

01 Native wildflowers, site amenities, and custom signage enhance the greenway.

02 Interpretive graphics discuss the Baxter Creek watershed and restoration process.

03 Post construction kite aerial photograph



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BAXTER CREEK GATEWAY

EL CERRITO, CALIFORNIA

On behalf of the City of El Cerrito, Friends of Baxter Creek, and the California State Coastal Conservancy, the Restoration Design Group led a hands-on public participatory process to create a new natural park and civic landmark in El Cerrito. The site, a vacant railroad parcel, lies along the city's northern portal at San Pablo Avenue.

A key challenge was finding an appropriate and intriguing way to combine creek restoration and environmental education within a civic gateway setting. RDG's proposition was to allow the form of the restored creek and floodplain to influence site layout. Dramatic boulder placements, curvilinear concrete seatwalls and rhythmically placed bollards shelter the central gathering area and creek while announcing the new El Cerrito gateway.

The Baxter Creek Gateway is a nexus between the cities of El Cerrito and Richmond, where the Ohlone and Richmond Greenways will soon connect. The Gateway is a civic confirmation that ecological restoration is important and appropriate in urban settings and that these projects can be designed to express urban sophistication and habitat sensitivity.