



Shore Lines

News from Citizens for East Shore Parks

Spring 2008

The fate of Richmond's shoreline lies with the City's general plan

by Patricia Jones, Executive Director

CESP looks forward to a time when all Richmond residents will have access to their entire shoreline. The year-long public outreach phase of the general plan process has demonstrated that this is the will of the people of Richmond.

A rare opportunity exists now for the City to envision and plan for greatness. Richmond's 32-mile shoreline could be planned for public ownership and become one of the dazzling jewels in the Bay's necklace of shoreline parks.

General Plan EIR is crucial. In January, the City Council set forth a range of land use options to be studied for the general plan Environmental Impact Report. In April the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) – an appointed mix of business and community stakeholders – made their recommendations for a Preferred Land Use Alternative.

In May, the Richmond Planning Commission reviewed the GPAC's recommendations and asked for four study sessions. These public meetings will give more opportunity for the City to hear from the public about its desire to protect Richmond's shoreline.

The next step will be for the City Council to vote on a Preferred Alternative for the EIR analysis.

It is essential that the Council hear from the public about the environmental, economic, social, and recreational values of protecting the Richmond Shoreline before they vote!

North Richmond Shoreline. CESP is committed to preserving the waterfront as open space by preventing any further development. The North Richmond shoreline, where Rheem Creek flows into San Pablo Bay, is home to millions of

migrating birds. Its 500 acres of tidal marshes and 800 acres of mudflats shelter many threatened and endangered species. Just off shore is the

largest eelgrass bed in SF Bay – important feeding,

escape and breeding habitat for many species of invertebrates, waterfowl, and fishes. Preserving this shoreline corridor as open space offers a unique opportunity to create a visible edge to the city with stunning long views in every direction.

Pt. San Pablo Peninsula, including Point Molate. San Pablo Peninsula separates San Francisco and San Pablo bays. Chevron is on the east and beautiful views are to the west. Pt. San Pablo was the site of the last operating whaling station in the U.S. and is a great candidate for future parkland and trails. Pt. Molate's scenic 5 miles of shoreline include a tranquil beach, open space, historic buildings, stunning views of Mt. Tam, and populations of native fish offshore and grasses on shore.



CESP board member Ellen Barth enjoys the view from the Richmond shoreline.

South Richmond Shoreline. North of Pt. Isabel Regional Park and south of Marina Bay, the Zeneca/Campus Bay site is an integral part of the South Richmond Shoreline, offering great views of SF Bay and hosting a stretch of the Bay Trail. It is also one of the most toxic sites in California. Despite the clean-up challenges, CESP envisions the shoreline of the Zeneca site becoming an extension of the adjacent Eastshore State Park.

You can help preserve a legacy of shoreline open space and access for all.

Write or call Richmond City Council (contact information on page 5)

Attend Planning Commission Study Sessions. check City website www.cityofrichmondgeneralplan.org/ or send CESP your email address so we can alert you when they are scheduled: pjones@eastshorepark.org.

Share our information with your neighbors and urge them to participate in the general plan process.

Volunteer to call and write to residents of Richmond

Donate money to support our effort to save the shoreline!

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On the Horizon for CESP

from Patricia Jones, Executive Director

Greetings! I hope you enjoy this premier edition of CESP's newsletter, *Shore Lines*. Here you will find information about recent progress toward our goal to create a necklace of shoreline parks from the Oakland Estuary to the Carquinez Strait, and what we see on the "Horizon."

CESP staff and volunteers are always looking for opportunities to help East Bay cities and parks departments realize ways to increase amenities and public access to Eastshore State Park and acquire other shoreline parcels that become available.

We're happy to report that our Eastshore State Park is buzzing. The *Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex* is taking shape and will be open to play ball in September. Habitat restoration projects are underway at the Berkeley Meadow and on the Albany Plateau. And the design phase of the Berkeley Brickyard is in progress.

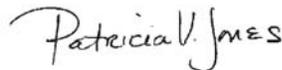
CESP has been working for months with Richmond community activists and neighborhood associations to build interest in securing strong protections for the North Richmond shoreline through the update of the City's General Plan. Like 19th century visionary Frederick Law Olmstead, CESP believes that parks are not mere "amenities," but necessities to provide recreation, inspiration and respite from the intensity of city life. And we believe that parks must be accessible to ALL of a city's residents—especially those who do not have the resources to escape to natural and healthy places farther afield.

We are optimistic that the Albany Waterfront Visioning Process will conclude with an open space vision for the shoreline that the community will embrace.

But there is much more to do – and we need your help! Active volunteers are the foundation of CESP's success. If you would like to get involved in efforts to secure a wonderful accessible shoreline for East Bay residents, please call me. Someday you can say "I helped create a park for future generations" or "I helped preserve a special piece of habitat for an endangered species."

Our success also depends upon the financial support we get from our friends. **Your tax-deductible contributions are crucial to the work that CESP does to create a world class necklace of shoreline parks along San Francisco Bay.** We are always grateful for your help.

Cheers!



Executive Director

(510) 524-5000

pjones@eastshorepark.org



Citizens for East Shore Parks held an open house for our friends at our new office in El Cerrito. That's me, Patricia Jones, seated in the front between CESP leaders Robert Cheasty, Sylvia McLaughlin, and Ed Bennett.

Office and meeting space available

In 2007 CESP moved into a new location at 520 El Cerrito Plaza (above Trader Joe's). We have office space we'd like to share and a meeting area available to community groups for a small fee. Please call Patricia Jones for information.

Supporting organizations include: Golden Gate Audubon Society • Sierra Club • Save the Bay • NRSOSA
Oakland Waterfront Coalition • Berkeley Partners for Parks • California Native Plant Society
Environmental Defense • Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge • Friends of Aquatic Park
Oceanic Society • Regional Parks Association • Urban Creeks Council • Contra Costa Hills Club
California State Parks Foundation • Citizens for the Albany Shoreline • Ecology Center

Shore Lines

News from Citizens
for East Shore Parks

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Threats to Hoffman Marsh?

Steven Oliver and Company, a Richmond developer, has asked the City to rezone the area between Costco and Hoffman Marsh from "Light Industrial" to "Regional Commercial." The plan includes a Kohl's Department Store on Central Ave. and chain restaurant or retail use on the corner of Central and Rydin Rd. Hoffman Marsh, a sensitive wildlife habitat between Hwy 580 and this site, is only 150 feet away. During the 1990s, CESP and other community groups worked to protect the marsh, which is why the City kept the "Light Industrial" land use designation.

The project is undergoing formal review by the City. The Planning Dept. intends to issue a negative declaration of environmental impacts, in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act. Since this project is being considered before the General Plan Update is done, it is impossible to foresee its future impact.

The Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council meets on May 22, at 7 pm at the Richmond Annex Senior Center, 5801 Huntington Ave, to discuss the project. Interested residents are urged to attend. Contact Mary Selva at 510. 232.6510 or Maryspond@sbcglobal.net.

Comments can be emailed to Planner Hector Rojas, Richmond Planning Dept, Hector_Rojas@ci.richmond.ca.us

Zeneca CAG seeks participation

The Richmond Southeast Shoreline Area Community Advisory Group (CAG) is eager to increase public participation at its monthly meetings, held at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Thursday each month at City Council Chambers, 1401 Marina Way South.

Risk assessment of the South Richmond Shoreline at the Zeneca/Cherokee and UC Richmond Field Station sites continues under the direction of the state Dept. of Toxic Substances Control. The sites border a 3/4 mile east-west stretch of the Bay Trail north of Pt. Isabel. (www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public)

The 150-acre Field Station site has confirmed metals, VOCs, PCBs, and pesticides in soil and groundwater. Despite its Superfund status, the Campus Bay portion of the Zeneca site is proposed for housing in the City's General Plan process.

Albany waterfront visioning begins

by Steve Granholm, CESP board member



On April 21st, in response to the hard work of many citizens, the Albany City Council voted to begin the Albany Waterfront Visioning Process and selected Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) to lead the effort.

For years, the future of the privately owned Golden Gate Fields at the waterfront has been one of the most contentious issues facing Albany. Recently, after the property's owner proposed two large developments which were vigorously opposed by citizens, the City Council decided to develop a common vision for the future of the waterfront.

This vision is to be based on an intensive public participation process, and grounded in a detailed resource analysis and the administrative realities for the property. The outcome of the process will be a Waterfront Vision with specific goals and objectives for future land use changes. This Vision will be less detailed than a Specific Plan so that approval would not require an Environmental Impact Report or a Measure "C" vote.

The City will encourage the landowner to participate in this visioning process. It is timely to develop a vision for the site that has broad support from citizens. The racetrack owner, Magna Entertainment Corporation, has recently experienced serious financial setbacks due to downturns in the horse

*Thanks to everyone
who worked so hard
for years!*

racetrack industry, so there may be serious interest on the part of the owner in finding alternative uses for the site.

Fern Tiger and Associates were selected, in large part, due to their demonstrated success in designing and leading public participation processes to reach consensus in divided communities. FTA will begin by interviewing a broad cross-section of involved citizens, the racetrack owner, and owners of adjacent properties. At the same time, FTA will gather data on the environmental, social, and economic aspects of development at the waterfront. They will design and facilitate a public engagement process, which may include small informal gatherings, weekend community workshops, a waterfront education program, and presentations/discussions at community meetings and public hearings. The final report will describe the "Guiding Vision" for the waterfront, and will summarize the public input and resource analysis that led to the Vision.

The hard work of concerned citizens has paid off and the community-based visioning process has begun. With your continued support, a consensus will be reached for a world class waterfront that will benefit future generations.

Play ball!

by Jessica Tse, CESP intern

On September 6 CESP will join local residents to celebrate the groundbreaking ceremony of the newest addition at Eastshore State Park, the *Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex*.

The sports complex is named for Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates in recognition of his contributions to the creation of the Eastshore State Park. With the help of CESP and other conservation groups, the East Bay Regional Park District successfully acquired what was in 2003 an unused 16-acre lot in Berkeley. This shoreline parcel has been transformed into an active recreation area with three natural turf and two synthetic turf fields.

A total of \$20 million was spent on the ball fields, including the purchase price of the land. State grants totalling \$5 million from the Urban Parks Act, the California Youth Soccer & Recreation Facility Grant, and the California Healthy Communities enabled construction to begin. The next step will be adding amenities such as a bathroom, but that is contingent on additional funding. Renting the fields to schools for a full season is under consideration.

Creating the ball fields at the Gilman site required mitigation for the Western Burrowing Owl, a Species of Concern in California. On April 16, the City of Albany and the District started a project at the Albany Plateau to create habitat for the owls. There will be a permanent 4-foot fence around the conservation area, which is estimated to be completed in June. Funding to mitigate the loss of habitat from the ball fields is provided through a joint powers agreement between Albany, Berkeley, El Cerrito, Emeryville, and Richmond.

The Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex will serve the greater East Bay region. According to Berkeley Park and Recreational officer Roger Miller, sports leagues will be required to book for a whole season and any other special event will be by reservation

CESP works with park agencies to forge an affordable Brickyard Plan

by Shirley Dean, CESP Board Member

California's Department of Parks has designated the area known as the Brickyard for intensified public access and for the headquarters of the Eastshore State Park. The State allocated \$11 million for development of Phase I. All parties, including CESP, agreed that the funds are needed to create an inviting Park entrance, but differences of opinion regarding the design emerged between the State and the East Bay Regional Park District.

Valid points were raised by everyone. The State wanted a design that some called a "classic urban park." Phase I would include infrastructure utilities, turf, a parking lot, extensive pathways, and a building that could serve as a visitors' center. The State got some preliminary concurrence in its design concepts from various stakeholders, including CESP as an organization that represents the public interest.

The Park District felt that the north shore of the Brickyard, which is open to the Bay, is susceptible to erosion and needed riprap protection, and they wanted to include a corporation yard.

The city of Berkeley originally objected to that because the City already has one a short distance away. Additionally, the District wanted a design that wouldn't require large amounts of funding for ongoing maintenance. The State estimated that its design would require more than \$300,000 annually for maintenance, money the District does not have in its budget. Unfortunately, the state's severe budget crunch prevents State Parks from contributing to the maintenance costs at the Brickyard.

Everyone had the best intentions. State Parks and the District wanted to come to some meeting of the minds, but there appeared to be a logjam over getting the two concepts to meld. In particular, the State was concerned about any significant design changes without getting public input. CESP stepped in to speed the resolution of the different interests.

CESP met with representatives from the State and District, providing a forum for people to explain their concerns and offering suggestions to resolve problems. Phone conversations between the two parties were held, and today, CESP is optimistic that a plan for the Brickyard will soon emerge. CESP will continue to help facilitate outreach to the public, including hosting public forums to review the new plans. The State will circulate its new design aimed at providing needed infrastructure, pathways and low maintenance landscaping, will consider District budgetary concerns, and likely delay opening a visitor's center, but allow for some presence of a District maintenance facility. The District is also continuing to work with the city of Berkeley to address corporation yard issues.

It is good to get this long-delayed project going. CESP thanks Ruth Coleman, Director of State Parks, and Pat O'Brien, General Manager of the Park District, for their efforts, and Assemblywoman Loni Hancock for her continued work behind the scenes on this process.



Western Burrowing Owls

only. All other times will be available for public use.

CESP welcomes this addition to our shoreline park to provide a much needed resource for organized sports teams, as well as offering affordable sports programs for youths.

Things you might want to ask of the City Council:

- Oppose development of the shoreline.
- Support open space, parks and recreation along our shorelines for cleaner air and better public health.
- Provide permanent protections for the bay shores that are part of the Public Trust.
- Support public access to the Richmond shoreline for all its residents.

The general plan must include policies that firmly state and assure specific measures to prevent damage caused by development, including:

- Any mitigation money should be spent in Richmond.
- Any shoreline properties with commercial designations should be zoned with the lowest intensity possible under the law.
- The City should adopt a comprehensive "Transfer of Development Rights" ordinance to enable property owners to transfer development rights from shoreline properties to inland lands better suited to development.

For more specific details about CESP's position on each of these Richmond shoreline areas, visit our website at www.eastshoreparks.org.

At what price, Breuner Marsh?

by Rich Walkling, CESP Board Member

The trial involving the East Bay Regional Park District's acquisition by eminent domain of the Breuner Marsh on the North Richmond shoreline ended on March 28, 2008. The jury decided that the value of the approximately 217 acres was \$6.85 million.

According to the District's appraiser, the fair market value of the land, currently zoned for open space and preservation, was \$1.5 million. The property owners' attorneys argued that the city of Richmond would approve rezoning of 27 acres of the property to allow residential use, making the land worth \$18 million. In reaching its verdict, the jury chose an intermediate value.

The trial took three weeks and, together with the year-long legal battle, cost the District more than \$600,000 in attorneys' fees. Assistant General Manager Bob Doyle has been involved in 14 similar cases for the District and says that this case was the longest and most costly. The Park District was willing to take on this difficult and costly fight as an environmental justice effort to support the community that wanted this shoreline habitat permanently protected.



Mouth of Rheem Creek

The case was complex because it covered issues involving endangered species, environmental impacts of development, and the city of Richmond's desire to maximize tax revenues. It was further complicated because the Richmond City Council actively opposed the acquisition. Park District officials indicated that when there is speculation regarding the potential rezoning of a parcel, it is more difficult to acquire land. The conflicting testimony can be confusing for a jury.

The property owners will retain approximately 20 acres of land in the property's southeastern corner, plus a floating easement to enable them to have access to the parcel. This area is currently zoned "Office/Industrial Flex," and may be proposed by the owners for development in the future. The property owners have also indicated that they plan to appeal the judgment.

On May 6, 2008, the District's Board of Directors unanimously approved funding the jury verdict, as well as interest on the verdict amount from the date of possession which amounts to an additional \$700,000.

Although the end result is that acquisition of the Breuner Marsh cost more than expected, the good news is that upon payment of the verdict, the District will own the property. More than 200 acres along the North Richmond shoreline is permanently protected, public access will be provided, and restoration of this priceless area is only a matter of time.

Richmond City Council meets Tuesdays, 7 pm

Council Chambers, City Hall, 1401 Marina Way South, Richmond

Televised on KCRT, Channel 28

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East Bay Regional Parks AA Extension

by Norman LaForce, CESP Board Member

In 1988 voters approved Measure AA authorizing the East Bay Regional Park District to issue bonds that included \$15 million for acquisition for the Eastshore State Park. The tax rate was \$10 per \$100,000 in assessed valuation. Revenues were allocated on a population basis among the District's designated West, East, and South Metro planning areas.

The Park District now proposes to **extend** Measure AA for 20 years. The "extension" means the District cannot change the tax rate; the areas the measure cover; or the division of funds between them. Eastshore State Park is in the West Metro area, which runs from Oakland north to Crocket and west of the Richmond-Berkeley-Oakland hills. South Metro runs from south of Oakland to Livermore. East Metro is all of Contra Costa Co. east of Berkeley hills.

Key elements of the AA extension are:

- the tax rate remains at \$10 per \$100,000

- in assessed valuation;
- bonds will be issued for 20 years, totaling \$500 million;
- 25 percent, or \$125 million, of the total will be allocated to cities per population for local parks;
- each metro area will receive about 33 percent of the remainder (\$375 million) based on population;
- 25 percent of each metro area's amount is allocated for capital projects; and
- a 10 percent contingency fund is established.

West Metro's share will be around \$141 million. Of that amount about \$35.25 million is allocated for capital facility projects. The remaining \$105.75 million is for acquisition. The AA extension includes \$27 million for future Eastshore Park acquisitions that could include portions of the Albany race track, if the race track should close. Funds could also be used for other park-related acquisitions. The extension also includes \$5 million for Pt. San Pablo, the Bay Trail, and other projects.



CESP Executive Director Patricia Jones explains CESP's vision while tabling at an EBRPD's public meeting in Richmond.

CESP has made it clear that the extension *must* include \$27 million for the Eastshore State Park. We also urged the District to *increase* the funding for the North Richmond wetlands from \$1.5 to \$5 million, and to use 20 percent of the capital development project allocation for habitat restoration and improvement projects.

The District Board will vote in June on the specific allocations and whether to put the measure on the November 2008 ballot. We'll keep you informed.



Shore Lines

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Friends,

Please help CESP continue the work to complete a necklace of shoreline parks.

An envelope is enclosed for your much needed contribution and to share your views. All donations to CESP are tax-deductible.

Thank you!