A Community-based Vision for the North Richmond Shoreline

North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance (NRSOSA) and Citizens for East Shore Parks (CESP) have been working closely together to develop an inclusive vision for the shoreline that will bring long-overdue public access for Richmond’s underserved communities. Richmond deserves first-class public parks, open space, and recreational opportunities for all of its citizens, regardless of race or economic status.

The Shoreline’s Tarnished History

Despite its natural beauty, the North Richmond Shoreline has been a dumping ground for East Bay communities for years. Large swaths of marshland have been illegally filled, causing severe environmental damage. The West County Landfill, a 235-foot-tall “garbage mountain,” has finally been stuffed to capacity after more than 50 years of dumping. South of the dump, near Wildcat Creek Marsh, are sewage treatment plants. Chevron expelled contaminated refinery wastewater into Castro Cove (west of Wildcat Creek Marsh) for nearly a century. Neighbors have been denied access to a healthy shoreline.

Urban Industrial Complex?

Now, developers have their eyes on the North Richmond Shoreline, hoping to turn it into an urban industrial complex. Another proposal includes housing despite the fact that deed restrictions on the property prohibit residential use due to groundwater contamination. Developments like these would prevent community access to the shoreline, block views of the bay, and destroy a vital ecosystem. The increased traffic and pollution would further degrade the area. This piecemeal development offers only empty promises and creates a jumbled, inaccessible, poorly-planned shoreline, despoiled of natural beauty. Richmond deserves a better future!

Four Spectacular Opportunities

The NRSOSA/CESP longterm vision is to create parkland from Pt. Pinole to Wildcat Creek Marsh. This world class park will be a key destination in a whole network of shoreline parks from Crockett to San Jose. Four spectacular properties (see map at right) offer opportunity for much-needed recreation, wildlife habitat and public access for the entire shoreline.

The Community’s Vision for the North Richmond Shoreline calls for:

- Working to protect the North Richmond Shoreline from Pt. Pinole to Wildcat Creek Marsh, including open space and parks, first-class recreation and stunning views;
- Building athletic fields for our youth;
- Restoring precious marshland and Rheem Creek to their historic beauty;
- Acquiring key shoreline properties south of Breuner Marsh as they become available.

Why Parks and Open Space?

The children of Richmond are hospitalized for asthma at twice the rate of the rest of Contra Costa County, according to county health records. Richmond Mayor Gayle McLaughlin recently described the North Richmond Shoreline as the “lungs of Richmond.” A protected shoreline will improve air quality and newfound recreational use of the North Richmond Shoreline will enhance the health of citizens in nearby communities.

An East Bay Regional Park District study shows that parks, open space, and trails increase quality of life and property values throughout the East Bay; the value of property adjacent to open space may be enhanced by as much as 30% by the views of and access to parks and open space. Separate studies show that businesses are attracted by quality of life and quality of environment. Parks and open space enhance both.

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

Write your local officials—tell them that shoreline open space, parkland and recreational opportunities are a priority for Richmond voters. You can also get involved with our organizations. Contact: 510-524-5000, nrsosa@gmail.com or visit www.eastshorepark.org.
The North Richmond Shoreline is one of San Francisco Bay's most important natural treasures. This spectacular shoreline stretches from Wildcat Creek Marsh north to Pt. Pinole and contains 500 acres of tidal marsh, 800 acres of mudflats, and the largest eelgrass bed in the San Francisco Bay. Eelgrass provides essential habitat to fish and foraging birds such as the California least tern, an endangered species. Wildcat, San Pablo, and Rheem creeks all flow into the shoreline. It is a valuable portion of Richmond's 32 miles of shoreline—the longest of any city in the Bay Area.

AN EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT STUDY SHOWS THAT PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS INCREASE QUALITY OF LIFE AND PROPERTY VALUES THROUGHOUT THE EAST BAY

The shoreline is home to numerous shorebirds and the shallow waters are a critical habitat for diverse aquatic life including oysters, Pacific herring, lingcod, and salmon. The area is a habitat for the California clapper rail and salt marsh harvest mouse, both endangered species, and three candidates for federal endangered status: the black rail, salt marsh wandering shrew, and the San Pablo sole. Great egrets, white-tailed kites, and great blue herons, all species of concern, also call the shoreline home.

The shoreline is habitat for people too. Despite restricted access, generations of residents of the historic North Richmond Shoreline communities have enjoyed the shoreline's natural beauty, visiting it to hike, fish, and bird-watch. The nearest neighborhoods are Parchester Village (one of the oldest African-American subdivisions in California), Shields-Reid, and West San Pablo.

Partnering Together to Protect the North Richmond Shoreline

North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance (NRSOSA) and Citizens for East Shore Parks (CESP) are working to protect undeveloped shoreline in the East Bay. CESP and its allies succeeded in creating the Eastshore State Park, a unique urban park. NRSOSA is a local environmental group that includes the children and grandchildren of some of Richmond's earliest environmentalists. Together, we successfully advocated for acquisition of Breuner Marsh. This marshland will extend the Point Pinole Regional Park southward, adding 218 acres of open shoreline. The new North Richmond Shoreline could become a precious jewel in the necklace of shoreline parks from Oakland to the Carquinez Strait.

Get Involved Today!