



Before

Brownfield Revitalization

SUCCESS STORY, October 2005

Hercules Powder Works

Site Facts

Site Name:

Hercules Properties, Ltd.

Certification Date:

June 1997

Location:

Hercules, CA

Site Size:

167 acres

Historical Uses:

Manufacturing of explosives and fertilizers

Length of Cleanup:

12 years

Contaminants of Concern:

Lead, zinc, nickel, chromium, and petroleum and hydrocarbons

Deed Restriction:

Mostly residential, an 11 acre parcel is restricted to commercial and industrial use

Redeveloped Use:

Residential community around a commercial district "town green"

The Hercules Powder Works began operations in 1881 and became the largest producer of TNT in the world. By the 1960's, the 1,300-acre facility transitioned from making explosives to producing fertilizers. The community of Hercules, named for the factory, is still recognized by its rusting tanks and smoke stacks. However, a vision for community restoration has made this neighborhood, within commute distance to San Francisco, a sought after property.

In 1976 Hercules Properties, Inc., a redevelopment company, purchased three parcels totaling 167 acres. The land was unimproved until 1985 when the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) issued an Imminent and Substantial Endangerment Determination, ordering the previous land owners to remove machinery, debris and materials from the site.

Testing showed that soil, groundwater, and sediments contained hazardous levels of heavy metals and chemicals used in explosives and fertilizer manufacturing. Lead, zinc, nickel, chromium and petroleum hydrocarbon levels far exceeded health and environmental standards. Any future development of this land required extensive and costly remediation.

The \$12 million cleanup involved removing 60,000 tons of contaminated soil and sediments under DTSC oversight. Most of the property now meets residential environmental standards, with the exception of an 11-acre parcel that still has residual contamination. A deed restriction limits use of that land to commercial or industrial purposes. Ongoing groundwater monitoring is conducted on portions of the property to verify that contaminants are not migrating through groundwater into San Pablo Bay.

The City of Hercules has adopted innovative land planning concepts by developing the site into a residential community of apartments and single-family homes which encompass a commercial district and "town green" (a landscaped area free of development).



After



State of California

Department of Toxic Substances Control

