

PETALUMA RIVER PARK

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A NON-PROFIT HABITAT RESTORATION AND PUBLIC SPACE PROJECT

Local Nonprofit Acquires 20-acre Riverfront Property to Build new “Petaluma River Park”

Groundswell of community support raises \$1.055m in just 16 months, secures rare piece of undeveloped property in heart of City for new “central park”

Petaluma, CA – November 20, 2020 – Local nonprofit, Petaluma River Park Foundation (PRPF), has met its goal of raising \$1.055M and is set to purchase the northern end of Petaluma’s McNear Peninsula. Located just off D Street and through Steamer Landing, the 20 acres of undeveloped waterfront property will be the future home of Petaluma River Park, a combined park, event venue, and a gathering place for residents and visitors of all ages. PRPF is scheduled to close escrow on the property on Friday, November 20, 2020.

Founded by a small group of Petaluma residents in June of 2019, Petaluma River Park Foundation’s vision for a centrally located and community-focused park quickly garnered a groundswell of civic support. With over two-thirds of the purchase price raised by July 2020, the effort was bolstered by a \$175,000 matching challenge grant presented by local park advocates, Ginnie & Peter Haas. In just eight weeks, the community rallied to meet the challenge, raising the remaining funds to purchase the future-park property. The all-volunteer organization is proud to report that nearly all of the acquisition funds for the property have come from individual donors and private foundations—over 400 community members to-date—and a few local businesses.

"Petaluma has proven, again, that a small committed group of individuals can make a difference," states Matt Stone, PRPF Acting Executive Director. "We were inspired every day by the outpouring of support, especially during a difficult year for us all."

PRPF’s mission is to restore and preserve the 20-acre riverfront peninsula and to open it up to recreation, environmental education, arts programming, and events. “We envision this versatile natural space as a central park and cultural commons,” comments David Duskin, Co-Founder & Creative Director of PRPF. “We imagine a place where people come together and thrive in harmony with our riverfront ecosystem.”

The long-term River Park plan calls for outdoor classrooms, river access points, recreational equipment, and both permanent and temporary art installations. Although still in early stages, PRPF is already working in partnership with existing local conservation and outdoor education programs to conceive of an array of programming for all ages.

What’s Next?

With the property secured, PRPF now turns its attention to the “real work” of building Petaluma River Park, estimated as a \$5M project. In partnership with the Sonoma Land Trust, PRPF has received a grant from Ginnie & Peter Haas for a robust community engagement program to involve all members of the community in the creation of the park. “At its core, the mission of this project is to build a Park that represents and serves the broadest cross-section of

Petaluma and its surrounding communities,” states Co-Founder and PRPF Board Chair, Seair Lorentz. “We really want this to be the people’s park, so first we need to know what people need and want.” A community engagement program will launch in early 2021 with an initial 6-month planning phase run by a coalition of mission-aligned local organizations, including Friends of the Petaluma River, Point Blue Conservation Science, and Downtown Streets Team, among others.

PRPF wants to open the River Park to the public as soon as possible. Once insurance, sanitary services, and basic maintenance and security for the property are in place, PRPF is planning a soft opening to the Park in early 2021.

The buildout of the park will cost on the order of \$5M. PRPF has a grant application pending for \$2M from the Sonoma County Ag & Open Space District. This \$2M matching grant proposal (which cannot be used for land acquisition) will fund Master Design, Plan Development and Phase 1 construction. PRPF has partnered with Sonoma County-based landscape architects [Prunuske Chatham, Inc.](#) (PCI). PCI is widely respected in Sonoma County and beyond and has a strong background in developing habitat-sensitive outdoor places, including a robust public park portfolio.

About The Petaluma River Park & The Petaluma River Park Foundation

Located in the heart of the city, Petaluma River Park will open 20 acres of wild property to recreation, environmental education, arts programming, and events. This dynamic natural space will serve as a central park and gathering place where residents and visitors can be in community and enjoy the outdoors all while restoring the river’s natural habitat.

The park will be located on the McNear Peninsula along the Petaluma River, just off D Street and through Steamer Landing. It will be accessible by public transportation and within easy walking distance of downtown.

Much has changed since 1996, when the City of Petaluma adopted a plan calling for the creation of a park on the McNear Peninsula. Today, our understanding of climate change calls on us to develop a park plan that simultaneously restores Petaluma River shoreline and provides ample space for low-impact public use and education, all while establishing a high standard of environmental stewardship.

This ambitious project all began with a wild, beautiful and far-flung idea from long-time Petaluma resident and arts-supporter, Carol McKegney, who shared her vision with two other dreamers, Sean Paul Lorentz and David Duskin. From there, **Petaluma River Park Foundation** was founded in June of 2019 with the purpose of acquiring, building, and operating Petaluma River Park. The Foundation is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization made up of Petaluma residents. There are five board members and eight active committee members. Learn more at [PetalumaRiverPark.org](#).

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