

## Preserving the Best While Building for the Future: RioVision statement on the location of future development in Rio Vista

RioVision is dedicated to the dual goals of preserving the best of what has made Rio Vista unique and a wonderful place to live and raise a family while also supporting development that will provide the economic base for future generations to continue to live and prosper in our community. We take note of numerous thoughtful studies and reports on these topics, including:

- The Rio Vista General Plan, adopted in 2001, which notes “The existing downtown and waterfront should be strengthened and retained as the central focus of the community. Cultural, civic, entertainment, and specialty retail uses and supporting uses and activities should be located in the downtown and adjacent areas.”
- The 2014 report of the Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT), which states “Commercial investment near Trilogy and Riverwalk, for example, should be limited to local convenience commercial (under 5,000 sq. ft), while social services, community and senior centers and city hall should all be downtown. Likewise, there are two broad approaches to strengthen the shared sense of place and community. First, make downtown Rio Vista clearly a place of the heart for all residents.” This report encouraged *Adopting a **Downtown First Policy** that all public buildings, non-profit facilities, and private commercial investments are expected to be downtown (defined here to include Main Street, Front Street, and SR-12 between Main Street and Front Street) focuses on downtown as Rio Vista’s economic and community focal point and helps define the community. If the default is downtown, then such investments should be made elsewhere after an analysis showing that a downtown location is not viable and other locations would better benefit the entire community. Commercial investment near Trilogy and Riverwalk, for example, should be limited to local convenience commercial (under 5,000 square feet) while social services, community and senior centers, and city hall should all be downtown.*
- The 2017 Downtown Plan for the Priority Development Area (PDA) reviewed the above plan and report and in addition, the 2007 Waterfront Specific Plan and the 2009 Parks Master Plan. The PDA was defined as the triangle formed by Main Street, Front Street and Highway 12 and immediately adjacent neighborhoods. In its section on Land Use and Planning, the PDA Plan noted:

### DOWNTOWN FIRST

**Center of the Community** Develop the PDA as the center of civic life, entertainment, and commercial activity for all members of the community

- ✓ **Focused Investment.** Channel new investment and development to the PDA, with emphasis on activating opportunity sites
- ✓ **Cultural and Public Institutions.** Encourage cultural and public institutions to locate in the PDA in order to create a greater mix of land uses, establish the PDA as the city's cultural and civic center, and increase the number of visitors to the area

- ✓ **A Downtown for Everyone.** Promote a mix uses, universal design, and programming of public spaces that appeals to a broad range of Rio Vista's residents, including children, seniors, students and people of all income levels and ethnicities.
- ✓ **Branding.** Create a design scheme and logo for Main Street and the Downtown Waterfront that can be displayed in signage and promotional materials
- ✓ **Historic Properties.** Highlight historic buildings with signage and encourage preservation that accentuates original materials and appearance.

Based upon these reports and analyses, RioVision adopts the position that consideration of future development in Rio Vista should incorporate the following approach:

1. Developmental sprawl should be resisted: land will always be more available and cheaper away from the city center, so land availability and cost alone should not be reasons enough to locate an activity that would direct people away from the downtown core.
2. Development away from city's economic center should be allowed only if the nature of the development supports a remote location: for example, the fire department needs a new substation to service a geographic area; the police department should be in the geographic center of the developed areas it serves; a "convenience" store serves a particular neighborhood; an agricultural, industrial or manufacturing activity would be inappropriate in city center as it would not add significantly to commercial activity.
3. In the absence of a compelling reason for a remote location, new businesses and activities that would attract foot traffic and commercial activity should be located within the existing commercial core.