



August 2, 2008

David Hung, Associate Planner  
Current Planning Division  
Development Services Department  
300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95811

**RE: Natomas Landing (P99-091)**

Dear Mr. Hung:

*WALKS*Sacramento submits the following comments on Natomas Landing. These comments are based on the July 10, 2008 site plan.

*WALKS*Sacramento encourages people to walk and bicycle in their communities. The benefits include improved physical fitness, less motor vehicle traffic congestion, better air quality, and a stronger sense of cohesion and safety in local neighborhoods. *WALKS*Sacramento is a member of the Partnership for Active Communities and is funded in part by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Active Living by Design program. The Partnership is working to support increased physical activity such as walking and bicycling in local neighborhoods as well as helping to create community environments that support walking and bicycling. One of the ways we are doing this is through the review of proposed development projects in the Natomas community.

The latest site plan, dated July 10, is an improvement over the January, 2008 site plans. There are more buildings and less parking lots along El Centro - the western edge of the proposed project will be more pedestrian friendly. There are more connections from the east side of the project to the freeway buffer bike path – bicyclists and pedestrians are more likely to use the bike path. The distance across the parking lots for the major and junior retail stores is more than 10% shorter – a few more people may park once and visit stores on both sides of the parking lot without moving their vehicle.

There are a few outstanding issues that remain with the new site plan. The following items were identified in the testimony *WALKS*Sacramento provided at the May 8, 2008 City Planning Commission hearing: more freeway overcrossings that are pedestrian and bike friendly are needed; another pedestrian connection to Westlake is needed – the parcel at the north edge of the water tank on El Centro may be appropriate; the number of bicycle parking spaces should be increased; reduce the number of lanes at the Hawkview entrance; and move connection of the freeway buffer bike path to Del Paso Road closer to the I-5 interchange.

*WALK*Sacramento offers the following recommendations to improve the walkability and bikability of the proposed Natomas Landing.

### **Parking Lots**

1. **Decrease the number of vehicle parking spaces and increase the number of bicycle parking spaces.** The April 24, 2008 staff report for City Planning Commission indicated the project proposed 2300 vehicle parking spaces (700 more than required), but only 80 bicycle parking spaces (the minimum required) were proposed. *WALK*Sacramento agrees with the staff report that the over-abundance of vehicle spaces does not promote clean air and pedestrian friendliness. The new site plan includes more parking areas than the old plan had, but the size of each parking area is smaller and this will contribute to a slightly more pedestrian-oriented parking environment.
2. **Orient north-south pedestrian walkways in the major/junior parking lots with the entrances to Major 1, Junior 2, and Junior 3.** The walkways will be more convenient if they connect to the large stores in front of their entrances. A large portion of the foot traffic between the parking and the stores occurs near the store entrances. The number of high-activity crossings of the driveway along the fronts of the stores would be decreased if the crossings to the walkways were combined with the store entrance crossings.

### **Freeway Crossings**

3. **Construct the El Centro overcrossing soon after the project begins construction.** The El Centro overcrossing would provide convenient and safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists to Natomas Landing, Natomas Middle School, and Westlake Charter School.
4. **Improve the safety and pedestrian friendliness of the Del Paso Road I-5 Interchange.** The Del Paso Road interchange is not a safe crossing of I-5 for pedestrians and bicyclists. The partial-cloverleaf design encourages high-speed traffic and limits visibility of pedestrian and bicyclists. Modifications to the interchange should include signalized on- and off-ramps orthogonal to Del Paso Road, and lower speed limit on Del Paso Road.

### **Sidewalks**

5. **Construct 8' sidewalk on El Centro Road between Bayou Road and Del Paso Road.** Due to the pedestrian nature of the uses along El Centro Road, this segment of sidewalk should have pedestrian traffic greater than is typical in a suburban setting. Note that the site plan does not show a sidewalk along a portion of Pad 2.
6. **Construct 10' sidewalks on Del Paso Road from El Centro Road to the bike path connection and on both sides of El Centro Road from Bayou**

**Road to the bike path connections.** The sidewalk on these segments should be at least 10' wide because it is a shared use path, handling pedestrians and bicyclists.

7. **Construct a large pedestrian landing at the southwest corner of Del Paso Road and El Centro Road.** This corner of the intersection will have high traffic volume and many right turning movements. Pedestrians should have an area while waiting to cross the street that is not right next to the curb.
8. **Add trees to the El Centro Road planters.** The planter between the roadway and the sidewalk appears to be wide enough to accept two rows of trees. One row of trees near the curb will shade bicyclists, motorists, and the street. The other row of trees near the sidewalk will shade pedestrians.

### **Pedestrian Walkways**

9. **Provide a walkway from El Centro to MXD R/O 2 along the south side of the driveway at entrance #7.** A safe and convenient path to the "Village" is needed for pedestrians and bicyclists coming from the north.
10. **Align the vehicle and pedestrian entrance to Office 3 on Bayou Road with Nathan Court.** Nathan Court has pedestrian access to the sidewalk on the west side of Bayou Road, opposite the Office 3 corner of the project.

### **Roundabouts**

Special care should be given to the design of the roundabouts on the project site, especially the roundabout near the main entrance. The site plan appears to show the approaches and departures are single lanes, except for the entrance driveway from El Centro Road which has two lanes in each direction. The combination of moderate to high pedestrian traffic and motorists that have limited experience with roundabouts may result in an unsafe environment for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

11. **Raised crosswalks should be used at the main entrance driveway roundabout.** Visibility of pedestrians is enhanced when their path is elevated relative to the roadway. The table may also discourage motorists from stopping on the crosswalks.
12. **Inform motorists of the proper vehicle movements through the roundabout.** Use signs and striping to indicate lane usage and allowed turns.
13. **Use raised planter beds at corners to direct pedestrians to crosswalks.** Landscape planters, even at a minimum 5' width, may not be sufficient to keep pedestrians from crossing to the central island.
14. **Provide the option for bicyclists to travel through the roundabout in the vehicle lanes or move onto the sidewalk.**

### **Freeway Buffer Bike Path**

- 15. Place the freeway buffer bike path as far from freeway as possible.**  
The air pollution from the freeway is especially harmful to bicyclists since they often are respirating at a high rate. The bike path should be straight where possible and placed alongside the parking lot. This placement also can increase the safety for users since they will be closer to people that have the opportunity to help, as opposed to people driving by at high speeds.
- 16. Make allowance for a segment of the bike path to be constructed under the El Centro overcrossing approach.** The best route for the bike path to get from one side of El Centro to the other is to pass under the raised approach to the overcrossing. This avoids conflicts between bicyclist on the path and pedestrians and vehicles on El Centro Road.
- 17. Ensure that the bike path makes a connection north of the Office 3 parcel.** If the freeway buffer continues north of project site, the bike path should be aligned in such a way that it can connect to the planned or existing bike path east of Westlake Village Greens Phase 2, between Bayou Road and the freeway. If there is no bike path anticipated north of the project site, then the bike path should connect to Bayou Road.

### **Freeway Buffer Landscaping**

- 18. Construct planter beds between the bike path and the parking lot.** The bike path should be separated from the parking lot. We suggest using native low-growing shrubs and trees in an 8'-wide planter bed.
- 19. Plant shade trees on both sides of bike path.** The bike path will be well shaded if trees are planted on both side of path. Evergreens should be planted in the area between the freeway and the bike path.

The July 10, 2008 site plan appears to be a draft. *WALK*Sacramento would like to see the final site plan when it is available. We expect that incomplete areas in the current drawing will be finished and pavement treatments would be identified in the final plan. Pavement treatments are important to pedestrian circulation and should be identified before locations of sidewalks, curbs, and buildings are finalized.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and recommendations. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me at (916) 709-9843 or [cholm@walksacramento.org](mailto:cholm@walksacramento.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Holm". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "C" and "H".

Chris Holm  
Project Analyst

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