

# RioVISION: Coming Together



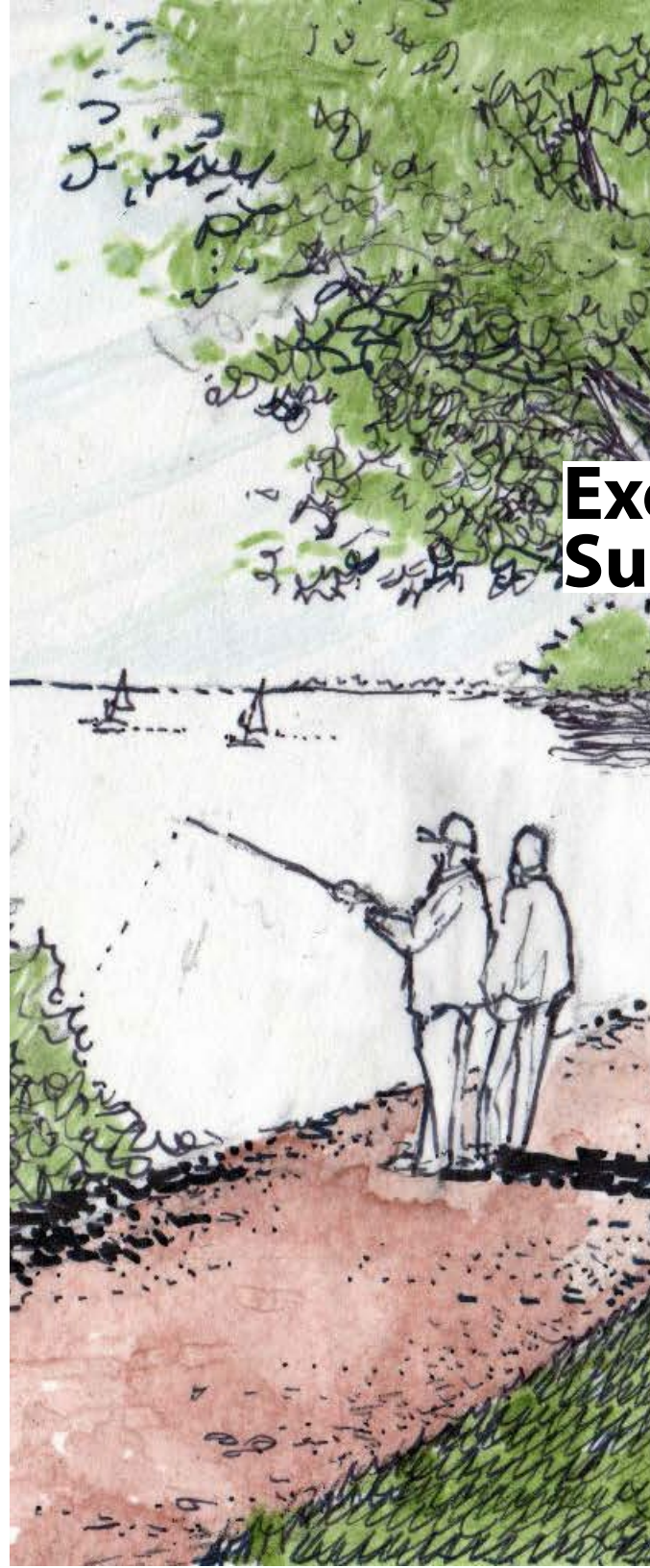
**Rio Vista, CA R/UDAT Report**

**AIA** Communities by Design   
ENVISION. CREATE. SUSTAIN.



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## **Executive Summary**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LESSONS LEARNED

RioVision and the City of Rio Vista requested assistance in exploring:

**1. Recommend a preferred State Route 12 alignment to serve a replacement Sacramento River Bridge.** The R/UDAT considered both the alignment of Route 12 and equally, if not more important, the design of SR 12 and how it connects to the community and serves placemaking and mobility needs.

**2. Build a viable business community in the downtown study area.** The R/UDAT examined actions from bricks-and-mortar improvements to creating a stronger identity, organizing downtown, adding promotional efforts and events all to bring people back downtown, and give them something to do when they get there.

**3. Revitalize downtown Rio Vista commercial core and waterfront.** As RioVision's application states, Rio Vista has "a charming but lackluster core city and waterfront." Rio Vista needs a vision for what downtown and the waterfront can be that extends beyond its current Waterfront Specific Plan. The R/UDAT examined many other opportunities for stronger physical and visual connections.

**4. Connect outlying areas and build a sense of a single community and a sense of place.**

The R/UDAT explored how physically, socially, and culturally the Trilogy at Rio Vista, other newer residential areas, and the planned Rio Vista Army Base Redevelopment Area can feel more connected to the rest of the city. What can appear to be four distinct challenges, however, is really one interconnected challenge.

**SR-12** functions as the edge of downtown, but functionally it should be **in** the downtown and not downtown's edge. SR-12 is the edge because it serves as the barrier or the knife artificially dividing downtown from an important downtown neighborhood. What City plans refer to as Rio Vista South and Rio Vista North would simply be Rio Vista if SR-12 united the community instead of dividing it. If SR-12 is already a knife cutting through the city, imagine the problems if the road becomes a divided four lane highway, with the easterly half-mile elevated to ramp up to a new much higher bridge span.

SR-12 can be tamed, however, in both the short and the long term with a community multi-way boulevard that can serve both **movement**, which is critical, but also **placemaking**, a function that is currently absent on SR-12. Such an approach would not only remove the threat to the City from an SR-12 remake, it will strengthen downtown and provide a long term economic development potential. If a new bridge is 15+ years away, there is time to get it right and provide new economic development opportunities for decades to come.

Making downtown more successful obviously serves the **downtown business community**. While the R/UDAT focused on ways to support business investment, vitality, and partnerships in the downtown, it is obvious that the strength of downtown and a commitment by city government and others to partner is key to the economic strength of the entire city. Even businesses with no directly downtown connection, such as industrial enterprises in the industrial park and elsewhere, still benefit from a vibrant community, a financially stable municipality, and a productive work force that wants to live in Rio Vista.

Rio Vista has done a great deal of planning and continues to make investments in **downtown, including the downtown waterfront**. Downtown and the waterfront should not be considered two different areas- **downtown is Main Street and Front Street**. Downtown and SR-12 feed off each other and benefit or suffer together. There are a huge range of opportunities for downtown, including simple façade and alley improvements, community partnerships and risk sharing, zoning reform, organizational improvements, and waterfront improvements. **The waterfront will catalyze downtown** through downtown expansion, restaurants that help provide access to the river, dense housing to build downtown's critical mass, built around public space.



*Downtown and Downtown First Investments*

Adopting a **Downtown First Policy** that all public buildings, non-profit facilities, and private commercial investments are expected to be downtown (defined here to include Main Street, Front Street, and SR-12 between Main Street and Front Street) focuses on downtown as Rio Vista's economic and community focal point and helps define the community. If the default is downtown, then such investments should be made elsewhere after an analysis showing that a downtown location is not viable and other locations would better benefit the entire community. Commercial investment near Trilogy and Riverwalk, for example, should be limited to local convenience commercial (under 5,000 square feet) while social services, community and senior centers, and city hall should all be downtown.

Likewise, there are two broad approaches to strengthen the **shared sense of place and community**. First, make downtown Rio Vista clearly a **place of the heart** for all residents. Paradoxically, strengthening the downtown or village center is also extremely effective at improving connections to the natural and working landscape. Downtown can be better focused on the river, more attractive to newcomers to reduce future pressures to convert farmland to subdivisions, and provide a home for a farmers market and other farm-to-market efforts. When residents and visitors identify their downtown as the focal point of the community, as a place they love and will fight to strengthen, then Rio Vista will become one community.

Second, build the events and shared activities that organically create a sense of community. One citizen reported "the circle of caring has been fragmented." Events and anything that brings the community together, whether they be the Bass Festival, new Main Street and waterfront events, or jointly working on **RioVision**, creates that sense of community.



*Events should make downtown fun and help build a positive reputation. A windswept beach isn't for Rio Vista when the wind blows, but what is the local equivalent that captures the energy the Bass Derby brings to town?*

Rio Vista asked for a R/UDAT strategically focused on actions and implementation. "We are doers, not dreamers," they reported. Any strategic focus still needs a unifying vision, but a vision directly connected to action and the timing of those actions.

**Timing** is everything. Rio Vista needs to move forward at several time scales.

- **Quick start projects** can start almost immediately, are very low cost, use minimal political capital, yield immediate results, and build momentum critical for larger longer term steps. For example, quick starts can include volunteer and willing investor façade improvements, alley improvements, the easy zoning changes, some pop-up arts and businesses, community prioritization of longer term projects, and starting some key partnerships.
- **Seed projects** are projects that might not be replicable and might be one-time opportunities, but they can create success and catalyze other projects. For example, a seed project could be an artist-in-residence in a vacant downtown space, a Rio Vista crowd-funded waterfront investment, or building the funded elements of the waterfront promenade with an eye to how it fits the recommended waterfront improvements.
- **Medium and longer term projects** are those that unfold over many years. Some take years because of the amount of resources required, but others take a long time because there are great risks in going too fast. For example, some kinds of investment in the waterfront and along SR-12 are critically needed and will make Rio Vista stronger, but moving too quickly ahead of the market can leave downtown with even more competition and not enough new spending. Timing is everything.

The participation, support, excitement, energy, and commitment the community had for the R/UDAT process is clear evidence of the community's ability to come together and move forward.

## INTRODUCTION

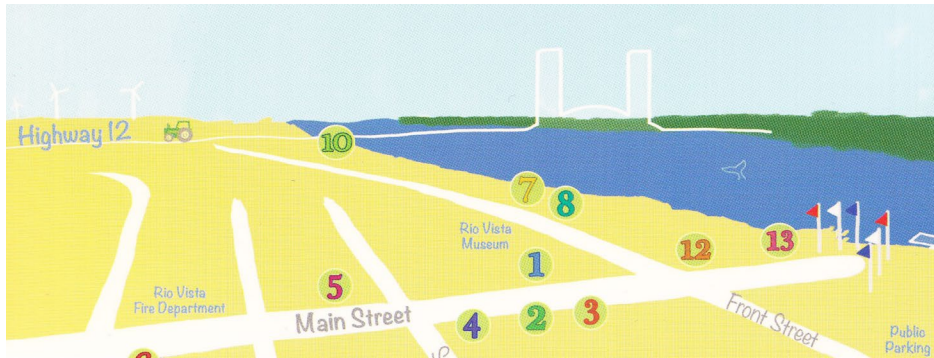
Rio Vista is a small Solano County city with a charming little downtown on the Sacramento River/Deep Water Channel waterfront, about halfway between Oakland and Sacramento. Rio Vista is the Gateway to the Delta (Sacramento River–San Joaquin River Delta). It is located at the base of the Montezuma Hills, whose 750 wind turbines in three wind farms creates a scenic backdrop to the City.

Downtown Rio Vista has great bones, but it is not especially vibrant. After a near municipal fiscal collapse in 2009, Rio Vista and its downtown have risen again and are continuing to get stronger.

Rio**Vision**, in cooperation with the city and many community sponsors, requested a Regional/Urban Design Assessment (R/UDAT) for a strategic assessment of its opportunities. In their R/UDAT application the community reported:

*The downtown has a 1950s undisturbed look and feel to it... Many buildings have facades that obscure the charming brickwork of years past and some buildings were victims of 1960s "upgrades" that now look dated. Storefronts have little curb appeal...*

Rio Vista has some great opportunities, driven by an increasing population, an increase in drive-by traffic, and opportunities to improve downtown and the waterfront. It can be a great little city. There are some recurrent themes for Rio Vista's story that can help define the city. A small historic downtown, a rich history of visitors (e.g., Rio Vista was a favorite for Jack London), a waterfront with potential, an iconic bridge, wind generators helping define the Montezuma Hills, and a market town serving a vast agricultural region, and the ecological diversity of the delta.



**Themes from "Shopping in Downtown Rio Vista."**

Rio Vista is the gateway to the Sacramento River Delta and in the base of the Montezuma Hills, ecologically and recreationally some of the most interesting areas in California. It is a comfortable and safe community. Downtown is walkable, the river provides fishing, windsurfing, sailing, boating, and passive recreation opportunities,

cycling in Rio Vista and the nearby Delta serves residents and visitors from areas as far as San Francisco, and the waterfront provides great, if largely untapped, opportunities.



**Serving the Delta Boating: Rio Vista today and Old Rio Vista 1865.**

Downtown Rio Vista is, however, threatened by competition from a potential new commercial area elsewhere in town, an eventual replacement of the California State Road 12 (SR 12) Sacramento River Bridge and related realignment of SR 12. Although more than a decade away, the need to plan for a realignment of SR 12 to serve a new bridge, and the resulting impacts on the community was the catalyst for Rio Vista applying to AIA for a R/UDAT.

SR 12 currently crosses the Sacramento River/Sacramento River Deep Water Ship Channel on a draw bridge at the edge of downtown Rio Vista. With a steady increase in motor vehicle traffic, commercial shipping, and recreational boating, there are plans to eventually replace the drawbridge with a much higher fixed span bridge. A higher bridge requires a long approach ramp, potentially creating an elevated highway extending over one-half mile west of the bridge.

The AIA R/UDAT application referred to Rio Vista as "centrally isolated," a quote which resonates with the community. Less than an hour from Sacramento or Oakland yet too small and too isolated to be attractive for many kinds of medical uses (there are currently no doctors' offices in Rio Vista) and many other basic services. Rio Vista is the gateway and the economic center of the Delta, yet a huge percentage of retail, entertainment, and medical spending leaks to other communities. This limits community services, jobs, and municipal sales tax revenue.



## THE COMMUNITY SPEAKS

R/UDATs are built around a community participatory process. In Rio Vista, approximately 50 people attended targeted focus group meetings and 350 people attended a Town Hall-style listening meeting, and a handful of people sent in notes with their own thoughts. In the Town Hall meeting, the community answered a few key questions...community responses are represented by the adjacent graphic and by the graphics on the next two pages.



**It Takes a Village.**

**Town Hall**  
This Friday  
February 28, 6 - 8PM

**Final Presentation**  
Monday  
March 3, 6 - 8PM

*RioVision did extensive outreach to invite the community and diverse stakeholders to participate.*

The community expressed great concern about a SR 12 limited access highway and a new Sacramento River Bridge elevated approach ramp cutting an even deeper knife through the heart of the community.

The community also stressed the importance of strengthening the sense of community and sense of place. Representative comments included, "There are a couple of senses of place, one for Rio Vista and one for Trilogly. We should be one community." "Growth has not been organic. The eclectic mix of housing is part of the charm of the organic growth in the older neighborhoods." "Our kids are no longer the center of the universe in the built environment."

When asked what would reinforce community character, the residents focused on four concepts:

1. A stronger connection to the natural and agricultural landscape.
2. A more vibrant downtown that is the clear focal point of civic and community life.
3. A vital and vibrant waterfront that strengthens downtown and the connection to the river.
4. A small town feeling that reinforces the interconnectivity of the community.



*What is Rio Vista; what is the soul of the community?*





What most important changes we should see within two years?



# State Route 12



## THE HIGHWAY 12 CONUNDRUM: IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON

SR 12 serves as both the lifeline of Rio Vista and its biggest obstacle. It serves as the primary means of access by car and bus between Rio Vista and State Routes 84, 160, 113, and 4, as well as Interstates 80 and 5, which allow Rio Vistans to access to commerce, entertainment, and jobs in Fairfield, Sacramento, Lodi, Antioch, and beyond. However, SR 12 carries as many as 20,000 cars per day, and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Salano Transportation Authority (STA) project this volume to increase substantially as planned residential development comes online throughout the region. This traffic cuts through the heart of Rio Vista, dividing its historic downtown grid from newer subdivisions to the north – compromising a sense of community.

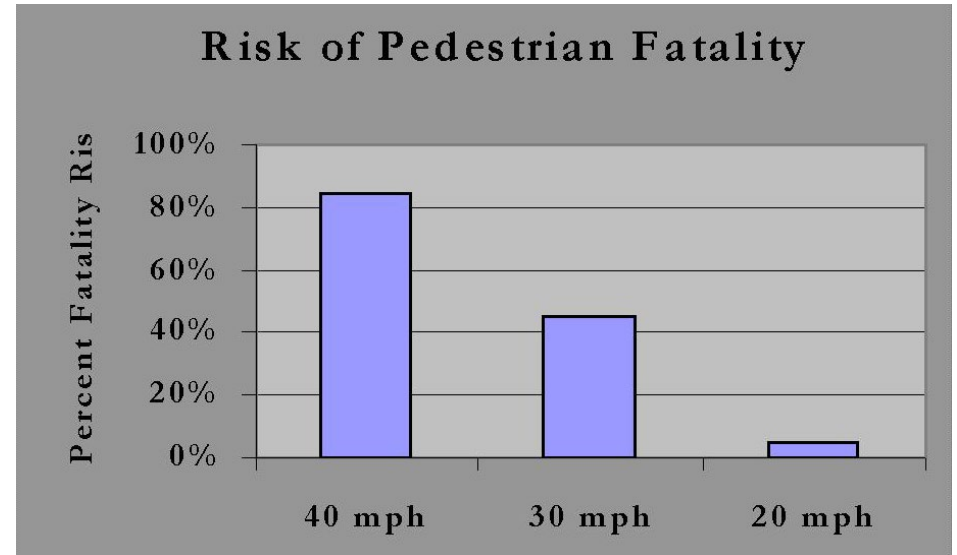
### A Community Divided

Residents often refer to the community as two parts: Rio Vista and Trilogy. Certainly the development of the 3,000-unit Trilogy at Rio Vista subdivision has added inland weight to the community's population, but the presence of Trilogy in itself is not the biggest factor driving the distinction of two communities within one. Trilogy is only a short 7-minute drive, 15-minute bike ride, or 45-minute walk from downtown. These are typical distances to travel within a community – similar to traveling from the White Elementary School to Sandy Beach Park. Trilogy's separation from downtown is much more the result of a lack of comfortable and safe connections. SR 12 serves as the primary and most direct connection between Trilogy and downtown, but the roadway is not a complete street, serving only as a conduit for cars with no sidewalks or bike facilities, with posted speeds between 45 and 55 mph.



### Severed Neighborhoods

Closer to downtown, SR 12's speeds are a particular threat to community vitality. The short 0.6 mile stretch of highway between Front Street and Drouin Drive maintains a 45 mph posted speed limit on a roadway cross-section that averages over 80-feet wide. Such cross-section and speeds are entirely inappropriate for pedestrians, with data clearly showing such size and speed almost always results in pedestrian fatality when there is a conflict.



### Street Width and Injury Accident Rate

4th Order Polynomial ( $R^2 = 0.52$ )





For their own safety, pedestrians mostly keep away from SR 12. Unfortunately, this means they don't walk across or along a road that is in the heart of their community, separating the downtown from most of its residential neighborhoods.

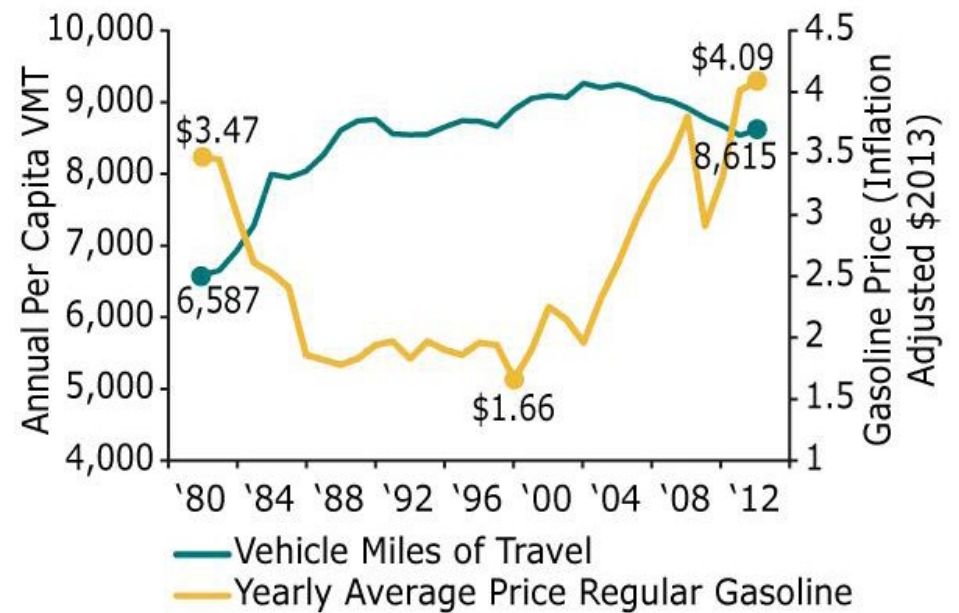
Both near downtown and out to Trilogy, SR 12 serves as a barrier to community integration. Overcoming this barrier is key to the future success of Rio Vista.

### A History of Debate

Unfortunately, the debate over the future of SR 12 has focused for decades on its expansion and greater throughput. Caltrans and the STA view it as a critical highway link between I-5 to the east and I-80 to the west, short-cutting about 36 miles off a drive through Sacramento – though the time savings is only 25 minutes today (45 minutes versus 70 minutes), due to the lower speeds of SR 12. Caltrans has designated SR 12 a Service Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) highway, allowing it to handle trucks longer than the legal limit – ostensibly for the carriage of specialized products that must be able to connect between I-5 and I-80, which may include military shipments to Travis Air Force Base, agricultural product, and even large loads associated with Rio Vista drilling industries. Relinquishment of Caltrans control over this facility for its entire length is not currently permitted.

Regional travel demand modeling conducted by Solano County's travel demand model has concluded that the roadway will experience 50-percent increases in volume by 2030 with no roadway changes, resulting in extensive delays and queues in many places, including Rio Vista. However, this projection is in direct conflict with travel trends, as well as the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) of the Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Overall vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as well as VMT per capita in California have been declining since 2004, ahead of national trends which have been in decline since 2006. These declines began before the last recession and have continued downward years after the recovery began.

## Per Capita Vehicle Miles of Travel and Price of Gasoline, California, 1980-2012



Data Sources: U.S. Department of Transportation; California Department of Finance; California Energy Commission

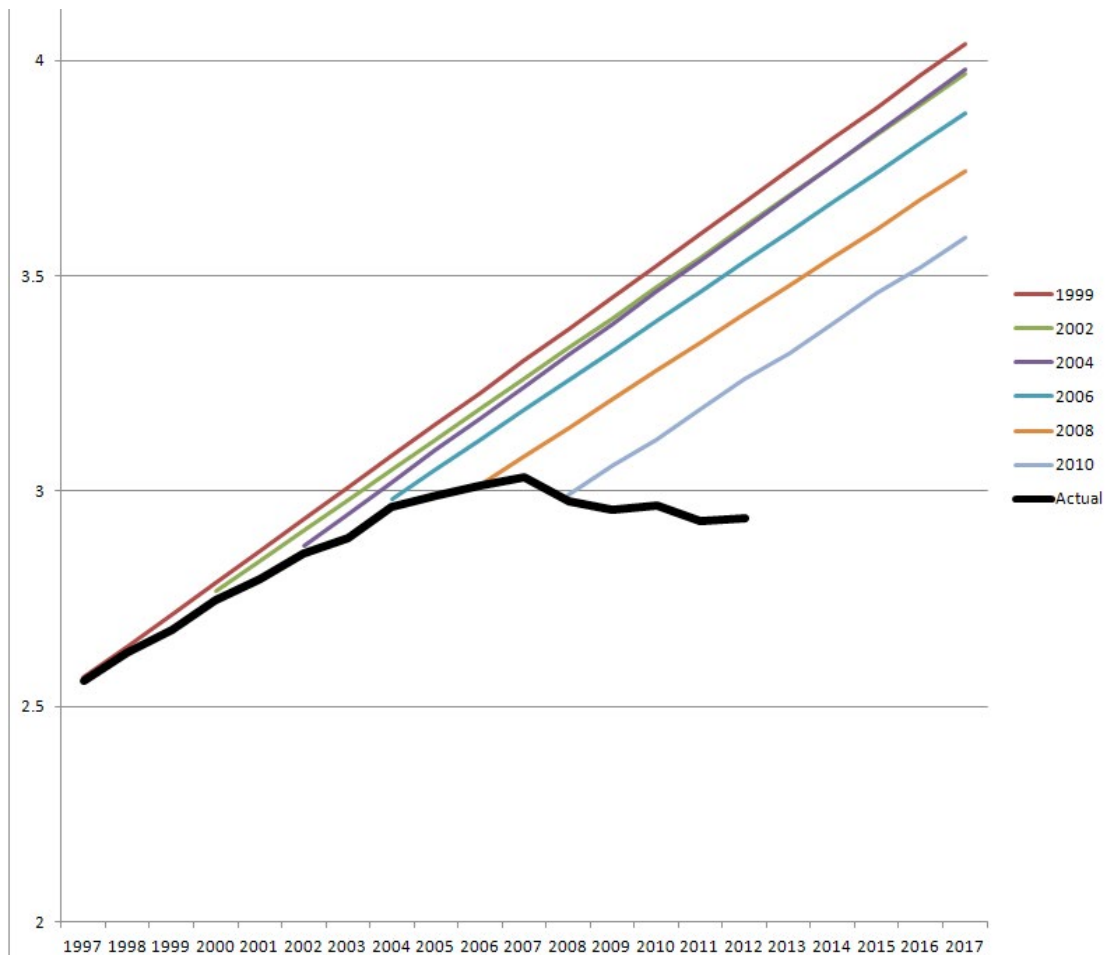
Under State Bill 375, California jurisdictions are required to have Climate Action Plans for future development, otherwise developers must prove they are undertaking measures to control greenhouse gases, which generally result in greater density, pricing incentives, and/or multi-modal improvements to reduce VMT. This legislation has had dramatic effect on the form of future development. Residential subdivisions like Trilogy and Homestead would not be compliant with the law today, due to their heavy reliance on the automobile. Planned developments like Brann Ranch, Riverwalk, and Del Rio Hills also appear unlikely to meet the requirements of this law as currently conceived.

Rio Vista's 2001 General Plan is used, however, as the basis for travel projections in this part of the County, and the number of units projected at prevailing driving rates predicted as many as 60,000 daily trips. While many of those trips stay within Rio Vista, the number is a direct factor in the County's predictions of 30,000 cars per day on SR 12 by 2030. It is particularly noteworthy that this volume is predicted without any roadway improvement. As often happens with traffic models, road capacity drives increased travel rates – regardless of additional development. As such, the predictions

for SR 12 volumes increase more substantially if SR 12 is widened. By converting the highway to 4-lanes, including a new mid-level bridge, roadway volumes increase to 45,000 cars per day; a high-level bridge results in 55,000 cars per day.

Such traffic growth projections – a self-fulfilling prophecy of “build it and they will come” – are certainly possible if driving is made easy and people chose to drive. The United States was crisscrossed with highway expansion projects in the 1980’s and 90’s that were built to reduce congestion, only to see the extra capacity filled within a few years. Looking at history, expanding SR 12 would presumably attract more driving, and the model says a high-level bridge attracts even more regional through trips. The travel demand model’s default assumption that population growth and easier driving leads to more driving, however, has been entirely disproven for nearly 10 years, STA and Caltrans have been limited by modeling tools that have been slow to respond, much like many U.S. jurisdictions. In fact, year after year, based on some of those same models, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) continues to predict travel growth that is not happening.

Even a casual reader should see many areas of concern in the above numbers. Firstly, projected SR 12 traffic is based on a 2001 plan for development that has not evolved and now may not be permitted under SB 375. Secondly, traffic modeling is consistently faulty in its assumptions that traffic must grow, contrary to all evidence for the last decade. Thirdly, any expansion of SR 12 – and particularly a \$1B investment in a river crossing – would be in direct opposition to the MTC’s RTP for 2035. Simply put, without a bigger SR 12, traffic growth may not occur, especially if new development is denser, incentivized against driving, and provided with multi-modal options.



Vehicle miles traveled in trillions as tracked by FHWA’s Travel Volume Trends, compared to projections from the U.S. DOT “Conditions and Performance Report to Congress.”

### A Re-Cast Bridge Decision

Given questionable traffic projections, high cost, at least 10 years of planning and design delay, and the immediacy of correcting SR 12’s speed and safety concerns, it is not in Rio Vista’s best interest to further debate the alignment and size of the river bridge without questioning some of these assumptions. If the bridge is ever constructed, it must be 150-feet tall with 3,200-foot long approaches that would have a dramatic visual impact on Rio Vista, effectively cutting off the downtown from the rest of the community. If it were 4 divided lanes, this effect would be continuous through the community, even after coming to grade.

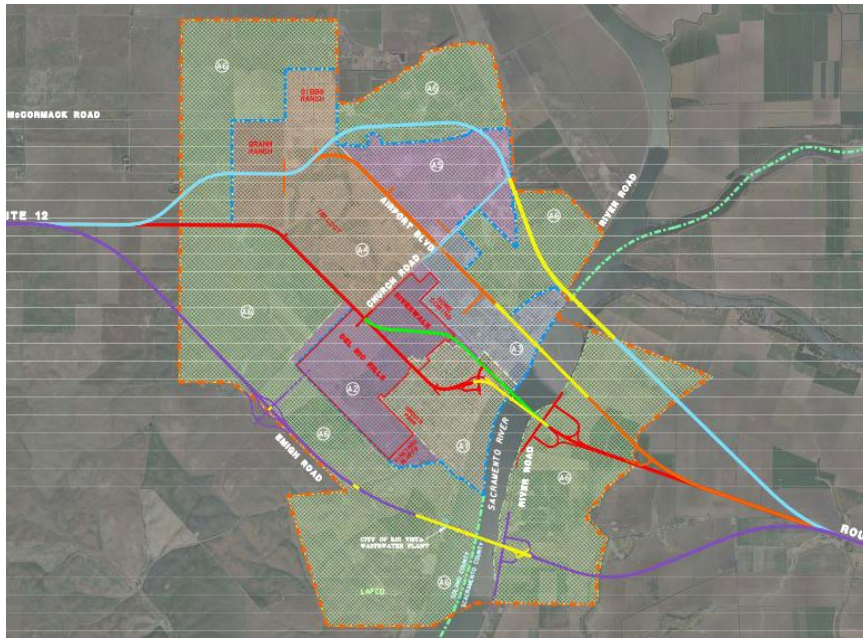


*Crescent Drive before proposed bridge construction.*



*Conceptual rendering of Crescent Drive after proposed bridge construction.*

The highway would become a far more significant barrier than it already is – permanently and negatively impacting the viability of neighborhoods on either side of it. As such, it should not be considered on any alignment that runs through the heart of Rio Vista, unless it can be substantially reduced in size and height. Only options that avoid the developed area of Rio Vista are viable for the future of the community, such as the most northern or southern alignments studied in the last Caltrans study of SR 12.



Fears of negative economic impact are not born out in any case study data, especially since recent studies of SR 12 show that only 2-3 percent of pass-through trips stop in Rio Vista, and those are mostly concentrated on roadside businesses which would relocate to locations near the new highway exits. In fact, there is more evidence of positive economic impact from highway removal in downtowns than from retaining highway access in one place versus another nearby.

The question that Rio Vista should be asking is not “where should a new bridge go” but rather “what do we do if the bridge remains?” For no less than 10 years – and potentially much longer – SR 12 in the heart of Rio Vista will remain. As it exists today, it severs the community, limits non-motorized travel, and represents a real threat to the safety of our children. Within the borders of Rio Vista, the community receives no benefit from keeping SR 12 a 50 mph facility versus a 30 mph facility – the difference in drive time from the river to Trilogy would be only 2 minutes (3.2 versus 5.2 minutes). However, the difference

## WISCONSIN BYPASS STUDY:

This paper reviewed prior studies of the economic impact of highway bypasses, based on prior research conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation as well as several other studies carried out in other states (Kansas, Iowa, Texas, and North Carolina).

### Summary of Findings on Impacts of Highway Bypasses:

- “The wide range of highway bypass studies carried out around the country provide a generally consistent story. They indicate that highway bypasses are seldom either devastating or the savior of a community business district. The locational shift in traffic can cause some existing businesses to turn over or relocate, but net economic impacts on the broader community are usually relatively small (positive or negative). Communities and business districts that have a strong identity as a destination for visitors or for local shoppers are the ones that are most likely to be strengthened due to the reduction in traffic delays through their centers. However, there is also a broad perception that adequate signage to the bypassed business center is an important need (and concern) for ensuring its continued success.”

*Dennis Leong, Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Glen Weisbrod, Economic Development Research Group, “Summary of Highway Bypass Studies,” Wisconsin Department of Transportation, December 2000.*

## CALTRANS BYPASS STUDY (KEY POINTS):

- Stay visible from the bypass, either visually or through signage – Caltrans may help with this.
- Keep the bypass as close as possible/acceptable.
- Highway oriented communities who cater directly to highway traffic, with gas, fast food, and transportation businesses as economic staples have difficulty transitioning. Quick service businesses such as gas and fast food likely need to relocate.
- Residential & tourist communities benefit from reduced traffic and improved safety. Visitor services such as motels and antique/curio shops are positively affected. The downtown must capitalize on being a destination through marketing, redevelopment, parking, sidewalks, etc.
- Regional market communities (e.g., big box stores, auto dealers, and hospitals) experience no little to change, unless access improves, bringing in more business.
- Other economically based communities (e.g., agriculture, manufacture, and government) experience little to no economic impact.
- Most business types are not affected.

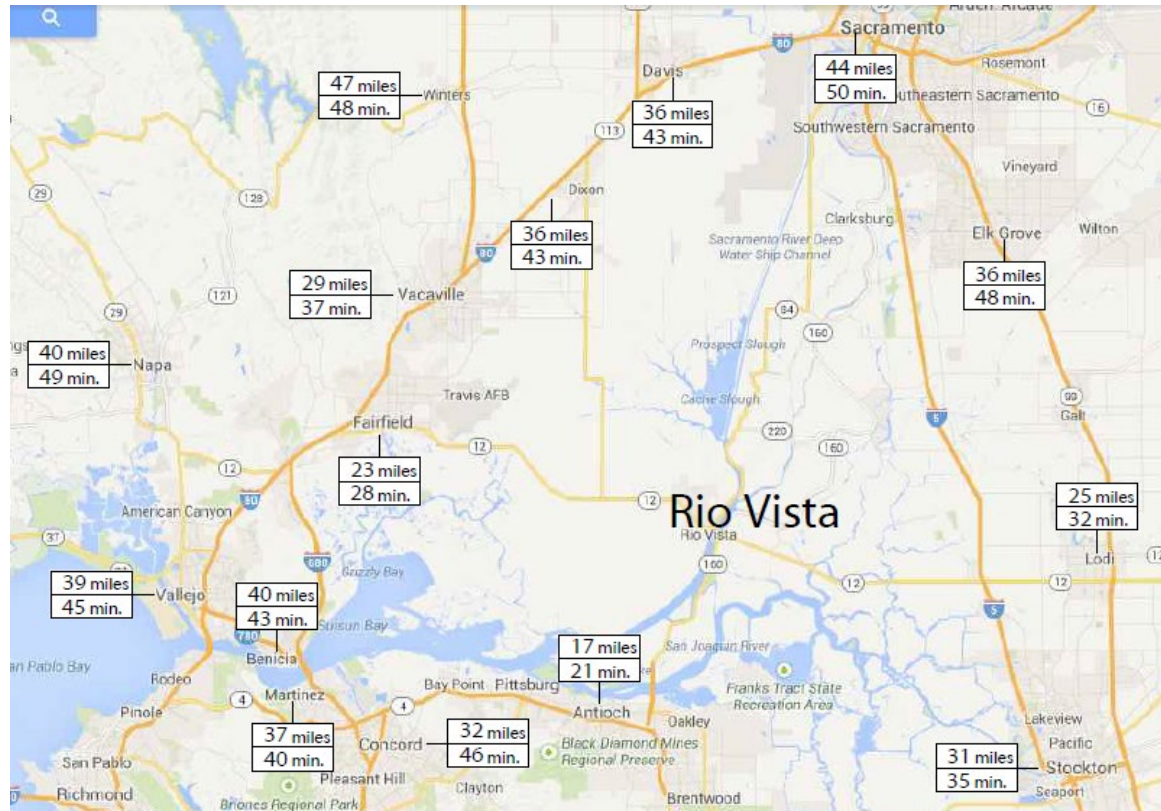
*System Metrics Group, Inc. in association with: Cambridge Systematics, Inc.; Economic Development Research group, Inc.; HLB Decision Economics, Inc.; Judd Associates, “California Bypass Study. The Economic Impacts of Bypasses Volume 1: Planning Reference,” California Department of Transportation, Transportation Economics, May 2006.*



between 50 and 30 mph is the difference between a safe community street and an auto-oriented barrier, dangerous to walkers and bikers and impactful on community vitality. A new discussion is necessary.

## A Boulevard for the Future

SR 12's value to Rio Vista is as a connection to regional markets and services. In less than an hour, SR 12 provides access to roadways connecting residents with hundreds of shopping destinations, dozens of downtowns, a multitude of entertainment options, and thousands of jobs, including the downtowns of Sacramento, Napa, Berkeley, and Stockton, as well as nearer communities like Fairfield, Lodi, and Antioch.



The ability to travel through Rio Vista itself quickly is of almost no value to the community. In fact, slowing down pass-through traffic and making regional motorists take a look at Rio Vista for an extra two minutes on each trip may result in a much higher percentage of trips taking a moment to come into downtown. At the very least, slowing traffic enables people to cross SR 12 by foot, bike, and car much more easily than they can today, helping re-connect severed neighborhoods.

To date, Caltrans' reaction to safety concerns on SR 12 has been entirely focused on head-on crashes occurring on high-speed 2-lane sections – mostly outside Rio Vista's borders. While most crashes occur at

intersections, the worst crashes have been on open highway. Such conditions do not exist near downtown Rio Vista, where some of the widest and most pedestrian-unfriendly sections exist, and this stretch of the highway has received little attention from Caltrans. The City had in-pavement warning lights installed at the only crosswalk east of Main Street, but it does not operate today and has been ineffective at substantially improving the pedestrian environment – mostly due to the significant length of the crossing with absolutely no protection from vehicles.



The remainder of this section is hostile at best, with discontinuous sidewalks along and intersecting SR 12. Large swaths of pavement are simply painted with hash markings to help define the two travel lanes with center turn lane, which require far less pavement than is in place.

A treatment that has been used in numerous locations around the country to improve pedestrian safety and calm traffic while maintaining vehicle capacity is the "multi-way boulevard." The design has been in place in many cities for decades. It involves separating local entering and exiting traffic from through traffic by installing a planted median on either side of the through lanes, creating parallel one-way "carriageways" on either side of the main line. The channelization has great benefits to all roadway users: through traffic encounters less local movements, which are separated by the outer medians, helping to reduce crashes; local access is managed better, forcing most entering and exiting traffic

to convert to right-in right-out movements, with lefts accommodated at the next intersection; on-street parking becomes viable when separated from high-speed through traffic by being placed on the carriageway; bicycles find a new slow-speed shared street in the carriageways; and pedestrians have significantly less roadway to cross between medians, typically able to cross carriageways without a signal.



*Octavia Boulevard in San Francisco replaced the Central Freeway. Today it still carries over 45,000 cars per day. The surrounding neighborhood has entirely changed, becoming one of the most energized places to live in the city.*

A multi-way boulevard treatment on SR 12 in Rio Vista would be a tremendous benefit to the community and overall safety while preserving if not improving existing roadway capacity. Between Main Street and Front Street, the existing roadway cross-section is sufficiently wide to accommodate full multi-way treatments with parallel carriageways that have parking and shared-use travel lanes for almost its entire length.

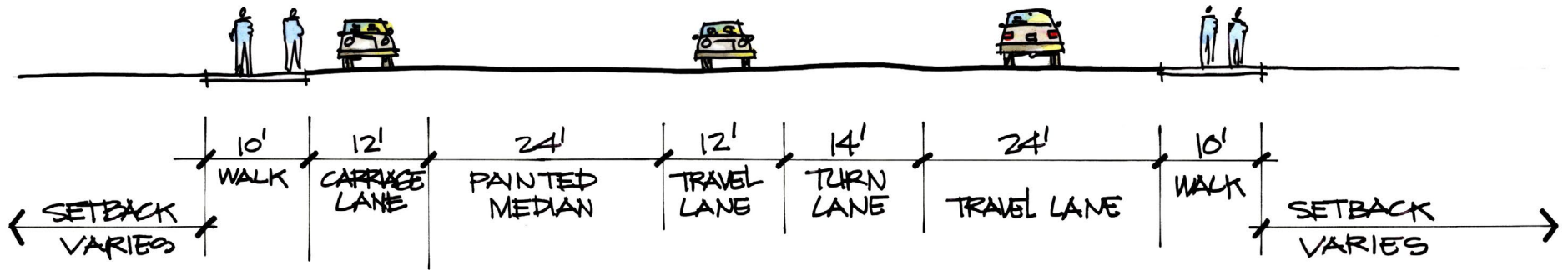
## CATHEDRAL CITY, HY 111 OR EAST PLAM CANYON DRIVE

Widening was required along much of the highway to improve traffic flow. However, in the city's downtown, leaders felt a multi-way treatment would be an opportunity to stimulate economic prosperity and beautification while enhancing capacity.

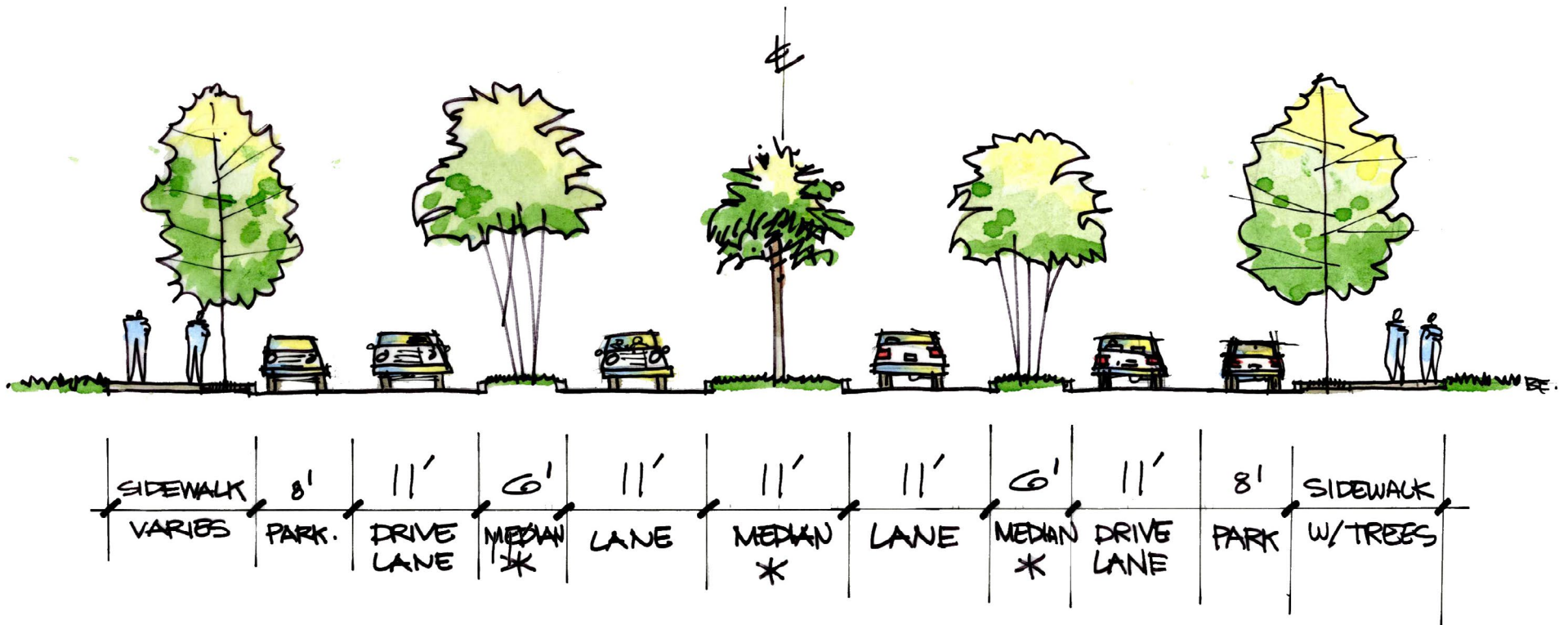
For this section of Highway 111 the 2002 traffic statistics were an average ADT of 39,450 (Average Daily Trips) with an average Daily Capacity (Veh./Day) of 45,000. The level of service was mostly F. The build out / improvements were resulted an average ADT of 43,800, increasing to 52,000. The resulting level of service averages E.

The city's Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee (appointed by the City Council) hired consultants and developed a design for the benefit of the city and the road. Caltrans, however, rejected the plan. The city utilized Caltrans' relinquishment program to take over the section of highway and implement their plan. The financial support of the Riverside County Transportation Commission and Coachella Valley of Governments were instrumental in this project.





Cross section of existing Route 12.



\* INCLUDES CURB

Proposed redesign of Route 12.

While Caltrans has multi-way boulevards on its state routes in Cathedral City and Chico, the agency has not designed or funded their construction in California to date. However, the department is now subject to the passage of California's "Complete Streets Act," which requires the consideration of all modes of transportation in roadway projects. Several policies and guidebooks have been produced with more on the way, and in-state engineering firms continue to be responsible for designing multi-way treatments out of state. Many of the multi-way treatments suggested in this report can be installed simply in paint, with smaller crossing-islands at crosswalks and landscaping barrels at key points where full planted medians might otherwise be installed. For low cost, the City can create a noticeably traffic-calmed and safer SR 12 in the heart of its community if it begins the conversation with Caltrans, the STA, and the MTC. Given mandates such as SB 375 and the Complete Streets Act, now is an excellent time to implement lasting positive change on Rio Vista's highway.

### Completing a Triangle

Converting SR 12 from a highway to a slower boulevard (with potentially greater capacity) is more than just an opportunity to mend community divides. It represents a great economic development opportunity. By buffering the noise and speed of the existing highway with tree-lined medians and parked cars along a boulevard, the character of parcels along this conduit entirely changes. Underutilized parcels can become commercially viable, and upper floors would be entirely compatible with many types of residents. The large parcels along the boulevard provide many opportunities to re-envision this corridor and promote new connections across it between downtown and the neighborhood to the northwest.



With redevelopment along this corridor, Rio Vista has an opportunity to concentrate a mix of uses right in its core, as opposed to its undeveloped edges where access is more restricted to automobile travel. Such development would touch both Main Street as well as Front Street, completing a triangle of mixed-use activity and development – as well as an attractive downtown without an end, so to speak.

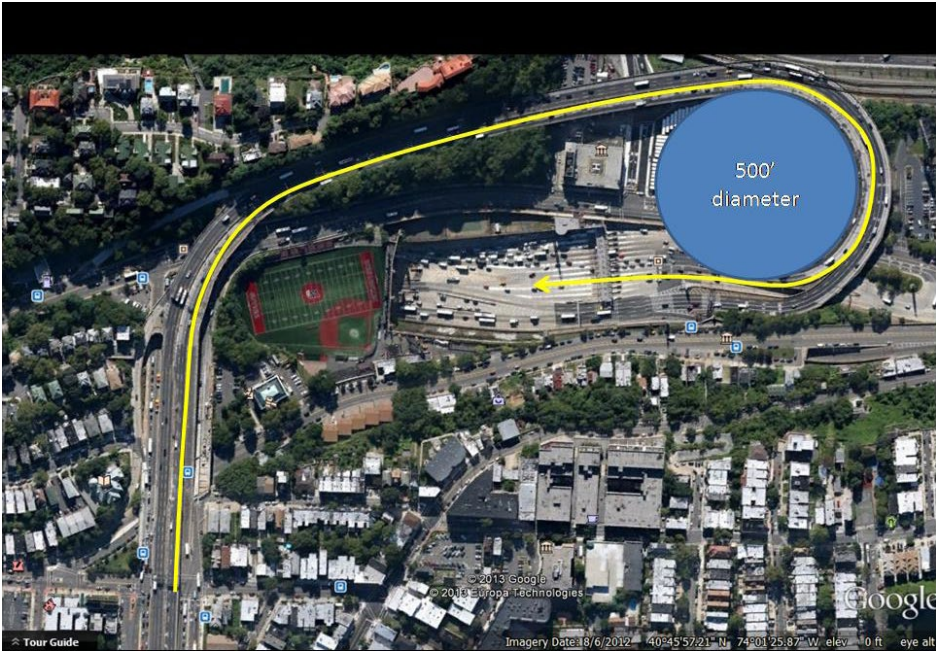
### A Smaller Bridge?

The introduction of a multi-way boulevard on SR 12 embraces the goals of SB 375 by promoting multi-modalism and opening up opportunities for denser development in the heart of the community. Such development is reflective of regional and national trends towards more compact and walkable communities, which increase and preserve land values while reducing healthcare costs and emissions. In Rio Vista, it is quite possible to see this trend evolving long before a replacement of the bridge is necessary. It is possible that continued downward VMT trends and policies like SB 375 will meet or exceed the RTA's goals for 2035, which would necessitate an important consideration for Caltrans: why build a 4-lane high-span bridge? While age, maintenance, and river navigation will likely necessitate bridge replacement, traffic may not. It would be wise for the Rio Vista of tomorrow to consider alternatives that would be more in line with their walkable community.

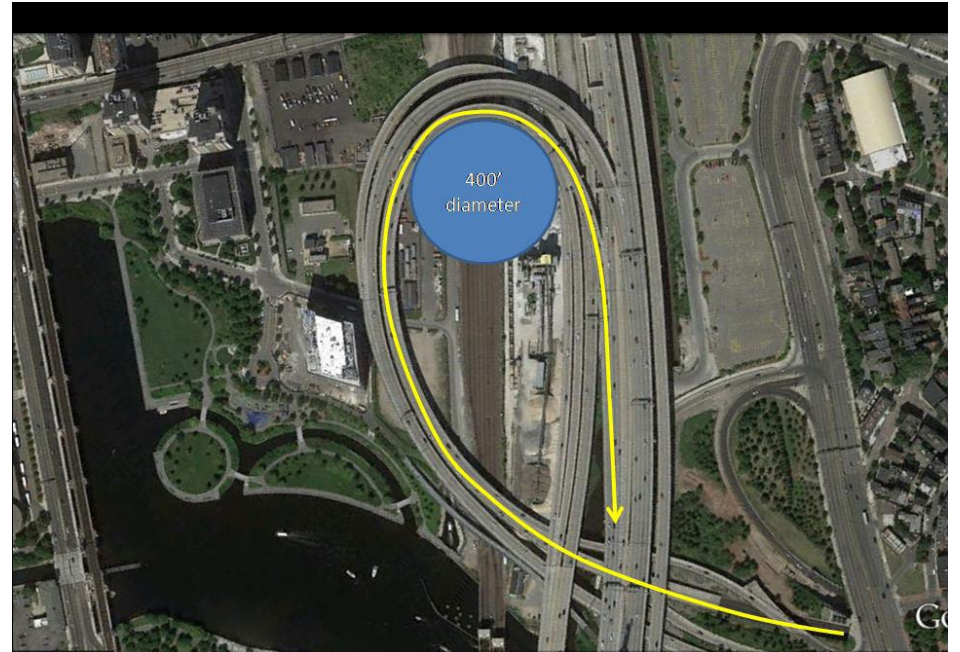
While a smaller two-lane bridge with no more traffic than today might not need to be diverted out of town if it connects with the multi-way boulevard, it will likely still need up to 3,200-feet of ramping, which would destroy the multi-way boulevard treatments and compromise any development. It is not necessary, however, to consider alternative alignments if alternative configurations are possible. One common treatment for large grade-separated facilities is to loop the ramping back upon itself to lose altitude in a compact space.

This approach could be applied to a high-span bridge of any size very effectively, bringing it to grade at the water's edge to connect seamlessly with a lengthened multi-way boulevard – preserving community connectivity while avoiding visual impacts between neighborhoods, the downtown, and the river. An inside diameter of 500-feet is sufficient for the over-size trailer loads permitted on SR 12 maintaining 30-35 mph in standard highway lane widths.

While such an approach would also work for a full 4-lane divided highway, unless Caltrans is willing to keep the multi-way boulevard or other heavily-calmed treatment in place through the heart of Rio Vista, it is not recommended to maintain such a facility close to downtown.



Lincoln Tunnel entrance, Hoboken NJ



US Route 1/I-93 Interchange, Boston MA



Elevated structure and ramping in orange; ground-level roadway in green.



## A Triangle of Gateways to Downtown

In the future, if Rio Vista has successfully developed a multi-way boulevard along SR 12 between Front and Main, the nature of through trips in the community will have changed. No longer will a drive through downtown be a quick highway pass-by but rather an enjoyable interlude along a longer drive. Once upon a time, SR 12 came right down Main and Front Streets through the heart of town. While the traffic volumes were unsustainable, the visibility of downtown was at its height. The current SR 12 alignment in downtown has bypassed the downtown for years, but its calming as a multi-way boulevard would bring an opportunity to resurrect the visibility of Main and Front Streets that they once had.

If during the installation of a multi-way boulevard, the intersection of SR 12 and Main were realigned to emphasize the straightness of the historic corridor of Main Street, while de-emphasizing the dominance of the SR 12 bypass, the future roadway infrastructure could well-serve a reinvigorated downtown as a regional attraction – not a cross-roads. By forcing approaching motorists from the west to deliberately make a left-turn onto the boulevard, the desire line of historic Main Street will be emphasized, as well as a straight view to the water from near Bruna Vista Park. This new intersection can become a valuable gateway to downtown Rio Vista.

Furthermore, the boulevard may present a similar opportunity at Front Street when a new bridge is built, either in/near the existing alignment or outside of the community's core. Without the need to ramp upwards to a structure, the boulevard can connect directly to River Road or to the looping ramp of a narrowed high-span bridge further to the north. Motorists from SR 12 to the east and/or from River Road and Route 84 to the north would also be aligned straight onto Front Street, requiring a deliberate right-turn to proceed on the boulevard. Similar to the Main Street intersection, this approach re-emphasizes the importance and value of the downtown waterfront while calming traffic entering the community. With another gateway treatment, Rio Vista may have a truly wonderful presence.

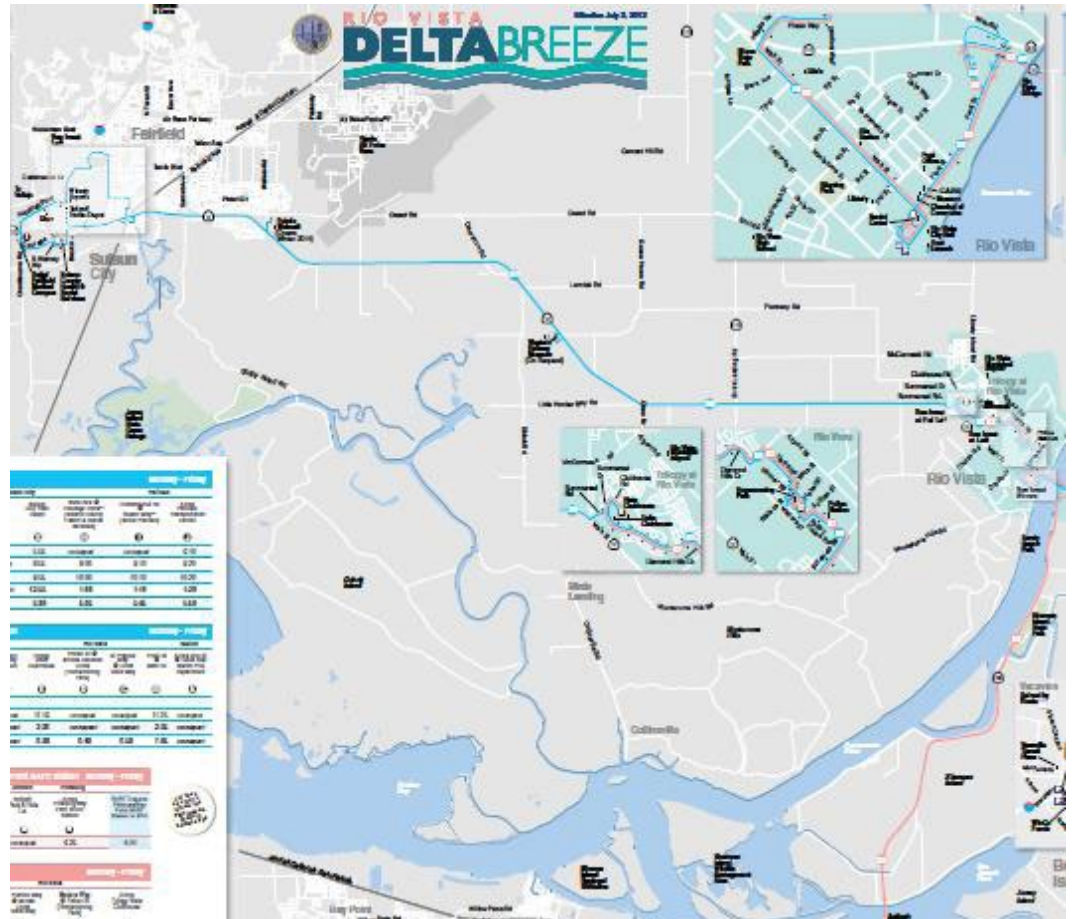
## Embracing Community Transit

For several years, Rio Vista has been served by several transit



routes that provide intra- and inter-community service. Delta Breeze, which is based out of a facility adjacent to the City's northern wastewater plant, operates several 16-passenger cut-away vans, which have comfortable seats, regional transit information onboard, and bike racks. The operation is grant-funded.

Within town, Route 51 provides dial-a-ride service, whereby any resident can call for a pick-up at least 30 minutes in advance of their travel time and be dropped-off anywhere in Rio Vista. Connecting service outside Rio Vista is provided by express Routes 50 and 52, which connect with Fairfield/Suisun City and Antioch respectively. Route 50 passengers have access to the Capital Corridor and Amtrak service at Suisun City, which connects Rio Vista transit riders to Sacramento, Oakland, and the full extent of the Amtrak system. Route 52 passengers have access to Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) at Pittsburgh/Bay Point station, with frequent service into San Francisco and other Bay Area destinations.

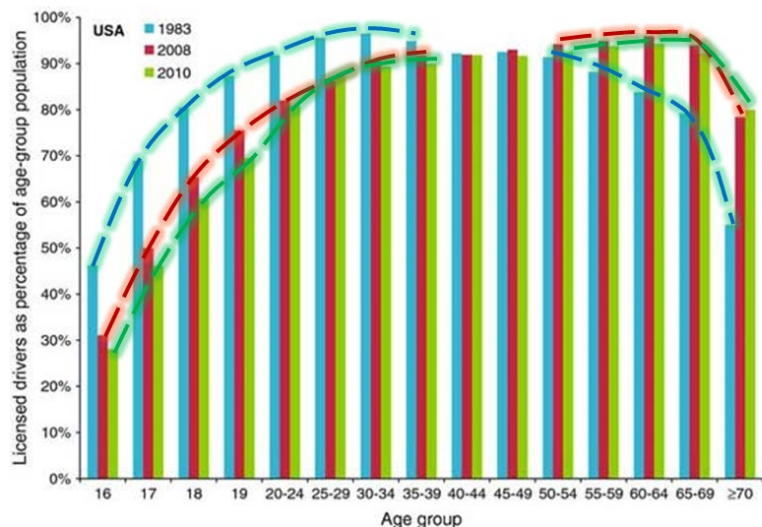


Due to the limitations of available funding, every Route is restricted in its overall hours of operation. Express Route 50 to Suisun City only has two morning runs spaced three hours apart, plus a midday run. Only one bus returns travelers to Rio Vista near the evening peak hour. Express Route 52 to Pittsburg/Bay Point has only one run in each direction timed near the peak hour. Route 51 can have more frequent service, but it is only available between 9:30am and 1:30pm.

### Need for Change

The value of expanding transit service to Rio Vista will grow as walkability improves but especially as demographic changes continue in the near future. Auto ownership rates in the U.S. are declining dramatically due to the aging of Baby Boomers and the digital lifestyles of Millennials who much prefer the convenience of nearby interaction, rather than any time spent in a car. The movement of these large segments of the population into downtowns is pronounced, and the most successful downtowns are offering quality transit that these populations are embracing readily.

## Fewer Millennials are Getting Drivers Licenses



Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc.

Unfortunately, the frequency and structure of transit in Rio Vista is not well-suited to these generations. The express services are entirely designed to serve only those who simply cannot drive and don't have an alternative, which helps explain their winding routes through downtown, Homestead, and Trilogy. Meanwhile, the dial-a-ride service is also oriented to those who cannot drive: it is inconvenient for short trips, and waiting 30 or more minutes for a trip that must be completed within a 4-hour early-day span is simply not well-matched with many lifestyles.

Delta Breeze is conducting a study of its route system, and Rio Vista should work proactively to think about the future of community transit. Some simple strategies may be very cost-effective for Delta Breeze while serving many growing downtown needs.

### Improving In-Town Service Options

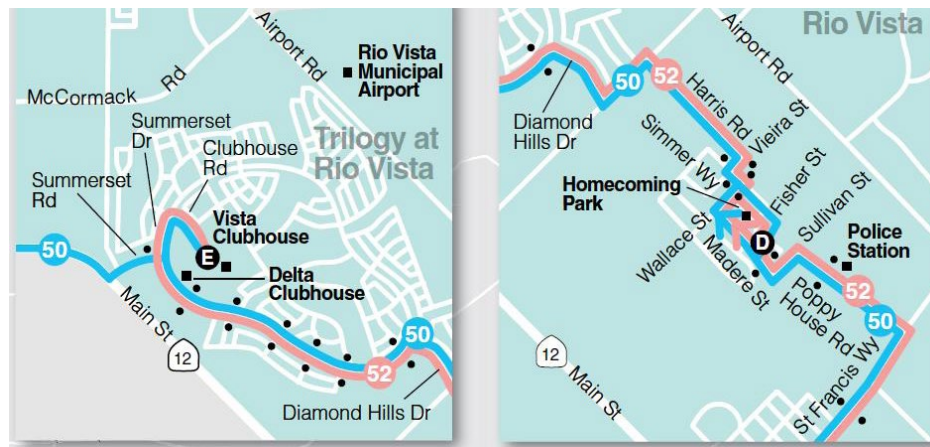
The operation of Route 50 and 52 is not likely to change in the near future, but its deviated response within town and to Isleton represents a type of service that could be introduced on the Route 51 to dramatically change the visibility of transit to Rio Vistans and downtown businesses. Each of the express routes runs down Front and Main streets, but with limited early morning or late afternoon service, the bus is largely transparent to all but those who rely on the service. If service on these streets were more frequent, the potential to serve transit lifestyles would greatly increase.

A similar approach to Route 51 would be very effective. Today, it can provide service effectively every 30 minutes anywhere in town, but it has no fixed route presence and therefore no need to run on Main or Front unless called there. A successful approach used by many small communities with similar characteristics is to implement a limited fixed route with deviated ends, operating on a regular schedule. In Rio Vista, this fixed route could begin on the spine of Main Street between City Hall and the food market. Service would depart either end on a fixed schedule every 15 minutes and run the length of Main Street. At the opposite terminus, the bus could then depart or "deviate" to any dispatch calls before returning to the spine in 15 minutes, traveling the length of Main Street again in the opposite direction before deviating to potential destinations beyond the other end of Main Street. Two simple dispatch zones served from either end of the spine would be able to be served every 30 minutes, offset 15 minutes. This provides the same level of service transit riders experience today, but adds a brand new regularly-time presence on Main Street, with a bus anyone can hop on traveling in one direction or the other every 15 minutes during the bus' service span.

Over time with additional funding, one additional vehicle can make one-way frequency every 15 minutes, and extending the span of service into the evening would better mesh with the transit lifestyles of more potential riders.

### Straightening Express Routes

One of the biggest impediments to effective inter-city transit is the need to serve front-door destinations within Rio Vista. All riders are expected to walk to a stop (unless they have called for a front-door deviated pick-up), but the current road and sidewalk network in Rio Vista makes this difficult for any distance. Homestead and Trilogy could be within a 10- and 5-minute walk respectively of "straightened" service that remains on Main Street/SR 12, but the complete lack of adequate walking or biking facilities makes this impossible, so each express route must meander through these neighborhoods, adding delay and rider frustration.





In order to someday straighten these routes, the City must work proactively to install walking and biking connections north-south between these neighborhoods and Main Street, and it must work to ensure that future developments also provide these connections – preferably as many as possible on multiple grid-like desire-lines, as opposed to through a single gateway or intersection. As regional growth drives increasing demand for these services and eventual frequency improvements, both express routes overlap easily with the deviate fixed-route of a revised Route 51 along Main Street and Front Street, truly emphasizing the presence of transit in Rio Vista.

### Future Development

With the redevelopment of the Army Base, additional housing subdivisions, waterfront redevelopment, and other opportunities, there may be many more potential riders that Delta Breeze can serve by building services off of the transit spine concept. By ensuring scheduled service along Main and Front Streets with on-call deviations or new fixed-route alignments connecting to the ends of the spine, Main Street can become a dramatically different place, even incorporating concepts such as a fare-free zone, lighted and heated bus shelters, and real-time arrival information on LED displays and internet devices.

### Improving Walkability – Connecting a Community

The division that SR 12 creates within Rio Vista is the largest community-building hurdle to overcome. Evolving this corridor into a revitalized Main Street spine between Trilogy/points west and the river – as well as a new boulevard along the current bridge approach – is the most important part of re-stitching a fractured street network and promoting walking and biking. Other interventions, however, are needed to connect the community.

The City has a well-evolved pedestrian safety program, with most crossings in the downtown having modern treatments, including curb ramps and crosswalks. Along Main Street, these are superior, with the latest accessible ramp designs and curb extensions or “bulb-outs.” However, the quality of walking facilities begins to diminish as proximity to Main Street declines.



*Typical downtown crossing treatments.*



*Absence of sidewalks on Church Road near Trilogy.*

### Establishing Good Pedestrian Design

Streets are home to more than just motorized vehicles. Many cities and towns across the nation are adopting “Complete Streets” policies that support balanced, multimodal street design for automobiles, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit. The California Complete Streets Act is intended to promote this in all local jurisdictions.

Complete streets are always unique to the community, context, and purpose served. Still, all complete streets policies and projects share a focus on accommodating the full range of mobility options and consider the entire right-of-way. Specific complete street elements may include, but are not limited to: design and operation of general travel lanes, sidewalks, pathways, trails, bicycle lanes, street and sidewalk lighting, pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements (including appropriate crossings), freight access improvements, access improvements consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act, public transit facilities (including pedestrian access to transit stops and stations), street trees, landscaping, street amenities, dedicated transit lanes, buffer/stormwater facilities, or signal improvements to accommodate all modes and users.

Planning and building complete streets in Rio Vista is an important way to enhance multimodal transportation; encourage drivers to be aware of their surroundings; and support the social, economic, and environmental vitality of the community.

Investing in walkability has the compounding effects of encouraging people to walk instead of drive, increasing safety for both drivers and pedestrians by calming speeds, and discouraging pass-through automobile trips by slowing and making them less convenient.

Unfortunately the design of recent Rio Vista subdivisions as well as those currently in planning and permitting processes are mostly not adhering to these principles, with many lacking sidewalks on one side or both, no crosswalks, no bicycle facilities, no transit stop pads or benches, and few multi-use paths.



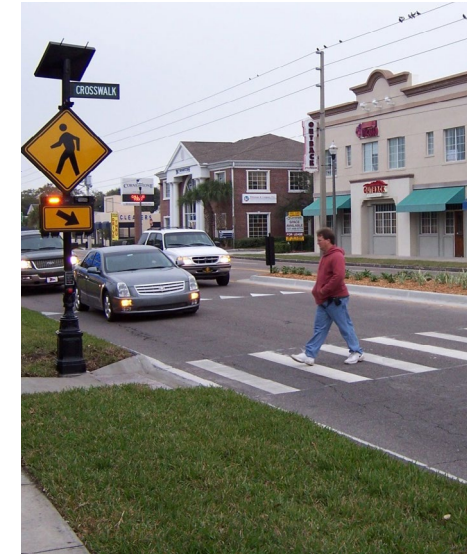
*Missing sidewalks at entry to Trilogy.*

### Increasing the safety of pedestrians and cyclists

Studies have shown that when pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers are aware of and attentive to each other's presence, the crash rate declines. Strategies that raise awareness of pedestrians and improve visibility for people driving and on foot must be integrated into future development in Rio Vista. These may include:

- High-visibility crosswalks can incorporate rectangular rapid flash beacons and special or raised paving, which assist in calming traffic and raising driver awareness that they are in a zone where pedestrians are expected to be crossing.
- Median islands can be combined with crosswalks to simultaneously shorten crossing distances in high-traffic areas while narrowing auto lanes and diminishing straight sightlines that encourage drivers to speed.
- Pedestrian-only crossing phases during signal cycles allow pedestrians to cross the intersection in any direction while all vehicles are stopped with a red light.
- Leading pedestrian interval gives pedestrians a few second head start to claim the right-of-way ahead of turning traffic.
- Prohibiting right turns on red prevents vehicles from turning into the path of crossing pedestrians. Signal phases need to accommodate adequate time for through movement to reduce the urge to violate the no-turn-on-red.
- Reducing intersection widths improves visual contact between drivers and pedestrians, and reduces crossing distances and the time needed to cross on foot.

Curb extensions, road diets, and striped bicycle lanes are measures that rededicate space to non-motorized travelers, reduce crossing widths, and slow traffic.



- Curb extensions, or bulbouts, extend a section of the sidewalk into the road at an intersection. Curb extensions are often placed at the end of an on-street parking lane. Pedestrians standing on the bulb can see and be seen by drivers before crossing. Bulbouts can be implemented in residential areas and main thoroughfares alike.
- Striped bicycle lanes can be implemented in conjunction with road diets. The space gained from reducing automobile lanes can be allocated to wide bicycle lanes and striped buffers. These striped lanes serve to calm traffic by narrowing the roadway and simultaneously provide safer facilities for those who choose to make their trips by bicycle.

When pedestrian and bicycle facilities are inadequate, streets with high automobile volumes can act as barriers between neighborhoods and destinations. Intersection and corridor improvements for non-motorized modes can encourage residents and university students to walk and bike, as well as strengthen connections between the neighborhoods of Rio Vista.



## Capturing Demand for Biking

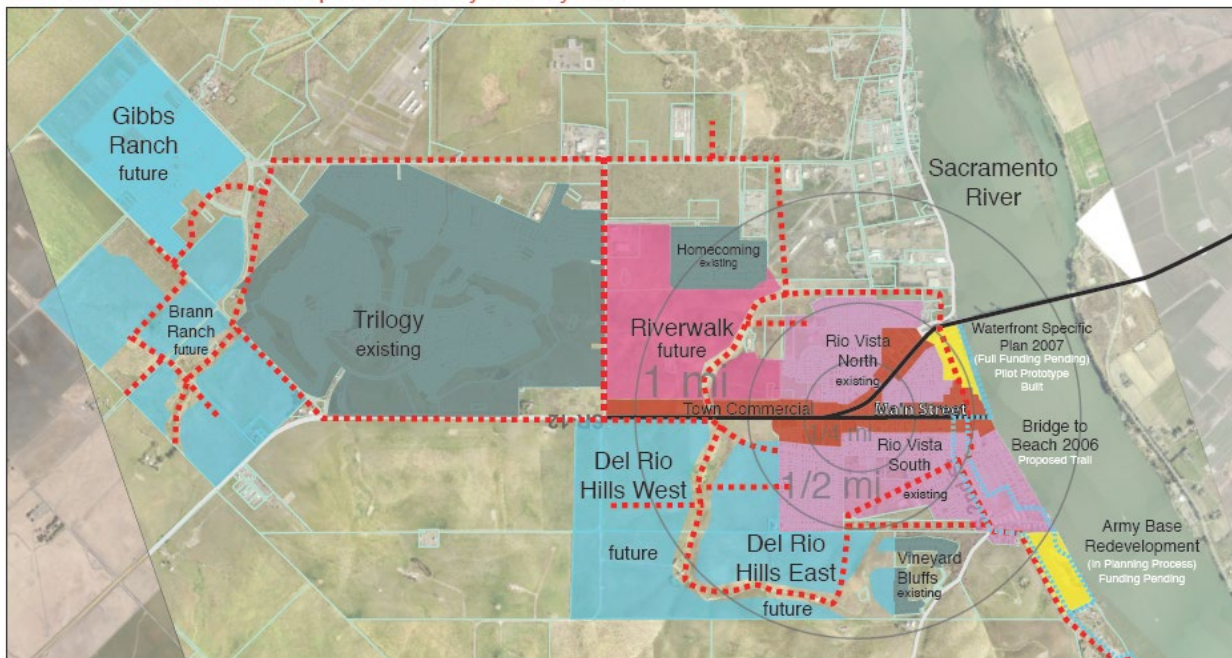
Bicycle infrastructure can be an excellent complement to traffic calming that also promotes a mode shift away from automobile dependence. Residents, commuters, and visitors alike can benefit from striped and built bicycle networks that connect major destinations. Short, internal automobile trips can be replaced, reducing overall congestion and promoting healthier lifestyles. Meanwhile, Rio Vista also has an attraction for recreational cyclists from throughout the region, with excellently graded training runs available in the Montezuma Hills where few cars travel – all in close proximity to the downtown.

Few bicycle facilities exist within Rio Vista today, unfortunately. The newest subdivision, Gibbs Ranch, included bike lanes – however no development has occurred there. No bike racks exist in town. However, the City has consistently worked to incorporate multi-use plans in future roadway and subdivision plans.

2006 Bridge to Beach Proposed Trail/2007 Waterfront Specific Plan Trail

2001 Rio Vista General Plan Proposed Trails and Bikeways

2011 Parks Master Plan Proposed Primary Trail System



Solano County has picked up many of these plans in its Countywide Bicycle Plan. A multi-use path between Rio Vista and Fairfield has long been contemplated, though funding has not yet been available. Rio Vista's planned loops are also on the County's plan, but funding is not expected before 2030.

In the interim, many treatments can be used to promote safe cycling on existing roadways. While Main Street is insufficient for bike treatments west of its intersection with SR 12, its remaining length to the water should be striped with "sharrows" that promote driver awareness of cyclists. Dedicated bike lanes are unnecessary on this slower-speed street where cyclists can easily take the lane.



Absent a future multi-use path, intra-community connections beyond downtown can be facilitated through the inclusion of bike lane markings where shoulders are sufficiently wide. Airport Road and River Street make a potentially valuable biking spine between Trilogy, Homestead, and downtown if their shoulders are improved and marked for bike lanes. If shoulders cannot be adequately paved in the short-term, sharrows can be placed on their edge lines to warn drivers that bikes may be present.



*Airport Road – a potential bike connector.*

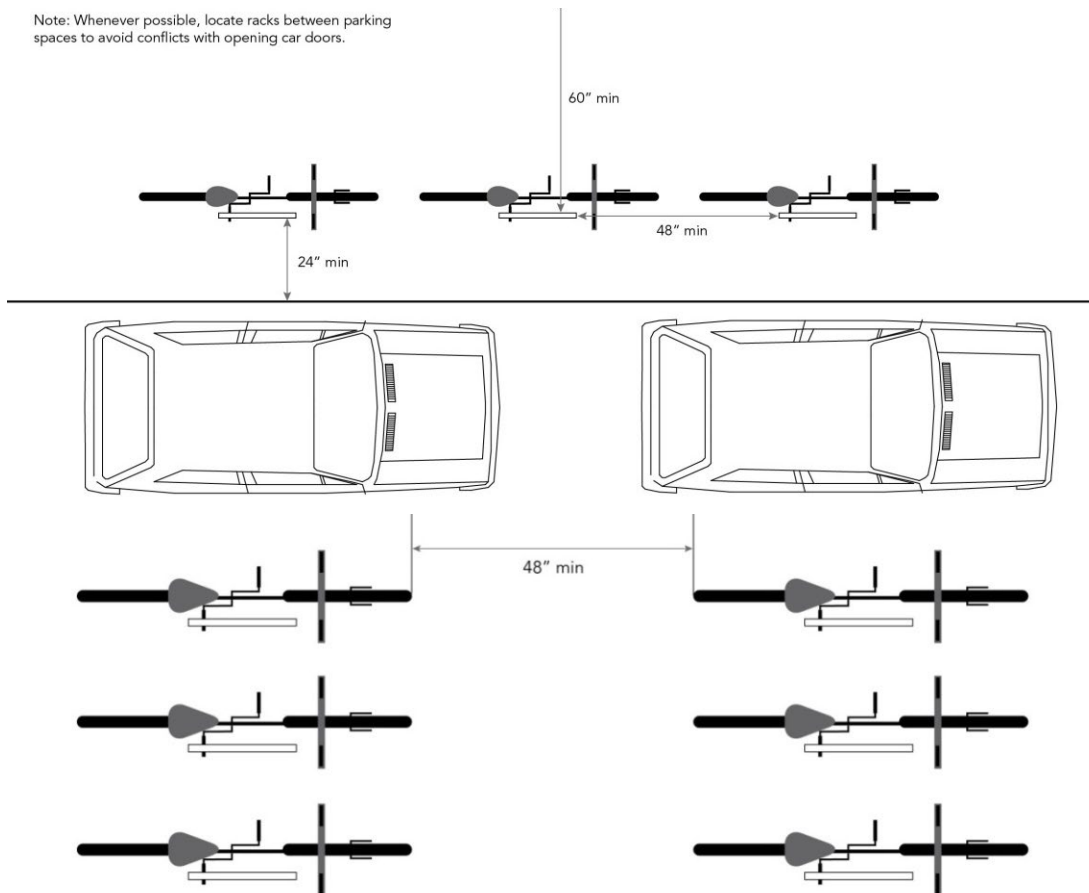
## Bikes Need a Place to Park

Without a single modern bicycle rack in town, Rio Vista is in need of multiple bicycle racks at prominent destinations in downtown that are compliant with Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) standards, that necessitate three-point securing. Future developments should be required to provide short-term bike racks in prominent locations as well as long-term covered parking within buildings near accessible entrances or within garages.

Appropriate cycle parking standards are important to ensure that convenient, easily used, and secure bicycle parking is available throughout Rio Vista in order to encourage people to replace some of their trips by bicycle. Racks should address all unique site conditions, but should be guided by the following:

- Locate all racks to minimize obtrusions and reduction of open space
- Orient sidewalk racks to ensure bicycles are parked parallel to the curb face and parked vehicles
- Ensure clearances from walls, trees, tree wells, news racks, doorway exits/entrances, and parked cars

Note: Whenever possible, locate racks between parking spaces to avoid conflicts with opening car doors.



Source: City of Cambridge, MA

## Managing Parking Demand

Parking availability is often confused with parking supply. Many regular visitors to downtown Rio Vista find the lack of available front-door parking frustrating and have to park around the corner. While this free side-street space may only be a 30-second walk from Main Street, the fact that others have filled front-door spaces leads to the misperception that there is not enough parking. This problem is a resource management issue, not a supply issue. Rio Vista has ample existing parking for all of its needs, and no supply expansions are necessary. In fact, the amount of space dedicated to paved surfaces such as parking, streets, and sidewalks in the heart of downtown overwhelms grassy areas and buildings.



Paved areas in red, buildings in black.

City	City Pop.	Mode Split (Employee Commuting)							Occupied Parking Spaces per 1,000 sf (non-res)
		Drove Alone	2 or More Person Carpool	Transit	Bicycle	Walked	Other Means	Worked at Home	
Chico	59,900	61%	12%	1%	11%	13%	1%	1%	1.7
Palo Alto	58,600	80%	9%	4%	3%	3%	1%	0%	1.9
Santa Monica	84,100	74%	11%	11%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1.8
Kirkland, WA	45,600	77%	12%	4%	0%	2%	1%	4%	1.6

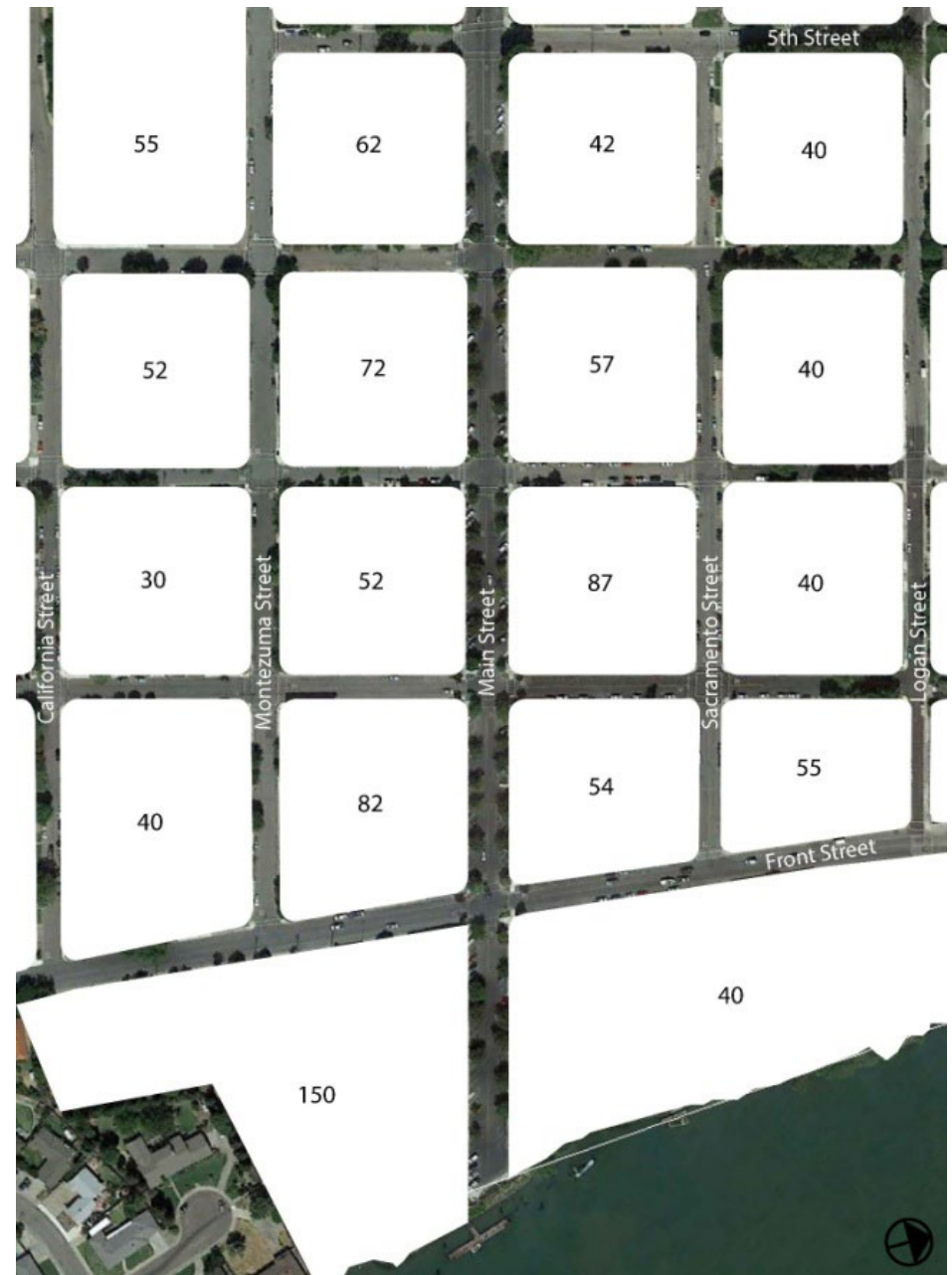
The total parking supply in just the 18 block core area of downtown nearest Main Street is over 1,000 spaces. This serves about 500,000 square feet of gross commercial and residential floor area for a supply ratio near 2 spaces per 1,000 SF. This is in excess of observed peak parking demands in downtowns throughout California that average 1.8 spaces per 1,000 SF when fully-occupied. Given estimated downtown vacancy rates, the downtown parking supply has at least 400 empty spaces at the peak lunchtime demand.

However, if future development comes online and Rio Vista’s sense of place attracts more visitors, certain strategies aimed at increasing parking efficiency are appropriate.

### Create Remote Parking Incentives

Many mixed-use downtowns like Rio Vista’s suffer from a common problem. The most visible and most convenient parking spaces are frequently entirely full, while simultaneously, parking spaces just behind or just under a building -- or a block away -- sit largely vacant. The result is often a perceived parking shortage, even when the downtown has hundreds of vacant parking spaces available. In many communities, employees occupy the best spaces, even when time-limits are instituted to try to reserve these spots for customers.

When demand builds in Rio Vista’s future, to create vacancies and rapid turnover in the best, most convenient, front door parking spaces, it is crucial to have price incentives to persuade some drivers -- especially employees -- to park in the less convenient remote spaces: higher prices for the best spots and cheap or free prices for the less convenient, underused spaces.



*On- and off-street parking inventory by block.*



Motorists can be thought of as falling into two primary categories: bargain hunters and convenience seekers. Convenience seekers are more willing to pay for an available front door spot. Many shoppers and diners are convenience seekers: they are typically less sensitive to parking charges because they stay for relatively short periods of time, meaning that they will accumulate less of a fee than an employee or other all-day visitor. By contrast, many long-stay parkers, such as employees, find it more worthwhile to walk a block to save on eight hours worth of parking fees. With proper pricing, the bargain hunters will choose currently underutilized lots, leaving the prime spots free for those convenience seekers who are willing to spend a bit more. For local merchants, it is important to make prime spots available for these people: those who are willing to pay a small fee to park are also those who are willing to spend money in stores and restaurants.

### **What are the Alternatives to Charging for Parking?**

The primary alternative that cities can use to create vacancies in prime parking spaces is to set time-limits and give tickets to violators. Time-limits, however, bring several disadvantages: enforcement of time limits is labor-intensive and difficult, and downtown employees, who quickly become familiar with enforcement patterns, often become adept at the "two hour shuffle", moving their cars regularly or swapping spaces with a coworker several times during the workday. Even with strictly enforced time-limits, if there is no price incentive to persuade employees to seek out less

convenient, bargain-priced spots, employees will probably still park in prime spaces – hence, turnover does not equal availability.

For customers, strict enforcement can bring "ticket anxiety", the fear of getting a ticket if one lingers a minute too long (for example, in order to have dessert after lunch). As Dan Zack, Downtown Development Manager for Redwood City, CA, puts it, "Even if a visitor is quick enough to avoid a ticket, they don't want to spend the evening watching the clock and moving their car around. If a customer is having a good time in a restaurant, and they are happy to pay the market price for their parking spot, do we want them to wrap up their evening early because their time limit wasn't long enough? Do we want them to skip dessert or that last cappuccino in order to avoid a ticket?" Repeatedly, surveys of downtown shoppers have shown that the availability of parking, rather than price, is of prime importance.

### **Establish a "Park Once" District**

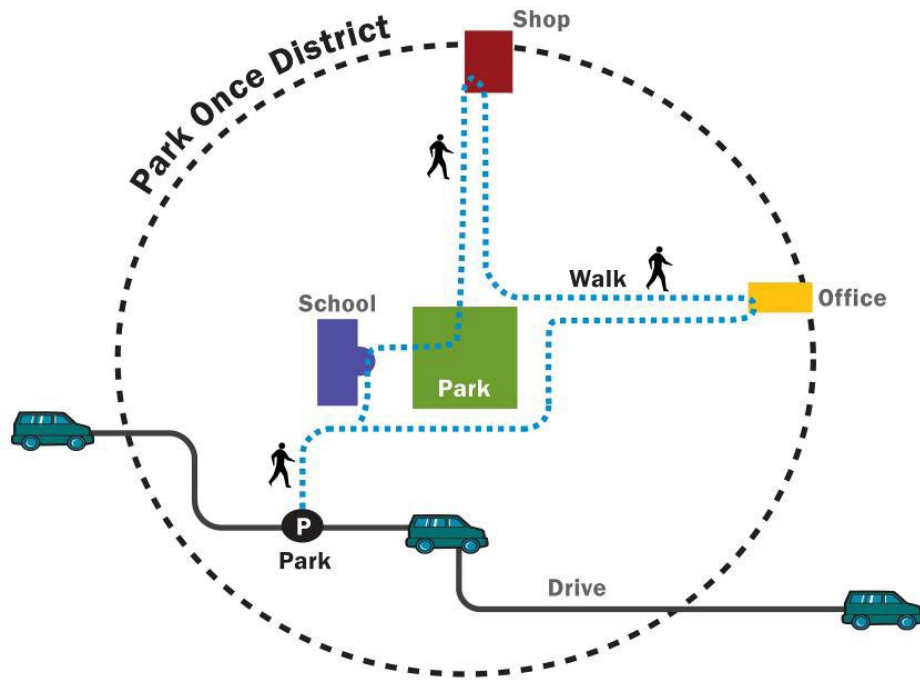
The creation of a "park once" environment is fundamental to Rio Vista's goal of creating walkable districts along the waterfront. The typical pattern of individual buildings, each with its own parking supply, requires two vehicular movements and a parking space to be dedicated for each visit to a shop, office, or residence. To accomplish three errands in this type of environment requires six movements in three parking spaces for three tasks. With most parking held in private hands, spaces are not efficiently shared between uses, and each building's private parking is typically sized to handle a worst-case parking load. Most significantly, when new buildings are required to provide such worst-case parking ratios, the result is often pedestrian-hostile buildings that hover above parking decks.

When the practice of building individual private lots for each building is adopted, the result is also a lack of welcome for customers: at each parking lot, the visitor is informed that his vehicle will be towed if he or she peruses any place besides the adjacent building. When this occurs, regional shopping malls gain a distinct advantage over a district with fragmented parking. Mall owners understand that they should not divide their mall's parking supply into small fiefdoms: they operate their supply as a single pool for all of the shops, so that customers are welcomed wherever they park.

A "Park Once" strategy allows for those arriving by car to easily follow a "park once" pattern: they park their car just once and complete multiple daily tasks on foot before returning to their car. This is a natural occurrence in downtowns like Rio Vista that should be acknowledged and embraced.

To implement a "Park Once" strategy, parking at future development sites should be managed much like a public utility, just like streets and sewers, with public parking provided in strategically-placed lots developed with new properties, all of which have fully-accessible and accommodating main entries directly off of public streets. All new

development should be prohibited or strongly discouraged from building privately-controlled parking. Shared parking can leave business parking available during evening and weekend hours for restaurants, for instance, resulting in an efficient sharing of the parking supply, lower costs for all, and a parking supply that matches hourly demand without having seas of parking that encourage driving. Implementation of simple signing improvements helps motorists easily find shared parking facilities when they chose not to seek on-street parking.

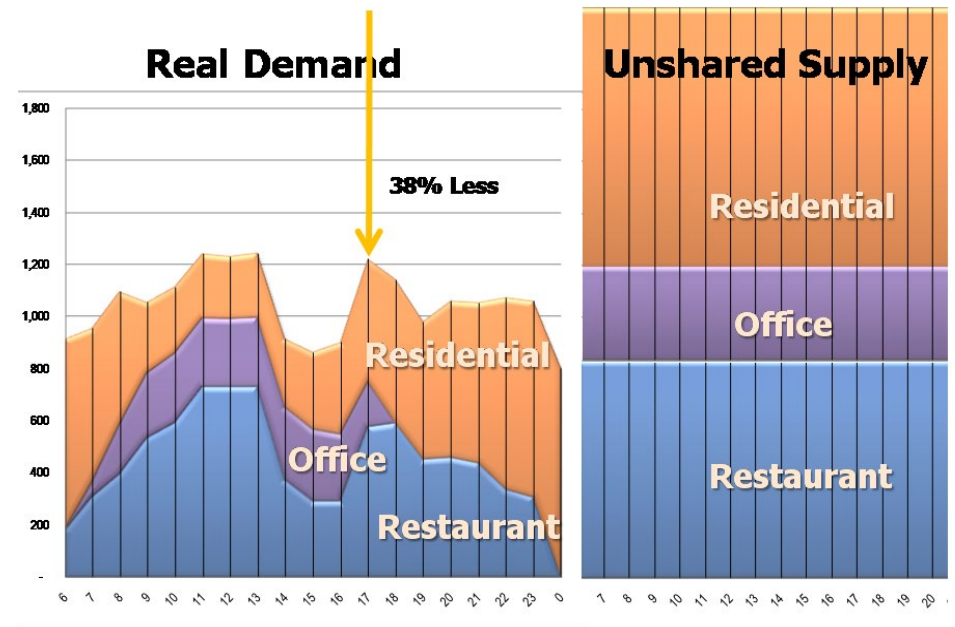


Based on an original illustration by Walter Kulash.

## Why Share?

Shared parking means that parking spaces are shared by more than one user, which allows parking facilities to be used more efficiently. Shared parking takes advantage of the fact that most parking spaces are only used part time by a particular motorist or group, and many parking facilities have a significant portion of unused spaces.

Shared parking is one of the most effective tools in parking management. Because many different land uses (a bank and a bar or restaurant, for example) have different periods of parking demand, they can easily share a common parking facility, thereby limiting the need to provide additional parking.



Shared parking policies do not treat the parking supply as individual units specific to particular businesses or uses, but rather emphasize the efficient use of the parking supply by including as many spaces as possible in a common pool of shared, publicly available spaces.

## No Minimums

Existing zoning code in Rio Vista has minimum requirements for off-street parking for developments. Cities have been using minimum parking requirements for decades as a means to account for a given land use's parking demand to ensure that an adequate parking supply is available. Minimum parking requirements, however, have emerged as one of the biggest obstacles to many cities' efforts to encourage new residential and commercial development in downtown areas and ultimately undermine many cities' efforts to create attractive, vibrant, and walkable communities. More specifically, minimum parking requirements have been shown to:

- Create an "oversupply" of parking in almost all communities in all but the highest periods of parking demand
- Devalue the true "costs" of parking to drivers, thereby creating an incentive to drive, which results in more local congestion and vehicle emissions
- Require tremendous amounts of land, thereby degrading the physical environment and impacting a community's urban form, design, and aesthetics
- Limit the ability to do "infill" projects or adaptively reuse historic structures

- Make projects more expensive and reduce overall profitability

Therefore, the ultimate goal of eliminating minimum parking requirements is to remove barriers to new development and renovation of existing buildings, while creating a healthy market for parking where parking spaces are bought, sold, rented and leased like any normal commodity. With the elimination of minimum parking requirements in Rio Vista, most parking will be provided by the private sector in sufficient supply with no need for the City to do anything other than manage on-street demand.

### Unbundled Parking

Parking costs are generally subsumed into the sale, lease, or rental price of housing and commercial space for the sake of simplicity – and because that is the more traditional practice in real estate. But although the cost of parking is often hidden in this way, parking is never free. The expected full construction cost for a surface parking space is about \$5,000 – garage spaces run over \$25,000 each.

In residential buildings – rental units, condominiums, and private homes – the full cost of parking should be unbundled from the cost of the housing itself, by creating a separate parking charge. This provides a financial reward to households who decide to dispense with one of their cars and helps attract that niche market of households who wish to live in a walkable, transit-oriented neighborhood where it is possible to live well with only one car per household. Unbundling parking costs changes parking from a required purchase to an optional amenity, so that households can freely choose how many spaces they wish to lease. Among households with below average vehicle ownership rates (e.g., low income people, singles and single parents, seniors on fixed incomes, and college students), allowing this choice can provide a substantial financial benefit. Unbundling parking costs means that these households no longer have to pay for parking spaces that they may not be able to use or afford.

It is important to note that construction costs for residential parking spaces can substantially increase the sale/rental price of housing. This is because the space needs of residential parking spaces can restrict how many housing units can be built within allowable zoning and building envelope. For example, a study of Oakland, California's 1961 decision to require one parking space per apartment (where none had been required before) found that construction cost increased 18% per unit, units per acre decreased by 30%, and land values fell 33%.

As a result, bundled residential parking can significantly increase “per-unit housing costs” for individual renters or buyers. Two studies of San Francisco housing found that units with off-street parking bundled with the unit sell for 11% to 12% more than comparable units without included parking. One study of San Francisco housing found the increased affordability of units without off-street parking on-site can increase their absorption rate and make home ownership a reality for more people. In

that study, units without off-street parking:

- Sold on average 41 days faster than comparable units with off-street parking
- Allowed 20% more San Francisco households to afford a condominium (compared to units with bundled off-street parking)
- Allowed 24 more San Francisco households to afford a single-family house (compared to units with bundled off-street parking)

Charging separately for parking is the single most effective strategy to encourage households to own fewer cars, and rely more on walking, cycling and transit.

## KEY TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

### 1. Ignore the Highway.

In the short-term, Rio Vistas needs to focus attention on the character of their community's streets, working to redefine the conversation about SR 12 and breaking down the barrier it represents to community cohesion. The discussion about the appropriate alignment should be recast: any highway alignment within Rio Vista is a threat if it can't be a community street. Therefore, if Caltrans and the County insist on projected volumes that exceed 40,000 cars per day and necessitate a 4-lane divided facility, it should not cut through Rio Vista's heart – the ultimate alignment should be outside developed areas, which will still be only a short drive from downtown businesses. Today's SR 12 between Front Street and Trilogy should be calmed and made complete as the intra-community link it should be. With simply paint and minor landscaping, SR 12 in downtown should be calmed with multi-way boulevard features that re-dedicate excessive lane capacity to pedestrian refuges and valuable on-street parking, making it a slower street that can be traveled and crossed safely on foot and by bike. Such a community street should not be a “highway” but be renamed to reflect the character of Rio Vista: west of Drouin Drive, “SR 12” should be “Main Street” to reflect its historic origin, all the way past Trilogy; and between existing Main Street and the river, “SR 12” should have a name embracing its prominent position in the heart of Rio Vista.

Similarly, the City should adopt clear street pattern and cross-section guidance for all future sub-division streets to ensure that intra-community connectivity is enhanced while safe accommodations for walkers and bikers is universal. Many existing subdivision plans need to be re-visited on account of their excessive street widths and poor connectivity with existing streets and abutting neighborhoods.

Meanwhile, the City must work now in partnership with the Delta Breeze transit system as it conducts its on-going transit system evaluation. Discussions should begin on the creation of a fixed-route spine along Main Street for current dial-a-ride service (Routes



51 and 54), with deviated dispatch beyond the ends of this spine. This change can promote transit visibility in the community, while continuing to provide door-to-door service to neighborhood locations outside the downtown.

## **2. Return to Main Street.**

Over the next 10 years, Rio Vista needs to work aggressively to promote intra-community connectivity by all modes of transportation. A suite of programmatic and infrastructure efforts should begin, focused on Main Street from Trilogy to the river and including:

- Continued construction of permanent multi-way treatments to calm SR 12 and resurrect Main Street;
- A citywide crosswalk marking program, especially along key walking routes;
- The incorporation of shared-lane markings and dedicated facilities for bicycles, including a multi-use path parallel to Main Street connecting residential neighborhoods from Trilogy and beyond eastward into downtown; and
- The extension of Delta Breeze's fixed-route, Main Street spine both north along Front as well as west up Main to Trilogy, overlapped by newly "straightened" express Routes 50 and 52 operating only on Main and Front Streets.

This multi-modal approach creates a connected community where neighborhoods are better connected to each other with complete streets accommodating any mode of transportation. Transit riders should easily walk north-south to connect with a Main Street transit spine; bike riders should use neighborhood streets safely or a dedicated multi-use path connection to the river; and walkers should get to their neighbors, services, transit, and jobs safely on foot. As SR 12 becomes a calmed Main Street, it will serve as the critical linkage within the community, rather than a highway we must turn our backs towards. Embracing this front door street makes it the "address street" it deserves to be.

Meanwhile, to help encourage development without the fear of undersupplied parking, the City needs to begin promoting shared parking programs and customer-friendly curb regulations that promote front-door parking for visitors and patrons – regardless of their length of stay – while actively finding remote on-street and off-street opportunities for regular visitors and employees who benefit from keeping customer spaces free.

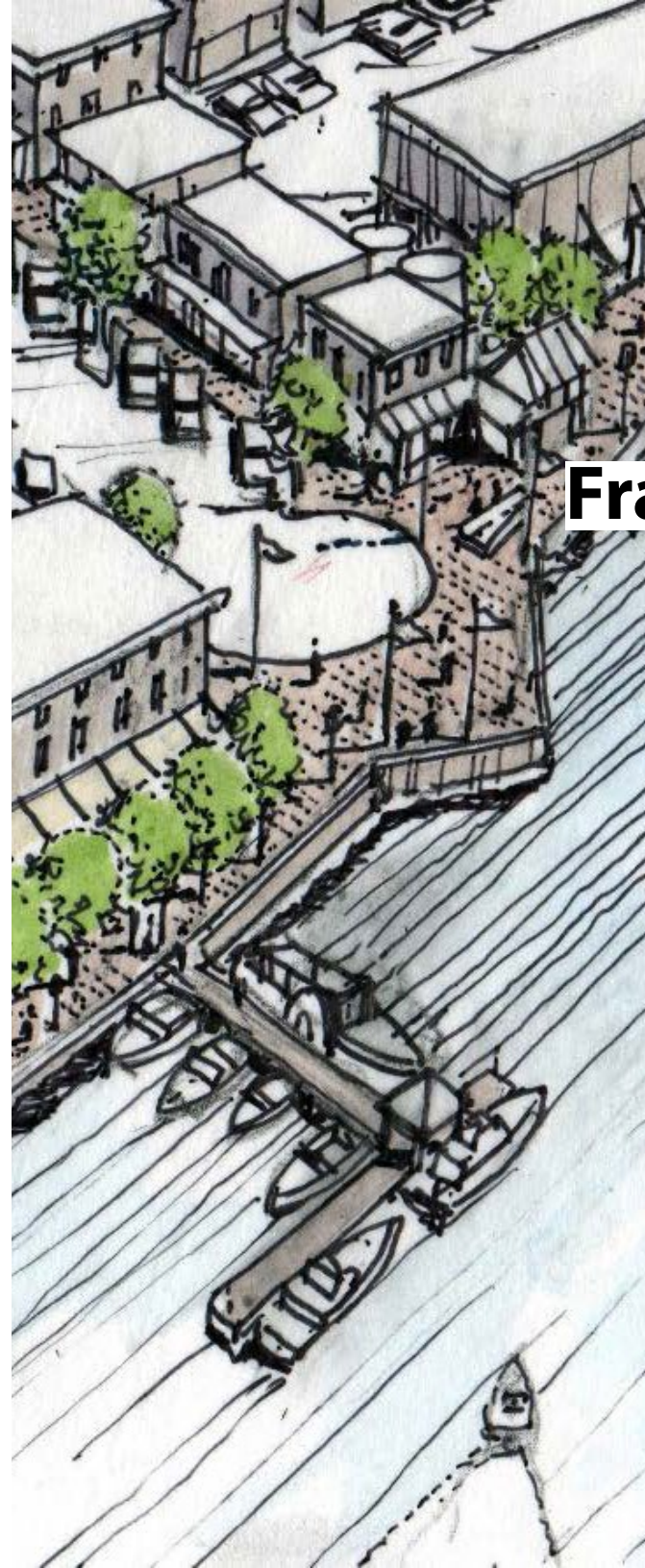
## **3. The Traffic Reduction of a Connected Community.**

If Rio Vista embraces a connected, walkable, and transit-friendly future, there are notable rewards possible. First and foremost, such livable communities are where Americans want to live. Beyond the return of Baby Boomers to downtowns, the Millennial generation is the pre-cursor of a new way of living compactly and efficiently in

walking proximity to goods, services, entertainment, and jobs. Property value, income, and health cost trends all continue to tilt heavily towards the type of downtown that is already in the bones of Rio Vista. Connecting neighborhoods to each other and the downtown will further promote these valuable improvements.

Secondly, compact mixed-use development patterns enable new development – such as that planned for the army base or envisioned along the waterfront and the old SR 12 – to occur more cost-effectively, without redundant services and with far less parking than sprawled development would need. A smart transportation vision can make Rio Vista the most competitive place for quality development, while capitalizing on its central position on the Sacramento River.

Most importantly, if Rio Vista can lead the region in the development of attractive, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods, it will demonstrate that the traffic predictions of today are unrealistic. Traffic models predict future performance by looking in the rear mirror – they continue to disregard the trip-making reality of a compact community, especially one that has more and more locally-serving destinations. The best future Rio Vista can hope for is one where its tax dollars do not need to support a 4-land high-span bridge over the river but rather an elegant two-lane solution that might keep a signature structure on its waterfront in a manner that respects Rio Vista as a place and not solely as a through route.



# Framework

## FRAMEWORK

Imagine a Rio Vista where we live in compact, efficient, safe neighborhoods that include shops, restaurants, schools, and parks – all within a five minute walk of every resident.

Imagine a Rio Vista where the streets are walkable and bike-able; are clean and beautiful; and comprise a cherished part of our public realm.

Imagine a Rio Vista where we can grow our own food in community gardens, interacting with our neighbors; where we can pick fruit from the trees growing in our parks; and where restaurants and families serve meals prepared with fresh, locally grown, organic food that never saw the back of a semi-truck.

Imagine a Rio Vista where the water is clean; the air is pure; and nature is revered. A place where natural systems and habitat are protected and cultural and natural resources are preserved for all.

Imagine a Rio Vista that is resilient – producing more energy than we use; and where reducing waste, reusing, and recycling are second nature.

Imagine a Rio Vista where the arts are cherished; the creative class is nurtured; and where public art and beauty are ubiquitous and accessible.

Imagine a Rio Vista where history is respected; the innovations of the future are embraced with enthusiasm; and people from all walks of life live sustainably and in harmony.

Imagine, Rio Vista. If we don't imagine it now, it will never happen. So imagine it. Please.

Then act on it.

***“There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served.” - Jane Jacobs***

## ZONING AND LAND USE

Settled in 1862, Rio Vista has evolved over many, many decades. Along the way, there have been successes and there have been failures. There have been times of progress, times of inactivity and times of decline. Through it all, the city has maintained its "good bones" and a few fine jewels.

Architecturally, Rio Vista is very eclectic. There is no unifying style or predominant building form. There is not a single streetscape in the core that has any coherent design characteristics. Oddly, this random collection of forms and materials seem to work, much like a beautiful patchwork quilt. This makes Rio Vista unique and there should be a conscious effort to not replace the richness and variety of the place with the overly homogeneous and banal results found in recent suburban efforts.

Like most small towns facing challenges, mistakes have been made but few of those are irreversible. Ideally, we should learn from our mistakes as well as the mistakes of others. Conversely, when we see something that works, we should evaluate why and then try to replicate those conditions. The regulations that guide growth and development should be based on what we know works and allows the kind of place and "community" that the citizens aspire to create. That sense of community -- rooted in the wonderful people of Rio Vista -- is perhaps the single greatest asset.

In most small towns, especially at the tail end of a recession where there were losses in population and economic vitality, there is a tendency to embrace any kind of development. There is a feeling that any kind of activity is better than no activity at all. The worst thing a city can do, however, is to allow the wrong kinds of development to occur. This is truly worse than no activity at all because once it is done it is very difficult to undo or repair the damage done.

Regulations must guide development in ways that produce the best results. If you want to strengthen the core, it is obvious that you must put the most important things in the core. This includes businesses, civic uses, and places to live. In fact, it should be assumed that all new development should be located in the core and only with a very compelling argument do uses go outside the core. The danger is weakening the core, threatening the viability of existing businesses, and promoting sprawl. This "Downtown First" approach should become a litmus test for where new developments occur.

This approach does acknowledge the fact that some commercial uses should exist outside the core. For example, someone living in one of the suburban planned developments should not be expected to drive into downtown every time they needed to buy a quart of milk. At the same time, a large suburban shopping center with a large supermarket and/or pharmacy would probably be the death knell for several local businesses in the core.

However, some support commercial uses such as boat and RV sales, automotive sales, service and repair businesses, do not necessarily need to be in the core. These should still be very carefully sited and designed to help reinforce the public realm.

Generally, these suburban shopping centers tend to be very auto-centric in their site planning and do little to reinforce the public realm. In fact, they can destroy a sense of the street as public realm. Even when their development is warranted, great care and consideration should be given to their site planning.

Although we use the word "development" a lot we should think first in terms of "town building" and not in terms of "development". "Development" seems to be more about self interest and commerce and less about civic responsibility.

When thinking about regulations it is also important to resist the temptation and not overly regulate a place, allowing that natural evolution of place to occur in a more or less organic fashion. To force forms and uses that are not economically or culturally viable is to court disaster. Redevelopment efforts should preserve and protect the true assets of the community -- the things that really matter. Redevelopment efforts should also reinforce the core area. If any efforts fail to reinforce the core they should be regarded as potential mistakes. This approach is more about incremental steps and small victories than grand moves and big projects. Every vacant storefront filled by a viable local business should be celebrated as a success. Every existing building that is renovated should be touted as another victory.

Perhaps the most important thing regulations can do is prevent more mistakes from being made. Much like the Hippocratic Oath, people in Rio Vista should pledge to "do no harm". All decisions should also work toward reinforcing and respecting the public realm. The public realm, whether it is a street, a park or a commons area is the place where people come together and bump into their friends, brush elbows with their fellow citizens or speak to total strangers. This concept leads us to question what becomes of the public realm when those streets or parks are behind a wall and a guarded gate. What does that say about "community" and "inclusiveness"? What is the message this sends to those who live outside the walls and the gates? The public realm of a community is the place where every citizen's heart can sing.

***“The public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak. What makes mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved, or at least not primarily, but the fact that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and separate them.” -Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition***

Currently, there are eight zoning categories found within the core area. Those are: R-1 (Residential Low Density), R-2 (Residential Medium Density), R-3 (Residential High Density), R-4 (Residential High Density), C-2 (Community Commercial), C-H (Highway Commercial), C-3-I (General and Service Commercial and Industrial) and D-W (Waterfront).

The existing zoning ordinance is what is generally referred to as a Euclidian Code (because of the double entendre from the first comprehensive US Supreme Court case based on Euclid, Ohio zoning and because traditional zoning uses zoning districts drawn in geographic shapes that might have made Euclidean proud). Euclidian zoning traditionally has a strong focus on regulating development by land use.

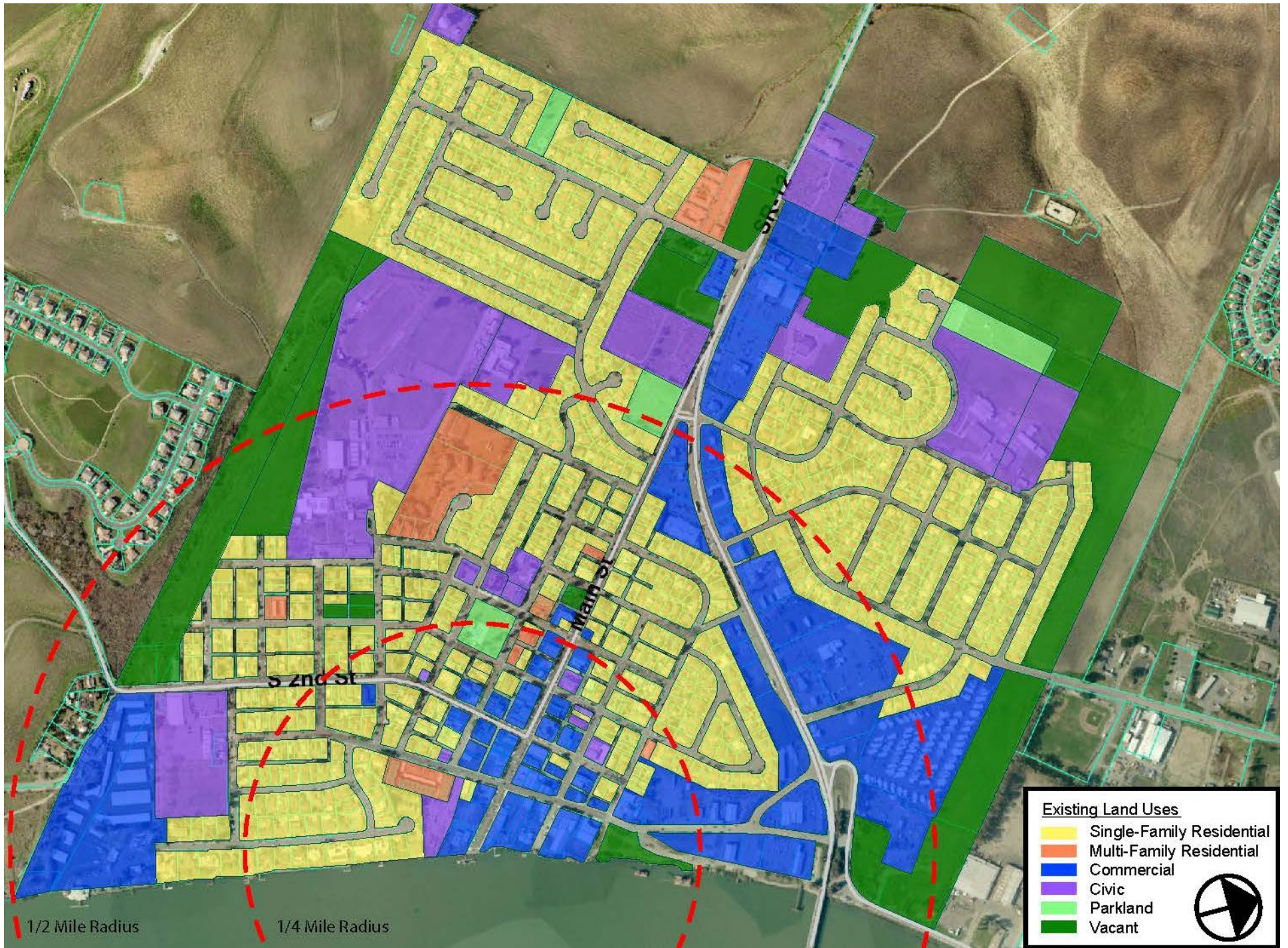
In Rio Vista, only the Neighborhood Commercial (C1), Community Commercial-downtown (C2) zoning districts and potentially some Planned Development projects are true mixed use areas which allow mixed commercial/residential projects in the same building, and even C1 requires a conditional use permit. Other districts, some of which do allow mixed use within a zoning district don't necessary allow mixed use on the same parcel of land.

This approach can often result in a segregation of uses that requires more automobile dependent development than may be desirable. As these trips become longer it can exacerbate traffic issues in a community. In practice, this is not what you find in Rio Vista. There is a pleasant mix of land uses that further contributes to the idea of a patchwork quilt, regardless of zoning.

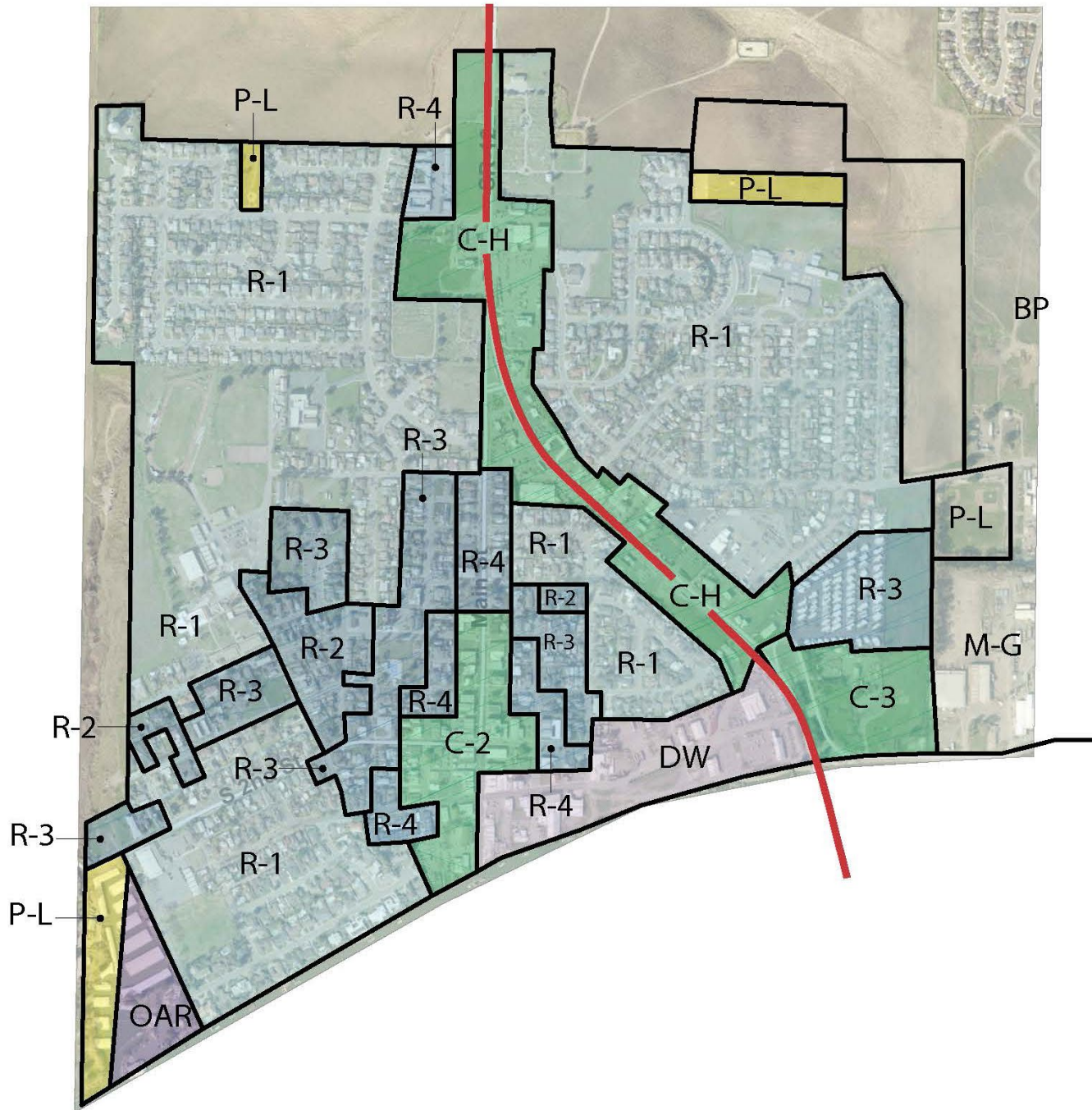
Generally, the current zoning ordinance is archaic and inadequate to guide future development in a progressive manner. Adherence to the code will in many cases produce inferior results. For example, setback requirements in R1, R2, R3 and R4 are excessive and will not allow existing neighborhoods patterns to be replicated. This also makes most homes in these areas non-conforming uses.

When you see urban patterns that you know are desirable and produce the kind of community character that you appreciate yet your zoning code will not allow it, there are obvious problems. Other problems with the ordinance include lot requirements that are too large, mandating very suburban results; height requirements that are too restrictive, which could easily result in banal architecture; and setbacks in commercial areas that allow very automobile centric solutions.

In these commercial zones there is a no setback requirement (unless it abuts residential uses) but there is nothing to prevent a situation where fields of parking separate the street from the buildings. In fact, these types of site planning solutions are evident all along Highway 12 in the core. These 0' setbacks should be replaced with build-to lines (or maximum setbacks) that promote and require strong relationships between buildings and the street.

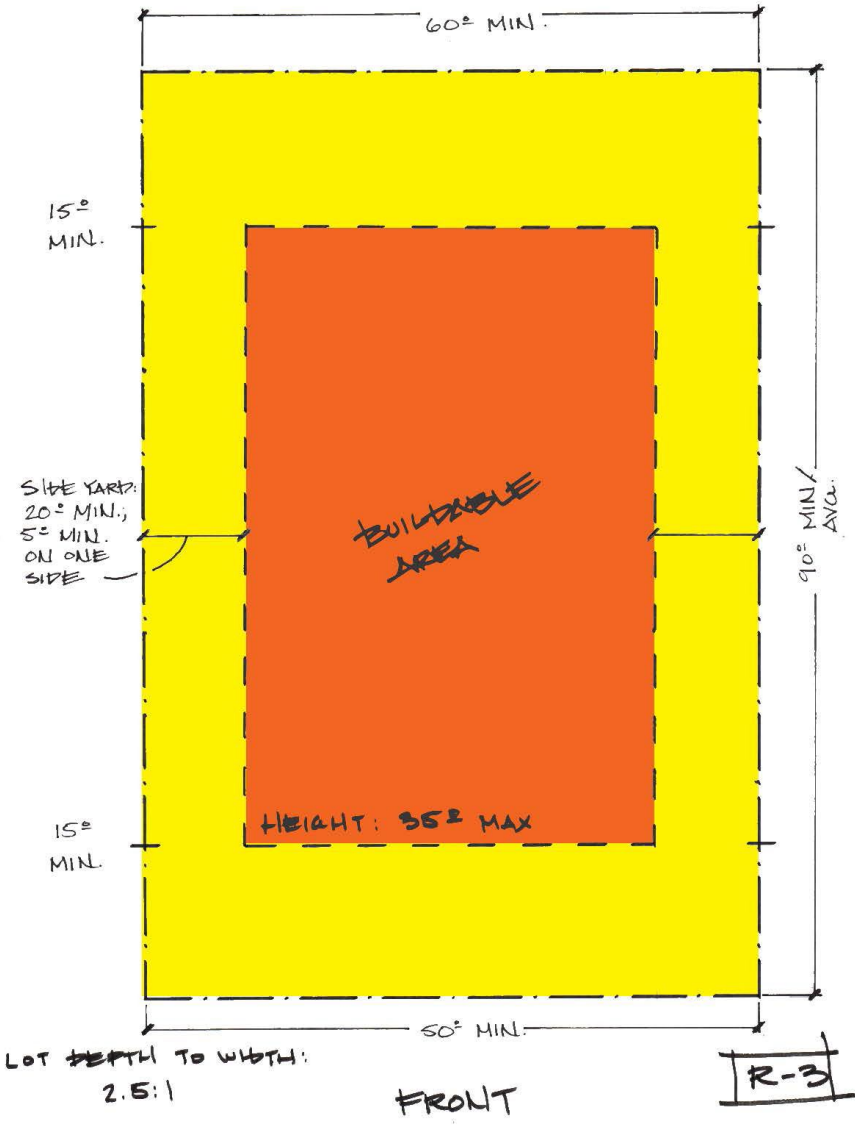
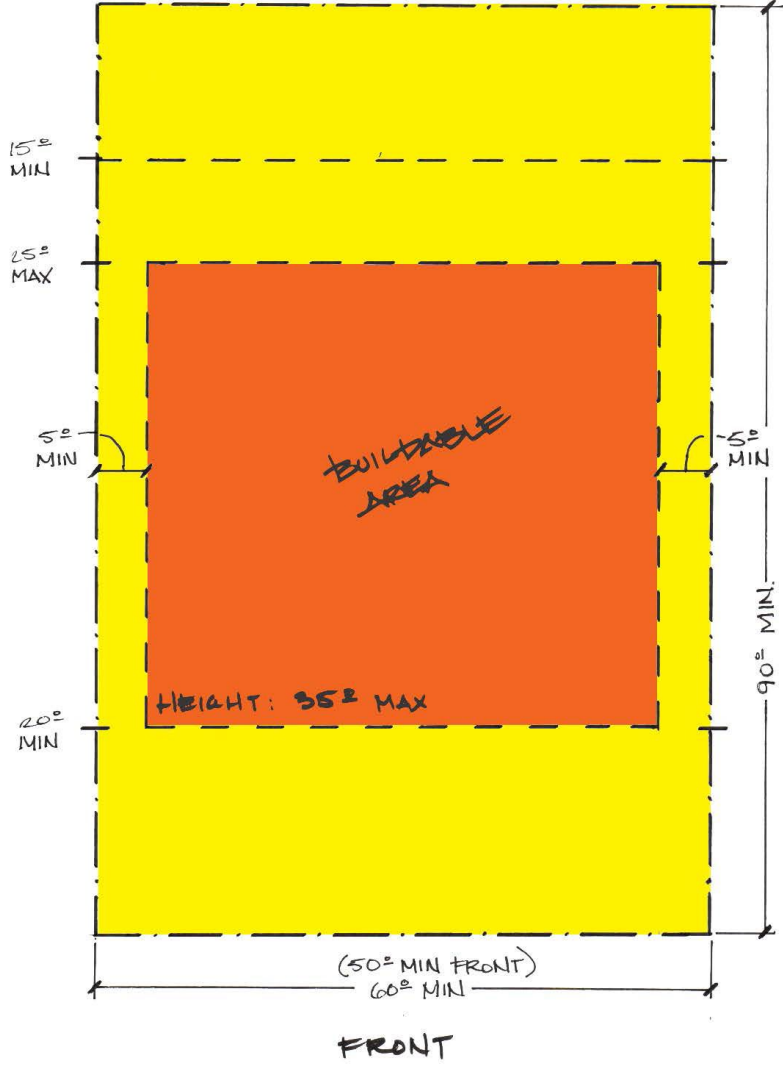


Existing land use map.

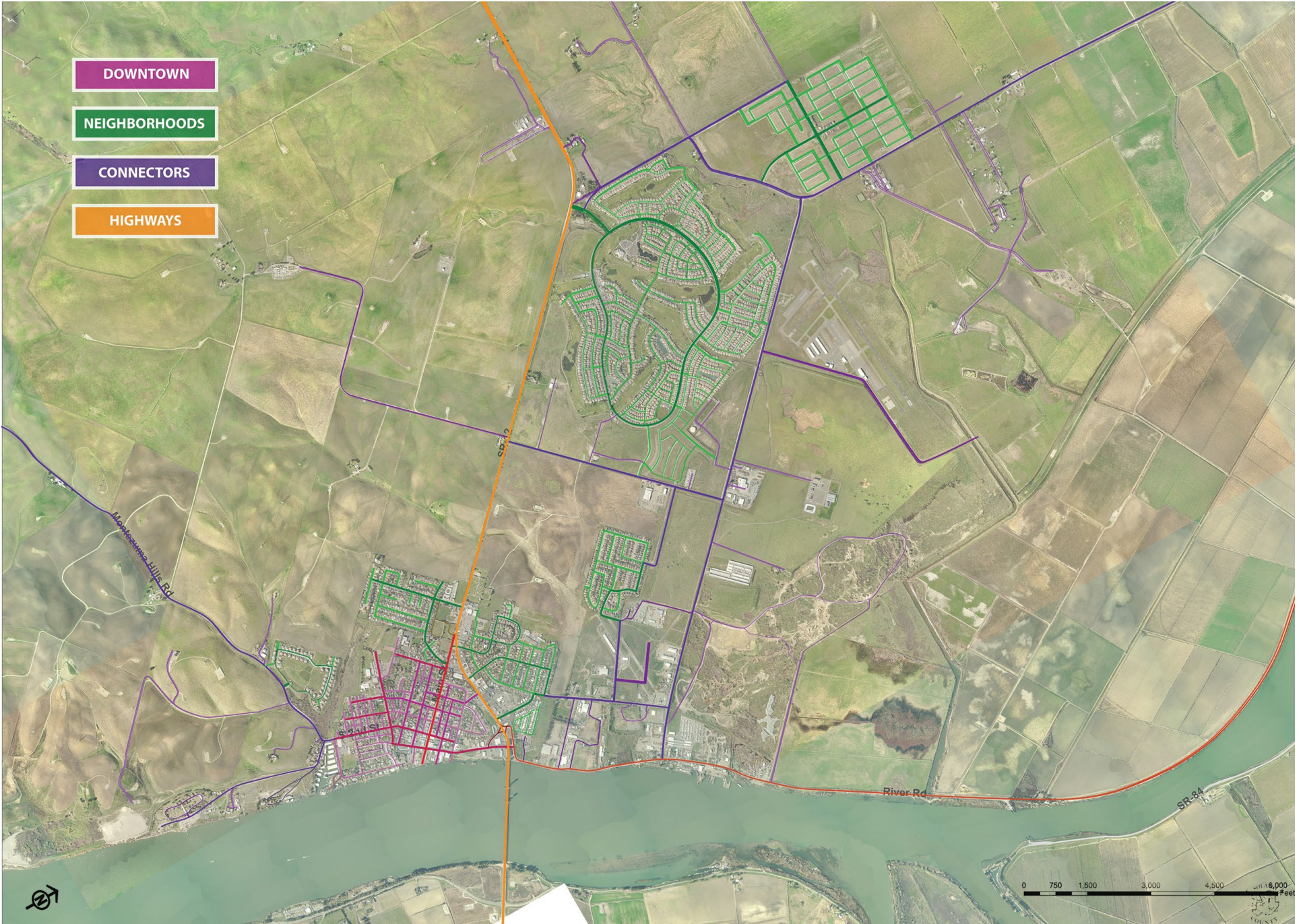


Existing zoning map.

R-1 & R-2



Current zoning setback requirements.



Rio Vista Street Families.



The waterfront zoning is too prescriptive and over reaching. It will not encourage the incremental small steps that are much more likely to occur in a community of this size.

Directly related to land uses: street standards and parking standards are not adequate to guide growth in a desirable manner.

Street standards all but ignore walkability or the needs of bicyclists. There are no clear requirements for adequate sidewalks in either residential or commercial areas. In fact, there is only a very vague reference to sidewalks of a minimum 4'-0" width in residential areas. Sidewalks should be required on both sides of virtually all streets with widths that are appropriate for their intended use. In no cases should a 4'-0" wide sidewalk be deemed appropriate.

Parking standards are also very suburban in nature, requiring high parking counts that must be provided on the site. There are no provisions for shared parking, on-street parking that counts towards requirements, or a more urban approach to parking. In core areas outside of Main Street the parking requirements should be adjusted to be less suburban and less restrictive. Within the downtown commercial areas (Community Commercial C-2) parking requirements should be dropped.

There is currently no requirement for bicycle lanes or sharrows on any streets. Granted, not all streets need special accommodations for bicycles but some street types should include these facilities. It is recommended that a bicycle master plan be developed and implemented.

Lastly, there is no provision for architectural design review. Without design review, there is no assurance that the height, massing and scale of a building will be compatible with its surroundings. There is also no assurance that the architectural design and detailing will respect the context and spirit of the community.

It is our recommendation that the current Zoning Ordinance be replaced with a hybrid form-based or form-oriented code in conjunction with comprehensive thoroughfare standards. These new codes should be accompanied by a well-defined approval process that includes public input and a design review component.

The thoroughfare standards would provide guidelines that address streets of different types that appropriately accommodate vehicles (including on-street parking), bicycles, pedestrians, and street amenities such as signs, street trees, and lighting. This is essentially geared toward creating a strong public realm. In more urban areas there is a very clear demarcation of private realm versus public realm where in more suburban areas it is, unfortunately, sometimes blurred.

Street guidelines should assure that lane widths are never wider than they have to be; that street designs promote driving at posted speeds; that sidewalks are gracious and

accommodating; that crosswalks are well-marked and safe; that streets are populated with the amenities that assure the streets are beautiful, safe and convenient such as trees, lighting, furnishings, and signs.

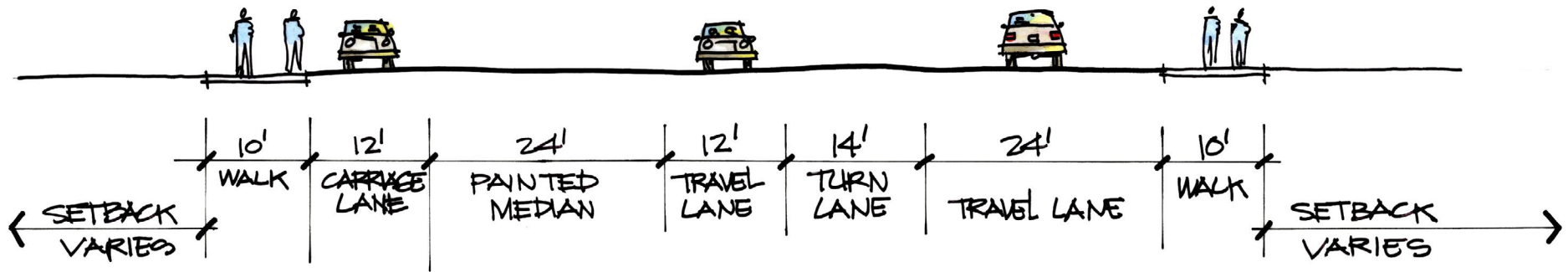
***"Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull." - Jane Jacobs***

It is very important that Planned Development (PD) zoning not be used to circumvent these requirements. PDs should only be used to allow projects that are more unique and have more character than what can be developed under base zoning. In other words, Planned Development zoning should be about being exceptional, not about exceptions.

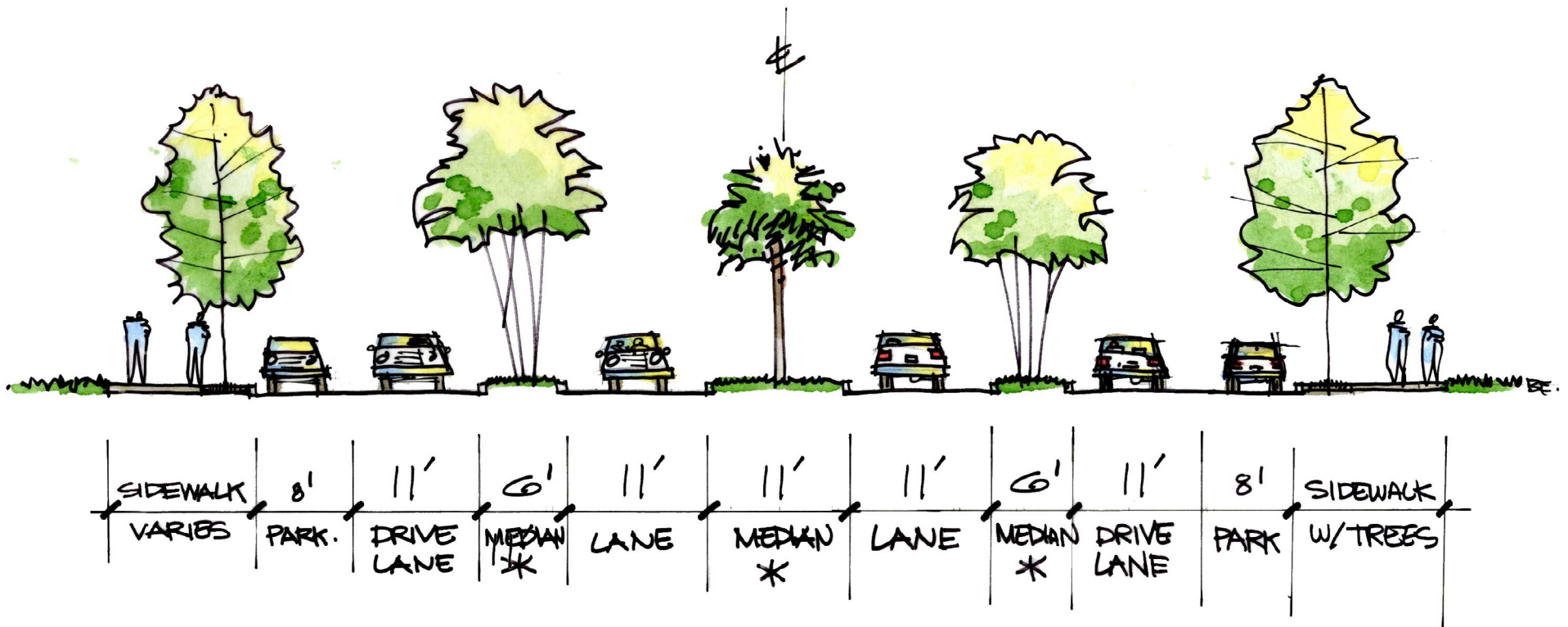
The form based code deals, primarily, with how buildings address and reinforce the public realm. This is done, not by what the building's use may be but through how close the building may be to the street, the height, massing and scale of the building and the orientation of parking and service uses on the site. This approach allows for a very seamless mix of uses, adding richness and diversity to the urban fabric. Growth and redevelopment then becomes about the notion of appropriateness and can be ruled by the very simply precept of "know where you are and build that way". There are a few different ways this could be accomplished:

1. It is possible to keep the existing zoning categories and overall approach, but change at least some portion of virtually every aspect of the code including the lot requirements, height requirements, setbacks (sometimes replacing them with build-to lines), and allowed and conditional uses.
2. It is also possible to utilize an overlay zoning ordinance that supersedes the various underlying zoning categories for a larger area. Unfortunately, this would not affect development outside the overlay zone which is equally important.
3. It is certainly possible to adopt a modern traditional Euclidean zoning code that enhances the best of every neighborhood while focusing less on use and excessive setbacks and more on a simplified scheme to preserve the essential character of that neighborhood.
4. Lastly, new zoning designations could be adopted based on a transect based approach. These designations are based on intensity of use, not land use type. These designations range from land to be held in "preserve" (T1) through a sub-urban zone (T3) to the urban core (T5).

***"Forget the damned motor cars and build the cities for lovers and friends." -Lewis Mumford***

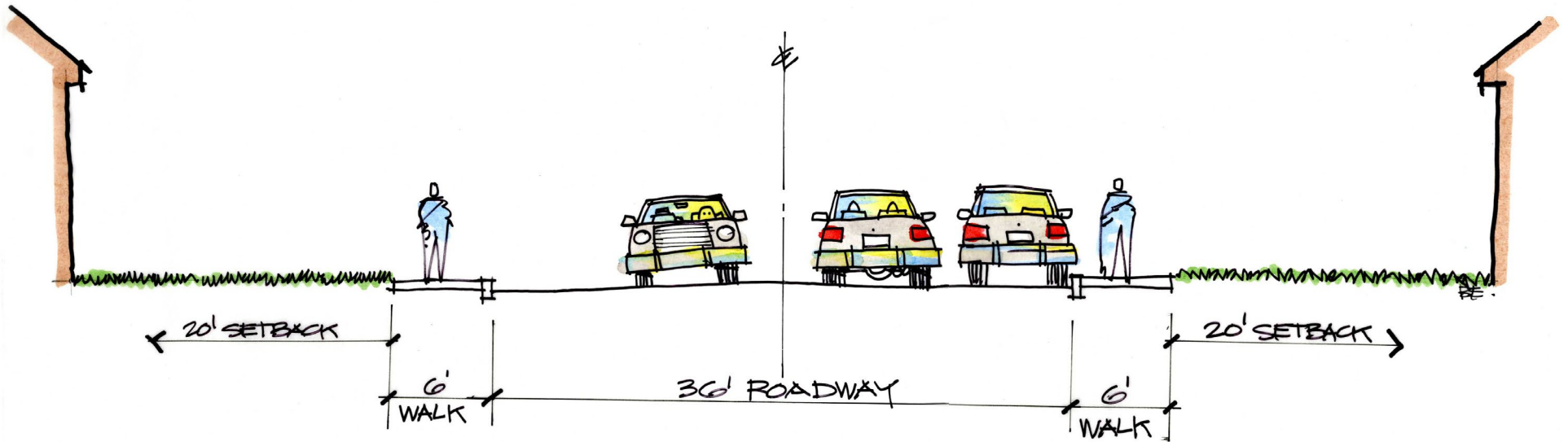


Cross section of existing Route 12.

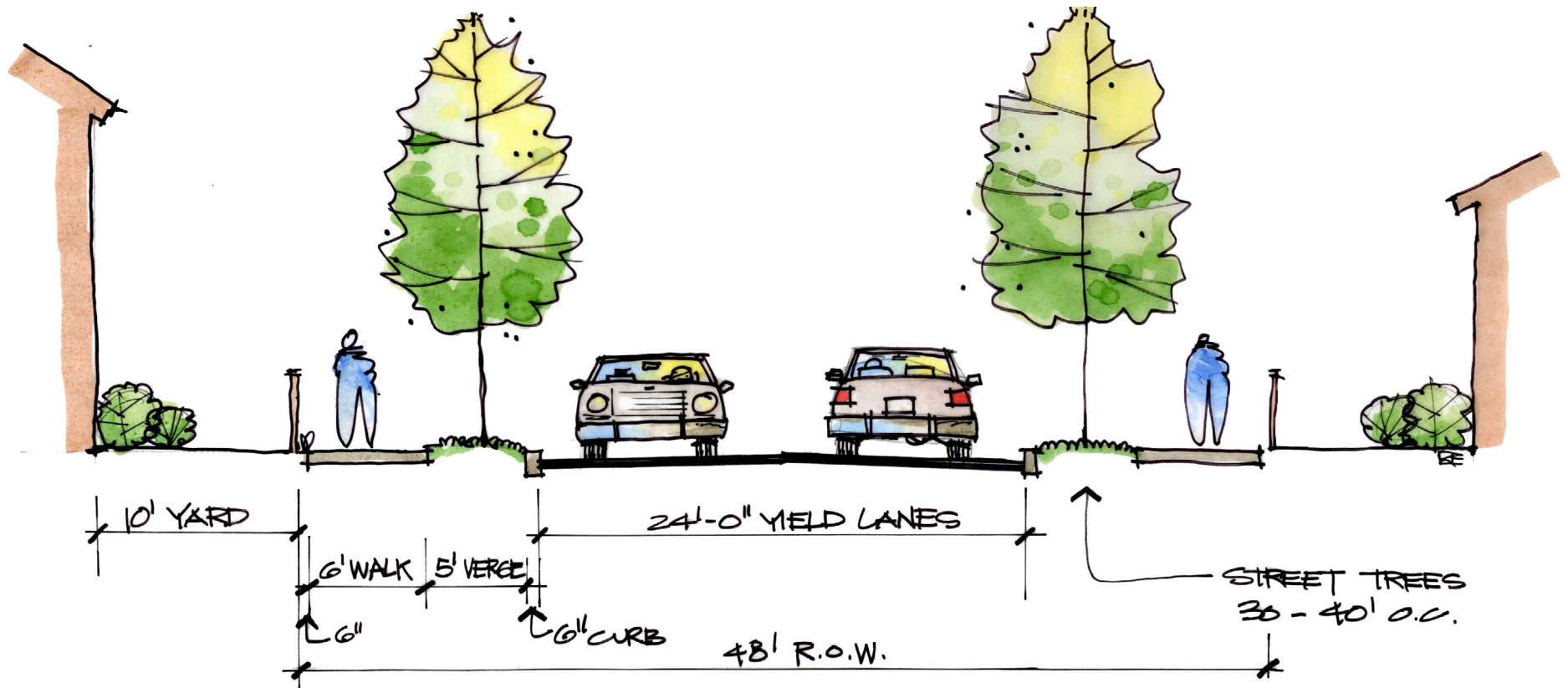


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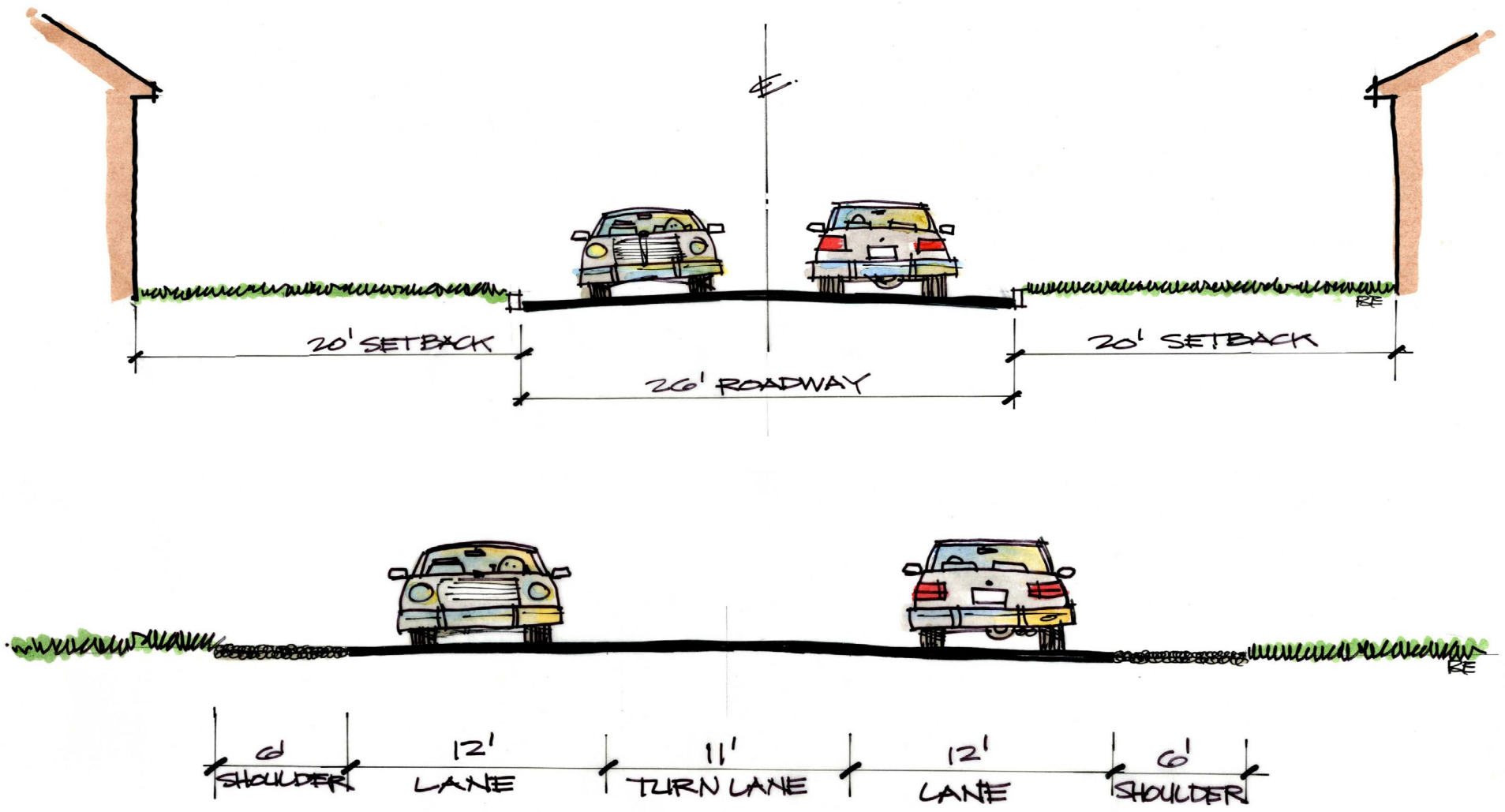
Proposed redesign of Route 12.



Cross section of existing residential street.



Proposed redesign of residential street.



Cross sections of existing streets in newer residential developments.

## WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

There is a general feeling amongst the R/UDAT team that the present Waterfront Specific Plan is too specific and far-reaching and could be simplified. The plan includes too much building mass for a town of this size or what would be needed to accommodate any reasonable future growth scenarios. This means that the likelihood of the plan being fully implemented is low and that could be perceived as another failure.

We also feel that more of this land should be set aside for public enjoyment and the land to be developed should be identified more strategically. Maximizing the public views of the river is fitting for a community named after the river views.

We propose a realignment of the streets along the river to create better development

and open space parcels and that a minimum 100' wide public access area be maintained along the entire length of the riverfront from Highway 12 to Main Street. In the interim, the entire site could be treated as public open space and individual projects could be built, incrementally

***"The most beautiful places in a city should belong to everyone."  
- Mayor Joseph P. Riley, City of Charleston, SC***







**Vision**

## A VISION FOR DOWNTOWN AND ITS WATERFRONT

The physical manifestation of the vision for downtown Rio Vista is anchored by the triple concepts of waterfront, Main Street, and SR-12 as part of downtown, not its edge. This geometry creates a way to capture commerce from the SR-12 and to reinforce downtown and the waterfront as the “living room” and “recreation room” of Rio Vista. Downtown, as so defined, has soft edges, not a hard edge, and fully engages the new employment to the south at the planned Rio Vista Estuarine Research Station (RVERS), the new residential enclaves to the north and west, and it brings the water experience into the heart of the community. There are multiple elements to this vision; Rio Vista anchored on the river and in the heritage and culture of the community.

The vision is not fully formed or described in detail. The core principles that shape this vision allow for many ways to achieve a high quality of life for Rio Vista citizens. The path forward enables the city to evolve related to its historical resources but not to be trapped by them, responsive to market forces and enabled by the aspirations of the public as they change over time. Each move will also align with both the ecological context and the foundation in planning and permitting involved with work in process.

Each step forward helps make Rio Vista an even better place, without leaving citizens feeling that the place is not done. Rio Vision is both a good place to live can be confident of become yet a better place in the future.

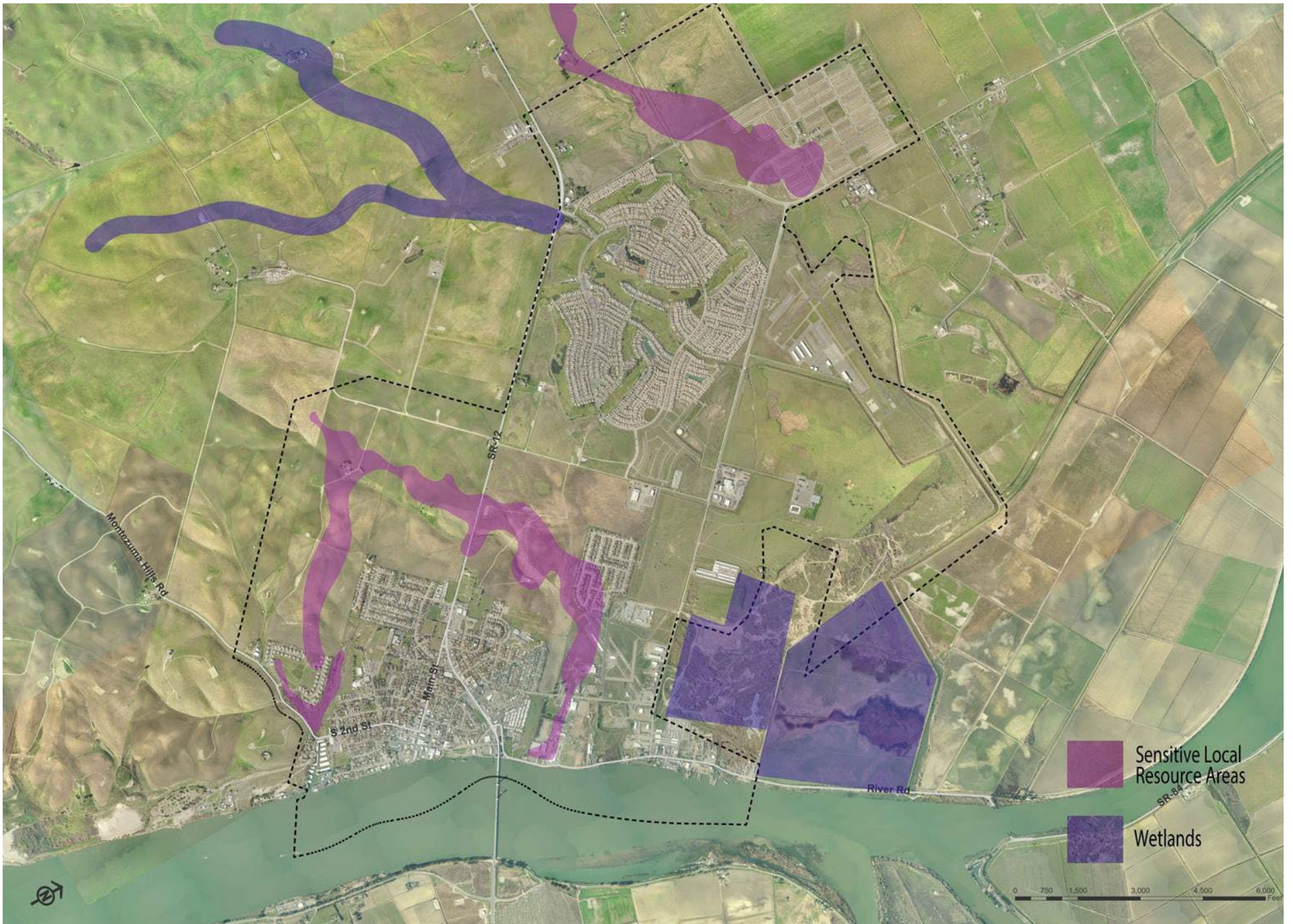
### Some Core Physical and Development Principles

- Small moves. Create a portfolio of projects that favor many small moves and incremental change, a few medium scale projects and still fewer big moves. The geography of the moves influence places both within and outside the triangle that defines downtown.
- Waterfront access. Activate the access to the water everywhere but especially along Front Street between the current City Hall and SR-12 at the bridge. Don't wait for the grand plan but keep such a plan in mind as the river is more fully engaged as integral to the life of the community.
- Build on the strengths. Retain awareness of the contextual character, ecology, and historical resources of each location repairing and improving what works well and leveraging it to change what defeats the quality of place.



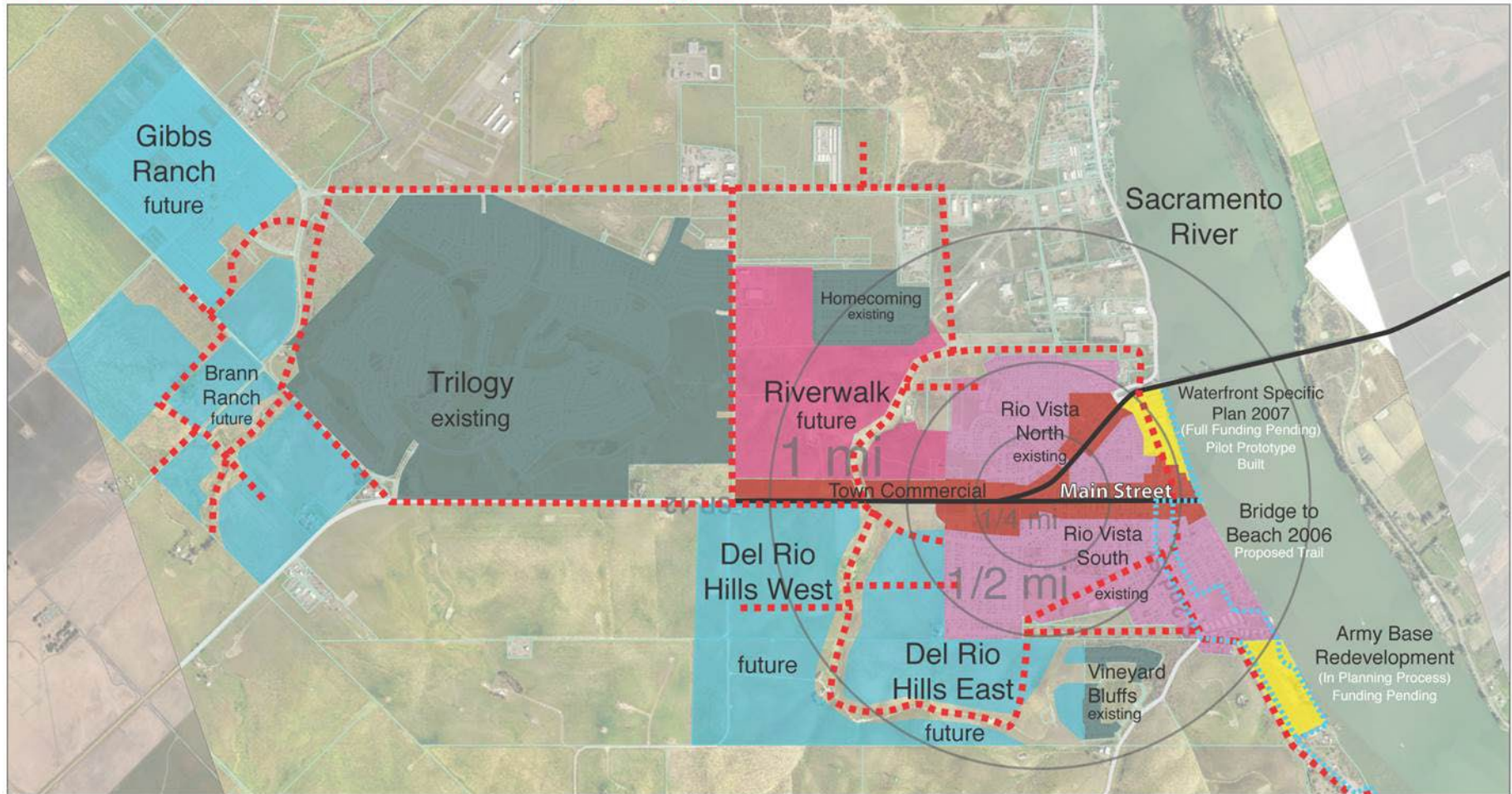








2006 Bridge to Beach Proposed Trail/2007 Waterfront Specific Plan Trail  
 2001 Rio Vista General Plan Proposed Trails and Bikeways  
 2011 Parks Master Plan Proposed Primary Trail System



1 inch = 900 feet



- Leverage City Owned Land. Consider using land owned by the city for commercial development through land swaps or other transactions where location is seen as offering higher and better commercial and community uses.
- Identity. Give special attention to points of arrival and key paths and routes defining the triangle as a place that gathers the community.
- Intergenerational Programming. The gathering place for the city should be programmed and designed with accessibility and activities for all ages.
- Design Matters. Architecture and landscapes do not have to be heroic or shout at you to be great. That said, the opportunity to do great architecture, build appropriate landscapes, and consider art installations on even modest projects is critical to the long term success of places.
- Time. Start immediately but be patient. While city-making is a long and continuous process, start now, to achieve initial benefits soon and learn from each move to inform the next.

### Putting the Principles to Work in the Short Term

Property owners suggest that 20% to 30% of the real estate in the triangle framed by the water, SR-12 and Main Street is vacant or underutilized. Reinvestment and active uses are essential to bring increased vitality. Expand and strengthen the pockets of vitality focusing first on sites adjacent to those pockets. These small steps will create awareness and invite some of the longer term investments and structural adjustments like those suggested by street pattern and zoning adjustments.

In and around Main Street, for example, the lighter, quicker, cheaper investments that can be made include façade and street scape improvements focused on “the details” including which way do benches face, façade details, paint palette, lighting, and simple landscape.



They also include the installation of temporary store front galleries where owners with vacancies collaborate with artists for short-term free occupancy to bring people downtown, show their space to the best, and avoid needing to insure vacant spaces. There is also the opportunity for art based installations including mural art walls, lighting installations, or Pop Up experimental stores as art on parking lots, alleys, or vacant retail space. Many municipalities have also found a way to temporarily use parking space or alley space off Main Street as “park” or opportunity for outdoor eating.



Establishing the conditions for all age accommodation is very important to attract the diversity desired in the community. Consideration should be given to augmenting the park surrounding the new swimming pool with facilities supporting skate boarders, perhaps a handball wall or climbing wall. Heritage attractions should be identified and made visitor ready through collateral marketing material and directional signage. Bike racks as sculptural additions to the city and making the city fully accessible for all users further enrich the potential for an intergenerational Rio Vista.

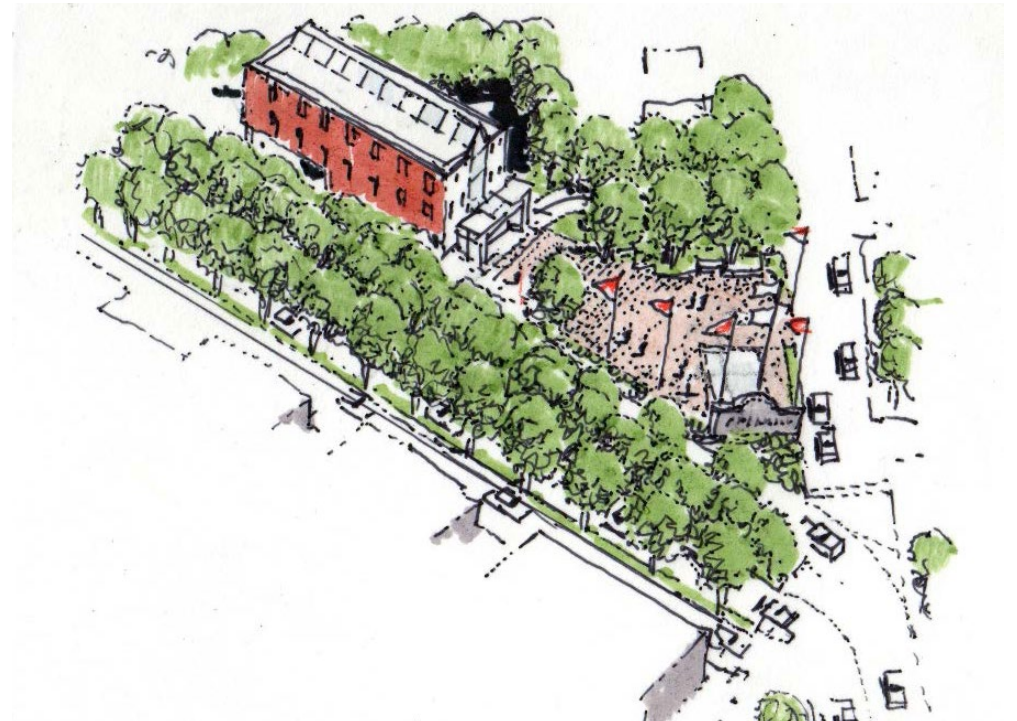
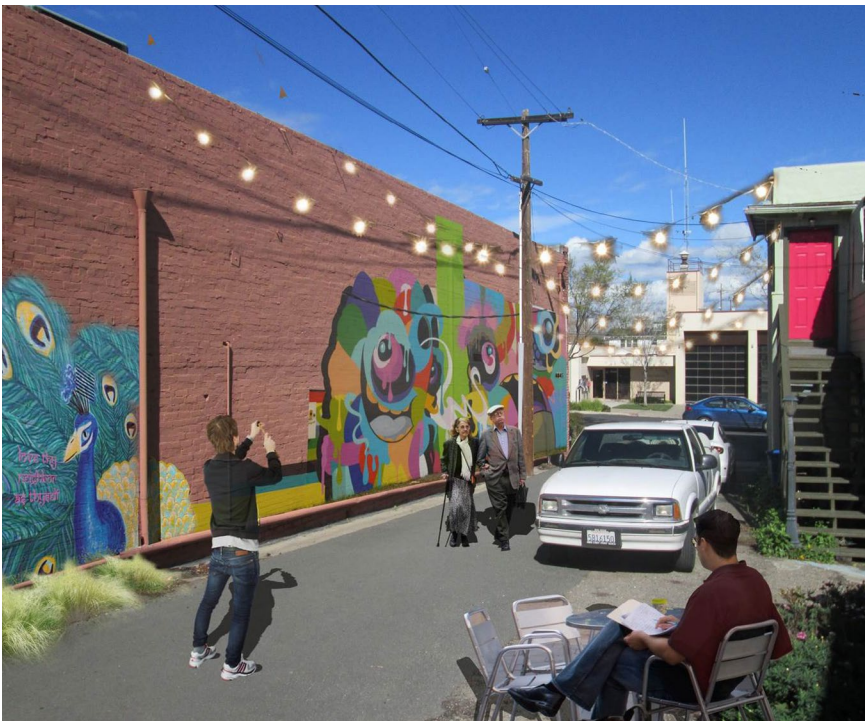
The identity of Rio Vista is tightly connected to the idea that it is a water city; it is about the river. To reinforce this there are some immediate things that can be done at a relatively low cost including water-side dock improvements with essential sanitary capacity, path systems, and boat slips. Basic landscape developments robust enough to sustain occasional flooding would also build interest in the waterfront. Such developments should enable a continuous waterfront destination with supports for farmer’s market and festival programming. Consider temporary band shells, Adirondack chairs, a dog park, and food truck rodeos.

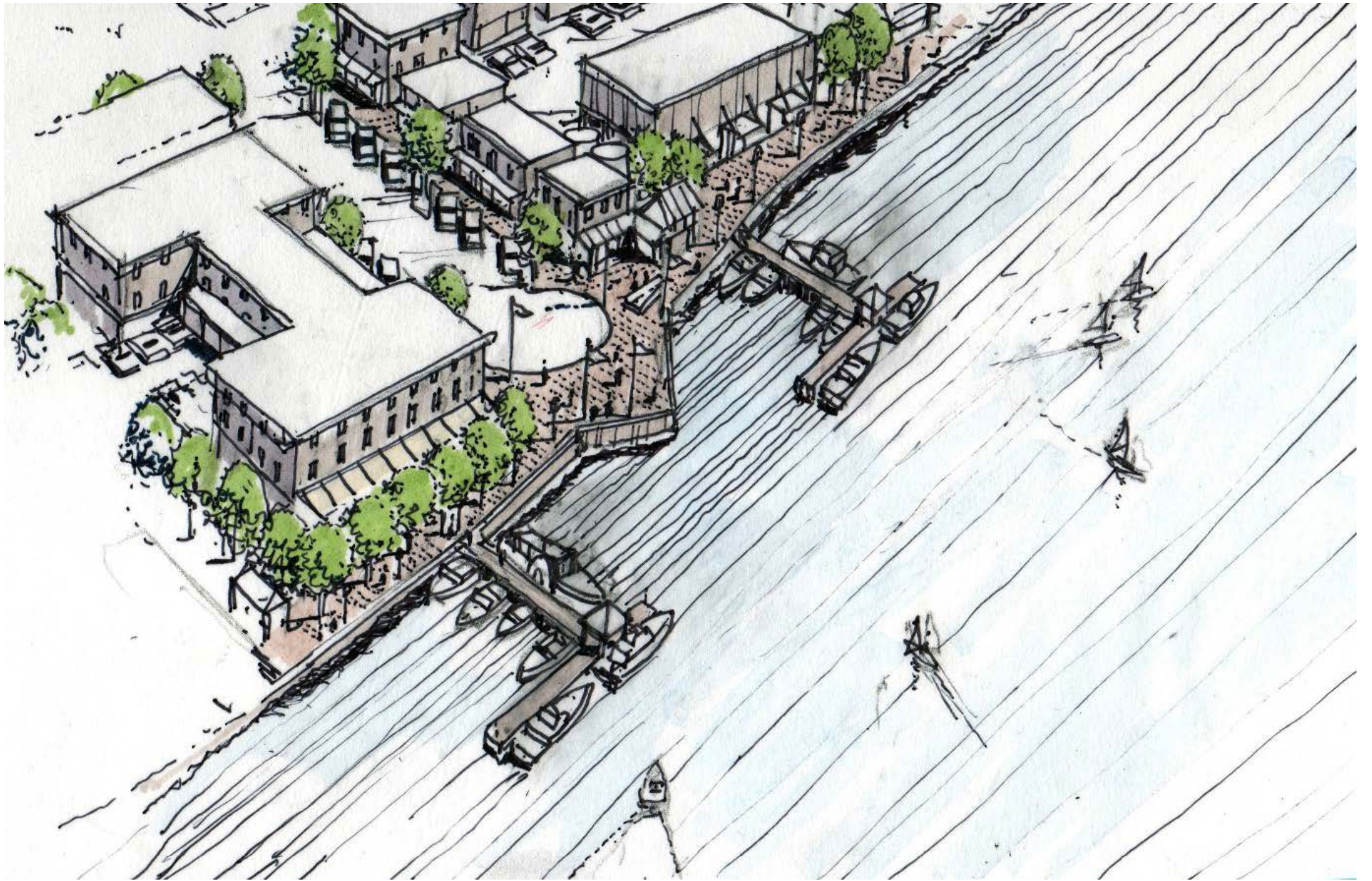


## In the Longer Term

Both the way citizens identify with the water and aspire to a vital Main Street benefit from the enhancement of the mix of retail and services within the triangle. Such uses represent the way in which the empty or underutilized space in the city will receive new investment over time. Building on the strengths suggest such infill be sited next to already strong areas and many can have the advantage of mixed use with a retail base and housing or office accommodations above. Citizens have suggested the retail and service mix include a coffee shop (indoor and outdoor opportunities), a visitor center (perhaps as part of the history museum), a shoe store, a community center/cultural center/arts center, an ice cream store, bed and breakfast hospitality, a brew pub, a bike store, a sporting goods shop with an emphasis on wind surfing, biking, fishing.

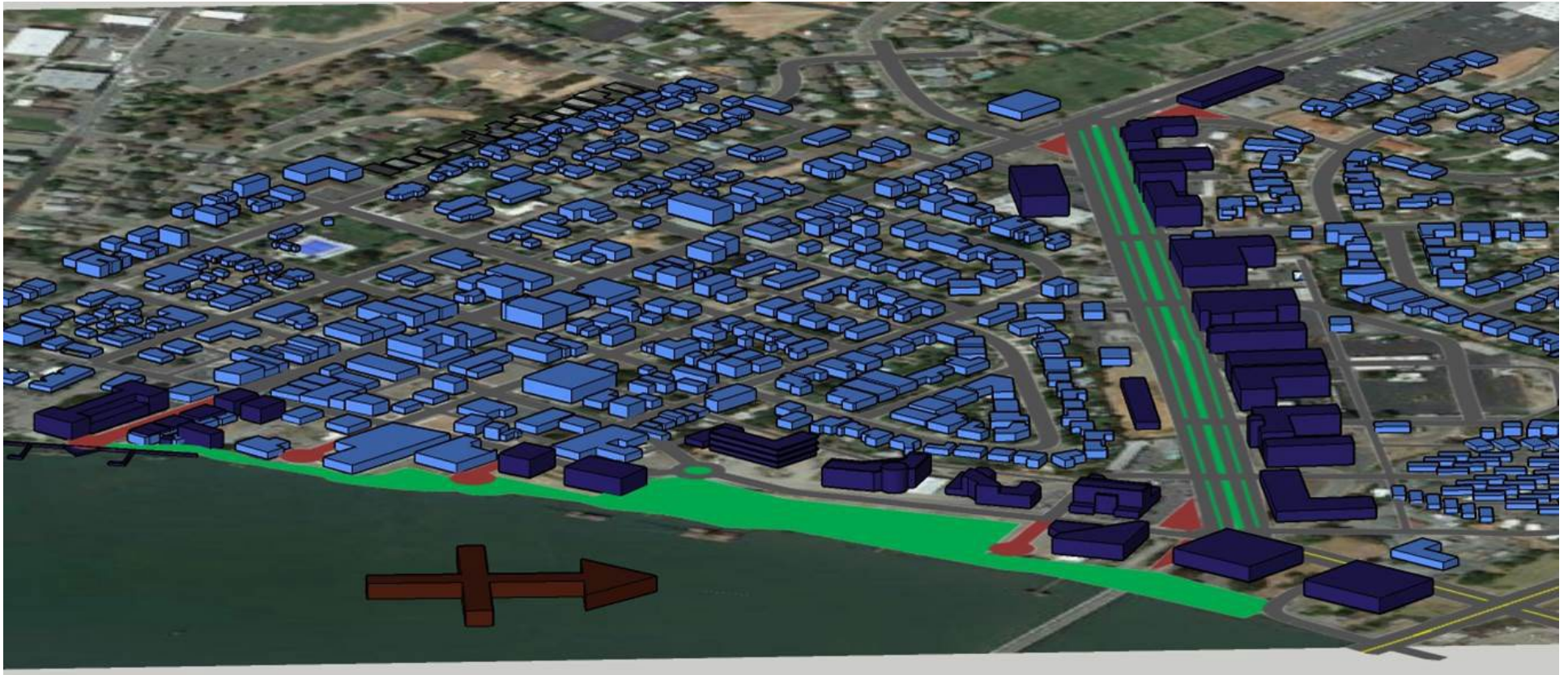
Citizens have also requested larger scale retail, entertainment, and service facilities to include a conference hotel, theatre, bowling alley, youth activity center, and medical center. Sites to consider include the Sidwell site and each of the nodes defining the three points of the triangle. The R/UDAT team has suggested a good site for the conference hotel and restaurant complex would be the site of the existing city hall and senior center. This would leverage city owned land, create a river dining and hospitality experience, and enhance the identity of the city related to the river. It also invites further infill within the triangle for a new city hall and associated public space and services. One possible site for the new city hall would define the Main Street and SR-12 intersection. Still other larger scale facilities include siting for a youth center, perhaps with the "Y" organization.













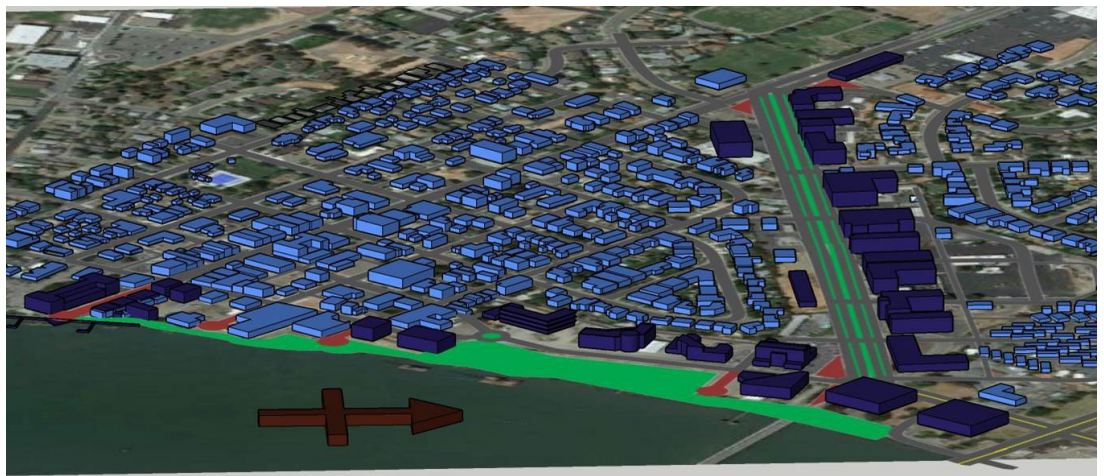
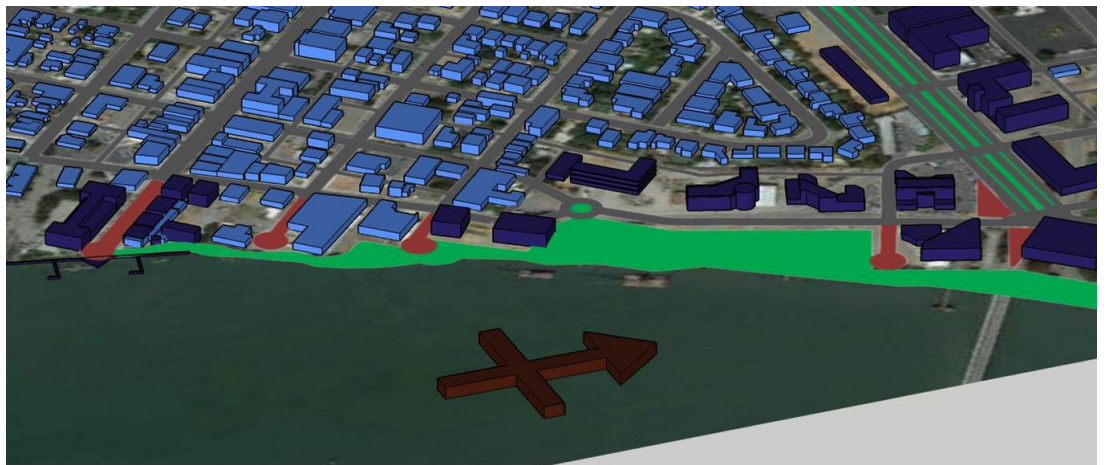
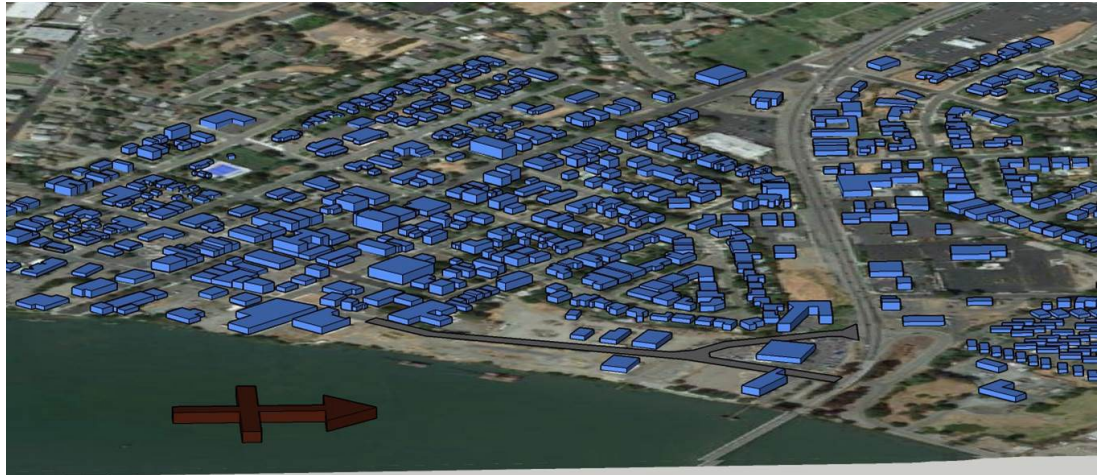


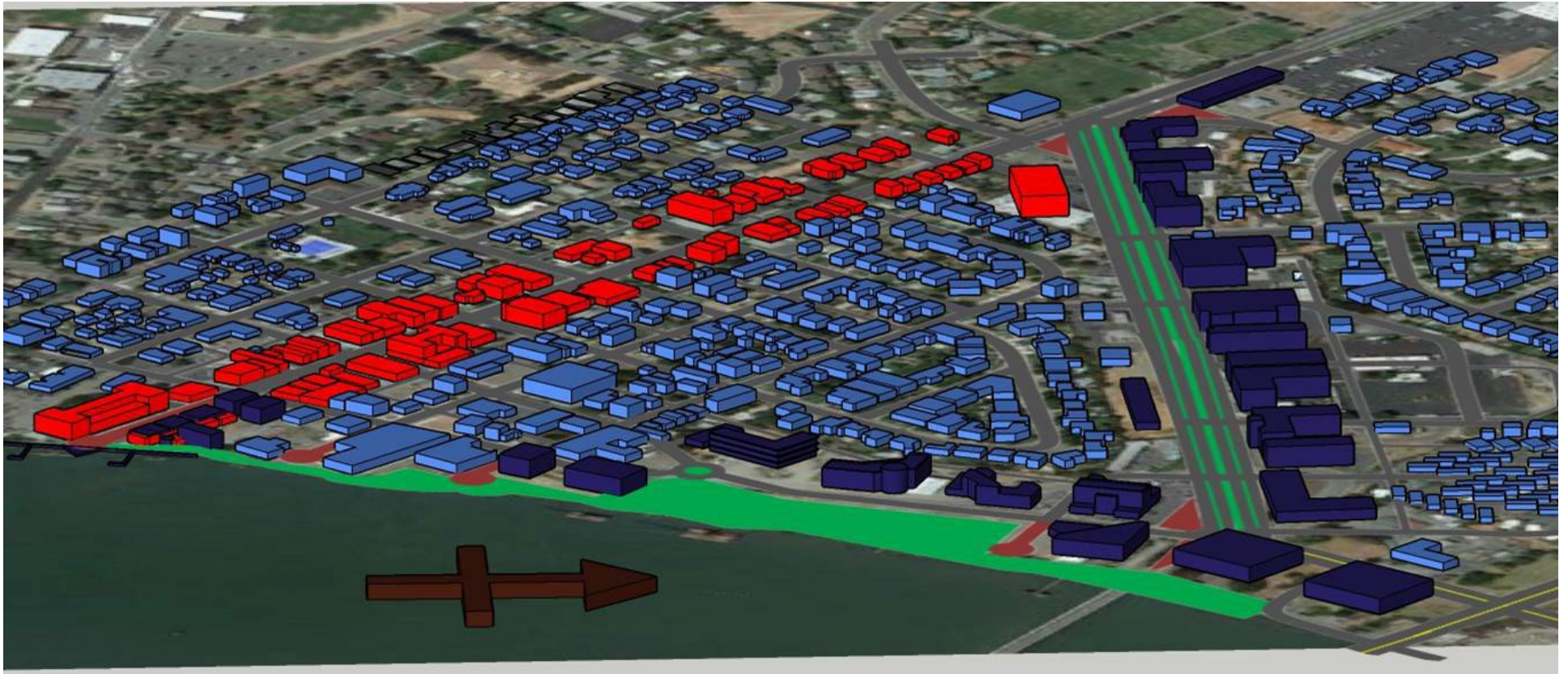
Leveraging city owned property also suggests the now abandoned bank property held by Rio Vista should be redeveloped in its host residential neighborhood as a mixed use building with a modest commercial base (coffee shop and corner store without dedicated parking and housing above. Such a move will increase the density of housing and complement the walkability of the immediate neighborhood with needed retail services.

Perhaps the most significant recommendation would involve a land swap or other transaction related to the properties east and west of Front Street paving the way for the full expanse of the waterfront to become public even as it is framed by private investment in high end residential property as well as housing upper middle income residents. This concept represents a recommendation to continue with the implementation of the waterfront master plan with suggestions that adjust the road network, improve connectivity and thus the ways the parcels are developed and the public areas are defined. Bringing the City to the Water implies development of a public green and all the appropriate park amenities through this process.

The R/UDAT team has also recommended a community multi-way boulevard for SR-12 between the bridge and Main Street. This concept, as proposed, creates new opportunities to capture commercial traffic off the highway adding energy to economic development in the city and the quality of the highway as a vehicle to join the city across the boulevard east and west.

When taken together the scope of the recommendations for the urban design of the area in and around the triangle may seem overwhelming. Taken in increments of short term enhancements building on the design improvements implemented, for example, in the city's Downtown Marketing and Design Study of October 1999, it seems less daunting. Work has been done, there is still a lot to do, and there has been learning based on the work done. The values expressed in much of the planning documentation have been very consistent. The most ambitious of the recommendations that seem beyond the reach of the City should be thought of as ideas to protect for a future when they are not so difficult. In short, don't do work that would preclude such a future but rather establish the conditions that increase prosperity so the proposals can ultimately be realized.















**Main Street**

## MAIN STREET

"One thing we know about the future is that it will be different," said Peter Drucker when talking about strategy. "The best way to predict the future is to create it."

Strategy is about creating your own future.

If strategy is indeed about the future then it will increasingly be about partnerships. Together you have the power to advance community and commerce to work together for shared prosperity.



**What's the story?** There's so much to do right outside your door. Water, Wind, (W)hills.

Location. Location. Location. Rio Vista is the only downtown located on the waterfront of the main stem of the Sacramento River between Sacramento and Vallejo. Rio Vista is about midway between Oakland and Sacramento. With the best wind in California, Rio Vista hosts windmill farms on ranches and windsurfers on the Sacramento River.

Rio Vista is the home of The Spirit of America. Its rich cultural history includes Jack London, Bill Foster, Craig Breedlove and Marcie Coglianese. Asparagus, Salmon, Bass. Cattle, Sheep, Goats. Endive.

Stronger than the wind and the water are Rio Vista's people. Smart. Savvy. Sincere. Committed. Passionate. Advocates. Embracing the refreshing and the challenging. Advancing economic changes and community spirit.



**What do we have?** Using an assets-based approach is an efficient and effective way to leverage for results with positive impact. What do we have? That will tell what we don't have and that will tell us next steps.

Rio Vista is a destination for recreation using the wind and the water and hills. This needs to be capitalized on and celebrated. Partnerships are essential. Next steps could include connecting in a deliberate way with windsurfing equipment sales and rentals and sailboat companies. Rio Vista Parks Department could develop programming for youth sailing lessons on Sunfish sailboats. A sailboat rental company or a cooperative sailing club would be a significant asset for the downtown.





Only 32 miles south of Davis, Rio Vista can be more of a destination for bicyclists who enjoy training and riding in the Montezuma Hills. Bike racks made in Sacramento by Park-A-Bike (<http://www.parkabike.com/>) are state of the art and a small corral of five racks can hold ten bikes. The racks have safeguards that prevent bikes from falling into each other, they're secure and there's space on top of each rack for a QR code that can push bicyclists to places to eat, stay, shop and get their bicycles tuned and serviced.

There is a severe lack of beds for visitors in Rio Vista. A great way to test the market for hotels is establishing Bed & Breakfast inns (B&Bs). And these can easily be developed by local entrepreneurs. Once marketed, there may be others from away that will see the opportunity to open more B&Bs. It's a great way to live where you want to and have a resource for income.

Rio Vista has endive. The only place in the US to grow endive at a commercial scale is Rio Vista. This provides a unique opportunity to develop a true farm-to-table experience in Rio Vista. Visiting chefs could compete for best endive dishes. Contractual agreements between Endive California and downtown restaurants could promote signature endive dishes that are monthly specials.

There are local ranches raising cattle, sheep and goats that are grass-fed. These, too, can be featured in monthly specials in downtown Rio Vista restaurants.

Endive California and the meat products from local ranches can be featured at the Rio Vista Farmers Market. The Farmers Market can be located near the waterfront in



the early evening and include music, and other arts, demonstrations by bicyclists, windsurfers, kite flying enthusiasts. The Farmers Market could be a location for Rio Vista community gardens to sell vegetables and prepared foods and culinary students could pair with chefs to showcase a local restaurant. The Farmers Market could be part of the Third Thursday event in the evening from 5p – 7p, offering a different opportunity and time from the market in Isleton that closes at 5p.

Having better access to fresh locally grown fruit, vegetables and meat affords more opportunity for local residents to be entrepreneurial with start-up companies producing specialty food items made in Rio Vista. A community commercial kitchen that could be used by them and culinary students could evolve into a business venture itself. This is one example of a career path available to Rio Vista's youth. These can be funded by a blend of grants and business investment. (see, for example <http://cookithere.com/Kitchens/NJ>)

**How do we get there from here?** Organization. Rio**Vision** should explore the value of operating like a Main Street Organization. The National Main Street Center, Inc. is associated with the National Historic Preservation Trust. The program is led by a salaried Executive Director and operates as a volunteer driven organization using the four pillars of Design, Economic Restructuring, Promotions and Organization (<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-center/>).

Economic Restructuring works to advance and enhance the economic environment. For Rio Vista, this could address workforce development including career paths for culinary, wind power engineering and maintenance, and research and development for the proposed fishery. This effort could also include overseeing a Trade Market Analysis, to understand opportunities, and developing a Pitch Packet for recruiting new businesses.

Design works on developing a cohesive and welcoming City design, including wayfinding signage, streetscape, complete streets walkability, location of bike racks, community gardens and access to the waterfront.

Promotions focuses on promoting the city as tourism and investment destination. This work includes branding, website development, social media, and events.

Organization works on resource development for the sustainability and strength of the organization. Volunteer recruitment and stewardship, as well as prospecting for investors in the organization (businesses and individuals) are the important responsibilities for this committee.

When RioVision becomes an IRS approved nonprofit organization, it will be better able to fundraise, apply for grants, and develop partnerships with businesses and others.

Nurturing relationships into partnerships will open up opportunities with other local, regional and national organizations. AARP California could be a good partner in addressing age-friendly accessibility and livability projects. (<http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2013/age-friendly-resource-guide.html>)

One of the first things this organization should address is branding Rio Vista. From the brand should come a logo and website that would act as a clearinghouse for information on Rio Vista as a destination to live, work, play, and invest in business opportunities. On this site should be the **RioVision: Coming Together** report, the future Trade Market Analysis Report and the Pitch Packet for recruiting new businesses to Rio Vista. (See, for example <http://discovernewportvt.com/>.)

A Trade Market Analysis of Rio Vista will provide data that can be used by existing businesses seeking to better serve various consumer segments. Existing businesses may also wish to use the data to adapt their marketing and operating strategies based on consumer spending behaviors and the proposed economic development projects. The data can also be used to identify potential business expansion opportunities and attract new retail stores, restaurants and other businesses. (<http://www.uvm.edu/extension/community/pdfs/market-analysis-report-newport-2014.pdf>)

A Pitch Packet for recruiting new businesses to Rio Vista should include an inventory (with pictures) of available commercial space, city incentives, tax rates, Trade Market Analysis when completed, maps, assets, amenities and opportunities for businesses that choose to locate in Rio Vista. This should be developed so it can be available electronically and on the RioVision website.

Can Do. Get It Done. Using the Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA) 2014 Global Trends Impacting American Cities (of all sizes) report as reference for planning ahead for Rio Vista's future:

- Rio Vista needs to adapt to an increasingly connected and competitive world to become a center for entrepreneurship. Career paths in Rio Vista could include the new fishery (research & development, technology), culinary, wind tower maintenance, waterfront services for recreation, boat maintenance.
- Downtown Rio is poised to continue to be centers of creativity and innovation

if it can offer business climate favorable to the incubation and growth of small dynamic enterprises.

- The growing importance of women and Millennials in the American professional class creates opportunities for designing, programming and managing vibrant and interactive urban environments.
- To preserve hope for upward mobility and the downtown's historical role in delivering the 'American Dream', as well as to ensure a ready workforce, downtown Rio Vista needs to consider social equity in planning for the future by encouraging a variety of housing and transportation options, an enhanced education system, public amenities that promote healthy lifestyles and policies that encourage equity.
- Vibrant downtowns are well positioned to capitalize on economic opportunities in the global marketplace by offering the advantages of jobs, entertainment, culture, education, recreation, health and livability accessible to all.
- Rio Vista can capitalize on the healthy places and food movements. Improve public realm with active green spaces, inviting connections and walkable streets. (Walkable real estate can command value premiums of 50% to 100%.) Connect with the healthy food movements by including community gardens, new retail localvore through the Rio Vista Farmers Market and downtown restaurants.
- Entrepreneurship continues to be a key to job growth. Rio Vista can explore ways to broaden support to small businesses and startups through variety of means, including technical assistance, co-working and other flex spaces, and creative incentives.
- Adaptive reuse will be more affordable as construction costs rise. In Rio Vista, new construction runs between \$150/sq ft to \$250/sq ft. Adapting homes for B&Bs would be a great example of adaptive reuse.
- Rio Vista can be technologically relevant.

RECOMMENDED ACTION	NOTES	TIMELINES
<b>Organization.</b> Develop RioVision as an IRS recognized nonprofit that can follow Main Street Organization's 4 pillars: Design, Economic Restructuring, Promotions and Organization.	Research a possible relationship with California Downtown Alliance to learn more. Once IRS nonprofit status has been established, the organization can pursue a number of federal, state, regional and private investments in strategic projects.	Short-term (2014)
<b>Branding.</b> Secure grant and matching private funds for branding Rio Vista, including a logo and website development, to support marketing Rio Vista as a tourism and investment destination. Tell the Rio Vista story.	Telling the story. To those who live, work and play in Rio Vista. This is a step forward toward developing the pitch packet for prospective investors in Rio Vista.	Short-term (2014)
<b>Design.</b> In vacant spaces or dedicated city spaces, develop community gardens that will provide locally grown fresh produce for neighborhoods. Survey neighborhoods, work with city government and private landowners to identify appropriate location(s).	The Community Gardens can provide platform for intergenerational cooperation and celebration of locally grown fresh produce. The excess produce can be sold at the new Rio Vista Farmers Market, shared with schools, or given to those in need. The effort can also provide opportunity to all ages to learn how to process food for storage and later use. Culinary career paths can be sparked from the garden experience. This enhances and expands the localvore movement in Rio Vista.	Short-term (2014 & beyond)
<b>Farmers Market.</b> Celebrate the agriculture industry that surrounds Rio Vista as part of its cultural history and develop Rio Vista as a culinary destination.	Identify vendors of locally grown and produced fruit, vegetables, grain and meat to invite to participate in the new Rio Vista Farmers Market. Celebrate California Endive. Include music and art. Showcase recreation opportunities with demonstrations by bicycling, stand-up paddling, kites, kite boarding, wind surfing, kayaking, and sailing businesses. Chef demonstrations. Showcase local culinary students.	Mid-term (2015)
<b>Design.</b> Establish National Register Historic District to celebrate Rio Vista's cultural history and simplify eligibility for historic tax credits.	Work closely with the city government and state agency to identify qualified properties and establish the district. Plaques could be designed for these buildings celebrating the cultural heritage.	Mid-term (2015)
<b>Trade Market Analysis for downtown Rio Vista</b> (Main Street, Front Street, SR-12 downtown) for consumers and business owners. This will provide data on local money leaking out of the community to businesses elsewhere and identify opportunities for local investment.	This can be funded by grants and partnerships with university students. The effort could include a subscription for ESRI demographic information that can strengthen current businesses and inform the pitch packet.	Long-term (2016-2017)
<b>Develop a Pitch Packet.</b> This could include information on available property and buildings, commercial incentives provided by the city government and other entities, zoning regulations information. It will include the brand and vision for Rio Vista.	The Pitch Packet should be available electronically as a file to be sent as well as located on the RioVision website marketing Rio Vista as a destination for investment. Information and link to the Trade Market Analysis.	Long-term (2016-2017)



# Partnering

## PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS

A community with a rich heritage, numerous physical and cultural attributes, and a passionate citizenry, Rio Vista is now faced with pivotal decisions about how it will grow and what it can do to help shape that growth, particularly in its downtown and along its central waterfront.

Central among these decisions are how to effectively: 1) accelerate revitalization of its downtown to bring greater vibrancy and economic resilience, and 2) secure an agreed upon strategy, partnerships, and funding sources to bring a mix of uses, public and private, to a currently underutilized jewel of a location. Rio Vista has developed numerous plans for both of these areas but has encountered significant difficulties in moving from concepts to concrete implementation.

The inability to implement is largely due to demographic and market conditions. The community has experienced both spurts of growth (65% increase in population over the past 15 years due largely to the addition of Trilogy active senior development) and periods of economic decline (the loss of businesses and jobs, as well as associated fiscal impacts due in large part to the deep recent recession). Vacancy rates for commercial properties in the downtown area are high, while rents are currently too low to support new construction and significant rehabilitation at market rate terms.

## PATH TO IMPLEMENTATION

Development has been and will be coming to Rio Vista (e.g., large scale housing developments with some commercial spaces are planned for west Rio Vista). The city's challenges will be 1) how to attract a greater portion of development to downtown and the waterfront, 2) what kinds of development will be most viable and beneficial in these areas, 3) what actions should the city, property owners, and others do to help attract desired development.

To progress from aspirations to development Rio Vista, we believe, will need to:

1. Agree on a vision for downtown and the waterfront. The community has a specific plan for the waterfront and is in the process of procuring a specific plan for downtown. Earlier in this report we suggest a strategic focus on downtown and the waterfront.
2. Assure that it has land use and building codes that enable achievement of those plans.
3. Understand current market realities but avoid getting boxed in. Current and past market and demographic trends are important to recognize, but this implementation agenda will be transformative and will alter market conditions in a positive direction going forward.

4. Adopt a viable funding assistance tool kit that can stimulate and be applied to a variety to development types (e.g., housing, mixed-use, commercial, and institutional).
5. Identify willing public, private and non-profit partners capable of delivering quality desired development.
6. Target strategic redevelopment opportunities (buildings and parcels) as well as phasing strategies. Look for willing partners and focus on sites/development types that help generate momentum for additional redevelopment.

Since previous sections of this report address many of these items. this portion focuses on the third and fourth items.

## DEMOGRAPHICS AND MARKET REALITIES

Rio Vista has experienced significant demographic and market dynamics changes over the past two decades. A few of these are highlighted here to illustrate these points and to suggest that these changes bring both challenges and opportunities.

**Population:** Rio Vista has experienced an unusual spike in growth (increasing 65.5% since 2000), reaching 7,563 residents (96% of them urban) over the past decade and is poised to absorb considerably more residents over the next two decades.

Rio Vista's population is considerably older (median age 57.2 years) than the rest of the state (median age 45.6 years) which impact services and development types needed in the community.

**Income:** Median household income for Rio Vista declined, as did the county and state, from pre-recession highs but is now on the rebound. While these median incomes, as well as the City's low unemployment rate preclude its eligibility for certain public investment programs (e.g., New Markets Tax Credits), they open the doors for others. Low Income Housing Tax Credits, for example, can be used for mixed-income apartments that accommodate workforce residents who earn 60% of the county's regional median income)

Estimated median household income in 2011:	
Rio Vista:	\$53,563 (MSA # 8720 Vallejo-Fairfield-Napa)
Salano County:	\$69,006
California:	\$57,287

**Housing:** Ownership housing is a comparative advantage for Rio Vista, which is considerably more affordable than the rest of the state and slightly better than other areas of Salano County. This should continue to make Rio Vista attractive to retirees as well as potentially young families.

Estimated median house or condo value in 2011	
Rio Vista:	\$245,600 (Zillow)
Salano County:	\$277,700 (Zillow)
California:	\$402,760 (Bloomberg News)

Mean California prices in 2011: All housing units: \$418,733; Detached houses: \$441,424; Townhouses or other attached units: \$333,837; Mobile homes: \$155,914.

Median Rio Vista gross rent in 2011: \$1,074.

**Market Conditions:** While the R/DAT team was not able to secure as much information on market conditions as would be desired, a few key factors have been instructive.

1. There has apparently been little if any new commercial construction downtown in about 20 years. And the current commercial project being built is an owner occupied building. Largely due to a paucity of new development, it becomes difficult for lenders to have comparables to underwrite projects and assign capitalization rates to determine value.
2. Based discussions with local people in the building industry we understand that commercial construction costs can run from about \$150 to \$280/square foot for hard and soft cost. This number does not include site acquisition.
3. Similar discussions with property owners indicate that downtown area commercial vacancy rates are about 20% and that rents average \$1/square foot/month or \$12/square foot/year. Residential vacancy rates may be about 5% with rents running \$1/square foot/month at the high end.

The combination of demographic and market conditions suggest that:

1. There is a potential market for housing multi-family downtown,
2. Vacant first floor commercial space needs to be absorbed as commercial. Vacant second floor commercial space can potentially be converted to residential uses,
3. Rents for commercial development (with the exception of owner occupied buildings) and higher quality multi-story residential buildings are not able to support developer and lender conditions for being able service debt and being profitable under current market conditions downtown. Commercial rents would need to be between \$2 and \$3/square foot/month to warrant the upper end of these development costs.

This is not an uncommon situation in many smaller communities and many neighborhoods in larger cities. In many of these cities and neighborhoods, collaborative efforts between the public, private and non-profit sectors have been effective at reversing trends over time, and achieving desired developments that have physically revitalized tired areas and injected new economic life into businesses.

The keys to this kind of turn around are based in the steps identified at the beginning of this section. One of the essential elements is identifying, using (and creating if necessary) alternative funding sources that can provide more patient capital to reduce the overall development costs. These “development tools” can assist projects that have a “gap” in their ability to achieve the kinds of rents needed to justify development costs.

## DEVELOPMENT TOOL KIT POSSIBILITIES

Depending on circumstance cities find themselves in (e.g., unemployment levels, poverty levels, proximity to navigable bodies of water, and having local community foundations) they are sometimes eligible for various types of patient capital investment programs. Some of these financing alternatives provide what are effectively grants that don't need to be repaid, while others offer lower interest rates loans with more generous terms than are available through the traditional market place. Some, in addition to stimulating private development, can help pay for various public improvements.

The alternative funding sources offered below should be explored further. There are many federal and state grant programs for transportation, parks and other public improvements that should be examined, but our focus on programs that will help stimulate redevelopment. Rio Vista needs to weigh the benefits and costs before using any alternative funding sources. Some may be feasible while others, upon analysis, may end up being politically and/or economically unviable (e.g., take too much effort for not enough return, or are too risky,). It is also important to be aware that every alternative funding source will have its own special requirements. Some mandate documentable job creation, others place requirements on who can occupy buildings that use their funds, still others have requirements that projects be in specified locations. Figure 1 offers a sample of considerations that communities often go through in deciding which tools to use.



Figure 1

### **Risks and Fears about Public Investment**

- Project won't deliver on all its promises
- Catalytic impact won't enough to jump start other development
- Perception that project is doable without public funds
- Scarce public resources needed elsewhere
- Impact on tax payers

### **Benefits and Attributes about Public Investments**

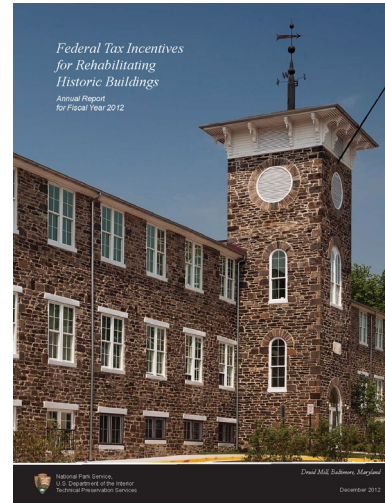
- Provide publicly desired services and amenities
- Influence type, quality, timing of development
- Increase the tax base
- Attract new residents, businesses, employees and visitors
- Retain existing residents, businesses and employees
- Push the market: create new comps, demonstrating higher rents
- Enhance the image and perception of an area

## **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY**

There are a number of funding sources that essentially involve bringing funds in from other than local sources. These are often more readily acceptable to many jurisdictions because they usually do not impact local tax payers.

**1. Historic Tax Credits (HTCs):** This federal program enables owners who rehabilitate historic commercial properties to secure tax credits, effectively grants, for 20% of the eligible rehabilitation costs. If, for example, a property owner or developer paid \$1 million for a property but then invested \$2 million in rehabilitation costs, a portion (usually about 80%) of that \$2 million can be eligible for HTCs. In this case that could mean that of the \$1.6 million in eligible costs, 20% or about \$320,000 would essentially be available as a grant to the project.

**2. Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs):** This federally enabled program lets states issue tax credits for qualifying affordable and mixed-income multi-family rental developments. Key qualifying elements are that the project needs to have at least 40% of all the units available to households who earn a maximum of 60% of area median income. If the area median income for Salano County is approximately \$69,000 for a family of 4 then the 60% requirement would stipulate that the income cap would be approximately \$41,000. There are many working family households in Rio Vista that



### **Historic Tax Credits**

would qualify for such units. The remaining 60% of the units in the development could be market rate, and there are many examples throughout the state and nation of high quality mixed-income projects.

**3. 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Bonds** (issued in the Bay Area by the Association of Bay Area Governments or ABAG): These are revenue bonds issued at tax exempt rates for a range of tax exempt uses that can include eligible medical facilities, senior housing, non-profit offices, etc. The key benefit of this funding source is that these bonds can pay for up to 100% of the development costs which means that a project doesn't have to have expensive equity requirements which increase project costs. Projects do need to have sufficient revenues to repay the bonds.



### **Low Income Housing Tax Credits**

**4. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HUD Section 108 low interest loans:** While Rio Vista is far too small to be an CDBG entitlement city, it is nevertheless eligible for and has in the past received CDBG dollars. These fund need to be used to address community goals that meet federal requirements such as paying for projects that benefit low and moderate income areas, meet urgent needs and will pay Davis-Bacon or prevailing wage. CDBG allows a city to set up revolving low interest loan funds that in many cities have been used for façade improvements to buildings, rehabilitation of underused buildings or assistance with tenant improvements. Loan terms can include forgivable provisions if various locally set goals are met (e.g., job creation at designated wage levels). An offshoot of CDBG is the HUD Section 108 program which allows agencies receiving CDBG funds (entitlement cities or in Rio Vista's case Salano County) to borrow up to five times their annual CDBG allocation to enable low interest loans to be made for qualifying economic development projects (e.g. commercial or industrial redevelopment or new development projects in qualified areas). Like direct CDBG funds, these loans carry Davis-Bacon requirements,

but they also have, in the past few years, been available at less than 1% interest for a 20 year period. Like CDBG they can only pay for a portion of a project's costs, but can help reduce the overall debt burden.

**5. Small Business Administration (SBA) 7a loan program:** One of the most popular SBA loan programs, the 7a which has flexible applications. It can be used by businesses for real estate development, property acquisition, equipment purchases, and working capital among others. 7a loans are provided by cooperating private lenders who get a guarantee of 75% from the SBA thereby reducing their risk. Terms can be up to 25 years for real estate and 10 years for working capital with rates negotiated between the lender and business client.

## LOCAL INVESTMENT TOOLS

The fund sources listed below are generated or have impacts on local public or private entities. They are locally set up and implemented and have applicability to a variety of private investments as well as public improvements that compliment private investments.

**1. Business improvement districts (BID):** BIDs are business property owner associations that allow business owners to approve an assessment of all the business property owners within a defined district. The funds provide services to the district, from bricks-and-mortar public realm improvements, to marketing, maintenance, security, and other services of benefit to the district. BIDs can provide services that municipalities cannot provide and that individual business owners cannot do by themselves. Depending on the market and lease terms, BID fees are usually eventually transferred to commercial tenants.



BIDs

**2. Community Reinvestment Act (CRA):** The CRA is a federal law to ensure that banks reinvest in their communities, including low and moderate income communities. Banks sometimes offer grants to benefit their CRA obligations and benefit their communities, but the primary benefit is CRA below market loans. The more local the bank, the easier it typically is for community projects to capture CRA loans.

**3. Mello Roos Special Taxes/Betterment Districts:** Mello Roos districts allow a super majority of residents or property owners to approve an assessment of all property owners within a defined district to fund a specific improvement in that district. A parking lot, sidewalks, sewer line, road reconstruction and parks can be funded by those who will benefit from that improvement. Borrowing for such projects are over a long term, at significantly lower interest rates than most property owners would be eligible for themselves, and, as special tax, do not require the borrowing to be paid off when a property is sold.



Mello Roos Special Taxes/Betterment Districts

**4. Property tax abatements for affordable housing:** Property taxes for affordable housing owned by nonprofit organizations can be abated. Abatement standards depend on the source of the subsidy and restrictions, but abatements can be 100% of property tax for the portion of the property rented to low-income tenants for qualified rents. For example, if a community development corporation developed a ten unit property with partially subsidized with a state, local, or federal bond, loan, grant, or tax credit, with five affordable units and five market rate units and 40% of the value of the property can be abated.

**5. Property tax abatements for historic properties:** Rio Vista does not currently participate in this program but potentially could. Historic properties, including both historic residential neighborhoods and the downtown commercial areas may receive property tax relief in return for restoring and maintaining their historic properties, potentially providing enormous benefits to downtown, but obviously at a significant cost. New investment spurred by the program can make downtown more vibrant and potentially offset a significant amount, theoretically up to the full cost, of the program.



*Property tax abatements for historic properties.*

**6. Rio Vista Foundation:** The Rio Vista Foundation is eligible to provide gifts for Rio Vista projects. They do not have an endowment to allow a formal grant cycle, but they are a vehicle that potentially can be used to allow community fundraising to support community projects. The most significant recent project has been funding the new community pool. The pool grounds have room for other facilities that would be used by young folks as well as others such as outdoor handball courts and a skate rink.



*Community pool funded through the Rio Vista Foundation.*

**7. Land Swaps:** The City is fortunate to have control of scores of acres of land. This situation puts it into a position where it can, if it and a willing private party have interest, in swapping ownerships for sites that the city believes it would be better for it to control while still providing a fair value exchange of property with the current private owner. This alternative may be beneficial in moving toward implementation on the city's waterfront plan. It may be in the best interest of both the city and one or more private owners to exchange their interests in waterfront parcels so that public open space can be created on the waterfront that would then make redevelopment there a more viable venture for those willing and able to make higher quality investments around that open space. Both public and private parties would need to complete due diligence on the parcel exchanges and work to achieve fair values for their properties based on appraisals.

**8. Fee Reductions and Waivers:** To help reduce the costs of projects in downtowns and emerging areas, many cities offer developers reductions or waivers of various fees (impact fees, permitting fees, etc.). This tool obviously cannot apply to every project in a downtown or in an emerging area such as a redeveloping waterfront. However, projects which meet locally determined criteria, that may include 1) being the first one or two to develop projects that are viewed as momentum builders or catalytic for the area, 2) projects that demonstrate that "but for" these fees this particular project would pencil at terms acceptable to the city (e.g., where the developer still makes a profit but one within reasonable guidelines).

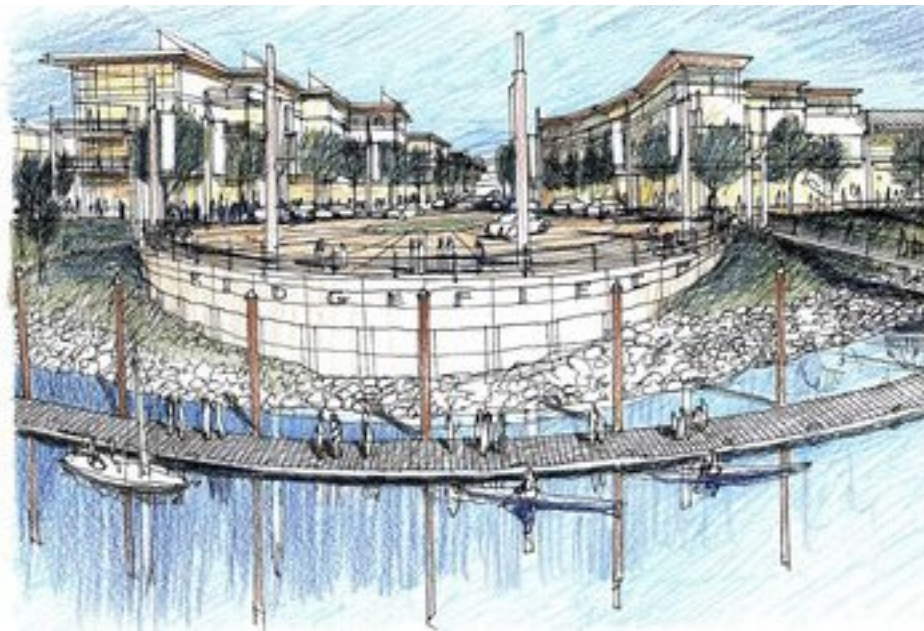
**9. Single Purpose Public Corporations:** This is a financing mechanism that uses layers of tax exempt bonds to pay for all or most of the costs of conference center or headquarters hotels in many cities. By using various layers of bonds (each with differing levels of risk) the total costs of owning and operating a conference center hotel can be significantly reduced. While the hotels are owned by a public agency, they are operated privately by national chains. Their development costs are repaid by a combination of sources that usually include at least: revenues from hotel operations and hotel taxes generated by the hotel. Some communities include increases in other taxes such a county wide hotel taxes, car rental taxes and various other amenity taxes. The bonds can be secured by various jurisdictions to get a better bond rating and lower cost (e.g., city, county, regional governments, ports). This tool has been used mostly in mid to larger size cities.

## **CREATING NEW FUND SOURCES**

**1. Community based Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs):** Real Estate Investment Trusts have been around for many years. These are ways for individuals to invest in real estate the way they would in stocks. By pooling funds from thousands of people REITs are able make significant investments in a variety of real estate developments that bring returns to their shareholders. More recently, in a few US cities, residents have gotten together to form local REITs that enable them to invest in projects they care about. While these are generally smaller scale projects (adaptive re-use of older

buildings or smaller scale multi-family housing developments), these funds can help make a project that is marginal more successful.

**2. Port Authorities:** Port authorities are typically empowered to be self supporting entities that can issue bonds and secure various resources to support water, rail and airport commerce. They can also invest in public improvements and can help secure funds for private development on their properties. Currently there are 11 larger port authorities in California with the closest one to Rio Vista being West Sacramento. There are many examples of smaller cities in Oregon and Washington which have port authorities and are located well upriver from the Pacific Ocean. St. Helens, OR, a city of about 12,000 located 30 miles north of Portland, has a port authority which owns and manages an industrial park, an airport and a marina. The Port of Ridgefield, WA (on the Washington side of the Columbia River across from St. Helens, OR) is located in a city with about 4,700 people. That port owns flex office space in its industrial park and recently completed a master plan for a major mixed use development a large portion of its waterfront holdings. The various industries currently located on the waterfront north of the Highway 12 Bridge, the underdeveloped waterfront downtown, as well as airport here, may all benefit from the establishment of a Port of Rio Vista.



*Master Plan for Port of Ridgefield's Millers Crossing*

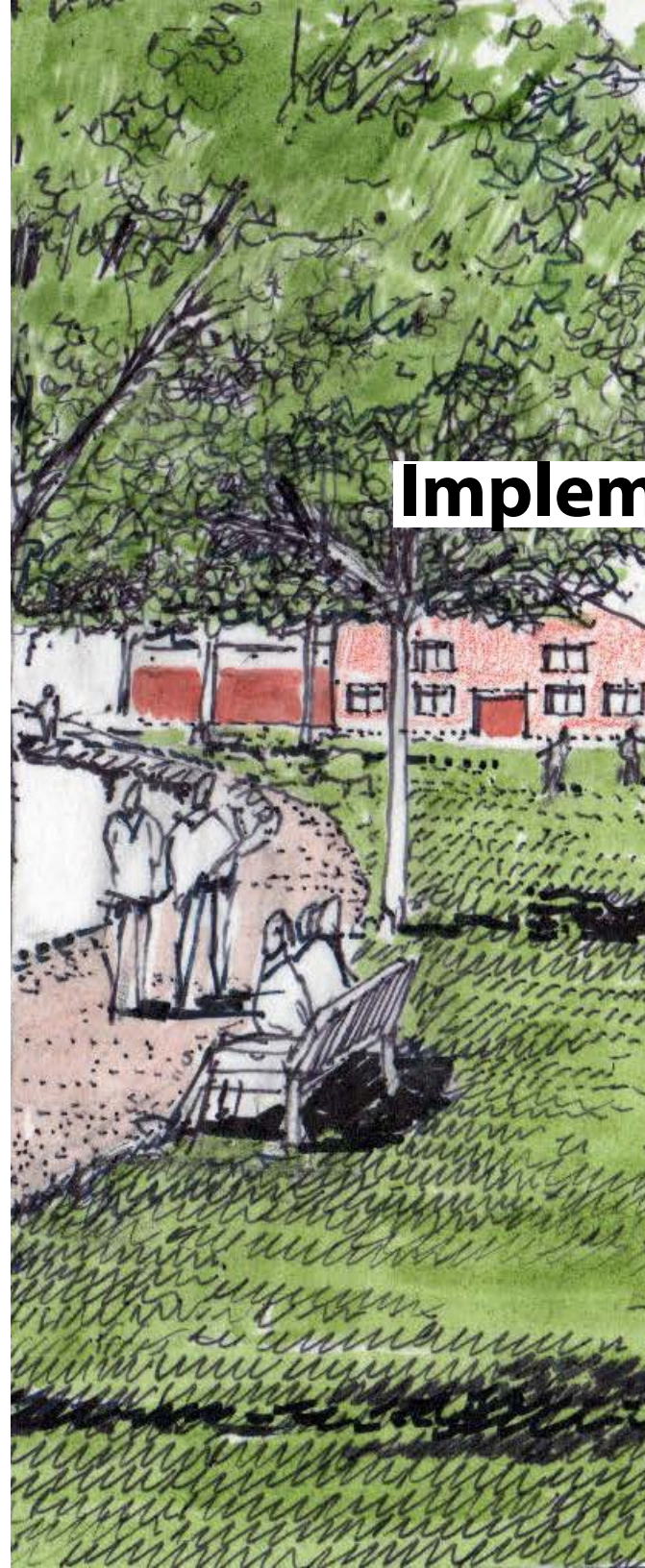
**3. Crowd Funding:** Crowd funding is a collective effort of individuals to raise funds for a variety of causes, projects or business ventures they care about. Crowd funding, which is usually solicited via the internet thereby casting a wide but inexpensive net, has been used for help fund start up businesses, political campaigns and development

projects. Recently a small town in Wales raised over \$1 million to finance a community center. Unlike community based REITs, crowd funders do not necessarily seek a direct return on their investments.

## CLOSING CHALLENGE

While having wonderful assets such as an outstanding river, a community of passionate citizens, and a compelling cultural legacy are tremendous attributes, these alone are often not enough to bring about the revitalization of a downtown or development of a new waterfront. Having an enabling land use code is essential but also not usually sufficient to bring about implementation of community visions for these areas.

Effective downtown and waterfront redevelopment most often require some type of partnership between the public and private sectors. By offering public incentives that are acceptable to the community and make economic sense for private developments, communities can reduce the risks for each party and enhance the potential for successful projects. The City has many plans and extraordinary community support wanting to move these plans into implementation. The range of public and alternative private investment incentives are meant to provide options to explore further. Which, if any, of these options or others not identified here the city selects is up to its leadership and residents.



# Implementation

## IMPLEMENTATION

In thousands of cities, downtown success requires a few common elements. First, and perhaps most importantly, downtowns that are successful are loved by their residents and help define the sense of place and sense of community for the entire community. Other elements, all important, are strong entertainment and civic components, a large amount of housing and healthy neighborhoods within walking distance, a walkable pedestrian-focused core, the organizational and collective commitment and capacity to overcome challenges, and the ability to attract private and public investment.

The R/UDAT is a strategic approach for vitalizing Rio Vista, building community and achieving downtown success.

The next steps are up to the City of Rio Vista, **RioVision**, the business community, diverse community partnership, and, most importantly, the citizens. It is time to move forward. The most important ingredient to moving forward is City and **RioVision** joint ownership and a commitment to focus on the project.

**Quick start** actions should be identified immediately. Momentum forward, even with small baby steps, is self-reinforcing. With a few baby steps Rio Vista will quickly reach a tipping point where the community owns RioVision and drives the process.



*In five months in 2009, after an AIA Design Assistance Team, 160 volunteers, a lot of paint, a thought out color palette, and 41 buildings with tired facades came together to transform how Port Angeles looked.*

**Building excitement** keeps the community involved with the process, building a can-do attitude, and making the process fun is important. Rio Vista's Third Thursdays and the Rio Vista Bass Derby and Festival are both fun for residents, attracts visitors and

money, and helps put Rio Vista on the map. More events, whether it is the "Running of the Sheep" of local sheep herded by local dogs, as suggested by a local resident, or any other events, are relatively easy quick starts that the community can take.



*Trailing of the Sheep Festival, Ketchum, Idaho. Photo by Rob Crow.*

**Seeding:** There are few projects, be they quick starts, medium term, or long term, which can catalyze a community and move overall revitalization forward. Some of these may build on one-time opportunities (surplus city land, and angel investor,

crowd sourcing) that may not always be replicable and some may be more traditional investments, but the key is the catalytic effect. For example, examples could include high end condominiums in or at the edge of downtown, a downtown hotel, or an artist-in-residence program that moves around to vacant storefronts as available.

**Building capacity:** It takes capacity to move forward, but resources for paid staff and consultants are limited. Below are just a few of the approaches that have worked for other communities with similarities to Rio Vista for implementing the **RioVision: Coming Together** process and other planning processes:

1. Hire a new city staffer to coordinate the process and apply for appropriate grants and other funding, an investment that will pay off many times over.
2. Set project implementation as part of the performance plan for the City Manager, Director of DPW and Community Development, and Planning Manager.
3. Set time to focus on project priorities in the City Council and Planning Commission's agendas.
4. Coordinate with the **RioVision** organization for them to serve as the lead agency with access to staff and commissions.
5. Develop partnerships with Rio Vista's service clubs: Rotary, Lions, Women's Improvement Club, and Sir Optimist Club.
6. Engage youth in the process, especially for decisions on parks, recreation, community centers, and issues of special interest to youth, connecting through student government, creating a dedicated municipal youth commission, or holding youth focus groups.

### Partial List of Quick Start Recommendations

- Review this report and prioritize actions
- Identify how to build capacity to focus attention, build momentum and implement the plan
- Develop the organizational structure to support downtown businesses
- Develop a community garden downtown
- Make Main Street façade and landscaping improvements and art installations
- Develop temporary Main Street pop-up activities (e.g., stores, art installations, and dining in alleys and parking lots)
- Redo dimensional standards in zoning, replacing as appropriate minimum setbacks with maximum setbacks
- Remove minimum parking requirements in downtown
- Install murals and clean up of alleys that provide short cuts downtown and river vistas

- Program more events downtown
- Active Front Street to the river with a simple path, benches and trees
- Adopt a Downtown First Policy in City Council and the Planning Commission
- Rename SR-12 to Main Street from the west side of town to Main Street
- Expand wayfinding signage to SR-12 for traffic coming in from east
- Begin the creation of a Downtown Business Improvement District (BID)
- Ignore the highway—Tame SR-12

### Partial List of Medium Term Recommendations

- Codify the Downtown First Policy into zoning
- Reinvest in and reuse underutilized Main Street buildings
- Relocate City Hall to Main Street and 12th Street or other gateway site
- Develop hotel, restaurant and conference facility at former City Hall site
- Develop downtown farmers market
- Develop a pitch packet for recruiting businesses
- Conduct a trade market analysis to identify opportunities to continue to grow downtown
- Develop space for community college classes to be held in Rio Vista
- Begin the creation of a Rio Vista Port Authority
- Return SR-12 to being a Main Street community multi-way boulevard
- Nominate a downtown Rio Vista National Register Historic District
- Develop a historic preservation tax credit project(s) to rehabilitate key historic opportunities
- Develop form based zoning code
- Develop thoroughfares standards (public realm coding)

### Partial List of Long Term Recommendations

- Complete riverfront part as the primary civic space for Rio Vista
- Revitalize riverfront development with high end and mixed income residential east of Front Street
- Achieve the traffic reduction of a connected community

## LET'S GET STARTED.



# Acknowledgements



## THE DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM PROGRAM

The American Institute of Architects has a 47-year history of public service work. The AIA's Center for Communities by Design has conducted design assistance projects across the country. Through these public service programs, over 1,000 professionals from more than 30 disciplines have provided millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 200 communities across the country, engaging thousands of participants in community driven planning processes. Its projects have led to some of the most recognizable places in America, such as San Francisco's Embarcadero, Portland's Pearl District, and the Santa Fe Railyard Park.

### Regional and Urban Design Assistance Teams (R/UDAT)

Created in 1967, the AIA's R/UDAT program pioneered the modern charrette process by combining multi-disciplinary teams in dynamic, multi-day grassroots processes to produce community visions, action plans and recommendations. In its 47 year history, the R/UDAT program has worked with over 150 communities.

### Sustainable Design Assessment Teams (SDAT)

In 2005, as a response to growing interest and concern about local sustainability planning, the AIA launched a companion program to the R/UDAT that allowed it to make a major institutional investment in public service work to assist communities in developing policy frameworks and long-term sustainability plans. Since 2005, the SDAT program has worked with over 70 towns, cities and regions.

The Center's Design Assistance Team programs operate with three guiding principles:

**Enhanced Objectivity.** The goal of the design assistance team program is to provide communities with a framework for action. Consequently, each project team is constructed with the goal of bringing an objective perspective to the community that can transcend and transform the normal politics or public dialogue. Team members are deliberately selected from geographic regions outside of the host community, and national AIA teams are typically representative of a wide range

of community settings. Team members all agree to serve pro bono, and do not engage in business development activity in association with their service. They do not serve a particular client. The team's role is to provide an independent analysis and unencumbered technical advice that serves the public interest.

**Public Participation.** The AIA has a four decade tradition of designing community-driven processes that incorporate substantial public input through a multi-faceted format that includes public workshops, small group sessions, stakeholder interviews, formal meetings and presentations. This approach allows the national team to build on the substantial local expertise already present and available within the community and leverage the best existing knowledge available in formulating its recommendations.

**Multi-disciplinary Expertise.** Each project is designed as a customized approach to community assistance which incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community. As a result, each design assistance team includes an interdisciplinary focus and a systems approach to assessment and recommendations, incorporating and examining cross-cutting topics and relationships between issues. In order to accomplish this task, the Center forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.



## NATIONAL TEAM ROSTER



### WAYNE FEIDEN, FAICP, HON. WMAIA- TEAM LEADER

Wayne Feiden is Director of Planning and Sustainability for Northampton, MA. He led that city to earn the highest “Commonwealth Capital” score, the former Massachusetts scoring of municipal sustainability efforts, as well as “Bicycle-Friendly,” “Pedestrian-Friendly,” “APA Great Streets,” and “National Historic Trust Distinctive Communities” designations.

Wayne’s professional focus includes downtown revitalization, multi-modal transportation, and open space preservation. His research and lecture focus is downtown revitalization, sustainability, assessments of sustainability, and professional practice. He is adjunct faculty at the University of Massachusetts and at Westfield State University, teaching planning law, professional practice, and planning methods.

Wayne’s most recent publication was *Assessing Sustainability* (American Planning Association). He has also published on management of local government planning, planning on Native American reservations, planning issues of onsite wastewater treatment, and financial performance guarantees.

Wayne has led or served on 21 American Institute of Architects design assessment teams. He has also served on numerous additional assessment efforts from Vermont to Puerto Rico to Haiti to Hungary.

Wayne’s Eisenhower Fellowship to Hungary and Fulbright Specialist fellowships to South Africa and to New Zealand all focused on urban revitalization and sustainability. He is a fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners, Honorary member of Western Mass AIA, earned professional planner and advocacy planner awards from APA-MA, and American Trails Massachusetts Trails Advocacy Award.



### ABE FARKAS

Abe Farkas is the development services director with ECONorthwest. Farkas has nearly three decades of experience in structuring successful public-private partnerships that have improved urban neighborhoods, business districts, and university environments. Farkas is the former Development Director for the Portland Development Commission; Planning and Development Director for the City of Eugene, OR; Economic Development Manager for the City of Seattle; Director of Community Development and Planning for the City of Fort Wayne, IN; and

Assistant Professor of Housing and Public Policy at the University of Tennessee. Most recently Farkas was President of the Farkas Group, a development services company in Portland, OR. Several mixed-use, public-private partnerships projects, which Farkas helped structure, have been transit-oriented developments, achieved LEED certification (silver to platinum) for sustainability, and were recipients of regional or national awards.



### PATRICIA SEARS

Patricia serves as the Executive Director of Newport City Renaissance Corporation, an independent nonprofit organization working on the revitalization of downtown Newport, Vermont, an international gateway to Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom. She works with the volunteer board and members of the organization’s Design, Economic Restructuring, Organization and Promotions Committee working as catalysts for Newport City’s downtown’s economic change and community development. Patricia

is recognized for her ability and skills in coalition building, networking for opportunities with tenacious follow-up for impact, community outreach and advocacy. She has a proven track record of working in challenging environments with facility, bringing diverse groups and cultures together in project development.



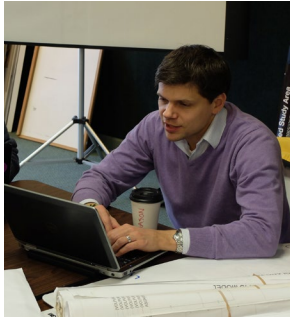
### ROBERT SHIBLEY, FAIA, AICP

Bob Shibley is the University at Buffalo, State University of New York Campus Architect and serves as Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning as well as Director of the UB Regional Institute. As a professor of architecture and planning he has led the development of an international award-winning ensemble of plans for the City of Buffalo, focused on downtown, waterfront, the Olmsted park system and the city-wide comprehensive plan. Prior to his appointment as Dean, Professor

Shibley led the development of UB 2020: The Comprehensive Physical Plan serving as a Senior Advisor to the President from 2006 to 2010. He is a co-author of thirteen books, including *Placemaking: The Art and Science of Building Community*, *Urban Excellence*, and *Time Savers Standards for Urban Design*. The New York State AIA recognized him last year with the 2013 Educator of the Year Honor Award. In addition he has led project work resulting in over thirty international, national, regional and local professional awards.

During his career, he had four years of service on the NY State Fire Prevention and Building Code Council and served six years as a Federal Commissioner on the Erie Canalways National Heritage Corridor. Prior to his appointment at UB he served nine years practicing architecture as a client representative for the U.S. Army Office of the

Chief of Engineers and two more years with the U.S. Department of Energy as a Branch Chief in the Passive and Hybrid Solar Energy Division. Professor Shibley has Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Bachelor of Architecture degrees from the University of Oregon and his Master of Architecture in Urban Design from the Catholic University of America.



### **JASON SCHRIEBER, AICP**

As a Principal at Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates Inc., Jason has 20 years of experience and is a specialist in understanding how cities' transportation infrastructure affects their economic prosperity, environmental impact, and overall health. His work includes evaluating the economic impacts of streetcar lines, multimodal strategies to stimulate downtown development, land use and demand management programs for net zero climate impact, the integration of priority transit into

existing downtowns, and progressive parking management frameworks. Jason works to carefully balance the often competing needs of residents, developers, and local government, identifying opportunities to work in partnership for a greater mutual gain.



### **KEVIN WILSON**

Kevin Wilson attended Lafayette College in Easton Pennsylvania, graduating 1970 with a B.A. in Geology. He spent the next two years in the U.S. Army, and then attended graduate school at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, graduating with a M.S. in Design in 1982. From 1983-1990, he held the position of Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Classes taught included interior design, architectural drawing, rendering, and furniture design.

From 1985-2000, he held the position of assistant lecturer in the Smith College architectural studio.

Kevin has worked at numerous firms, including: Joslin & Lesser Associates, Cambridge MA; Juster, Pope, Frazier, Shelburne Falls MA; Dodson Associates, Ashfield MA; Thompson Design Group, Boston MA; and Bing Thom Architects, Vancouver. His work has been featured in the following publications: Progressive Architecture, Architecture, The Architectural Record, Landscape Architecture, Fine Homebuilding, and the New Yorker. Kevin is currently principal of Mill River Design, Haydenville, Massachusetts.



### **BILL EUBANKS, FASLA, LEED AP**

Bill Eubanks is an award-winning landscape architect and Creative Director of the Urban Edge Studio in the Charleston, SC area. The studio's practice focuses on building community through sustainable urbanism, including urban infill, suburban redevelopment, form-based codes, small town master planning, urban parks, and campus projects. He is a graduate of the E. Fay Jones School of Architecture at the University of Arkansas with a Bachelors of Landscape Architecture.

He is a past Vice President, Membership of ASLA and is currently on the Board of Trustees of ASLA, representing the South Carolina Chapter. He is a member of the Urban Land Institute and the Congress for the New Urbanism. Bill is a certified Public Meeting Facilitator, Charrette Planner and Charrette Manager through the National Charrette Institute (NCI) and believes strongly in both collaboration and the public participation process.

Bill resides in the historic Byrnes Downs neighborhood of Charleston, SC where he represents his neighborhood as Board President of the Ashley Bridge District. He was also appointed to the "10,000 Trees" Committee by Mayor Joe Riley, Honorary ASLA and he also serves on the Board of Directors of the East Cooper Land Trust.

### **JOEL MILLS- DIRECTOR, AIA CENTER FOR COMMUNITIES BY DESIGN**

Joel Mills is Director of the American Institute for Architects' Center for Communities by Design. The Center is a leading provider of pro bono technical assistance and participatory planning for community sustainability. Through its design assistance programs, the Center has worked in over 200 communities across 47 states. Its processes have been modeled successfully in the United States and across Europe. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Joel's 18-year career has been focused on strengthening civic capacity and civic institutions around the world. This work has helped millions of people participate in democratic processes, visioning efforts, and community planning initiatives. In the United States, Joel has worked with dozens of communities in over 25 states, leading participatory initiatives and collaborative processes that have facilitated public-private partnerships and led to hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment. His work has been featured on ABC World News Tonight, Nightline, CNN, The Next American City, Smart City Radio, The National Civic Review, Ecostructure Magazine, The Washington Post, and dozens of other media sources.

In December 2010, he was elected to the Board of Directors for the IAP2-USA. He is also a member of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), the American Planning Association, the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), and the Mid-Atlantic Facilitators Network.

## ERIN SIMMONS- DIRECTOR, AIA DESIGN ASSISTANCE

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. Through its design assistance programs, the AIA has worked in 200 communities across 47 states. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Erin is a leading practitioner of the design assistance process. Her portfolio includes work in over 65 communities across the United States. A frequent lecturer on the subject of creating livable communities and sustainability, Erin contributed to the recent publication "Assessing Sustainability: A guide for Local Governments". Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.





The team would like to offer special thanks to our student and local design professional volunteers; their contributions to this report and effort were invaluable. We extend particular thanks to **Mark McTeer, AIA**, for coordinating the local volunteer effort.

**Noah Housh**- Student/City Planner, Santa Rose, CA

**Ryan Natividad**- UC Berkeley

**Sarah Sobel**- Interstice Architects

**Brandon Briones**- Cosumnes River College

**Matthew Gaul**- Local professional

**Lotus Grenier**- UC Berkeley

**Elizabeth Romo**- Cosumnes River College

**Courtney Thomas**- Cosumnes River College

**Daniel Christman**- Cosumnes River College

**Annie Luu**- Cosumnes River College

**Robert Keen**- UC Berkeley

**Nathan McCallister**- Cosumnes River College



## THANK YOU RIO VISTA!

Without the ongoing feedback from everyone in the community, this program would never have happened. Below is but a small sampling of the community that has participated in this Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team program.

### Special Thanks to:

#### RioVision Committee

Constance Boulware

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Dave Falk

Jack Krebs

Dave Greiner

Jenny Emigh

David Melilli

Jim Nordin

Derek Jones

John Degele

Donna Armanino

Linda Orrante

Doug Alvarez

Lynne Hansen

Edwin Okamura

Mark McTeer

Elaine Wemple

MaryEllen Lamothe

#### Corporate Sponsors

Mitch Conner

Bank of Rio Vista

Noah Housh

California Endive

Noel O'Brien

City of Rio Vista

Norman Richardson

D & S Press

Richard Pettijohn

Hale & Sue Conklin

Sidney Sweeney

Linda Orrante & Jim Nordin

Tim Kubli

McCormack Ranch

Tom Surh

Rio Sands Lodge

Walt Stanish

Solano EDC

Solano Transportation Authority



### Community Leaders & Supporters

AIA East Bay	David Melilli	Jan Hunter	Mary Lee Sharer	Robert McGahey
All Occasion Travel	Diamon Ratola	Jenifer McGahey	Mayor Norman Richardson	Robert Songey
Amy Bettencourt	Don Beno	Joan & Chris Quan	Memo's at the Point	River News-Herald
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Barbara Lee	Elaine Wemple	Kathleen Klessen	Patricia Pia	Striper Cafe
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Bob Bard	Foster's Bighorn	Kathleen Nilsson	Pizza Factory	Taqueria Mexico
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Cafe Rio	Frances Riedmiller	Lee Ann Frable	Richard Pettijohn	The Nines Restaurant at Trilogy
Cafe Vista	Gerald Oxoby	Lee Williams	Rio Vista Bakery	Tom Surh
Chef Edwards	Gloria Flores	Les Nunes	Rio Vista Beacon	Trilogy at Rio Vista
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