

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Commissioners

FROM: Fred Blackwell, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Blanken Avenue Park planning and environmental site assessment services funding under the Department of Toxic and Substances Control Targeted Site Investigation Program; Visitacion Valley Redevelopment Project Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Blanken Avenue Site (“Blanken Avenue Site”) is a vacant parking lot located adjacent to the former Schlage Lock facility within the Visitacion Valley Redevelopment Project Area (see Attachments 1 and 2). In accordance with the Visitacion Valley Redevelopment Plan and Design for Development, the Blanken Avenue Site is proposed to be redeveloped into a public park as part of the new open space network for the Schlage Lock mixed-use development.

This fall, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (“Agency”) will work in partnership with the property owners of the Blanken Avenue Site and Schlage Lock facility on an Open Space and Streetscape Design community planning process. Prior to open space programming, an environmental assessment of possible soil contaminants for the Blanken Avenue Site must be completed.

On August 18, 2009, Agency staff applied for the Targeted Site Investigation Program (“TSI Program”) under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“U.S. EPA”) and the California Department of Toxic and Substances Control (“DTSC”) to conduct a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and soil sample testing for the Blanken Avenue Site on behalf of the property owner, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (“PCJPB”). On September 22, 2009, Agency staff received an award notification for \$40,000 worth of environmental assessment services from DTSC for the Blanken Avenue Site. These assessment services will enable the Agency to facilitate the re-use of the former parking lot as a public park.

DISCUSSION

The Visitacion Valley Redevelopment Project Area (“Project Area”) is a 46-acre area in the Visitacion Valley neighborhood in the southeastern corner of the City, and is comprised of approximately 124 parcels. The Visitacion Valley Redevelopment Plan (“Plan”) was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on April 28, 2009 (Ordinance No. 70-09). The focal point of the Project Area is the vacant, former Schlage Lock manufacturing facility on Bayshore Boulevard and surrounding vacant properties. These properties, frequently referred to collectively as the “Schlage Lock Site,” consist of approximately 20 acres of industrially-zoned properties.

Universal Paragon Corporation (“UPC”) is the owner of the Schlage Lock Site and the PCJPB owns the Blanken Avenue Site.

The soil and groundwater on the Schlage Lock Site and some of the surrounding land contain hazardous materials released during the industrial operations that occurred on the site. It is unknown if the soil beneath the Blanken Avenue Site has been impacted by its proximity to the Schlage Lock manufacturing activities. The DTSC issued a clean-up order requiring UPC to initiate a Remedial Action Plan (“RAP”) however, DTSC’s order did not include the Blanken Avenue Site. The Draft RAP is currently under a 30-day public review period. DTSC has held several community information sessions on the RAP, including a presentation to the Visitacion Valley Citizens Advisory Committee. UPC will begin soil remediation procedures once the RAP is finalized.

Open Space Planning

The Visitacion Valley/Schlage Lock Design for Development (“Design for Development”), adopted by Commission on February 3, 2009 (Resolution No. 4-2009), sets forth development controls and guidelines to shape the redevelopment of the Schlage Lock Site. The Design for Development establishes an open space system that will augment the existing open space resources available to Visitacion Valley residents and visitors. The Plan includes three new parks. The Blanken Avenue Site is proposed to be one of the three parks (“Blanken Avenue Park”) and it is the only lot on the Schlage Lock site that is owned by a public entity. Blanken Avenue Park is adjacent to the Schlage Lock Historic Office Building, and will offer views of the Baylands to the south, the San Bruno Mountains, and the surrounding neighborhoods. The park will provide pedestrian connections between Little Hollywood and Visitacion Valley, and to new streets within the Schlage Lock Site. As part of the park development, the adjacent Historic Office Building (located on the Schlage Lock Site) will be renovated and re-adapted to a community center or other public uses. It is anticipated that the future design and program of the proposed Blanken Avenue Park will relate to the anticipated community facility uses at the Historic Office Building.

The next phase of the project planning process consists of an Open Space and Streetscape Master Design Plan (“Design Plan”). This fall UPC will select a consultant to prepare a Design Plan that will include conceptual and schematic designs for Blanken Avenue Park and improved physical connectivity between the park, the Historic Office Building and the mixed-use development. Agency staff will concurrently work with UPC on a community facility planning process for programming the space within the Historic Office Building. The community planning process for the Design Plan is expected to begin by the end of this year.

The Blanken Avenue Site has been used as a parking lot for the past 70 years. The PCJPB requires an environmental assessment prior to design and final programming of open space on the site. Agency staff has been working with the PCJPB on an inter-agency agreement to facilitate the re-use of the site as a public park. Subject to final park design approval, the PCJPB is amenable to negotiating a rent-free agreement with the Agency to provide public open space on the site. The site assessment services provided through the TSI Program will advance the redevelopment goals for Visitacion Valley, and satisfy the PCJPB requirements for an

environmental assessment at little to no cost to the Agency. The assessment of the Blanken Avenue Site will inform the next phase of the Schlage Lock project site planning for open space and streetscape design.

TSI Program

The Small Business Liability Relief & Brownfields Revitalization Act of 2002 provides funds for the assessment and clean up of brownfields sites. Under this Act, the U.S. EPA awarded \$1.5 million per fiscal year to the DTSC, of which \$550,000 per fiscal year is allocated to the TSI Program.

The TSI Program funds provide local governments, redevelopment agencies, non-profits, and school districts an opportunity to gain more information about a brownfield site's condition and facilitate decisions about property acquisition or development strategy. Direct funding is not provided through the TSI Program, rather the selected brownfield site will receive environmental investigative services through DTSC or its contractors at little or no cost to the Agency. DTSC will also provide technical oversight to ensure that the TSI Program funds are utilized in an effective manner, and help facilitate the site clean-up and re-use decision making process.

On August 18, 2009, Agency staff applied for the TSI Program to conduct a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and soil testing on PCJPB's property, the Blanken Avenue Site. On September 22, 2009, Agency staff received an award notification of \$40,000 worth of environmental assessment services for the Blanken Avenue Site. The five-day fieldwork funded through the TSI program will take place between November 2009 and March 2010. The Agency will receive a final report on the site assessment by April 2010.

Agency staff involvement in the environmental assessment services to be funded by the TSI Program is not a "project" as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5). Agency activities related to the environmental assessment of the Blanken Avenue Site are administrative activities in furtherance of the Visitacion Valley Redevelopment Plan and would not independently result in a significant physical effect on the environment.

Originated by Lila Hussain, Associate Planner

Fred Blackwell
Executive Director

Attachment 1: [Map of Visitacion Valley Redevelopment Project Area](#)

Attachment 2: [Aerial Photo of Blanken Avenue Site](#)