



DTSC helps turn contaminated land into housing project

Part of DTSC's mission is to turn bad land good, and that is what is occurring on a small site in the heart of Silicon Valley. Cleanup of the 1.8-acre parcel is paving the way for proposed development of eight new homes.

That's not a large parcel or many houses, but in San Jose, which has some of the highest home prices and strongest economies in the nation, it is significant. Home prices in the area increased about 25 percent over the last two years.

The 1.8-acre parcel – known as the Mazzone property – is on Almaden Expressway. The former orchard and home site was rezoned in 2010 to allow more dwelling units, and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control is overseeing a voluntary cleanup.

A public comment period for the proposed Draft Removal Action ended Aug. 29 with no submissions. The plan calls for removing 250 tons of soil, disposing it in a licensed landfill and refilling the site with new fill.

The soil is contaminated with lead, pesticides and mercury. The mercury most likely came from Alamitos Creek, which from the mid-1800s to 1975 was home to the largest mercury-mining operation in North America.

Cleanup could start by the end of September, said Wayne Hagen, a Public Participation Specialist for DTSC.