

# Delta Community Design Study Recommendations Report

JULY 2020



Prepared by the Delta Protection Commission

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Delta Community Study Recommendations Report is an action-oriented planning document that reflects the issues and priorities of Delta legacy communities along the Sacramento River. This report is intended to be used as a guide for both policymakers and the community in identifying actions that can enhance the quality of life and historic character of these communities through physical improvements.

## 1.1 Background

Community action planning is a participatory process where professionals work with community members to identify the community's common goals and priorities. The purpose of Delta Community Action Planning project has been to support and enhance historic Delta towns, referred to in the 2009 Delta Reform Act as Delta "legacy communities" (Public Resources Code Section 32301(f)). The legacy communities include Bethel Island, Clarksburg, Courtland, Freeport, Hood, Isleton, Knightsen, Locke, Rio Vista, Ryde, and Walnut Grove.

In 2015, the Delta Protection Commission (Commission) launched the Delta Community Action Planning process in three communities: Courtland, Walnut Grove, and Clarksburg. Processes for Isleton and Hood began in 2017 and 2018, respectively. Community Action Plans were completed for Courtland, Walnut Grove, and Clarksburg in 2016 and Hood in 2018.

One of the recurring themes in the Community Action Plans has been the need for physical improvements that enhance the quality of life and historic character of the communities. In addition to the inherent value for residents, these improvements can benefit the Commission's work as local coordinating entity for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area (NHA). The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA was created on March 12, 2019 when the President signed the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act into law.

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, historic, and recreation resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. NHAs are a grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development. Designated local coordinating entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

The Commission selected Urban Field Studio, an urban design consulting firm, to work with diverse stakeholders in assessing potential physical improvements for Sacramento River legacy

communities with traditional main streets (i.e., Courtland, Freeport, Isleton, Locke, Walnut Grove) and prioritizing their importance for community efforts, grant writing, and funding. The types of places considered for physical improvements were primarily areas open and visible to the public, such as streets, sidewalks, building facades, and open space.

The Commission is prepared to assist communities with planning and policy expertise, serve as a broker in helping the community use the Delta Community Design Study Recommendations Report to identify and apply for funding sources such as grants, possibly provide grants through NHA Program, and serve as a liaison between Delta communities and agencies that must be involved to accomplish these actions.

## **1.2 Planning Process**

The Delta Community Design Study process took place in winter and spring 2020. The planning process employed different methods of engaging members of the community, specifically stakeholder interviews, a community workshop, online surveys, a website, and an online meeting.

### **1.2.1 Initial Outreach (January 2020)**

In January 2020, the Commission and Urban Field Studio hosted two consecutive days of meetings, consisting of:

- Interviews with 17 stakeholders from Courtland, Freeport, Isleton, Locke, Walnut Grove on January 10. The interviews took place at the Bartley Cavanaugh Golf Course clubhouse in Freeport, Courtland Fire Station, Isleton City Hall, and Jean Harvie Community Center in Walnut Grove.
- A full-day Community Design Workshop at Jean Harvie Community Center in Walnut Grove on January 11. Thirty-six community members discussed physical improvements for the region as a whole along with particular improvements in Courtland, Freeport, Isleton, Locke, and Walnut Grove.

The Commission also conducted an online survey between January 3 and 27. Survey questions concentrated on potential improvements for businesses, residents, property owners, and visitors. Sixteen responses were collected.

The objectives of the outreach during January 2020 were to:

- Meet with Delta stakeholders to understand community and regional issues, identify challenges and opportunities, and to generate ideas.
- Link ideas to existing programs.
- Identify new short and long-term improvements.
- Prioritize which improvements to make first and begin discussion of funding, process, and implementation.

The questions posed during the January stakeholder meetings and workshop consisted of:

- What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of each community and the larger region?
- What is the user experience for visitors, locals, and property owners?
- What kinds of improvements could be made and where?

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was a central part of the stakeholder interviews and served as a reference point during the workshop. Participants at the workshop continued to add ideas and heart stickers to comments that they liked. Data collected from the SWOT analysis was an important bridge to the development of strategies and actions.

Urban Field Studio began the workshop on January 11 by asking questions about the people who visit, live, and operate businesses or own property in the Delta. Participants at the workshop considered the following user experiences in a brainstorming session, which helped set up the improvement ideas for the entire region.

#### *Visitor's Experience*

- How do visitors know about the Delta?
- Where do they go? Where do they stay? Where do they eat?
- Why do they come? What events compel them to visit?
- What can they do and experience (recreation and culture?)
- What can be improved for the visitor experience?
- What kind of attractions could there be that are not existent now?

#### *Local's Experience*

- Where do you go on a daily basis, weekly basis, and on weekends?
- Where do you shop, eat, and meet people?

- What kind of events do you attend to meet others in the community?
- What is the education system like?
- Where do you play/recreate?
- What kind of improvements would make your daily life easier?
- What kind of offerings would you like to see that are not there now?

*Business/Property Owner's Experience*

- What are the challenges to making improvements to your property?
- What are the challenges to running a business?
- Do you have future plans?
- What could help you maintain and preserve your buildings?
- What are the challenges to operating/ new construction?

After discussion of regional issues, participants broke into small groups facilitated by Urban Field Studio, Cygnus Planning, and Commission staff to generate ideas for each legacy community. Participants used maps and art supplies to identify improvements at specific sites. The workshop concluded with the small groups reporting their findings back to the larger group.

**1.2.1 Follow Up Outreach (May 2020)**

A follow up meeting to discuss recommended community and regional improvements was originally scheduled for March 25 but was canceled due to local and state orders concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to obtain further public input, Commission staff worked with Urban Field Studio to develop a website that summarized the results of the January 11 workshop and other stakeholder outreach for five Delta legacy communities – Courtland, Freeport, Isleton, Locke, and Walnut Grove – and the Sacramento River legacy communities as a larger region. The website provided:

- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) for each community (see Appendix A).
- Information on ideas gathered during outreach. These ideas were organized into themes, placed on community maps, and listed for each community and the region. Visitors to the website could view videos describing ideas for Courtland (<https://vimeo.com/412752869>), Freeport (<https://vimeo.com/412755058>), Isleton (<https://vimeo.com/412743910>), Locke (<https://vimeo.com/412749780>), and Walnut Grove (<https://vimeo.com/412747015>).

- The timeframe for implementing ideas, whether short-, medium-, or long-term.
- Public surveys for each community and the region.

After the launch of the website, Commission staff and Urban Field Studio hosted a virtual meeting on May 12 to present ideas generated during the January public meetings and introduce the website and surveys. Sixteen participants provide comments on the recommendations and posed questions. A summary of the meeting is available in Appendix B. Partial recordings of the meeting were made available on the Vimeo video sharing website.

The community and regional surveys were open on the website through May 31. The results of the surveys are found in Appendix C.

## **2 REGIONAL IMPROVEMENTS**

During the public outreach process, community members discussed recommendations that can apply to all Delta legacy communities along the Sacramento River, including those communities that were not the focus of this study, and surrounding rural areas. These recommendations included policies that promote, implement, and complement regional and community physical improvements. Water and internet infrastructure, health care, workforce housing, and homelessness are also important issues raised during the study but are outside the scope of the physical improvements to be addressed at this time.

### **2.1 Delta Central Office (Short-Term)**

This recommendation involved creating a one-stop location for government in the Delta region, including the county, state, and federal offices. The office could house programs for small businesses, historic building assistance, grant writing assistance, and more. Community groups could also meet there.

### **2.2 Streamlining Initiative (Short-Term)**

A related recommendation focused on studying potential options for streamlining the building process in legacy communities, including reducing redundant and onerous regulations and helping historic building owners make improvements necessary to keep buildings intact and maintain their historic character. This work would be coordinated closely with local planning and building enforcement.

### **2.3 Legacy Community Business Improvement District (Short-Term)**

A potential business improvement district could be responsible for maintenance, security, public improvements, and marketing for Delta legacy communities.

### **2.4 Delta Tourism Exposition (Short-Term)**

The annual tourism exposition would involve potential business owners that can provide services to tourists, including accommodations, recreation activities, cultural activities, and restaurants. The exposition would be an opportunity to plan major annual events.

### **2.5 Implement Existing Marketing and Sign Plans (Short-Term)**

The Commission and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy previously worked with the Delta Marketing Task Force to complete the Delta Tourism Awareness 5-Year Marketing Plan (2017) and with the Delta Marketing Task Force and Delta Stewardship Council on the Delta Sign Plan (2018). These plans recommend marketing campaigns, improving guest experience and visitor services, and signs on highway approaches to the Delta. Stakeholders supported implementation of plan recommendations along with emphasizing the presence of the new National Heritage Area (NHA) on signs, especially along Highway 160.

### **2.6 Landmark Public Art (Short-Term)**

Public art can enliven places, strengthen community pride, provide opportunities for local artists, and create unique landmarks for the Delta. Potential art pieces could include painted water towers, a series of murals for each town, or a marker (such the El Camino Real Bells along Highway 101 or the eagle statues that once designated Victory Highway through the Delta). Public art can be permanent or part of a temporary public art program. These landmarks are good for “selfies” and social media and help make the area better known.

### **2.7 Landscape Improvements (Short-Term)**

Trees and other vegetation can mark gateways to the communities and provide strong connections between legacy communities. There is a need to assess and trim, remove, or replant trees along Highway 160 and within the legacy communities. Federal requirements for levees are very specific about vegetation and the proximity of irrigated landscape to the levee. Local proposals for landscaping must be analyzed with larger public safety measures in mind.

## **2.8 Revitalize Main Streets and Storefronts (Short-Term)**

Main streets, such as Highway 160 in Courtland and Freeport, Highway 160 and Main Street in Isleton, Main Street in Locke, and River Road in Walnut Grove, are critical to the cultural, economic, and social health of their communities. There are a number of strategies that can be used to revitalize main streets and their storefronts. For example, communities can remove outdated or worn features, put up lights, flags, and other removable and temporary décor, and provide places for people to sit and planters. Storefronts play an important role because they are the interface between private and public space and welcome residents and visitors during and outside of business hours. They can provide space for public art, historical information, and captivating displays, even if the storefront is not commercially used.

## **2.9 Strengthen Connections to the Sacramento River (Medium-Term)**

The Sacramento River has connected the legacy communities together for more than a century and serves as one of the legacy communities' biggest assets. Wherever possible, improvements should focus on developing better access to water. Section 3 identifies specific ideas by community, include adding more public docks, more viewing platforms, and more places to hang out by the river.

## **2.10 Offer Overnight Accommodations (Medium-Term)**

The region has several places to stay overnight, but would benefit from more overnight accommodations, including bed and breakfasts, campgrounds, farm stays, and resort hotels.

## **2.11 Provide Alternative Transportation Improvements (Long-Term)**

Transportation was an important issue during the public engagement process, particularly making walking and biking easy and safe and providing alternative ways to visit the area such as boat, bus, kayak, rail, shuttle, and train. Discussion focused on possible rail connections with Old Sacramento, water connections with the Bay Area, Sacramento, and Stockton, and improved connections to local trails and a larger regional trail network.

## **2.12 Address Levee-Adjacent Design as a Region (Long-Term)**

Regional flood risk management can help reduce the cost of flood insurance and flood mitigation design measures. Look for opportunities to coordinate the design of new buildings and building improvements adjacent to levees.

## **3 PUBLIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS BY COMMUNITY**

### **3.1 Courtland**

Courtland is known for the small commercial district on top of the levee at River Road (Highway 160) and Primasing Drive and the annual Pear Fair in late July. A historic Chinese American district that once hosted Sun-Yat Sen, known as the father of modern China, is located in northern Courtland. The town behind the levee has several beautiful buildings, including the former Bank of Courtland, a small-town vibe, and a large property owned by the River Delta Unified School District. The improvement ideas that emerged from the public engagement process for Courtland revolved around several themes: traffic calming, parking, and road construction, increasing the visibility of town, revitalizing the business district and historic Chinese American district, and enhancing public infrastructure.

#### **3.1.1 Transportation Improvements**

- Slow traffic through Courtland with traffic calming measures such as electronic speed signs and a 35-mph speed zone. (Short-Term)
- Complete the street grid by extending Riverside Avenue to make walking more convenient. (Long-Term)
- Improve the visibility and safety of parking in the business district along River Road. (Medium-Term)

#### **3.1.2 Visibility Improvements**

- Add Courtland signs along River Road (Highway 160), including highlighting history as cross-country “Victory Highway”, and interpretive signs. (Short-Term)
- Use public art to highlight the special features of Courtland, potentially on the water tower. (Short-Term)

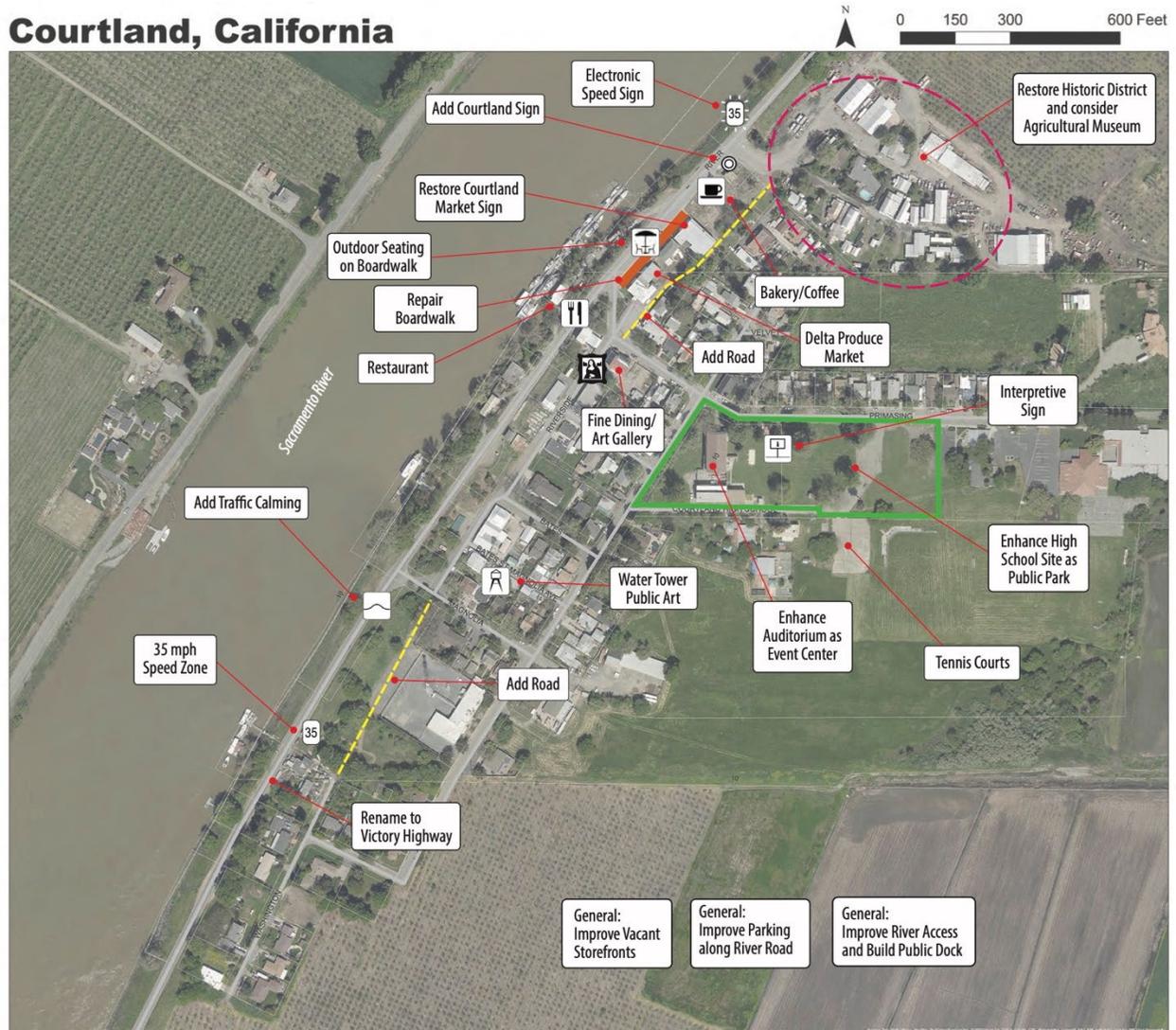
#### **3.1.3 Business District and Historic Chinese American District Improvements**

- Attract new businesses to vacant buildings such as a coffee shop, bakery, restaurant, art gallery, or produce market. (Short-Term)
- Improve vacant storefronts through art, lighting, and façade repair. (Short-Term)
- Repair the Boardwalk. (Short-Term)
- Provide outdoor seating on the Boardwalk. (Short-Term)

- Consider highlighting the Chinese history in Courtland by enhancing district buildings. (Long-Term)

### 3.1.4 Public Infrastructure Improvements

- Use the River Delta Unified School District property, including the Auditorium and open space, more frequently. (Short-Term)
- Add public access to the river and build a public dock. (Medium-Term)
- Improve the water system and internet connectivity. (Long-Term)



## **3.2 Freeport**

Freeport was named for its “free” port that served as alternative in the 1860s to the taxed port at Downtown Sacramento further upriver. Located near Interstate 5 and surrounded by the city of Sacramento on two sides and the Sacramento River on a third side, the historic community is a northern gateway into the Delta, distinct from the newer suburban development to the north and east. Physical improvement recommendations for Freeport focused on the town’s two north-south corridors: Freeport Boulevard (Highway 160), which serves as the Freeport’s main and only road, and the riverfront.

### **3.2.1 Freeport Boulevard Improvements**

- Add gateway signs or arches announcing that visitors are entering the Delta. (Short-Term)
- Replant the historic “tunnel of trees” with Dutch Elms along Freeport Boulevard. (Short-Term)
- Install public art in the proposed park focused on community history. (Short-Term)
- Implement traffic calming features on Freeport Boulevard (in addition to the rumble strips that have recently been installed.) (Short-Term)
- Install sidewalks on both sides of Freeport Boulevard and more visible crosswalks. (Medium-Term)

### **3.2.2 Riverfront Improvements**

- Clean up debris on the waterfront. (Short-Term)
- Extend the bike trail southward to the Freeport Bridge. (Medium-Term)
- Reconfigure parking at the Freeport Bridge. (Medium-Term)
- Provide a fishing area near the Freeport Bridge. (Medium-Term)
- Consider potential Sacramento River Train along the riverfront that connects to Old Sacramento, following its historic route. (Long-Term)
- Improve access to the river at marinas. (Long-Term)

## Freeport, California



### 3.3 Isleton

Isleton is the only incorporated city among the five communities selected for the Community Design Study. The city's commercial districts were initially separated by ethnicity. Whites would use the commercial area along River Road (Highway 160), Chinese the area along Main Street between E and F Streets, Japanese Main Street between F and H Streets, and Filipinos were interspersed on Main Street. Main Street, also referred to as the Chinese and Japanese Commercial Districts, is now on the National Register of Historic Places and has become a significant destination for visitors. Recommendations include traffic, visibility, commercial street, and river access improvements.

### **3.3.1 Traffic Improvements**

- Install new stop signs at the west end of Main Street/2nd Street and Highway 160, and at H Street and Highway 160. (Short-Term)

### **3.3.2 Visibility Improvements**

- Place public art at the water tower and on prominent buildings. (Short-Term)
- Create a new and unique Isleton sign directing visitors to Main Street from Highway 160. (Short-Term)

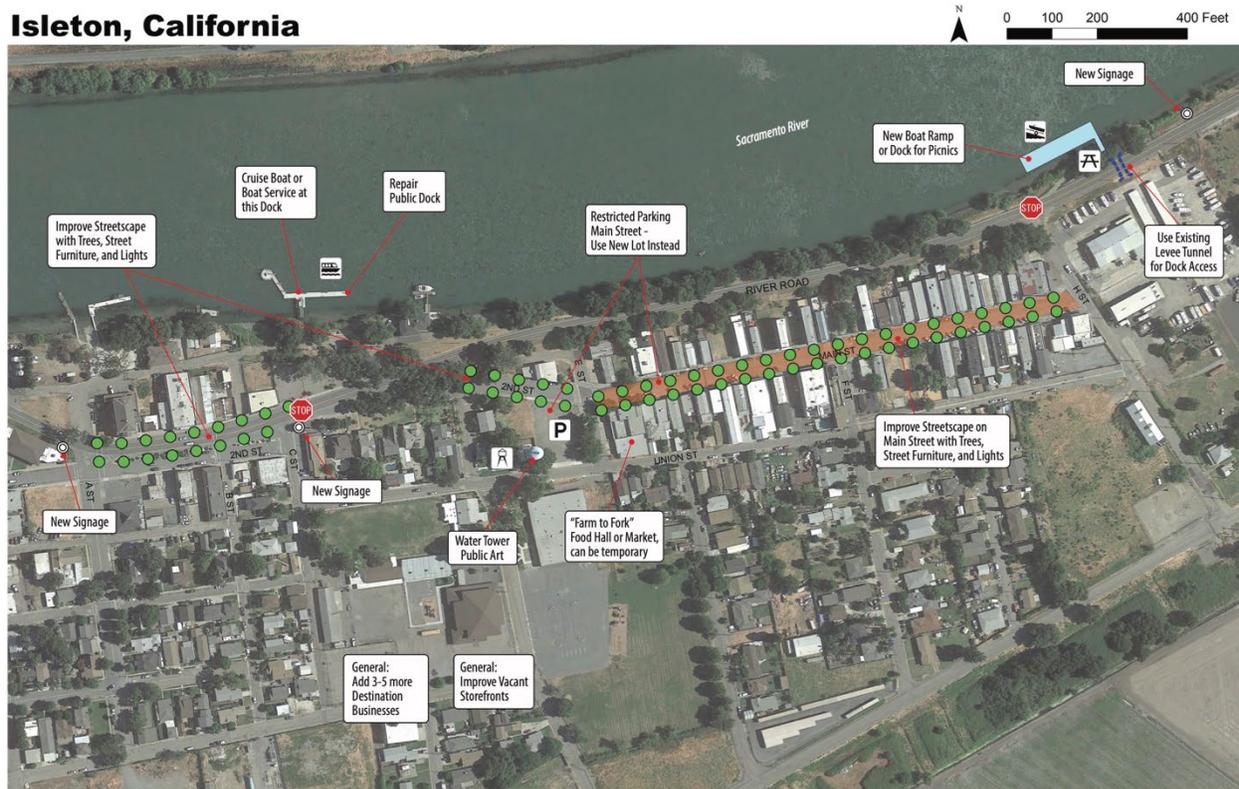
### **3.3.3 Main Street and River Road (Highway 160) Improvements**

- Improve the streetscape on the prominent routes in Isleton – Highway 160, 2nd Street between Highway 160 and Main Street, and Main Street – including more trees, new street furniture, and new streetlights. (Short-Term)
- Restrict parking on Main Street for more customer use and to promote turnover. Adequate parking exists at the new parking lot. (Short-Term)
- Improve vacant storefronts to better unify the street. (Short-Term)
- Reuse as many empty buildings along Main Street as possible. Add three to five more destination businesses to build critical mass. (Short-Term)

### **3.3.4 Riverfront Access Improvements**

- Provide new services at the public dock for visitors. (Short-Term)
- Repair the public dock. (Medium-Term)
- Create a new boat ramp or dock near H Street, utilizing access through an existing tunnel through the levee. (Long-Term)

## Isleton, California



### 3.4 Locke

The small town of Locke is one of the Delta's most famous destinations – the largest and most intact surviving example of a rural Chinese American community in the United States and the region's only National Historic Landmark. Locke was built in the mid-1910s by Chinese immigrants after a fire destroyed much of Walnut Grove's Chinese district and became a thriving center for Chinese culture between the 1920s and 1940s. There is agreement that this is a special place, worth preserving, but there are challenges in repairing and restoring the town's historic buildings and places. Recommendations during the public outreach process focused on enhancing the town's visibility from River Road, traffic calming, improving pedestrian access, historic preservation and other building improvements, and enhancing Main Street's streetscape and storefronts.

#### 3.4.1 Visibility Improvements

- Enhance the welcome signs on River Road. (Short-Term)
- Paint buildings and improve properties that are visible from River Road. (Short-Term)
- Increase the number of parking spaces in the existing parking lot. (Medium-Term)

### **3.4.2 River Road Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Improvements**

- Add a stop sign or flashing stop sign on River Road at Locke Road. (Short-Term)
- Add traffic mirrors at Locke Road and River Road. (Short-Term)
- Add speed bumps on River Road at the north and south ends of Locke. (Short-Term)
- Move pedestrian crossing closer to intersection of River Road and Locke Road. (Short-Term)
- Improve the boardwalk along River Road. (Short-Term)

### **3.4.3 Connection Improvements**

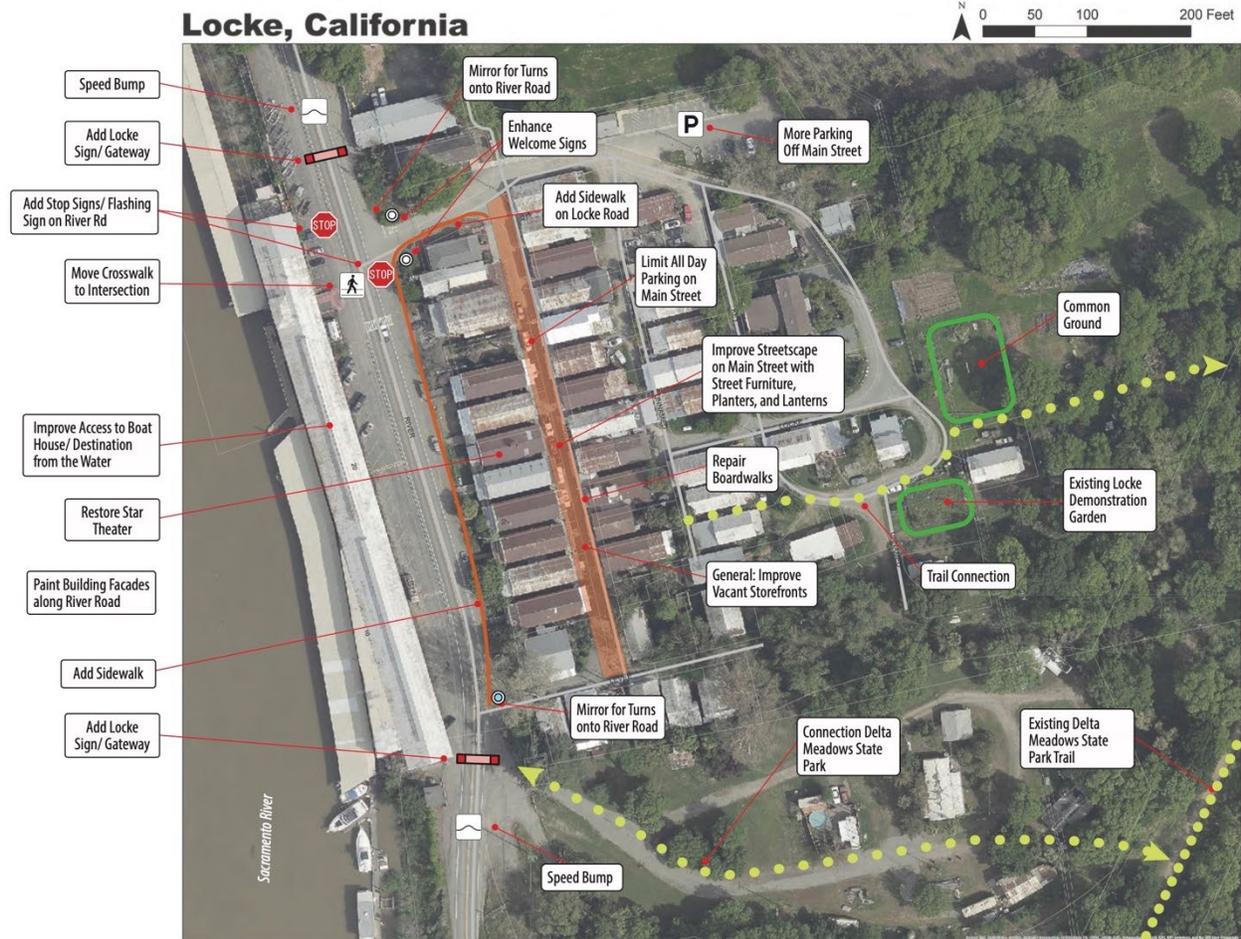
- Improve pedestrian connections to the Delta Meadows State Park at Locke Road and south of Levee Road. (Medium-Term)
- Establish a pedestrian pathway to Walnut Grove not on River Road through the former railroad right-of-way. (Long-Term)
- Improve access at the Boat House to help make Locke a destination from the water. (Long-Term)

### **3.4.4 Building Improvements**

- Streamline the historic preservation process. (Short-Term)
- Seek grants for historic preservation projects. (Short-Term)
- Improve the fire prevention system. (Medium-Term)
- Restore key structures, such as the Star Theater. (Long-Term)

### **3.4.5 Main Street Streetscape and Storefront Improvements**

- Limit all-day parking on Main Street. (Short-Term)
- Consider closing Main Street occasionally to parking to allow for pedestrian-only access, especially during events. (Short-Term)
- Improve vacant storefronts with displays. (Short-Term)
- Decorate Main Street and improve the streetscape with new planters and benches that fit with the historic nature of the street. (Short-Term)
- Follow historic sign rules and use custom or hand painted store signs to preserve the town's historic character. (Short-Term)
- Place collective trash containers out of view rather than individual trash cans. (Short-Term)
- Repair Main Street sidewalks. (Medium-Term)



### 3.5 Walnut Grove

Walnut Grove is the largest of the five selected communities and serves as a commercial center for the region. The community lies on both sides of the Sacramento River – the west side is predominately residential, and the east side has most of the town’s commercial area – tied together by the Walnut Grove Bridge. Like Isleton, the community has three distinct, traditionally ethnic commercial districts. Each is on the National Register of Historic Places. The district along River Road north of C Street was home to the community’s Japanese Americans, between C and Theater Streets was Chinese American, and south of Theater Street served White residents. Historic residential areas in East Walnut Grove lie farther east of the Sacramento River. Recommendations include visibility, pedestrian safety, River Road streetscape and storefront, connection, public access, and riverfront access improvements.

### **3.5.1 Visibility Improvements**

- Place signs and markers on Highway 160 for attractions in West and East Walnut Grove, such as the historic Chinese American and Japanese American districts. (Short-Term)
- Improve parking in front of businesses along levee roads (River Road and Highway 160). (Medium-Term)

### **3.5.2 Pedestrian Safety Improvements**

- Align crosswalk with the stop sign at the intersection of River Road and C Street. (Short-Term)
- Add crosswalks at the Walnut Grove bridge. (Short-Term)
- Improve street lighting. (Medium-Term)
- Repair sidewalks and build continuous sidewalk along River Road. (Medium-Term)
- Improve pedestrian access on west side of river as potential public art walk. (Medium-Term).
- Open pedestrian access on south side of Walnut Grove Bridge. (Long-Term)

### **3.5.3 River Road Streetscape and Storefront Improvements**

- Freshen up the Marty Stanley mural on River Road. (Short-Term)
- Add outdoor dining spaces along River Road. (Short-Term)
- Beautify River Road with more landscaping. (Short-Term)
- Enhance vacant storefronts. (Short-Term)
- Reuse vacant commercial buildings on River Road. (Short-Term)

### **3.5.4 Connection Improvements**

- Establish a pedestrian pathway to Locke not on River Road through the former railroad right-of-way. (Long-Term)
- Develop connection from Walnut Grove to Snodgrass Slough (Long-Term)

### **3.5.5 Public Infrastructure Improvements**

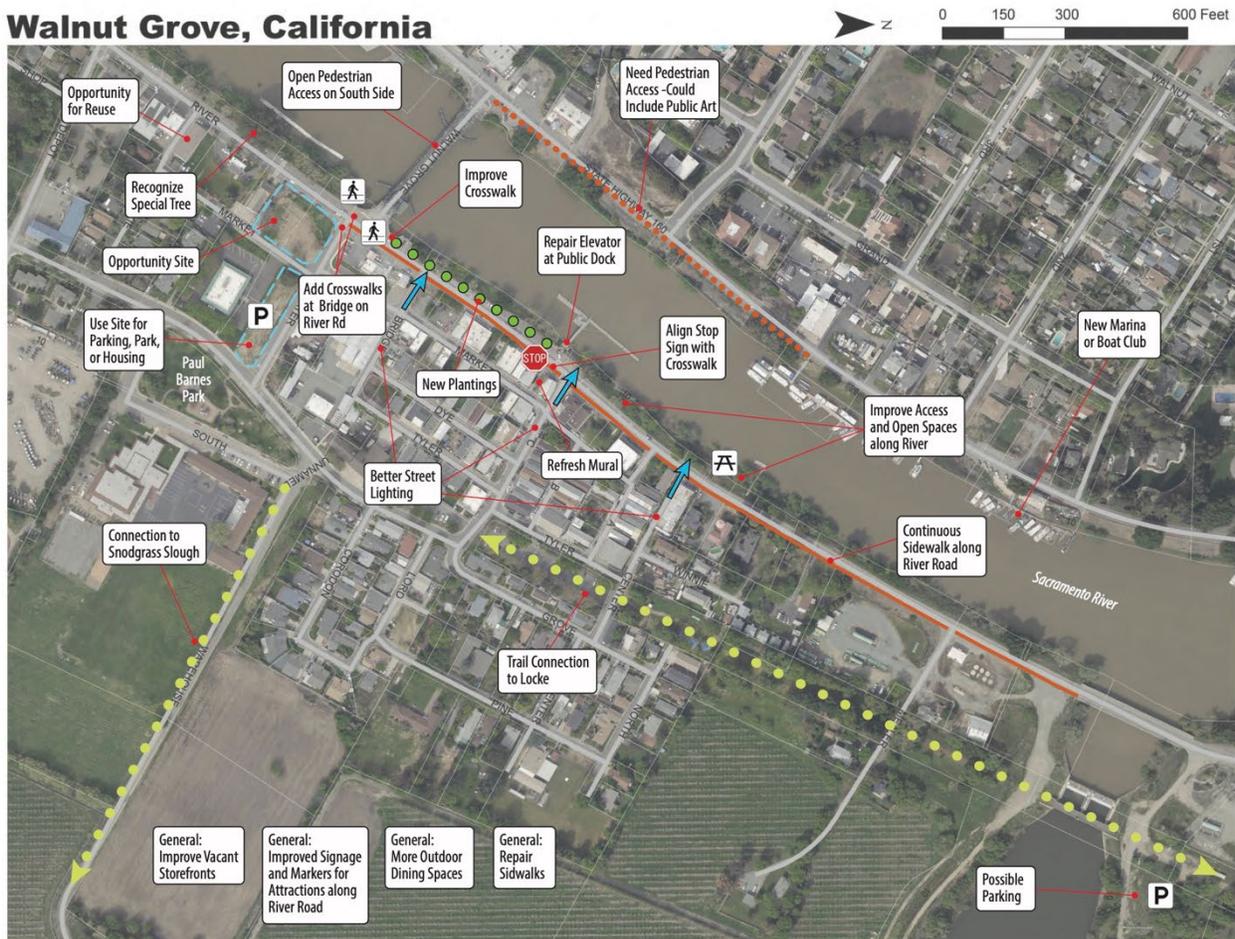
- Identify opportunity sites for public parking, public parks, or housing. (Short-Term)

### **3.5.6 Riverfront Access Improvements**

- Fix elevator at public dock. (Short-Term)

- Add more places to sit on the riverfront. (Short-Term)
- Improve connections to the riverfront. (Medium-Term)
- Build viewing platforms that enhance riverfront experience. (Long-Term)
- Build new marina or boat club on west side of the river. (Long-Term)

## Walnut Grove, California



## 4 IMPLEMENTATION

### 4.1 Public Agency Comments

Representatives of Caltrans and Sacramento County attended the January workshop and were given the opportunity to comment on the recommended transportation improvements.

#### 4.1.1 Caltrans Comments

Caltrans staff described the steps that communities would need to take to move ahead with certain improvements:

- New improvements to Highway 160, which include signing, striping/markings improvements, traffic calming, gateway structures, and sidewalks, would need to conform to Caltrans Standards and must go through the Caltrans Encroachment Permit process.
- If there is a proposal to convert an intersection from one where there is a signed or unsigned stop at a side street to an all-way stop, a Multimodal Transportation Impact Study would be required with an All Way Stop Control Warrant Analysis completed per Manual of Uniform Traffic Control (MUTCD) guidelines found at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/camutcd>. Intersection Control Evaluation Screening per Traffic Operations Policy Directive 13-02 may also be required if more than one type of intersection control may be viable.
- A Caltrans District 3 Pedestrian Crossing Location Evaluation Worksheet should be used to determine whether an existing pedestrian crossing should be modified or a new pedestrian crossing established within the State Right-of-Way.
- Policy regarding gateway monuments is described in Chapter 29 of Caltrans Project Development Procedures Manual found at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/manual-project-development-procedures-manual-pdpm>. Caltrans District 3 landscape architects can assist a local agency with a gateway monument proposal, including helping them develop, evaluate, qualify, and process a gateway monument submittal as an Encroachment Permit.

Caltrans staff provided comments related to specific recommended improvements:

- Radar Feedback Signs are not an effective way to slow down traffic unless California Highway Patrol or local police are present to issue tickets. Installation may be allowed under an Encroachment Permit, but the communities would have to maintain them.
- Caltrans would have to perform an Engineering and Traffic Survey to determine whether to lower speeds to 35 miles per hour in accordance with California Vehicle Code 22354.
- Caltrans can only approve rumble strips, similar to what was installed in Freeport, for traffic calming.
- The two new stop signs at the beginning and end of Main Street in Isleton on Highway 160 would need to meet stop control warrants.

- The proposed gateway in Freeport must be approved to meet vertical and horizontal clearance requirements.

#### **4.1.1 Sacramento County Comments**

Sacramento County staff comments were focused on improvements in Locke and Walnut Grove:

- In Locke, staff suggested that there be more community input on three recommendations, including limiting parking on Main Street and closing the street for more events, adding a stop sign or flashing stop sign on River Road at Locke Road, and traffic calming on River Road. They said that residents did not support a stop sign at a 2019 community meeting. There was also concern about the proposed traffic mirror at Locke Road and Levee Street. This would not be an official traffic control device and would be difficult to clean.
- In Walnut Grove, they noted that pedestrian improvements to the River Road/C Street intersection and around the Walnut Grove Bridge would need to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. These improvements could be significant, including removing existing parking spaces on River Road south of C Street.

#### **4.2 Public Agency Assistance**

The Commission will work with the state and local government, regional groups, and legacy communities (see Appendix E for legacy community resources) to facilitate the recommended improvements in Sections 2 and 3, providing planning and policy expertise, assistance with obtaining funding, and serving as a government liaison. Potential funding may be available through the Delta Conservancy's Community and Economic Enhancement Grant (Proposition 68) Program and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area.

**APPENDIX A**  
**STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT)**  
**ANALYSIS**

# Courtland SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

- The Pear Fair
- Pear Cider is good! 🍷
- River Road Business District with the Courtland Market, restaurants, and Dr. Go's
- The School Auditorium and Field
- The Library and Post Office
- Food related businesses
- Old Bank and Masonic Lodge are amongst the stock of beautiful old buildings
- Small town charm
- The town is primarily Spanish speaking and are good neighbors
- There is a Montessori School

## Opportunities

- The Chinese District at the Chan Family Farm is really charming and could be something linked to the other Chinese districts in Locke and Isleton
- Local food could be sold at the River Road Business District
- Courtland Market Signage (and signage for the town) is missing
- There could be outdoor seating on the boardwalk
- Create a bike/path trail parallel to and in-between Freeport Blvd and the Sacramento River
- Engage with docks to make it a bigger part of the community. Put in a new public dock 🍷
- Figure out how the Auditorium could be used by the town as an event center. Perhaps explore ways for the School District to share use or give to the town to manage.
- Slow traffic down going through Courtland. Work with Caltrans to put up speed signs and flashing lights to traffic calm pass-through traffic (don't necessarily need to have a stop sign or speed bump) 🍷

## Weaknesses

- The Boardwalk needs work (on the levee)
- It is hard to park at the River Road Business District
- Business District could be more neighborhood serving
- Because of the narrow levee, it is tough to add sidewalks and parking
- Traffic is too fast on Hwy 160. Motorcycles in the summer time are really loud
- There is only one restaurant at the moment, would be great to have more
- The Internet Service is really bad. The location of Courtland below the levee and trees obstruct the signal. (#1 issue for some)
- The roads and alleys are hard to maintain
- Properties creep onto the shoulder of Hwy 160
- Properties right on 160 are not always well kept and visually detract on approach to Courtland
- Does not have an easily definable personality besides the Pear Fair
- River is hard to access and there are no public places to put a boat in
- Street lighting is lacking in places

## Threats

- Housing is a problem, there is high demand for housing in Courtland
- Water system needs a lot of work. It is aging. It is hard for the town to meet water standards for the wells
- The Fire Suppression system is aging

# Freeport SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

- It was a “free” port, that’s what separates Freeport from all the other towns in the Delta (it wasn’t taxed)
- Near I-5
- Very close to population in City of Sacramento and Elk Grove, all within 15 minute radius
- 10 minutes from 25 wineries
- Gateway to the Delta 🍷🍷
- There is traffic that is good for business
- Freeport is visible, easy to access
- Recreate the old victory highway sign 🍷🍷  
Part of the Victory Highway from NY to SF.
- Walnut Trees formed a canopy on the main street
- Golf Course
- 2 marinas
- Cluster of businesses
  - 4 restaurants
  - Small general store
  - Tackle shop
  - Lots of History

## Opportunities

- Street lighting in Freeport that is vintage or heritage to match new development
- Replant trees “Tunnel of Trees” (elms)
- Recreate identity from 1850 railroad and riverboat history
- 2 speed bumps will be put in to slow traffic
- Good kayaking on the back slough
- Public art depicting the Port of Freeport
  - Docks
  - Ferries
  - Boats
  - History
  - Photos
- Extending the bike trail to the bridge
- Safety for bikes on Freeport Blvd
- Scenic Route 160, like Grass Valley and Placerville

## Weaknesses

- The City of Sacramento has been encroaching
- How does Freeport differentiate itself from the City of Sacramento?
- There is lots of traffic that goes too fast – slow it down with a speed sign
- Not many people know about it. There needs to be more Outreach about the Delta
- Homeless encampments
- Not very walkable, need sidewalks
- Some blighted properties
- Trees no longer there, some need clean up
- City / County / Town – 43 parcels only
- Shortcut between I-5 and 80
- Not enough identity

## Threats

- Swallowed by the City of Sacramento
- How do we preserve this town?
- Uncontrolled traffic – pass through, drive through town
- Delta Shores 387 homes

## Opportunities Continued

- Let's do it right!
- Would like alternative ways to get around
  - Winery bus tours
  - Bikes
  - Boats
  - Tours
- Gateway Signage is the #1 priority
- Potential train from Sac to Freeport Hood. Room for a trail, Excursion train and extension 🍷
- This is the first ¼ mile impression of the Delta - make it the best it can be
- Marina Boat Business, destinations (2 docks)
- Potential Marina (in City) at North end entry
- New signal associated with Delta Shores  
387 homes
- More signs saying things like "Entering the CA Delta!"
- Gateway to the Delta Sign on I-5
- Move existing sign to the beginning of Freeport
- More visitors would build public awareness of the tunnels
- Parking - make inviting with angled parking
- Develop charm of Freeport, gravitate to the river
- Agriculture - historic and today's crops
- Wine country
- Clean up along waterfront - homeless encampment - no facilities
- Bike path can help, which goes all the way down to the bridge
- Leave the train track
- Bridge to Bridge to Bridge Triathlon (Georgia Slough to Freeport)
- Regatta (rowing)
- Potable water issues (Quality and capacity)
- Sutter Slough bridge, Yolo County Site - Historic Campsite (Carson/Jackson)
- Truck - Junk Yard - Paintersville Bridge (some transient housing)

# Isleton SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

- Is an incorporated City
- Visitors do come from San Francisco, Sacramento, and all around
- History: The Asian history on Main Street includes both Japantown, Chinatown and a Museum
- Close to the Bay Area
- Isleton Foundation
- Festivals
  - Summer Fest 🍷
  - Asian
  - Reggae
  - SPAM
  - Fall Fest (Oktoberfest)
  - Health care fest
  - 2nd saturday food trucks
- River boat Town
- Geography, natural setting, and water are all beautiful
- Long time residents in the Town - generations of families
- Public parking lot (needs a sign)

## Opportunities

- Small business assistance, no formal program yet
- Make resources or grants better known
- Bing Kong Tong Building is under renovation into a museum
- Educate Realtors and contractors to understand that Significant contributor historic building has to follow rules
- "Destination Business" need about three more businesses
  - Cafe
  - Ice Cream Shop
  - BBQ (just closed)
  - Beer (got it)
  - Restaurants
  - Mexican Food

## Weaknesses

- Small businesses have a hard time surviving here
- Process of starting a business was hard to navigate
- City doesn't have enough resources and personnel
- There's only 1 boat ramp, more would be nice!
- Parking in front of businesses are blocked by building occupants all day
- Highway 160 cuts off the town from the water
- Not much foot traffic for businesses, need more foot traffic to revitalize 🍷
- Fewer people now than in the past
- Accomodations: Rogelios, Air BNB, more needed
- Electrical Outages
- Historic Preservation Ordinance (1991) NPS important, but another step (challenge)
- Pump system, Flood planning opportunity, environmental responses
- Incentivize owners to fix buildings with grants
- Fix the public dock
- Coordinate amongst Fire, Historic Preservation, and Planning
- Wifi Signal. Internet is iffy, not great
- Small businesses have limited hours and limited staff, not enough critical mass

## Threats

- Flood plain, storms and tides
- No police force - shared force?
- Cut through traffic
- Homelessness (volunteers needed to provide services)

## Opportunities Continued

- Affordable Housing, add more people, these are customers
- Anchor businesses needed
- Arts and Crafts businesses especially on the weekends 🧡
- ADA upgrade grants
- Rail Trail from Sacramento
- SACOG summary with Priorities
- Signage on I-5 to I60 and stop signs
- Potential cruise boat for accommodation (potentially hotel and events with 30-80 rooms)
- Environmental education about sea level rise and climate change
- The dispensary is a destination

# Locke SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

- It's renowned: Lots of literature written about Locke, books, theses
- Small condensed, dense Main Street, double sided  
– Street improvements would be more bang for the buck
- Photography and Art destination
- Destination for school groups (3rd Graders) learning about State of California History
- Good Businesses include Al's and Locke Garden
- Asian Festival is two times a year (once a year they close the street)
- Locke Foundation
- Sacramento River Delta Historical Society (SRDHS)
- Distinctive Cultural Heritage
- Ghost Town TV Show has made it an attraction
- On National Register of Places and National Register of Historical Landmarks
- Rich history and a key historic place in the Delta
- There are 4 museums
- On Harley Davidson Tour Map

## Weaknesses

- Sidewalks need repair
- Not enough motorcycle parking
- Bike Bar is a bit rough
- Parking on retail Main Street filled with renters
- Buildings really need repair but the permits and standards that need to be met are costly
- Inconsistent timing of openings, Museums only open on weekends, there are few businesses open all the time
- Dysfunctional management of the town. internal conflicts. Individual ownership means governing town is hard. Town runs on individual efforts and volunteers
- Some owners are indifferent and do not maintain their properties and are not involved. Assessments are not easy to collect.
- Boathouse does not allow parking
- Low boat traffic
- County permits don't align with business model
- Sidewalks are bad. Repair Streets

## Opportunities

- Star theater is the ideal building to make better
- Add a stop sign by the Locke Boarding House
- Remove cars from Main Street
- Boat house rents boats, other watercraft – could this be a destination
- Events – dinner events River Road Arts
- New Grants? To help fix historical properties? Loans?
- Buy Star Theater for Cultural Performances because it is a focal point
- Delta Meadows is a connection to the State Park Trail
- Walking off Main Street – highlight other assets of the town
- Parking lot improvements and expansion
- Tourist information portal for the entire Delta

## Threats

- Board size and government oversight is difficult to manage
- Locke politics are killing the town
- Persistent emotional difference amongst residents
- Fire
- Construction of the tunnels
- More traffic

## Opportunities Continued

- Fishing access
- Visitors come by for day trips
- Trails from Locke as part of the visit?
- Locke has a wide River Road ROW, unlike others.  
The streetscape does not show it, it's hard to tell  
Locke is there
- Facade improvements to make cues in stores that  
the place is "visibly open" even when its not

# Walnut Grove SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

- Access to river farther down, Wimpy's has lots of events
- Public dock across from Mel's 🍷
- Shops are great, Mel's, Alma's, Toni's, Ironworks
- Multicultural heritage
- Public Community Assets: Jean Harvie, Paul Barnes Park
- Guisti's
- Family Friendly
- Waterfront access for Kayaks and motor boats
- Commercial location is the best at the top of the levee at River Road
- Strong community with a "local feel"
- Clean and safe
- Really visible on 160
- Wine destinations
- Variety of businesses are good
- There is the "Big Store" and "Central Market" for groceries
- 3 or so Food trucks in town

## Opportunities

- Delta Legacy Town Crawl (using stamp card or passport)
- Signs for cultural or historical significance 🍷
- Stairway, sidewalk by Mel's should be improved
- Traffic calming with stop signs might deter or slow commute traffic
- Take advantage of traffic? Stop and Spend Money! Use signage
- Programs for schools
- Add outdoor spaces on the street to attract customers
- New access to the meadows?
- New Launch for non motorized boats
- Make a new connection between Walnut Grove and Locke 🍷
- Labels on buildings to highlight historic significance

## Weaknesses

- Sidewalks are disjointed and need to be repaired. They have different levels
- Not enough plaza space
- Vacant land off levee is difficult to infill to make level (it is otherwise a hole)
- Improve Market Street - businesses are not continuous
- Biking on roads is too difficult, independent bike trails could be better
- Few guided tours (There is a Delta Tour here, SF based, and in Clarksburg)
- Not enough events? Buddhist Bazaar, Crab feed, home tours, catfish jubilee
- Permitting regulations on levees on River are tough
- Locals need a way to get fresh produce grown nearby
- Limited accommodations (The Bartlett, AirB&B)
- Boating traffic is slow
- Low amounts of services: schools and public services
- The levees create a topographic difference that is a challenge
- Ownership of river frontage chops up access to the riverfront
- Main Street goes through different districts and Main Street is one sided
- "Going to town" for groceries means going to Elk Grove
- Too many programs!

## Threats

- Traffic: commuter, pass through is fast and doesn't stop
- Insurance costs
- Business are hard to keep going, they come and go
- Retail is suffering maybe from online sales?
- Farm worker housing needed
- Restaurants have a hard time surviving because locals and visitors are coming in regular intervals

## Opportunities Continued

- Boondox would be a potential for on-water place
- Boat excursions in the summer (May through October)
- Trail and Paths could be part of State owned land
- Revive Ag week? Tours, animals, dinner?
- Seating on the river, more places for hanging out on the river
- First Friday in Walnut Grove
- Public art, gateway or placemaking improvements at Mel's intersection

# APPENDIX B

## DELTA COMMUNITY DESIGN STUDY COMMUNITY CALL MEETING NOTES

May 12, 2020, 4:00 PM

### Leaders:

- Jane Lin
- Blake Roberts
- Heidi Sokolowsky

### Participants:

- Mike Campbell
- Robert Charney
- Pat Clark
- Claire Cooley
- Martha Esch
- Paulette Hennum
- Douglas Hsia
- Campbell Ingram
- Bob Lake
- Janet Lake
- Dylan Moore
- Anthony Navasero
- Emily Pappalardo
- Jeff Twitchell
- Jim Wallace
- Sofia Zander
- Unknown caller (847.702.XXXX)  
*(may be listed above)*
- Unknown caller (916.744.XXXX)  
*(may be listed above)*

### Agenda:

1. Project Introduction – Blake Roberts
2. Introduction to Website – Heidi Sokolowsky
3. Presentation – Heidi Sokolowsky
4. Questions and Discussion

### From the Chat:

**Jeff Twitchell:** Didn't we discuss/explore opportunities for the Community of Hood?

**Jane Lin:** We did discuss Hood briefly. We were really asked to focus on the five communities.

**Blake Roberts:** We will be reaching out to Clarksburg and Hood about improvements in the near future as well.

**Blake Roberts:** The Commission and Conservancy are currently supporting a marketing website called VisitCADelta.com.

**Pat Clark:** The website looks very well done, informative and attractive.

**Jeff Twitchell:** Does anyone know who owns/controls the tunnel for access to the river (Isleton)???

**Jeff Twitchell:** Is there any public boat dock facility in Courtland??

**Emily Pappalardo:** No, there were plans for a permitted dock for the Market long ago but it never moved forward.

**Douglas Hsia:** The sprinkler system [in Locke] worked for my building during the fire of 2016. However, it is good to give it periodic check.

## **Questions and Discussion**

Pat Clark liked the maps and felt that they made the discussion more real and put it in the town planning sphere.

Claire Cooley asked if there is funding for implementation available. Blake Roberts said that there are potential funds in different pots. Dylan Moore spoke about the Delta Conservancy's Prop 68 Community Enhancement Program. She said that they are still open for applications. Blake Roberts said that the Commission may have some funding as part of the National Heritage Area and counties may have access to funding sources as well. He noted that this effort is also meant to be a community building effort with the community participating in improvements.

Martha Esch said that her main priority for Locke is fire protection so the town can be preserved. She was not sure if SHRA ever finished work on the sprinklers on Main Street or tested them. Key Street does not have any protection. She said that the sidewalks need to be repaired and upgraded to ADA (Americans with Disability Act) for width.

Paulette Hennum felt that repainting the Courtland Market sign is a big priority and dealing with the gas station on the side of the River Road since it seems to be hanging from the levee. Blake Roberts said that he did not have any information on the status of the gas station and who owns it. Paulette noted that the Walnut Grove fire district uses convict labor for landscape clean up and suggested asking for that assistance elsewhere.

Martha Esch said that she talked to the Courtland Market owner about the sign. She said that the sign was painted over unintentionally, and he would like to restore it. She also commented on the possible renovation of the Star Theater in Locke. The property is individually owned by one person and someone else needs to purchase it and find funding. The building is leaning visibly. \$2 million is probably needed to renovate the building. Other buildings need assistance as well.

Douglas Hsia said that nobody is in charge of day-to-day maintenance in Locke since Locke Association members have resigned and the Locke Foundation is concerned about litigation. He is looking for possible options.

## APPENDIX C

### RELATED PLANS

#### Regional Plans

- Great California Delta Trail - Master Plan (in progress), <http://delta.ca.gov/recreation-and-tourism/>
- California State Parks Recreational Trail Plan (June 2002), [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=23443](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23443)
- River Road Traffic Calming (February 5, 2019), <http://www.agendanet.saccounty.net/sirepub/agdocs.aspx?doctype=summary&itemid=418451>
- Delta Tourism Awareness 5-Year Marketing Plan (February 2017), <http://deltaconservancy.ca.gov/delta-branding-and-marketing/>
- Delta Sign Plan (June 25, 2018), <https://visitcadelta.com/signs/>
- Lower Sacramento River/Delta North Regional Flood Management Plan (July 2014), <https://www.yolocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=28753>

#### Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation is reviewed by the Delta Citizens Municipal Advisory Council and is codified by the County of Sacramento's Special Planning and Neighborhood Preservation Area Plans. The only exception is Isleton, an incorporated City, where there is a Historical Preservation Board.

- Courtland Special Planning Area, <https://planning.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Pages/SPAandNPAs.aspx>
- Town of Freeport Neighborhood Preservation Area, <https://planning.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Pages/SPAandNPAs.aspx>
- The Isleton Historic Preservation Board, <http://cityofisleton.com/historical-review-board.html>

- Locke Special Planning Area,  
<https://planning.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Pages/SPAandNPAs.aspx>
- Walnut Grove Special Planning Area,  
<https://planning.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Pages/SPAandNPAs.aspx>

### **Community Action Plans**

- City of Isleton Opportunities, Constraints, and Vision Report (October 2017),  
[http://www.planisleton.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Isleton Opportunities Constraints Vision Report 2017-10-18 Reduced.pdf](http://www.planisleton.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Isleton_Opportunities_Constraints_Vision_Report_2017-10-18_Reduced.pdf)
- Clarksburg Community Action Plan (November 2016)
- Courtland Community Action Plan (November 2016)
- Hood Community Action Plan (September 2018)
- Walnut Grove Community Action Plan (November 2016)

## **APPENDIX D**

### **DELTA LEGACY COMMUNITIES RESOURCES**

The following organizations provide oversight, management, funding, and resources for Delta legacy communities. The process of implementing improvements will involve selected organizations.

#### **Federal**

National Park Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, and US Fish and Wildlife Services

#### **State**

Delta Protection Commission and Delta Protection Advisory Committee, Delta Stewardship Council, Sacramento San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, Department of Water Resources, CalTrans (District 3)

#### **Regional and Local**

Sacramento County, Sacramento County Delta Citizens Municipal Advisory Committee (DCMAC), Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, Reclamation Districts, City of Isleton, County of Yolo, Clarksburg Citizens Advisory Committee

#### **Community**

Delta Legacy Communities, Hood Community Council, Locke Foundation, Locke Management Association, Walnut Grove Rotary, Courtland Town Association (CTA), Isleton Chamber of Commerce, Freeport Community Committee (FCC)