

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control



News Release

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Housing, green jobs, open space flourish on former Bay Area flower nursery site.



Artist Rendering of Miraflores Development

RICHMOND, CA – A former Bay Area nursery site once contaminated with pesticides, is now being cleaned up to pave the way for new housing and open space. The project will create about 300 ‘green jobs’ in construction and remediation.

Richmond Mayor Gayle McLaughlin joined Keith Takata, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Deputy Regional Administrator, Stewart Black, Acting Deputy Director of Brownfield and Environmental Restoration for the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, Richmond residents and a host of officials at a press conference and kick-off ceremony to celebrate the start of demolition and environmental cleanup at the Miraflores site in Richmond.

This site, which consists of three former flower nurseries at South 47th Street and Florida Avenue, will be developed into a new housing development and open space. The development will include affordable senior apartments and new market-rate single family homes. The open space will include creek restoration, an urban forest of trees and the preservation of historic structures including greenhouses and homes dating back to early 1900s.

“This is the beginning of a sustainable smart-growth project near public transit,” said Gayle McLaughlin, Mayor of Richmond.” The clean-up is the first step, to be followed by much-needed affordable housing with wonderful integration of the environment and public space to create a community-oriented development for all to enjoy.”

“This is a prime example of how government is re-invigorating communities and breathing new life into neighborhoods while creating homes and local green jobs,” said Stewart Black, DTSC Acting Deputy Director, Brownfields and Environmental Restoration Program “DTSC has worked with many other agencies including the U.S. EPA and the California Pollution Control Financing Agency to provide resources to remove toxic chemicals from the site and create affordable housing for local families.”

“EPA is proud to be part of the effort to cleanup and revitalize this historic community,” said Keith Takata, EPA’s Deputy Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest Region. “Our Brownfields program provided the seed money for the cleanup and cleanup is the first step in this vital redevelopment.”

The Miraflores is a story of commitment to community. From the early 1900s, the 14-acre property was owned by three Japanese-American families who used it to grow flowers. Despite World War II internment, the Sakai, Oishi and Endo families maintained the site and their flower-growing and distribution businesses.

“This development reminds us of the important contributions of the Japanese community to the Bay Area. We are pleased to honor the history of the Sakai, Oishi, and Endo families and the legacy they represent,” said Linda Mandolini, Executive Director of Eden Housing, a partner in the project. “As we celebrate rebuilding here in Richmond, the unique history of this site also reminds us of the tragic circumstances that many in Japan face and our thoughts and prayers are with them as the country works to rebuild.”

By the time the Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency purchased the nursery properties in 2006, only a carnation distribution business remained. By then the property was contaminated with pesticides and other chemicals like lead, benzene and perchloroethylene (PCE, a solvent).

The cleanup and revitalization of the Miraflores site received a significant boost when the U.S. EPA awarded the Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency three Brownfields Clean up Grants totaling \$600,000 in 2006. In addition, the agency will use monies from the U.S. EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund program to help clean up the property.

Miraflores is a public/private partnership involving federal, state, and local governments as well as local non-profit developers and private developers. Local non-profits, the Community Housing Development Corporation (CHDC) and Eden Housing Inc. were early partners that helped to identify the availability of the property for purchase and worked with the community to determine its reuse. The State of California’s Pollution Control Finance Agency awarded the Redevelopment Agency \$2.6 million in clean up funds and the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) awarded a \$1.66 million grant for urban greening to the Redevelopment Agency last year.

“Working to improve urban growth practices benefits all Californians,” said Heather Fargo, the SGC’s Executive Policy Officer. “Urban greening plays an important role in creating sustainable communities and helps to improve air and water quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote public health.”

Cleanup is expected to be completed by the fall of 2011. It is anticipated that residents will move into the new housing community in 2014.

Click [Here](#) to see the artist rendering of Miraflores Development

“In these times of economic uncertainty it is good that the collaboration of CHDC, Eden and the City of Richmond is in the position to continue the work on Miraflores,” said Donald Gilmore, CHDC Executive Director. “Resources for this stage of the project are extremely important to pave the way for the new development by mitigating the environmental issues.”

Information about the partners involved can be found at:

City of Richmond

www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.aspx?nid=99

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The Mission of the Department of Toxic Substances Control is to provide the highest level of safety, and to protect public health and the environment from toxic harm.