



February 24, 2015

Erin Simmons, Director  
Design Assistance Team Program  
Center for Communities by Design  
The American Institute of Architects  
1735 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington D.C. 20006-5292

Dear Erin,

RioVision and the city of Rio Vista started off 2014 getting ready for the Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) visit. When the team arrived, meetings were held with the townspeople of Rio Vista, comments were gathered and recommendations were made. In March the team presented its final recommendations with over 400 people attending the final town hall meeting. Since those presentations were held our town has experienced a number of changes.

I joined the team shortly after the final R/UDAT presentations and, mid-year, took over the role of Executive Director. Approaching the one year mark, we felt that it was helpful to recap the changes that have happened as we are now in the planning process for 2015. We are continuing to evolve, having just added 4 additional members to our Board of Directors.

The attached list represents the combined accomplishments of RioVision as well as other changes that have taken place within the community. These all go to making Rio Vista a place more vibrant for its residents and setting the stage for economic development.

We look forward to speaking with you about our accomplishments and determining any next steps.

Jim Wheeler  
Executive Director  
RioVision  
Phone: 415 847 7350

cc: RioVision Board of Directors  
Rio Vista City Council  
Tim Chapa, Rio Vista City Manager

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## **ACCOMPLISHED TO DATE:**

### **Organization**

- Joined the California Main Street organization for guidance and the ability to interact with other Main Street cities. Following the Main Street Four Point Approach of Organization, Promotion, Design and Economic Restructuring. Plan on attending the annual conference on 2/25/2015.
- Developed the RioVision organization to consist of a Board of Directors and a Steering Committee, led by an Executive Director. Each group has its own set of responsibilities and sub-committees. The Board works inter-organizationally with other organizations in Rio Vista and is responsible for long-term strategy and planning. The Steering Committee is responsible for day-to-day operations and the development and implementation of projects in fulfillment of the objectives and strategies.
- The Board of Directors and Steering Committees, between them, include representation of various service groups, the Chamber of Commerce, city officials, property owners and old-time Rio Vista families.
- Day to day operations of the Steering Committee is organized into a Design Committee with 3 mentors leading, a Highway 12 group, a Promotion and Communication group, a Waterfront group and Economic Development.
- The Executive Director and Board members have established relationships at several levels of the city government. The Executive Director has a weekly meeting with the Planning Manager and/or Public Works Director.
- Established the organization 501(c)(3) status as a non-profit. Established a funding arm within RioVision for the funding of large projects (starting with the Main Street Streetscape). This group is a sub-committee of the Board of Directors.
- Began a youth activities investigation that will lead to more involvement by and for the youth of Rio Vista that is currently underway.
- Regularly attend City Council and Planning Commission meetings.
- Board approved credit card use for donations.
- Just implemented the Amazon Smile program for ongoing donation support.
- Just implemented Constant Contact for mailings.

### **Design**

- Received offers from two elected officials in local and US government to provide benches for the new Main Street streetscape.

# RíoVision

bridge to the future

- Researched, purchased and obtained location agreement for new bike racks throughout the downtown area. One artistic bike rack installed. Six utilitarian bike racks donated to the city, which were installed initially on downtown sidewalks.
- Adding a stenciled bike logo to existing bike stanchions to make them more noticeable as bike racks.
- Painted a beautiful new mural on the corner of a building at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Main Streets done by volunteers. The mural represents the history of Rio Vista and includes a commemorative plaque.
- Organized and held a mural painting workshop that was conducted by a well-known mural artist.
- Installed lights on the 16 trees on the corners of the business district on Main Street to remain all year; additional lighting of the trees is happening during the Winter.
- Organized a team, including several teenagers, and cleaned up the town entrance.
- Began negotiations with the property owners of the town entrance for a more permanent monument.
- Developed, presented and obtained approval from the city for the redesign of the 76 planters on Main Street into a streetscape/parklet concept. Two pilot planters completed to date. Two more imminent. Funding campaign started for the remainder.
- Drafted a Public Art Ordinance, with assistance and input from the city Planning Manager and a member of the Planning Commission, and presented to the city for finalization. Draft ordinance is going before the Planning Commission on February 11.
- Facilitated the development of proposals for two historic, large neon signs on Main Street – Proposal accepted and project fully funded (approx. \$19k). Work to begin soon.
- Received agreement to repaint an historic mural on Main Street at Hap's Bait Shop. Work just completed.
- Investigated locations for a community garden. Selection of a site underway.
- Lent strings of lights to the Rio Vista fire department to light up the Firehouse on Main Street for the holiday season.

# RioVision

bridge to the future

- The Chamber of Commerce brought in a Farmers Market that is on one closed-off block on Main Street each Saturday morning during the Summer and Fall.
- The Chamber of Commerce instituted a “Third Thursday” event throughout the year where the businesses on Main Street are open later (until 7:00 PM) and feature artists’ installations and meet and greet at various stores.
- The Chamber has just adopted a new slogan and logo for 2015: Eat, Shop, Discover Rio Vista.

## Highway 12

- Highway 12 group formed and conducted surveys of issues from the 22 businesses located along the Highway 12 corridor that runs through town; (17 surveys were completed). Letter summarizing the merchant issues and comments from the police chief sent to Caltrans (group responsible for changes to the highway) and local government officials. Awaiting word back.
- Provided input from the Highway 12 businesses for the Priority Development Area (PDA) project being undertaken by the city of Rio Vista.

## Promotion

- Combined the Promotion and Communications teams into one team.
- Helped to organize and promote events at a new local venue, Hunter Hall.
- Held regular communication with the townspeople via a weekly article in the two town newspapers. One of these, the Beacon, was the first publication used (that goes to all residents). Published a monthly status report that goes to a list of over 100 people (including volunteers). Now expanding and updating that list.
- In the process of establishing an Information Forum which will meet once a quarter and share information between organizations within Rio Vista.
- Wrote a series of newspaper articles around the holiday season on the many works of volunteer organizations in Rio Vista.
- Developed a quarterly publication, Discover Rio Vista, that goes to all households in Rio Vista and selected surrounding cities. The publication, consisting of approx. 12 pages included articles about Rio Vista, tourist suggestions and ads from local merchants. The publication is self-funded based on advertising. Second quarterly publication just completed.
- Participated in the Bass Festival parade and had RioVision booths at the new Farmer’s Market and the Bass Festival



### **Economic Development**

- Funded the production of sales data reports for RioVista and the surrounding 25 mile radius by the Nielsen organization.
- Re-constituting that team to include the new full-time Planning Manager from the city.

### **Other**

- Held a six-month celebration at the six month mark since the R/UDAT team left to celebrate accomplishments of the team of volunteers.

### **Current State:**

- Organization consists of 70+ volunteers

### **FUTURE:**

- Complete the planning for 2015 to determine new projects for 2015, in addition to the following:
- Plans to develop an appropriate entrance monument that reflects our town.
- The existing mural on the side of Hap's Bait Shop is getting a repaint and more bike racks will be installed.
- Capital Funding Campaign for the streetscape, including street furniture is now beginning.
- More planters will get a new treatment to create a streetscape in the downtown area.
- The two neon signs on the Striper Café and Foster's Bighorn will be redone (thank you to some generous donors for funding this work).
- Additional sign refurbishment.
- Youth involvement.
- Work with the city to develop projects they would like to have done such as art, etc. for the new promenade.
- Work the Delta Collaborative on the Community Center project in areas such as fund raising and communications.
- Continue the quarterly publication of Discover Rio Vista.