert the site back to a single family structure lot. Habitat for Humanity may not have enough funding to cover all of the development fees and the additional development of the remaining vacant sites. A decision should be reached by Habitat for Humanity's governing board within the month. Lead Staff: Ewen.

33 Parsons Avenue: The Agency has purchased the single-family residence on the site and will partner with the Housing Department to use the home until construction on Parsons begins. Demolition bid packets will be prepared within the month and distributed to interested contractors. After construction, the remaining lot will be used for an affordable housing partnership yet to be determined. Lead Staff: TBD

Way Finding Signs: A total of 63 signs have been installed. Staff has applied for encroachment permits with Caltrans for the installation of 16 signs within the State right of way. Staff met with Caltrans on August 10, 2009 regarding the design of the signs. Caltrans should respond with an approval or disapproval of the signs in the coming month. Lead Staff: Ewen.

## **IN DEVELOPMENT:**

*Childs and Canal:* The Agency is marketing the site for a new development with various developers. A temporary fence has been installed. The Agency repurchased a 4.7 acre parcel from the Housing Authority. Lead staff: Quintero/Ainslie.

*Downtown Street Resurfacing, Public Improvements:* The City is receiving \$3.1 million in federal stimulus funds. These funds will be combined with City and Agency funds to complete road reconstruction, sidewalk repairs and streetlight upgrades on 16<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, N, M and G Streets in the Downtown and Midtown area. Construction is scheduled to begin this fall. Lead staff: Ainslie.

*Highway 59 & Cooper Avenue Signalization:* Staff has submitted a full plan set and specification to Caltrans for an encroachment permit. Portions of the properties purchased will be used for affordable housing. The City was awarded a \$1 million grant from the state for the construction of this project. Lead staff: Ainslie.

*East 16<sup>th</sup> Street Beautification:* The project's scope calls for the beautification of East 16<sup>th</sup> Street from G Street to Motel Drive. Engineering staff has completed a design plan set and is working on the selection of plant species and locations. Plans and specifications should be submitted to Caltrans by September 2009. Lead staff: Ewen.

*Underground Utility District #9 & East 13<sup>th</sup> Street Streetlights:* PG&E is in construction for the Rule 20A project since Mid-July 2009. The Agency has bid the separate streetlight project in May with construction beginning back in July 2009. The selected firm, Collins Electrical Group, is approximately half-way through the two month construction project. Streetlight foundations are already laid. Staff is coordinating with the building and engineering departments to make sure both projects are completed properly. Lead staff: Ewen.

*Underground Utility District #10 Phase II:* PG&E has designed Phase II of their Rule 20A UUD #10 project. It will include an area along Yosemite Ave. from Edwards Ave. to the City limits. Plans have been submitted to Caltrans but there has not been final approval given. Caltrans will install Sternberg lights from the Bradley Overhead Bridge to Edwards Ave. The Agency will not have to install lighting for this project. Lead staff: Ewen.

*Simpson's Cleaners Site Investigation:* The Agency received a \$200,000 Brownfields Grant from the U.S. EPA for site investigation at 618 W. Main Street. Kleinfelder has completed the investigative work, and has submitted a report to the Regional Water Quality Control Board and U.S. EPA for review. The report recommends closure of the site and staff is awaiting a response from the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Lead Staff: Angulo.

*73 South R Street:* The site has been cleared and is available for future development. The project will improve the aesthetics and safety of the neighborhood and provide additional affordable housing. Lead Staff: Ewen.

### *Midtown Residential District:*

The development of 18<sup>th</sup> & I streets is moving along steadily. The sites were cleared and fenced in. Staff is working with a developer to work out a mix of affordable and market rate historically sensitive housing units. The site at 150 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street was transferred into the Agency's name in July 2009. The site will be demolished within the next few weeks and marketed as a package deal to the developer of 18<sup>th</sup> & I street. The Residential Façade Improvement Grant Program is being marketed on a selective basis.

A scoping project was held to consider improvements to the roadway and public infrastructure of Midtown. Staff has created an inventory of repairs needed in the district including curb and gutter, sidewalks and streetlights. The project will tie in the goals and objectives of the 2007 Downtown Strategy to make the Midtown district a premier residential neighborhood. Further project details will be developed in the coming months. Lead Staff: Ewen/Ainslie.

## **PROGRAMS, PROMOTION AND PLANNING:**

Downtown Summerfest: Summerfest, formerly the Thursday Night Farmers Market, will finish up its 8 week program on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Themed events have included a health & wellness fair, agriculture week and a car show. Average estimates on the number of attendants per night are approximately 1,500. The program will be reviewed during the off-season with the Advisory Committee and Downtown Steering Committee. Lead staff: Mendoza, Ewen.

Visitor Services: The staff continues to assist visitors and reply to inquiries regarding traveling to Merced. Lead staff: Baker

Downtown Steering Committee: The Committee will meet next month to review progress made to date on the Strategy. Further discussion will be made on streetscape improvements. Lead staff: Ainslie.

Downtown Advertising and Business Services: The focus of the marketing is print advertising, a rotating billboard, and an overall message via different avenues showing Downtown as the "Heart of the City". The focus of the Downtown Fund is to continue to build Downtown as an entertainment, shopping, and business destination. Lead staff: Quintero.

Merced Theatre Property Management: Tenant improvements have been completed for Forte Frozen Yogurt, Inc. The business has been open for approximately 4 months and has received positive media press. Staff is also working with other potential retail tenants to guide them through the application process. Commercial lease rates are competitive with other downtown spaces. The apartment units are fully occupied. Lead Staff: Ewen.

Downtown Design Guidelines: Agency staff is working to complete a draft version to present to committees later this quarter. The guidelines will establish façade, sign and public improvement design throughout the downtown area. Lead Staff: Ewen.

Affordable Housing Monitoring: Staff has developed a complete inventory of all housing units assisted in Agency history. The housing monitoring database has been posted on the Redevelopment Agency webpage under the Housing tab. Mailings for the verification of the affordability rates were sent to property managers, developers and property owners in December 2008. Staff has received a majority of the monitoring documents back and will continue the program for reporting purposes during FY 2009-2010. These documents are on file at the Agency office. Lead Staff: Ewen.

### **AVAILABLE**

Façade Improvement Program: Approximately \$34,102 is available in the Gateways Project Area. Lead staff: Mendoza.

Residential Façade Improvement Grant Program: \$180,000.00 is available for residential property owners seeking improvements to the exterior's of their structures. Restrictions do apply.

### **Calendar**

### **City Council/Agency Commission Meetings – 2009**

August 3, 2009  
August 17, 2009  
August 18, 2009

City Council/Redevelopment Agency  
City Council/Redevelopment Agency  
Redevelopment Advisory Committee

*This report is prepared monthly and distributed to the Executive Director, Redevelopment Advisory Committee, Economic Development Advisory Committee, City Council, department heads and others.*