



Sonoma County Community Development Commission
Housing Authority • Redevelopment Agency
1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95403-4107

Russian River Redevelopment Project Newsletter

Spring 2010

Newest Projects in the Russian River Redevelopment Area

Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program

The Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC) is pleased to announce the start of a Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program for the Russian River Redevelopment Project Area. On March 16th, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of up to \$805,000 for the Program, which provides business tenants and business property owners with three options for financial assistance to improve their buildings and storefronts:

Façade Improvement Program

- 3 Year Deferred Loan: Up to \$5,000, with up to \$1,000 of free design services. No monthly loan payments; loan forgiven after 3 years if the improvements are adequately maintained.
- 5 Year Deferred Loan: Up to \$15,000 with up to \$3,500 of free design services. No monthly loan payments; loan is forgiven after 5 years if the improvements are adequately maintained.

Eligible façade projects must make substantial visible improvements viewable from the public right-of-way, such as painting and plaster, awnings and canopies, signage and graphics, windows and doors, exterior lighting, parapet walls, exterior tile work, and landscaping.

Commercial Rehabilitation Program

- 20 Year Amortized Loan: Up to \$100,000, with up to \$3,500 of free design services. Repaid over a term of up to 20 years through amortized monthly payments.

Eligible commercial rehabilitation improvements may include but are not limited to: improvements to the structural integrity of the building, restoration, rehabilitation, or expansion, roof repair or replacement, parking lot resurfacing, expansion, and improvements, pedestrian pathways, code violation corrections, ADA improvements, lead and asbestos abatement, and septic system upgrades.

All Loans: Interest rate from 0% - 2%, depending on amount of business owner matching funds.

Example of façade improvement work funded under similar program in the Springs Redevelopment Project Area.



Project Updates

Sweetwater Springs Water District (SSWD)

Project 1, CIP IV-B (the Schoolhouse tanks, water line replacement for Bonita Terrace, Riverlands Rd., and Handy Andy) is underway.

SSWD expects construction to begin first on the Riverlands Road main replacement element. Construction is planned to begin in July for the water main replacement on River Blvd., Alder & Heller Streets, and Pebble Way in Monte Rio.

Banners and Baskets

The hanging baskets are now in place for the 2010 season on Main St., Guerneville. The Chamber of Commerce is in the process of purchasing a mobile watering system and will be exploring the idea of giving community service hours for help with the watering.



Fife Creek Commons

Burbank Housing continues to make progress in the design and permitting work for its planned 48-unit affordable housing development at Fifth and Mill Streets in Guerneville. Burbank hopes to receive the federal low-income housing tax credits needed to complete project financing in the near future.

Comprehensive Project Identification and Analysis

In 2009, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Russian River Redevelopment Project Strategic Plan, which contains the community's visions and values, and a comprehensive list of potential projects and initiatives to improve the Project Area. The CDC is currently engaged in a process to identify and prioritize projects that will be consistent with this and other redevelopment planning documents, and that are also eligible for redevelopment assistance.

To assist the CDC, vital information is being gathered from County Departments, Special Districts of the Project Area, RRROC and Task Group members, other stakeholders, and the general public.

In order to gather broad feedback, CDC has posted a Project Identification Survey on our website at: <http://sonoma-county.org/cdc/redevRussianRiver.htm>

We encourage all Project Area residents, businesses, and property owners to complete and submit survey forms by 7/9/10 to tell us about projects that should be included in this analysis.

Monte Rio Sports Courts

Tennis and basketball court improvements are nearing completion, with color coat to be installed by June (weather permitting).

Riverkeeper Park

The final Riverkeeper Stewardship Park construction plans have just been completed and will be posted on the Riverkeeper website (<http://russianriverkeeper.org>)

In the initial phase of construction, an entry kiosk will be built, with information about the park and educational information on River ecology, a community circle area built from rammed earth, and a loop trail that will be ADA accessible. The first phase also will include a bioswale and several rain gardens that will treat pollutants in storm water runoff, such as nutrients, metals and sediment that run onto the Park property from above. Riverkeeper hopes to begin construction this summer.

Riverkeeper stewards host volunteer days on Wednesday mornings 8:30 am - 11:30 am.

This is a time when interested people can meet the volunteers and project coordinator and learn about native plant restoration. Over the past three years, Riverkeeper Park's habitat quality has improved due to more native plants and there are more birds and wildlife than ever.



Interviews with RRROC Members to Address Current Redevelopment Issues

Lynn Crescione



Q: As Chairperson for the RRROC, you recently led the committee on a 9-0 vote approving the Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program. What do you see as the benefits this program will provide

to local business and the community as a whole?

A. This program will provide opportunities. The Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program will provide the opportunity for business people and commercial property owners to address facade improvement, deferred maintenance, blight, and code requirements such as energy efficiency, accessibility and flood mitigation in the commercial areas of our community. It is designed to encourage private investment and new business investment. Benefits of this program could be increased local employment and business retention. However, none of this will happen without participation by businesses, commercial property owners and organizations. I am pleased to hear that there has been a significant amount of interest in the program already.

Q. Tourism is a big part of the economy in the Russian River; what do your guests love about the area, and what would they like to see changed or improved?

A. Visitors who come to my place appreciate the natural environment, the proximity to good wineries, fine and fun restaurants, local produce, and a diverse population. For many of our guests, it is a multi-decade, multi-generational habit—a family tradition. Some come for events and some come in spite of events. It would be good if guests did not feel intimidated at various public places in our community. Guests have complained about Riverside Park during the day or walking across the bridge at night.

Q. What is the number one Redevelopment Project you would like to see come to fruition in the next five years and why?

A. There is a difference between what I think is the most important project that Redevelopment could tackle and what I think can be accomplished in the next five years. I think the most important project would be a plan for the town centers that would retain their character and protect them from flood damage. It would be wonderful if flooding was a natural event and not a national disaster. I think that we can work towards this, keeping this goal in mind when we do short term projects. But, I don't think that will be possible in five years, so I will pick some projects that I think would be significant. I ran to bring parking to downtown Guerneville, a sewer to Monte Rio and a teen center to the area.

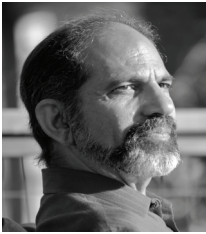
The Monte Rio sewer is moving forward with local involvement, building community consensus.

While working on design guidelines, parking issues were discussed. Downtown Guerneville needs additional parking and a source of revenue to maintain it. The parking shortage may lead to further problems attracting new business.

Regarding the teen center, my ideas have evolved. I was so impressed by the enthusiasm of the group of primarily teenagers who came to us in support of a skate park. Also, I see a pent up demand for it when I pass the plaza where kids have brought home-made ramps. In the past I have found that our local teenagers have gone to great lengths to create dirt half-pipes for BMX riding. All of these things have had unintended consequences of creating problems for business and environmental damage. A skate park and perhaps a pump track would be a wonderful addition to town and a way for adults to channel this energy to that end.

Interviews with RRROC Members to Address Current Redevelopment Issues

Dan Fein



Q. You head up the Monte Rio Wastewater Task Group; what has the group learned so far and what is it looking to study next?

A. The task group has put a huge amount of information on the table, and we're not done. We started with a presentation on How Septic Systems Work. Then we had a panel discussion with County and State officials and regulators. We followed that with a history of the Sheridan Ranch project that focused on both the process that the community went through and the actual engineering that was done. That was followed by a presentation on how other communities handle wastewater, including several sewer districts, two septic management districts and a STEP/STEG system. Finally, we heard from several vendors of small scale systems.

Much of the focus has been on onsite and decentralized systems. In part, this is because the ideas for centralized systems were pretty well vetted in the previous effort and because a large part of the community wants to know if there are other viable options.

Q. Do you think there will be a sustainable solution with the current septic systems, or will the area eventually need to transition to a sewer system?

A. I have no doubt that there are sustainable solutions, but it's not an either/or question. The current situation for the community as a whole is not sustainable. While some individuals have conventional septic systems that are up to code and working well, or have invested in exotic systems, most do not. Eventually everyone else will have

to upgrade or be able to prove that their systems are not polluting groundwater — at all.

Q. What is the number one Redevelopment Project you would like to see come to fruition in the next five years and why?

A. Coming off the prior questions I'd have to say we need to see the River area get access to the highest-speed broadband that is being rolled out in other cities and get it sooner rather than later. The confluence of high-speed connectivity and the need to reduce driving is already leading to a larger population of online workers doing all kinds of jobs from home or small offices. The River area already is a great place for these types of electronic cottage industries, even with the level of service we have, but greater bandwidth will provide infrastructure for the creation of local jobs that haven't even been thought of yet. Whatever Redevelopment can do to facilitate that will be a real economic boost in the long run.

Gary Getchell



Q. From the perspective of a business owner, how has the economy in Guerneville changed over the last few years?

A. My business, General Contracting, has been affected every 7 to 10 years by the National Economy, not by local conditions. Business was very good right up through 2008. The year 2009 was slow due to the economy and financing. This year, 2010, appears to be another good year.

The economy of the Russian River area has been basically the same for the 42 years I have been in business. Most of my clients are summer home owners who do not live

continued

Interviews with RRROC Members to Address Current Redevelopment Issues

Gary Getchell, continued.

here full time. The core businesses that provide basic needs along the Russian River have continued to thrive in the long term. I purposely try to use local businesses for all my needs and conveniences. Those businesses have remained stable. The various novelty shop type businesses have always tended to come and go with economic conditions.

Q. *What do you see as the primary challenges for local businesses, and what role might Redevelopment play to assist in addressing these challenges?*

A. In looking at the recreation business picture, I have seen what 50 years ago was primarily a summer seasonal cycle that was strong seven days a week during the summer and weak to non-existent during the depths of winter, change to a mostly weekend trend with a longer season, but slow on weekdays year-round.

The main draw to the area is that the river offers both a summer swimming and boating experience, as well as being a winter fishing destination. The river itself, unfortunately, has become extremely blighted with the imposed low flow conditions that create warm stagnant, shallow water that harbors algae, moss, invasive plants and scum. It has become an increasingly unappealing destination for boating and swimming. There have been newspaper articles about the difficulties of floating canoes in various stretches of the river. The winter steelhead fishing is all but gone as the species has disappeared and has moved toward being endangered. Redevelopment should at least encourage appropriate agencies and the Board of Supervisors to address this issue. Without a healthy river, the recreational use will dry up along with it.

Q. *What is the number one Redevelopment project you would like to see come to fruition in the next five years and why?*

A. My selection for this project would be the old Monte Rio School. There are no other sites that have the ease of development potential that this site and complex provide. The original two room school was built in 1939, with two classrooms added in 1954 and a gym/all purpose room added in 1960. All of the improvements were done to the State School Building Code at the time of the improvements, with State inspections. The site with historic use is already owned by the Monte Rio Parks and Recreation District and includes a ball field. It also has parking. The small Parks and Recreation District, with a revolving Board of Directors, has failed to realize the potential and the loss if the structures are allowed to deteriorate. There is an immediate need for the buildings to be stabilized. Flood elevation would be necessary to rehabilitate these. A multi-purpose use approach could include rented office space as needed to create cash flow.

I think this facility would be a tremendous asset for a relatively small rehabilitation investment, compared with the costs of developing a project like this from nothing. It would be an asset to the entire Redevelopment Project.

Project Task Groups

The CDC appoints Project Task Groups to provide input on a range of redevelopment project issues. We strive for balanced community input on each of these groups. Current Task Group members and meeting dates can be viewed at: http://sonoma-county.org/cdc/redev_rr_task_groups.htm

Upcoming Task Group Meetings

Monte Rio Wastewater, June 21, 2010; 6:00
Monte Rio Community
Center

**Sonoma County Community Development
Commission / Redevelopment Agency**

1440 Guerneville Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95403-4107

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program
Project Updates
Q&A—RRROC Members
Project Task Groups

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Sonoma County Community Development Commission / Redevelopment Agency

1440 Guerneville Rd., Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Kathleen H. Kane, Executive Director
Al Lerma, Redevelopment Associate
Jennifer Howze, Redevelopment Assistant

Russian River Redevelopment Oversight Committee (RRROC) (as of May 21, 2010)

Residential Property Owners: Dan Fein, Tom Lynch, Ken Wikle

Business Owners/Business Property Owners: Lynn Crescione, Gary Getchell, Justin Lacy

Residential Tenants: Amber Twitchell, Catherine Young, vacant seat

Be a Part of Your Community Process!

RRROC Monthly Meetings:

June 17, 2010, 6 p.m., Monte Rio Community Center, Monte Rio

July 15, 2010, 6 p.m., Guerneville Vets' Hall, First & Church Streets, Guerneville

August 19, 2010, 6 p.m., Monte Rio Community Center, Monte Rio

September 16, 2010, 6 p.m., Guerneville Vets' Hall, First & Church Streets, Guerneville

Updated Meeting Announcements & Agendas are posted at:

Rio Nido Post Office, Rio Nido Community Bulletin Board, Guerneville Veterans' Hall,
Guerneville Regional Library, Guerneville Post Office, Guerneville Chamber of Commerce,
Monte Rio Post Office Community Bulletin Board, Monte Rio Community Center, Villa Grande Post Office fence,
and the Community Development Commission, 1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa

Contact Information:

Russian River Redevelopment Home Page: www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/redevrussianriver.htm

Frequently Asked Questions: www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/redevrussianriverfaq.htm

Community Development Commission: www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/index.htm, or call

707.565.7523 or 707.565.7903, or email the RRROC at rrroc@sonoma-county.org

WE INVITE YOUR FEEDBACK!