

\$12.7M in state grants to significantly enhance two Richmond parks

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The design of Pogo Park's planned expansion and enhancements to Harbour-8 Park in Richmond. (Image courtesy of Pogo Park).

Two Richmond parks are set to be significantly enhanced via a combined \$12.7 million in Prop. 68 grants, the California Department of Parks and Recreation announced on Tuesday.

Of those funds, \$8.5 million will be used to continue expansion at Harbour-8 Park located on the Richmond Greenway between Harbour Way and 8th Street. The funds will be used to construct a community center, children's play area, two entry gateways, two ziplines, a bbq/picnic area, public art, security cameras, lighting and a restroom, according to Pogo Park, the nonprofit staffed by Iron Triangle residents that also built Elm Playlot and Unity Park.

Pogo Park partnered with the City of Richmond and The Conservation Fund to secure the \$8.5 million grant.

Another \$4.16 million in state funds were awarded to Boorman Park at S. 25th Street and Maine Avenue in Richmond. The funds will be used to construct a new athletic/soccer field, a multi-use trail with three fitness stations, children's play area, community gathering area, restroom, two parking lots, park artwork, a shade structure and landscaping and lighting throughout the park.



Both grant awards were part of a \$254.9 million round of funding derived from Prop. 68, the \$4 billion “Parks, Environment, and Water Bond Act” approved by voters in November 2018.

The latest round of grant allocations is the “state’s largest investment in grant funding history targeted for underserved communities,” according to the Dept. of Parks and Recreation. The Richmond park projects were among 62 projects statewide to receive awards out of 478 applications.

Pogo Park is now three-for-three in securing grant funds from the Prop. 68 program. Previously, the nonprofit’s partnership with the city secured \$1.94 million for Elm Playot at Elm Avenue and 8th Street, and \$5 million for Unity Park at 16th Street and the Greenway. Over the past decade, Pogo Park’s partnership with the city has secured \$16.17 million in capital funds to improve parks in the Iron Triangle.

“The formula that Pogo Park has implemented has struck gold – the essence is that the parks are designed and then built by neighborhood residents who then take ownership of the parks once they

are constructed which protects them from vandalism and the like," Richmond Mayor Tom Butt said in a statement.

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"Our pioneering partnership with Pogo Park is the result of 'out of the box thinking' that has really gotten the State of California excited and become a state-wide model for park planning and construction."



Harbour-8 Park Community Center design.

Pogo Park also partners with local businesses to enhance parks. Scientific Art Studio, a world-renowned custom fabrication shop, opened its Iron Triangle studio to Pogo Park to help local residents build skills and experience in designing and constructing parks and park amenities. Also, Chevron Richmond invested \$1 million from its \$10 million eEquip Richmond Initiative to help launch Pogo Park Products, a for-profit business staffed by neighborhood residents that offers design services for parks and children’s play spaces, along with custom-made park products, in Richmond and beyond.

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Another significant investor in Pogo Park’s mission is The Conservation Fund, which “purchased key parcels of land around Harbour-8 Park and supported every facet of this grant application,” according to the nonprofit.

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