



# REPORT TO DESIGN COMMISSION City of Sacramento

# 4

915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2671

PUBLIC HEARING  
January 12, 2011

To: Members of the Design Commission

**Subject: River District Design Review Guidelines and Design Review District  
(M10-012, also M09-003)**

**Location/Council District:**

The River District Specific Plan area is bounded by Downtown and the Railyards on the south, the Sacramento River on the west, the American River on the north, and 28<sup>th</sup> Street on the east.

Council District 1 and 3

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends the Commission forward to City Council a recommendation of approval for the River District Design Review Guidelines and formation of the River District Design Review District. The City Council has the final approval authority.

**Contact:** Evan Compton, Associate Planner, Community Development (916) 808-5260  
Greg Taylor, Senior Architect, Community Development (916) 808-5268

**Design Guidelines and Design Review District:** The River District Plan Update (see Attachment 3 for a boundary map) proposes adopting policy documents to support a transit-oriented mixed use urban environment. The Design Guidelines for the River District articulate the overall vision for the physical form and character of the public and private improvements within the plan area. The Design Guidelines, which were developed based on guiding principles developed from the property owners and stakeholders with a series of workshops, will ensure a quality of design that is consistent with the River District Specific Plan and the larger Central City area.

The River District Design Review District covers a greater area than the Special Planning District and Specific Plan boundary, since it will also include the eastern portion of the former Richards Boulevard SPD which includes Blue Diamond and other vacant industrially zoned land.

Guiding Principles for the Design Guidelines included engaging the rivers, encouraging a walkable district, and providing an opportunity to develop mixed use development.

**Background Information:** On December 13, 1994, the City adopted the Richards Boulevard Area Plan (M93-119), commonly referred to as the "RBAP." The RBAP is a community plan establishing land uses and development standards to guide decisions on development and growth in the River District. On December 11, 2007, the City Council adopted Resolution 2007-915 directing staff to proceed with an update to the RBAP. On August 18, 2010, the Design Commission initiated formation of the River District Design Review District and reviewed the draft Design Guidelines. The River District Design Review Guidelines attached in this report are part of a master planning effort for the River District which also addresses zoning, infrastructure, circulation, parks and open spaces, and the treatment of cultural resources.

### **Height, Yard, and Stepback Requirements**

With the River District SPD, any deviation from the required height, yard, and stepback standards would be reviewed and approved by the Design or Preservation hearing bodies. The Design or Preservation hearing bodies would evaluate the intent and purpose of the River District Design Guidelines, to ensure that an adequate and appropriate street tree canopy is created and maintained, and to mitigate visual impacts on listed historic resources.

**Environmental Considerations:** A Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the River District Specific Plan (RDSP) and circulated for public review. A Final EIR is currently being prepared.

**Public/Neighborhood Outreach and Comments:** Public outreach has been ongoing since this project was initiated. In February and March of 2008 staff conducted three community "Visioning Workshops" to identify issues requiring focused study and to formulate the vision and guiding principles for the future of the district.

In February of 2009, staff conducted targeted "Property Owner Meetings" to introduce the draft land use and circulation elements of the Specific Plan, explain the potential impacts to individual property owners, and to capture their feedback. Those in attendance were largely supportive of the proposed land use and circulation elements.

Public outreach is a very important component of this planning project and every effort is being made to engage with area residents, property owners, public agencies, not-for-profits, and other stakeholders. The following is a compilation of some of those efforts to date:

- Visioning Workshops (2/20/08, 2/21/08, and 3/19/08);
- Stakeholder Group monthly meetings;
- Property owner meetings (2/11/09 and 2/12/09);
- Historic Resources Survey workshop (3/23/09);
- Individual meetings with key area stakeholders, including Regional Transit, SMUD, PG&E, SAFCA, SHRA, Sacramento County, SMAQMD, Twin Rivers Unified School District, and the State of California.

- Regional Parks Advisory Group (4/17/09)
- External Stakeholder Meeting (5/28/09)
- Meeting with Real Estate Brokers (06/02/2009)
- SAFCA and ARFCD on 10/30/2009
- Rezoning Workshops on 4/27/2010 and 4/29/2010
- Staff maintains and regularly updates a page on the City's website dedicated to this project.

**Summary of Public Hearings Conducted:** Table 1 below lists the public meetings and public hearings conducted on the River District Specific Plan project:

<b>Table 1: List of Public Hearings</b>		
<b>Hearing Body</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
City Council	July 15, 2008	Review and Comment
Planning Commission	April 9, 2009	Review and Comment
Preservation Commission	August 4, 2010	Review and Comment
Parks Commission	August 5, 2010	Review and Comment
Planning Commission	August 12, 2010	Review and Comment
Design Commission	August 18, 2010	Review and Comment
Preservation Director	October 13, 2010	Final Recommendation
City Council	October 19, 2010	Review and Comment
Preservation Director	October 20, 2010	Final Recommendation
Preservation Commission	November 3, 2010	Public Hearing
Preservation Commission	December 1, 2010	Final Recommendation
Design Commission	January 12, 2011	Final Recommendation
Planning Commission	January 13, 2011*	Final Recommendation
Law and Legislation	January 18, 2011*	Final Recommendation
City Council PFP	January 25, 2011*	Pass for Publication
City Council	February 1, 2011*	Final Adoption

\*Anticipated Hearing Dates Subject to Change

**Policy Considerations: General Plan**

**LU 2.4.1 Unique Sense of Place.** *The City shall promote quality site, architectural and landscape design that incorporates those qualities and characteristics that make Sacramento desirable and memorable including: walkable blocks, distinctive parks and open spaces, tree-lined streets, and varied architectural styles.* Staff finds the Design Guidelines encourage an eclectic character for the area, highlight the importance of celebrating connections to the river, and promote the adaptive reuse of existing buildings when possible which will foster a unique sense of place for the River District.

**LU 2.7.1 Development Regulations.** *The City shall promote design excellence by ensuring city development regulations clearly express intended rather than prohibited outcomes and reinforce rather than inhibit quality design.* Staff finds that the River District Design Review Guidelines provide a balanced regulatory framework because

the document shares a vision for the future possibilities of the district while providing overall guiding principles and the rationale behind the minimum development standards.

**LU 2.7.6 Walkable Blocks.** *The City shall require new development and redevelopment projects to create walkable, pedestrian-scaled blocks, publicly accessible mid-block and alley pedestrian routes where appropriate, and sidewalks scaled for the anticipated pedestrian use.* Staff finds that the Design Guidelines provide detailed street sections to ensure circulation that is friendly for pedestrians, bicyclists, and the motoring public. Possible alley locations have also been incorporated into the plan where it was deemed to be the most feasible and desirable.

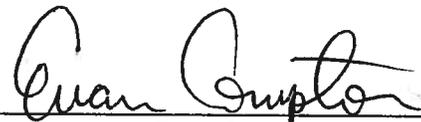
**Central City Community Plan Policies**

**CC.LU 1.1 Industrial Areas.** *The City shall upgrade the industrial-designated areas of the Central City and minimize incompatibilities with adjacent land uses.* Staff finds the Design Guidelines work with the Specific Plan, Special Planning District, Finance Plan, and Historic District to advance the River District transformation from an existing industrial area into a transit-supportive mixed use urban environment.

**Conclusion:**

Staff recommends the Commission forward to City Council (1) a recommendation of approval for the River District Design Review Guidelines because the River District Design Review Guidelines: a) are consistent with the General Plan and Central City Community Plan; and b) will protect and enhance the value, appearance, economic development, and vitality of the area; and (2) a recommendation to adopt the ordinance to establish the River District Design Review District.

Respectfully submitted by:



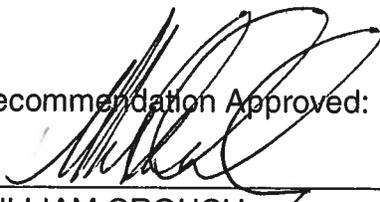
EVAN COMPTON  
Associate Planner

Approved by:



GREG TAYLOR  
Senior Architect, Urban Design

Recommendation Approved:

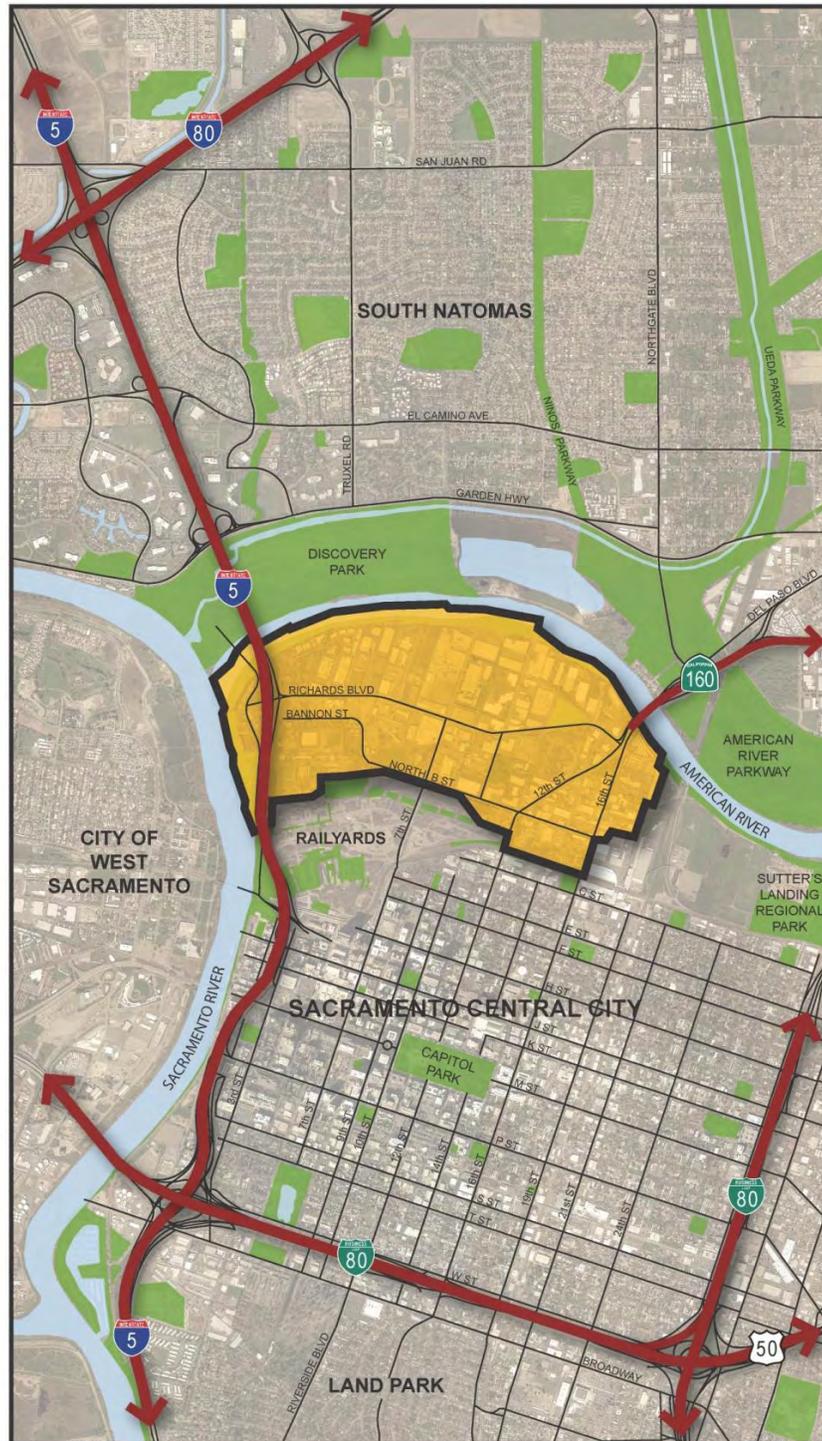


WILLIAM CROUCH  
Preservation Director, Urban Design Manager

Attachments:

Attachment 1	Vicinity Map	Page 6
Attachment 2	Draft Council Resolution and River District Design Review Guidelines	Page 7
Attachment 3	Draft Council Ordinance and River District Design Review District Map	Page 239

Attachment 1: Vicinity Map



CITY CONTEXT DIAGRAM

Attachment 2: Draft City Council Resolution

**[Adopt Design Guidelines - City Council Resolution]**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2011- \_\_\_\_**

Adopted by the Sacramento City Council

**ADOPTING THE RIVER DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES  
FOR THE RIVER DISTRICT DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT**

**BACKGROUND**

- A. The River District Design Guidelines were prepared in conjunction with the River District Specific Plan. A noticed public hearing was held to review the River District Design Guidelines and establishment of the River District Design Review District to accept public comments and to recommend approval of the new design review district and adoption of the design guidelines by the Design Commission.
- B. The River District Design Guidelines contain architectural and streetscape design standards to be applied to projects located within the River District Design Review District and Specific Plan boundaries.
- C. The River District Design Guidelines provide design guidance for private and public projects within the River District Design Review District in a manner that will allow for transit-oriented and mixed use development while preserving and enhancing the qualities that would contribute to a vibrant, economically robust and pedestrian- and transit- friendly urban area.
- D. The River District Design Guidelines include both design principles and guidelines that distinguish between mandatory and advisory provisions that will be used by city staff and the Design Commission, Preservation Commission and Planning Commission in determining the appropriateness of any proposed building or structure, or the alteration of an existing building or structure located within the River District Design Review District and the North 16<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District.
- E. The River District Design Guidelines are consistent with the River District Specific Plan, the Central City Community Plan and the 2030 General Plan.
- F. On January 12, 2011, the Design Commission conducted a public hearing for which notice was given pursuant Sacramento City Code Section 17.132.60 and forwarded to the City Council a recommendation to approve the River District

Design Guidelines for application within the River District Design Review District.

- G. On February 1, 2011, the City Council conducted a public hearing, for which notice was given pursuant Sacramento City Code Section 17.132.60, and received and considered evidence concerning adoption of the River District Design Guidelines.

**BASED ON THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE BACKGROUND, THE CITY COUNCIL RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

Section 1. Based on the verbal and documentary evidence received at the hearing held on February 1, 2011, the City Council hereby adopts the River District Design Guidelines attached as Exhibit A for application within the River District Design Review District.

Table of Contents:

Exhibit A - River District Design Guidelines

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Subject: River District  
Design Review Guidelines and District (M09-003)

January 12, 2011

**Exhibit A: River District Design Review Guidelines**

**Document attached below.**

SECTION 6

# River District Design Guidelines



**City of Sacramento**  
Urban Design Group



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## Acknowledgements

### The City Council

Kevin Johnson, Mayor  
Angelique Ashby, District 1  
Sandy Sheedy, District 2  
Steve Cohn, District 3  
Robert King Fong, District 4  
Jay Schenirer, District 5  
Kevin McCarty, District 6  
Darrel Fong, District 7  
Bonnie Pannell, District 8

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Ernie Gallardo  
Steve Goodwin  
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Melissa Marshall, Utilities  
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Brent Mueller, GIS Specialist  
Avery Livengood, Student Intern  
Mark Polhemus, Student Intern

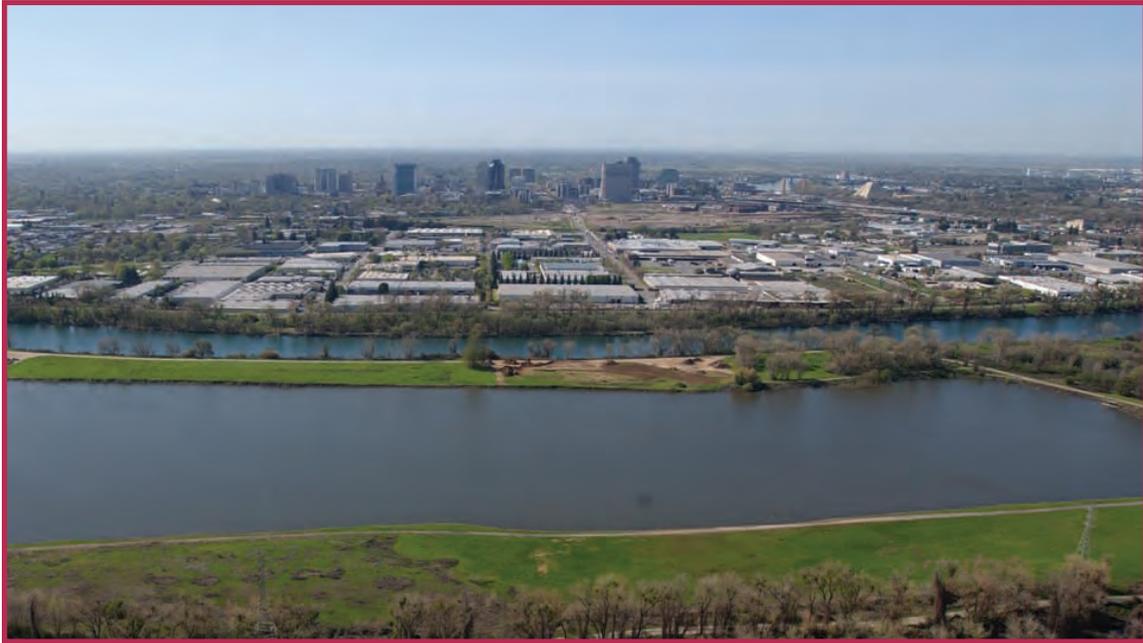
#### Consultants:

Dan Burden, Gladding, Jackson, Kercher, Anglin / Walkable Communities  
Consultation on pedestrian-friendly design principles.

Note: The Design Guidelines Chapter 3 & 4 were adapted from the Central Core Guidelines, Section 1 of the Central City Urban Design Guidelines produced by WRT Solomon-ETC, Inc.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction



# 1. Introduction

*The vision for the River District is to transform a light industrial and warehouse area into an urban community of diverse uses exhibiting an eclectic architectural character that celebrates its unique place in the city at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers.*

The River District Design Guidelines provide urban design and architectural guidelines for the River District Design Review District. They supersede the design guidelines of the 1994 Richards Boulevard Area Plan (RBAP).

These guidelines have been developed in coordination with the River District Specific Plan (2010) and as a part of the newly compiled Central City Urban Design Guidelines (2009). The River District Design Guidelines relate to two significant sets of architectural guidelines - the newly established Central Core Design Guidelines (2009) and the Railyards Design Guidelines (2007), that along with the Central City Neighborhood Design Guidelines, cover 90 percent of the Central City.

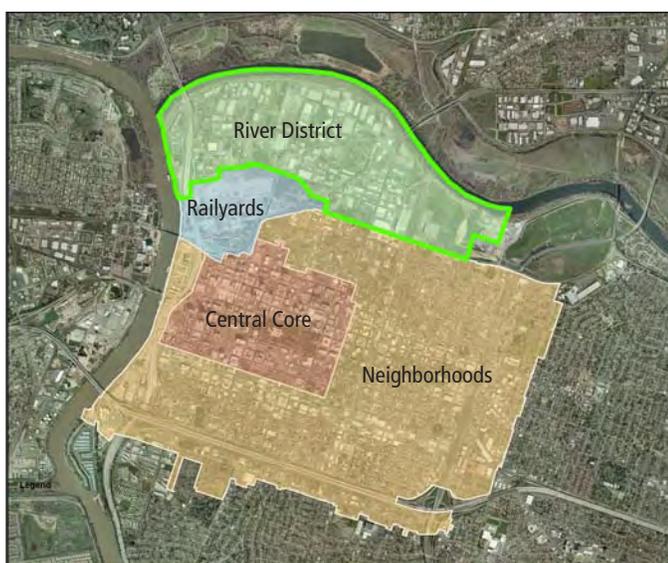


Figure 1.1 River District Design Review District shown in green with areas of other Central City design review districts.

The Central City Urban Design Guidelines consist of the following sections:

Section 1 – Introduction

Section 2 – Central City Framework

Section 3 – Central Core Design Guidelines

Section 4 – Central City Neighborhood Design Guidelines

Section 5 – Railyards Design Guidelines

**Section 6 – River District Design Guidelines**

## Guiding Principles of River District Specific Plan (RDSP)

- The River District's unique character and design will provide a sense of place.
- The River District will be comprised of distinct neighborhoods with unique personalities.
- The River District's desirable location will support its diverse and robust economy.
- The River District will maximize connectivity – north/south and east/west – and support all transportation modes.
- The River District will be a model for sustainable development.
- The River District Specific Plan will support strategies to improve safety and social conditions.
- The scenic environment and livability of the River District will be enhanced through the development of public parks, open space, trails and outstanding community facilities and amenities.



Figure 1.2 Working session of public workshops held in February and March of 2008.



Figure 1.3 The 2008 Visioning Public Workshops were well attended and urban design concepts were presented with early Guiding Principals.

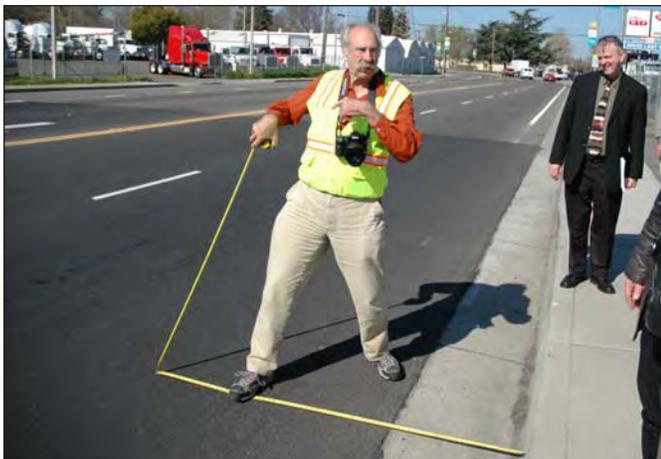


Figure 1.4 Walkability expert Dan Burden spent two days with staff surveying and advising staff and stakeholders on pedestrian-friendly street design.

## Background

In February, 2008, two workshops were held to gather public input on Urban Design and Land Use, Circulation and Infrastructure within the District. The Project Team brought walkability expert Dan Burden to the River District to work with staff over a two-day period to advise on principles for walkable streets and complete neighborhoods. The culmination of this work was presented to the public in March 2008 with a statement of principles and concepts. This formed the basis of the urban design element of the River District Specific Plan and has been refined into this document.

## Discussion of Principles

The major urban design concepts continued to be refined until the street grid and land use assumptions were finalized in late 2009. An area of over 1,100 acres including long established businesses and business districts, the River District Design Review Area embraces the diverse character and carries forward the notion that distinctive areas could evolve into unique sub-districts or neighborhoods within the District (See Sidebar previous page).

## The Intention of this Document

This document is written to inspire great design within a vision framework for creating an exciting and eclectic district of neighborhoods and vibrant streets. It sets forth the major urban design concepts for the district and the vision for each of seven character-defined areas. Chapter 2, Framework, seeks to establish a vision for creating one of the most unique and energetic areas of the city. Attention to detail and vision at the outset of the redevelopment effort is of paramount importance to the future investment and expectations for the quality of life that can unfold as the district transforms. Good design through

recognition of context, thoughtful site planning, careful articulation of mass and form, and care in the detailing of systems and finishes will protect careful, well informed investment.

For the public realm, quality standards of streetscape design, parks and open space, landscape and quality transit facilities are investments in public dollars which will contribute to the value of private investments. The synergy between the private realm and public realm are essential in creating a great place to live, work, play, and invest.

## Urban Character

The existing urban character of the area is mixed with many post WWII warehouse buildings, framed with expansive wood trusses, and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century masonry structures along with many recent tilt-up concrete structures.

The eclectic, unplanned nature in the district has an uniqueness in contrast to other areas of the Central City. There are several buildings that qualify as historic and many others that while not historic, hold great opportunity for reuse creating unique Sacramento places.

The opportunity exists to create diverse, family-friendly districts with high design standards that builds on the qualities of the existing district, such as:

- Its location at the confluence of two major northern California rivers,
- Easy access to two Interstate highways
- Two light rail lines connecting the district to the region and key transit hubs (i.e. Sacramento Valley Intermodal Facility and Sacramento International Airport),
- An existing public school,
- Desirable employment locations, and
- Two Rivers Trail and other cultural amenities.

## How to Use these Guidelines

The River District Design Guidelines (RDDG) govern the design and planning of both the Public Realm and the Private Realm of the River District Design Review District, which includes the 2010 River District Specific Plan area. The organization of the Guidelines follows that of the Central Core and the Railyards Design Guidelines.

The urban design concepts and goals are covered in Chapter 2, Urban Design Framework, of these guidelines. Chapter 3 provides design guidelines for the Public Realm and Chapter 4 is specific to the Private Realm. Together these guidelines are intended to provide design criteria to city staff, property owners, design professionals, commissioners, council members, and the general public. They set-forth a framework of design intentions, recommendations and design standards for the various areas of the River District in coordination with the Policies and Goals of the Specific Plan. Specific policies include:

- High priority for pedestrian, bike and transit mobility in balance with the vehicular demands passing through the district,
- Land use classifications that will allow and encourage a diverse mixture of uses,
- Place-making concepts that will guide the development of a distinctive district,
- Parks and open space priorities which are linked and sequenced through the district
- Streetscape design that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle mobility with comfort and safety

## Governing Design Guideline Documents

The River District Design Guidelines have been developed in coordination with the 2010 River District Specific Plan process.

Township 9, a Planned Unit Development (PUD) in the cen-

ter of the RDSP is governed by Design Guidelines adopted for this area on September 7, 2007 and any further amendments approved since the original approval. The Township 9 PUD Design Guidelines reference the Central City Design Guidelines of which this document is a part. Therefore, where the Township 9 Guidelines are silent, this document shall preside. Other existing PUDs in the District such as Continental Plaza and others shall preside. Future PUDs shall be established within the framework of this document.

The River District Design Review District boundary. These guidelines therefore contain general “best-practice” guidance for the entire area, and also extend particular design guidance for areas contained in the RDSP.

Any amendments to these guidelines shall be made with the recommendation of the Design Commission and be adopted by resolution of the City Council as a subset of the Central City Urban Design Guidelines.

## Chapter 4 - The Private Realm

The River District Design Guidelines provide policy guidance to the Design Commission, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Commission, Planning Commission, Preservation Commission, and the City Council. Used in concert with the City of Sacramento Zoning and Preservation Ordinances and applicable building codes, this document will provide City staff and private interests a common basis for the evaluation of design and development issues during the design review and approval process.

These guidelines are to be used to give direction rather than prescriptive requirements. The Design and Preservation Commissions shall have the authority to waive individual guidelines for specific projects where it is found that such waiver will better achieve the design policy objectives than strict application of the guidelines.

These Guidelines incorporate both mandates and recommendations. Where the word “shall” or “must” is

used it is intended to be a mandate; and where the word “should” or “encouraged” is used, it is intended to be a recommended guideline. The mandates are treated as standards with little room for variation whereas the recommendations are subject to some interpretation and have room for minor variances.

Some key building components referred to repeatedly in this section are identified and pictured at the beginning of *Part D - Massing & Building Configuration*.

## Review of Alternative Designs

The River District Design Guidelines are intended to be a framework and basis for the review of projects in a fair, consistent, transparent, and seamless fashion by the City of Sacramento. Although not all Design Principles will be met on any given project, staff will review projects for overall compliance to ensure project meet the intent of the design criteria set forth in this document.

As such, alternative designs that can be demonstrated to achieve key design principles in some form will also be considered by City Staff. The Preferred Design will always be the recommended approach for proposed projects; however, when an Alternate Design can be proven to be appropriate, staff will be flexible and use reasonable judgment when reviewing projects.

Alternative Designs can be proven to be appropriate when the proposed design provides equal or greater amenities and benefits to compensate for areas of the project design not in compliance. Alternative Design projects should always strive to uphold the Urban Design Policies set forth in this document related to context, architectural character, project scale, pedestrian experience, exterior material quality, integration of building services, and sustainable design.

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## Chapter 2: Framework



*“A good city is like a good party - people stay for much longer than really necessary, because they are enjoying themselves.”*

Jan Gehl

Professor of Urban Design, School of Architecture, Copenhagen, Denmark

## A. Urban Design Vision

### Vision

The vision for the River District is to transform a light industrial and warehouse area into an urban community of diverse uses exhibiting an architectural character that celebrates its unique place in the city at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers. The District has tremendous potential for urban waterfront development emphasizing pedestrian and cycle friendly streets to provide access to more than 2.5 miles of riverfront. This is an unique opportunity to guide development of the area with a strong circulation plan and urban character that will evolve and capitalize on the opportunity to expand its downtown to the banks of two major California rivers. Few inland cities in the United States can offer transit-oriented, dense urban development directly adjacent to nearly three miles of waterfront in a central city area and within a mile of the Downtown Center and State Capitol (See Figure 2.1).

The River District Design Review Area comprises approximately 1,500 acres of which the 770 acres is planned in the River District Specific Plan (RDSP). As a comparison of scale to a city known for strong pedestrian-transit supportive system and defined waterfront linkages, inner city Portland, Oregon equates to the area of River District Specific Plan, from the north end of the Pearl District to University Place at the southern end of downtown (See Figure 2.2). Understanding the scale of area allows us to

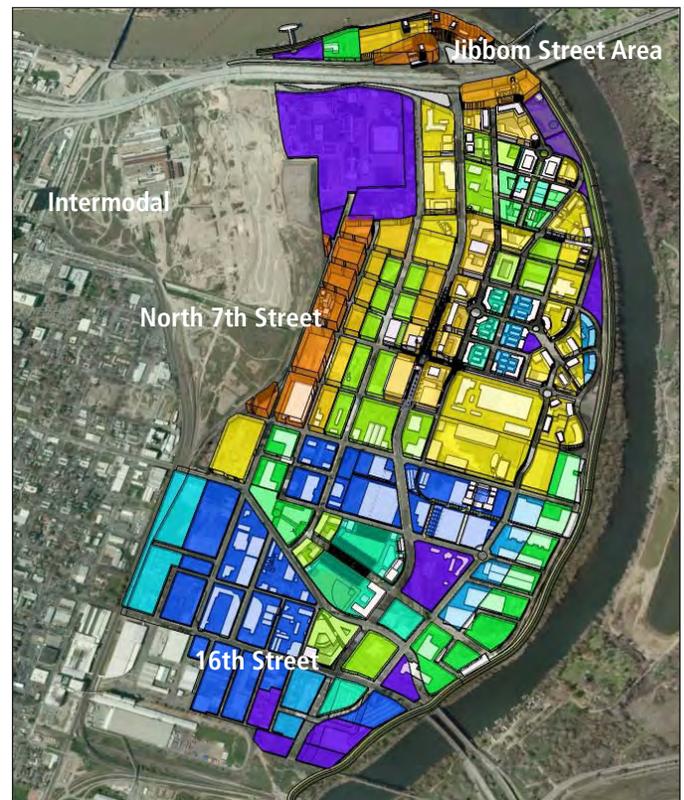


Figure 2.1. River District Specific Plan block height envelopes delineate overall form and scale of district blocks. See Height Map in Chapter 4 for specific height detail.

consider a vision for the River District which is diverse and responsive to its urban and natural geography and its unique urban potential, which will evolve for decades to come, for an exciting infill expansion of the Central City.

The River District lies at the mouth of the American River Parkway, one of the nation’s important urban greenways west of the Mississippi. The strong juxtaposition between dense urban developments alongside scenic natural systems provides the River District the opportunity to evolve as a rich urban waterfront community over the next several decades.



Figure 2.2. Outline of River District Block Plan overlaid on aerial map of Downtown Portland, Oregon, provides scale comparison. (Map source: Google Earth).

## B. Urban Design Concepts and Goals

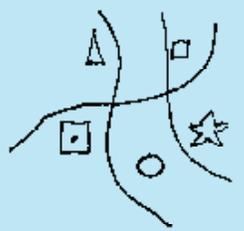
Four fundamental concepts of urban analysis address the key urban design issues in the River District: Form, Edges, Orientation, and Places. These four concepts serve to organize design intentions for the district and address the basic issues facing the district’s transformation into a series of livable and distinctive places which are well connected to the Central City. The overall Concepts and Goals outlined in this section are applied specifically for each area of the plan in the Urban Design Framework and carry forward into the specific guidelines found in Chapter 3 – The Public Realm, and Chapter 4 – The Private Realm.



**FORM** The form of the urban skyline will express the desired balance of competing expectations placed on the land from the market-driven economic value, the scale and context of the surrounding built and natural environments, and the functional response to factors such as climate and human comfort.



**EDGES** Edges may exist as abrupt divisions in the urban realm but can also provide a contrasting interface to highlight exceptional circumstances that can create unique and positive opportunities.



**ORIENTATION** The ability to recognize one’s precise physical position in a city helps ensure comfort and security through identifiable landmarks that help humanize the scale of the city into discernible segments.



**PLACES** Places are identifiable as neighborhoods, streetscapes, parks and plazas, that evoke positive human emotions and feelings of comfort arising from positive interactions with the built environment and natural landscape which serve to be retained in memory.

## FORM

### A DISTRICT WHERE THE BUILT FORM SHALL RESPECT AND ACCENTUATE ITS SURROUNDING CONTEXT

*As the northern boundary of the Central City, the River District will absorb moderate to high densities and maintain a modest skyline with some buildings of more dramatic height. Form and massing will respect the context of natural areas and established neighborhoods with a street pattern that transitions from an industrial scale to a neighborhood, pedestrian-serving circulation pattern.*

#### Goal 1.1: Implement pedestrian-scaled Central City sized blocks.

The City Plan of 1873 (Figure 2.3) illustrated a desire of the City to extend the Sutter Grid north through today's River District. The recent Railyards street grid carries that vision forward to the southern boundary of the District with streets which closely approximate the historic Sutter grid (Figure 2.4).

The RDSP street network has sought to maintain the scale of the downtown grid while responding to recently approved plans and built conditions and embodying a pedestrian scaled network. Development pressures to abandon rights-of-way and expand block size should be reviewed in recognition of the Guiding Principles of the 2010 RDSP.

Prior land consolidations in the district may prevent through streets in some areas, however, future opportunities should be sought to subdivide large parcels and facilitate connectivity of pedestrian and vehicular movement throughout the district and move closer to the realization of the urban grid plan.

#### Goal 1.2 Implement urban form and pattern that contribute to a healthy community environment.

Behavioral science has found that the form and patterns of a city can have a direct bearing on the health of individuals. Neighborhoods and business districts which have street and land use patterns to promote walkability, along with quality physical environments that are safe and invit-

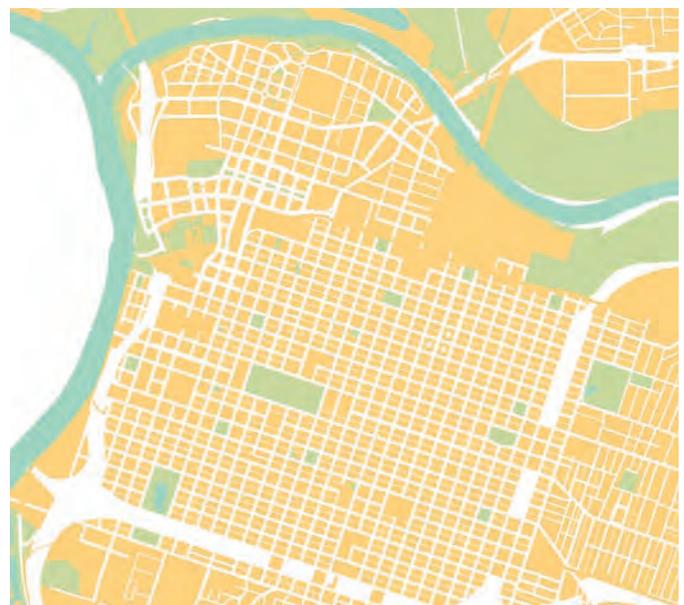
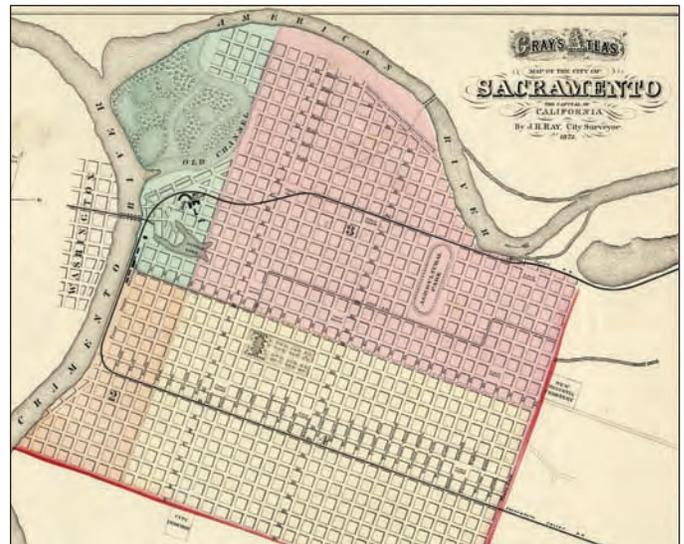


Figure 2.3 (top). 1873 City Plan shows Sutter's street grid extending north to American River.  
Figure 2.4 (bottom) Street grid of RDSP and Railyards to connect to river.

ing, promote more healthy activities. The form and pattern of blocks and open space will influence the environment for walking, biking and general recreation which will benefit everyone living in the River District, and Central City.

**Goal 1.3: Building Form at Riverfront will balance urban and natural environments.**

As determined during the public process of the River District Specific Plan (RDSP), the public and stakeholders supported a concept of a transition in development form from a vertical massing along Sacramento River to a moderate edge progressing eastward along the American River Parkway.

General consensus concluded that the eastern bank of the Sacramento River should offer opportunities for high-

rise development in concurrence with adopted plans for the Railyards Plan and Docks Area Plan, which both allow for buildings of 30 floors and above. The recognition of the Sacramento River as a true urban waterfront warrants intensity of development to satisfy the demand for spectacular river views for hotel and residential suites. Therefore, tall buildings are encouraged along the Sacramento River and at the mouth of the American River, however, they shall not form a visual barrier to the interior blocks of the district.

To respect the transition from urban riverfront to the more natural scenic qualities upriver along the American River, the RDSP sets a transition of building height and massing. Desirable views south to Downtown and north to the American River may entice broad building flanks with an



Figure 2.5. Allowable height diagram of RDSP blocks illustrates 250 ft height envelope (orange) at confluence of Sacramento and American Rivers, and lower height envelopes along American River Parkway.

east-west axis. Therefore, along each riverbank, the design of high rise towers will follow slender massing principles to maintain view apertures from buildings and the public trail and to reduce ground shadows on adjoining parks and public spaces.

**Goal 1.4: Maintain vistas along riverbanks.**

Vistas across both the Sacramento and American Rivers should be maintained by orienting the major axis of buildings perpendicular to riverbanks and a slender profile on the minor axis. This orientation is consistent with the major view line facing south towards the bridge crossings and downtown skyline.

At the pedestrian level, the base of highrise building should be reduced in floor area and story height in order to maintain the open view lines from the levee trail. Good site planning that results in towers offset to one another, whenever possible, will increase the potential for view lines (See Figure 2.6).

**Goal 1.5: Height and bulk of buildings will transition between sub areas.**

Height transitions within the District shall balance the need for density along major corridors and transit-oriented developments with the form and character of adjacent neighborhoods. Transitions in height designations serve to define the character of each sub area by the types of uses anticipated (See Area Character in the second half of this chapter).

**Goal 1.6: Maintain variety of block sizes to accommodate diversity of land uses.**

The transformation of the River District to a more mixed-use, pedestrian-scaled district relies on smaller block sizes than currently exist. The RDSP street grid accommodates existing large scale light industrial and warehouse business operators and provides some of the largest parcels in the Central City while maintaining an overall pedestrian-scaled district (See Figure 2.7).

**Goal 1.7 Each block should have a variety of scale and massing**

Development that accommodates a variety of building types and forms within a block creates a rich living environment and provides a greater economic mix of businesses and residential opportunities.



Figure 2.6. Orientation of tower elements along the river should maintain open aperture to river and distant views.

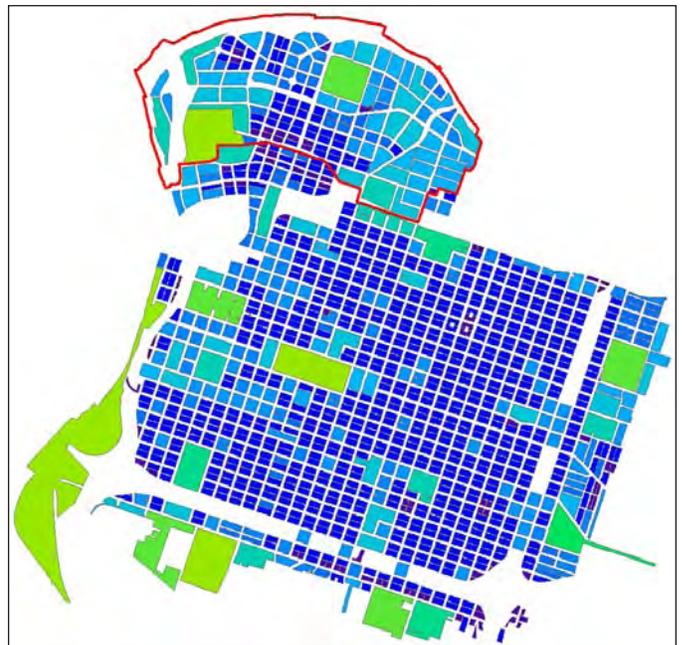


Figure 2.7. Color code of block size. Dark blue represents smallest block area while bright green indicates the largest area

**Goal 1.8: Maximize opportunities for Green Energy generation**

RDSP grid is oriented with the original Sutter Grid of the Downtown. This grid is approximately 18 ½ degrees west of true north-south. This orientation for solar technologies, particularly solar photovoltaic peak power generation in summer months. While the blocks west of 5th Street provide optimal true north-south orientation.

Existing large blocks and large floor plate buildings serve as excellent opportunities for capturing solar energy (Figures 2.8 to 2.11). To ensure proper solar access, vertical heights for new buildings should be designed to allow proper solar penetration onto existing rooftops to be utilized for power generation.

**Goal 1.9 Facilitate the implementation of Green Roofs**

Green roofs provide opportunities for elevated open space, gardens and recreation while providing the environmental benefits of reducing heat-gain from roofs, and reduced stormwater surges into the municipal drainage system in heavy rain events.



Figure 2.8. Roof gardens in dense urban areas provide visual relief while decreasing roof heat loads, filter run-off and abate storm water surcharges.



Figure 2.9 The existing warehouses in the River District, exhibiting good orientation and large unobscured roof areas, present a great opportunity for investments in solar energy generation.



Figure 2.10. Solar photovoltaic panels cover the roof of a transit station in New York City is similar in profile to some warehouses in the River District.



Figure 2.11. Solar photovoltaic panels cover the roof of a warehouse with accessways for roof-mounted mechanical equipment.

## EDGES

### A DISTRICT WHERE EXISTING BARRIERS DISSOLVE AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES ARE EMBRACED

*The River District historically has been walled in by levees on all sides. The lowering of the railroad levee embankment and the engagement of buildings along the river levees will open exciting opportunities for the District and the City of Sacramento.*

#### Goal 2.1: Develop an active and accessible riverfront

While development adjacent to the levees is highly desirable, visual and physical public access to the levee trails and riverfront must be maintained by each development plan along these edges. When building next to a levee trail, the active elements should be viewable from the trail and major program areas should be visually linked to connecting streets and to the interior grid.

Every opportunity shall be taken to increase access to the river's edge, including creatively providing accessible compliant access to the river banks inside the levees.

#### Goal 2.2 Extend internal streets to river trails

Street connections to the Two Rivers Trail are limited. North Fifth and North 10th Streets and the extension of Jibboom Street at Tiscornia Park provide the only public access to the River Trail. The extension of North 7th Street to the river will be a welcome celebration of the linkage from Downtown to the river. The RDSP street network provides for additional opportunities to create strong connection with Two Rivers Trail and the river.

#### Goal 2.3 Provide transitional landform from street elevation to levee

The approved development plan for Township 9 takes advantage of the elevation difference between the street level and the desired views from atop the river levee by grading the ground form gradually up to Riverfront Drive, allowing for parking to be tucked under the new grade

level. Wherever possible, development should seek to minimize the abrupt transition which occurs at the levee embankment and provide accessible paths (Figures 2.12 and 2.13). Parking garages may serve as podiums to raise pedestrian building access at new grade levels behind levees.



Figure 2.12. New Orleans Washington Artillery Park steps leading to levee embankment of the Mississippi River.



Figure 2.13. Public event at Washington Artillery Park, New Orleans.

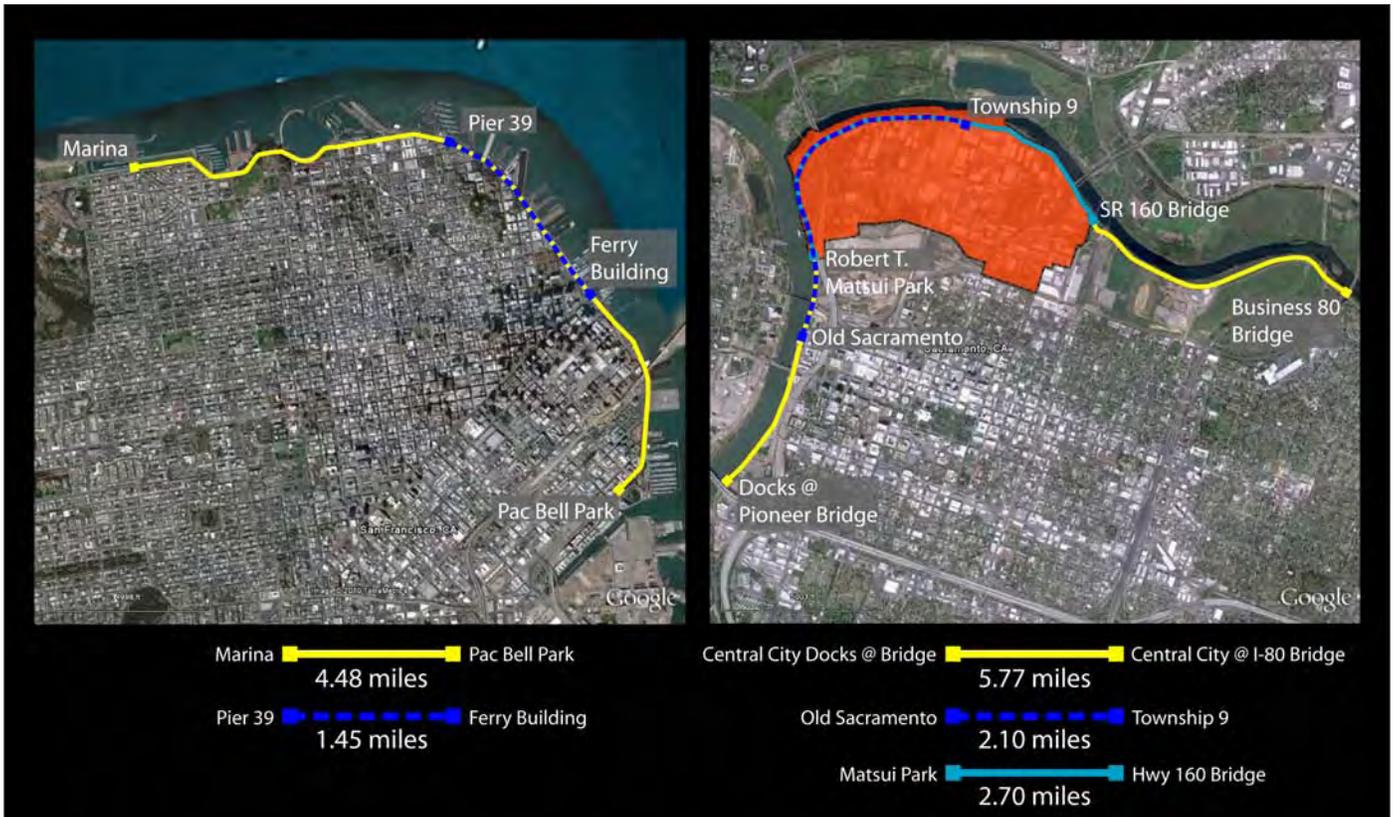


Figure 2.14. Waterfront opportunity comparisons between San Francisco’s waterfront (left) with the riverfront length of Sacramento’s two bounding rivers.

**Goal 2.4 Provide public access to the river**

Public access to the river is a high priority of the RDSP and all development shall strive to incorporate attractive and secure passage from public streets to the Two Rivers Trail. Public access easements, or “Riverways”, for pedestrian and cycling access to the river provide other opportunities to activate the riverfront. All site design and architectural design shall maximize the visibility of the public river trails with consideration for pedestrian safety, way-finding and high quality material treatment of walkways and landscape elements.

**Goal 2.5: Create opportunities for a variety of conditions for unique linear pathway experiences**

With limited recreational use of the riverfront, the extent of river frontage in Sacramento is little understood. The

2.7 miles of river frontage in the RDSP alone is nearly double the length of San Francisco’s Embarcadero from the Ferry Building to Pier 39. (See Figure 2.14) Such a significant opportunity to connect the community to two vast riverfronts, the RDSP has identified as a central concept the development of active and passive points of interest along the American and Sacramento Rivers. (See Figure 2.30) These uses would be spaced an approximate walking interval of five to ten minutes. New riverfront developments, such as the Powerhouse Science Center, will be encouraged to incorporate programming that will establish relationships with the river and the natural environment.

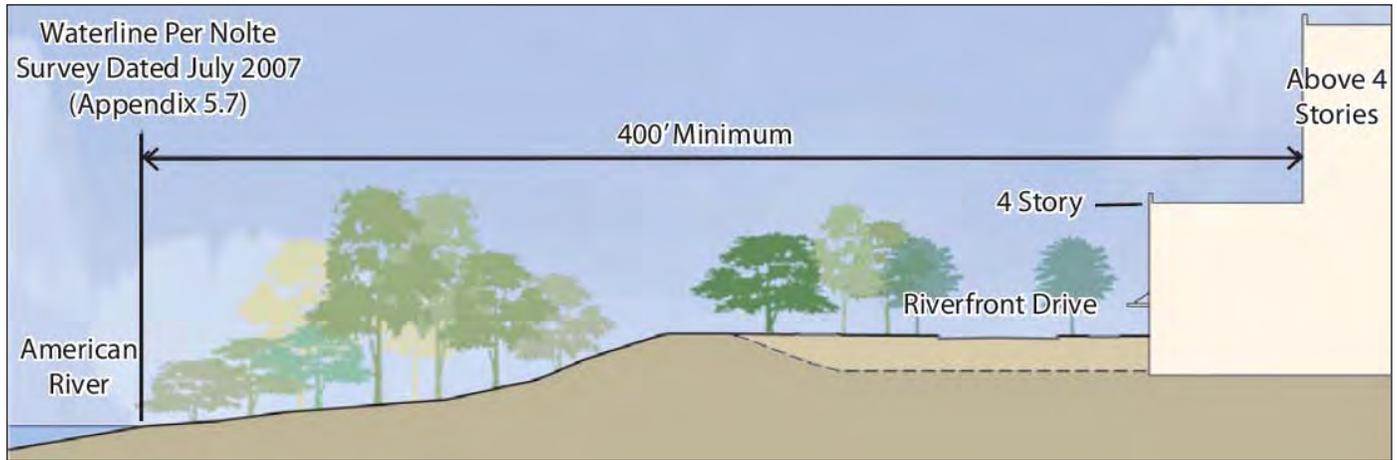


Figure 2.15. Township 9 levee condition at Riverfront Drive. (Carter Burgess).

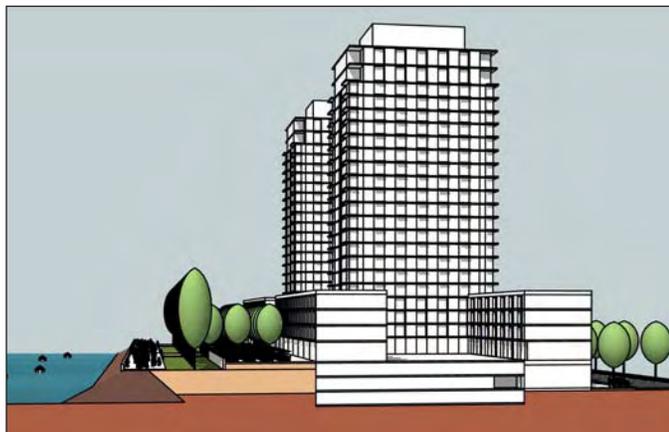


Figure 2.16. Riverfront promenade extension along Sacramento River.

**Goal 2.6: Provide safe and activated pedestrian linkages across railroad facilities.**

Grade separated undercrossings are typically perceived as unsafe environments for pedestrians and bicyclists. Throughways should be well lighted and free of obstructions to allow a clear line of sight before entering and while in these passageways. Active uses should be developed at each end to integrate undercrossings with frequent users and avoid isolated situations.



Figure 2.17. Open-air pedestrian bridge at Portland Union Station creates a viewable environment for pedestrians to cross over rail facilities.

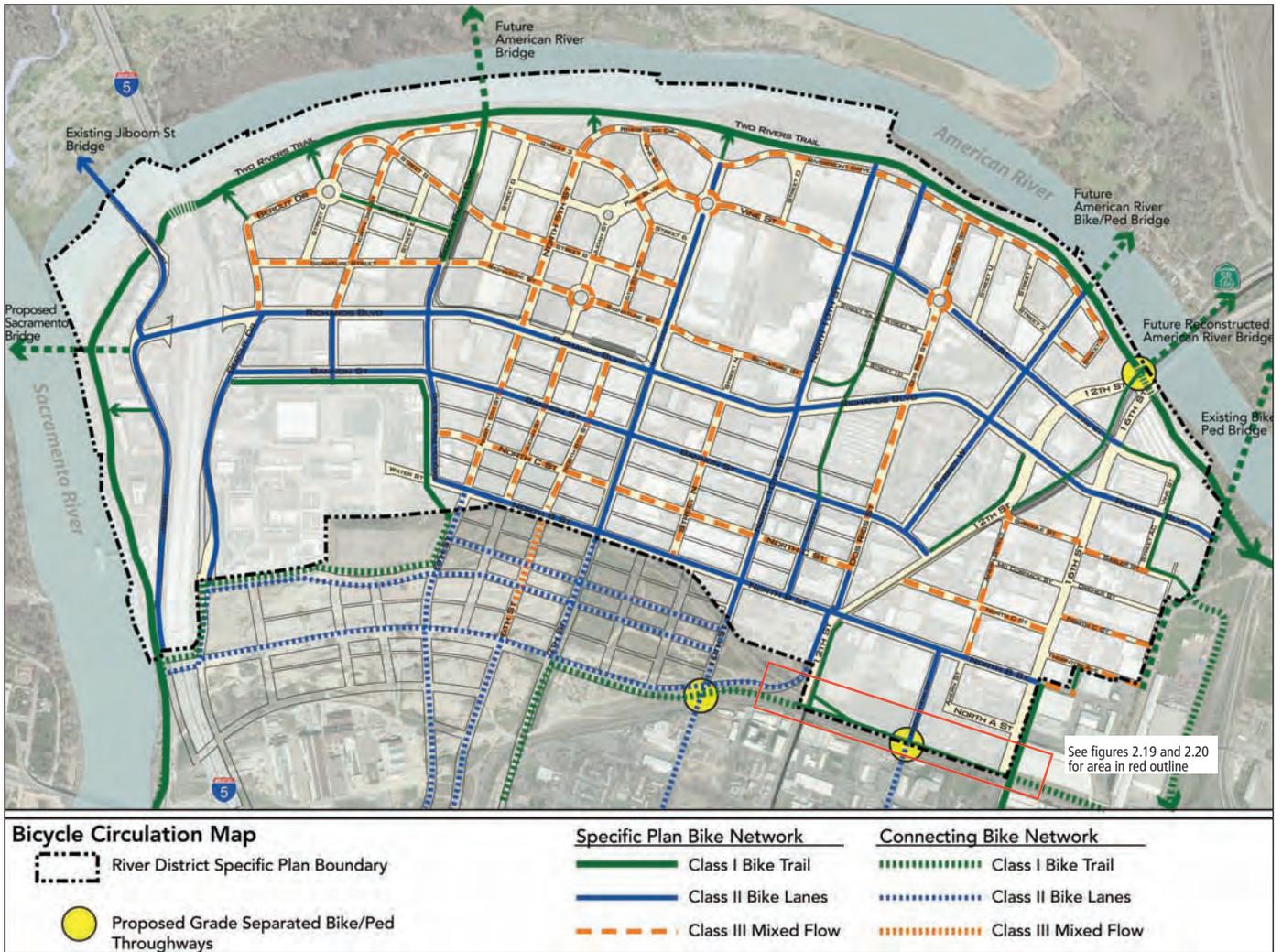


Figure 2.18. Bikeway Plan illustrating proposed Class I bike facilities along north boundary UPRR mainline tracks. Also see Specific Plan



Figure 2.19. UPRR bridge over 12th Street showing future surplus track area in red. Siding track at right to be removed with future Railyards development.



Figure 2.20. UPRR bridge over 16th Street showing future surplus track area and embankment in red.



Figure 2.21. The 14th Street tunnel was closed soon after opening. When sufficient development occurs around this crossing, significant re-design will be needed to ensure better security and usability for pedestrians and cyclists.



Figure 2.22. Bikeway along rail line.



Figure 2.23. New York's new elevated parkway along abandoned subway line.

### Goal 2.7 Implement a bikeway along the Union Pacific Railroad

Linkage to the East Industrial Area and future Sutter's Landing Park is desirable along the track rights-of-way owned by Union Pacific Railroad. With the removal of secondary tracks which once served the railyard shops, the excess right-of-way may present opportunities for an east-west trail north of the railroad mainline deck facilities over 12th and 16th Streets. The RDSP has identified this area as a potential easement for Class I bicycle trail and pedestrian facilities which would link the Railyards Park Blocks, through the River District and the Blue Diamond properties to the bike trail from C Street and onto the future development to the east.

# ORIENTATION

## A DISTRICT OF VIEWS, VISTAS & GATEWAYS

*The sensory experiences of visual connections, destinations, and sense of entry and departure within a city serve to locate us in an environment and mark our experience with heightened meaning and importance of place.*

### Goal 3.1: Implement streets which integrate the inner grid to the Riverfront

The street network of the RDSP carefully weaves together the intention of the historic Sutter Grid with new networks such as the approved plan for Township 9, and the

desire for a strong transit centered plan at Sequoia Station.

The RDSP plan seeks to develop streets that circulate the grid to the river and provide numerous opportunities to reach the river without relying on the rigid framework of

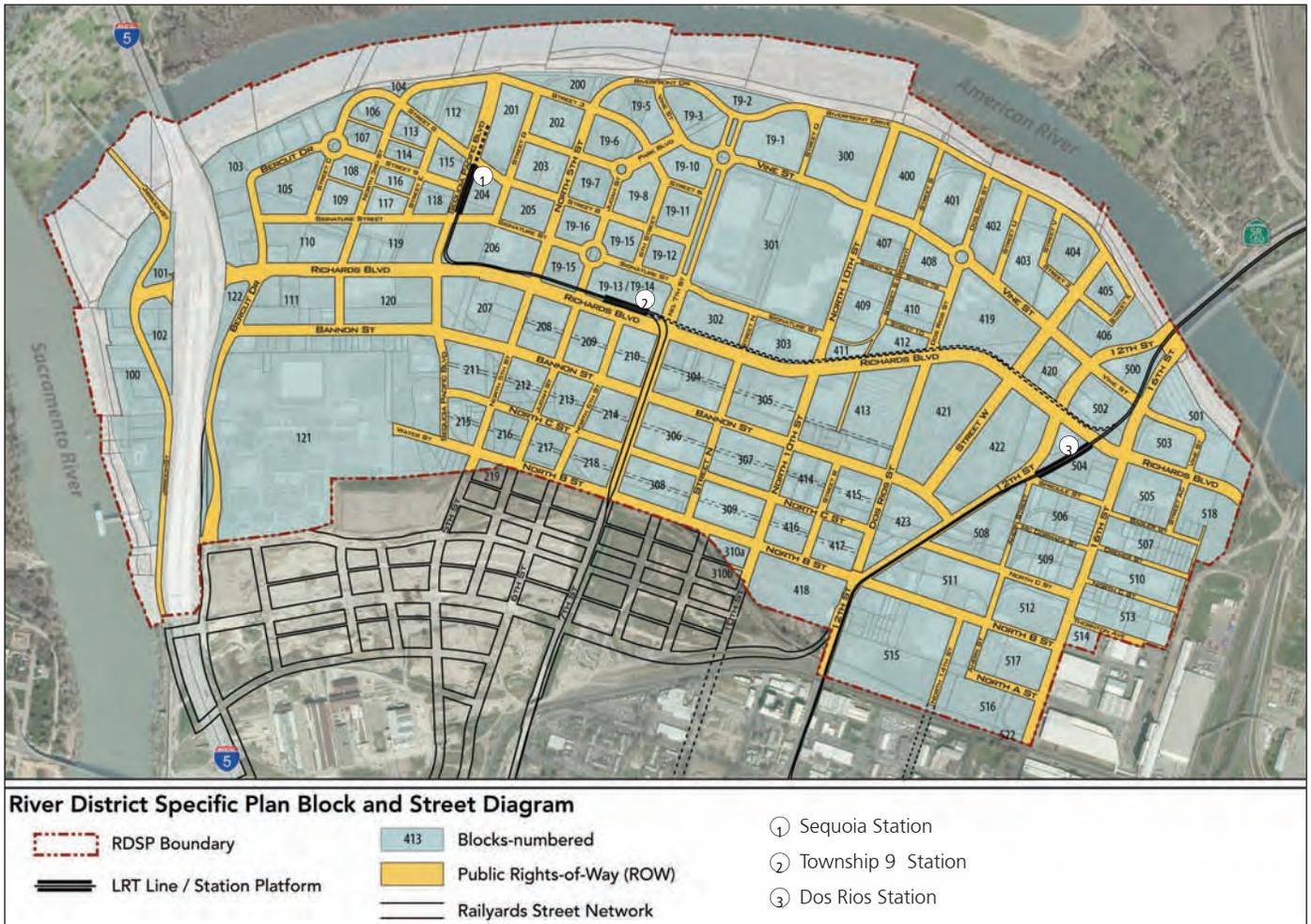


Figure 2.24. Park linkages from the downtown and the Railyards and future development to the parks of the River District and surrounding areas.

the rectangular grid. This is a particularly unique urban design strategy for Sacramento. These streets will be articulated to convey that they are primary “River Routes” connecting the district street network with a ribbon of parks along the river edges.

### Goal 3.2: Accentuate Gateways

The sense of arrival and departure heightens the significance of a place, and is an important to understanding one’s place in a locale and celebrating the transitions between places in a city. Physical edges, whether natural or contrived, are often more psychologically important than administrative boundaries that exist solely on a map. The River District is an area distinctly defined by natural edges (the rivers) and man-made edges (the railroad and highways). These features pose design opportunities for highlighting the River District as an unique place within the Central City Community Plan Area.

With the development of the Railyards, the removal of the railroad levee along North B Street and the flood gates at 7th Street will open the street grid connecting these two districts.<sup>1</sup> New crossings of the railroad proposed in this plan provide for points of entry/departure that can be artfully celebrated. Tenth Street and Fourteenth Street undercrossings can serve as important linkages between Alkali Flat, the River District and the Railyards. These connection points can be designed as more than circulation links; they can be treated as a vibrant part of the street experience.

Currently, two bridges at the east and west ends of the District cross the American River. The Interstate 5 and Highway 160 bridges carry high vehicular demand along the edges of the district each day. The addition of notable features could distinguish these sections of roadway as gateways to the River District and the Central City and provide more significant river experiences.

The first gateway feature for the District will be installed in

<sup>1</sup> The levee, known as the Secondary Levee, will be taken down in this location and re-graded to a finish grade within the Railyards Plan area that will provide the same elevation protection as currently exists.



Figure 2.25. Pedestrian promenade, populated with major retailers and restaurants, passing under highway bridge with architectural treatment along the Yarra River, Melbourne, Australia.



Figure 2.26. An example of street continuity under major infrastructure elements in Berlin, Germany. Each example illustrates open ground level expanse with storefronts integrated with the infrastructure and directly adjacent.

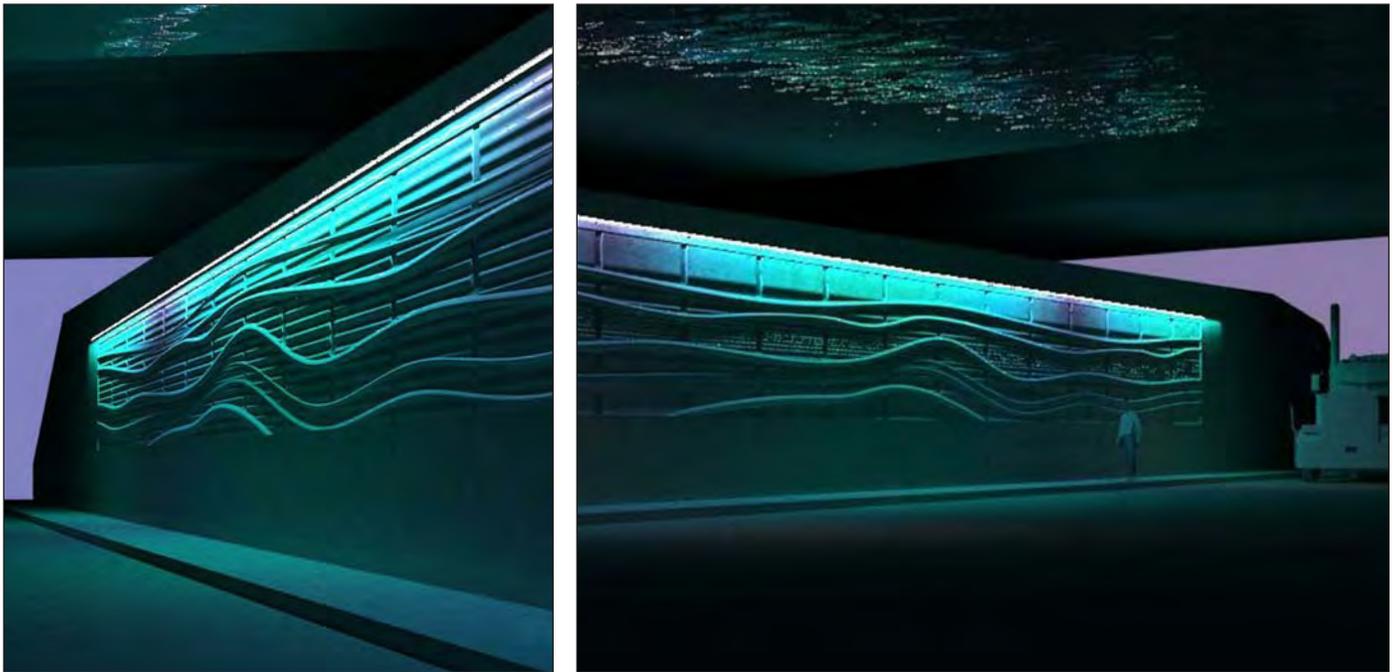


Figure 2.27. Wall art and lighting design for Richards Blvd undercrossing at Interstate 5 (City of Sacramento-Urban Design Group).

the segment of Richards Boulevard under the Interstate 5 overpass. The lighted graphic will announce to motorists and pedestrians the District's connection to the rivers (See Figure 2.17).

The proposed future multi-modal bridge (not a part of the RDSP), connecting Sequoia Street and Truxel Avenue as it crosses the American River Parkway, should take advantage of scenic vistas to the City and the design should celebrate this important crossing.

### Goal 3.3: Celebrate vistas and view lines

Views to prominent landmarks within a city serve to orient and provide reference for people moving through the city. With the exception of Capitol Mall aligned to the State Capitol, the gridiron plan of Sacramento's downtown leaves little opportunity to capture terminal vistas. In contrast, the RDSP street plan provides many opportunities for an architectural response to terminal street views, or significant corners where diagonal streets intersect with the orthogonal grid. The elevated levee system and elevated Vista Park in the Railyards also provide unique opportunities for vistas and distinguishing landmarks.

These short distance terminal view lines serve the pedestrian and motorist alike in the orientation of the city and provide perceptual markers for way finding. The architectural response of individual buildings should celebrate and accentuate form, signature architectural elements, and lighting to enhance the expression of place.

The boulevard plan for North 7th Street as it terminates at

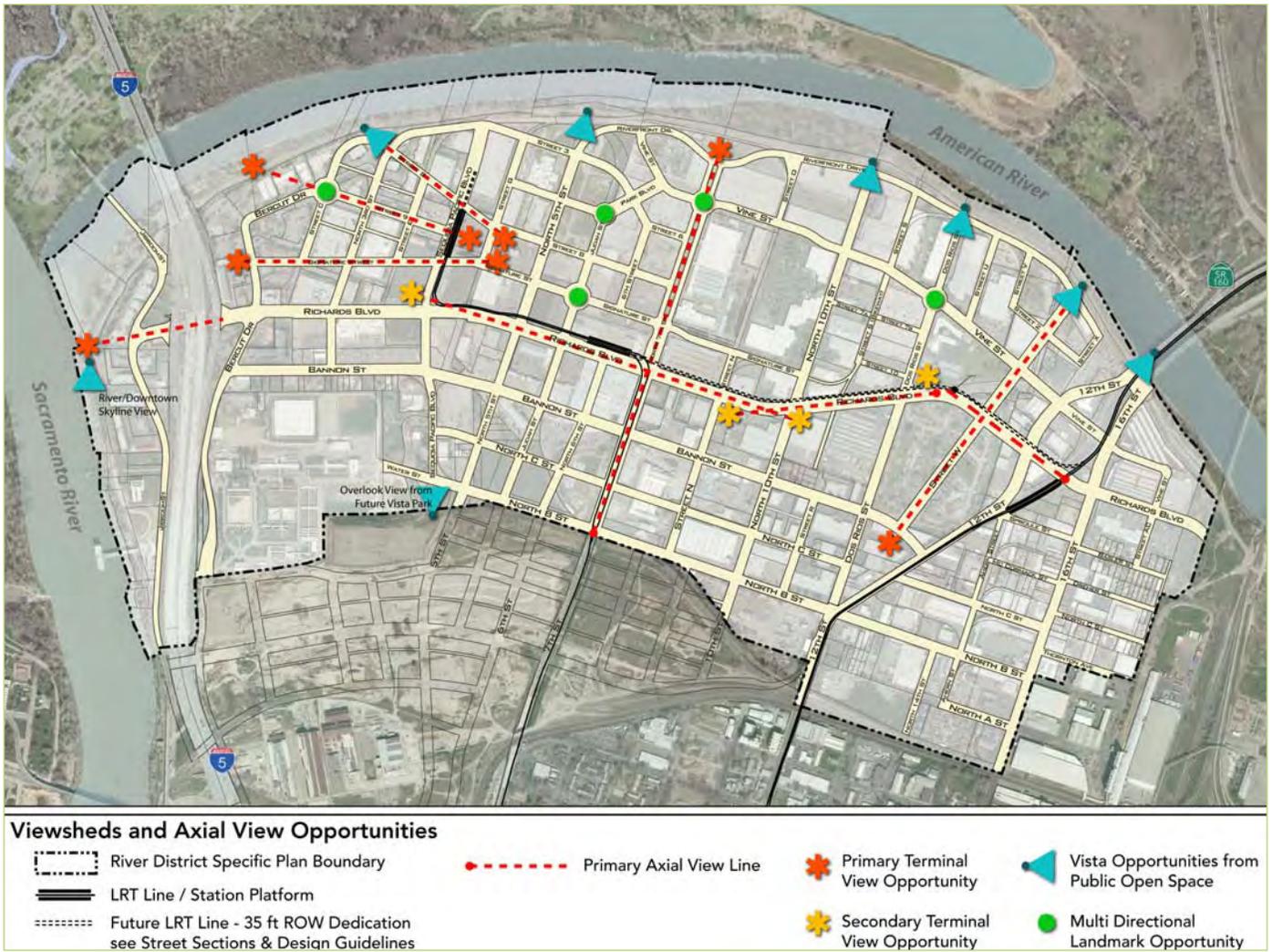


Figure 2.28. Visual orientation in the River District Specific Plan area.

Riverfront Park will artfully signify this strong street-river connection. As development occurs in the District, other opportunities should be utilized to visually connect destination points within the District.

Many view opportunities exist along the Two Rivers Trail, from the eastern gateway of Highway 160, to the axial alignment of 7th Street, and onto the vantages from the Sacramento River. Opportunities to capture select views must be of high priority to designers engaged in future projects.

Streets that terminate to the river – describe from Central City context (e.g. 5th Street that travels from Broadway’s warehouse district, through the Railyards overlook of the Central Shops and the new Intermodal to edge Vista Park to terminate into Riverfront Drive.

# PLACE

## A DISTRICT OF ECLECTIC EXPERIENCES AND MEMORABLE PLACES

*Unlike most other precincts in the Central City, the River District has unparalleled opportunities, manifest by location and time, to create unique places of distinctive character.*

### Goal 4.1: Maintain Scale of Sutter’s Grid

The historic blocks of the Central City have a distinctive scale and orthogonal pattern. Measuring approximately 320 feet on a side, these blocks have had few changes, other than consolidation with street closures, provide a very uniform spatial experience and sense of place defining the Central City. The Railyards street grid is largely patterned upon this historic grid, maintaining the distinct pedestrian character, but will have nuances unique to its development pattern. The River District will evolve to a pattern of streets in proportion to the historic grid, and the Railyards, providing a more common pedestrian experience akin to the Central City as a whole.

### Goal 4.2: Bring the river into the grid

Creating memorable urban places necessitates capturing the unique natural elements of a place including the native flora and fauna. The inclusion of plant types native to the river shed will anchor the public realm spaces to this unique area. Landscape design in both the public realm as well as private open space shall seek to incorporate appropriate native plants on the parkway and attract native species of fauna into the developed areas.

### Goal 4.3: Establish the riverfront as a destination experience for the Sacramento region

The Sacramento and American Rivers are regional amenities, actively used for water-related activities centered on limited number of public access locations. The development of the desired active promenade with strong connec-

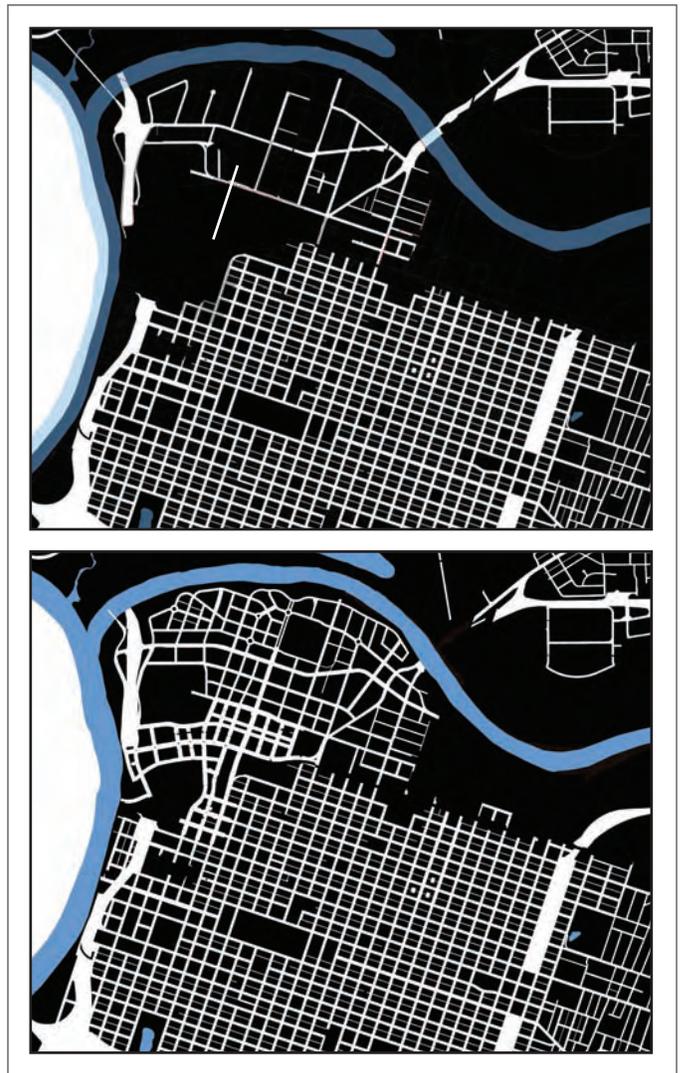


Figure 2.29. Transformation of circulation network in the Central City.

Top: Figure ground diagram of existing blocks in the Central City. The paucity of streets in the River District is evident in this illustration, with only 7th Street linking the downtown with the River District.

Bottom: Figure ground diagram of the Central City with the street grids as planned in the Railyards Specific Plan and the River District Specific Plan.

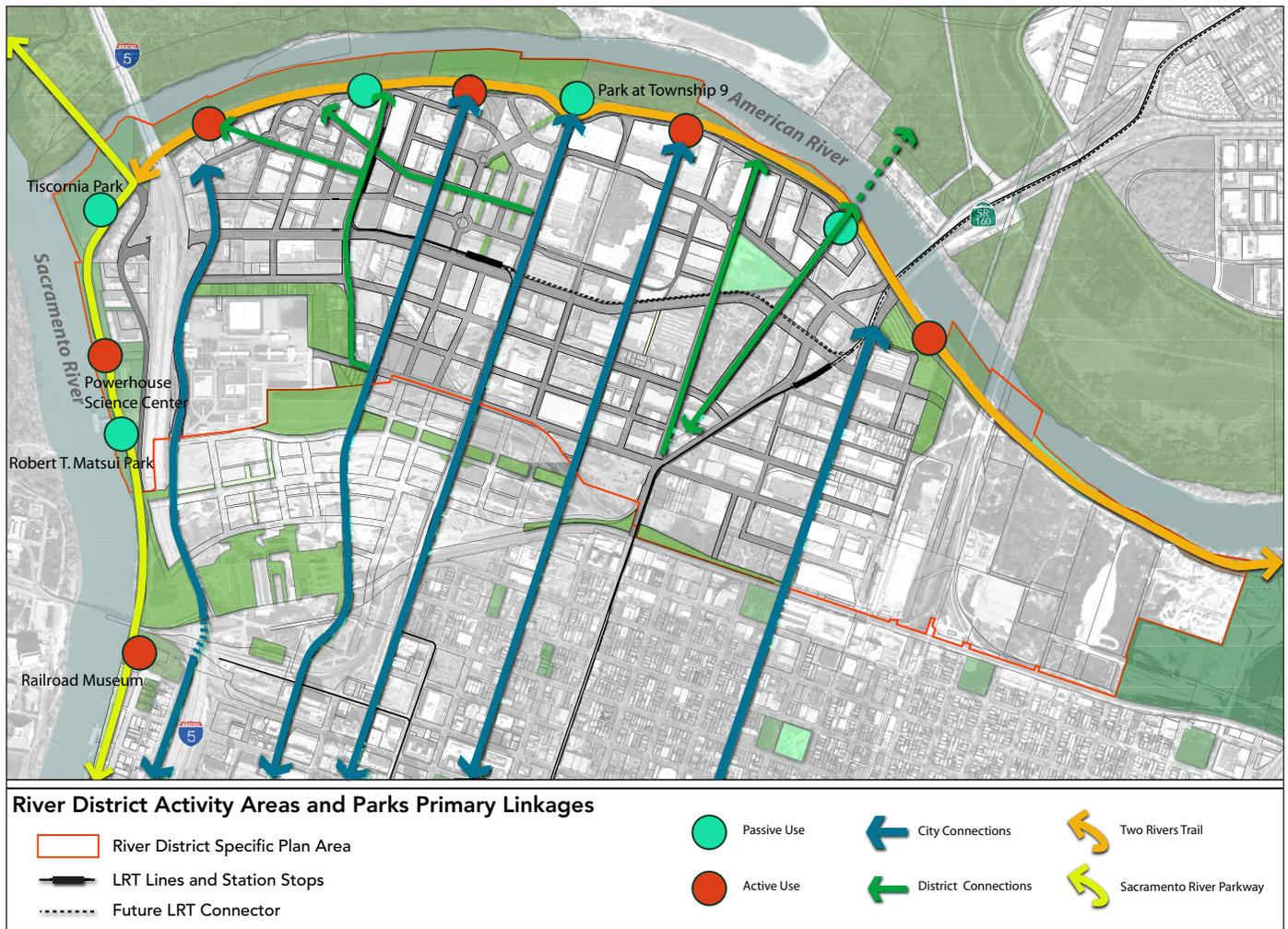


Figure 2.30. A variety of links to parks within the street grid and links from the street grid to the surrounding river edge parks with anticipated program uses. Also see Specific Plan.

tions from the grid will promote active and passive uses and will serve to reconnect Sacramento to its riverfronts.

**Goal 4.4: Develop active street edges**

A high quality pedestrian street experience relies heavily on the quality of the building frontage directly adjacent to the pedestrian path. The principles of street design and building articulation are outlined in Chapter 3, and guide the establishment of active retail and service commercial uses at the street level that will help ensure an vibrant pedestrian street environment.

**Goal 4.5: Preserve eclectic character and image**

The RDSP identifies areas which should be maintained and enhanced by the design of streetscapes and the integration of new buildings with existing buildings in a manner that preserves and reinforces the character and image of the area.

**Goal 4.6: Preserve buildings of distinctive character & promote adaptive reuse**

Many older buildings in the district have distinctive characteristics that create a ‘sense of place’ within the district. Not all are historically significant, but they add to a distinctive character that enhances the sense of uniqueness in the District and should be retained and adaptively reused wherever possible (See Figure 2.31).

**Goal 4.7 Create Complete Communities and complete streets**

Business districts and residential neighborhoods will be served with streets which provide for multiple modes of mobility and contain a mixture of active frontages with a diversity of destinations, ranging from neighborhood to regional. Neighborhoods which support local shopping

needs as well as larger regional needs create a healthy mix of economic activity and community cohesion along public streets.

**Goal 4.8 Create excitement around transit hubs**

Light Rail provides the River District access to Downtown, employment centers, and regional connections. The density of people locating and interacting around transit stations provides the opportunity for intensive small retail outlets as well as quality public gathering spaces for people watching, interacting, and gathering.

Creating strong centers of activity at transit hubs with a diverse mix of retail, entertainment, housing, and office mixes will attract users to transit hubs and feed the District



Figure 2.31. An industrial building on North 10th Street (top) and a similar building type in Berkeley, CA adapted for a contemporary office use (bottom).



Figure 2.32. San Francisco’s South Park, once a location for small industrial business, has transformed to a central place of mixed uses around the park.

with excitement and a place to experience a sense of community.

### Goal 4.9 Create visually appealing places

It is in the economic interest of the River District to invest in well designed and executed places that will provide a comfortable and enriching environment for people to live, work, and play.

The creation of visually appealing places relies on investments from both the private and public sectors to create urban environments which add value through the design of spaces and buildings, the provision of streetscape amenities, and the selection of durable materials that add contribute to the expression of the area and will endure over time.

The early investment in planning and execution of quality in the Public Realm will generate economic value for subsequent Private Realm investments.



Figure 2.33. A street section view of the proposed street in the Twin Rivers Community which creates a public promenade for jogging and walking and bicycling which links the inner street grid to the American River. See Chapter 3 Street sections for further detail.

## C. Urban Character Areas

The urban character within the RDSP is intended to be varied and eclectic. For an area of over 700 acres, which is comparable in size to many west-coast downtowns, the expectation for a variety of areas which will evolve over time into distinct neighborhoods or commercial districts.

This chapter will highlight the existing character of seven identified areas within the River District and the unique

area of the south bank of the American River and its unique and special place in the overall planning of the River District as a whole.

How the pattern of urban redevelopment may evolve through the goals and vision of this plan is the focus of this section to begin a broad discussion of urban design vision that with time will evolve with future development and public investment. In the first section of Chapter 3, Public Realm, specific highlights for place-making opportunities are discussed for further inspiration to designers,

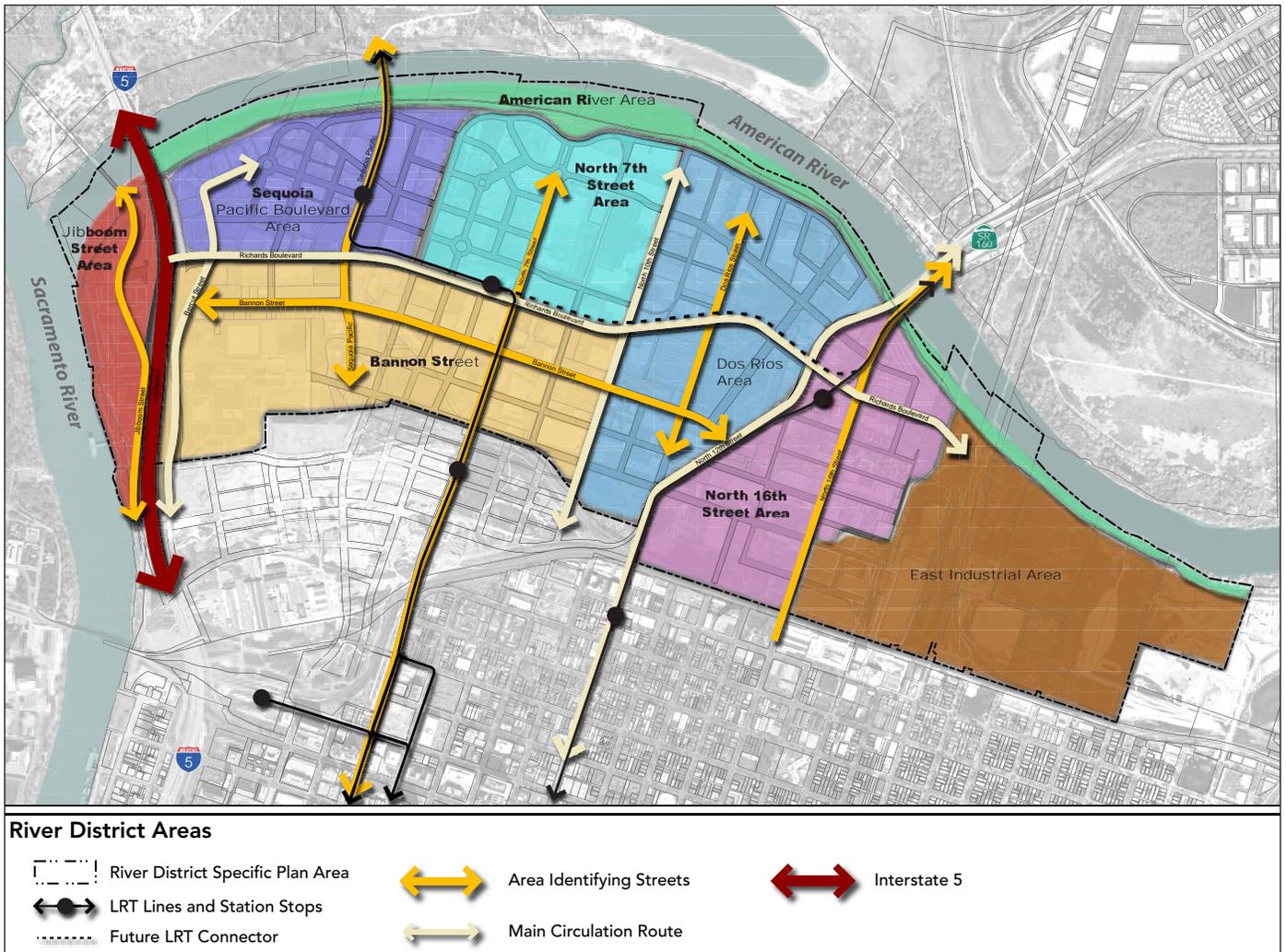


Figure 2.34. Map of identifiable Areas in the River District which may evolve unique urban character as development matures.

developers and the public-at-large.

The River District is foreseen to develop in a density pattern that requires modest highrise development. The desire for office is accommodated around the North 7th Street and Richards Boulevard corridors. Rather, the overall form is seen to be modest in height to support a diversity of uses and transit infrastructure in the range of 45 feet to 90 feet as the typical range. The Jibboom Street area does seek to capitalize on its location and encourage highrise hotel development at the edge of the Sacramento River with

spectacular views of the river and downtown. Blocks along North B Street are set for heights comparable to anticipated highrise residential in the Railyards East End District.

Height allowances in the remainder of the district have been set in respect to a variety of factors including existing context, relationship to transit stations and the American River Parkway.

For specific land-use regulatory criteria, consult the River District Specific Plan and Special Planning District (SPD).

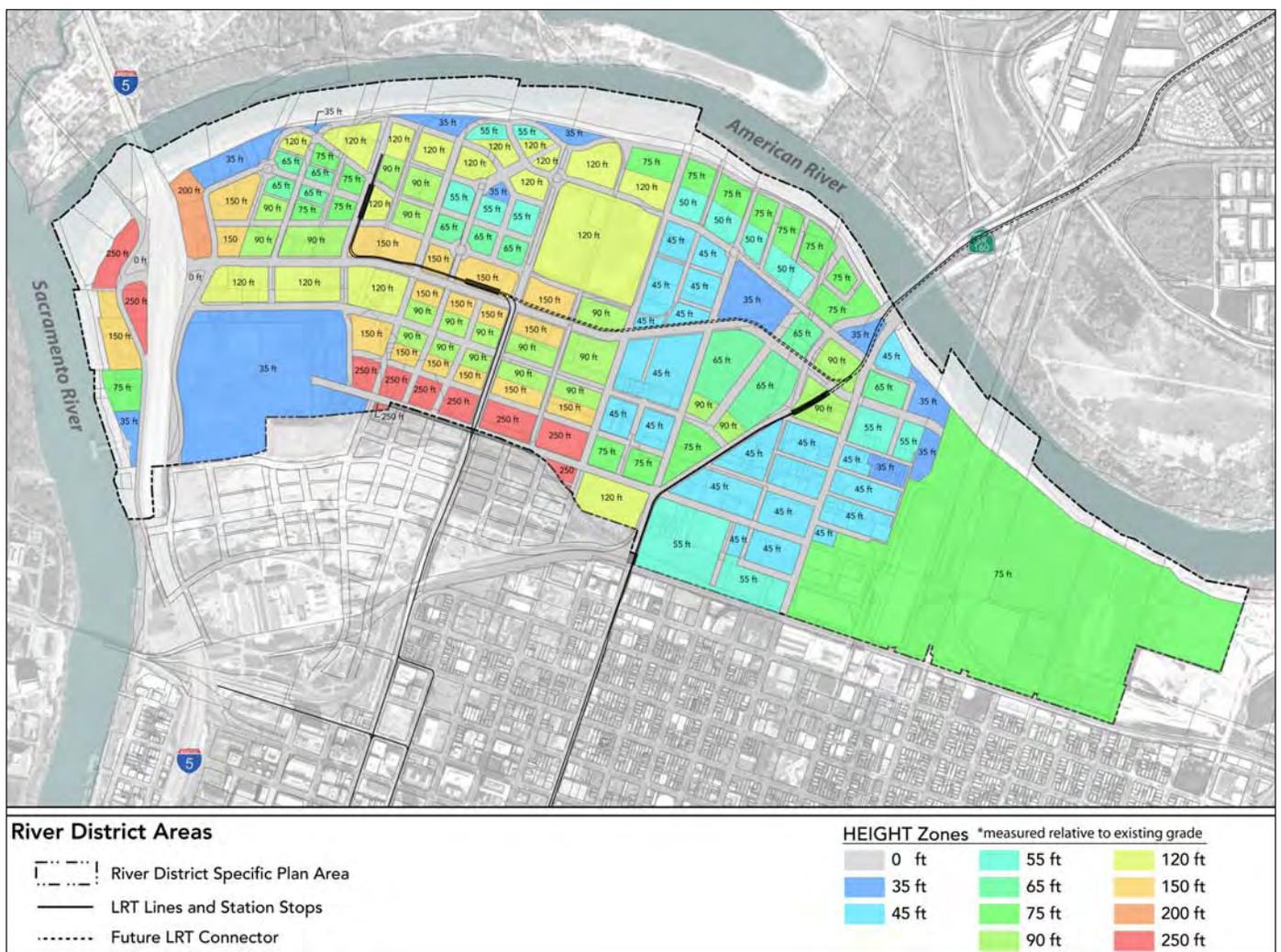


Figure 2.35. Map of allowable building height within the River District Design Guidelines Area and Specific Plan Area.

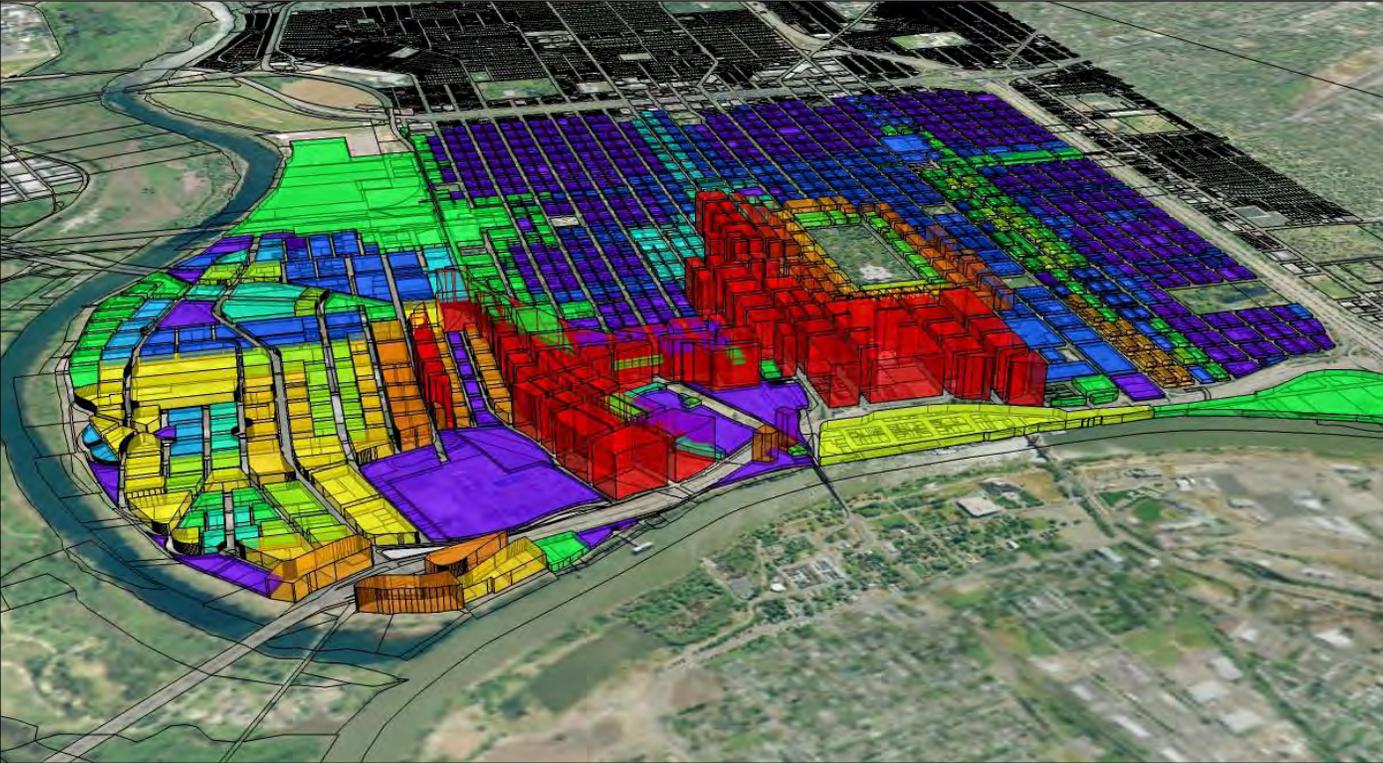


Figure 2.36. Three-dimensional view of the allowable heights in the Central City. The lowest allowable height, 35 feet (purple) to unlimited (red). The River District area (left side) exhibits a mid-height range between 90 feet to 150 feet that is unique in the Central City.

## C.1 American River Area

### Existing Character

The existing levee embankment in this area provides flood protection from high water events and supports a riparian habitat area along the southern bank of the lower portion of the American River. A paved bike trail on the levee crest, known as the Two Rivers Trail, begins at the entry to Tiscornia Park just west of Interstate 5 at the mouth of the American River, and extends eastward to eventually reach the proposed Sutter's Landing Park, and later, onto the H Street Bridge at the California State University Campus upriver. The Two Rivers Trail intersects with the Sacramento River Parkway Trail at the Jibboom Street Bridge (see the Jibboom Street Area section for further discussion of the Sacramento River Parkway).

The levee embankment on both the American and Sacramento Rivers is a critical piece of flood prevention infrastructure that shields the city but has also limited the ability for people to access the rivers. A large portion of this riverfront was constructed in existing development along the levee embankment turns away from the river with the exception of the vacant former Rusty Duck Restaurant elevated above the levee crest (See Figure 2.37). No designated pathways to the water exist and access to the bike trail is limited to specific trailheads from various streets in the district (Robert T. Matsui Park, Tscornia Park, termini of North 5th and North 10th Streets).

Pedestrian safety and connectivity are in need of improvement. The Interstate 5 bridge passing over the trail creates a perceptual barrier. Connectivity of the Two Rivers Trail to the east is also lacking, ending at the intersection with the Highway 160 bridge and resuming east of this span.

Any design intervention needs to conform to various governing agency regulations and standards.

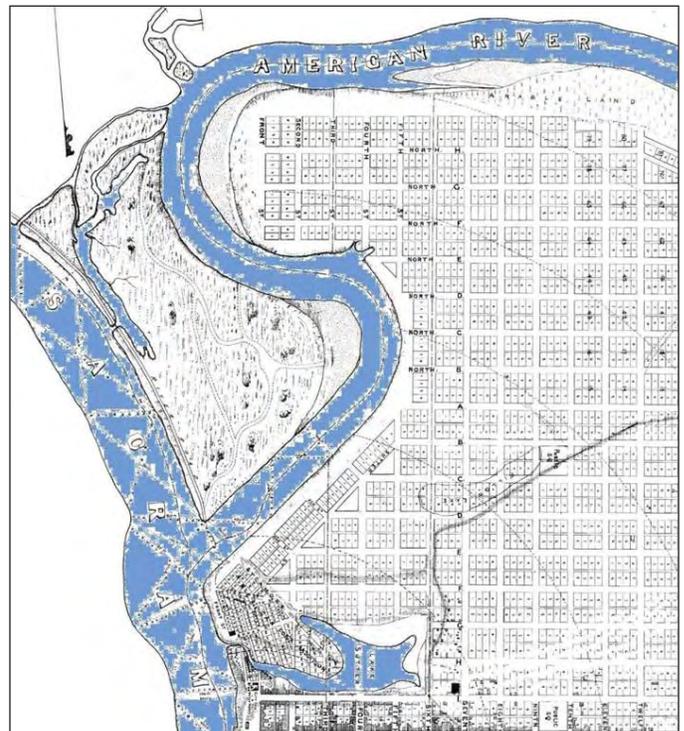
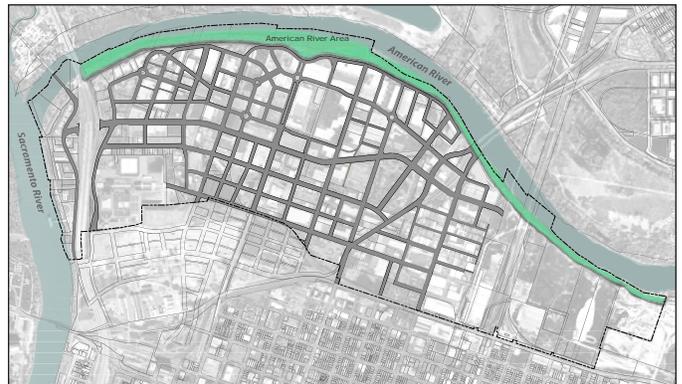


Figure 2.37. Diagram showing anticipated activity nodes along the Two Rivers Trail and the major city linkages to the rivers



Figure 2.38. This former restaurant is the only structure along the American river to take advantage of the views to the American River Parkway.

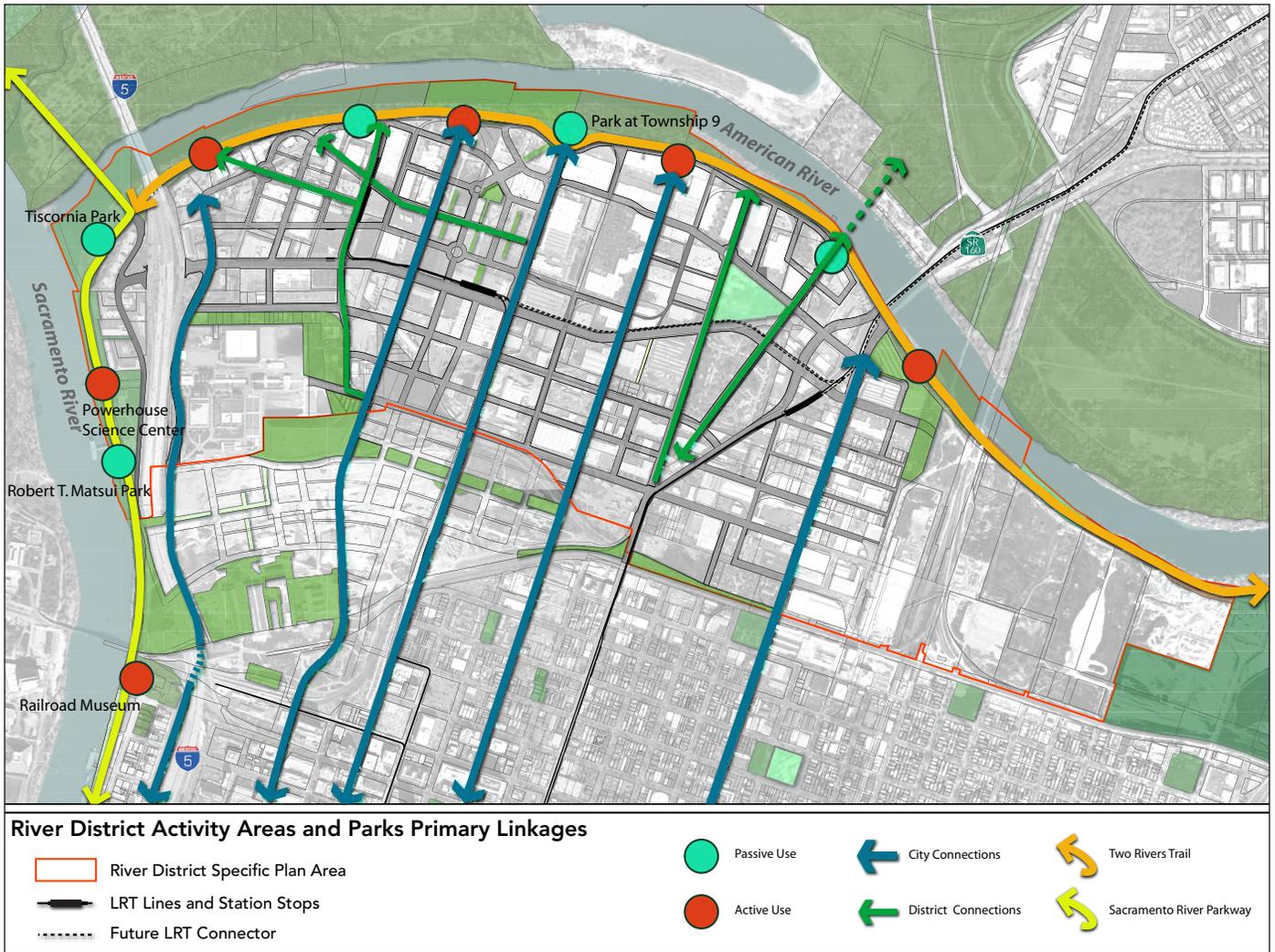


Figure 2.39. Diagram showing anticipated activity nodes along the Two River Trail and the major city linkages to the rivers

### Vision for Area

A signature feature of the River District Specific Plan is the development of the Two Rivers Trail into a regionally recognized urban cycling and walking promenade which celebrates the two rivers with a variety of activity locations along the 2.7 mile Sacramento and American River frontage located in the River District Specific Plan Area. This crescent shaped promenade will be a significant amenity for the District and the City as it engages and promotes development and recreational opportunities along its length.

### Vision for the Trail

Together, these two trails form the existing armature of what is envisioned as a regional riverfront recreation destination of parks and cultural program locations.

The RDSP envisions a series of passive and active destination activities, such as parks and destination uses, spaced apart within a five-minute walk from one another and coinciding with the terminus of major streets. Linkages between the inner street network and the promenade are a critical feature of this plan (refer to Figure 2.39 and Chapter 3 Public Realm-Streets).

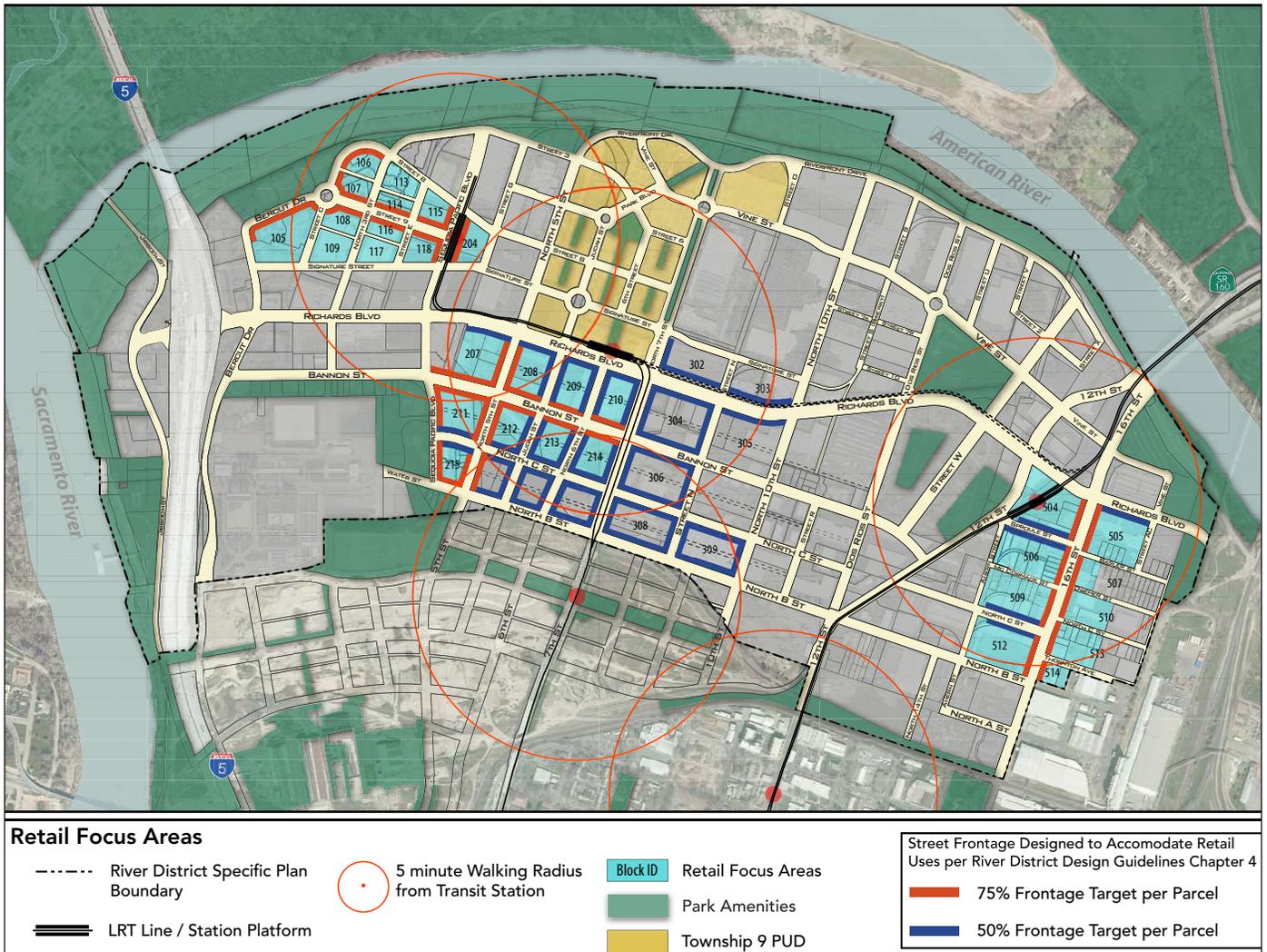


Figure 2.40. Diagram showing anticipated retail areas in the district and their relationship to amenities such as transit stations and parks.

As development occurs along Riverfront Drive and neighborhood retail centers around transit nodes support a permanent population base the Two Rivers Trail will benefit from these activity and amenity centers (see Figure 2.40). With the implementation of the Sequoia Station and redevelopment in the Sequoia Area, Two Rivers Trail will be a primary link between the Jibboom Street area and the radial street linkages to the Sequoia Area and its transit station. Quality improvements for the pedestrian experience under the freeway are important to increase public safety and activity through this area. The trail in this area can become a true riverfront walk with light standards,

seating and café kiosks necessary to establish a strong pedestrian promenade (See Figure 2.45). The Dos Rios Station will bring connectivity to the eastern end of the Trail. New trail connections outside the RDSP planning area can further complete a series of loop connections between interior parks and the Two Rivers Trail as well as connection goals outlined earlier in this Chapter for crossing railroad infrastructure.

New crossings planned for the American River provide an excellent opportunity to celebrate the goals of access to the river from north and south in a way that empha-



Figure 2.41. Views to the Sierra Mountains are often enjoyed under clear skies from the American River. (Luis Alvarado Photo)



Figure 2.42. Lightweight spaceframe structure provides access into the rain-forest jungle in southern Australia. The structure is supported from a single column support.

sizes pedestrian priorities in artful structures within the American River Parkway. Three crossings are contemplated: The Truxel Bridge, the Pedestrian Bridge identified in the American River Parkway Plan, and the future replacement of the Highway 160 Bridge. With the replacement of the existing Highway 160 bridge, provisions can be made to include a grade separated undercrossing for the Two Rivers Trail to maintain safe and uninterrupted east-west flow for pedestrians and cyclists. This facility may also extend bike lanes along a reconstructed bridge alignment.

### Accessibility

Making the riverside of the American River levee accessible is an important design consideration when planning trails and pathways from the promenade to the banks of the river.

Pathways will be required to meet requirements under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will require review for impact to sensitive habitats along the American River Parkway.

In sensitive habitat areas, access must be carefully designed through well defined trails which lead to the river's edge while protecting the surrounding fauna. Opportunities for education with informational signage and observation areas could be one of the many opportunities to further

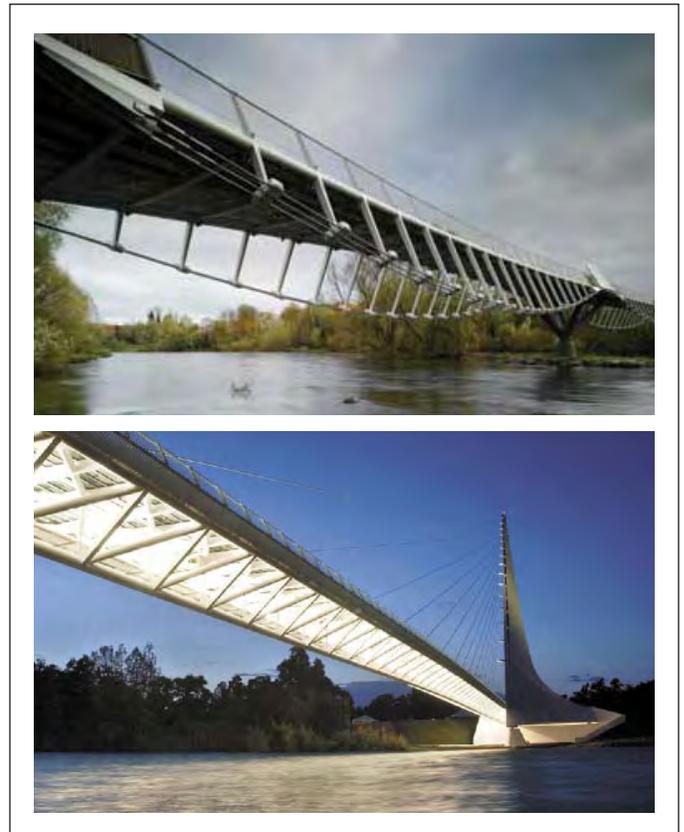


Figure 2.43. Artful bridges can give identity to a place or region while respecting the natural environment. The Living Bridge on the River Shannon, Ireland (above) and the Sundial Bridge in Redding, California illustrate how structure and light can be used to move beyond simple utilitarian infrastructure where the natural beauty of the surrounding should be complimented.

engage in the river’s history and ecology. elevated walkways may be implemented with very light connection to the ground, and minimal disruption to habitat allowing users to capture the scenic views to the Sierras (See Figure 2.40) and other distant landmarks not viewable from the ground within the city grid. Such structures can provide a unique vantage point above the ground and provide views through the tree canopies even during flooded conditions (See Figure 2.41).

*Program Uses for the Two Rivers Trail*

The transformation of the Two Rivers Trail to a linear esplanade of civic and cultural amenities will be dependent upon the type of amenities which are identified and implemented along the 2.7 mile crescent within the RDSP boundary and future eastward expansion. The concept foresees a mixture of passive uses, such as parks and plazas integrated with active uses such as museums, nature centers or other cultural activity uses.

*Adaptive Reuse*

The existing historic water intake structure in the Sacramento River should be reused perhaps as a pedestrian access viewing point of the river, and remain as a cultural education resource.

*Building Heights*

Building structures are not permitted in this area under the RDSP.

*Massing and Scale*

Any structures in areas adjacent to the American River Area will be respectful of view lines and designed to minimize the impacts to views and shadow casting to the immediate surroundings onto this area.

*Transitions*

Not applicable.

*Step backs*

Not applicable.



Figure 2.44. Two Rivers Trail as it passes under Interstate 5. Tiscornia park is viewable beyond. This area can benefit from attractive active program uses.



Figure 2.45. Pedestrian undercrossings can be enhanced with lighting and texture as well as activated program uses sited adjacent to the passageways to populate with users to improve security.



Figure 2.46. A variety of human-powered modes of travel can be accommodated on and along the Two Rivers Trail. Clockwise from top left: Bicycles and skateboards; peddle cart rentals; rollerblading and strollers; and servicing streets connecting to the Two River Trail pedestrian network, pedi-cabs for Riverfront Drive and other streets leading to the trailheads within the district.



Figure 2.47. Aerial conceptual illustration of the future buildout of the River District Specific Plan Area as seen from the north bank of the American River. Note: the Railyards development is not shown in this illustration.

### *Landmarks and Vistas*

The park at 7th Street and Riverfront Drive has been identified as a site for a structure which may serve as a terminal viewline element.

The development of the Two Rivers Trail relies on passive and active destination nodes spaced at 5 to 10 minute walking intervals and which correspond with the terminus of streets to the levee. As Figure 2.47 illustrates, these locations should be reserved for a viewshed to be clearly identifiable from both the levee and street vantages (See also Figure 2.28).

## C.2 Jibboom Area

### Existing Conditions

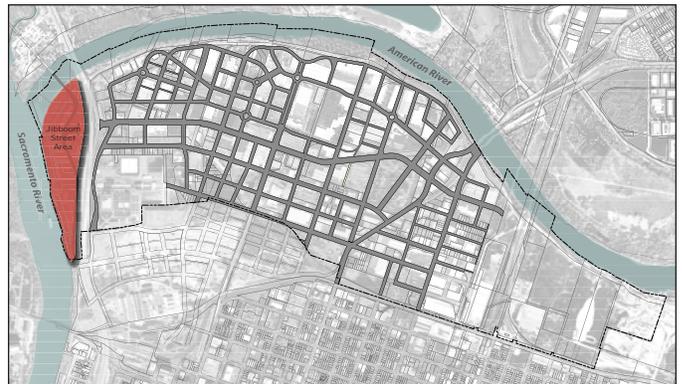
The Jibboom Street Area consists of typical highway commercial uses such as low-rise motels, gas stations and restaurants, all surrounded by parking lots. Many of the existing motels are approaching 40 years and are primarily open balcony type, a configuration that is less desirable by most contemporary hotel standards. Only the upper floors of existing motels enjoy the possibility of river views (See Figure 2.48).

The streetscape responds to the automobile, with only limited pedestrian facilities provided with minimal sidewalks and bicycle lanes. This area has a very weak pedestrian connection to sections of the District east of the Interstate 5 overpass (See Figure 2.49) and is only connected to Old Sacramento via the Two Rivers Bike Trail.

Park facilities along the Sacramento River are great attractions. At the southern end of the Jibboom Street Area, the water intake facility at Robert T. Matsui Waterfront Park is a very popular destination for those seeking a spectacular view of the river or to cool in the summer heat with the interactive fountain at the entry plaza. At the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers, Tiscornia Park



Figure 2.48. 1970's era motels along the Sacramento River do not take full advantage of the river views or the opportunity to create a riverfront hospitality destination. (Luis Alvarado Photo)



is a regional destination for boaters, swimmers, and sun bathers particularly in the hot summer months (See Figure 2.49).

The westerly bend in the Sacramento River provides the eastern riverfront with the ability to view the entire length of the Sacramento River to Miller Park along with views of Downtown and the growing West Sacramento waterfront. [Need photo]

### Vision for Area

The Jibboom Street Area will serve as the northern end of a riverfront esplanade along the Sacramento River providing a transition to the more passive beauty of the American River Parkway.



Figure 2.49. Freeway access at Interstate 5 and the lack of pedestrian facilities design results in the isolation of the Jibboom Street Area from the remainder of the district.



Figure 2.50. Tiscornia Park at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers is a favorite destination for water activities.



Figure 2.52. New hotels fronting the river should maximize the separation of towers and provide public access to the river as per policies in the River District Specific Plan and Chapter 4 of these design guidelines.

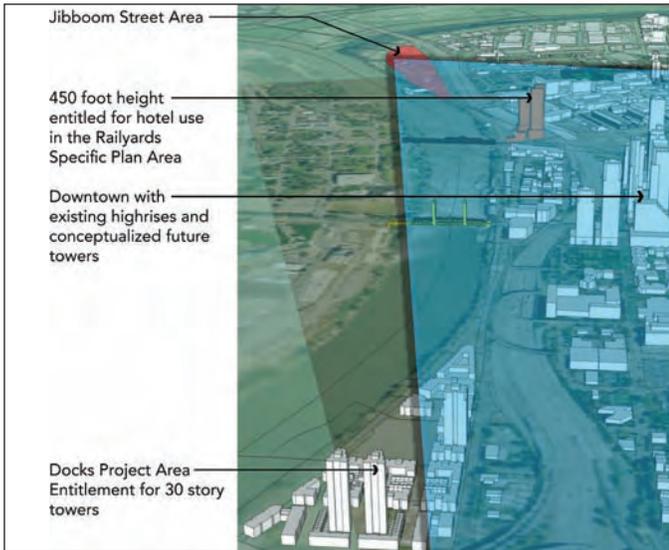


Figure 2.51. Viewshed from Jibboom Street District overlaid in blue illustrates the view down the Sacramento River and the Downtown Business District.

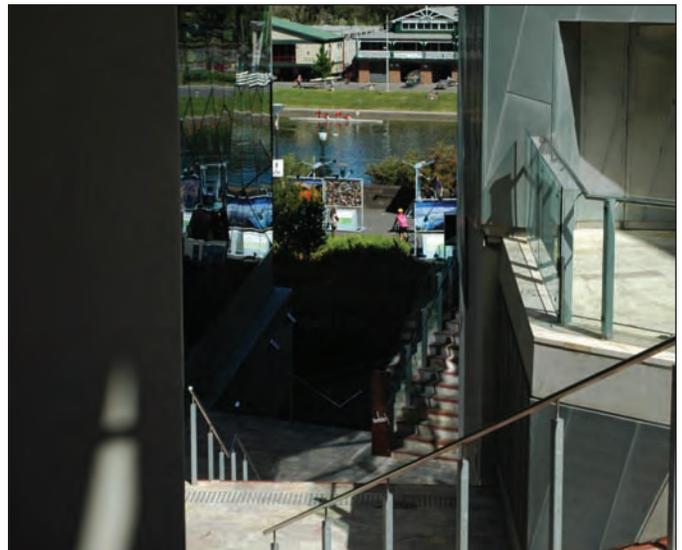


Figure 2.53. Pedestrian easement to waterfronts are necessary in connecting people to the rivers from the public street.

The Sacramento Promenade will traverse the river's eastern bank reaching down to the Docks project area and eventually to Miller Park, below the Interstate 80/State Highway 50 Pioneer Bridge. This riverfront linkage will connect various projects planned for the eastern bank of the Sacramento River. As envisioned in the River Front Master Plan, new connections will be made to the West Sacramento Waterfront. With improved access opportunities in the development of the Railyards and the conversion of the old railroad overcrossing at R Street to a pedestrian and bikeway, many more opportunities to access the

waterfront from urban focal points will allow mobility from the southern Central City to the Jibboom Street Area. The area will build upon its current hotel establishments and redevelop with greater attention and capitalization of its prominent siting for exceptional views and recreational opportunities.

High rise hotel and residential development proposals have been approved south of the District that will set the stage for more intensive development along the northern end promenade. The Docks project, at the southwestern cor-