



CENTER FOR  
CREATIVE  
LAND  
RECYCLING

*Redesigning Land for  
Sustainable Communities*

RECEIVED

MAR 10 2016

Comm. Dev. Dept. Brisbane

March 07, 2016

Honorable Commissioner TuongVan Do and Members of the Planning  
Commission  
City of Brisbane  
50 Park Place  
Brisbane, CA 94005

RE: UPC's Brisbane Baylands Project

Dear Commissioner Do and Members of the Planning Commission:

On behalf of the Center for Creative Land Recycling ("CCLR") – the only national nonprofit organization solely dedicated to catalyzing the redevelopment of contaminated or underutilized land by applying specialized knowledge to accelerate results-focused, community-driven revitalization – I am writing to express our support for UPC's Brisbane Baylands project.

CCLR's mission is to catalyze the redevelopment of contaminated or underutilized land through expert guidance. Our work propels economic revitalization, enhances environmental health and advances resident well-being. Our particular expertise is in cleaning up and redeveloping environmentally-distressed properties, sometimes referred to as "brownfields." Our work is accomplished through training and technical assistance for communities working to turn around vacant or contaminated properties.

The Brisbane Baylands project exemplifies all of the benefits that land recycling has to offer. It will transform nearly 700 acres of blighted, contaminated former railyard and landfill property into a model transit-oriented infill community. UPC's commitment to utilizing renewable energy, positioning the project as a regional transit hub, and outreach to the community are all laudable. In addition, by providing over 4,400 new housing units, their project addresses one of the key problems in the regional housing crisis: that of supply in the right location, namely near major job centers and multiple modes of transit. Not only does the project help reduce sprawl development by building on previously developed property, it will also restore and preserve over 300 acres of wildlife habitat and open space.

We understand one of the concerns with the project is the appropriateness of putting housing on contaminated property. As with all brownfield redevelopment projects in California, the developer is engaged in a rigorous, transparent process to assess the property's contamination, devise a cleanup plan that will make the site safe for its intended reuse, and then execute that plan. All assessment and cleanup plans and reports are publicly available and

subject to review and approval of the state oversight agency, and the process also includes a robust community engagement effort as well. We have seen this process work successfully in communities across the state to take what was a threat to public health and the environment and turn it into a safe and vibrant neighborhood asset.

For example, a historically under-served neighborhood in East Oakland had been trying to shut down an old auto dismantling facility, which had become a community eyesore and source of soil contamination. A nonprofit developer purchased the site and worked under state oversight to remediate the contamination and the site is now home to 54 units of affordable, sustainable housing for low-income families.

When the town of Truckee wanted to revitalize an underutilized 40-acre rail yard and integrate it into the downtown area, they entered a public-private partnership with a community developer, who, under the close oversight of the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), cleaned up the soil contamination stemming from rail operations, and the site is now well on its way to being transformed into a mixed-use development that includes housing, retail, commercial and recreational space.

The RWQCB also oversaw significant soil and groundwater cleanup operations at the site of the MacArthur BART parking lot, which BRIDGE housing is redeveloping into the MacArthur Transit Village, a master-planned transit-oriented development which includes 94 affordable and 218 market-rate housing units, neighborhood-serving retail, and a child care facility, all located around the highly-active MacArthur BART transit hub. The grand opening of the affordable housing piece, known as Mural, is scheduled for later this month.

In all of these cases the project proponents conducted community meetings to keep neighbors informed of remediation progress and answer concerns, and they worked closely with the state regulators to make sure that the cleanup was fully protective of human health and the environment. It is a model that has worked successfully on projects of all shapes and sizes, and it is a model that can work for UPC and the Brisbane Baylands project as well.

The Brisbane Baylands project is a poster child for responsible, sustainable development and we look forward to watching it progress. Feel free to contact me with any questions at [evan.reeves@cclr.org](mailto:evan.reeves@cclr.org) or 415.398.1080.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Evan Reeves". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Evan Reeves, Policy Director  
Center for Creative Land Recycling