

8/10/2015

VIA EMAIL

Matthew Sites, Associate AIA
City of Sacramento Community Development Department
300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: SMUD HQ Rehab (DR15-177)

Dear Mr. Matthew Sites:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the SMUD HQ Rehab (DR15-177) project routing. The project is requesting to rehabilitate the SMUD Headquarters site with a 20,000 SF +/- addition to the building's central core. WALKSacramento offers the following comments.

Development projects that lead to more walking and active travel are critical to our community's future. The Centers for Disease Control recommends a minimum of 30 minutes per day of moderate exercise, such as walking, 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.

The rehabilitation of the SMUD Headquarters site plans include multiple trails and attractive pedestrian paths. The illustrative landscape plan cites multiple features that support walkability. This includes the "Wellness" category, which mentions the looped walking trail with connection to off-site walking/biking routes. This supports "active design," as the design of the campus encourages physical activity.¹ The pedestrian paths throughout the site support recreational walking and the connection to local routes allows employees to commute to work or close-by destinations. The applicant will be responsible for maintaining existing paths and constructing new paths in compliance with ADA standards and the historic character of the complex.

However, the project entitlement application also mentions non-historic pathways that will be removed in the rehabilitation. Consider the potential impact on recreational walking and pedestrian safety regarding the following removed pathways, mentioned on page 10 of 24 in the Proposed Change Analysis:

	Proposed Change	CLR or HSR - Resource Designation	Secretary of Interior Standards*	Reason and Justification for Change
E.2	Pedestrian – Remove non-historic pathway	Historic Core – pedestrian paths (new) Compatible CLR p. 69.	II. Building Site – Alterations/Additions for the New Use – Recommend removing non-significant buildings, additions, or site features which detract from the historic character of the site.	No longer needed and not ADA compliant.

Will these pathways be replaced or will they be a barrier to pedestrian safety and recreational walking?

¹ <http://centerforactivedesign.org/dl/guidelines.pdf>

While the project meets the City's 50% standard for shade coverage for Parking Lot A, WALKSacramento recommends increasing the shade coverage of Lot B. Consider alternative methods to maintain visibility of the Headquarters Building from S Street in order to maintain and promote more shade coverage.

The added bicycle storage facility supports a potential increase in ridership of SMUD employees. Creating a safe space for employees to park their bike will eliminate a common barrier to riding.

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 egerhart@walksacramento.org.

Sincerely,

Emily Alice Gerhart
Project Manager
WALKSacramento

Attachment: 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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