

Self-guided Walking Tour

The Rio Vista Historic Walking tour is self-guided, so you can start when you're ready and take as much time as you wish. The tour meanders about 1-1/2 miles through the downtown and historic districts. Points of interest are indicated with numbers on the map with descriptions provided below. Take your time enjoying your stroll and be sure to visit the restaurants, shops and waterfront during your stay.



1 Waterfront Park
Enjoy your lunch at a picnic table overlooking the river while enjoying scenic views of the Rio Vista Bridge. The Waterfront Promenade also offers access to the California Department of Fish and Game's Fishing Pier and public restrooms.



2 Gordon Hansen Company Building
The building across the street was constructed in 1938 as a farm equipment and implements showroom and service department for the Gordon Hansen Company. With its strong geometric forms and striped design, this is an excellent example of the Art Deco style, which was popular at that time. Art Deco was influenced by Classical Greek and Roman design as well as Egyptian and Aztec motifs.



3 Rio Vista Museum
The Rio Vista Museum opened in 1975. It displays artifacts depicting Rio Vista's history, including farm equipment, dolls and toys, newspaper headlines, uniforms, and housewares. It is housed in an old blacksmith shop. The Museum is open weekend afternoons and by appointment.



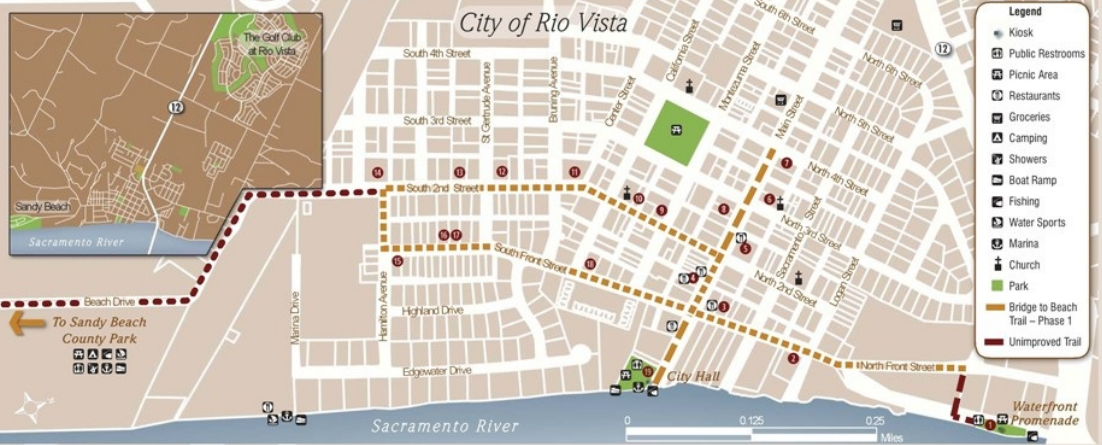
4 Foster's Bighorn
Foster's Bighorn restaurant is a local landmark renowned for its collection of over 300 wild game trophies on display, including an African elephant. The collection was assembled by Bill Foster in the 1930s and 40s. He was an avid photographer as well as a hunter and many of his photographs are also on display.



5 Striper Cafe and the Hotel Rio Vista
The Hotel Rio Vista officially opened on September 26, 1914. After a fire destroyed the interior in 1917, it re-opened on April 5, 1919. The Striper Cafe is one of many businesses that have operated on the ground floor of the hotel. The neon sign is one of many historic examples on Main Street.



6 Church
The church on the corner of 3rd and Main Street was constructed by the Union Baptist Church of Rio Vista and was dedicated on April 20, 1919. It exemplifies the Mission Revival style with unadorned plaster walls and wide tiled eaves.



7 Fire Stations
There are two buildings that house the Rio Vista Fire Department and the Montezuma Fire District, which serves ~150 square miles around the City. The Rio Vista Fire Department was officially formed in 1926. The first hook and ladder company in Rio Vista was formed in 1871. Today, the citizen volunteers are still a vital part of the City's Fire Department.



8 Vista Theater Building
The Vista Theater, a one-screen cinema seating 530 people, opened in 1925. The original Robert Merton pipe organ was the largest in Solano County at that time. The theater remained in operation until 1974. The marquee and sign have been removed from the exterior, but the original art deco walls and ceiling remain inside.



9 Fraser Brothers
Rio Vista's first apartment building, this structure originally hosted a meat market on the lower level and apartments in the upper level.



10 Bailey House
Considered one of Rio Vista's oldest homes, the Bailey House was built in the 1870s. Norris Millican Bailey, the town's jeweler lived here with his wife, Marion until his untimely death when he was murdered in his store in April 1927.



11 Captain Larsen's Home
Weston Campbell, a local contractor constructed this striking Queen Anne home for Captain Lars Peter Larsen, Annie, his wife and their two children in 1897. The quarter block property included a yard, barn and carriage house. Features include 12-13' ceilings, hand painted wood and a roof top "widow's walk" which provided Captain Larsen a grand view of the river.



12 Senator McCormack's Home
Senator Thomas McCormack purchased this land on the corner of Second and Gertrude Streets in 1898 to build his home. Fred Johnson was the contractor for the project, completing the home in 1902.



13 Thomas Home
Jesse Thomas purchased this lot for \$600 in gold coin from one of Rio Vista's founding fathers, Joseph Bruning. He contracted Weston Campbell to build the home in 1910. Later, when Thomas' daughter married Henry Durr, the home was known as the Durr Home.



14 Dr. A.J. McKinnon's Home
For \$10 in gold coin, Dr. Aloysius J. McKinnon "A.J." purchased the quarter block at Second and Santa Clara Streets in March 1905. A.J. and his wife Lizzie, hired respected local builder, Weston Campbell to build their brown shingle home.



15 Egbert Home
This 1900 Vintage Style house was by J.P. Mortensen for the Egbert family. Rio Vista's family doctor for many years, Dr. Simmer also owned this South Front Street house.



16 Tudor Revival Home
This house, with its steeply pitched roof, narrow windows, and wood framing accents, exemplifies the Tudor Revival style. This architectural style was most popular in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s.



17 Gordon Home
J.P. Mortensen built this 1900s home for the Rush Family. The house was then sold to Captain Fay, a river boat company owner. In 1919, George Gordon, Sr. purchased the home and modified the structure by adding a 2nd story.



18 Victorian Home
This small Victorian house shares many of the architectural characteristics of Captain Larsen's residence with decorative brackets on the porch and eaves and multiple paint colors to highlight architectural details.



19 City Hall Plaza
City Hall opened in 1950. City Hall Plaza pays tribute to the sacrifices of local residents in battle, the Pony Express Memorial to the river boat steamer "New World", and the visit of Humphrey the whale. Just behind City Hall is the public boat launch. The annual Bass Festival and Derby are held downtown on Front and Main Streets.

Many of the Photos Above are Courtesy of Jan Vick, Sea Wings Creations