

Santa Cruz Redevelopment Gets Under Way

Flood-Hit Area Is Initial Target

By John J. Corrigan

The San Lorenzo river and Branciforte creek ran wild in Santa Cruz the night of December 22-23.

It was one of the longest, blackest nights in the community's history—a night of terror, destruction and death.

Torrents of muddy water crashed through the residential lowlands on either side of the river, splintering homes and sending their occupants to upper floors to await the arrival of undermanned rescue crews.

The San Lorenzo, a trickle swollen to a raging monster by 10 days of rain, poured over its banks and into the shops and offices of Pacific avenue.

Five persons died in Santa Cruz that night, four of them by drowning.

Those marooned in homes and trailers shouted for help, fearful lest it would come too late as the waters mounted higher about them. Their cries resounded across the lowlands through the sheets of rain that fell most of that night.

While the flood was smashing a seven and one-half million dollar swath of ruin through the city, while the pleas for aid still rang through the gloom, there was little time for thoughts of tomorrow.

But tomorrow came—and with it problems more complex and less clear-cut than the series of crises that made up the night of the Christmas flood.

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The deadline for registration for the Santa Cruz City Schools Trustees Election, on Friday, May 18, 1956, is **MARCH 23**

If you aren't registered, please do NOW. Register at the County Clerk's office, Courthouse Bldg.

Inserted as a public service by the Cruzaders for Good Schools.

The trespassing waters drained slowly back into the channel of the receding river, exposing the residue of mud and slime that covered streets and lawns.

Almost immediately, the energies of city hall were thrown into the task of sizing up damage, of effecting hasty repairs, of determining if outside aid was available and how it could be obtained—an undertaking of heroic proportions.

Nothing like the damage and destruction left in the wake of the flood had ever happened here before. The severity and the suddenness of the inundation might well have locked the city in the grip of bewilderment and despair as it began picking up the pieces.

But the disaster, enormous as it was, did not overwhelm the city or its leadership. Sleeves were rolled up, the problems were charted, and Santa Cruz went out looking for the answers.

In the city itself, dynamic leadership was provided by city hall and the chamber of commerce. A lot has been accomplished since the flood toward rebuilding damaged areas and restoring the economy; a lot more remains to be done.

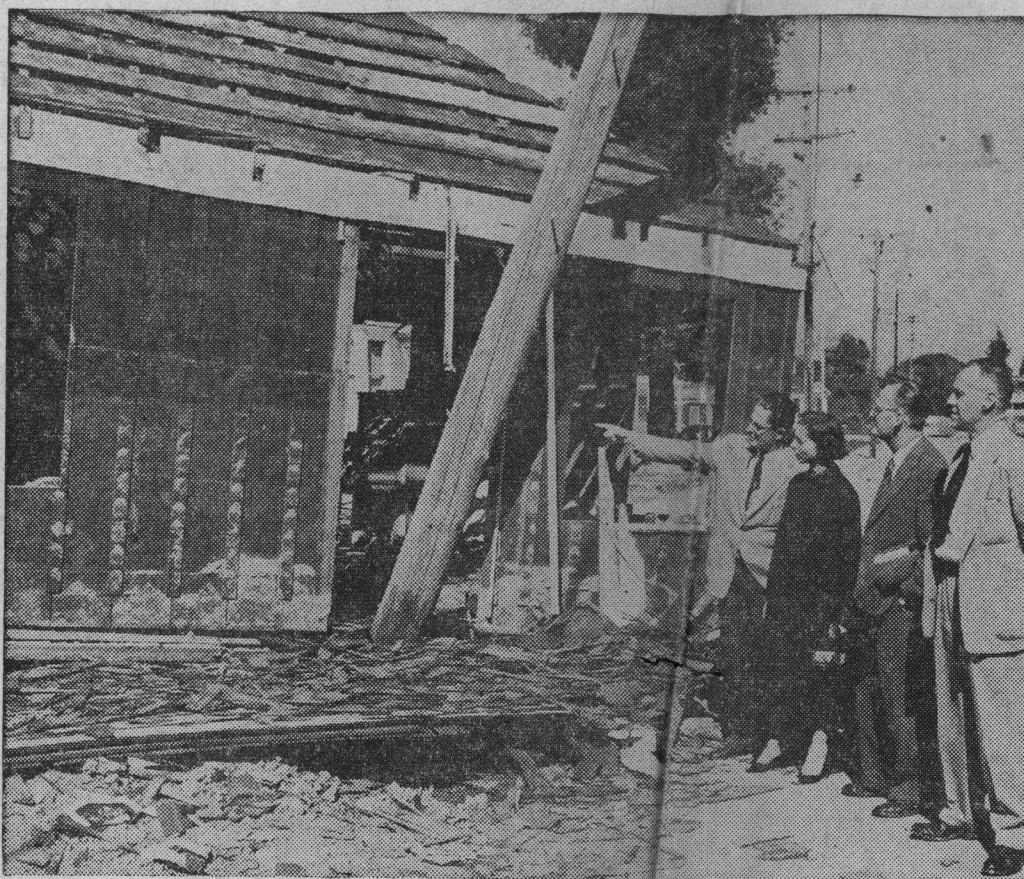
Working closely with the city have been its representatives in congress and the state legislature—Senators Thomas H. Kuchel and William F. Knowland, Congressmen Charles S. Gubser, State Senator Donald Grunsky and Assemblyman Glenn Coolidge.

Federal aid to finance temporary repairs to public facilities has been obtained. Bills introduced at the current session of the legislature will provide state aid if passed.

Two achievements in particular stand out as yardsticks of the effort expended by Santa Cruz leaders on the drive toward recovery.

First, there is the renewed impetus for a flood control system to build up the banks of the San Lorenzo and Branciforte creek with levees. A hearing on bills appropriating \$307,000 for planning and initial construction of flood control works will be held next week before the house ap-

Planners Begin Looking Over Project



"This," Planning Expert John Boucher seems to be telling colleague Barbara Kemp, "has gotta go." Boucher and Miss Kemp, staff members of the firm which has been assigned to draw up plans for the San

Lorenzo park project, the city's first redevelopment effort, began initial studies last week. Here they are shown on Garfield street, which lies within the flood-battered Front-Water-Ocean-Soquel quadrangle. Show-

ing them typical examples of the havoc wrought by the Christmas flood are City Planning Director Robert Cook and Kermit McGranahan (extreme right), chairman of the city redevelopment agency.

propriations committee in Washington. Present will be spokesmen from Santa Cruz.

Second, there is the urban renewal program under which the city can, if it chooses, rebuild or renew flood-shattered districts with federal aid.

Until the days immediately following the flood, urban renewal was a phrase scarcely ever heard here. Santa Cruz has no real slum areas, no teeming tenement districts.

However, written into the reorganization of the federal urban renewal administration is a provi-

sion permitting areas touched by flood waters to be declared blighted and, therefore, eligible for URA aid if the community as a whole decides to embark on a redevelopment program.

The city learned of this avenue of assistance a few days after the flood when a team of federal officials representing a variety of government agencies visited Santa Cruz and told how they could help a flooded community regain its feet—and perhaps emerge in better shape than ever.

To the city council, urban renewal looked like a good bet. A city redevelopment agency—a government corporation separate and distinct from the municipal government—was created, with Kermit McGranahan as chairman.

Assisted by Earl Newkirk, URA specialist assigned here to help get the ball rolling, the agency, the city planning commission and the council began laying the groundwork for bringing urban renewal to Santa Cruz.

One of the first steps taken was to declare the area lying within the farthest limits reached by flood waters as a redevelopment area.

Next, the sector bounded by Front street, Water street, Ocean

Last February 23 Santa Cruz became the first California city to win post-flood approval of redevelopment plans from the federal government, which announced it had set aside \$80,180 to cover planning and administrative costs during the preparatory stages.

With this authorization in its project, the redevelopment agency hired the Palo Alto planning firm of Harold F. Wise associates to study the quadrangle and come up with plans for its redevelopment.

Two Wise planners, John Boucher and Barbara Kemp, arrived in Santa Cruz last week and launched the first phase of the program with a block-to-block study of the existing land uses in the quadrangle.

When current land uses have been charted, the planners will move into new fields—studies of where and how families now living in the project area can be relocated, utilities layouts, street diagrams, estimated cost of purchase and improvement, projected new uses and other aspects of a jigsaw of complications.

In three months, according to the schedule, the tentative plan of the San Lorenzo park project will be in the hands of the re-

selected commercial enterprises.

If these features can be worked into the plan and executed without excessive financial strain, it is safe to say they will appear in the final version. But whether they will be feasible from both the planning and financial points of view will be up to the planners, the agency and the council to say.

As of now, the planners say their study has not reached the stage where they can say how much land will be required or to what uses it will be put.

Where is the money to come from?

That was the first question asked by the council when the concept of urban renewal came to Santa Cruz.

To put it simply, the federal government pays two-thirds of the actual cost of approved urban renewal projects, with the local redevelopment agency obligated to find the wherewithal to pay the remaining one-third.

One method of meeting the local share of costs is to issue revenue bonds secured by the increase in tax revenues accruing from redevelopment improvements.

But the hopes of the redevelopment agency are pinned on a bill introduced in the legislature last week which would make state funds available to meet the obligations of flood-hit communities carrying out renewal programs in conjunction with the federal government.

Suppose the city council takes a look at the proposed renewal plan and decides that redevelopment is not for Santa Cruz?

In that case the cost to the local agency is nothing. The government writes off as a loss funds expended to obtain plans which are scrapped before the actual program begins.

One point to bear in mind is that the city is not responsible for the debts or obligations of the city redevelopment agency. If the agency folds up, the city is not liable for payments on any bonds it may have issued.

The agency must find the means of financing its programs through such devices as revenue bonds or state aid, both suggested above.

Another point on which too much emphasis cannot be laid is that the San Lorenzo park project—the Front-Water-Ocean-Soquel quadrangle—is the first project area, not the redevelopment area.

A map outlining both the initial project area and the entire redevelopment appears on Page 1 of this issue. Additional projects may be planned in the future within the overall redevelopment area. Or, the initial project area may be expanded or contracted as planning progresses.

How long will the redevelopment program take?

It's impossible to say. It has been stated by an authoritative source that the first project, the San Lorenzo park project, could be completed in 18 months from the inception of planning.

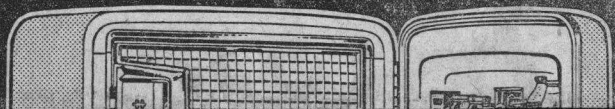
But it must be kept in mind that the job may prove more complex than had been supposed. And, the redevelopment agency

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government — was treated, with Kermit McGranahan as chairman.

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One of the first steps taken was to declare the area lying within the farthest limits reached by flood waters as a redevelopment area.

Next, the sector bounded by Front street, Water street, Ocean street and Soquel avenue, a rough quadrangle comprising 81.7 acres, was singled out and labeled the first project area. Later the proposed first undertaking was named the San Lorenzo park project.

An application for assistance was completed and submitted to the federal government. The application estimated it would take \$2,500,000 to buy up the 190 parcels of land lying within the quadrangle—although it may be decided not to purchase all the property—for improvement re-sale to future users who will develop it according to the renewal plan.

study of the existing land uses in the quadrangle.

When current land uses have been charted, the planners will move into new fields—studies of where and how families now living in the project area can be relocated, utilities layouts, street diagrams, estimated cost of purchase and improvement, projected new uses and other aspects of a jigsaw of complications.

In three months, according to the schedule, the tentative plan of the San Lorenzo park project will be in the hands of the redevelopment agency. There will follow public hearings before the agency, the planning commission and the city council.

By seven months from now, if the city decides to proceed with the project and if agreement can be reached on the project's make-up, the final plan will be ready for adoption.

What the plan will look like cannot be foretold with exactitude, but city hall has already asked the Wise planners to keep in mind such things as a downtown park, off-street parking lots, a senior citizens' center, a possible new courthouse site and

may be planned in the future within the overall redevelopment area. Or, the initial project area may be expanded or contracted as planning progresses.

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But it must be kept in mind that the job may prove more complex than had been supposed. And, too, the redevelopment agency may launch additional projects. There has been some talk, even at this early stage, of including the River street area in the first project or of making it a separate project later on.

The agency theoretically could continue mapping new projects until the entire redevelopment area was covered with new uses.

Whatever the outcome of all the plans, ideas and enthusiasm seething through the city today—whether they fade away with the passage of time and the appearance of new difficulties, or are brought to full fruition — this much can be said three months after the worst disaster in local history:

Santa Cruz has its hands on its own bootstraps and its eyes on the future.

DA To Talk To Police Reserve, Auxiliary