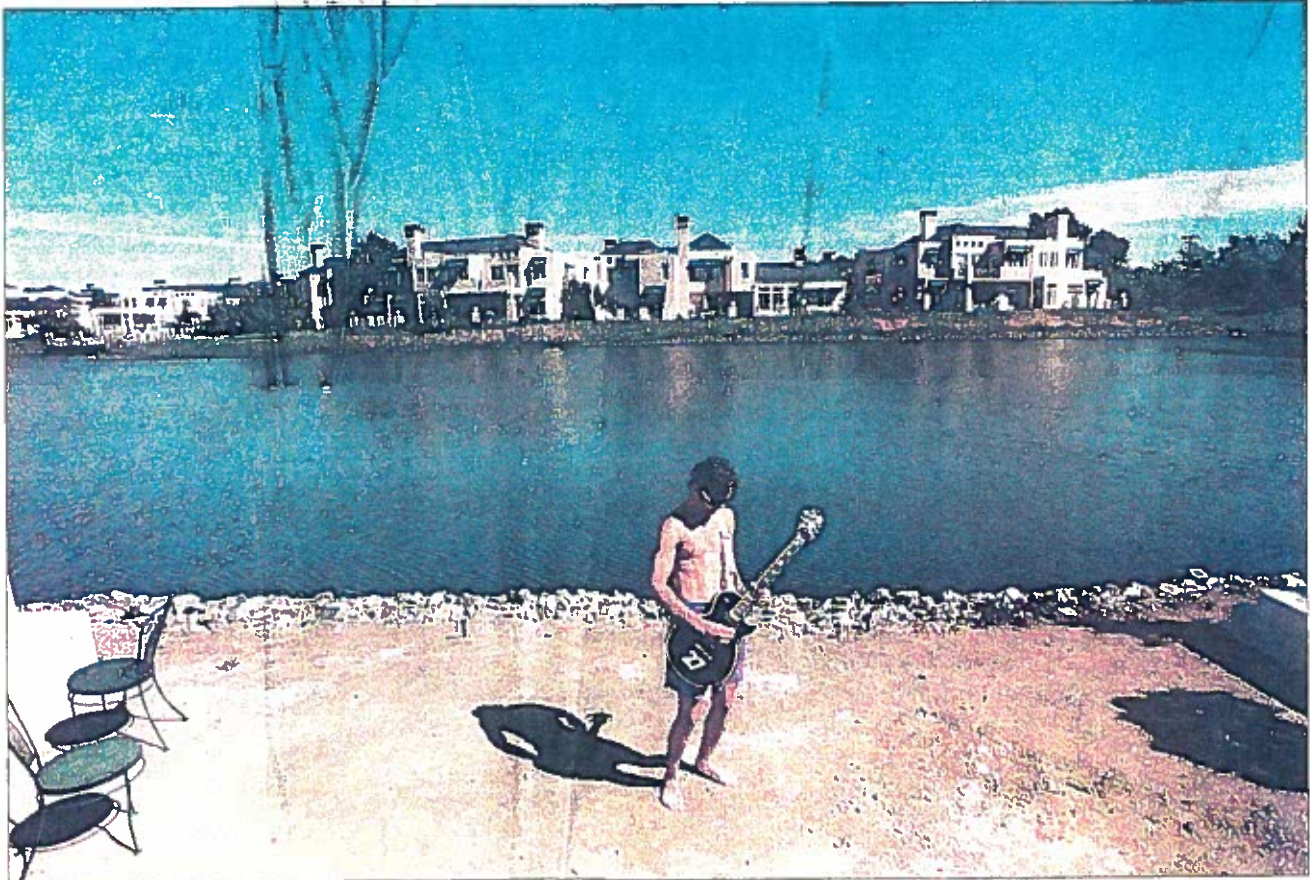


Shores is stuck in the mud no more



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TODD VAN DYKE — MERCURY NEWS

Tod Distly plays a guitar in the back yard of a friend's new house in Redwood Shores, Redwood City's booming bayfront community of waterfront homes and high-tech jobs.

■ Silicon Valley north: San Mateo County's fastest-growing community.

BY HEIDI VAN ZANT
Mercury News Staff Writer

Redwood Shores, San Mateo County's community-in-waiting for more than 20 years, waits no more.

The Redwood City baylands neighborhood, geographically isolated and still without many basic conveniences, is the fastest-growing community in San Mateo County, luring homeowners and corporations who want something more cutting-edge than the region's conventional suburbs.

"It's really Silicon Valley coming north. Growth is where the land is, and we've got it," Redwood City planner Charles Jany said of the 1,486-acre community just south of Foster City.

With a thousand new water-oriented houses soon to be constructed and some of the biggest companies in the region building

million-square-foot corporate campuses, Redwood Shores definitely is not the traditional bedroom community.

It is home to such brand-name corporations as Oracle, Sega of America, DHL, Adia Personnel Services and Sony Electronics. And with Oracle adding another office tower, Electronic Arts planning a high-rise and the Westport office park of 900,000 square feet now under construction, thousands more soon will be working in Redwood Shores.

"When Electronic Arts occupies their new world headquarters, Redwood Shores will become the software capital of the world," said Don Warren, president of Redwood Shores Properties Inc., master developer of the upscale enclave where some 20,000 people now live or work.

See COMMUNITY, Page 2B



Oracle employees exercise in a company gym not far from Shores residences.

■ Bair Island: 1,700 acres of marshlands may be developed.

Bair Island, the huge parcel of open space just south of Redwood Shores, doesn't look like a battleground, but indeed it is.

The environmental community is intensifying efforts to have the 1,700 acres of tidal and marshlands protected from development and made part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

The property owners, a Japanese company whose subsidiary holding firm was the master developer of Redwood Shores, has made no official announcement of its plans for the property, but speculation is that it wants to develop the portion of the site closest to the Bayshore Freeway.

There's even a name for this proposed development: South Shores.

"South Shores will get built, but we really don't have any plans right now. We're just focusing on Redwood Shores," said Don Warren, president of Redwood Shores Properties Inc. The property is not for sale, he said.

Worried that the opportunity will be lost to save from development these wetlands that are home to the endangered California clapper rail and other

See BAIR ISLAND, Page 2B

It's been a long wait for Redwood Shores

COMMUNITY from Page 1B

According to projections by the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County, there will be more job and household growth in Redwood Shores than anywhere else in San Mateo County between now and 2010. The population is projected at 14,000 when the development is complete.

"The bay-side is pretty much built out, and the coastal areas have growth limits," said Lisa Auzasa of the San Mateo County Planning Department. That leaves Redwood Shores as the high-growth area.

For many newcomers, it seems like an ideal place to work and live, with a boat dock in every executive's back yard and a lagoon out each office window.

For Shores old-timers, who have had a long wait for the services and conveniences that are standard in other communities, the boom is a blessing. They are finally on the verge of getting their first school, fire station and shopping center.

The pace of development was slow during the 1970s and 1980s when Redwood Shores changed ownership and there was a downturn in commercial and residential construction, but it has quickened considerably in recent times.

Lagoon city

Redwood Shores was created out of mud flats from the ground up, with a 200-acre, man-made lagoon and connecting waterways as the focal point. The plan all along has been to build an enclave with a balance of high-in-

come jobs in office parks near the Bayshore Freeway and a range of new housing out toward San Francisco Bay.

There are many places to buy older homes on the Peninsula, but only small pockets of new development like Redwood Shores. The housing ranges from relatively affordable rental apartments and condominiums priced under \$200,000 to Cape Cod-style houses with picket fences in the \$350,000 range and swanky executive-style homes that near \$700,000.

Heather Shotwell said her family bought its four-bedroom home in Redwood Shores after a lot of thought and research.

"We looked all up and down the Peninsula but picked here," she said. "The tree-lined streets in Burlingame are beautiful but expensive. You get more house for your dollar here. We love it in Redwood Shores — it's very quiet, peaceful and safe."

But the 10,600 residents and 13,000 workers still have to go elsewhere to gas up the car, get a haircut or buy a gift.

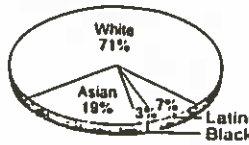
New homeowners, in particular, say they don't mind the inconvenience. They can wake up to a view of egrets at water's edge or the sound of a quacking duck, get in a noontime workout at the trendy Pacific Athletic Club and have dinner at the high-rise Hotel Sofitel.

"It's easy living here," said Thelma Farren, who moved a month ago from Saratoga into a villa-style waterfront home with a slate terrace leading to a newly built outdoor fireplace. She also plans to build a boat dock.

Like the others in this Laguna

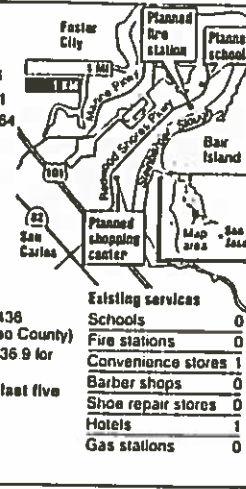
Redwood Shores

Population	Households
1995 7,894	1995 3,441
2000 9,635	2000 4,164
At build-out 14,000	



- Median household income: \$77,436 (compared with \$53,344 for San Mateo County)
- Median age: 38.4 (compared with 36.9 for San Mateo County)
- Households that moved there in last five years: 56%
- Adults over 25 with graduate or professional degrees: 17%

Sources: ABS MarketQuest



Pointe neighborhood of upscale homes, she and her husband, Gerard, a Foster City business executive, could have afforded other pricey neighborhoods in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Close to the airport

"But we wanted something new. We've been through all the remodeling phases in the ranch-style houses we've owned. And because we travel a lot, we wanted to be close to San Francisco International (Airport)," said Farren, whose son Derek, 26, a tennis professional, also made the move.

The new police chief in Redwood City, Carlos Bolaños, moved his family into Redwood Shores after looking on the more established west side.

"There's nothing else like it on the Peninsula. I've always lived in an older home, but now we've got a brand new one," Bolaños

said.

Redwood City Councilman Matt Leipzig, a local real estate agent, said that in real estate circles, Redwood Shores is this year's boom town.

"It has an aura about it; it's a very hot spot. People like the newness, the high-tech jobs, and that it's clean and well-planned. There's no graffiti. It's the way the rest of Redwood City should be," Leipzig said.

While the newer residents are enamored of the surroundings, those who have lived there a number of years said it becomes tiring to have to leave the area to run your errands.

There is one convenience market and a dry cleaners, but most services are found elsewhere. Ground has just been broken on a 120,000-square-foot shopping center with a Nub Inn Foods supermarket.

Because Redwood Shores is on a peninsula, residents must cross the freeway to get to San Carlos, Belmont or downtown Redwood City.

"I find it very inconvenient to run most of my errands in San Carlos and Belmont," said Carol Ford, former president of the Redwood Shores Homeowners Association, who has lived in Redwood Shores for 17 years.

What is of more concern to her and others is that fire service comes from the South County Fire Authority, which has to cross freeway overpasses that could be damaged in an earth-

THE REDWOOD SHORES STORY

Following is a chronology of significant events in the development of Redwood Shores.

- 1983: Leslie Properties Inc. announces plans to develop a 4,000-acre community on baylands that have been annexed to Redwood City.
- 1984: Redwood City creates a general improvement district to finance public works at Redwood Shores.
- 1988: Marine World Africa USA opens theme park that draws nearly 1 million visitors annually.
- 1989: First homeowner moves in.
- 1970: Leslie loses \$2.5 million, a major factor being that federal authorities suspended home loan guarantees pending study of earthquake safety. Seismic-safety clearance later issued and loan program resumed.
- 1973: Mobil Land Development Corp. and its subsidiary, Redwood Shores Inc., take over the project. Smaller master plan unveiled.
- 1980: First large-scale commercial development, Shores Business Center, wins city approval.
- 1982: Voters reject plans to develop adjacent South Shores.
- 1985: Marine World moves to Vallejo.
- 1988: Oracle Corp. moves into new world headquarters built on former Marine World property. Also, Mobil Land Development Corp. sells Redwood Shores assets to a joint venture of First City Development Corp. and KG California Corp. (now the sole owner).
- 1994: Construction pace picks up after downturn in Bay Area housing and commercial markets.
- 1995: Belmont School District and Redwood City hire architect to develop first school and community center, projected to open in the fall of 1997. City approves Westport office park on former dump site.
- 1996: Redwood City Council approves first fire station, set to open by January 1998; ground broken for first shopping center, projected to open in mid-1997.

Source: Reporting by Heidi Van Zant

Environmentalists seek preservation of Bair Island marshlands

BAIR ISLAND from Page 1B

vanishing species, a strong effort is under way by environmentalists to have this land brought under public ownership.

Peninsula representatives Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, and Tom Lantos, D-San Mateo, recently asked that Congress set aside \$10 million for the purchase of Bair Island by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"The momentum is unstoppable. Things are going our way," said Ralph Nobles, founder of Friends of Redwood City, a group formed in 1982 that stopped, by referendum, development of South Shores.

While the developer may believe that some of Bair Island can be preserved and some can be developed, Nobles said there is flawed logic in allowing homes to be built near marshlands that are the habitat of endangered species such as the California

least tern, the peregrine falcon, the brown pelican and salt marsh harvest mouse.

"You couldn't control the invasion of house pets and kids. The slightest activity could frighten this wildlife. They would just abandon their nests," Nobles said.

The portion of Bair Island known as South Shores now is used by hikers, runners and bicyclists, and Nobles said those activities should continue to be allowed.

Bair Island is really three parcels: an outer area closest to the bay, much of which is in state and federal ownership; a middle area between Corkscrew Slough and Smith Slough that is mostly owned by South Shores Properties; and the property closest to Bayshore Freeway and just south of San Carlos Airport, also owned by South Shores Properties.

— Heidi Van Zant

quake.

Redwood City Mayor Jim Hartnett said the city is working hard to address community concerns.

Traffic also is seen as a major issue. A rush-hour bottleneck is created each workday at the only two freeway access points into Redwood Shores, at Holly Street in San Carlos and Ralston Avenue in Belmont.

"Traffic is the No. 1 issue they face. It's certainly an issue that can be solved, but it's going to be expensive," said Denise de Ville, president of the San Mateo County Economic Development Association.

Warren of Redwood Shores Properties Inc. said congestion would be greatly reduced by the widening of the Bayshore Freeway from the Santa Clara County border up to Highway 92 in San Mateo. The project has been delayed by cutbacks in highway funding.

He also supports building an east side expressway south to Redwood City, a proposal that is

highly controversial because of environmental concerns.

Warren has been associated with Redwood Shores since 1971 and seen it through some long and troubling periods of financial problems, downturns in the commercial and housing markets and second-guessing about whether a small city ever could be built on these former mud flats.

With the exception of Foster City, another planned community that is older and more residential in character than Redwood Shores, the other suburbs of San Mateo County — like Pacifica, Millbrae, Belmont and San Carlos — are more traditional, quiet places to live, not world-class job centers.

Much of the housing in San Mateo County was built during the post-World War II boom years, when San Francisco International Airport became a major employer and the electronics industry on the Peninsula was burgeoning, according to Mitch Patel, executive director of the San Mateo County Historical Society.