



7/16/2015

VIA EMAIL

Matthew Sites, Associate Planner
City of Sacramento
Planning Department
300 Richards Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: 19th and Q apartments (DR15 – 169)

Dear Mr. Sites

WALKSacramento has reviewed the Development Project Routing (June 25, 2015) for the 19th and Q Apartments project. Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comment on the project.

Development projects that lead to more walking and active travel are critical to our community's future. 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 30% 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. This project proposes 72 new residential units and nearly 2,000 square feet of retail, creating the opportunity for many new walking trips. To best accommodate those trips, it is imperative that the site is safe, inviting, and accessible to pedestrians.

Retain, Replace, and Plant More Shade Trees

As proposed, this project leaves much of the hardscape along 19th Street, Q Street, Powerhouse Alley, and within Lot 1 under-shaded, detracting from the pedestrian environment. According to resident input at the 19th and Q dog park open house on July 15, 2015, a major priority of nearby residents for this area is ample tree shading. Tree shading encourages walking, decreases glare, and can mitigate the heat island effect.¹ Additional shade trees should be installed within the landscaped buffers along 19th and Q Streets. Furthermore, as pedestrian oriented uses, it is imperative that tree shading be provided to cover the BBQ area and pedestrian path of travel within the alley. Currently, there are several existing trees serving this purpose that should be retained. The larger and healthier the tree, the better the pedestrian environment. If retention is not possible, the existing tree within the proposed pedestrian path of travel to the BBQ patio should be replaced with a similar tree adjacent to the patio entrance.

¹ Reduce Urban Heat Islands: Compendium of Strategies, pg. 6.
<http://www.epa.gov/heatislands/resources/pdf/TreesandVegCompendium.pdf>

Extend the Existing Bulbout Features at the Project's 19th and Q Street Corner

As a mixed use commercial and residential facility, it is conceivable that this site will both generate and attract significantly more pedestrian trips than before. An opportunity exists to improve the overall walking environment by effectively creating a curb bulbout at the 19th and Q corner. An additional pork chop structure on the 19th Street side of the 19th and Q corner, symmetrical to the one on Q Street, will reduce pedestrian exposure to higher speed vehicular traffic and the potential of being stuck. In addition, the buffer would slightly narrow the pedestrian crossing distance as is the case across 19th Street. It is worth noting that the proposal's relocation of the closest parking spots away from the corner is a benefit to the pedestrian environment. The additional traffic calming structure would encourage motorists looking to park along Q Street to take a slower and more rounded approach into the stall rather than enter straight-on nearer to the corner and through the crosswalk and bike lane.

Orient Active Living Spaces to the Fronts of Units

WALKSacramento commends the applicant for proposing a design that emphasizes eyes on the street with numerous street facing windows. Not only do eyes-on-the-street and park improve safety, but passive views of green spaces can contribute to improved mental and emotional health.² To ensure consistent views of the streets, alleys, and nearby park, active living spaces such as kitchens and living rooms should be oriented toward the front of units.

Install Pedestrian Zone Seating

To further enhance the pedestrian environment and attract patrons to the site's retail uses, street level seating should be installed along 19th and Q Streets.

Soften the Building Façade with a Slight Setback and Additional Landscaping

To soften the building façade, a set-back of 18 inches would provide room for additional landscaping. Also, the slight setback would allow for more pedestrian zone furniture and for trees to achieve greater canopy coverage.

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 me at (916) 446-9255 or kkumar@walksacramento.org

Sincerely,

Kirin Kumar
Project Coordinator

² Green Space, Urbanity, and Health: How Strong in the Relation?
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2566234/>

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 & BIKE LANES 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

www.walksacramento.org

www.sacbike.org

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