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Groundbreaking Ceremony for Yellow Brick Road® Marks a Milestone Achievement in Richmond

Richmond, CA. June 4, 2021 -- The City of Richmond and nonprofit partner Pogo Park announce a groundbreaking ceremony for the Yellow Brick Road® to take place at noon on Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 8th Street and Ohio Avenue.

The Yellow Brick Road is a safe bike and walking route through Richmond's Iron Triangle neighborhood that connects important community assets such as schools, parks, stores, and churches together.

The original idea for the Yellow Brick Road was born in 2009 when youth from Iron Triangle participated in a summer program that challenged them to dream up solutions to problems that plagued their community. As an answer to high levels of gun violence, blight, dangerous streets and speeding cars, the youth proposed stenciling yellow bricks across roads and on sidewalks to create a designated safe bike and walking route through the heart of their community.

The Yellow Brick Road groundbreaking ceremony will include speeches by Mayor Tom Butt and other key community partners, followed by special recognition given to the youth who envisioned the project.

“The Yellow Brick Road is a leading example of smart urban planning and will accelerate the positive changes in the Iron Triangle to create a safe, walkable connection between homes, schools and parks,” said Richmond Mayor Tom Butt. “This 13-year-long, multi-million dollar project is a triumph of community-led, creative design and is a direct investment into the community.”

Supported by \$13 million in capital funds, the Yellow Brick Road includes the top-to-bottom transformation of 25 intersections in Iron Triangle. Each intersection employs the latest techniques proven to slow down traffic, including curb extensions, raised crosswalks, stop signs, and roundabouts.

A six-block section of the Yellow Brick Road on 8th Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and Barrett Avenue will become a “Green Street” with 93 new trees to filter the air, stormwater planters to filter runoff water, and 11,000 square feet of planting to beautify a neighborhood that suffers from a critical lack of green space.

The Yellow Brick Road will also create living wage-jobs and opportunities for local residents to develop workforce skills as they care for trees and plants in their own neighborhood. Pogo Park will employ local residents for a three-year period to establish drought-tolerant trees and plants along the route.

“Our baby is finally being born” said Brandon Harris, one of the original youth being honored. “All neighborhoods need to have projects like this where the neighborhood is actually involved – instead of just people from other places.”

The Yellow Brick Road connects with a network of other safe-street projects that include San Pablo’s Rumrill Boulevard Complete Streets Project, the ramp over the BART tracks at Pennsylvania and Harbour, and the Richmond Wellness Trail. Linking the Yellow Brick Road to these three projects will create a continuous 5-mile bike and walking path that runs from San Pablo through Richmond to the San Francisco Bay Trail.

“Residents here are leading the charge to make changes in their neighborhood, and the Yellow Brick Road is the result of their work,” says Doris Mason, Vice-President of the Iron Triangle Council. “This is a dream come true for the youth who created this vision in order to make their streets safer. This cannot come at a better time.”

ABOUT POGO PARK:

Founded in 2007, Pogo Park is an entrepreneurial, community-based, 501(c)3 nonprofit in Richmond, California that creates green and vibrant parks in Richmond’s Iron Triangle neighborhood for children to play, grow, and thrive. Thirteen years ago, Pogo Park reclaimed Elm Playlot, a broken, neglected, and little-used city park in the heart of the Iron Triangle – and transformed it into a safe, green oasis for thousands of local children and their families. Pogo Park has been working with the City of Richmond and the Iron Triangle community for thirteen years to move the Yellow Brick Road project from idea to implementation.