

This story is taken from Sacbee / Our Region

---

## West Sacramento plans major facelift

[hsangree@sacbee.com](mailto:hsangree@sacbee.com)

Published Monday, Oct. 27, 2008

West Sacramento is transforming itself – from its former red-light district along West Capitol Avenue to vacant lots next to the Sacramento River to the post-industrial wasteland near Raley Field.

City officials broke ground last week on a project to streetscape a half-mile of West Capitol Avenue east of Jefferson Boulevard.

Lanes on the former stretch of Highway 40 will be reduced from six to four. Sidewalks, now about 5 feet wide, will be widened to 20 feet, with trees lining the thoroughfare.

"The streetscape plan will radically change the look and feel of West Capitol Avenue," said city redevelopment manager Maureen Pascoe.

The goal is to eventually transform the strip of low-rent motels – once notorious for drugs and prostitution – into an all-American main street with storefronts and pedestrians.

After the streetscaping, there will be a gradual process of encouraging more upscale business development along the avenue, she said.

### New library and civic center

Across West Capitol Avenue from the city's modern City Hall, construction is under way on the \$9 million Arthur F. Turner Community Library that will open late next year.

The 18,000-square-foot contemporary library will replace a 30-year-old structure half its size. There will be twice as many computers, self-checkout stations and a 1,200-square-foot community room.

Next to the library, at the corner of Merkley Avenue and West Capitol, a new civic center will include a satellite campus of the Los Rios Community College District and a community senior center, scheduled for completion by 2010.

A computer rendering of the community center shows a strikingly modern black box theater – a flexible performance space – its lights aglow at dusk.

Next to the civic center, buses would come and go from a new transit center.

If voters approve a ballot measure Nov. 4 to pay for it, new streetcars linking Sacramento and West Sacramento across the Tower Bridge would travel down West Capitol Avenue, with a terminus at the transit center.

## Raley's Landing

Not far away, an area called Raley's Landing stretches along the Sacramento River from the Tower Bridge north to the I Street Bridge.

The curved glass tower of the California State Teachers' Retirement System now rises above the river, where the city's ambitious levee improvement project has begun.

Between the city's landmark ziggurat and the Tower Bridge, a developer plans to build a hotel and office tower in what is now a vacant lot, Pascoe said.

A 150-unit condo tower might eventually be built in the lot north of the ziggurat, she said.

And CalSTRS also has the option of building another major office structure along Third Street, behind its new tower.

## Triangle Area

South from the Tower Bridge to the Pioneer Bridge, where Capital City Freeway crosses the Sacramento River, is the Triangle Area.

Its 188 acres, slanting away from Raley Field, are a sun-blasted swath of barren earth and railroad spurs that were once home to grain silos and heavy industry.

City officials say they plan to relocate the few remaining industries, including the Cemex cement plant, to the Port of Sacramento.

From then on, the Triangle would be a blank slate where the city envisions long-term development of millions of square feet of hotel, office and retail space, along with 4,500 housing units.

"The plan is to deindustrialize the riverfront," said Pascoe.

Under the plan, city streets that currently end at freeways and railroad tracks would connect the Triangle with the Tower Bridge and West Capitol Avenue.

A riverfront plaza would be a centerpiece, along with an amphitheater for the performing arts.

As city planners envision the future, they see a riverfront south of the Pioneer Bridge where the large fuel tanks that now dot the landscape are gone, replaced by houses, shops and offices. A new bridge might connect the area to Sacramento if both cities agree.

Pascoe said the current crisis in the housing market and slump in commercial real estate could slow down the redevelopment process in West Sacramento.

But she said millions of government dollars already have been set aside for the projects to develop infrastructure and entice developers.

The money – including \$23 million in state grants for the Triangle Area and another \$20 million in citywide redevelopment funds – is not affected by the housing market, she said.

"We're moving ahead and putting the infrastructure in place," Pascoe said. "When the next up cycle comes along, we'll be ready."

---

*Call The Bee's Hudson Sangree, (916) 321-1191.*