



January 31, 2010

Heather Forest, Associate Planner
City of Sacramento, Development Services Department
300 Richards Blvd, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: Curtis Park Village (P04-109)

Dear Ms. Forest:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Curtis Park Village project (P04-109). WALKSacramento submits this letter based on the December 2009 project routing for Curtis Park Village.

The December 2009 revision of the Curtis Park Village project retains many of the good characteristics of earlier proposals – connections to Curtis Park neighborhoods; multi-family housing; and a mix of uses, including residential, office, retail, and commercial.

The latest revision has several changes that are positive. The senior multi-family housing has been moved from the east side to the west side of road A. This will improve access to the retail and restaurants by eliminating the need for seniors to cross what is projected to be the busiest street in the project. The residential streets, with the exceptions of Road A and Road G, have been narrowed to 30'. This width should reduce average vehicle speeds and increase safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The most noticeable change in the December 2009 drawings is the removal of the roundabout. The three-way intersection at Road A and 10th Avenue has been moved to the east and changed to a conventional four-way intersection with signal lights.

1. Restore the roundabout at Road A and 10th Avenue

The use of roundabouts instead of signalized intersections can result in less severe collisions and injuries for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle occupants. Roundabouts also moderate speeds through intersections and provide comparable throughput for all streets of the intersections.

The revised design of Road A may contribute to higher vehicle speeds compared to the October 2008 design for several reasons. Road A now has a 2800' long straight segment whereas the longest straight segment on the previous tentative subdivision map was about 1200'; the signals lights at 10th Avenue will usually be green for

north-south traffic; there are only three public-street intersections and three driveways along the straight section of Road A; along the park the street is wide for the projected traffic volumes; and between the park and 10th Avenue the street is wider than on the previous map. We believe these conditions make a stronger case for a roundabout at Road A and 10th Avenue.

2. Locate the senior housing closer to Area 1

The senior housing was placed about 300' farther from Area 1 when it was moved from the east side of Road A to the west side. Access to the stores and restaurants for seniors will be improved if the senior housing were moved south of its current location.

Many of the issues raised in our previous comment letters (October 20, 2008 and December 18, 2008) still remain and are restated below.

3. Increase the width of Road J as it approaches Portola Way

Road J between Portola Way and the elbow northwest of Road H is shown as a 42' ROW One-Way Residential street. Road J is the most direct route to the 4th Avenue / Wayne Hultgren Light Rail Station and there is no accommodation for bicycle travel in both directions. Both Road J and Portola Way south of 4th Avenue to Road J should be changed to two-way streets. If Road J and Portola Way cannot be widened, then the respective sidewalk sections should be widened to 10' to allow for mixed bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

4. Add tree wells and traffic circles to the north-south alley

The alley parallel to 24th Street is about 1800' long from Donner Way to 10th Avenue and about 950' long from 10th Avenue to the turnaround near Sutterville Road. The alleys are straight; except for a slight bend about 240' from Donner Way. We are concerned that some vehicle speeds may be dangerously high on these alleys. The design guidelines encourage one street tree per residence between the alley right-of-way and rear-yard fence, but there is no guidance regarding the east side of the alley where the existing fence will present a 1560' long uninterrupted flat wall along the northern section. Tree wells, perhaps one for every one or two lots, on the east side of the alley in addition to trees on each lot will present a low-speed driving environment. Traffic circles at the east end of access alleys Lot V and Lot X would also calm traffic on the alley.

5. Move park site to the north and add bulb-outs to park side of street

The park, like the commercial in Area 1, is not located in a place accessible to the greatest number of residents. It should be placed farther north with more homes to the south.

6. Provide public access parallel to Road A from Road E to 10th Avenue

Road A is the only north-south street where Village 4, 5, and 6 multi-family housing and Lot B health club, entertainment, and commercial uses are proposed.

WALKSacramento recommends block sizes of 400' in urban settings. This would lead to adding a street by extending Road C north from 10th Avenue to connect to road E at the northwest corner of Village 6. However, a public pedestrian walkway from Road E through Village 6, between Villages 4 and 5, and through Lot B to 10th Avenue could provide the connection for pedestrians and bicyclists without the expense of constructing a public street.

7. The grocery store and neighborhood-serving retail should be close to the homes

Grocery stores, parks, and restaurants are popular destinations for walking trips within neighborhoods, and most of those trips are one-half mile or less. The revised map has the park in an ideal position – near the higher density multi-family residential and towards the geographic centroid of the single-family residential. The grocery store in Lot 1, though, is in the least desirable place to encourage walking because it's in the most remote location with parking between it and the housing. The residents of Curtis Park and the future residents of Curtis Park Village will have better access if the grocery store is closer to their homes.

We believe the best location for the grocery store is at the north end of Lot 1 with parking on the south side of the building. This location would provide the most convenient access for pedestrians approaching from the north (the apartments and most of the Curtis Park Village houses), the east (the senior housing and Curtis Park houses), and the west (the potential east-side landing of the pedestrian bridge from the Sacramento City College Light Rail Station).

8. Add Class I bike trail and narrow the width of Road A

The on-street bike lanes could be removed and north-south travel could be provided by a Class I bike trail along the western edge of the project site, as identified on the City of Sacramento Bike Master Plan proposed map.

WALKSacramento 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. *WALKSacramento* is a member of the Partnership for Active Communities. 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.

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.

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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