



10/19/2012

VIA EMAIL

Ellen Marshall, Associate Planner
Community Development Department, Current Planning Division
City of Sacramento
300 Richards Blvd., 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: CVS Pharmacy (P12-032)

Dear Ms. Marshall:

WALKSacramento has reviewed project routing for the CVS Pharmacy project, near the northwest corner of Howe Avenue and Fair Oaks Boulevard. The project proposes a 16,500 square-foot pharmacy building with 110 parking spaces, a 50,880 square-foot grocery building with 164 parking spaces, and the demolition of an existing 43,127 square-foot vacant car dealership building. The pharmacy building and the parking lot for both the pharmacy and the grocery will be constructed first, followed by construction of the grocery building after a tenant is determined.

We support the intent of the project to “create a sustainable and viable project that will be an asset to the community for years to come,” as stated in the applicant’s operational statement. Walkability of development projects is an important factor of sustainability as replacing vehicle trips with walking reduces emissions, individual expenditures on gasoline, and public costs for street maintenance and expansion. Development projects that lead to more walking and active travel are also critical to our community’s health. Human beings need moderate exercise, such as walking, for about 30 minutes a day in order to prevent the development of chronic disease and overweight. Only 38% of the population in the Sacramento region is active at this minimal level, often due to limitations placed by a built environment not suited to walking and other types of physically active travel. If more people could obtain regular exercise by walking and bicycling to their regular destinations, in lieu of driving, it could yield significant health improvements to the resident population of this area. Reduced driving would also decrease vehicle emissions and the prevalence of asthma, cardiovascular disease, and other air pollution-related conditions. More trips by walking and bicycling could help reduce the current expensive burden on the health care system of providing medical care to more and more people with chronic conditions due to inactivity and poor air quality.

There are at least a half-dozen apartment complexes and many low-rise office buildings within a half-mile walking distance of the project site. A round trip walk to the proposed

CVS and grocery store could contribute up to 20 minutes of the daily exercise for many of the nearby residents and employees.

Given the importance of walkable development to sustainability, public health and clean air, there are two issues we'd like addressed.

(1) The buildings and their entrances have weak pedestrian orientation. Both of the proposed buildings are set back from the street and separated from the street by parking spaces and driveways. The CVS pharmacy has two rows of parking along Howe Avenue and a drive-thru and one row of parking along Cadillac Drive, and there is a driveway between the grocery building and Cadillac Drive. Whether the site is considered Employment Center Mid Rise, as it is in the General Plan, or Suburban Center (commercial), the General Plan recommends that buildings should be placed close to the street with their entrances engaging the street.

Bringing the buildings close to the street would improve the pedestrian "feel" at the sidewalks along the project site. Eliminating parking and driveways between the buildings and streets would reduce the number of pedestrian-vehicle conflict points. Direct access to the buildings from the sidewalk would welcome pedestrians. The front of the pharmacy, rather than the rear, should be at the corner of Howe and Cadillac to maximize pedestrian access. The proposed location of the drive-through also presents an auto-oriented view to Howe Avenue and Cadillac Drive. The triangular shape of the parcel at the corner makes it difficult to place a building up to the street, but the space could be utilized to create a welcoming pedestrian plaza entrance to the pharmacy.

A good example of the appropriate relationship to the street can be found on the block immediately north of the site on Howe Ave between Cadillac Drive and Feature Drive. Each corner has a building close to the street with landscaping between the building and the sidewalk. The two corners on Feature Drive at Howe Avenue are exceptionally pedestrian friendly due to the pedestrian holding areas where the sidewalk widens to 16 feet wide to provide room for pedestrians to stand while waiting for the "walk" signal.

(2) The location of the drive-through queuing and access lanes will create unnecessary conflict points for pedestrians and vehicles. In addition to being set back from the street, neither of the buildings has an entrance close to the street. The entrance to the CVS building faces the parking lot at the "rear" of the building and is far from the street. The walkway length to Cadillac Drive is about 400 feet and it's about 300 feet to Fair Oaks Boulevard. Even the line-of-sight distance through the landscaped area between the parking lot and either Howe Avenue or Fair Oaks Boulevard is at least 200'.

The drive-through location also creates a pedestrian-vehicle conflict point that wouldn't exist with a pedestrian-friendly site plan. Although the project requires a variance to reduce the queuing length, it appears there is a pedestrian walkway crossing at the queuing lane or just outside of it. Two additional conflict points are created by the driveway along the west side of the grocery building which appears to be primarily for access to the loading dock.

The pharmacy drive-through and the grocery loading dock driveway would present fewer pedestrian conflicts and a better view to pedestrians if they were located on the driveway that runs between the two buildings.

We recommend the following to improve the pedestrian connection to the proposed buildings, provide a more pedestrian orientation, and reduce the number of times pedestrian must cross vehicle lanes and driveways on the project site.

- 1) Eliminate parking between the pharmacy building and the adjacent streets.**
- 2) Move the pharmacy and grocery buildings closer to the adjacent street.**
- 3) Provide pedestrian entrances into the buildings closer to Cadillac Drive and Howe Avenue.**
- 4) Eliminate the driveway between the grocery building and Cadillac Drive.**
- 5) Locate the drive-through and the grocery loading dock between the buildings.**

WALKSacramento 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. 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.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and recommendations. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact us at (916) 446-9255 or either cholm@walksacramento.org or tduarte@walksacramento.org.

Sincerely,

Chris Holm
Project Analyst

Teri Duarte, MPH
Executive Director

Enclosure: Development Checklist for Biking and Walking

DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST for BIKING and WALKING

*Prepared by WALKSacramento and SABA (Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates)
September 2012*

This checklist is provided to give an indication of design, engineering, and policy elements that we consider when reviewing development projects.

POLICIES

- Walking and biking is a priority
- Adopted a policy to develop a full multi-modal and ADA accessible transportation system

Project Review and Comment

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Pedestrian Master Plan
- Bicycle Master Plan
- Regional Blueprint
- Regional Blueprint Consistent General Plans
- Adopted Climate Action Plans
- Subdivision ordinances to support pedestrian and bicycle access and safety
- Zoning ordinance to support pedestrian and bicycle access and safety

ENGINEERING

- SIDEWALKS & BIKELANES ON BOTH SIDES OF MAJOR ROADWAYS
 - Pedestrian Level of Service "C" or better on arterials
 - Bicycle Level of Service "C" or better on arterials
- SAFE CROSSINGS FOR PEDESTRIANS
 - every 300-600 feet on major arterials
 - well lit, marked crosswalks
 - audible signals & count-down signals
 - median refuge islands
- SPEED MANAGEMENT
 - Speed limits based on safety of pedestrians and bicyclists
 - Implement "road diets" where there is excess lane capacity
- STREET DESIGN STANDARDS
 - Maximize pedestrian and bicyclist safety
 - Sidewalks buffered by trees and landscaping on major arterials
 - Vertical curbs
 - 5' minimum sidewalk widths, 8' in front of schools
 - 6' minimum bike lanes on busy streets

- ❑ **INTERSECTIONS**
 - Median refuge islands for pedestrians
 - Signal timing to enable safe passage
 - Signal detection for bicyclists
 - Crossings on all 4 legs of intersections

- ❑ **ELIMINATE BARRIERS**
 - Freeway, railroad, river and creek crossings
 - Obstructions in sidewalks and bike lanes

NEW DEVELOPMENT – REQUIRE

- ❑ Walking & bicycling circulation plans for all new development
- ❑ Direct and convenient connections to activity centers, including schools, stores, parks, transit
- ❑ Mixed uses and other transit supporting uses within ¼ mile of light rail stations or bus stops with frequent service
- ❑ Minimum width streets
- ❑ Maximum block length of 400'
- ❑ 4-lane maximum for arterials; Recommend 2 lanes wherever possible

NEW DEVELOPMENT – DISCOURAGE

- ❑ Cul-de-sacs (unless it includes bike/ped connections)
- ❑ Gated and/or walled communities
- ❑ Meandering sidewalks
- ❑ Inappropriate uses near transit (gas stations, drive-thru restaurants, mini storage and other auto dependent uses)

BUILDINGS – REQUIRE

- ❑ Direct access for pedestrians from the street
- ❑ Attractive and convenient stairways
- ❑ Bicycle parking – long & short term
- ❑ Shower & clothing lockers

OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS

- ❑ Improve street crossings
- ❑ Reduce speeds
- ❑ Provide new connections
- ❑ Create short cuts for walkers and bicyclists by purchase of properties or other means
- ❑ Provide sidewalks on both sides of major streets

Policy Review and Comment

ENFORCEMENT & MAINTENANCE

- ❑ Enforce speed limits
- ❑ Enforce crosswalk rules – conduct crosswalk sting operations
- ❑ Enforce restrictions against parking on sidewalks
- ❑ Enforce bicycle rules including riding with traffic, lights at night, stopping at red lights
- ❑ Implement CVC 267 setting speed limits based on pedestrian and bicyclist safety
- ❑ Sweep streets and fix hazards
- ❑ Repair and replace broken sidewalks

EDUCATION

- ❑ Train staff on pedestrian and bicycle facility design.
- ❑ Train development community about pedestrian and bicycle planning and safety issues
- ❑ Bicycle skills training

FUNDING

- ❑ Include pedestrian and bicycle facilities in capital improvement programs
- ❑ Include pedestrian and bicycle facilities as a part of roadway widening and improvement projects
- ❑ Support Measure A pedestrian and bicycle facility allocation
- ❑ Set priorities based on safety and latent demand
- ❑ SACOG Community Design grants & Bike/Ped grants
- ❑ California Bicycle transportation Account
- ❑ Safe Routes to School

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