



CITY OF WHEATLAND

CITY COUNCIL MEETING STAFF REPORT

February 23, 2021

SUBJECT: Council consideration and adoption of Resolution 07-21 expressing support for ongoing development of the Three Rivers Parkway

PREPARED BY: Jim Goodwin, City Manager

Recommendation

Adopt Resolution 07-21 expressing support for ongoing work on development of Three Rivers Parkway

Background/Discussion

Yuba Water Agency (YWA) has sponsored formation of a Three Rivers Parkway Working Group and has retained a consultant to develop the concept. The proposed Three Rivers Parkway is envisioned as an open space and recreational public space that can promote opportunities for waterway conservation, habitat restoration, recreational access, and increased quality of life for Yuba County and regional residents.

The attached information outlines the concept. Doug Svensson, a consultant with Applied Development Economics (who is also Wheatland's consultant for our Business Park Feasibility Study), will be present and make a presentation on the project.

Wheatland is being asked to adopt Resolution 07-21 to show support for the regional effort. Specifically, the resolution states Wheatland will:

1. Participate in the planning activities of the Yuba County Three Rivers Parkway Working Group.
2. Encourage the land use planning agencies in the County, including Yuba County, and the cities of Marysville and Wheatland, to incorporate the River Parkway concept into their park and recreation master plans.
3. Collaborate with Working Group member organizations to identify and access state, federal and foundation grants, or other funds to acquire land and design and construct facilities to implement the river parkway plan.
4. Participate in the formulation of a long term organizational and funding plan for operation and maintenance of the river parkway system.

5. Urge the California State Departments of: (A) Fish and Wildlife, (B) Water Resources (C) Wildlife Conservation Board, as well as all other local, state, and federal agencies to support and expedite the forgoing River Parkway acquisition and planning activities.

Alternatives

The City Council may choose not to adopt Resolution 07-21.

Fiscal Impact

No General Fund impacts.

Attachments

1. Resolution 07-21
2. Three Rivers Parkway Concept

RESOLUTION NO. 07-21

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHEATLAND
ON THE PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT OF THE YUBA COUNTY THREE
RIVERS PARKWAY**

WHEREAS, the City of Wheatland's mission includes (A) promoting the economic development of the community, (B) improving recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, (C) promoting the environmental quality of natural habitat systems, and (C) advancing public safety; and

WHEREAS, Yuba County has three major rivers and associated levee systems that connect the cities, unincorporated urban areas as well as natural areas; and

WHEREAS, trail systems and associated open spaces have been shown to provide substantial recreational amenities, economic benefits, and health benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Yuba Water Agency has sponsored the formation of a Three Rivers Parkway Working Group consisting of local governments and non-profit organizations representing habitat restoration, recreation, levee management and economic development interests; and

WHEREAS, the Three Rivers Parkway Working Group has prepared a conceptual proposal for the River Parkway system; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wheatland values the collaboration of Federal, State, County agencies and other public and private partners to fulfill its mission.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Wheatland expresses its commitment to:

1. Participate in the planning activities of the Yuba County Three Rivers Parkway Working Group.
2. Encourage the land use planning agencies in the County, including Yuba County, and the cities of Marysville and Wheatland, to incorporate the River Parkway concept into their park and recreation master plans.
3. Collaborate with Working Group member organizations to identify and access state, federal and foundation grants, or other funds to acquire land and design and construct facilities to implement the river parkway plan.
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5. Urge the California State Departments of: (A) Fish and Wildlife, (B) Water Resources (C) Wildlife Conservation Board, as well as all other local, state, and

federal agencies to support and expedite the forgoing River Parkway acquisition and planning activities.

ATTEST:

Lisa J. Thomason, MMC

Rick West, Mayor

Proposal for the Development of the Three Rivers Parkway

(Draft Concept Paper IV)

Concept Introduction

The Three Rivers Parkway is envisioned as an open space and recreational public space that can promote opportunities for waterway conservation, habitat restoration, recreational access, and increased quality of life for Yuba County and regional residents.

The Parkway would accommodate and enable increased hiking, biking, kayaking, fishing, and equestrian recreational uses. It would also preserve and protect riparian and river environments.

Yuba County is blessed with 3 major rivers and over 5,000 acres of publicly owned land adjacent to the river and in close proximity to future population centers. This is an asset that can be developed for the benefit of our economy, public safety, and wildlife, as well as for our physical and mental wellbeing.

The Parkway Vision for 2030

Imagine yourself transported to the future. You are a resident of Yuba County in the year 2030. The 2020 pandemic has passed but has left an indelible imprint on our economy and culture of the world. People are more keenly aware of health needs. Public recreation is recognized as a significant contributor to a local economy. The Three Rivers Parkway is providing these vital public benefits for the citizens of Yuba County.

After implementation of several key pilot programs, a user could access an expanded bike and pedestrian trail system. Major Class I bikeways have been established from Sycamore Ranch Park on the eastern Yuba River to downtown Marysville, a distance of approximately 10 miles. Residents

The Three Rivers Parkway Vision:

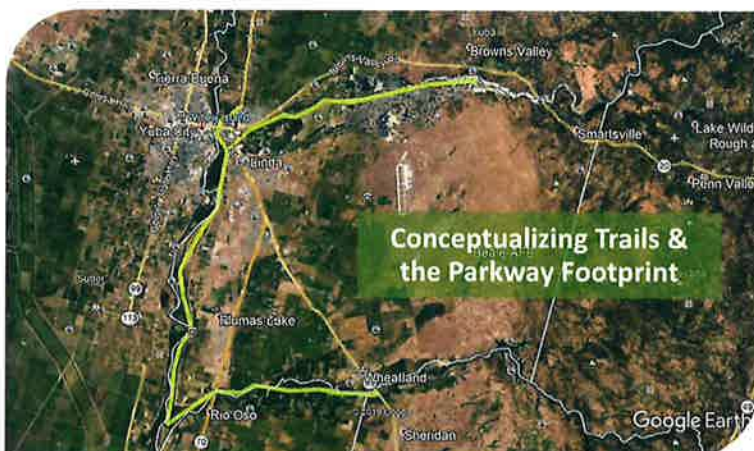
The Three Rivers Parkway aims to become an economic and environmentally sustainable public resource, creating and enhancing connected riparian trails and associated habitats throughout Yuba County on the lower reaches of the Bear, Feather and Yuba rivers for public use, public safety and wildlife.

can also travel by bike from Riverfront Park to the Plumas Lake area utilizing the abandoned Union Pacific rail line once operated as the Sacramento Northern Electric Railway. This corridor is nearly 12 miles long and creates a central trailway for bikes and pedestrians with feeding trails from key points along its path—the airport, Linda and Olivehurst neighborhoods, and the Hard Rock Casino-Hotel to the southeast. There is also a similar Class I bikeway that runs north-south parallel to the Feather River, nestled up against the westerly toe of the Feather River Setback Levee. Public access across the levee top has been secured in key locations. This more rural biking and hiking trail has been enhanced by several riparian restoration projects and establishment of a native tree canopy to shade the corridor. This Class I loop system has added over 25 miles to the County Class I network. A Class I extension to Wheatland's bikeway system is in progress.

We can also enjoy the new Water Education Center, located along the Yuba River. This facility provides nature and conservation camp programs for youth and provides an educational experience featuring the riparian habitats of the three major rivers of the County—the Bear, the Feather, and the Yuba. Restoration and fishery studies are underway at this facility. The ecosystem of waterways is depicted in a hands-on museum setting where visitors can learn about water conservation, hydro-electric power, and flood mitigation. The Parkway has sponsored and supported several riparian restoration projects along the rivers, including a new project in the Yuba Gold Fields.

The Parkway also has provided improvements for small boat craft and kayaks. Two new access/take-out locations have been developed to work in concert with the existing the Riverfront boat ramp and the Star Bend boat ramp. Kayakers can now travel beyond Sycamore Ranch Park by accessing a new intake facility below the underwater flood dam facility. In addition, small craft can now enter below Shanghai rapids and either exit at Star Bend or continue south to the new access point near the confluence of the Bear and Feather Rivers.

Our Approach



Our vision is to create over 40 miles of walking and bike trails in the floodway, on and adjacent to the levees while promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Enhanced river access for public use will create new business and recreational opportunities in our community, while healthier riparian habitat will enhance our local fisheries.



Access to hiking and water trails provided by the Parkway will improve the quality of life for Yuba County residents, create educational opportunities and attract out of town visitors, thereby strengthening our economy.

Economic and technology trends over the next 10 years will allow more high paying jobs to move out of cities and into communities with high quality lifestyles. The Parkway will allow Yuba County to benefit from this trend.



As the Parkway evolves into a major recreational facility with resource development along 40 miles of river parkway, it utilizes a Joint Powers authority to develop an innovative partnership of the Yuba Water Agency, Yuba County, Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority, Bureau of Reclamation District 784, the cities of Marysville and Wheatland, and the State of California to form a special district to oversee the operation and maintenance of the parkway. The operations include a Park Ranger service to assist with public safety and code enforcement.

These agencies have moved forward in partnership and cooperation to provide a public resource that rivals many other river parkways in the State. Key non-profit and private organizations, such as River Partners and the South Yuba Citizens League are involved in the expansion of the parkway and its development, helping to lead the way in riparian habitat restorations and tree plantings. Use of the parkway expands every year and has provided a visitor attraction that is contributing to the Yuba County economy.

Hunting deer, duck, turkey and upland game bird species is an important part of our community's history and economy. The Parkway will provide habitat for these and other important species.



A well-designed Parkway will enhance public safety and assist water managers, levee districts and other agencies to move floodwater through the system safely.



Working in concert with wildlife agencies, levee districts and TRLIA, the Parkway will enhance and expand habitat areas along the rivers. The Parkway's open space and riparian habitat will be designed to support flood control efforts by enhancing floodwater attenuation and groundwater.

With California's unpredictable climate and an ever-increasing demand for water, the Parkway can help manage our groundwater resources by providing recharge fields, which improve water security for our farmers.



Yuba County is home to approximately 12,000 commercial honey bee colonies. Our local apiculture industry has struggled with losses from decreasing numbers of native flowering plants that support bees year-round, pesticide drift, and bee parasites. Allowing beekeepers access to the Parkway will improve bee nutrition, decrease hive losses from pesticide drift, and improve the industry's bottom line.

Economic Development and Recreation

Outdoor recreation has become increasingly popular with many age groups. Consumer spending on outdoor recreation grew more than 30% between 2012 and 2017, well above the national economy growth of 20%. The Outdoor Industry Association has compiled data indicating that Americans spend more on trail sports gear (\$20 billion) than on home entertainment equipment (\$18 billion), more on water sports gear (\$14 billion) than on movie tickets (\$11 billion) and more on cycling and skate boarding (\$97 billion) than on video games (\$61 billion).¹

In 2008, a study conducted for the California State Parks System estimated that California adults spend an average of 96 days per year on all types of outdoor recreation on publicly accessible lands, resulting in 2.6 billion person days for adults and 3.5 billion days including children.² In 2016, Washington State estimated that their population plus out of state visitors spent an average of 42 days per year on trails alone.³ Of the 39 most popular outdoor activities in the California study, at least one third occur on trails or in rivers.

The studies in California and Washington have derived the following spending estimates for park and trail users (\$2019).

Local/Regional Parks (CA)	\$7.68 /person day
Trail users (WA)	\$29.82 /person day
State Parks System (CA Central Valley)	\$81.15 /person day
Federally Managed Parks (CA Central Valley)	\$109.32 /person day

The State of California estimates that in 2017, visitors to Yuba County generated \$90 million in spending within the County, including lodging, retail sales and transportation, as well as arts and culture activities. Visitors to Sutter County generated slightly less, at \$88 million. On a per capita basis, these were the lowest visitor spending totals of any of the counties in the Sacramento Valley.⁴ Tourism is a higher proportion of the county economy for virtually every other county in the region. The Yuba Sutter Lodging Association reports that much of their existing trade is weekday business travel and significant capacity exists to increase weekend visitor travel. In addition, Yuba County has the lowest per capita total taxable retail sales level of any of the Sacramento Valley counties except Sierra County.

¹ Outdoor Industry Association. The Outdoor Recreation Economy. 2017.

² BBC Research and Consulting. California Outdoor Recreation Economic Study: Statewide Contributions and Benefits. California State Parks. 2010.

³ EcoNorthwest. Economic, Environmental, & Social Benefits of Recreational Trails in Washington State. 2019.

⁴ Source: ADE, Inc. based on data provided in Dean Runyan Associates, California Travel Impacts, 2010-2018. April 2019. CA Department of Finance Population Estimates.

In addition to the health and quality of life benefits of the river parkway system for residents, there are a number of business opportunities directly associated with increased use of the river areas.

- Increased weekend lodging stays
- Increased concessions for biking, kayaking, rafting, fishing, wildlife viewing and visits to historical sites.
- Increased business for eating places, brew pubs, recreational clothing and equipment and gift shops
- Improved quality of life amenities to help attract entrepreneurs and their businesses to Yuba County
- Trails improve property values for adjacent lands⁵

Currently Planned Parks and Bikeways



The Parkway will build and expand on existing plans already vetted by local and regional government agencies, citizens and non-profits.

Yuba County has actively looked towards open space and recreation development and expansion for nearly twenty years. There are four key planning documents that support the Three Rivers Parkway concept, including:

- The 2008, Yuba County Parks Master Plan,
- The 2009, TRLIA Public Access Study,
- The 2009, TRLIA Land Management Plan for the Feather River Levee Setback Project (see Figure 1),
- The 2012, Yuba County Bikeway Master Plan,
- The 2015-16 SACOG Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Master Plan (updated in 2018).

All of these documents discuss an expansion of public access and the creation of new active recreational corridors. The major projects and programs of these plans define

⁵ Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse. "Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways." Rail to Trails Conservancy. n.d

and shape the Parkway concept (see Figure 2 for a broad outline of the study area for the Parkway system)

The Way Forward

The first task in realizing our vision for the Parkway is to define our goals. These goals include:

- Create a linked parkway comprised of non-contiguous public lands which run west from the City of Wheatland to the Feather River, north up the Feather River to the area around Marysville and east to the Parks Bar SR20 bridge and beyond
- Establish a financially sustainable organization (JPA, etc.) that coordinates the development and operation of the Parkway between local governments and local, state and federal agencies
- Identify and develops synergies with companies, governments and NGO's that leverage resources, resulting in better outcomes and reduced costs incurred by JPA members
- Craft a regional brand through effective use of media and public awareness activities
- Enhance economic opportunities for new and existing Yuba County businesses
- Restore habitat and creating open space that supports wildlife and promotes public safety
- Develop space for the public pursuit of healthy recreational activities that improve our quality of life
- Improve public safely through enhanced floodwater management system
- Strengthen our agricultural community by enhancing groundwater recharge and providing safe harbor for pollinators (the apiary industry)

The Parkway Concept solidifies the planning work of the past twenty years. Since several agencies and stakeholder organizations are involved in the development of recreational and conservation work along the County's three rivers, a formal agreement is needed to coalesce the various entities. The Working Group needs to take up finalization of A Memorandum of Understanding as an important first step, followed by a joint effort to identify financing sources for development of the programs and projects identified in this concept paper. The concept needs further refinement with prioritization of the programs and projects listed above. The full Working Group may want to look at supporting a few pilot projects and identify financing sources such as the State Proposition 68 funds currently allocated for rural projects.



Figure 1: Feather River Setback Project Conceptual Plan

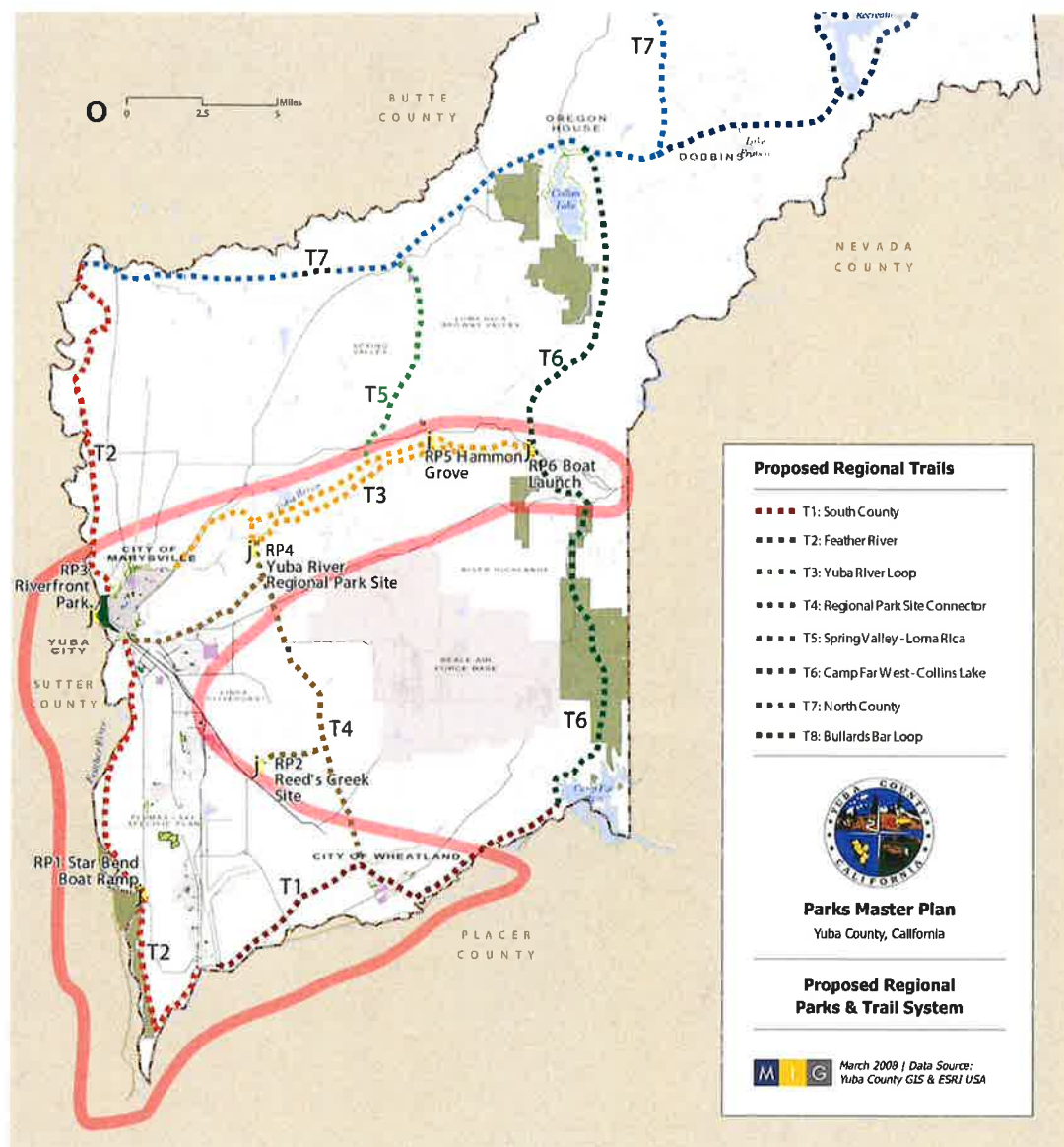
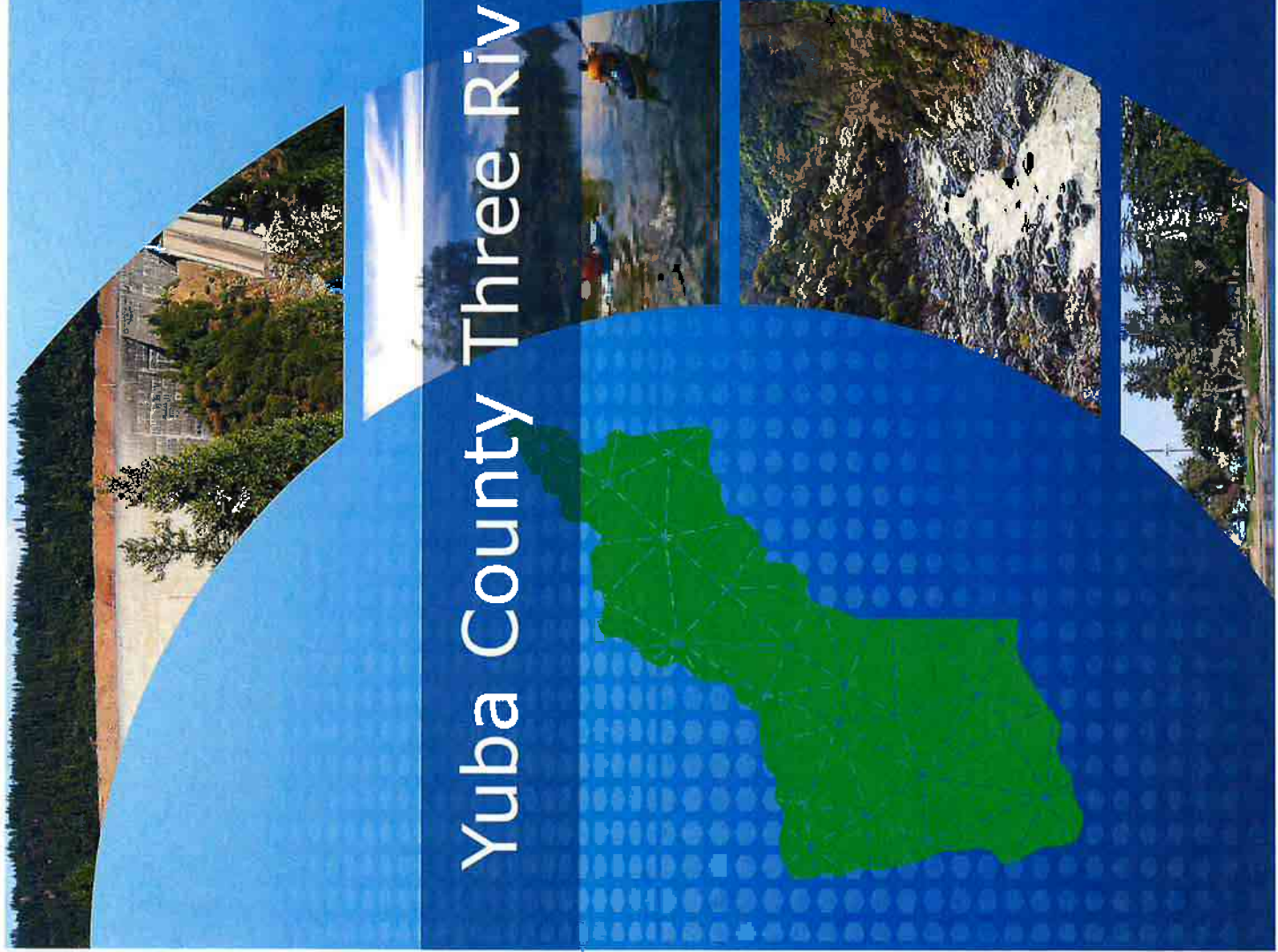


Figure 2: Three Rivers Parkway Study Area

Yuba County Three Rivers Parkway

Presented by:
Doug Svensson, President
Applied Development Economics, Inc.



Three Rivers Parkway Working Group

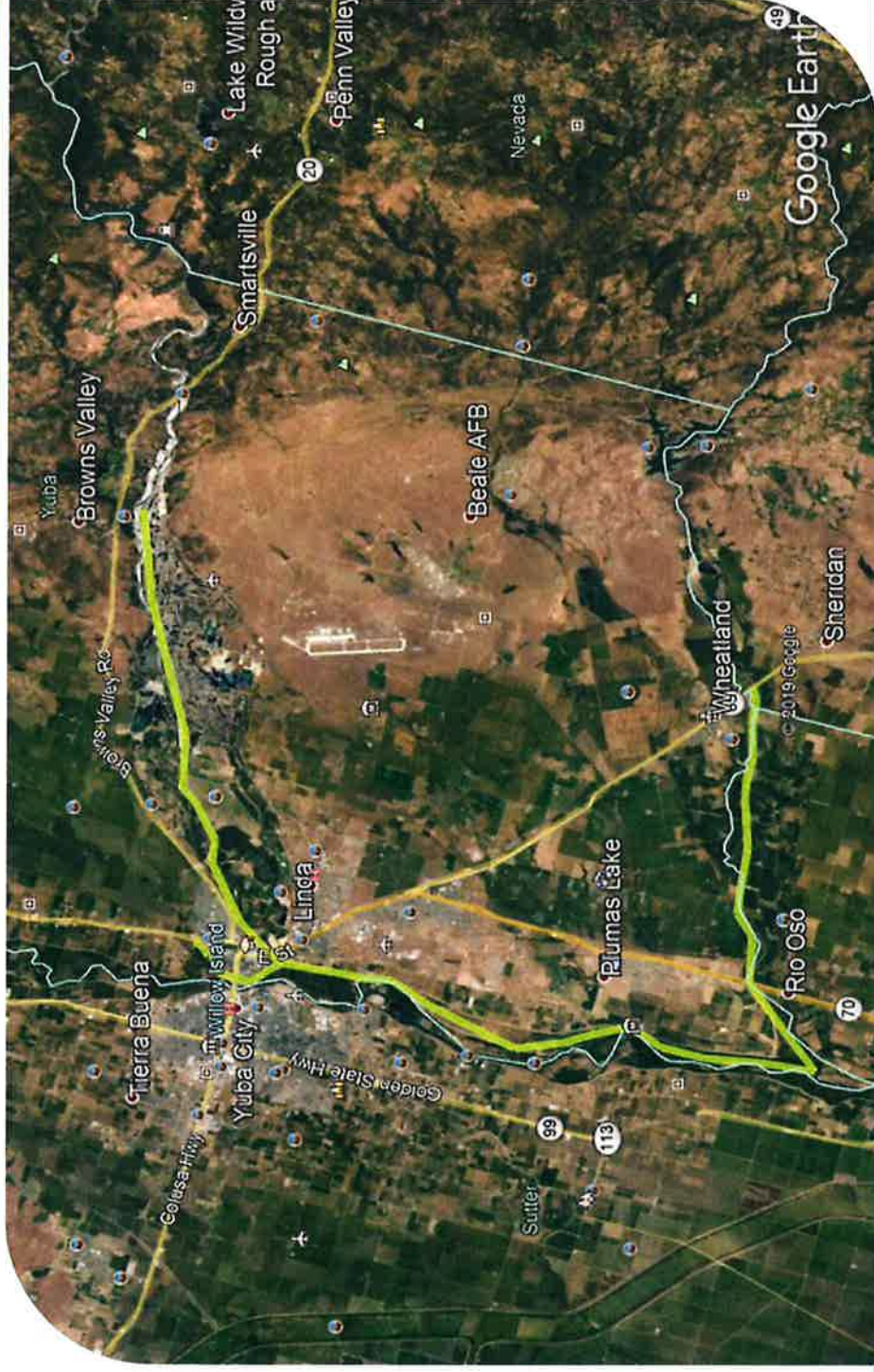
- Yuba Water Agency
- Yuba County
- Marysville
- Wheatland
- River Partners
- South Yuba River Citizens League
- Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority (TRLIA)
- Reclamation District 784
- Yuba Sutter Lodging Association
- Yuba Sutter Chamber of Commerce

Currently Planned Parks and Bikeways

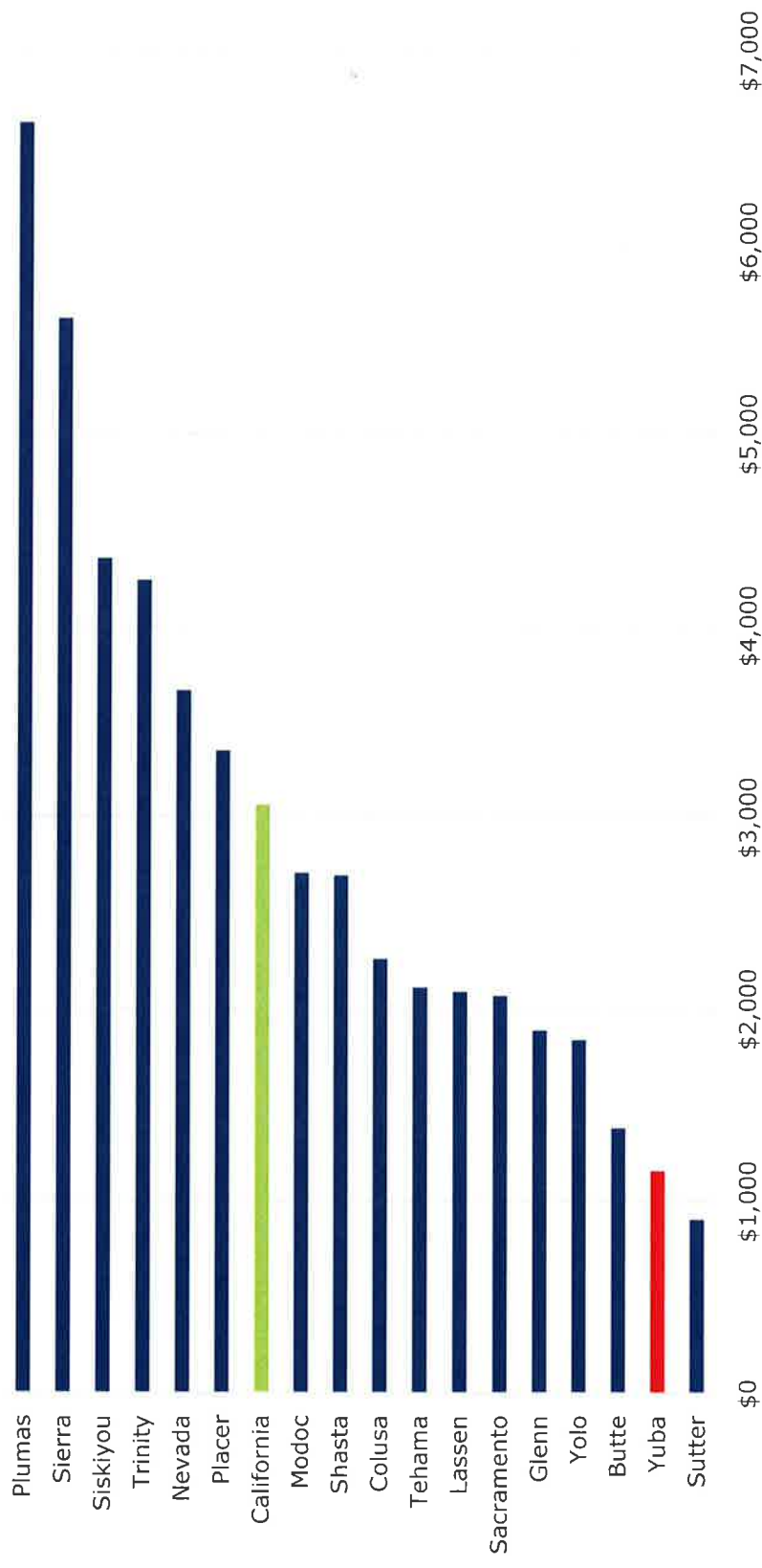
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- The 2018 SACOG Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Master Plan (currently being updated).

Parkway Footprint

- Over 5,000 acres of publicly owned land adjacent to rivers and in proximity to future population centers.
- The Parkway could include 40 miles of walking and bike trails and river access for small boat craft and kayaks.



Tourism Growth Opportunity: Per Capita Destination Spending



Economic Development Benefits of River Parkway

- Consumer spending on outdoor recreation grew 30% between 2012 and 2017, compared to 20% for the rest of the economy.
- Studies in California and Washington show substantial spending from park and trail users (\$2019).

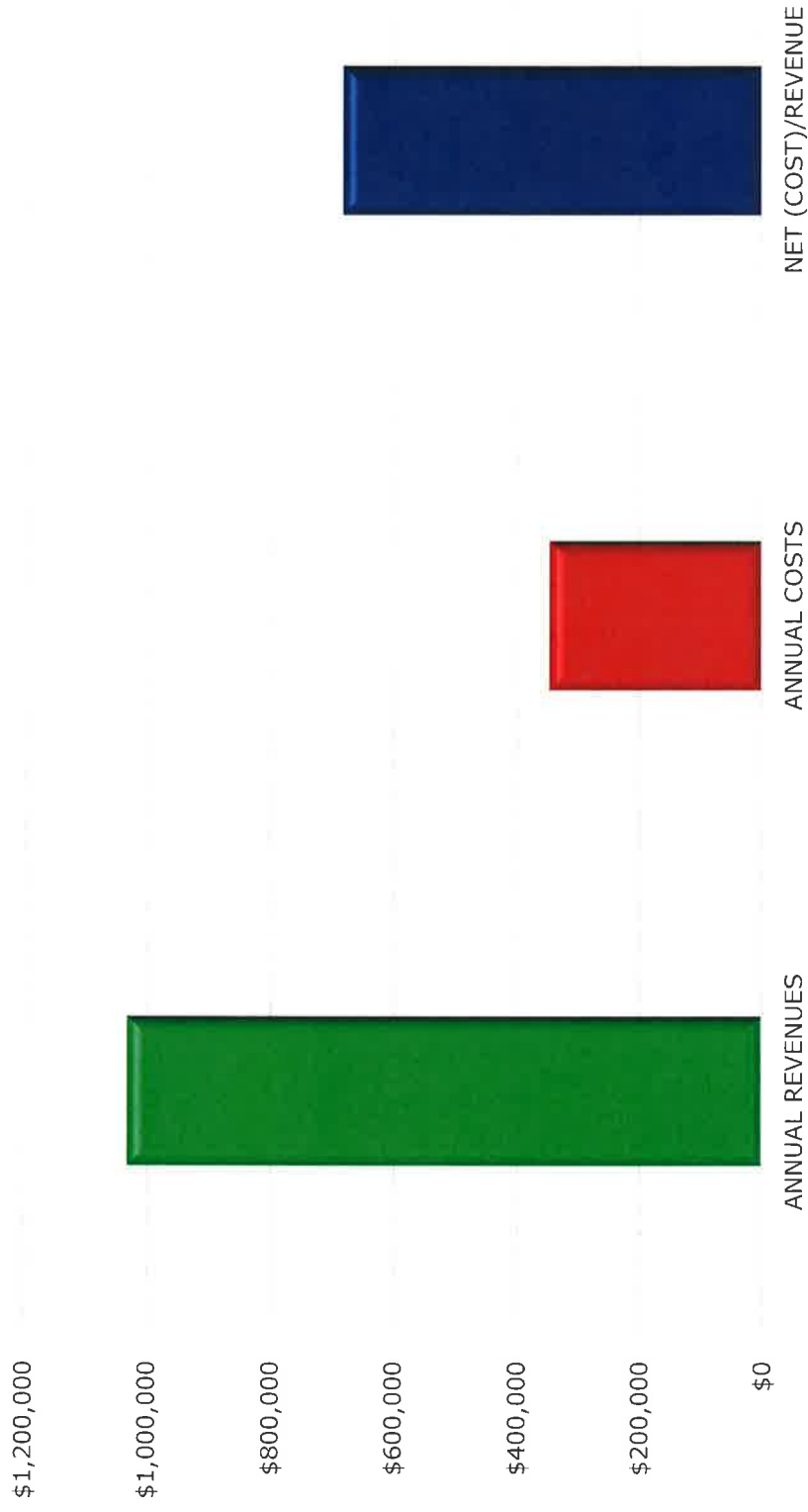
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- 900,000 new visitors per year could generate \$27 million in business revenues

Tourism, Hospitality and Entertainment

- Increased weekend lodging stays
- Increased concessions for biking, kayaking, rafting, fishing, wildlife viewing and visits to historical sites.
- Increased business for eating places, brew pubs, recreational clothing and equipment and gift shops
- Improved quality of life amenities to help attract entrepreneurs and their businesses to Yuba County
- Trails improve property values for adjacent lands

Fiscal Benefit of 900,000 new visitors to Yuba County



Three Rivers Parkway Vision

The Three Rivers Parkway aims to become an economic and environmentally sustainable public resource, creating and enhancing connected riparian trails and associated habitats throughout Yuba County on the lower reaches of the Bear, Feather and Yuba rivers for public use, public safety and wildlife.

Three Rivers Parkway

- Enhanced river access for public use will create new business and recreational opportunities in our community, while healthier riparian habitat will enhance our local fisheries.



- Access to hiking and water trails provided by the Parkway will improve the quality of life for Yuba County residents, create educational opportunities and attract out of town visitors, thereby strengthening our economy.

Three Rivers Parkway

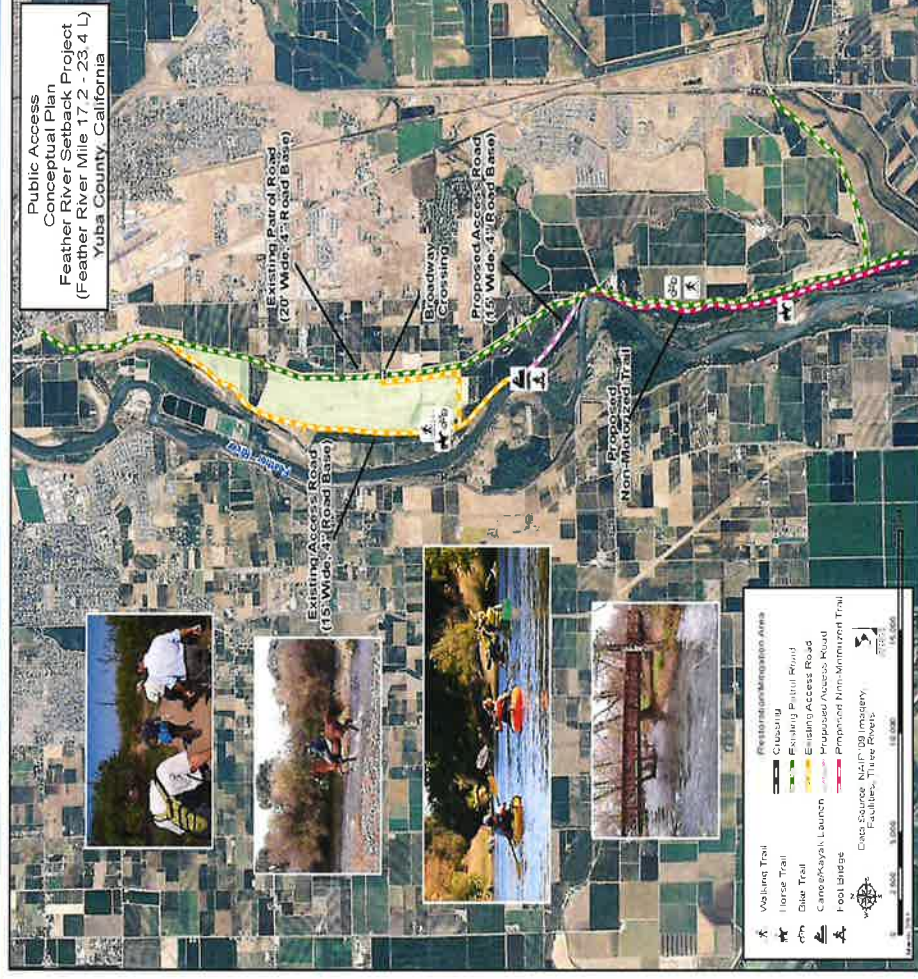


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With California's unpredictable climate and an ever-increasing demand for water, the Parkway can help manage our groundwater resources by providing recharge fields, which improve water security for our farmers.



TRLIA Feather River Setback Plan



Next Steps

- Working Group organizations and agencies adopt resolutions of support
- County and partners develop plan for maintenance and operation
- County applies for grant funds, including funds to conduct planning and engineering

Planning for Sustainable Prosperity