



SOLANO COUNTY GRAND JURY
2019-2020

Rio Vista – The Price of Growth

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I. SUMMARY

Rio Vista is a small delta city where the population has nearly doubled over the past ten years. Most of this growth has occurred in subdivisions peripheral to the original downtown area. Because of the population growth, the original downtown Rio Vista streets and alleys are subject to increased usage and accompanying accelerated deterioration. Streets and traffic conditions are negatively affected and require corrective action to ensure public access and safety.

II. INTRODUCTION

The 2019-2020 Solano County Grand Jury elected to investigate the condition and use of downtown Rio Vista streets and alleys. The objective of this investigation was to evaluate their usability and safety.

III. METHODOLOGY

- Interviewed city officials
- Interviewed city staff
- Toured Rio Vista downtown streets and alleys
- Reviewed 2019-2020 Rio Vista budget
- Reviewed the current Rio Vista 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

Rio Vista, located on the Sacramento River, is a small delta city of approximately 9,000 residents. Between the years 2000 and 2018, the population has almost doubled from 4,571 to 9,239 through the development of new subdivisions. Rio Vista provides services and facilities for the entire population. As a result, the traffic on business district streets and alleys has increased.

Through its annual city budget, Rio Vista has allocated funds for the repair and maintenance of residential and downtown streets and alleys. However, the costs of street maintenance of some subdivisions, such as Trilogy, are included in home-owners association dues. The area south of Highway 12 is referred to as downtown. Incorporated in 1863, Rio Vista has several original streets in the downtown area that are too narrow to allow for parking on both sides and still accommodate two-way traffic. During their tour, Grand Jury members had to back up their vehicle to an intersection to allow for safe passage of an oncoming vehicle. While the streets are paved, most alleys are either unpaved, or are covered with deteriorating paving. Some alleys are narrow and can accommodate only a single lane of traffic. These alleys are used for various purposes, including merchant and residential parking, material delivery, and emergency vehicle access. According to city staff, since these alleys are not identified by name or signage, response

times for emergency service vehicles are negatively impacted due to this lack of specificity and vehicle access.

There is a generic complaint form available at City Hall and on the Rio Vista website should citizens of Rio Vista want to notify the City of street or alley conditions requiring maintenance or repair. However, there does not appear to be an established, uniform process for management of complaints received.

The Rio Vista 2019-2020 budget includes a project addressing alley maintenance. This project addresses the repair of the alley behind the fire station to limit potential damage to recently purchased fire-fighting equipment. At the time of the Grand Jury investigation, no construction activity had been initiated on this project and no commencement date was provided. There is no funding in the current budget for naming or numbering the alleys.

V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDING 1 – The streets in downtown Rio Vista are too narrow to accommodate parking on both sides of the street and still allow for two-way traffic. This creates a situation where one vehicle must back up to the end of the street to allow safe passage for oncoming vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION 1a –Limit these streets to one-way traffic.

or

RECOMMENDATION 1b – Restrict parking to only one side of the street.

FINDING 2 - The alleys in downtown Rio Vista are used for both business and residential access. Many of these alleys are in poor condition and in need of maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION 2 – Conduct routine inspections of the downtown alleys and perform maintenance as needed.

FINDING 3 – The alleys in downtown Rio Vista are not identified by name or number creating difficulty for emergency services, such as fire, police, and ambulance, to respond to emergencies in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – Develop and implement a plan to identify by name or number all alleys.

FINDING 4 – Rio Vista has put its firefighting equipment at risk by failing to repair the downtown alley that serves the fire department.

RECOMMENDATION 4 – Initiate and complete the funded alley maintenance project.

FINDING 5 – There is no established process for managing complaints regarding the condition of Rio Vista streets and alleys, making it difficult for the general public to know the status of repairs.

RECOMMENDATION 5 – Establish a functional complaint process to include acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint and to communicate a schedule for correction of the issue.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Rio Vista Mayor – All findings

Rio Vista City Council – All findings

Rio Vista City Manager – All findings

COURTESY COPIES

Rio Vista Public Works Manager

Solano County Board of Supervisors