



7/31/2016

VIA EMAIL

Miriam Lim, Junior Planner  
City of Sacramento Community Development Department  
300 Richards Boulevard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95811

**RE: Cresleigh University Park (P16-034)**

Dear Ms. Lim:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the routing for Cresleigh University Park (P16-034), a proposal for 42 single-family houses on a 5.3-acre site located at 7050 San Joaquin Street. WALKSacramento offers the following comments for improving the walkability of Cresleigh University Park.

Infill projects have the potential to increase opportunities for daily physical activity. This is important because about two-thirds of residents in the Sacramento region get less than the minimum recommended amount of physical activity. Walking and/or biking to work, school, play, transit, shopping and other daily activities can help our community members to improve their health, but it requires neighborhood and street design that makes walking and biking safe, convenient and pleasant.

The Cresleigh University Park site is located in the Tahoe Park East neighborhood and less than a 20-minute walk from two elementary schools and a high school, four parks restaurants, coffee shops and commercial businesses. Having these destinations close by will help to encourage more daily foot or bike trips by the future Cresleigh residents. However, there are several aspects of the site design and house plans that may work against greater physical activity: 18 of the 42 homes are on private alleys without important pedestrian amenities, there are no houses facing San Joaquin Street, and none of the house floor plans have strong “eyes on the street.”

**PRIVATE ALLEYS**

Sidewalks, trees and lighting are important for pedestrian safety and comfort. Sidewalks provide a place for pedestrians to walk without having to constantly watch and listen for cars and bikes, trees provide shade from the sun and a green, natural environment that enhances wellbeing, and lights provide illumination of walking surfaces and the surroundings at night.

About half of the street frontage within Cresleigh University Park is on public streets with 5' detached sidewalks, large-canopy trees in 6-1/2' landscape planters, and street lights. In contrast, the private alleys have no sidewalks, medium-canopy trees in the front yards, and no street lights. The lack of a pleasant and safe walking environment right outside

people's homes may diminish the frequency of walk trips. **WALKSacramento recommends adding sidewalks, street trees and pedestrian-scale lighting to the private alleys.**

### SAN JOAQUIN STREET

In general, pedestrians feel safer and more comfortable walking along streets where they are within view of the occupants within adjacent buildings. The northern edge of Cresleigh University Park, except where 'A' Circle intersects San Joaquin Street, is rear-yard and side-yard fences. Pedestrians walking along San Joaquin Street for this stretch of roadway may not only feel they are alone on the street, but in the event of emergency they'll have no clear place to go for help or refuge. **WALKSacramento recommends orienting the houses along San Joaquin Street to face north towards the street, rather than south towards the private alleys.**

The proposed design for the Cresleigh University Park side of San Joaquin Street will have a dense street tree planting and a detached sidewalk with landscape planter. The landscape plan shows the trees in the P.U.E. while the tentative map shows the trees in the landscape planter. Pedestrians and bicyclists will be north of and further from any trees within the P.U.E. and will therefore get less benefit from trees in the P.U.E. than from those in the landscape planter. Trees in both places would be preferred, but planting trees in the landscape planter should take priority. **WALKSacramento recommends that street trees along San Joaquin Street be planted within the landscape planter and the P.U.E.**

### HOUSE FLOOR PLANS

The two pedestrian safety issues mentioned above also apply to the layout of the house plans. All four of the house plans have at least one characteristic that decreases surveillance of the street by occupants of the houses and diminishes the comfort of pedestrians.

First, the windows for each of the four floor plans are in bedrooms, powder rooms or entry ways. "Eyes on the street" would be much better if rooms such as kitchens and family rooms that are frequently occupied during the day face the street.

Second, almost half of the houses as shown on the landscape plan and the site layout have front doors that are set back from the garage door elevation and, therefore, are out of view from much of the street. This can make it more difficult for pedestrians to see places of refuge should they temporarily feel unsafe while out walking. Front doors that are outside the view of nearby residents and pedestrians can also contribute to more house break-ins and, in turn, reduce the perceived safety for pedestrians.

Especially problematic is Lot 4, which places Plan 4 at the end of a private drive and against the rear fence of an existing home. This house plan has the front door on the side facing away from end of the private drive and about 18' behind the front of the house. There is absolutely no visibility of the front door from the street.

**WALKSacramento recommends revising the house plans or adding additional house plans so there are active living spaces with windows facing the street and front doors are within the wall closest to the street.**

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.

Sincerely,

Chris Holm  
Project Manager

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

*www.walksacramento.org*

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