



SIERRA CLUB
SAN FRANCISCO BAY

Reprieve for Richmond's Point Molate Shoreline

June 28, 2021

By Rochelle Nason

The Sierra Club salutes the leadership demonstrated by Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia on June 17th, 2021, when he led a large majority of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) in deferring for four months its consideration of a proposed development plan for Point Molate in Richmond. This deferral will be helpful to the Richmond City Council, which clearly needs time to re-evaluate its options for new policy directions on this issue.

The Sierra Club strongly supports such a re-evaluation. We envision a Richmond with more transit-oriented housing affordable to local residents in its Downtown, around the BART stations, and along key bus routes with Point Molate preserved as a public regional park for all with playing fields for Richmond residents and youth.

Point Molate is an extraordinary shoreline natural area tucked between the Chevron oil refinery and the San Francisco Bay. The Sierra Club and its allies have challenged an ill-conceived plan, approved by a previous city council, for the creation of luxury housing in an outmoded, automobile-oriented suburb in this location. The City's own economic analysis found that one would need an annual income of between \$200,000 and \$250,000 to be able to buy a unit at the development. **This legacy development model fails to adequately address climate change, wildfire and refinery-related risks, and racial and economic equity.** It also fails to heed the pandemic's lesson that

shoreline parks are an essential recreational resource for our urban population.

Richmond is an historically industrial city with a high percentage of lower-income residents, many of them people of color. The Sierra Club is aware of the city's economic challenges, and the sensitivity of its population to the forces of displacement and environmental injustice. We know that environmentally just plans will require funding assistance from multiple levels of government and other sources to address the housing needs of local residents in appropriate locations as well as to assure that Point Molate is permanently dedicated as a park.

The current Richmond City Council is positioned to explore options with the plaintiffs, including the Sierra Club, in the pending litigation. **Our coalition includes a wide range of community members and organizations, from Ohlone people who are indigenous to the area, to local youth recreation advocates, affordable housing advocates, and historic conservators and educators** interested in Point Molate's remarkable historic sites.

The Sierra Club and this coalition stand ready to work as Richmond's allies in an effort to secure funding for environmentally just community development as well as for park acquisition and development.

Supervisor Gioia, Supervisor Aaron Peskin of San Francisco, and a dozen other members of the BCDC demonstrated their cognizance of Richmond's need for time to rethink this situation and deserve our thanks.

Chapter members are strongly encouraged to visit Point Molate if they are unfamiliar with the area. **Those interested in more information and opportunities to get involved in this issue are invited to attend our East Bay Public Lands committee meetings**, on the second Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm via Zoom. Our next meeting will be on July 14th, [please register here](#) for the Zoom information. You can also contact committee chair Norman La Force at n.laforce@comcast.net.

Photo credit: Point Molate Beach Park by NAParish via [Flickr Creative Commons](#).