

2026 Hornet Community Bus Tour: the spaces between the stops

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May 28, 2026

Board at: CAMPUS WELCOME CENTER, Sacramento State University, 7:30-8:00 a.m.

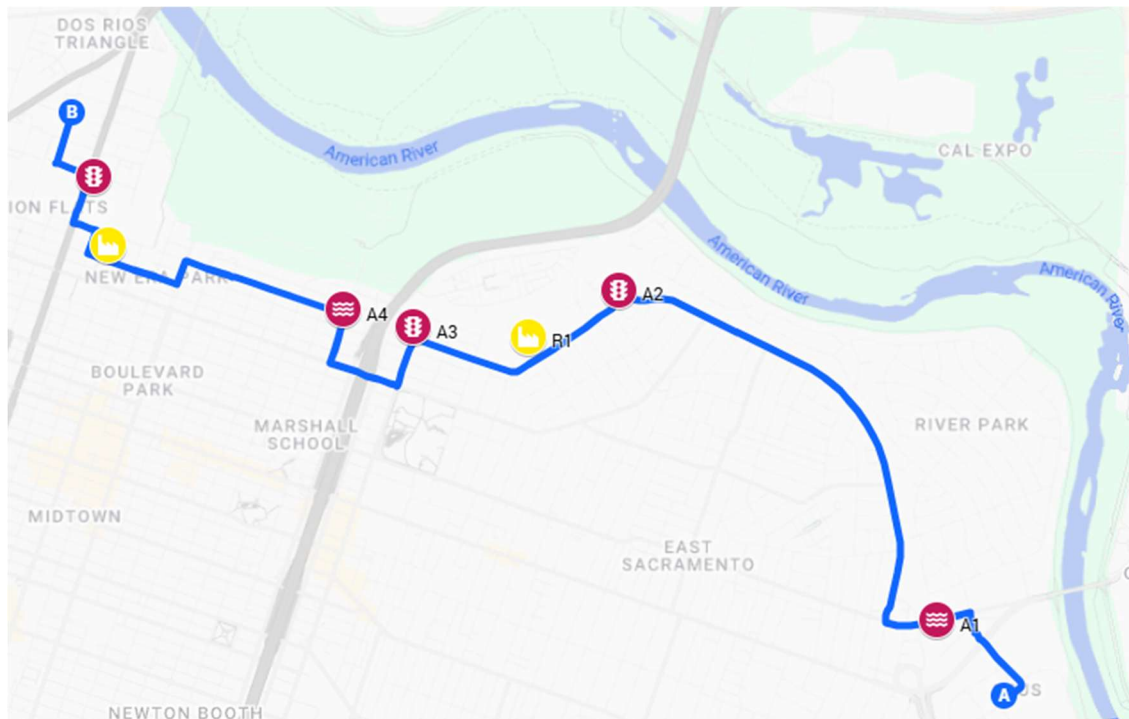
The tour is a series of stops where we get off the bus and meet with groups to hear about their work in the community, discuss our partnerships with them, and increase our awareness of opportunities to further support them and to create new partnerships through our various anchor university roles. Linking the stops are routes that provide context for the partnership meetings and introduce the city's diverse landscapes and people and the forces that have shaped them. Professor Datel has provided the on-bus commentary on past tours; this year she is joined by Andrew McLeod. They consider themselves a historically-minded geographer and a geographically-minded historian, respectively.

Legend

R# – point of interest presented by Dr. Datel **A#** - point of interest presented by Mr. McLeod

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
|  Water feature |  Theater |  Cemetery |
|  Traffic obstruction |  Railroad |  Real Estate |
|  Cannery |  Hospital |  Mosque |
|  Neighborhood |  Military |  Auto Sales |
|  Fairgrounds/Amusement |  Shopping Center |  Church |

LEG #1: to Loaves & Fishes



Turn left at onto Bay Laurel Way	430 ft
Slight left onto State University Dr	919 ft
Continue onto Carlson Dr	571 ft
Turn left onto H St	0.273 mi

A1 – Weaponized flood control

- The Sac State campus was built on former agricultural land. But even before that it was the site of two bustling Gold Rush towns, Norristown and Brighton. Despite excellent locations and low flood hazard, these towns were depopulated by the 1850s, then forgotten. Settlers took some of the best land of the Nisenan people; but we failed to agree who could live on it.
- The lower American River flows through an alluvial fan of gold-laced debris ground out of the Sierra Nevada mountains, deposited here over eons. Land along its banks is actually higher than the surroundings, as overflow dropped sediment most heavily along the immediate banks before settling into the flood basins once known as “the inland sea.”
- The inner levee that now rings East Sacramento is a key part of that story, illustrating a dark side of Sacramento’s flood control strategy granting the railroad land for elevated tracks in the 1860s. This barrier isolated and inundated rival waterfronts along the American River.
- Our campus’ unusual isolation from surrounding neighborhoods results from land use and transportation decisions made in the interest of Sacramento’s notorious land speculators, and we still suffer the consequences today. This case is laid out in the Sacramento Public Library’s recent book *Lost Gold Rush Towns of Sacramento* (History Press, 2025).

Turn right onto 56th St	417 ft
Continue onto Elvas Ave	1.49 mi

A2 – Blocked Crossings

See *Map of Rutte, Muldrow & Smith’s Gardens* (1857)

- While riverside roads are common in most parts of the world, today we follow a route set back as much as a half mile from the waterside trails that once served as this region’s obvious thoroughfares. Sacramento’s closest thing to an American River road is the Elvas/C Street route, from which the river is undetectable and almost entirely unreachable.
- At least three crossings have been severed. These include Sinclair’s (east from F St.), Norris’ (northeast from C St.) and Muldrow’s (north from Elvas). These routes once provided connections from the overland trail and northern mines, cutting miles off the route that forced travelers into Sacramento City. This improved the value of real estate by funneling gold-laden miners into channels where they could be controlled and exploited, a.k.a. “mining the miners.”
- The road upstream from campus survives in fragments such as La Riviera Drive, but the Coloma Road is long gone. We have also lost the network of communities and railroads that once sought to challenge Sacramento City’s hegemony. Little remains of one of the 19th Century’s greatest travel corridors, despite its transcendent role in Western economic development.

Turn left onto C St

0.759 mi

R1 – American Can Company (1920s-1980s)/ Cannery Business Park, 3301 C St

- The American Can Company (ACC), one of the largest can makers in the U.S., built its facility here in 1926 on 33 acres adjacent to the Southern Pacific RR and close to many canneries.
- The growing national RR network and improvements in canning technology made possible the nationwide distribution of canned Central Valley fruits and vegetables. Canneries and linked industries were key parts of Sacramento’s farm-to-fork economy in an earlier era.
- Over time, every major cannery in Sacramento closed (myriad causes: switch to frozen foods, availability of fresh foods year-round, industry consolidation, movement to lower-cost locations) as did the ACC’s tin can factory. ACC legacy: Silgan Holdings, Inc., which at one point in its history absorbed ACC, continues to operate a metal containers plant on Franklin Blvd.
- Changing economy: today’s Cannery Business Park is occupied largely by professional offices; its largest tenant is UC Davis Health. Currently the 4-county region has almost 6 times as many jobs in health and private education as it does in manufacturing of all types.

Turn left onto Alhambra Blvd

850 ft

A3 – Sacramento City’s original grid *See Plan of Sacramento City (1848)*

- The original city limits included streets numbered eastward to 31st (now Alhambra) and lettered southward to Y (now Broadway). This was some of the most hazardous real estate in a generally hazardous region, and severe ownership controversies made for quite dangerous investments.
- Sacramento City and the modern city of Sacramento are two entirely different things. The former was a ruthless land scheme that killed off its competitors to form the latter.
- Settlers claimed “government land” belonged to whoever lived on it. But waves of evictions starting in 1849 stoked outrage and inspired organizing of the Sacramento Settlers’ Association.
- On August 14 & 15, 1850, violence exploded in Sacramento City and Brighton. Eight were killed, including the sheriff and assessor. The mayor was wounded and left town, never to return.

Turn right onto E St

1,201 ft

Turn right onto 28th St

850 ft

Turn left onto C St

0.531 mi

A4 – Sutter’s Landing

- Johann Augustus Sutter claimed to have been given this land by Mexico in 1839. In fact, his grant lay a dozen miles north, along the Feather River near Marysville. To make matters worse, this habitual con artist was deeply indebted and often inebriated.
- Johann Sutter, Jr. arrived as the controversy was building; he soon was saddled with his father’s affairs. Junior understood little English and suffered from worsening addiction to opium.
- The two engaged a web of agents, who made often contradictory sales of land that was not theirs to begin with. Although upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1864, the Sutter claim was a ruse holding back the chaos that would unfold with an accurate reckoning.

Turn left onto 21st Street 463 ft
Turn right onto D St 0.300 mi
Turn right onto 17th St 420 ft

R2 – Blue Diamond Growers, C St. between 16th and 19th streets.

- Blue Diamond Growers was founded as the **California Almond Growers Exchange** in 1910. By 1931, this farmer-owned cooperative had 4,000 members. Among its industrial innovations were the automated mechanical nutcracker and refrigerated nut storage for off-season sales. Today, Blue Diamond remains **the world’s largest** almond processing and marketing entity.
- One of the buildings in the complex is Calpak Plant No. 11, built in 1925 and acquired by Blue Diamond in 1982. It was one of the largest fruit and vegetable canneries in the world. The California Packing Corporation for which it was built later became **Del Monte**, a food giant on the global stage.
- The last major food processor left in Sacramento, Blue Diamond is now moving most of its processing and packing operations to its other plants in Turlock and Salida. It has sold 35 acres of its C St site to Bardis and Miry Development, which plans a mixed-use project with 1,000-2,000 housing units.
- Neighborhood context: adjacent neighborhoods (now called Alkali Flat, Mansion Flats, and New Era Park) housed numerous railroad and cannery workers, including many of Irish and Latinx background. The activist artist group, **Royal Chicano Air Force**, with roots at Sac State, often operated in this area (see an early RCAF mural in the Washington Neighborhood Center at 16th and D Sts). Extensive holdings of RCAF protest posters and other works are held by Sac State Special Collections. Many appear in the Crocker Art Gallery’s current exhibit, “Rebels with La Causa: Royal Chicano Air Force Art and Activism, 1970-1990,” on through June 28.

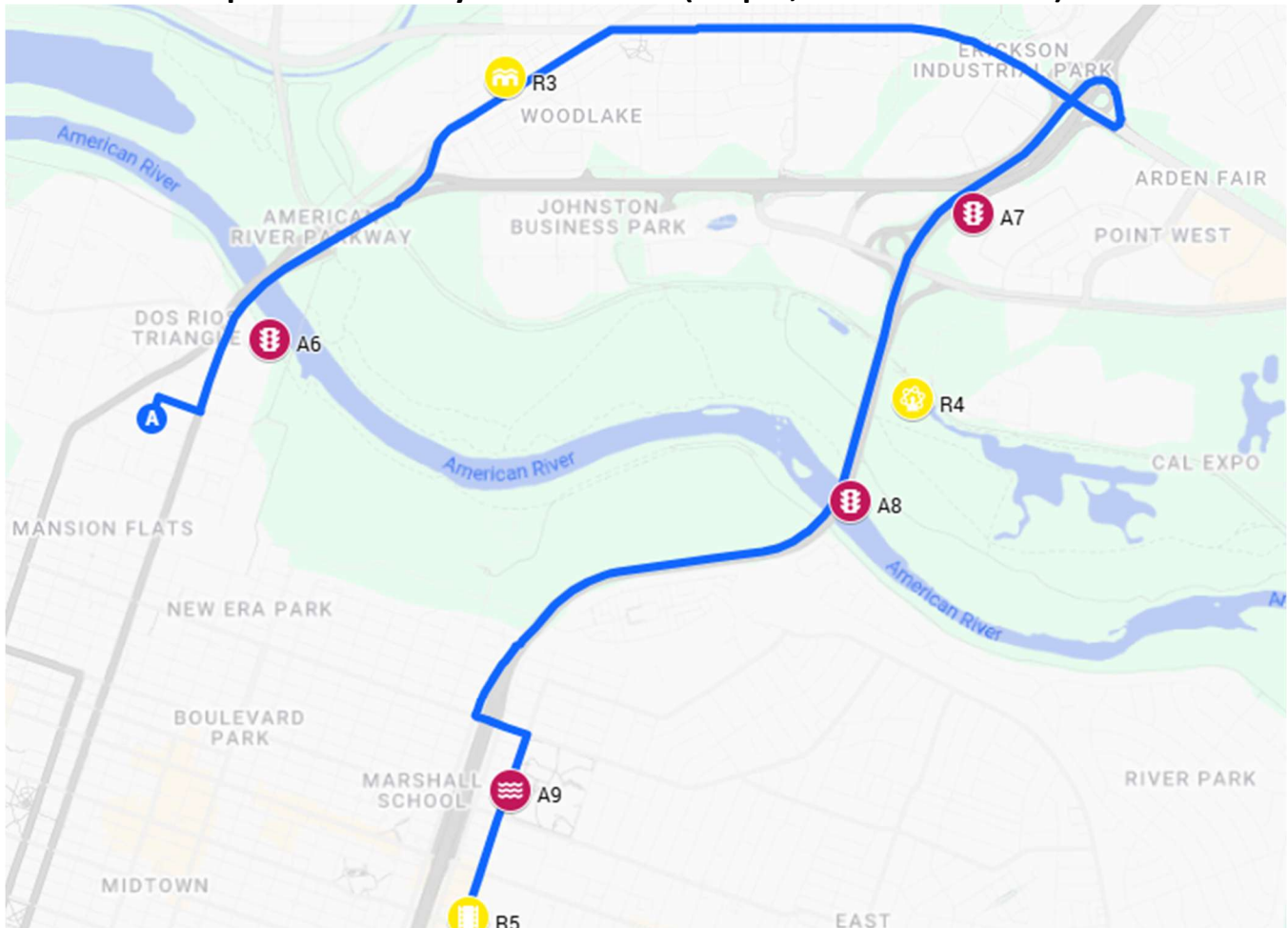
Turn left onto C St 397 ft
Turn right onto 16th St 840 ft
NOTE: You must turn into the two left lanes to make immediate left turn after overpass
Turn left onto A St 594 ft

A5 – A Street See *Gas Works (1855)*

- Sacramento’s southern lettered streets are mirrored with another set marching northward towards the river. The city’s historic main drag, and main connection to the gold was J Street, which runs along an elevated platform for its first mile. Modern Sacramentans take this for granted, but anyone who looked at the city’s first map would have focused on A Street.
- The city’s backbone once connected to the lost river road, serving two waterfronts at obviously advantageous spots: El Calle de los Americanos perched at the main crossing (which still survives), with a name that clearly indicates habitation by Americans during the Mexican period.
- A Street ended at Slater’s Addition, where the American River met the navigable Sacramento River, home to Sacramento’s first gas works. Here two city blocks remain, embedded in a levee.

Turn right onto Ahern St 833 ft
Arrive Loaves & Fishes: 1351 N C St, Sacramento, CA 95811

LEG #2: to Freeport Community Collaborative (Map A, northern section)



Turn right onto McCormack Ave **627 ft**
Turn left onto N 16th St **0.341 mi**

A6 – El Calle de los Americanos

- El Calle was the first place that greeted overland travelers of the late 1840s, fresh off the long trail from the United States and surely desperate for provisions. Land must have been precious.
- Here, travelers could turn left and head for Sutter’s Fort. Or they could turn right to the Sacramento River waterfront where supplies and travelers from San Francisco came ashore.
- To our left is Vine Street, which once ran parallel to the lower stretch of El Calle. This nondescript road is one of the oldest surviving streets in all of California.
- To our right is a storage facility, which stands on a waterfront that once mirrored the bustling embarcadero now famous as Old Sacramento.

Continue onto CA-160 N **0.484 mi**
Take exit 46B (on left) to Del Paso Blvd **1,056 ft**
Continue onto Del Paso Blvd **0.584 mi**

A8 – Belated Bike Crossing

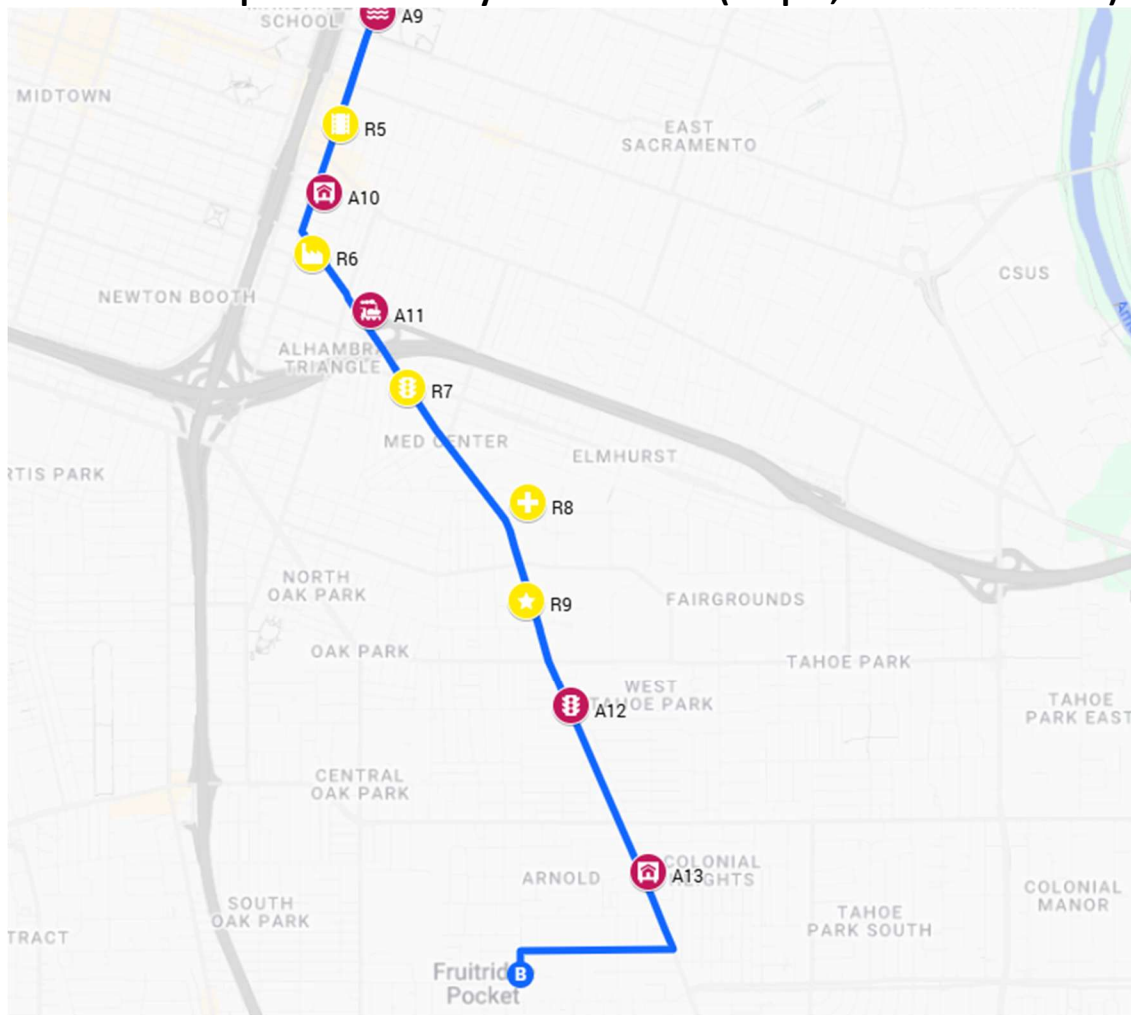
- The bridge-widening construction will soon close a gaping hole in Sacramento’s vaunted bike network. This route will make it possible to retrace the steps of pioneers and Indigenous travelers for the first time in well over 150 years.
- This crossing was originally connected to the routes mapped in 1857 (discussed in our previous leg). From this point, one could head upstream to the gold or downstream to navigable water.
- For much of the first American century, not even cars could use this route. They had to go more than two miles downstream to 16th Street, or upstream to H Street. While the freeway did bridge the old crossing, this modern route had no connection to the river on either side.
- It is worth noting another gap of 10 miles, upriver between Watt and Sunrise; this separates solid bands of suburban development on both banks, isolating a broad swath of eastern Sacramento from a freeway that runs only two miles to its south, which roughly follows the path of the old Coloma Road.

Take exit 7B toward E St	1,027 ft
Merge onto 29th St	236 ft
Turn left onto E St	804 ft
Turn right onto Alhambra Blvd	0.882 mi

A9 – Burns Slough

- McKinley Park’s most distinctive feature is a lovely duck pond with surprising (if common) origins; this is a remnant of Burns Slough, through which some of history’s worst floods entered Sacramento City. Its origins are both the overflow blocked by the rail levee downstream of Sinclair’s Crossing and Norristown, as well as the channel that snakes through East Sacramento.
- As was sometimes the case, a city’s wettest wetlands remained undeveloped until the owner generously donated them for a park. Or perhaps they sold at a low price. In any case, the very lowest parts were typically dug out to form a pond, with its muddy bottoms deposited into a serviceable bank around which pedestrians could stroll Et voila! Urban amenity!
- The ponds at Sutter’s Fort are also part of Burns Slough, along with those of Land Park. The lake at downtown’s Southside Park is a similar feature created from a neighboring slough.

LEG #2: to Freeport Community Collaborative (Map B, southern section)



R5 – Alhambra corridor: Alhambra Theatre, Sutter medical complex

- This street was renamed (it was originally 31st St) for the 1927 Moorish-style movie palace that sat where Safeway is today. The fight for and the ultimate destruction of the **Alhambra Theatre** in 1973 invigorated the **Sacramento historic preservation movement**.
- We are traveling along the boundary between East Sacramento to our east and Sacramento's original 1848 grid, aka the **Old City**, to our west. East Sacramento was developed largely between the two World Wars. It is prosperous and substantially white, having been redlined and marketed with racially restrictive covenants, excluding most people of color. The eastern half of the original grid, platted in 1848 and developed over many decades, is now called **Midtown**; subareas have their own neighborhood names. Long an area of mixed land use and a diverse population, many blocks are gentrifying.
- **Sutter Medical Center** opened its first hospital in this vicinity in 1923. It is part of Sacramento's central Medical Triangle, with vertices at Sutter, Mercy, and the UC Davis Medical Center. [When the new Kaiser hospital opens in the Railyards, the geometry of our core medical district will change.] Many related health care facilities and businesses are located near and around the hospitals, creating a strong specialized land use cluster. Major health-care providers are among the Sacramento region's largest employers.

A10 – Sacramento City Extension Homestead Association

- In May of 1868, a legal free-for-all erupted, with over 700 lawsuits filed in rapid succession, challenging ownership of most Sacramento area property. The following year saw the birth of a new form of quasi-cooperative ownership, in which investors pooled funds to buy and subdivide a large plot, with bylaws limiting speculation.
- The area to our left was organized by a group with surprising leaders – the Big Four of railroad fame, as well as Crocker’s brother, whose stately home now holds the West’s oldest art museum. Despite these powerful backers, the project vanished without a trace. Nothing is left of the streets and parcels laid out. Even the roads flanking the association were moved outward to block access – Folsom Boulevard to the north and Y Street to the south.
- The last sign of this visionary plan was a forlorn “Homestead” mapped in 1891, along the rails that roughly bisected the site.

Turn left onto Stockton Blvd

2.55 mi

R6 – Libby McNeill & Libby

- The **Libby, McNeill and Libby** (LML) complex (now The Cannery) at Alhambra and Stockton boulevards is another impressive monument to Sacramento’s cannery past. Between 1912 and 1918 the company built a large factory complex of nine brick structures at this location with good wagon road and railroad access. The company provided cottage housing nearby for some of its workers, as well as onsite daycare.
- In the 1930s, when leftist leaders were organizing the **Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union** in Sacramento, a couple of workers at LML acted as spies for law enforcement, and one tried to get workers in trouble by encouraging window-stoning at the factory. All this was part of the lead-up to an infamous court case against the union organizers, who were charged with criminal syndicalism. After a four-and-a-half-month trial, some were acquitted and some convicted, although later those convictions were overturned on appeal. In the 1980s, the cannery closed down and its buildings were converted to office uses, mostly medical.

A11 – Sacramento Valley Railroad

- That depot I just mentioned was just to our right, along some of the West’s oldest tracks. This was the Sacramento Valley Railroad, designed and built by Theodore Judah before his better-known work for the Central Pacific’s transcontinental line.
- Passenger trains ran daily from 1856, spurring development of a massive shops complex that employed 1500 workers in Folsom. Within a few years, five independent branches reached towards Marysville, Auburn, Placerville and the Sacramento River at Freeport.
- This system sought to beat the Central Pacific in the race to the mines of Nevada and points east, but it was captured by Leland Stanford and dismantled after nearly a decade of operation. Tracks along the Sacramento waterfront were torn up by a violent mob.

R7 – Stockton Boulevard

- Stockton Blvd has been **an important N-S route** in Sacramento since the mid-19th century, its businesses serving both travelers and local residents. In 1926, it received designation as US 99. Inner stretches of the street suffered from disinvestment when it lost this designation, having been superseded by the new freeway of the same number in the early 1960s. Oak Park, the neighborhood on the west side of the boulevard from about Y St to Fruitridge Road, suffered other economic challenges that contributed to inner Stockton Blvd's decline. In more recent decades, investments from UC Davis and further south from Asian immigrant sources have revitalized many blocks.

R8 – UC Davis Medical Center and Aggie Square

- The **UC Davis Medical Center** is on the site of the Sacramento County Hospital, opened in 1871, located far from the city due to contagion concerns. UCD began an affiliation with the county hospital in 1966 and purchased it in 1973. A stunning campus now encompasses all the university's medical activities—research, teaching, and community service. A van tour in 2020 (before COVID restrictions) exposed Med Center leaders to how inherited neighborhood patterns, many rooted in structural racism, are tied to current health disparities.
- UCD's multibillion-dollar **Aggie Square** project at 2nd Ave and Stockton Blvd will bring with it investment, jobs, research breakthroughs and marketable products mostly in the biotech sector. Prices for housing nearby are going up, displacing low-income residents of Oak Park and other neighborhoods. **Sacramento Investment Without Displacement** pushed for and won a **Community Benefits Partnership Agreement** with the University of California and the City of Sacramento, with provisions related to housing, jobs, and transit for local neighborhoods. An ordinance that would have required community benefits agreements for future projects was voted down by the Sacramento City Council.

R9 – VFW Post #67, 2784 Stockton Blvd.

- The Veterans of Foreign Wars advocates for veterans, connects them and their families with services, and promotes camaraderie among them. VFW Post #67 is the second oldest post west of the Mississippi. It welcomes vets and cadets from Sac State. The post includes a library of materials on military history. This place has a strong commitment to community building.

A12 – Sutterville-Brighton Road*See Sacramento Valley Railroad (1854)*

- Stockton Boulevard is known for disinvestment and neglect, but its modern struggles are nothing compared to the fate of an intersecting road that was wiped off the map. This was probably a major thoroughfare of the Nisenan, who used it to bypass the tangled sloughs surrounding the rivers, flowing through what is now known as Sacramento.
- 8th Avenue doesn't quite line up. This conspicuous kink interrupts a road that is otherwise dead straight for more than a mile. This kink results from a sort of scar in the landscape, from when Sacramento cut out the Sutterville-Brighton Road entirely.
- This road was once considered a county road, with its own commissioner. It connected two major centers of rivalry to Sacramento City. Sutterville was hilltop land overlooking the Sacramento River, although awkwardly set back from the banks. Brighton and Norristown flanked a spot on the American that seems to have been a fundamental reference point for early settler surveys. This is now Alumni Grove.

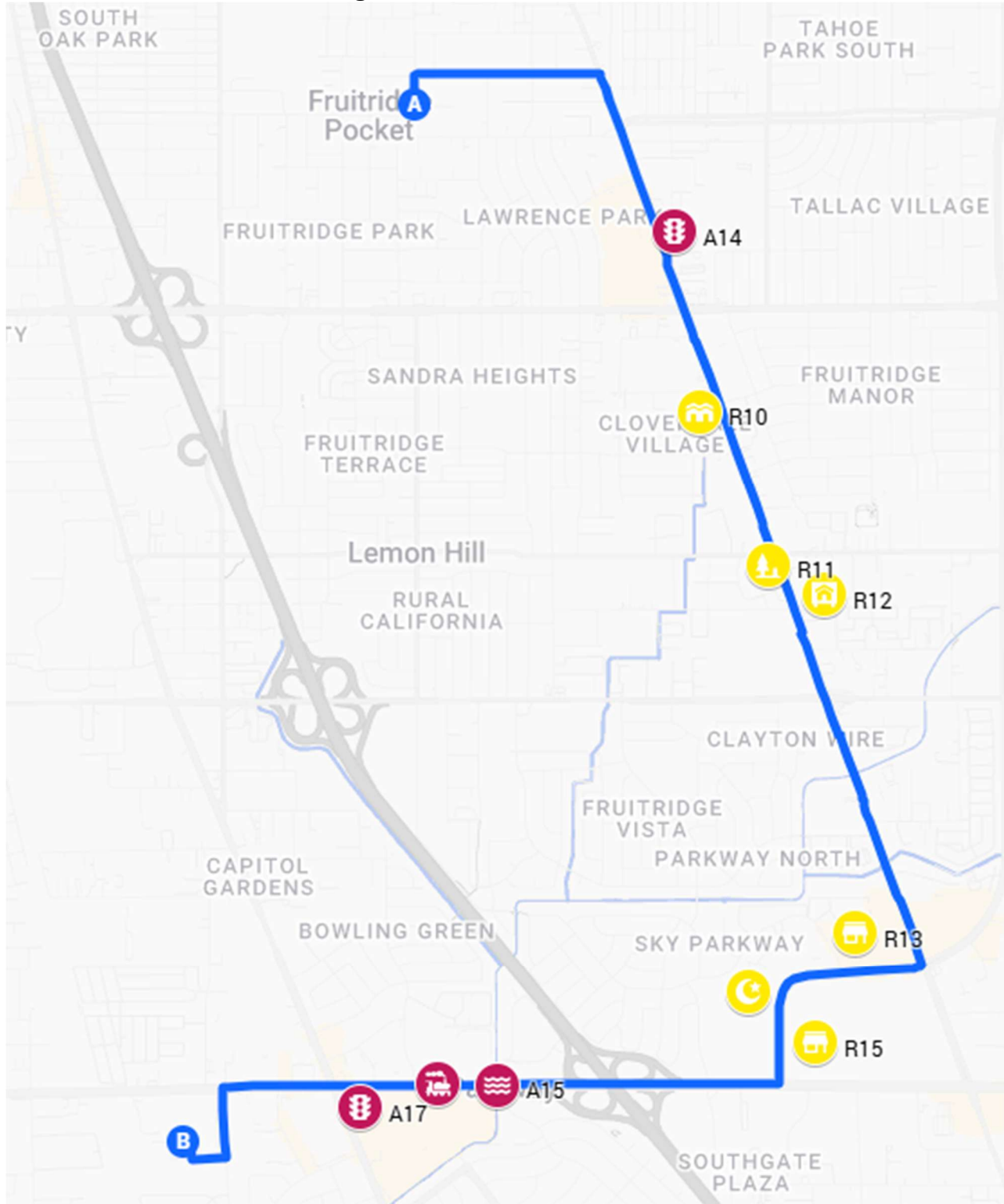
A13 - San Francisco Boulevard*See Upper Stockton Road (1911)*

- This street is the gateway to Colonial Heights, one of the early 20th Century's most prominent suburban streetcar developments. But despite its prominence, this is a deeply dysfunctional street. It appears to be a narrow street with incongruous frontage roads, with visibility hampered by the lovely palms that line the roadway.
- An image from 1911 captures the original design, with a massive stone gazebo flanked by striking arches. Both dwarf the children captured in the scene, which is described as the depot for the streetcar that once drove development on this important corridor.
- Within years, these signature features were gone, along with a neutral ground that resembles those found along T Street and 21st Street. These amenities were replaced by an awkward and dangerous setback marking the mouth to a confusing roadway. No recorded complaints have been located, marking a strange silence about a spectacular real estate bait and switch. It also hints at an even darker phase of this area's development, which I'll address after our next stop.

Turn right onto Roosevelt Ave**0.475 mi****Turn left onto 44th St****404 ft****Arrive Fruitridge Community Collaborative: 4625 44th St, Sacramento, CA 95820**

- While North Oak Park is dramatically gentrifying, parts of the neighborhood further south have seen less change in race and income. Organizations, such as those housed in the Fruitridge Community Collaborative, engage with issues ranging from health and education to poverty and the criminal justice system. The Collaborative was formed following a wave of school closures that were concentrated in low-income areas.

LEG #3: to Luther Burbank High School and Sacramento Native American Health Clinic



Head north on 44th St toward 22nd Ave 404 ft
 Turn right onto Roosevelt Ave 0.475 mi
 Turn right onto Stockton Blvd 2.44 mi

A14 – Tree Circle Monument Site

- The tales I've told are admittedly far-fetched, and it is right to be skeptical of stories that so dramatically diverge from the historic consensus. However, I'm not the first person to point out something seriously wrong with Sacramento's development patterns.
- In 1937, an aerial photograph captured a circular planting of trees, 400 feet across; this is reproduced on this tour's main map. These appear to be somewhat mature, revealing that someone kept hundreds of trees watered and healthy for a decade or more.
- This planting featured a crosshairs pattern, tilted clearly to the north-northeast. This pointed precisely at the point on the river shared by Norristown and Brighton, now Alumni Grove.
- These trees stood on land between the current roadway and the more irregular route that appears in the 1870 county assessor book – still clearly visible from the air in 1937
- The western end of the crosshairs feature a parking area and a roadside building. While it is conspicuous and public, no known writing has identified who created this marker, or why.

R10 – Little Saigon

- As we drive south on Stockton Blvd, notice the many Asian themed shopping centers, restaurants, professional offices, and other kinds of businesses. Little Saigon, located partly in the City of Sacramento and partly in the unincorporated county, has replaced older Japantown and Chinatown in downtown Sacramento as **the region's largest Asian-American business and cultural district**. In recognition of the latter, a two-mile stretch was designated "Little Saigon" by the Sacramento City Council in 2010.

R11 – Sacramento Memorial Lawn, 6100 Stockton Blvd

- This resting place reveals changes in the surrounding area's ethnic mix over time and reflects today's **diverse South Sacramento**. For example, the cemetery tells the story of immigration flows from many different places in Asia and includes a section reserved for Hmong burials, as well as a dedicated Muslim Gardens section.

R12 – Cara Bay Apartments, formerly The Stocktonian, 6125 Stockton Blvd

- This modest apartment complex became home to numerous Vietnamese households within a few years of the U.S. exit from Vietnam in 1975. (This demographic change can be traced using city directories.) The complex became **a business incubator**, as refugees opened small businesses in affordable spaces nearby and shared their acquired knowledge with neighbors.

R13 – Pacific Plaza, 6820 Stockton Blvd

- **This is the largest Asian-themed shopping center in Little Saigon**, anchored by a Shun Fat Supermarket. Refugees from Vietnam, some who arrived with capital to invest and others penniless, have created a busy commercial and social place, with contributions from other ethnic groups, both Asian and non-Asian. Sacramento's Little Saigon has benefited from finance flowing out of San Jose, where similar investments saturated the marketplace, leading entrepreneurs to seek new opportunities. Here you can catch the Hoang Express bus (nickname: the Banh Mi Line) to Oakland, San Francisco, and San Jose—and also Orange County, where the biggest Little Saigon in the U.S. spreads out along Bolsa Ave. in Westminster and Garden Grove.

Turn right onto 65th St/65th St Expy 0.615 mi

R14 – Masjid Annur Islamic Center, 6990 65th St

- The **Masjid Annur Islamic Center** at 6990 65th Street, founded in 1982, is one of Sacramento’s largest mosque complexes. It includes Al-Arqam Islamic School and College Preparatory, currently serving 450 pre-K through twelfth-grade students.
- Muslim immigrants from what later became the country of Pakistan arrived in the Sacramento area in the early 1900s, mostly working in agriculture. The earliest purpose-built mosque on the west coast was built at 4th and V Streets in 1947. Our country’s political and military interactions with Muslim countries in recent decades have generated sizable immigration flows to Sacramento, Afghanistan being the most recent source.

R15 – Florin Towne Center (2008), 6061 Florin Road, formerly Florin Mall (1968)

- For several decades, Florin Mall was a thriving indoor regional mall serving the south side of the Sacramento metropolitan area. Like some other regional malls in the metro, it fell victim to changing retail formats, increasing competition from other (freeway-adjacent) malls, and growing numbers of low-income households in its trade area. Eventually it was torn down and replaced by several big box retailers.

Turn right onto Florin Rd 1.43 mi

A15 – Morrison Creek

- Back in the day, counties were considered too large for grassroots democracy, which was rooted in small populations surrounding political centers. Sacramento County was carved into more than a dozen subdivisions. Sutter Township, on our right, stretched to the American River. Sacramento City dominated this area, which also included Sutterville and half of Norristown. To our left was Franklin Township, which reached the county line and the Delta. This was a rather wet place, only a few feet above sea level.
- But Franklin township had at least a couple of viable townsites, one of which we are now entering. While the American River’s strange tangle of levees and sloughs must have baffled settlers, Morrison Creek was more of a normal stream, providing a somewhat regular water source after miles in which any flows were so thin and erratic that the county’s modern streams map don’t show any significant streams south of the Sutterville-Brighton Road. This would have been an obvious place to stop, but nothing survives of 19th century settlement.

A16 – Sacramento Valley Railroad

- This is especially strange when we consider that trains once ran through that Home Depot, crossing this road right about here at a 45-degree angle – each day several scheduled trains connected riverboats with stagecoach lines, for a full year. Rails don't always bring towns, and the company may have prevented creation of a depot at this crossroads. But for the full length of this diagonal run, there is no sign that anyone sold the part of their field separated by the tracks. Nobody seems to have even speculated that a town might eventually erupt in this choice spot. The only surviving trace of the line is down around Freeport, where a curve in the route is marked by parcel boundaries and an elevated railbed across the bottomlands.

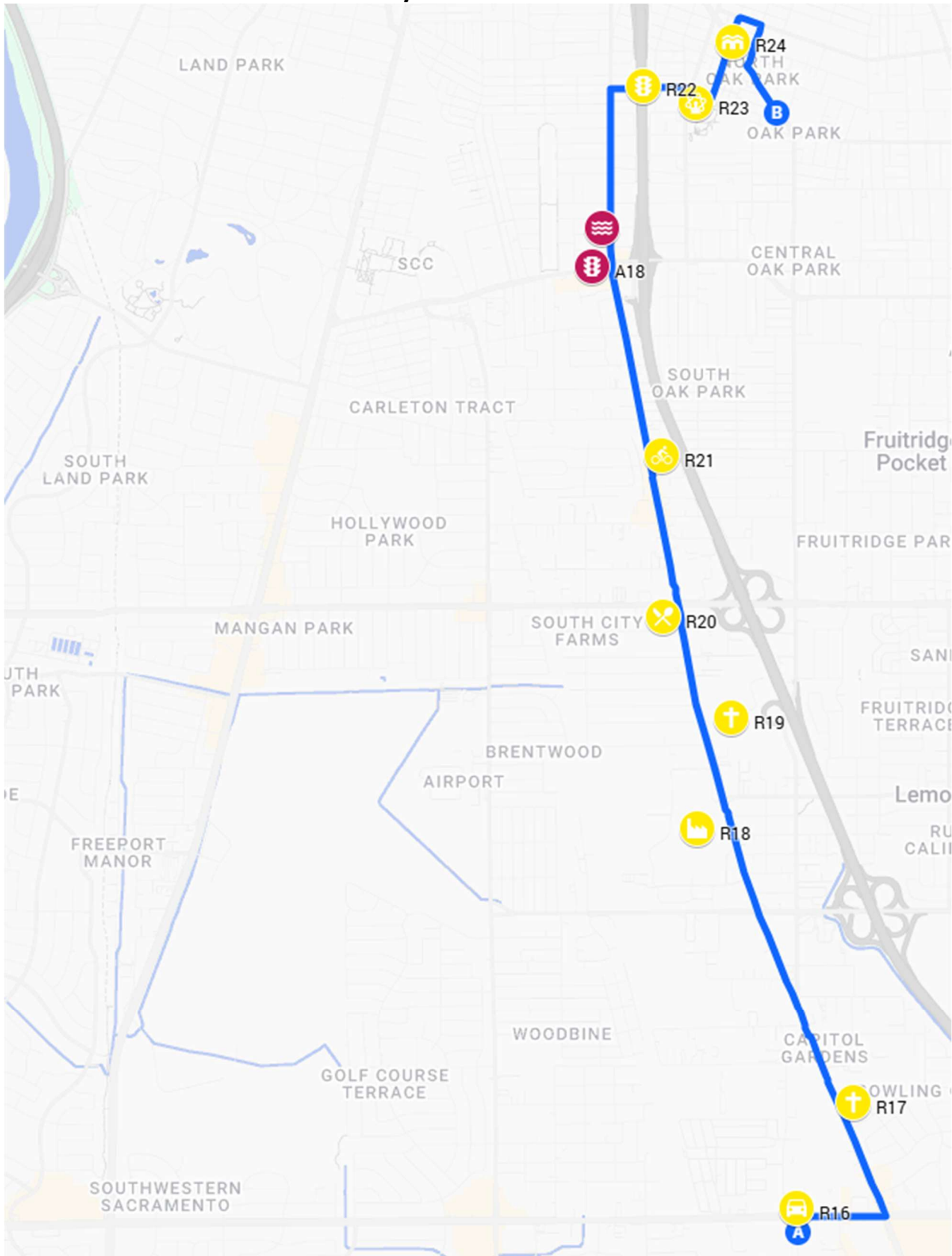
A17 – Franklin Crossing

- The other townsite briefly flowered during a year of regular train to the Sacramento River at Freeport. As the Sacramento Valley Railroad's relationship with Sacramento City worsened, some of its investors sought to bypass that area with a route that cut miles of increasingly tricky upstream travel and connected through Latrobe near Placerville.
- A web of stage lines serving the Mother Lode and the booming mines of Nevada's Comstock district, and this rival network made a serious effort to outcompete its original builder's new attempt to build the transcontinental line.
- This system briefly peaked around 80 miles with five branches, with up to 1,500 workers in the central shops at Folsom. Freeport was home to hundreds of railroad and port workers, and it would have been an obvious political center for Franklin Township. But an SVRR investor bought out his colleagues and handed it over to Leland Stanford of the Central Pacific. The Freeport line closed forever a week later.

Turn left onto Luther Dr

Arrive Luther Burbank High School: 3500 Florin Rd, Sacramento, CA 95823

LEG #4: to Oak Park Sol Community Garden



Start at SNAHC, 3800 Florin Road (access on Luther)
Turn right onto Florin Rd 0.285 mi

R16 – Auto sales and related land uses along Florin Rd

- The Sacramento metro area is a good place to see the outward spread of automobile sales and services, with their earliest locations in the downtown and their repeated relocation and expansion further out, as the city grew and suburbanized. On the south side of the downtown, car dealerships had their day successively on Broadway, Franklin, and Florin Rd before landing at the Elk Grove Auto Mall near Elk Grove Blvd and Hwy 99. Florin Rd no longer has any new car dealerships; now it houses a string of used car businesses, automotive services, and auto parts stores. Not every building that housed a new car dealer has been repurposed as a used car dealer; in fact, SNAHC occupies the former Florin Road Toyota space. Empty facilities left behind can be blighting but can also offer affordable opportunities to serve less affluent markets.

R17 – Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Church

- Many places of worship in Sacramento have identities tied to particular ethnic groups. The Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Church provides an example. Earlier Japanese Methodist churches in Sacramento included the Japanese Methodist Episcopal Church (renamed the Pioneer Methodist Church after World War II). This church was located at several different West End Japantown addresses between its founding in 1892 and its demolition as part of the Capitol Mall Redevelopment Project in the 1950s. The Florin Japanese Methodist Church was founded in 1913 to serve Japanese residents in and around the small agricultural town of Florin, where Japanese farmers created a flourishing community specializing in strawberry production. These two churches merged in 1968 and inherited this site on Franklin Blvd from another Methodist church that dispersed at that time. The combined church built a new sanctuary and social hall in 1970. It has occupied an important place in the cultural and social life of many Sacramento Japanese Americans over several generations.

Turn left onto Franklin Blvd 3.84 mi

R18 – Campbell Soup Plant (1947 - 2013)/now Capital Commerce Center, 6200 Franklin Blvd

- The **Campbell's** (soup, spaghetti sauce, etc.) **plant**, occupied 129 acres, now largely deindustrialized and dedicated to warehousing and distribution. However, major investments to attract new manufacturing tenants are being made.
- Employment opportunities at the Campbell's plant helped to attract a Mexican-American population to **Franklin Blvd** and establish it as the ethnic group's most prominent commercial street in Sacramento and the heart of the **Franklin Barrio**.

R19 – St Rose Parish Church (1942) and St Patrick Academy, 5961 Franklin Blvd

- This site was first a Catholic cemetery, then a Catholic orphanage (built in 1931), and in 1942 a parish church was added. Today it includes a culturally diverse school and a group home. Currently 3 of 8 weekly masses are in Spanish.

R20 – Caballo Blanco Restaurante, 5604 Franklin Blvd

- Opened in 1961, this 65-year-old restaurant is now run by the sons of the founders. A well-established community institution, its event hall is named for Emilio Zapata, a hero of the Mexican Revolution who advocated for agrarian reform, including the break-up of large estates and return of the land to indigenous peoples.

R21 – Franklin Blvd Complete Street Project

- This \$29M investment is designed to enhance safety and mobility between Sutterville Rd and 32nd Ave. Franklin Blvd, like all main commercial arterials in American cities, is machine space where the automobile is dominant. Complete street projects aim to dethrone the car and enhance the stature and safety of pedestrians and bicycles. This is a challenge just about anywhere in America; in the case of Franklin Blvd, perhaps it is heightened by the presence of many automotive businesses on the boulevard and the cultural meaning of car-centric activities such as cruising, to local populations. Many eyes will be on the outcomes of this project.

A18 – Sutterville-Brighton Road, part 2 See *Map of Sacramento City* (1913)

- We are now crossing the surviving midsection of the Sutterville-Brighton Road, which connected two major challenges to Sacramento City. Sutterville was founded in 1846, expanded in 1850. But almost nothing remains of the place today. At one point it had a string of multi-story brick buildings, and one stood for a century until its demolition in the 1950s – over a century.
- Sutterville had a flawed waterfront, separated from the center of town by a slough draining into an area just a few feet above sea level, known as the Pocket. But a causeway was constructed and real estate changed hands boisterously for years, until the entire place faded into obscurity.
- The other end of the Sutterville-Brighton Road meets the river near where our tour began – the high bank that is now home to Sac State. Here, it merged with the old river road that we tried to follow this morning, as well as the foolishly straight routes extending from Sacramento City. These combined to form the legendary Coloma Road, which traced the bank upstream along Brighton’s Front Street, continuing to the Gold Country.

A19 – Ancient Channel

- This route appears clearly in a few early maps, and it makes a lot of sense as we now drop into the slough that complicated travel from Sacramento City. This was once the main channel of what we now call the American River. 26,000 years ago, the river broke out of its natural levee near modern Watt Avenue and jumped northward into its present course.
- But even after the main flow had moved, the old channel remained, snaking back and forth through East Sacramento. This was still an active waterway, which repeatedly crossed the J and M Street Roads. It was a huge obstacle to travel.
- Even without the flood channels, the road we just crossed would have been a useful route to support transportation. So if you’ve ever wondered why there is no southern bypass around the city center, I’m afraid I don’t have answers yet. But a road was here, and now it is not.

Turn right onto 5th Ave

0.339 mi

R22 – US 99, a barrier between Curtis Park to the west and Oak Park to the east

- During the height of freeway construction in the decades after World War II, there were serious protests against its downsides. Often these objections were overridden. In later decades the negative impacts on communities cut through by freeways have been more widely acknowledged. The most often cited example of the barrier effect of freeways on neighborhoods in Sacramento is the way that US 99 and US 50 separated Oak Park from Curtis Park and East Sacramento. A number of events contributed to Oak Park's decline in the 1960s and subsequently; physical isolation from more prosperous areas contributed to its struggles.

R23 – Joyland/McClatchy Park

- **McClatchy Park** played a significant role in the history of Oak Park, starting life as a pleasure ground and becoming a full-fledged amusement park called Joyland. Joyland was used to attract weekend visitors to the neighborhood in hopes that they would become buyers in this first streetcar suburb of Sacramento.
- The park was the locus of an important incident in the racial history of Sacramento, involving police-community confrontations, injuries, and property damage. This 1969 Father's Day episode accelerated the flight of businesses, money, and white people from Oak Park. Near the park is Oak Park's largest private landowner, University of Pacific (including McGeorge School of Law).

Turn left onto 35th St

0.281 mi

R24 – Downtown Oak Park

- Oak Park was Sacramento's first suburb, meaning its first substantial subdivision outside the original 1848 platted area of lettered and numbered streets. Its development was enabled by the construction of a streetcar line in 1887 that made it practical to commute to jobs in downtown Sacramento or the railyards. The community prospered and was annexed to the city in 1911. The absence of racial covenants meant that there were some people of color in Oak Park from its early days.
- Later, downtown redevelopment brought poorer households to the area, and white flight exacerbated job losses and disinvestment. Problems of poverty and crime developed. Despite this, the neighborhood became an important center of Black life in Sacramento.
- Today, the blocks around 35th and Broadway display twenty years of returning investment and gentrification, boosted by former NBA star Kevin Johnson (who grew up in nearby Curtis Park). His investments in education and commerce include charter schools, the 40 Acres mixed-use development, and the Guild Theater. He went on to serve as Mayor of Sacramento. As noted previously, the expansion of the UC Davis Medical Center and the Aggie Square development also have brought new money to the area, contributing to demographic change.

Turn right onto 2nd Ave

400 ft

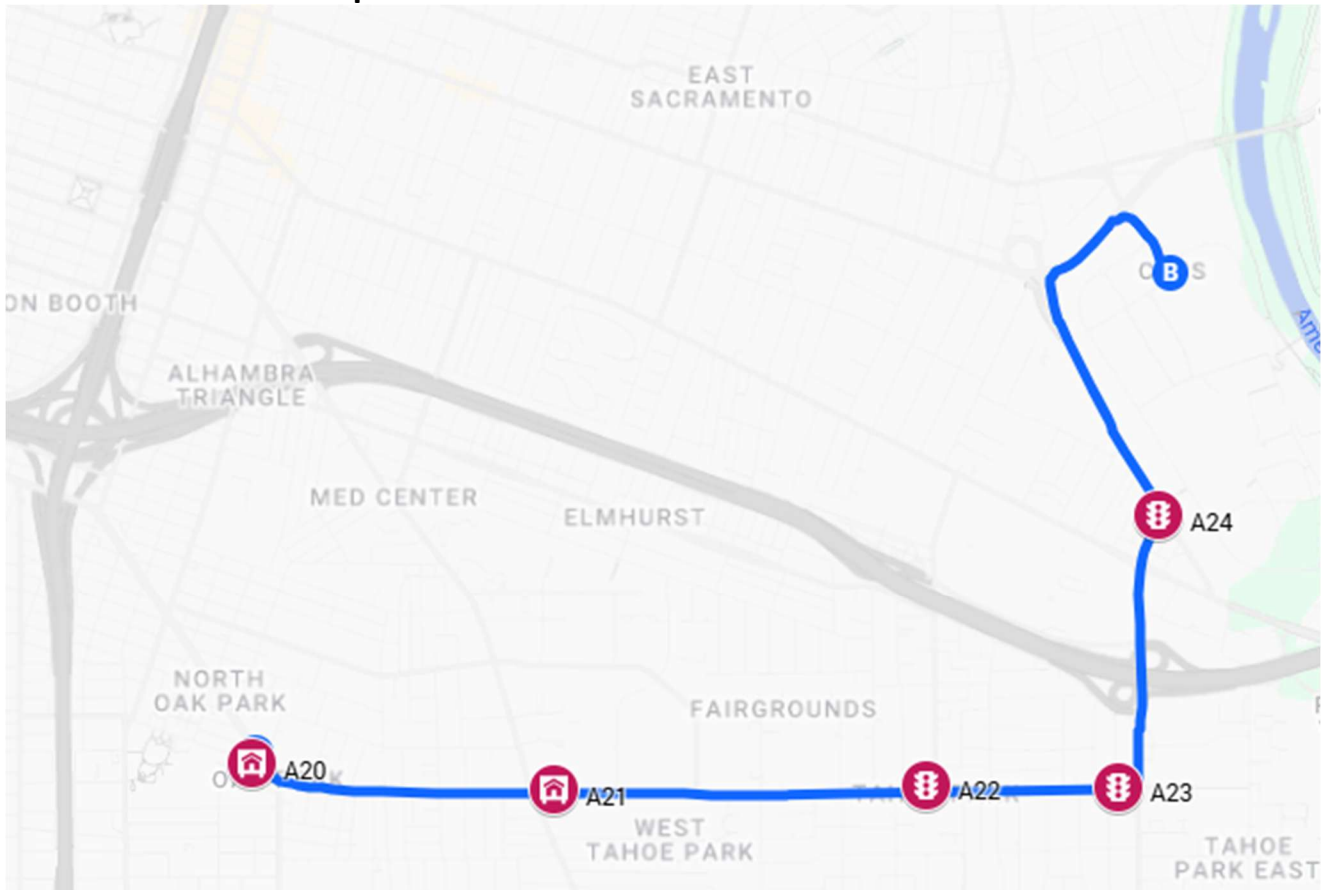
Turn right onto 36th St

719 ft

Turn left onto Broadway

Arrive Oak Park Sol Community Garden, 3733 Broadway, Sacramento, CA 95817

LEG #5: Return to Campus



Head southeast on Broadway

2.08 mi

A20 – Lewis/Landers Situation

- The half-block south of 5th Avenue was *officially recorded* as part of two overlapping subdivision with sometimes differing lot owners, just a few pages apart in the 1911 map book. Adding to the intrigue, the route of Broadway is bent to meet the point of this persistently disputed land.
- We are now entering a different, more egalitarian land scheme, called the Public Land Survey System. This is what you often see flying over the western US – a tidy grid of square-mile sections, divided into quarters that were the raw material of the 160 acre frontier homestead.
- We just crossed MLK, which follows the section line separating sections 17 and 18 of a township called T8N R5E – that is, 8 townships north and five townships east of the survey reference of Mt. Diablo. From here, Broadway runs eastward down the middle of sections 17 and 16.
- Now, a lot of section line roads have been cobbled together over years; they sometimes abruptly start and stop or widen from country lanes into major suburban thoroughfares. This is all driven by the particular assortment of land uses and owners on each side. Ideally urban section line roads would be widened in an orderly way, allowing for relatively smooth flow. That's what happens along Fruitridge and Florin, for example.

A21 – Capital Homestead Association

- As we approach the former crossing of the Sutterville-Brighton Road, something really jarring happens. The north side of the road is suddenly and dramatically squeezed as we pass an old exhibit hall from the fairgrounds, on land that was once the Capital Homestead Association.
- I have not yet untangled why this happened. Now the whole point of homestead associations was to create collective protection around small claims. This short blockage doesn't add up, but it is odd that such a warped bit of roadway is here, of all places. Maybe the problem is the exhibit hall. But maybe not.

A22 – Monte Vista

See Monte Vista (1888)

- The road running north across section 16 is now called 59th Street, but it was once Monte Vista Avenue. And the center of town was a landscaped traffic circle at modern 2nd Avenue, surrounded by 40-foot-wide “town lots” bounded by a cross-shaped alley.
- But this was an easy version of the rural life. A smoke-belching pump house had a tank with X gallons, piping tap water to houses and farmsteads, and a train depot stood along the tracks, just across the road from today's light rail station. This was apparently an “artistic” structure, and ads boasted that residents could wait there for regular trains that would get them downtown “faster than a carriage from 20th Street.”
- Little remains of Monte Vista. The depot and pump house are gone, along with the traffic circle. Strange zigzag alleys mark the edges of the town center, but only east of 59th.
- Another subdivision called Fruit Vale, created around the same time, also disappeared. It was replaced by the western end of Elmhurst, which has an entirely different set of streets dating to 1909. But a trio of nearly identical houses face the nearby hospital, with massing that supports the assessor's odd assertion that they were built in 1890.

A23 – Brighton Road Blockade

See Brighton (1850)

- Broadway ends abruptly at the section line road now called the 65th Street Expressway. This happens with section roads, but this break is weird. A driveway continues for a bit before ending nowhere. A bike path makes it as far as Redding Avenue, a quarter mile away. This was precisely the southwest corner of Brighton, the town where Sacramento City's sheriff died in an ambush as he attempted to put down the settlers' revolt.
- Broadway was known as Brighton Avenue until at least 1913, and it would have connected to Brighton's 11th Street, the train depot now called Perkins, and eventually to Kiefer Blvd.
- The break in this fundamentally important roadway forced traffic south onto other section line roads, but these also went nowhere: 14th Avenue peters out after Power Inn Road. 21st Avenue is blocked by those railroad tracks. Even Fruitridge is blocked by a strange fragment of Mayhew Road, which fails to connect to the old Sacramento Valley Railroad stop of the same name.
- That meant that one of the 19th century's greatest travel routes was squeezed through a narrow underpass at Folsom Blvd, which was the only way upstream until US 50 was built.

Turn left onto 65th St
Turn left onto Elvas Ave

0.654 mi
0.495 mi

A24 – Norristown and Hoboken

See *View of Hoboken (1853)*

- As we cross Folsom Blvd, we leave the section line and veer towards Alumni Grove. This is one of several long-range parcel boundaries approaching the lost landmark that once governed surveys of Sacramento’s eastern hinterlands. But then, suddenly, we run into the railroad again. Hornet Crossing was punched through in recent years, but that is no replacement for the end of the Sutterville-Brighton Road, which was depicted in 1853 as a boisterous streetscape packed with humanity. Much of Sacramento City came here to escape the floods then, as they always did. But then, a sinister and mysterious “armed force” blocked the river using a damaged drawbridge at 16th Street. And that was apparently the end of that.
- The southern edge of Norristown survives in traces. Concrete in the levee recalls a road that once met the river. The old route still appeared in 1937 airphotos, following a line between Tahoe and Amador Halls. And strange lumps in the railroad levee suggest a short-lived railroad crossing.
- The most durable remnant, however, is this strange triangular lot with a low fence along its southeast edge. This is one of the oldest property lines in the county. Official parcel descriptions confirm it to be the southwest corner of Norristown.
- Our tour ends with one more dip through that old snaking slough that caused so much trouble for travelers leaving Sacramento City. The Sutterville-Brighton Road was a great alternative, and so it had to die. Sacramento City couldn’t live with competition, so it ate the neighbors.
- But that wasn’t all. The land shenanigans even killed off J Street, that critical thoroughfare that linked the spine of Sacramento City with the gold that was its speculative lifeblood. It was a straight shot, with no room for confusion. It ran right past here and through campus, meeting the river at Alumni Grove – that idyllic little riverside spot that was once the nerve center of a failed challenge to the cannibal city.

Take the ramp to Fair Oaks (on right)
Merge onto J St
Turn right onto State University Dr

938 ft
722 ft

Return to Welcome Center: 6000 J St, Sacramento, CA 95819