



Before

# Brownfield Revitalization

SUCCESS STORY, April 2006

## El Cerrito Mill and Lumber Company

### Site Facts

**Site Name:**

El Cerrito Mill & Lumber Company

**Location:**

El Cerrito, CA

**Certification Date:**

August 2004

**Site Size:**

4 Acres

**Historical Uses:**

Lumber mill

**Contaminants of Concern:**

Lead, arsenic, benzene, petroleum hydrocarbons

**Redeveloped Use:**

Retail, office space, apartments

Since the 1940s, the El Cerrito Mill and Lumber Company successfully milled and sold high-grade lumber on a four-acre site in the heart of the City of El Cerrito. Until the decline of this industry, residents of El Cerrito were drawn to this specialty business to purchase custom-built wood doors, flooring, framing, and windows that were assembled onsite by craftsmen. Chemicals used as part of onsite operations caused both soil and groundwater contamination. Since 2001, the space has remained vacant due to concerns over the contamination, which stymied reuse.

In 2003, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) entered into a Voluntary Cleanup Agreement (VCA) with the current property owner to address any hazardous substances left behind by the mill. Environmental investigations discovered lead, arsenic and petroleum hydrocarbons in localized areas of surface soil at levels above those considered safe for residential use. Groundwater located underneath a former storage tank was found to be contaminated. The cleanup plan recommended by DTSC consisted of the removal of approximately 610 cubic yards of impacted soil, which was disposed of offsite at an approved landfill. The groundwater was aerated to treat the elevated levels of benzene. DTSC certified the site in August 2004, stating the property owner had successfully completed all required environmental cleanup activities.

The El Cerrito City Council approved a redevelopment plan for the area that includes retail and office space, live-work dwellings, apartment units, and a recreational center. The plan, now completed, created approximately 25 jobs and increased annual revenues for the City of El Cerrito by \$200,000. This successful redevelopment of a brownfield site exemplifies the benefits achieved from the VCA program.



After



State of California Department of Toxic Substances Control

