

Harbour-8 Park

How one of the San Francisco Bay Area's toughest neighborhoods is creating new recreational, health and economic opportunities for its residents.

Getting its name from three railroad tracks that form its boundaries, the Iron Triangle section of Richmond, California, has a reputation for being the "wrong side of the tracks." Poverty, crime, gangs and pollution have held this community back, depriving its youngest residents of safe places to play.

Over the last 30 years, California's land conservation community has protected millions of acres of forests, grasslands, rivers and working lands that define the State's natural grandeur and abundance. It is a remarkable achievement. However, as California's population becomes increasingly diverse and urban, the need to provide accessible open space and safe places to play in communities like the Iron Triangle has become apparent and urgent. Yet, the traditional approach to conservation is not up to this new challenge—a 2015 report by the California Council of Land Trusts noted that: the state's land trusts generally do not reflect the demographic make-up of California; existing protected lands are not readily accessible to most Californians; and they do not provide the range of outdoor experiences many Californians seek. In short, we have been challenged to find a new approach to conservation, one that marshals our resources, expertise, and funding to create new parks and open space that meet the needs of urban and other underserved communities.

A BETTER APPROACH TO URBAN CONSERVATION

The Conservation Fund set out to discover a new approach to conservation in urban areas, and found Pogo Park, a nonprofit transforming little-used and abandoned city parks in the Iron Triangle into vibrant public spaces that provide play opportunities for Richmond's most vulnerable children. Pogo Park is doing things differently, relying on its own community members to plan, design, build and manage these park spaces. By empowering the people who know the neighborhood and are directly impacted by it, Pogo Park is demonstrating successful long-term sustainability, ensuring that these spaces are here to stay.

Through The Conservation Fund's Parks With Purpose program, we are helping Pogo Park create additional park space in the Iron Triangle. In 2016, we purchased a small but important lot adjacent to Harbour-8 Park, utilizing a program-related investment loan from the David & Lucile Packard Foundation. Through our partnership with U-Haul, additional support helped advance Pogo Park's efforts to transform underutilized spaces for the community and engage Richmond residents in job training and workforce

development. Pogo Park was awarded a highly competitive \$8.5 million Prop 68 parks grant in 2020, which enabled the transfer of the land to the City of Richmond and to Pogo Park in two simultaneous transactions. This addition expands the linear park by 50% and enables the development of commercial activities and the creation of a vibrant, green, public square in the heart of the Iron Triangle Neighborhood.



Credit: Pogo Park

WHY THIS PROJECT MATTERS

Harbour-8 Park is part of the City of Richmond's planned Yellow Brick Road, a network of brightly stenciled, yellow bike and walking routes that connect schools, parks, churches, community centers, hospitals and public transportation hubs, giving 5,000 local children a safe, clean pathway through the Iron Triangle.

Pogo Park Prop 68



From Los Angeles to Kansas City to Atlanta, our Parks With Purpose program serves the underserved, improving opportunities for jobs, education and recreation in places that need it most. Community-driven efforts are key to vibrant parks, as parks are reflections of their communities and lead the way for our quality of life.

We are deeply indebted to The Conservation Fund for its entrepreneurial, can-do spirit, and forward-thinking. They are working with Pogo Park shoulder to shoulder to reimagine how a blank piece of industrial land in one of America's most underserved neighborhoods can be repurposed for the public good.

–Toody Maher, Executive Director, Pogo Park



LEARN MORE

- Parks With Purpose

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Harbour-8 Park with new addition shown behind fence. Photo by Pogo Park.

PROJECT PROGRAMS



Conservation Acquisition