



Flood Control, Recreation and Neighborhoods: Living with Our Levees

West Sacramento is located in a lowland that was once called the "Yolo Sinks." This part of the county was a vast wetland and river estuary, flooded each year as the Sacramento River swelled with runoff from the Sierra Nevada snow pack. The Gold Rush of 1849 began decades of settlement that reclaimed the lowland for agriculture, community development, and transportation through successive levee construction projects. Today, a complex system of levees surrounds and intersects the city, holding back the waters of the Sacramento River, Yolo Bypass, Deep Water Shipping Channel, and Port of Sacramento. Though the levee system has performed reliably over the years, the Katrina catastrophe in New Orleans and the aging of levees in our region has heightened awareness of this crucial infrastructure. West Sacramento is testing its levee system to evaluate needs for repairs or improvements.

Opportunities for Recreation

The levees are also a distinctive feature of our landscape and offer numerous opportunities for recreation that are compatible with the long-term integrity of levee structures—such activities as hiking, bicycling, fishing, bird watching, horseback riding, and jogging. However, recreationists should consider how their activities may affect nearby residents and remember that others share the same open space. The trash that is left behind by some visitors is the same garbage that others will encounter on later visits to the levee. Visitors should also take care to avoid trespassing on private properties adjacent to the levees. While public access is currently granted on the levee, individuals are responsible for complying with all posted regulations.

Unacceptable Levee Use

Some local levees are being used for off-road vehicle (OHV) activities—driving motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, jeeps and dune buggies, and other vehicles. Driving motor vehicles on levees accelerates the erosion of levee slopes, undermines the levee top and is against the law (California Vehicle Code 21116). As West Sacramento grows and the community investigates ways to maintain adequate flood control protection, continuing OHV use of the levees raises both the risk of levee failure and costs of levee repair. If you observe this illegal motorist use of levees, please call police dispatch at (916) 372-3375.

The city is working with local agencies to improve education about recreational use of the levees by installing additional signs and preparing an information guide describing allowed and prohibited uses. Access to levees will be controlled with better gates and police patrols. The city will also improve recreational access to the levees at suitable locations, such as the south bank of the Barge Canal. The city invites input from residents and visitors who recreate on the levees. In partnership with the community, the city is committed to protecting both the flood control and recreational values of local levees.

Questions about levee recreational access? Contact Park Development Manager Dave Shpak, (916) 617-4645.

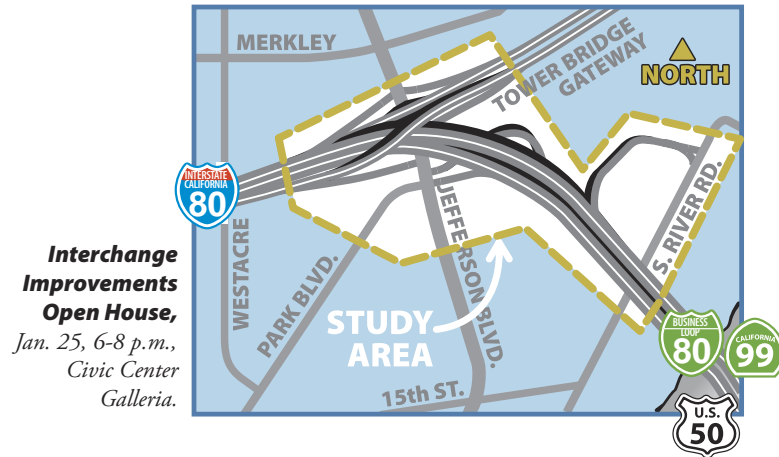


Giant electric transformer, bound for Arizona, is unloaded at the Port.

Port Continues to Ship Rice—Steel and Cement on the Way

The Port of Sacramento opened the 2006-2007 rice season with shipments via ADM Rice and Farmers Rice Cooperative. Both companies were successful in negotiating six Japanese rice shipments totaling over 78,000 tons through mid-January 2007. The Port and its rice shippers hope to secure more shipments to Japan, South Korea and other countries in the coming months of the export season. Silgen Containers is shipping coiled steel through the Port to support its container manufacturing operations in Northern California. Ninety foot steel sections for dock construction projects in the Pacific Northwest and a 90-ton electric transformer bound for Arizona are among other new shipments via the Port of Sacramento. Bulk cement import operations will commence this spring at A&A Cement, as construction is completed on its new 88,000 metric ton state-of-the-art cement facility in the Port District.

JEFFERSON BLVD. / SOUTH RIVER RD. INTERCHANGE STUDY



Interchange Improvements Open House,
Jan. 25, 6-8 p.m.,
Civic Center Galleria.

The public is invited to attend a Jan. 25 open house to consider alternatives for improvements to the US 50/Jefferson Boulevard and US 50/South River Road interchanges. The improvements are planned to help enhance traffic operations, relieve traffic congestion and improve general safety conditions for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. Residents are encouraged to participate in the planning and decision process for the project. The open house is an opportunity to offer comments and input on the proposed alternatives, which are being developed as part of the Project Study Report. Previous studies have identified improvements to ramps, traffic signals, cross streets and the Tower Bridge Gateway.

The Project Study Report is scheduled for completion this fall. A second open house will be held May 24 to present viable alternatives to be considered for the design and environmental document phase of the project.

For more information, contact Project Manager Jay Davidson, (916) 617-4645 or jayd@cityofwestsacramento.org.