

CHAPTER 7

OPEN SPACE AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION ELEMENT



7.0 INTRODUCTION

Rio Vista's identity and quality of life are closely linked to its surrounding natural environment and its agricultural, biological and cultural resources. The City of Rio Vista recognizes that natural resources are ultimately limited and must be conserved wherever possible. These resources provide both tangible and intangible benefits. For example, the Sacramento River environs provide benefits to the City, not only in the diversity of species they support, but also in their aesthetic appeal to residents and visitors to the community. This Element addresses the following topic areas:

- Open Space and Scenic Resources
- Biological Resources
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Farmland, Mineral and Natural Gas Resources
- Water Resources and Water Quality

PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

State law (State Government Code Section 65560) requires a General Plan to address open space and conservation issues, including the preservation, management, and efficient use of open space and natural resources. The State has defined open space lands as being essentially unimproved and devoted to the preservation of natural resources, managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, or public health and safety. Conservation efforts are intended to focus on the wise management of natural resources in order to ensure their continued availability for use, appreciation, and enjoyment.

The broad scope of issues addressed in the Open Space & Resource Conservation element overlaps with other elements of the General Plan. This element shall be considered in combination with the other elements to ensure full implementation of all General Plan resource-related policies.

7.1 OPEN SPACE AND SCENIC RESOURCES

OPEN SPACE OVERVIEW

Open space is a broad term that encompasses many types of land, including waterfront lands for walking and passive enjoyment, natural landscape in the City, such as wetlands, streams, corridors, hillsides, and agricultural lands that surround the City. Generally, these are lands that both provide for passive enjoyment and the character of Rio Vista and the local economy.

The Montezuma Hills lie to the west and south of Rio Vista. These hills are the most significant topographic feature of the Planning Area. The preservation of landforms can create places for long views, natural drainage flows, public open space, and protected habitat. These hilltops also create opportunities for visual connections to the existing neighborhoods south of Highway 12.

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North of Airport Road lies a large expanse of open land and some developed urban uses within the city limits. Lands north of Airport Road are within the boundaries of the Primary Delta as defined by the State of California Delta Plan and are subject to review by the Delta Protection Commission and the Delta Stewardship Council. This area includes some dry pasture lands, active sand and gravel quarries, State Department of Water Resources stockpiles of rock for repair of levee banks, and riparian/wetland zones that have become established over the past 40 years that offer the potential for nature trails. Use of this land is discussed further in the Land Use Element.



The area designated the South Waterfront includes the Delta Marina, land conveyed to the City by the U. S. Army and the Sandy Beach Regional Park. This area, located partially in the City, has tremendous potential to provide publicly accessible open space on the Sacramento River waterfront. Policies and programs related to the use of this land are provided in the Parks and Recreation Element.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Scenic resources are varied and abundant in and around Rio Vista. Those approaching town from the west will pass through the rolling Montezuma Hills, with undulating topography that creates spectacular vistas across the Delta to Mount Diablo. On the northern edge of the City, the Delta marshlands provide yet another viewing opportunity to the Delta island network. Travelers from the east enter the City via the Rio Vista Bridge (also known as Helen Madere Bridge), with panoramic views of the City's waterfront, the Sacramento River. Mt. Diablo, and the



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Delta Marina. Boaters can view the city from a unique water perspective that showcases the town and the Delta Islands levee system. Primary viewing opportunities in Rio Vista are intermittent, with vantage points along Highway 12, from River Road (State Route 84), the City's Promenade ("Beach to Bridge") trail, the Delta Marina, the docks at City Hall, and properties in the South Waterfront including Sandy Beach Regional Park.

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Rio Vista's location, adjacent to the Montezuma Hills and the Sacramento River, is a unique feature of the City's character and speaks to its agricultural heritage of managed resources. While under intentional and thoughtful agricultural and sustainable management, the Montezuma Hills offer outstanding views of the existing city, the Sacramento River, sustainable energy generation from the windmills, and the regional agricultural landscape. The hilltops and ridgelines offer the potential for views to a variety of urban and natural features and the low-lying areas include drainage corridors (intermittent streams), wetlands and floodplains, absorb storm water runoff and help to alleviate or reduce flooding.

The agricultural lands surrounding Rio Vista contribute to its rural community setting. This connection to its agricultural heritage and the landscape of rolling hills is highly valued by Rio Vista residents. Because

most agricultural lands in the City's Planning Area are outside the City limits and under the jurisdiction of Solano County, Rio Vista will have limited influence on and control over the agricultural lands and hillsides that surround the City.

Development in areas near these key scenic areas should be sensitive to the essential natural features of the area, including ecological systems, vegetative communities, mature trees, watercourses, crucial hilltops and landforms, and areas adjacent to the Sacramento River waterfront.

7.2 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Note: *This section will be updated based on the findings of the EIR consultant's assessment of biological resources that will be prepared for the GP EIR.*

The Sacramento River Delta, agricultural lands, wetlands, and seasonal streams in and around Rio Vista are rich in biological resources. Shorebirds and wintering waterfowl, rare plant species, and varied fish and aquatic species can be found in and around Rio Vista.

VEGETATION

Excluding the City's urbanized lands, lands in the City and its Planning Area are predominantly agricultural, managed, or natural-state lands. Small amounts of herbaceous upland and some open water habitats may be found, as well as woody non-native vegetation. Sensitive habitat types found in the nearby Delta lands include marsh, riparian, and naturally occurring vernal pools.

RIPARIAN HABITAT

Riparian habitats are characterized by shrubby or wooded plant communities along the fringes of ponds and streams. Ecologically, riparian habitats are biologically very rich, supporting more species than most other habitat types due to the presence of water and a productive, nutrient-rich environment. Within the Rio Vista city limits and immediate surroundings, riparian communities are quite limited. The two best example of riparian habitat are found north of Airport Road on State Department of Water Resources land where riparian plant communities have developed over a period of thirty (30) years following land disturbance related to sand and aggregate mining, or opposite the Delta Marina along Montezuma Hills Road, prior to the Vineyard Bluffs development.

HERBACEOUS UPLAND

Annual grassland is found primarily on the broad, gentle interior slopes of the perimeter levees and within set aside open space lands such as the northern portion of the Trilogy development. Typical annual grassland species include canary grass, ripgut brome, mustard, and burr-clover. Annual grasslands also develop along levees and on agricultural lands that are not cultivated for an extended period. These annual grasslands are typically dominated by non-native species, but with appropriate management native plant species can be encouraged.

VERNAL POOL AND VERNAL SWALE

Vernal pools are seasonally flooded depressions that pond water during the rainy season. They lack a drainage outlet and due to slow-draining clay soils, these depressions retain water for an extended period. This combination of persistent water and soil is conducive to native species and vernal pools tend to have high species diversity and support many rare plants and animals. Vernal pools in Rio Vista's City Limits and Planning Area are limited and such resources would likely only be affected by the City through future land annexations.

WILDLIFE

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta supports a diversity of plant, bird, mammal, fish and aquatic species. Rio Vista is fortunate to be located adjacent to this rich biological diversity. Within the City of Rio Vista the biological diversity is much more limited. Migratory and wintering wildlife include waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors that congregate primarily on agricultural lands north of Airport Road. Concentrations of starlings, egrets, snow geese, tundra swans, white-fronted geese, pintails, mallards, and blue heron are among the more visible species that are attracted to the Delta. Large bodies of grain harvest spill and winter wheat provide foraging habitat, and seasonally flooded fields provide both food and roosting habitat.

The Delta also is home to an abundance of wintering raptors, including red-tailed hawk, ferruginous hawk, rough-legged hawk, white-tailed kite, American kestrel, sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, osprey and peregrine falcon. During winter, raptors forage opportunistically throughout the Delta on rodents that become accessible because of flooded fields, harvest, cultivation, and other agricultural activities.

SPECIAL STATUS FISH AND AQUODIC SPECIES *(note: will be updated based on research for EIR)*

The Delta contains fish and other aquatic species that have been identified by state or federal agencies as species at risk. Some species, like the Chinook Salmon, Steelhead Trout, and Green Sturgeon, are seasonal. Others, such as Delta Smelt, Longfin Smelt, and Sacramento Splittail, are year-round residents in the Delta. Other aquatic species that could inhabit the area include the southwestern Pond Turtle and Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp.

SPECIAL STATUS PLANTS *(note: will be updated based on research for EIR)*

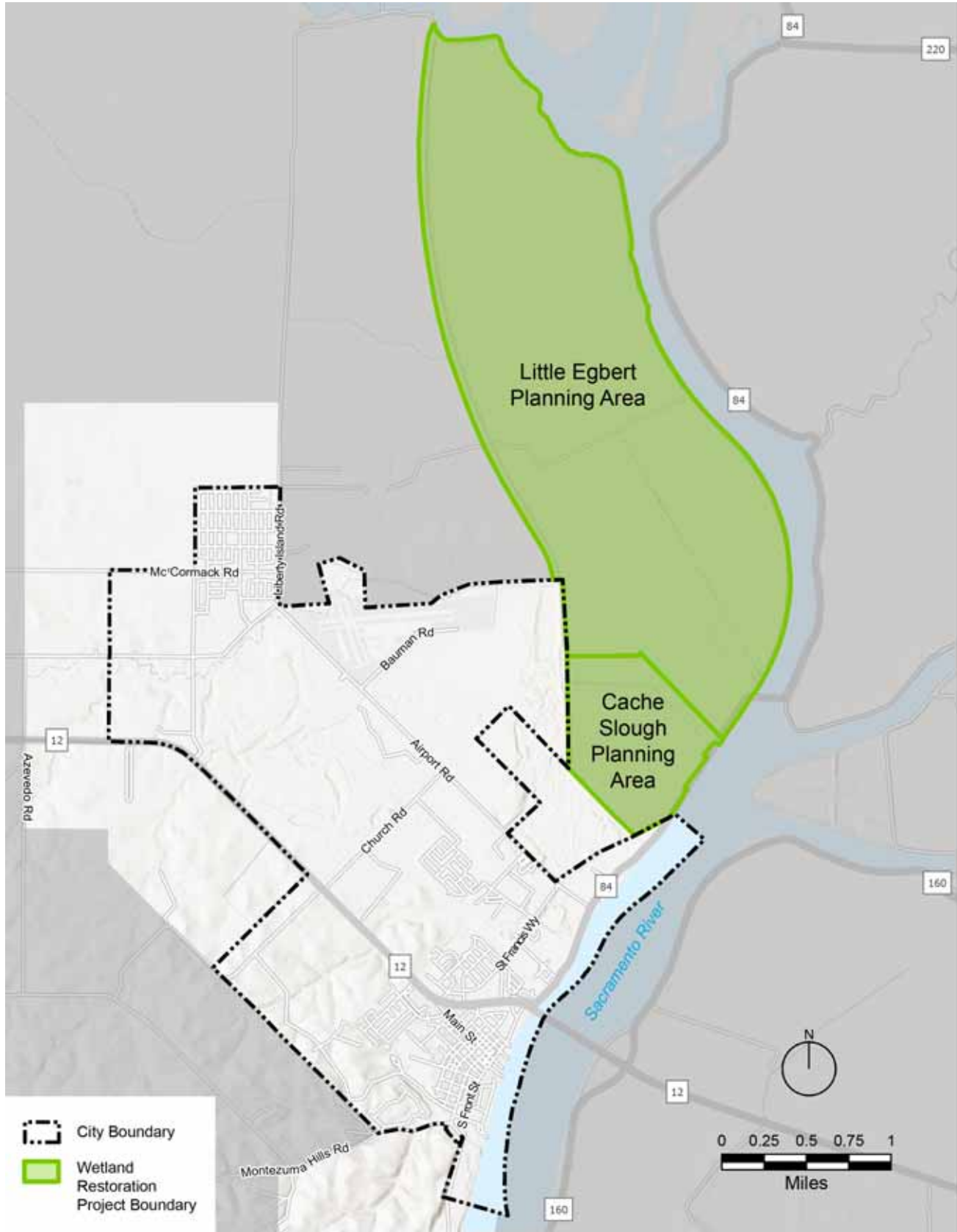
Special-status plant species potentially occurring in the planning area are defined as at-risk species with known populations in or near the planning area, or species found in habitats identical or similar to those found in the planning area. The California Department of Fish and Game's Natural Diversity Data Base indicates that six (6) special-status plant species are known to occur in the planning area. All are wetland-associated species from wetland habitats that occur along margins of large waterways or within the confines of the levee system (i.e., in-water islands or large remnant marshes). Reference "Appendix A of the General Plan Final EIR" for a list of the special-status plant species known or with the potential to occur in the planning area.

PROPOSED WETLAND RESTORATION PROJECTS

The State of California Department of Water Resources, working with private wetland restoration corporations, has proposed two wetland restoration projects immediately northeast of the City: the Little Egbert Tract project and the Cache Slough project (see Figure 7.1). The Little Egbert Tract project would include more than 3,000 acres of land and would provide an expanded floodway for the Sacramento River. The Cache Slough restoration project also abuts the Rio Vista City limit and is contiguous to the Little Egbert Tract project. Both of these projects would expand the floodway of the Sacramento River and would create tidal wetlands directly adjacent to the City.

Both Little Egbert Tract and Cache Slough abut the Mellin Levee, a flood protection levee along the northeast boundary of the City. As proposed, these projects would provide for improve maintenance of the levee but would not increase the current level of flood protection to withstand the 100-year storm. The potential for the projects to increase flooding potential is a concern for the City. Additionally, the Little Egbert Tract project is directly adjacent to the Rio Vista Municipal Airport and the City has significant concerns over the project's potential to attract birds that would create hazards to aircraft operations.

FIGURE 7-1: Wetlands Projects



Source: Solano County 2022, US Census Bureau 2022, Interwest 2024, Westervelt Ecological Services 2021, ESRI

7.3 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Delta possesses a unique blend of historic and archaeological resources. Until the Gold Rush of the 1840s and 1850s, the Delta was a network of waterways and natural islands of sand and peat. The levee system that evolved between the 1850's and the present represents a unique human-made landscape that contributes to the rich historic heritage of the Delta as a whole and to Rio Vista as a Delta community. The settlement was renamed "Rio Vista" before a flood in 1862 that resulted in the town moving to its present location on higher ground.

The Rio Vista Museum on Front Street houses most of the documentation of Rio Vista's history. While the community is rich in its history—with numerous homes and commercial buildings dating back to the mid-19th century and the settlement of Chinese immigrants—there is no historic district in Rio Vista, nor do any programs exist to promote or preserve its historic structures or sites.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Rio Vista's historic resources continue to play a vital role in maintaining the community's character. The City's rich historical context needs to be called out and preserved for future generations. The City's overall preservation objectives are to identify, protect, and encourage preservation of Rio Vista's historic and cultural resources throughout the City. This element establishes the policies and implements actions to guide the City's preservation objectives.



While structures and areas of Rio Vista may not have official designation as historic resources, the buildings remaining from Rio Vista's early years are among the most compelling features of the community. The City does not have specific regulations regarding the reuse or modification of these historic structures. However, any modifications to identified historic structures that are subject to review under CEQA, will be evaluated for significance and the City will strive to preserve the qualities that make these buildings an asset to the entire community.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Sacramento River and associated Delta provide a resource-rich environment to the indigenous peoples that occupied the region prior to European settlement. Artifacts of these peoples are considered significant cultural resources and must be handled appropriately when discovered. Due to the high level of disturbance in Rio Vista, first for Delta reclamation and later for agricultural operations, Rio Vista has had a generally low-level likelihood of locating indigenous cultural resources.

Significant development projects, such as Brann Ranch or Riverwalk, are required to conduct assessments of cultural resources within the project entitlement review and then are required to maintain specific practices during site grading to minimize the potential for damage of cultural resources.

7.4 AIR QUALITY

Note: *this section will be revised based on CEQA research and analysis.*

The air is a critical environmental resource that must be protected. Rio Vista enjoys good air quality due to the Delta breezes and the community's relative distance from the large urban areas of the Bay Area and Central Valley. Nevertheless, without conscious efforts to achieve and maintain air quality standards, threats to the public health may result from degraded air quality. Degradation of air quality is caused, in part, by emissions of pollutants from motor vehicles, as well as by commercial and industrial development. Agricultural activities and wood-burning stoves also affect air quality, as well as wildfires.

Both the state and the federal Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs) have established ambient air quality standards for six (6) key air pollutants by which overall air quality is measured. These six (6) pollutants are photochemical ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter ten (10) microns or less in diameter (PM10), and lead.

The Sacramento Valley Air Basin, of which Rio Vista is a part, meets each of the ambient air quality standards except ozone (state and federal standards) and PM10 (state standards). Ozone forms when precursor pollutants (i.e., hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides) react together in sunlight. Sources of ozone precursors include motor vehicles, petroleum and chemical industries, consumer products, and dry cleaning. From eighty (80) to ninety (90) percent of carbon monoxide emissions result from motor vehicles burning gasoline. The Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District (YSAQMD) is the agency responsible for protecting human health and property from the harmful effects of air pollution. The YSAQMD has jurisdiction over the northeast portion of Solano County, from Vacaville on the west to Rio Vista on the south. The District is governed by an air quality management board composed of representatives from both the County Board of Supervisors and the mayors and city council members from the cities within the District.

7.5 FARMLAND, MINERAL AND NATURAL GAS RESOURCES

Farming and natural gas extraction have both played significant roles in Rio Vista’s economy in the past. Today, natural gas production has diminished as underground gas reserves have become depleted. While farming remains a significant and important activity regionally, farming within Rio Vista and its Planning Area is focused primarily on grazing and dry pasture, with the primary economic impacts of farming in the City being related to sales of farming equipment and supplies and the transport of agricultural products.

FARMLAND

There is limited commercial agricultural activities inside the city limits and in the Sphere of Influence of Rio Vista, with the exception of land in the Sphere of Influence south of Rio Vista along Beach Drive and the Sacramento River, in the City Limits between McCormack Road and Highway 12, and from west of Church Road to the Sphere boundary in the east along Highway 12. Active commercial agriculture inside the City Limits is mostly limited to grazing activities on City-owned property between Airport Road and Church Road and adjacent to the City’s Northwest Wastewater Treatment Plant. Grain cultivation also occurs along Highway 12.

The Planning Area contains large tracts of land in active agricultural use generally southwest of Rio Vista between the City and the Montezuma Hills. Agricultural lands in the Sphere of Influence and adjacent to the Montezuma Hills are primarily grazing lands and unirrigated pasture. Much of the agricultural land in the Sphere of Influence and the Planning Area have natural gas infrastructure and wind turbines that can be compatible with dry-land grain cultivation, pasture, and grazing operations.



Although Rio Vista has not designated any of its lands in the City Limits for agricultural uses, preservation of farmland is a critical component in maintaining the community's rural, small-town character. If the City develops and expands, it will continue to promote agricultural conservation practices and will oppose premature conversion of farmland in adjacent unincorporated areas.

MINERAL RESOURCES

The alluvial depositions of sand and gravel along the historic course of the Sacramento River represent an important resource. Historically, mining of sand and aggregate has occurred on lands north of Airport Road and Decker Island south of Rio Vista in the Sacramento River. Property owned by the State Department of Water Resources has been mined since the 1980s and mining operations continue to the north of the Rio Vista city limits.

Areas located close to Airport Road and south of the City's Northwest Wastewater Treatment Plant were mined in the early 2000's and since that time riparian vegetation has become established. This area now approximates young riparian forest and demonstrates that after completion of mining operations, land can be restored for use in various ways, including the establishment of naturalized landscapes. The City will consult with the Department of Water Resources to determine the Department's ultimate plans for the use of this land and, if feasible, the City will encourage public access for bicycle and pedestrian use to these naturalized areas.

NATURAL GAS WELL RESERVE SITES

Natural Gas well reserve sites are found both within the City and on surrounding unincorporated lands. The presence of natural gas resources in areas planned for or developed as urban uses has created challenges in Rio Vista. In some residential developments, existing natural gas wells remain active, and homes have been developed immediately adjacent to the well sites. The City recognizes both the importance of energy production and the rights of parties owning wells to continue operations to extract natural gas, but the interface between residential uses and natural gas facilities can result in both community character and safety issues.

Municipal Code Chapter 13.12 – Natural Gas regulates natural gas operations and establishes requirements for a natural gas permit to drill or operate natural gas wells in the City. State law establishes the minimum setback of urban land uses from active natural gas wells and the City requires appropriate setbacks when reviewing development projects.

Ideally, when an area is developed for urban uses, natural gas extraction within the project site would cease and natural gas wells would be properly abandoned. However, rights to extract natural gas may be held by the individual owning a parcel of land or the rights to underground resources (e.g., minerals, natural gas, etc.) may be held by a separate owner. In such cases, natural gas extraction could continue as the project is developed and the new development is occupied. In these instances the design of the project must protect the health and safety of future occupants of the project. Further, the project should be designed to function independently of the land set aside for gas extraction and the visual impact of the well facility should be minimized through appropriate setbacks, screening, and landscaping. Additionally, future owners/occupants in the vicinity of these sites must be informed of the operations relative to safety, noise, traffic, and duration of the operation of such facilities.

7.6 WATER RESOURCES AND WATER QUALITY

Water resources and the landscapes surrounding water and waterways are resources of critical importance. Rio Vista is fortunate to share its border with the Sacramento River and has intermittent streams that pass through the community.

SACRAMENTO RIVER DELTA

The principal waterway in the Rio Vista area is the Sacramento River, which borders the City to the east. The river and Delta environs provide a variety of habitat types for wildlife in and around Rio Vista. The Delta Protection Commission (DPC) was created in 1992 to protect and enhance the existing land uses in the Delta: agriculture, recreation, and wildlife habitat. The State of California Delta Plan established the Primary Zone of the legal Delta that includes lands north of Airport Road.

Typically, lands in the Primary Zone would remain undeveloped or only developed for uses directly related to agriculture. Within Rio Vista, land use designations in the 2001 General Plan included an industrial designation west of St. Francis and Study Area east of St. Francis extending along River Road (State Route 84). Various uses have been developed in these areas that are now recognized as legal uses, including commercial/industrial operations, existing residential, existing light industrial uses, State Department of Water Resources operations, and the City's Northwest Treatment Plant (wastewater treatment). Future uses on lands designated for industrial uses in the Delta Primary Zone should have a relationship to and should support agricultural uses.

WATERFRONT

The Sacramento River waterfront, extending from the northern-most industrial uses to the Sandy Beach Regional Park in the south, represents a critically important resource to the Rio Vista community. The eight-acre area, bounded by Highway 12 on the north, Front Street on the west, Main Street on the south, and the Sacramento River on the east—provides a significant opportunity for public and private land uses to effectively link the river and downtown.

Land north of the Rio Vista Bridge extending to the alignment of Airport Road has been designated as part of the North Waterfront District by this General Plan and is anticipated to transition from industrial uses to commercial and residential uses that will enhance public access to the waterfront.

The area extending from the Delta Marina to Sandy Beach is designated as the South Waterfront by this General Plan. Included in this area is largely undeveloped land conveyed by the U.S. Army to the City of Rio Vista. This area provides the opportunity for recreational and related commercial uses that would significantly expand public access to the waterfront.



STREAMS AND WATERWAYS

Intermittent stream channels originating in the Montezuma Hills pass through Rio Vista. A primary example of this is the stream channel that passes through the Brann Ranch project area and extends through the open space on the northwest edge of the Trilogy project and drains to lands north of the Rio Vista Airport. A second stream channel is located in and adjacent to the Riverwalk project and crosses Saint Francis Way at Egbert Field and extends to the Sacramento River.

Such stream corridors function as important stormwater channels, but they also provide opportunities for aligning public trails. The City will support the inclusion of public trails along stream channels and drainage corridors.

WATER SUPPLY AND WATER QUALITY

Providing domestic water service and ensuring the protection of water quality are key priorities of the City. These functions are described in detail in the Public Facilities and Services Element. The City relies on groundwater for its domestic water needs. The availability of this water is regularly monitored and to date the rate of groundwater recharge has matched the rate of extraction for domestic use. The City's groundwater supply appears stable and reliable, and the City continues to implement regulations that reduce the amount of water required per person, further ensuring the availability of water as Rio Vista develops. While the supply and quality of groundwater available to the City will meet the demands of City development, the East Solano County New Community development could generate groundwater demands that could impact the City's groundwater supply.

Local, regional, and state regulations require that water quality be maintained as new development occurs. Improvements that protect water quality primarily relate to drainage facilities. Proposed development projects must include facilities that ensure the rate of runoff leaving a site after development does not exceed the rate of runoff prior to development. Additionally, facilities are required to ensure the quality of storm water runoff (level of contaminants) is reduced to acceptable levels. Key implementing actions to protect water resources include the use of setbacks, best management practices (e.g., grading, drainage, and erosion control), and site design.

7.7 OPEN SPACE AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION (OSC) GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

GOALS

Goal OSC-1: To preserve, protect and enhance natural resources in Rio Vista and the surrounding area, and to promote responsible management practices.

Goal OSC-2: To preserve agricultural resources by protecting valuable agricultural lands in Rio Vista, its Sphere of Influence, and Planning Area.

Goal OSC-3: To utilize energy and water resources wisely, and to promote conservation programs for lower energy and water consumption in the City and to protect them from demand from new developments outside the City.

Goal OSC-4: To preserve the rural landscape and to provide residents with access to the hills, wetlands, and waterfronts along the Sacramento River.

Goal OSC-5: To preserve and protect biological resources for their wildlife habitat, aesthetic, and recreational values.

Goal OSC-6: To preserve and protect the cultural and historic resources of Rio Vista.

POLICIES

Policy OSC-1: Work with public agencies, private organizations and landowners to preserve and maintain open space resources in and around the City.

Policy OSC-2: Create an integrated open space network within the City that links open space and natural habitat resources, recreation areas, schools, downtown, the waterfront, and residential neighborhoods.

Policy OSC-3: Require all new developments to provide direct or alternative linkages to existing and planned open space systems.

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Policy OSC-4: Protect open space areas of natural resource and scenic value, including wetlands, riparian corridors, floodplains, woodlands, and hillsides.

Policy OSC-5: Encourage landowners and developers to preserve the integrity of existing terrain and natural vegetation in environmentally sensitive areas, such as drainage corridors, native riparian habitats, wetlands, and prominent hilltops.

Policy OSC-6: The City shall require that new development be designed and constructed to preserve the following types of areas and features as open space:

- Scenic and trail corridors
- Streams and riparian vegetation
- Wetlands
- Drainage corridors
- Significant stands of vegetation
- Wildlife corridors
- Views of the Sacramento River

Policy OSC-7: Require use of native or compatible non-native plant species that are drought-resistant and water conserving in publicly owned landscape areas.

Policy OSC-8: Require purple pipe for recycled water in the design and construction of new developments in the City.

Policy OSC-9: Promote preservation of agriculture in and around the City of Rio Vista.

Policy OSC-10: For projects that include natural gas wells, reserve areas and abutting easements, require a phased development plan that includes a management plan for these areas and visual screening of the perimeter landscaping to be installed with project construction. Also, the City shall require a plan for ultimate improvement of the area as either urban development or public lands (not as City park land). Lands constrained by natural gas wells, facilities or rights shall not be credited as City park land.

Policy OSC-11: Require new development to mitigate wetland loss in both regulated and non-regulated wetlands to achieve “no net loss” through any combination of the following, in descending order of their desirability: (1) avoidance; (2) where avoidance is not possible, minimization of impacts on the resource; or (3) compensation that provides the opportunity to mitigate impacts on rare, threatened, and endangered species or the habitat that supports these species in wetland and riparian areas.

Policy OSC-12: Require that site preparation and construction activities incorporate effective measures to minimize dust emissions and pollutant emissions from motorized construction equipment and vehicles.

Policy OSC-13: Require application of the analysis methods and significance thresholds recommended by the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District to determine a project’s air quality impacts.

Policy OSC-14: Promote energy conservation programs for all utility users and encourage active and passive solar energy design in building and site development. Promote more tree planting and landscaping in the City to reduce the heat island effect and address climate change.

Policy OSC-15: Encourage public and private efforts for the preservation of historic and architecturally significant buildings and sites, archaeological sites, and other landmarks.

Policy OSC-16: Ensure that all projects involving ground-disturbing activities include procedures to protect archaeological resources if discovered during excavation. Projects shall follow CEQA and other applicable State laws.

PROGRAMS

Program OSC-1: Sensitive Habitat Buffer Guidelines. The City will review projects to determine the setback requirements for sensitive habitat. General guidelines for setbacks include 100 feet from the edge of perennial streams; 50 feet from the edge of intermittent streams; and 50 feet from the edge of sensitive habitats, including riparian zones, wetlands, and habitats of rare, threatened, and endangered species.

Program OSC-2: Water and Energy Conservation. Develop and design parks and other City facilities to incorporate water and energy conservation measures into the design of such facilities.

Program OSC-3: Preservation Lands and Easements. If a drainage corridor, wetland set aside, hilltop, or other sensitive area is proposed in an open space parcel or easement, allowed uses and maintenance responsibilities for such an area should be clearly defined and conditioned prior to map or project approval.

Program OSC-4: Agricultural Preservation. The City will encourage and support the preservation of agricultural lands and agricultural uses in and around Rio Vista, with potential actions including but not limited to:

- Prioritize new development on land directly adjacent to lands that are already urbanized – avoid leapfrog development.
- Seek partnerships with local farmers to establish local agricultural demonstration farming.
- Promote programs that allow and support local farmers providing agricultural products to Rio Vista restaurants and stores.

Programs OSC-5: Cultural and Historic Resources. The City will initiate an inventory of significant structures or sites with potential architectural, historic, archaeological, or cultural significance to the community. The inventory could include developing historic context statements for each property that is determined to have local historical significance, including acknowledgment of the indigenous peoples. The information will be incorporated into the City's cultural and historical database, to be maintained by the Rio Vista Museum, which then can be made available to historians or property owners pursuing listing on the official state or federal register.

Program OSC-6: Resource Maintenance and Management Programs. The City will accompany the designation of any area as Open Space with a program to ensure the long-term maintenance and management of the area. The program will address the frequency and type of maintenance needed, management, monitoring provisions, and costs and funding sources. The City will consider the establishment of maintenance districts or homeowners' associations (HOAs) to ensure sufficient funding for maintenance. Funding should consider all municipal costs that will ensure protection of natural values, improvements, public use, and adjacent properties.

Program OSC-7: Environmental Design Criteria. The City will require developers to minimize the creation of engineered drainage channels that concentrate runoff and disrupt natural drainage patterns. Runoff should be directed into vegetated valleys to allow for greater absorption of stormwater into the water table.

Program OSC-8: Flood Insurance Rate Maps. The City will continue its participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, including adoption and administration of updated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) model ordinances and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs).