

REDEVELOPMENT
UPDATE:
September 2010

Merced Redevelopment Agency

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

UNDER CONSTRUCTION NOW:

G Street Undercrossing: Teichert Construction began work on the undercrossing in July 2010. Nearly all of the utilities have been relocated. The digging has begun and is on schedule to be completed late in October. Construction is scheduled to last until December 2011. Upon the completion of construction, the Agency will work to redevelop several of the properties that were acquired for right of way. Lead Agency staff: Ainslie.

Commercial Façade Improvement Program:

The Vagabond Inn at 1215 "R" Street is almost complete. Painting of the structure as well as the installation of new windows has been completed. Remaining improvements include fencing, lighting and landscaping will be completed within the next 60 days. Lead staff: Ewen.

The Robinson-Montgomery Building façade improvements will be beginning this month. The improvements will include replacing the west facing awning, installing new lights under all of the awning and in the parking lot. Lead staff: Ainslie

512 W. 11th Street, 927 W. 8th Street, 195 S. "T" Street: Habitat for Humanity is making steady progress at the 1st site of 512 W. 11th Street. They have laid the foundation and are in the process of scheduling framing by the Mennonite Men. Lead Staff: Ewen.

Way Finding Signs: A total of 81 signs have been installed along City, County and Caltrans roadways. The Wayfinding Sign project will be complemented by new downtown branding materials and signage in the Fall of 2010. Lead Staff: Ewen.

RDA Owned Property Demolitions:

The Agency awarded a project to demolish blighted housing sites to Pantano Demolition of Manteca. The demolitions will lead the way for future development at 18th & I Street, PD-14 and Childs Avenue and Canal Street. The sites have been cleared and the project will close this month. Lead Staff: Ewen.

Residential Façade Improvement Program:

The Agency awarded a grant to a property at 101 W. 18th Street. The revitalization of the property is about half completed. An application for a six (6) unit multifamily site was approved in August 2010. In addition, the Advisory Committee will consider an application for a historically sensitive home at 101 W. 20th Street this month. Lead Staff: Ewen.

Former Texaco Station (Costco Area): The Agency is proceeding with remediation efforts at the site in accordance with the DDA with Costco. Efforts this year are being funded through a \$200,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. The contamination originated from former gas stations that once surrounded the site. The project is moving forward to meet the deadlines imposed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Lead staff: Angulo.

IN DEVELOPMENT:

Merced Theatre: Bids for the Phase III renovation of the historic Merced Theatre were received in August. The current project will be the final phase of construction. The bid was divided into two sections. The first will restore the castle façade, complete a new roof and install the basic systems of the auditorium (plumbing, HVAC, electrical). The second section includes all of the finishes needed to open the theatre. These finishes include texturing, painting, fixtures, flooring and seating. Currently there is adequate funding on hand to complete the first section. Staff is working to finalize the funding for the second section. These sources include a Federal Congressional Earmark, a 3rd Round California Cultural and Historical Endowment Grant and Federal Historic and New Market Tax Credits. Upon finalization of all financing sources, the City will award the project to the lowest responsible bidder. Lead staff: Cahill, Ainslie.

Downtown Street Resurfacing, Public Improvements: The second half of the City's \$3.1 million in federal stimulus funds will be combined with Agency funds to complete road reconstruction, sidewalk repairs and streetlight upgrades on 18th, N, M and Canal Streets in the Downtown and Midtown area. Project plans have been completed and the State has approved the project. The initial bids were rejected due to a 30% cost overrun. Staff reissued the project for public bidding and received bids slightly above the engineers estimate. An additional project to provide public improvements from N Street to O Street is being developed. Lead staff: Ainslie.

Pedestrian Crossing at Childs Avenue and S. Highway 59: The Agency is funding a project to place a pedestrian crossing and sidewalks to the newly signalized intersection of Childs Avenue and South Highway 59 in Caltrans right of way. The Agency received a 2nd plan revision from Caltrans and the plan comments are requiring significant changes to the proposed design. A Caltrans encroachment permit will be needed before the Agency can bid and award the project to a contractor. Lead staff: Ewen.

Childs and Canal: In May 2010, the Agency entered into an exclusive right to negotiate with Caddis Properties from Fresno, to complete the development of a neighborhood shopping center at this location. The Agency has begun the entitlement process on this 5.9 acre site in order to allow a neighborhood grocer and retailer to provide services to this underserved area. The developer has one year to complete terms of the agreement. Lead staff: Quintero/Ainslie.

Downtown Parking Signs: Staff is working with Armadillo Advertising of Fresno to design downtown parking lot signs that mirror the wayfinding sign design. The signs will be paid from Downtown Parking District funds. The project is still in initial design phases and may be constructed in Winter 2010. Lead staff: Ewen.

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

Hotel: Financing had been stalled due to the current national economic recession. The Agency has received a notice of closure on the site for soil contamination. The plans for the building have been completed. Staff is working with the developer to amend the development agreement and to seek alternate forms of financing. Lead staff: Cahill/Ainslie.

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

19th and N Parcel: The Agency is continuing to complete an environmental assessment on this parcel. This \$200,000 project is being paid for through an EPA grant. If the conclusion of the process is positive, then development at the site could begin. Lead staff: Angulo

Parsons Avenue: Bids for the project have been received. The apparent low bid is below the project estimate. Staff anticipates presenting the award to Council once the State's \$1,000,000 grant funds have been secured. The City received a \$1,000,000 grant from the State of California to complete the Parsons Avenue road widening between Highway 140 and Childs Avenue. The City has received the award allocation, meaning that construction is now required to begin by October 15, 2010. All necessary right of way has been acquired. Lead Staff: Ainslie

Highway 59 & Cooper Avenue Signalization: Staff has resubmitted plans for the project to Caltrans. Staff has prepared the necessary submittals to Caltrans to receive a funding allocation for the \$1,000,000 grant the City recently received for this project. Staff has completed all right of way negotiations needed and escrow is expected to close on the last parcels this month. Lead staff: Ainslie.

Highway 59 & Cooper Avenue Housing: The Agency entered into an Agreement to Negotiate Exclusively with The Cirrus Companies to conceptually develop an affordable housing project consisting of 50-75 units to be located on the Agency owned parcels at Highway 59 and Cooper Avenue. These units will be highly visible, high quality and will feature several green amenities. Lead staff: Ainslie.

East 16th Street Beautification: The project's scope calls for the beautification of East 16th Street from G Street to Motel Drive. Caltrans issued a notice of a pending project for the Highway 99 overhead expansion. Staff is currently working to relocate City utilities and negotiate easements as needed for the future Caltrans project. The Agency project will be delayed until Caltrans constructs their overhead replacement 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:

A DDA with Maxwell Homes for the development of 7-13 new affordable housing units is currently in negotiation. If approved, the homes would introduce new urban units complete with green features displaying a historically appropriate appearance. The Agency Board will consider the purchase of 202 W. 19th Street within the month. This site would be demolished and used for future new construction housing. Construction is anticipated to begin this year. Additionally, work continues on façade improvements for residential properties in the district. Lead Staff: Ainslie/Ewen.

Underground Utility Districts: Underground Utility District #11 has been drafted along Parsons Avenue from south of Childs Avenue to Highway 140 and Childs Avenue from Highway 99 to Golden Valley High School. A public hearing will be held in October 2010 to review the impacts of the project on the neighborhood. UUD #10, Yosemite Avenue Phase II is on hold as Caltrans prepares for the improvements to the Bradley Overhead. Additional districts along "M" Street, "R" Street and Childs Avenue are also being planned.

PROGRAMS, PROMOTION AND PLANNING:

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

Downtown Steering Committee: The Committee met in September to review progress made to date on the Strategy. The Committee reviewed progress with the Merced Theatre and in downtown planning. Lead staff: Ainslie.

Downtown Advertising and Business Services: The focus of the marketing is print advertising in the D Life. The Agency is also considering a marketing plan within the coming months. 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: The City Council approved a lease agreement with Off the Shelf Books for the Merced Theatre in August. The store will open this month. Commercial lease rates are competitive with other downtown spaces. Residential leasing is still strong for the apartment units. Lead Staff: Ewen.

Downtown Design Guidelines: Agency staff is working to complete a draft version of the design guidelines. 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. Staff received all verification letters to all active developers and property owners assisted with Agency housing funds. Past documents are on file at the Agency office. Lead Staff: Ewen.

AVAILABLE

Façade Improvement Program: The Agency is taking applications for high quality comprehensive projects located within the Gateways Redevelopment Project Area. Lead staff: Mendoza/Ewen.

Residential Façade Improvement Grant Program: \$124,000 is available for residential property owners seeking improvements to the exterior's of their structures. Restrictions do apply. Lead staff: Ewen.

Calendar

City Council/Agency Commission Meetings – 2010

September 7, 2010
September 20, 2010
September 21, 2010

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.

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