

MEETING DATE: March 2, 2026

ITEM # 3

SUBJECT:



UPDATE ON THE CLARKSBURG BRANCH LINE TRAIL EXTENSION PROJECT (CIP-14063)

INITIATED OR REQUESTED BY:

- Board Staff
- Other

REPORT COORDINATED OR PREPARED BY:

Steven Rosen, Associate Transportation Planner
Community Development Department

ATTACHMENT Yes No Information Direction Action

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this report is to update the Transportation, Mobility, and Infrastructure Commission on the progress made toward advancing the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Extension project.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff respectfully recommend that the Transportation, Mobility, and Infrastructure Commission receive staff's update on development of the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Extension Project.

BACKGROUND

The City of West Sacramento purchased the Clarksburg Branch Line/Yolo Shortline railroad corridor (approximately 9.8 miles) from Sierra Railroad Company in 2005. The right-of-way purchased from the railroad extended between Locks Drive at the barge canal in Southport and Willow Point Road in Yolo County near the unincorporated community of Clarksburg. The purpose of the acquisition was to build a multiuse bicycle and pedestrian trail on the right-of-way. Development of this trail is consistent with several local and regional planning efforts including the 2030 Yolo County General Plan, Yolo County Bicycle Transportation Plan, the Clarksburg Community Action Plan (2016), West Sacramento Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan (2018), the Sacramento Area Council of Governments' Regional Trail Network Action Plan (2022), and the California State Delta Protection Commission's Great California Delta Trail Master Plan (2022); and is currently identified as a priority trail in the Yolo Transportation District (YoloTD) Yolo Active Transportation Corridors Draft Plan.

Since acquiring the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail right of way, development of the planned regional trail has been phased as planning, engineering design, and construction funding is secured over several years. An initial 1.25-mile segment from Locks Drive to Cherokee Road adjacent to River City High School was paved. A 3-mile segment of the Clarksburg Trail from Cherokee Rd to South River Road is nearing completion of final engineering design and includes a segment of the Southport Levee Trail that merges with the Clarksburg Trail just south of Birchwood Place (Clarksburg Branch Line Trail to City Limits, CIP-11039). These plans include replacing the wooden trestle bridge at Birchwood Place which is too low for service and emergency vehicles, not historically significant, and structurally deficient to current standards, with a prefabricated pedestrian bridge crossing. The project to pave the trail to the south city limits also includes installing a prefabricated bridge over South River Road at the existing former railroad concrete abutments. The 0.85-mile segment beginning where the trail reaches the Southport Levee and ending at South River Road is a separate project being designed and permitted for asphalt paving as part of the Southport Levee Trail project (Southport Levee Recreation Trail Planning and Design project, CIP-62147) (See Attachments 1 & 2).

In 2024, the City partnered with Yolo County, YoloTD, and the Delta Protection Commission to form the Yolo-Delta Trail Coalition (YDTC) to secure funding to environmentally clear, design, complete right of way recordation, and develop a framework for building and maintaining the southernmost segment of the Clarksburg Branch Line as a multiuse regional trail. The City as the property owner of the Clarksburg Branch Line railroad corridor submitted a grant application in partnership with the YDTC as the lead agency. Each of the partners contributed to the application and subsequent project development coordination to ensure the project remains consistent with each local agency's existing policies and adopted plans, and submitted letters of support for the project along with written support from several elected leaders, and the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Extension Project (CIP-14063) was successful in securing a \$1.89 million grant award through the Sacramento Area Council of Governments' (SACOG) federally funded Carbon Reduction Program grant program, as well as subsequent funding through the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy to advance the project.

Existing Trail Conditions

The trail right-of-way acquired by the City for this project varies between 80-feet and 130-feet in width for approximately 4.65 miles between the West Sacramento city limit and Pumphouse Road (the trail segment owned by the City of West Sacramento). Historically, the railroad shared the South River Road right of way for approximately 0.3 miles before leaving the levee road. The remaining 4.35 miles between South River Road and Pumphouse Road is unpaved and includes a mix of railroad ballast, dirt road, and graded all-weather gravel road. A portion of the right of way has experienced significant vegetation overgrowth as a result of deferred maintenance.

Portions of the existing trail corridor has also experienced encroachment by neighboring property owners who have confirmed they are knowingly occupying city-owned public lands for storing equipment, disposing of dredged canal material, crop encroachment, and have even gravel paved a large portion of the trail corridor for use as a private driveway. The City and its partners recognize the importance of maintaining the viability of neighboring agricultural operations while simultaneously ensuring property rights for both public lands and private uses are respected. As part of the right of way documentation funded through the Carbon Reduction Program grant, the City is completing a full survey of property boundaries to clearly identify the former railroad corridor, to recover city-owned lands from private encroachment, and to preserve public access rights to the Clarksburg Branch Line trail.

Purpose and Need

The intent of the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Extension as identified through the funded grant application is to prepare shovel-ready plans for a multiuse trail facility. As previously introduced, the Clarksburg Community Action Plan (Goal 1, Action 1C) calls for Establishing bicycle routes along railroad rights of way in accordance with the Yolo County Bicycle Transportation Plan. Section 3.2.2 Pedestrian and Bicycle Paths calls for connecting tourist sites (including the Old Sugar Mill) and public survey results (Appendix B) frequently mention community preference for recreation opportunities including:

- Off-highway bicycle paths (Priority list)
- Bicycle routes (Goal 1c)
- Dedicated bike trail along railroad right-of-way
- History trails
- Off-road bikeways
- Dedicated bike trail to West Sacramento
- A potential pedestrian and bicycle loop through the orchards and along tourist destinations, including vineyards and agricultural areas

The adopted Yolo County 2030 Countywide General Plan Circulation Element explicitly calls out the railroad corridor between West Sacramento and Clarksburg as part of the Great California Delta Trail:

- Policy CI-10.2 - The County will work with West Sacramento to re-use the abandoned railroad that extends from the city limits to Clarksburg for the proposed California Delta Trail System.
- Action CI-A3 (Bicycle Transportation Plan update) - Calls for updating the County Bicycle Transportation Plan to include the Great California Delta Trail and identifies potential routes along levees and abandoned railroad corridors, among others.
- The Circulation Element also includes broader policies about establishing off-street trail systems / multi-use trails countywide.

The Great California Delta Trail Master Plan adopted in 2022 calls for creating a continuous recreation corridor looping around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and linking into the San Francisco Bay Trail and regional Sacramento Valley trail systems. It identifies the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail as a “rail-to-trail” segment following the former Yolo Short Line/Sacramento Northern Railroad corridor and formally designates the trail segment to help realize that vision.

In accordance with these publicly vetted and adopted policies, the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Extension project will accomplish the following objectives:

1. *Extend the Regional Class I Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Multi-Use Trail from West Sacramento to Willow Point Road in Clarksburg*
The project will extend a safe active transportation connection between the City limits at South River Road near the Shangri-La Slough to Willow Point Road and Willow Avenue at the Old Sugar Mill, a major economic support to the Clarksburg community and regional tourist attraction. This trail alignment, which

is located entirely within city-owned lands and existing Yolo County right of way, does not require property acquisition, will not negatively impact existing neighboring crop production, and has been the subject of ongoing consultation with community members, residents, public officials, SACOG and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) who is the acting federal environmental lead agency. The project team is taking special care to ensure that the trail remains within the former railroad corridor now owned by the City and within Yolo County road rights of way to eliminate the need for acquiring productive farmland and to ensure that the shortest possible route between Clarksburg and West Sacramento is achieved to maximize the potential for carbon reduction.

2. *Expand Diversity of Recreation and Expand Access to Recreation*

The Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Extension is a recreational facility of regional significance prioritized by the community through local and regional planning efforts driven by extensive community engagement, including the Sacramento Regional Trail Network; the West Sacramento Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan; the Great California Delta Trail Master Plan; the draft Yolo Active Transportation Corridors Plan; the Yolo County General Plan Circulation Element; and the Yolo County Bikeway Master Plan. A particular benefit will be the regional trail access gained by historically underserved residents in Yolo County and West Sacramento, as well as opportunities for experiencing first-hand the relationship between rural and urban living, bringing farm-to-table nutrition to our communities, and providing the health benefits that trails offer. This project will create an accessible recreation facility for use by bicyclists, walkers, runners, persons with disabilities, and equestrians, connecting persons of all backgrounds, income levels, and abilities within the region.

Additionally, the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center promotes use of traditional bicycles and e-bikes to increase mobility access for older adults and people with disabilities, and AARP describes how e-bikes enable older adults to bicycle farther and more frequently as they age. This trail will make Delta recreation accessible to these groups by providing a place for them to ride safely.

3. *Extend High-Speed Fiber-Optic Connectivity*

The Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Extension seeks to provide additional reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) through telecommuting by designating the project alignment for a future underground telecommunications conduit bringing high-speed internet service to Clarksburg residents. The opportunity for facilitating broadband telecommunications is supported by the Clarksburg Community Action Plan Goal 2 (Improved Community Communications) and Action 2a (Promote internet access through new or enhanced broadband and Wi-Fi locations).

4. *Improve Safety*

There are currently no bicycle lanes or sidewalks on South River Road between West Sacramento and Clarksburg, and no shoulders along most of the corridor. The project will substantially reduce bicyclist and pedestrian exposure to motor vehicle conflicts currently experienced for approximately 8-miles on South River Road by providing an alternative safe route. The safety benefits that can be achieved through this project's off-street trail and on-street safety improvements are shown by Attachment 4, a map of local fatal and serious injury crashes where the victim was on foot or on bicycle on adjacent area roads. This map identifies 3 reported injury/fatality crashes for vulnerable road users that occurred between 2014 and 2024 on the roads in the project area. The Transportation Injury Mapping System does not map or track non-injury crashes or crashes that were not reported to law enforcement.

5. *Mode Shift/GHG Reduction*

Visit Yolo estimated that, in 2023, there were approximately 401,000 motor vehicle trips to Clarksburg for tourism/recreation purposes originating from the Sacramento/West Sacramento area. The project will reduce the distance needed to travel between Sacramento/West Sacramento and Clarksburg by 2.5 miles and reduce exposure to vehicle traffic by 8 miles. A conservative estimate calculates a 5% shift in trips from car to bicycle travel. This reduction of 20,050 annual round trips could result in a reduction of approximately 439,175 vehicle miles traveled, 19,000 fewer gallons of gasoline consumed, and 171 metric tons of Carbon Dioxide-equivalent greenhouse gas emissions reduced each year.

6. *Expand Regional Economic and Business Opportunities*

The Economic Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta explains how the project would benefit the economies of the Delta Region and West Sacramento. It identifies that visitors practicing "right-of-way recreational activities" like walking and bicycling spend roughly as much per visitor-day as participants in "resource-related recreational activities" like boating. It shows that over two-thirds of the Delta region's 13.1 million residents participate in right-of-way recreational activities, but that only 0.10%

to 0.50% of them do so in the Delta. It identifies increasing this “capture rate” as a way to improve the Delta’s visitor-serving economy that has been impacted by a decline in boating since the 1990s.

Another growth area that the project would support is agritourism. The number of farms with direct sale operations, such as farm stands or you-pick operations, agritourism or recreation sales, have increased in the six Delta Counties since 2002, with resultant increases in income per farm. This connection to the food system can be built into an agriculture-appreciation initiative. In addition, many wineries and wine-tasting establishments are based in Clarksburg, and this trail connects Sacramento/West Sacramento to the Clarksburg American Viticultural Area. This can be built into a “Yolo-Delta Vine Trail” marketing concept with participation of area wineries and grape growers to boost the local economy.

Area businesses have shown preliminary interest in adopt-a-trail programs and the Clarksburg Community Action Plan references viticulture, wine-related trails, and tourism tied to vineyards. In Appendix A – Household interviews: Issues & Ideas (pages 21-23) several stakeholder interview responses support wine- and vineyard-oriented tourism:

- “Farm and winery trail from Sacramento area.” – Participants suggested establishing a farm/winery/agritourism trail connecting Clarksburg to Sacramento and other regional markets.
- “Winery and farm/produce trail with tasting rooms.” – Comments indicate interest in a touring experience linking local agriculture and wine tasting opportunities.

These interview ideas show that vineyard-oriented trails and wine tourism were considered by residents/business owners as desirable.

Ownership

In 2005, the City of West Sacramento purchased the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail right-of-way from Sierra Railroad Company pursuant to Section 8(d) of the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C Section 1247(d). This provision of the law is popularly known as the Rails to Trails Program. The railroad right-of-way is “railbanked” when it is transferred through the Rails to Trails Program, meaning that railroad rights are protected through conversion of the right-of-way to “interim trail use.” The railroad’s right to operate a railroad is transformed into the City’s right to operate a trail. This right-of-way extends between South River Road at the City of West Sacramento to Willow Point Road.

Adjacent properties with ownerships on either side of the railroad corridor have access rights to cross the trail that are expressed but not clearly identified in existing recorded documents that established the railroad right-of-way. The project team has engaged these neighboring property owners to identify where they are currently crossing the trail corridor and will continue to discuss opportunities to accommodate their needs as the project team further clarifies and records property boundaries. Once again, the project team is taking special care to ensure that the trail remains within the former railroad corridor owned by the City and within Yolo County road rights of way to avoid any acquisition of agricultural lands.

ANALYSIS

The purpose of this report is to update the TMI Commission on the status of the project. The project team has defined the scope of the project (Project Description) and is preparing a Preliminary Environmental Study (PES), a document required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) at the onset of the environmental documentation process. The project team has conducted a preliminary site assessment necessary to prepare that form, including development of preliminary mapping, and has initiated community engagement to receive feedback from the community on the project. The team has completed an initial review of potential alternatives based on public feedback. In response to concerns about avoiding agricultural and environmental impacts, the team limited the feasible alternatives to those within existing public rights-of-way. The team has completed most of the initial topographic and site surveys necessary to identify the property boundaries and will begin mapping the precise topography required to design the trail. Finally, the project team has met with all owners of property adjacent to the project site willing to meet with the project team, as well as attendees at workshops held in West Sacramento and Clarksburg, with the Clarksburg Citizen Advisory Committee (CCAC), and with the Delta Protection Advisory Committee.

Public Engagement

The project team initiated public engagement before developing a project description so that the project could be aligned with community input. In January 2025, the City, members of the YDTC, and project consultants

conferred with owners of parcels south of Pumphouse Road to discuss their operations and the potential for the trail to extend south from Pumphouse Road to Willow Point Road.

Additionally, the City of West Sacramento and its YDTC partners held two open houses in January of 2025. One was held at the Yolo County Library's Clarksburg Branch, and the other at the West Sacramento Recreation Center. These meetings were coordinated with the YoloTD Yolo Active Trails Corridors (YATC) project to maximize community feedback. YATC will be a plan for safe walkways and bikeways within and between Yolo County's unincorporated communities. During these open houses, the project team heard both support and opposition to the YATC concepts of building bicycle facilities in Clarksburg.

At the CCAC meeting held March 6, 2025, City staff presented an overview of the project and its history, including the Clarksburg Community Action Plan policies that call for facilitating active trails in Yolo County, including policies directed specifically at building the Clarksburg Trail. While not well attended, the City heard feedback from a handful of residents opposed to the trail which runs counter to policy recommendations and actions outlined in the community's own adopted plan.

City staff attended the 2025 West Sacramento Earth Day and Egg Hunt at Bryte Park, "Celebrate Trails Day" on the paved segment of the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, and the West Sacramento Senior Resource Fair to share information about the project. The trail extension project was widely welcomed by attendees with broad support expressed by attending residents and community leaders.

In the fall of 2025, the project team met with adjacent property owners in one-on-one and small group meetings to discuss property interface issues.

Project Description

The project is a 6.4-mile southern extension of the existing Clarksburg Branch Line Trail (CBLT) multi-use bicycle and pedestrian (walking/jogging) trail between the West Sacramento City limit at South River Road to Willow Avenue in unincorporated community of Clarksburg in Yolo County. The CBLT Extension Project would utilize the former Sierra Northern Railroad corridor, owned by the City of West Sacramento, to extend the trail to the south to Pumphouse Road. To connect Pumphouse Road to Willow Avenue and extend the trail north of the Old Sugar Mill, the trail follows Pumphouse Road east to South River Road, continues south along South River Road to Willow Point Road, extends west along Willow Point Road to Willow Avenue, and then continues south, terminating just north of the Old Sugar Mill.

The project would be constructed entirely within City-owned property and within Yolo County existing road right-of-way. The project would consist of paving an 8- to 12-foot-wide multi-use path (two 4- to 6-foot-wide bicycle/pedestrian use travel lanes), paved with hot mix asphalt (HMA). Two-foot-wide gravel shoulders would be installed on both sides of the paved trail. A separate graded multi-use path within the City owned property would vary from 6- to 10-foot wide with a crushed rock surface. Between the paved and unpaved paths would be a 2- to 4-foot-wide buffer with a gravel surface and a split-rail fence 5 feet in height located in the center of the buffer. Drainage ditches, native tree planting and shrubs, and/or fencing are proposed along the property line between City property and adjacent properties. The project may also include occasional rest nodes with amenities including wayfinding signs, educational interpretive signs, benches and drainage ditch improvements as needed to accommodate the bicycle and pedestrian facility. No restroom facilities, drinking fountains, or overhead trail lights are proposed.

Within Yolo County right-of-way, solar powered radar feedback signs, advance warning traffic signs and rumble strips, crossing signs, and crosswalk pavement markings would be installed to calm traffic speeds and enhance public safety. Babel Slough Road, Pumphouse Road, and South River Road would receive HMA surface treatment where required prior to installation of pavement markings to improve the road surface. The project would also install safety lighting and solar powered Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) traffic control devices at the public road crossing of the trail on Babel Slough Road. Additionally, a speed reduction zone on Babel Slough Road and on South River Road in the Clarksburg area would be considered as part of this proposed project.

Environmental Considerations

This project is subject to both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which applies to projects that receive Federal aid, as well as the California Environmental Quality Act. A Preliminary Environmental Study (PES) form has been prepared for Caltrans review. Public Resources Code Section 21080.25(b) exempts pedestrian and bicycle facilities that improve safety, access, or mobility, including new facilities, within the public right-of-way and projects that improve customer information and wayfinding for transit riders, bicyclists, or pedestrians within

the public right-of-way. The project team will advance the appropriate level of environmental studies and analysis based on consultation with Caltrans in accordance with NEPA/CEQA.

Strategic Plan Integration

This project implements the principles of Mobility & Connectivity by facilitating a convenient and sustainable mode choice, Inclusive & Diverse equitable investment and social/environmental justice by creating a recreational facility accessible to historically disinvested communities, and advances Local Economic Development in facilitating a regionally-significant active transportation facility to capture unmet regional demand for walking and bicycling with the potential for realizing regional economic benefit for both Clarksburg and West Sacramento. The project is identified in the 2025 Strategic Priorities set by the West Sacramento City Council – specifically “Clarksburg Trail Enhancements.”

Alternatives

The TMI Commission could decline to hear the report. This action is not recommended as this agenda item is an opportunity for staff to hear valuable input from the Commission, local residents, trail users, and the Yolo County community at large.

Coordination and Review

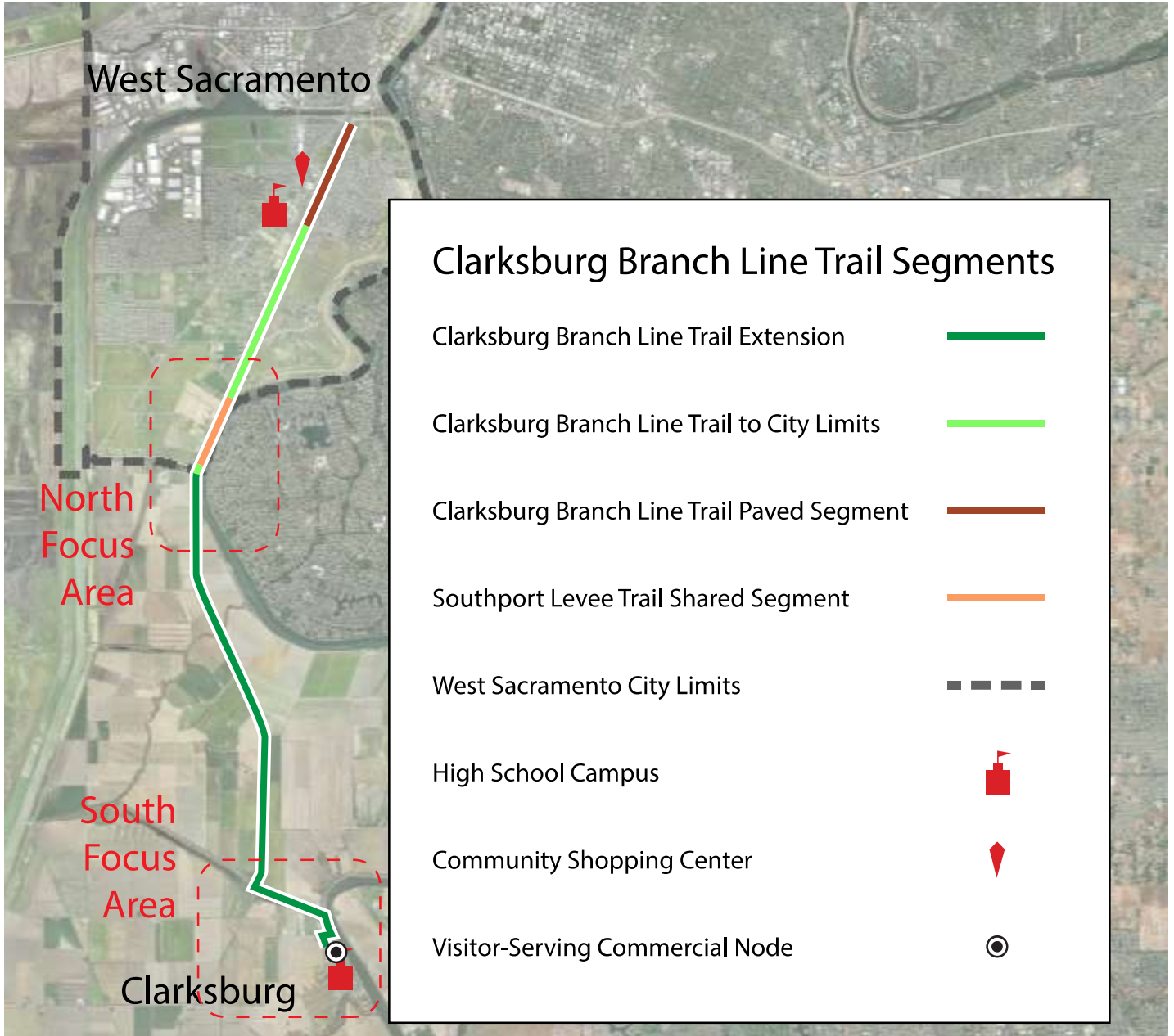
This project is being coordinated with Yolo County, the Yolo Transportation District, and the Delta Protection Commission (collectively the Yolo-Delta Trail Coalition (YDTC)). This update has been circulated to the YDTC partners to share with their organizations. The City of West Sacramento as lead agency continues to coordinate this project with SACOG and Caltrans and will be engaged in subsequent community engagement activities both in unincorporated Clarksburg and in West Sacramento as the project advances.

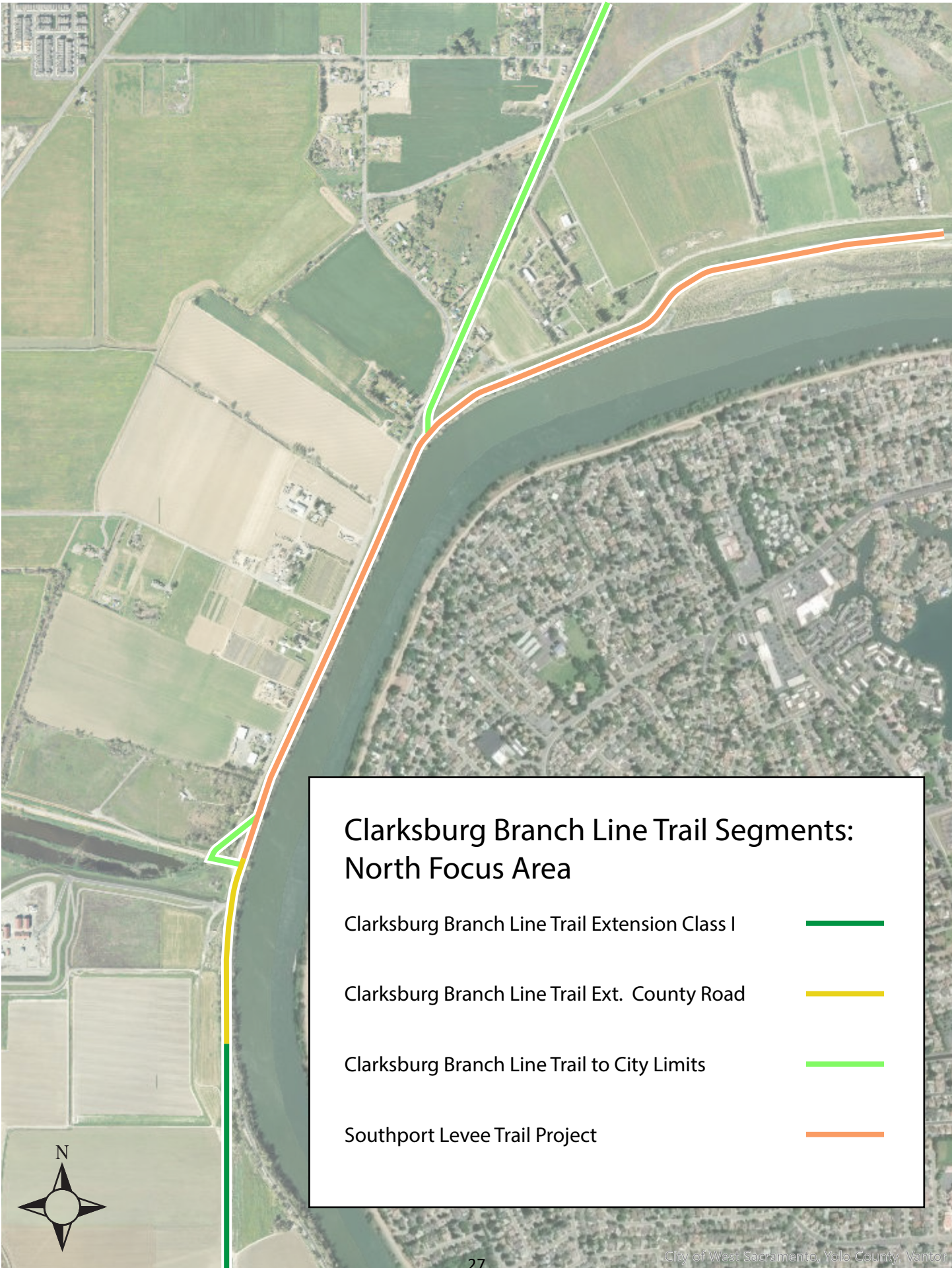
Budget/Cost Impact

The trail design work has been funded by a Carbon Reduction Program grant in the amount of \$1,899,952, a grant from the Rails to Trails Conservancy in the amount of \$5,000, a contribution by the Delta Protection Commission in the amount of \$75,000, and in-kind engagement work from YoloTD equivalent to \$33,200. The City of West Sacramento has appropriated additional Measure E funds as a required grant match totaling \$142,925. Total project funding, including in-kind match from YoloTD, is \$2,122,977.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Project Map
2. North Focus Area Map
3. South Focus Area Map
4. Crash Diagram

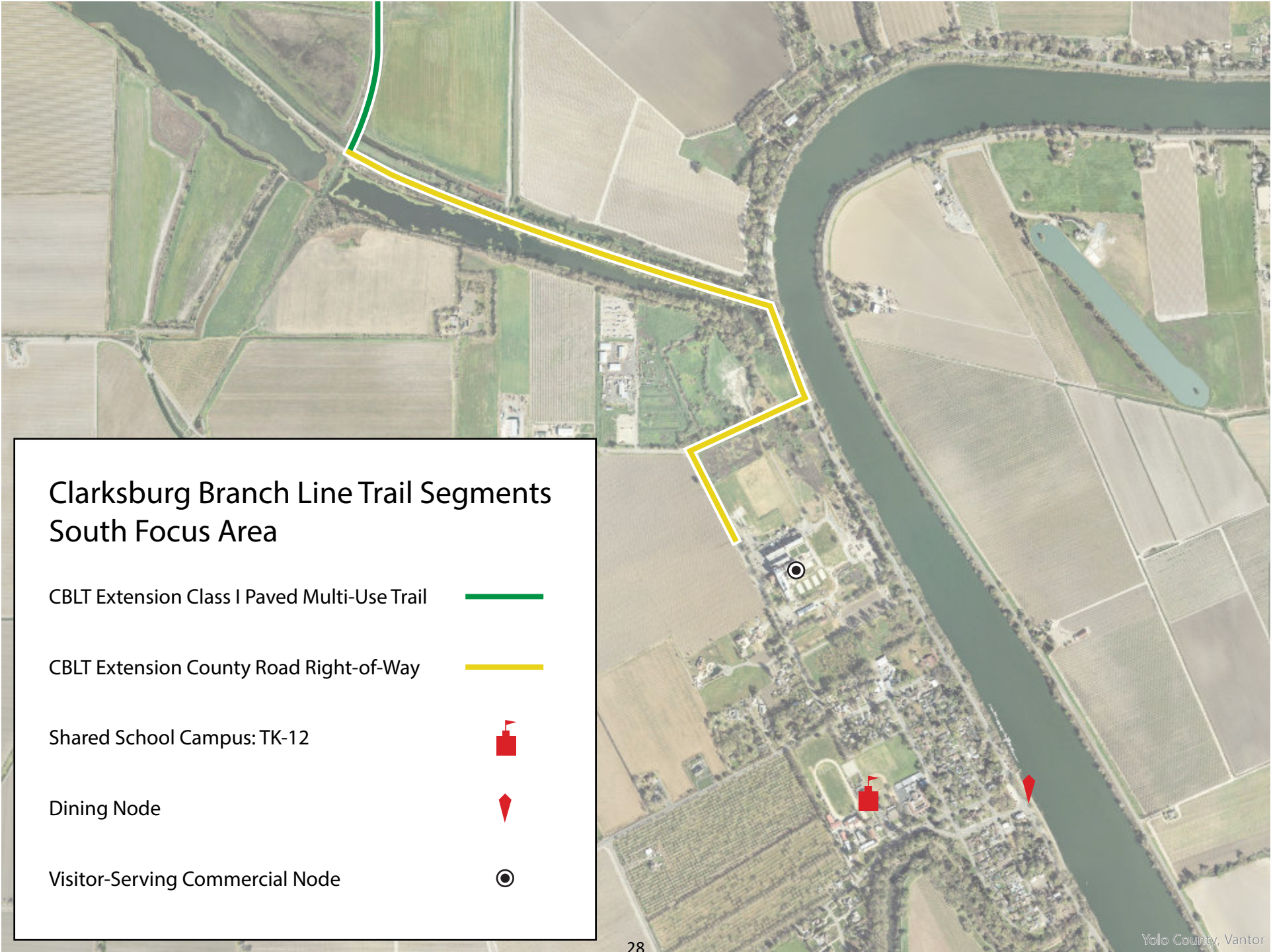




Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Segments: North Focus Area


- Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Extension Class I —
- Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Ext. County Road —
- Clarksburg Branch Line Trail to City Limits —
- Southport Levee Trail Project —








Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Segments South Focus Area

CBLT Extension Class I Paved Multi-Use Trail 

CBLT Extension County Road Right-of-Way 

Shared School Campus: TK-12 

Dining Node 

Visitor-Serving Commercial Node 

CRASH DIAGRAM

Primary Street:
 South River Road
 Secondary Street:
 Highway 84
 Time Period:
 1/1/2014 - 12/31/2024
 Agency Name:
 City of West Sacramento

Mapping Summary:

Fatal Crash	1
Injury Crash	2
Mapped	3
Not Drawn	0
Total	3

→ Straight	🚶 Pedestrian
↶ Left Turn	🚲 Bicycle
↷ Right Turn	☒ Object
↺ U-Turn	● Fatal Crash
↻ Overturned	○ Injury Crash
↘ Ran Off Road	
⏸ Stopped	
🅓 Parked	



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