

Bridge to Beach Trail

A Path With a View

By Robie Williams Contributions by Jan Vick Photos by Jan Vick & Robie Williams

Before starting your tour, delve first into a little history of how the Bridge to Beach Trail came about. Former mayor Jan Vick was part of a “charrette,” an intense period of design or planning activity, which included local citizens, community organizations, City of Rio Vista staff, an architectural firm, and City Council members, who collaborated in 2005 on a walking route from the Helen Madere Bridge to Sandy Beach County Park. Starting with an idea, the trail was planned by volunteers, then built and implemented through a federal grant.



Bridge to Beach Trail Marker

Using the Bridge to Beach Trail map, begin your tour near the Helen Madere Bridge, winding along the promenade with a view of the bridge, the Sacramento River and the Department of Fish & Game’s Fishing Pier. Stroll away from the promenade where it ends on Front Street to the Gordon Hansen Company building, constructed in the Art Deco style of the time. A little further south on Front Street is the Rio Vista Museum displaying Rio Vista historical artifacts.

Continue up Front Street to Main Street where a right turn leads you to Foster’s Bighorn, a landmark bar and restaurant founded by Bill Foster in the 1930’s. Open the doors to reveal



Foster's Bighorn

of over 300 wild game trophies and old photographs from this avid hunter. Continue up Main Street to the Hotel Rio Vista built in the 1920’s (no longer a hotel), and the Striper Café with an iconic 1950’s neon sign, recently restored to its original splendor. Further north at the corner of Main and Third Streets stands the Windborn Church, built in 1919 in the classic Mission Revival style. Just past the church are two local fire stations serving the Rio Vista community and surrounding foothills. Take a moment to admire the mural depicting a scene from 9/11 and section of steel girder taken from the disaster site and sent to Rio Vista by the NYFD.

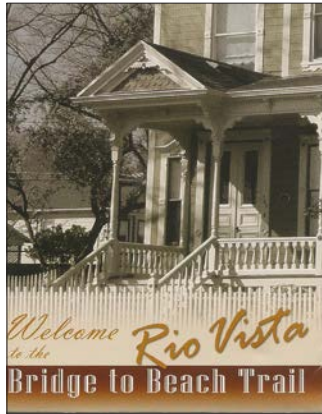
Cross back to the south side of Main Street and head toward Second Street passing the Vista Theater Building, which operated between 1925 and 1974 as a local movie house.

Turn right onto Second Street from Main Street and walk south to view several historic homes along the trail. At the corner of Second and California Streets stands the first apartment building in Rio Vista, where Fraser Meat Market was originally located on the ground floor. Across the

street is Bailey House, considered one of Rio Vista’s oldest homes, built in the 1870’s. On the next corner at Bruning Street is a prominent Queen Anne home built for Captain Larsen and his family in 1897. At Second and Gertrude Streets stands the home of former Senator McCormack, completed in 1902. In the next block, admire the lovely three-story Thomas Home, constructed in 1910. Further down Second Street at the corner of Santa Clara is the classic wood shingled home of Dr. Aloysius “A.J.” McKinnon, currently a real estate office and residence.



Bailey House



Turn left from Second Street onto Hamilton Avenue past the middle school. Walking back toward downtown, turn left again on S. Front Street. On the left is the Gordon Home built in the 1900’s, and modified with a second story in 1919 by George Gordon, Sr. Farther along S. Front at the corner of St. Gertrude is a small classic Tudor Revival home, a popular style in the 1920s and 1930s. The last house of note is a charming two-story home of Victorian design with decorative brackets and varying paint colors emphasizing architectural details.

From S. Front Street turn right onto Main Street The walking tour ends in front of City Hall where a small plaza includes memorials

for the Pony Express, the well-known visit of Humphrey the whale in 1885.

The original Bridge to Beach Trail plans continued on to Sandy Beach County Park. Yet to be completed, you can still get there from downtown by walking or driving about 2 miles.

Head south on Second Street, turn left at Beach Drive, past the old Army Base, fenced and abandoned in the 1970’s and the Rio Vista Coast Guard Station, arriving at Sandy Beach Campground. The park is well maintained with clean grassy picnic areas, large RV parking areas, plenty of parking, a large boat launch and beautiful views of the river... and a fence made of driftwood! Well worth the 2 mile walk or drive.



Gordon Home

Pick up a Bridge to Beach Trail pamphlet at the kiosk in front of City Hall or print it from the City of Rio Vista’s website at <http://riovistacity.com/images/visitors/WalkingGuide.jpg>. The pamphlet contains pictures, detailed descriptions and information about Rio Vista. Truly, A Path With a View.