

**City Manager's Bi-Weekly Report  
February 20, 2015**

**David Biggs, City Manager**



**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER**

**City Update**

I have received a very positive response to the City Update which I prepared and sent to all addresses in Hercules. I have also enjoyed hearing for a number of residents. Some expressed their love of Hercules as a place to live, and a few expressed concerns about the direction in which the City is heading. Please feel free to reach out to me with your ideas, suggestions, and concerns.

**Property Tax Update**

The City's new property tax analysis firm completed their review of property taxes for Hercules for FY 2014/15. The City saw the 4th highest increase of all Contra Costa County cities in 2014-15, 17.44% as compared the County-wide average of 9.77%. The vast majority of the increase in assessed value come from Prop 8 Recaptured Values whereby the assessor grants temporary reductions below the Prop 8 cap and can jump back up to that level based on market increases. The other big increase was the transfer of the Sycamore North (Town Centrale) site to private ownership. There is still substantial AB 8 recapture possible and the City may see much of that next year. Of course, since the City gets such a low share of overall property tax approximately 3.5% on a net basis, this does not result in significant dollars.

**Town Centrale Ownership**

There have been some inquiries regarding the ownership of the Town Central project, formerly known as Sycamore North, the partially completed building on Sycamore. The City entered into the Purchase and Sale Agreement with an entity called Uc-Bnb Partners LLC with Mark Conroe of Presido Partners as the Lead partner. At that time they had a firm called Lupert Adler as their financial partner, but at that point, while anticipated in the future, the financial partner was not a member of the partnership. In February 2013, Lupert Adler opted to not continue as the financial partner. At that time, Carmel Partners stepped in as the financial partner. The City conveyed the property to Uc-Bnb Partners LLC which had the same members as originally composed. After the conveyance from the City, Uc-Bnb conveyed the property to Hercules Urban Partners LLC, the entity that brought in the financial partner as always planned. That entity consists of Uc-Bnb Partners LLC and a Carmel Partners entity. No purchase price was paid for that conveyance and it allowed the financial partner to assume an equity position in the project. Carmel Partners has also now assumed the lead role during the construction phase.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### Planning Division

#### **San Francisco (SF) Bay Trail Update**

This week Tuesday about 17 interested community members showed up for a Community Field Meeting to discuss the trees along the Bay Trail path between Pinole and the Masonic lodge (north of Sante Fe and Railroad Avenues). The East Bay Regional Park District stated that their original focus was to reduce maintenance issues along the trail using one time grant funding, however they are open to incorporating what the community wants. Both long-term and new residents shared their thoughts about the existing adjacent foliage of Cypress, Blue gum Eucalyptus, Black Acacia and Toyon trees. Individuals shared various purposes for the trail trees which ranged from providing shade and beauty, being a wind break, attracting birds, removing hazardous over-hanging braches, to impeding Bay views. Some thought that tree removal of problematic trees may be appropriate while others believed that thinning individual trees or the thick foliage at the tree bases might be more appropriate. Additional comments about the trail included wanting to install benches, cleaning dirt mounds on large sections of closed Railroad Avenue, and removal of a concrete pile.

Over the next few months, City Planning Director Holly Smyth plans on consolidating the comments received, reaching out to Duck Unlimited to understand how their plans related to the Chelsea Wetlands project may affect Bay trail trees, discussing potential options with the Parks District and then bringing the results and potential recommendations before the Planning Commission and/or City Council for final determination. If you missed the Field meeting and still would like to provide your comments regarding the Bay trail between the Pinole bridge and behind the Masonic lodge building, please email to [hsmyth@ci.hercules.ca.us](mailto:hsmyth@ci.hercules.ca.us).

#### **Administrative Use Permits Approved for New Business**

Spectrum of IEP's home occupation to be located at 35 Lompico was approved for their home office to make computer entries regarding advocacy for parents who have children with special needs, with no customer traffic coming to the home business.

### Building Inspection Division

	<b>Jan 30 Thru Feb 13, 2015</b>	<b>FY 2014/15 YTD</b>
Number of the permits issued:	26	551
Total Fee Collected:	\$6,679.33	\$431,272.76
Number of Inspections:	11	232
New Housing:	0	20

## **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**Maintenance & Operations** – In addition to completing regularly scheduled janitorial and other facility-related tasks in public parks and buildings, staff repaired a damaged light on the pathway adjacent to Willow Avenue, repaired the gas fireplace in the library, and refreshed the stop bars and striping at the Willow Avenue/Palm Avenue and Palm Avenue/Sycamore Avenue intersections. Additionally, the large tree that fell down on San Pablo Boulevard during the last storm was removed and the large street light that was knocked down was reinstalled. Staff continues to coordinate with the West Contra Costa County Integrated Waste Management Authority on solid waste and Ducks Unlimited on the Chelsea Wetlands Restoration Project.

**Engineering** – Construction on the \$6M Bay Trail phase of the Intermodal Transit Center (ITC) continues and is approximately 50% complete. Staff is working with the environmental regulatory agencies to secure the permits for Path to Transit, which is the next phase of the ITC project. Construction is in progress on the Victoria Crescent residential development and sidewalk repairs along Sycamore Avenue were completed in front of the Creekside Center by Home Depot/Creekside Center. Grading and improvement plans for the Muir Pointe residential development are being reviewed. Staff met with PB Express and will be using their plan room services for the next project that is advertised for bid.

### **PERMITS: 2/1 - 2/14**

Sewer Lateral Inspection Program:

- Number of application received: 4
- Sewer Lateral Inspection Fees Collected: \$500
- Number of Certifications issued: 8
- Number of Deficiency Notices issued: 3
- Number of Condominium Waivers issued: 1

Wide Load/Transportation Permits Issued: 2

Encroachment Permits Issued: 4

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

### **Marijuana Grow Houses** **So you think you've found the perfect tenant.**



A Marijuana grow house could be in your neighborhood!

#### **Is there a Marijuana grow house in your neighborhood?**

The newspapers are full of marijuana grow house's being busted and, there could be one in your neighborhood. Over the past couple of years the Hercules Police Department has dealt 15 marijuana grow operations. These grow house can pose a threat to your safety. The **5 tips to spot a Marijuana grow house in your neighborhood**, that we have detailed, can help educate you as to what to look to for so that you can report any suspicious activity to the local authorities in your area.

#### **5 tips to spot a Marijuana grow house in your neighborhood**

##### **1.) An abundance of wires or protruding wires from a home.**

Marijuana grow houses typically use enormous amounts of electricity. This can be a red flag to power companies and should report the high usage to the police. Many times the operators of the grow houses will wire the home by passing the electrical meter and directly tapping into a utility line to avoid detection.

##### **2.) No one seems to live at the residence.**

Do you notice that all the windows are all covered up? Do you notice that that you rarely see anyone at the home and, if you do, they never seem to have any groceries or seem to hang out in the garage before leaving?

It could very well be that the occupants are very private but it can also be an indicator that the home is being used as a Marijuana grow house. Shades are often pulled down so that outsiders cannot see all the lights that are on 24/7. Also, since nearly every square inch of a grow house is occupied and there are dangerous chemicals, usually people do not live there. When they come by to check on the operation, they will often stay in the garage.

Sometimes, there will be occupants and they seem to live in a very small area, or even the garage.

### **3.) You notice an odor emanating from the home.**

Perhaps you just think it is the mysterious neighbors smoking weed, but it may be a sign of a marijuana grow operation, especially if you notice the odor when the wind outside is blowing. Some have said the odor smells like a skunk. If you have pets, pay attention if they seem to be continually “sniffing” towards the direction of the home you suspect.

### **4.) Recent changes have been made to the home.**

Did the occupants of the home, all of a sudden put bars on the windows and doors, or perhaps you have noticed a number of vents added, that are visible from the outside? This can be an indicator that there is a Marijuana grow house in your neighborhood.

### **5.) On the rare occasions that you do see the residents, they seem to always be carrying large garbage bags or plants**

Large plastic bags are often used to take items in and out of the home in these types of operations. The plants may be a red flag too. Of course your neighbors could just be avid gardeners. And then again, they could be operating a Marijuana grow house.

Bear in mind that each tip, on its own, is not necessarily suspicious, however, if you notice many of the signs, please seriously consider notifying your local authorities that there may be a marijuana grow house in your neighborhood.

### **As a Landlord what do I watch for?**

#### **Before you accept any tenant watch out for the warning signs.**

- Tenants who offer to pay in cash.
- Willing to pay more than rental asking price.
- Give incomplete answers on their application.
- Register with utilities under a different name.
- Have no home phone number.
- They are not interested in the layout of the home.
- They are very interested in the electrical panel, watts etc.

#### **First, learn to recognize the signs of a grow operation:**

Efforts to block windows day and night.

A skunk smell.

Bright lights.

Condensation.

Humming sounds.

Hoses running to the outside.

Paranoia about anyone entering the home.

Occupants who are never home, or not than the ones on the lease.

The roof has no frost despite bad weather.

Complaints of low water pressure, power surges from adjacent tenants, or spikes in utility usage.

Keep an eye on the property, and perform regular inspections of the inside. It's also helpful if neighboring property owners have your phone number and can alert you to suspicious behavior.

### **Patrol Highlights**

**Stolen Vehicle:** On February 5, 2015 at approximately 7:13 p.m. a Hercules resident came to the lobby of HPD to report her gray 2006 Acura RSX stolen. She advised her vehicle was stolen sometime between February 4, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. and February 5, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.

**Miscellaneous Report:** On February 5, 2015 at approximately 10:02 p.m. HPD units were dispatched to the 300 block of Brighton for subjects possibly attempting to break into a residence. Officers checked the residence and found no signs of forced entry. No one appeared to be home at the time. It was determined the responsible subjects left the area prior to the arrival of Officers.

**Stolen Vehicle:** On February 8, 2015 at 4:27 p.m. an officer was dispatched to the 2200 block of Redwood Rd. to take a report for a stolen vehicle. The reporting party stated he came outside this afternoon, at 4:00 p.m. and noticed his own personal company truck was missing. The truck, a White '05 Ford F-450 truck had an attached utility boxes, which was also stolen. The truck has Silva Construction" logos on both sides of the front driver's side/passenger side doors

**Second abatement notice given:** On February 9, 2015 at 5:11 p.m., Officers went to the 100 block of Chestnut Ct. to deliver a second (vehicle) abatement notice to the residents. The second abatement notice was hand delivered and explained to the resident.

**Residential Burglary and Vehicle Theft:** On February 9, 2015 at 8:39 p.m. an officer responded the 1000 block of Turquoise. The reporting party said her residence was burglarized and a vehicle was stolen. The reporting party's stated they left the residence at 5:30 p.m. When they returned at 8:35 p.m. their H2 Hummer was missing from the street in front of their residence; and the garage door was open. An unknown subject entered the residence and ransacked the bedrooms. The reporting party was not sure if the H2's doors were locked, but a garage door opener was in the vehicle. The loss consisted of coins; computers; and cash.

**Theft/Felony Threats/Use of Pepper Spray Other and Self Defense:** On February 10, 2015, at 2:31 a.m., officers were dispatched to the area of Pheasant and Cardinal Way, for a physical fight involving a taxi cab driver. Officers located an adult male, identified as the victim, on top of the adult female suspect. When an officer separated the two parties, he noticed the victim was squinting his eyes. The victim stated the female sprayed him with pepper spray. The victim stated he picked up the female (suspect) in San Francisco. She wanted to go to an address in the 100 block of Cardinal Way in Hercules. The address the suspect gave did not exist. The driver

stopped in front of another house, in the same block. The suspect said she had the money, in the house, to pay the fare. The victim asked the suspect to leave a piece of luggage, as collateral, but she took all her luggage and headed for a residence. The victim followed the suspect. The suspect said she could not find her keys and needed to go to the rear of the house to get in. The victim went back to his cab to wait. He waited several minutes then saw the suspect coming around the other side of the residence. The victim approached the suspect and she said her father had a gun. When the victim was going to call the police the suspect took off running. The victim chased the suspect and she sprayed pepper spray in his face. The victim held on to the suspect until the police arrived. The suspect stated she had a gun and would shoot him if she got free. 19 year old Lashay Anderson was arrested and transported to the Martinez Detention Facility. This case is very similar to the incident on February 7, 2015. Investigators are following up on the other case.

**Possession of Stolen Property/Probation Violation:** On February 10, 2015 at 9:43 a.m. an officer checked on a Green '97 Nissan Maxima parked in in the 1500 block of Partridge Drive. The Maxima's rear license plate had no month or year tabs affixed and the registration expired July 2012; with fees last paid in June 2014. The officer had personal knowledge the right front passenger was on searchable probation. The officer contacted an adult male, seated in the driver's seat, and determined he too was on searchable probation. A probation search was done of both subjects. The female was released at the scene. The officer found a Social Security Card, issued in another name, in the male's wallet. The suspect also had papers with two other person's names, and personal information. The officer contacted the owner of the Social Security Card, and determined he had been the victim of an auto burglary, in Novato, this past January. The Social Security Card was among the items in his stolen wallet. 38 year old Cutis Phea, of Richmond was arrested for Possession of Stolen Property and Probation Violation. He was transported to the Martinez Detention Facility.

**Grand Theft:** On February 10, 2015 at 1:45 p.m. an Officer was dispatched to the 800 block Dover to take a report for an internet fraud. The victim stated she arranged to purchase a Black '04 Nissan Titan via the internet. She wired \$2,000 via MoneyGram to a subject in Atlanta, Georgia. The victim never received the Titan. The vehicle was supposed to be delivered from a third subject in Arizona.

**Petty Theft:** On February 10, 2015 at 4:28 p.m. an Officer was dispatched to the 100 block of Tuscany Ct. to take a report for a theft of a package. The victim stated an unknown suspect stole a package from his front door today between 12:00 p.m. and the time of call. The victim received an email delivery notification, from UPS, that the package was delivered. When he went to his residence the package missing/stolen.

**Supplement to Stolen Vehicle taken from Residential Burglary:** On February 11, 2015 at 12:56 p.m. an officer was notified CHP was in the process of recovering our stolen vehicle (Black '03 Hummer H2), taken from the 1000 block of Turquoise Drive on February 9, 2015. CHP Dispatch was called by a truck driver who saw the vehicle off the roadway. The vehicle, was found the vehicle parked down a ravine approximately 50 feet from the shoulder along

Cummings Skyway, East of the W/B I-80 off-ramp. The vehicle was towed and the owner notified.

**Suspicious Circumstance:** On February 11, 2015 at 6:33 p.m. Hercules Officers were dispatched to the 1000 block of N. Shelter Bay. The reporting party stated about 5:00 p.m. she was upstairs, alone in her bedroom, when she heard a door opening downstairs. She went to see if it was her son who was arriving home. The reporting party saw her rear sliding glass door was open. She then heard someone walking up her staircase. The reporting party fled outside. She stood outside and called a neighbor. The reporting party saw the unknown male subject fleeing from her backyard over the backyard fence. Nothing appeared to have been taken from the house. The suspect is described as an Asian or Hispanic male, with long light colored hair, wearing a long sleeve tan shirt.

**Vehicle Tampering:** On February 14, 2015 at approximately 9:13 p.m. a HPD Officer was dispatched to Sapphire Court for a theft, of a catalytic converter, from a vehicle. The reporting party stated someone removed the catalytic converter from his 2004 Toyota Sequoia, on February 13, 2015 between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. It appeared the converter had been cut off.

**Stolen Vehicle:** On February 14, 2015 at approximately 5:04 a.m. a HPD Officer was dispatched to the 100 block of Meadowlark for a stolen vehicle report. The reporting party last saw the gold 1995 4 door Honda Accord on February 13, 2015 at approximately 9:00 p.m.

**Vehicle Tampering:** On February 14, 2015 at 8:40 a.m., an officer was dispatched to the 300 block of Violet for a report of property damage. The reporting party said sometime between February 10, 2015, and time of call today an unknown suspect(s) gained entry to the engine compartment of her gray 2000 Nissan Quest and ripped some of the cables from the engine.

**Auto Burglary:** On February 14, 2015 at 2:52 p.m. an officer was dispatched to the 100 block of Titan for a report of a burglary. The reporting party said sometime after 7:30 a.m. this morning, someone shattered the window of his truck and stole over \$1500 in tools from inside.

**Outside Assist:** At 4:56 p.m. CHP requested HPD assist in locating two subjects who ran, from an overturned vehicle, on eastbound 4 at interstate 80. Two African American males were seen running from an overturned black Hyundai. CHP was attempting to stop the Hyundai because the passenger was not wearing his seatbelt. The passenger was located on Sycamore Ave at San Pablo Ave but the driver was not located.

**Recovered Stolen Vehicle:** On February 14, 2015 5:00 p.m., an officer recovered the Honda, reported stolen from Meadowlark earlier this morning. The Honda was released to the registered owner.

**Hit and Run Vehicle Collision:** On February 16, 2015 at 6:53 a.m. Hercules Officers were dispatched to a report of a hit and run vehicle collision, which had just occurred, on Tsushima St. at Sycamore Ave. The victim vehicle was a parked vehicle, described as a 2 Door Accord with a Black hood. The suspect vehicle was described as a White Van with "On-Trac" and a phone

number on the sides. Officers checked the area for the suspect vehicle but did not locate it. The victim vehicle was located parked S/B on Tsushima near Lewis St. The vehicle was registered out of Alamo. A notice card with case number was left with the Accord.

**Vehicle Tampering:** On February 16, 2015 at 8:49 a.m. an officer was dispatched, to the 1700 block of Redwood Rd, to take a report for a vehicle tampering. The victim said an unknown suspect attempted to cut, and remove, the catalytic converter from his Gold '04 Toyota Sequoia on Wednesday, February 11, 2015. The suspect cut the catalytic converter but was unable to remove it.

**Strong Arm Robbery:** On February 16, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. an officer was dispatched to an HPD lobby detail regarding a strong-arm robbery which occurred on Friday, February 13, 2015. A parent stated that his 14 year old son was punched and robbed of his cell phone. The incident occurred, on the footpath, on Refugio Valley Rd this past Friday evening at approximately 5:15 p.m. The son was not present and currently in Sacramento. The parent will bring his son in when he returns home.

**Suspicious Circumstance:** On February 17, 2015 at 8:36 a.m. Hercules Officers were dispatched to a suspicious event that just occurred at 100 Lookout Ct. The reporting party stated two African American males were pushing on the front door of her neighbor's house. The males were seen driving away, down Overlook Terrace, in a Black Mercedes SUV. Both subjects were wearing black shorts. Officers checked the area but were unable to locate the SUV or the subjects.

**Residential Burglary:** On February 17, 2015 at 12:06 p.m. an officer was dispatched to the 100 block of Grenadine Way to take a report for a residential burglary. The incident occurred between 10:15 a.m. and the time of call. The reporting party said she noticed a newer model Black Mercedes SUV pull up to her driveway as she was leaving her house at 10:15 a.m. She did not get a look at the occupants of the vehicle. Officers found the front door open and the rear sliding glass door had been pried open. The loss is cash, jewelry, electronics, and family documents. It appears the suspects pried the rear sliding glass door open and fled through the front door. The suspects may be related to the incident involving the Black Mercedes SUV.

**Residential Burglary:** On February 17, 2015 at 7:26 p.m. a resident, from the 100 block of Pearce, reported being the victim of a residential burglary. The reporting party left her residence this morning at 6:30 a.m. and returned at 7:20 p.m. She found her front door unlocked. She found several drawers open and ransacked. The loss is undetermined at this time. A neighbor reported seeing two subjects, between 12:45 p.m. and 1:15 p.m., associated with a white van parked in front of the victim's residence. The subjects were pushing a dolly, into the victim's rear yard, through her side gate. The subject number one was described as a Hispanic male; 40's or early 50's; 5-9; 180lbs. Suspect number two was described as a African American male; 20's; approximately 6-4; and 190 lbs.

**Driving under the influence:** On February 18, 2015 at 2:29 a.m. an Officer checked a 98 Chevrolet Malibu, parked in the handicap stall, at Jack in The Box lot. The vehicle was running and the 30 year old female driver appeared to be passed out. The officer roused the female and

she displayed the objective symptoms of being under the influence of alcohol. Jasmine Scott, of Richmond, was arrested for Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol, and transported to the Martinez Detention Facility.

**Prowler:** On February 18, 2015 at 11:52 a.m. officers were dispatched to the 200 block of Dartford for a report of a male seen in a backyard. The reporting party stated, 30 minutes prior to calling the police, he saw a tall African American adult looking through the rear sliding door of his residence. The male was described as wearing a tan shirt. When the subject saw the homeowner, he waved and exited the backyard. An area was conducted with negative results.

**HERCULES POLICE BI-WEEKLY STATS  
(2-5-15 TO 2-18-15)**

CALLS FOR SERVICE	674
REPORTS	77
TRAFFIC CITES	25
PARKING CITES	15
ADULT ARRESTS	16
JUVENILE ARRESTS	0
ARSONS	0
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REPORTS	3
HATE CRIMES	0
TOWED VEHICLES	12
PART 1 TOTAL	22

PART 1 CRIMES BROKEN DOWN	----
HOMICIDE	0
RAPE	0
ROBBERY	1
ASSAULT	4
BURGLARY	3
LARCENY	10
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	4

**UPCOMING EVENTS\***

*\*Events are subject to change. Please visit the City Calendar available on the City's website for the most up-to-date information.*

**Wild about Writing Class** – Every Saturday, 3:30 p.m. at Hercules Library

**S.A.T. Classes** – Saturday, February, 21, 2015, 10:00 a.m. at Hercules Library

**Finance Commission Meeting** – Monday, February 23, 2015, 7:00 p.m. at City Hall – Council Chambers

**City Council Meeting** – Tuesday, February 24, 2015, 7:00 p.m. at City Hall – Council Chambers (Closed Session at 6:00 p.m.)

**West County Mayors' and Supervisors Association** – Thursday, February 26, 2015, 8:00 a.m. at San Pablo City Hall

**Planning Commission Meeting** – Monday, March 2, 2015, 7:00 p.m. at City Hall – Council Chambers