



12/13/2018

VIA EMAIL

Daniel Abbes, Assistant Planner  
City of Sacramento community Development Department  
300 Richards Blvd., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95811

**RE: Bruceville Apartments (P18-073)**

Dear Mr. Abbes:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the project routing for Bruceville Apartments (P18-073). We appreciate the opportunity to offer the following comments to improve the walkability of the project and increase the opportunities for residents to incorporate active transportation into daily life and reduce the number of car trips and vehicle miles travelled.

The Bruceville Apartments project proposes to construct eleven three-story residential buildings with studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom market-rate rental apartments totaling 351 units. The project will also construct 351 parking spaces and common space consisting of a 5,200 sf clubhouse, a pool area and a community outdoor courtyard.

The project site is within the transit-oriented College Square Planned Unit Development and directly across Bruceville Road from the CRC light rail station and Cosumnes River College. Within the College Square PUD surrounding the Bruceville Apartments project site are a half-acre vacant parcel zoned office, College Square South and the College Square shopping center; 270 market-rate apartments, 103 affordable apartments, and a restaurant. To the south of the College Square PUD is a 4.3-acre vacant parcel zoned residential, Shasta Community Park, Valley Hi-North Laguna Library, the Shasta Park Water Facility, and single-family homes including the 60-home Shasta Ridge subdivision under construction.

The College Square project was approved by the City in part because it was next to the proposed CRC light rail station and transit center on the west side of Bruceville Road. The mix of residential and employment uses near transit was expected to increase walking, biking, and light rail ridership, while trip generation would be lower than a typical suburban environment.

The project site is in a nearly optimal location for transit-oriented development – it's less than 150 feet from the CRC light rail station and many daily destinations including a park, library, shopping, and dining are one to two blocks away. The mix of uses near the Bruceville Apartments site will help future tenants to choose walking rather than their car for many daily trips. Maximizing the convenience and safety of walking will ensure that walking is a first choice. Many of the comments and recommendations in this letter refer to pedestrian access to, and within, the site and the surrounding pedestrian grid.

**Pedestrian Access to the Project Site**

There's a good mix and number of destinations within walking distance of the Bruceville Apartments proposed site, so providing good pedestrian access will motivate future residents to make local trips by walking rather than driving. This will give residents more opportunities for daily physical exercise and the chance to interact with community members and keep an eye on their neighborhood.

Although there's one building near Bruceville Road and four buildings near Kastanis Way, the only pedestrian walkway onto the site from adjacent streets is on the east side of the project site at the northeast corner of Building 8. This walkway will facilitate access to Kastanis Way for residents that want to walk to the north, but it will be inconvenient for walking trips to the south. In the future, there will be a direct route to Shasta Park and Valley Hi-Laguna West Library when Kastanis Way is extended to Imagination Parkway. The street extension will also add pedestrian and bicycle access to the east-west bike path along the southern edge of Copperstone Village that connects to W Stockton Boulevard. **A walkway connecting Buildings 9 and 10 to Kastanis Way is needed to provide convenient access to the street and for future access to Shasta Park and other destinations immediately south of the project site.**

Also on the east side of the project site, there's no walkway between Kastanis Way and Building 11. **Building 11 must have a walkway to the multi-use sidewalk along Kastanis Way so pedestrians can access the building without walking through the driveway and parking lot.**

On the west side of the project site, there's no walkways connecting Buildings 1 and 2 to Bruceville Road. **A sidewalk on the south side of the driveway and a walkway to Bruceville Road on the south side of Buildings 1 and 2 should also be provided for travel to the south from buildings along the south half of the parcel.**

Buildings 3, 4, 5, 6 and the clubhouse on the "block" in the northwest corner of the project site also have no pedestrian connection to Bruceville Road. **The fire access driveway should have a sidewalk on the north side to provide convenient street access to interior buildings and the clubhouse.**

Improving pedestrian access to Bruceville Apartments from the street is important, but the nearby destinations should also be conveniently accessible so that residents will be motivated to walk rather than drive. Pedestrian circulation in the area is limited by the incomplete grid of sidewalks and street crossings. When Kastanis Way and Imagination Parkway are extended, the Bruceville Apartments parcel will be within a 21-acre superblock that is roughly 1000 feet by 1000 feet. As it is now, the superblock is about 65 acres! The figure below shows the superblock in which Bruceville Apartments is located.

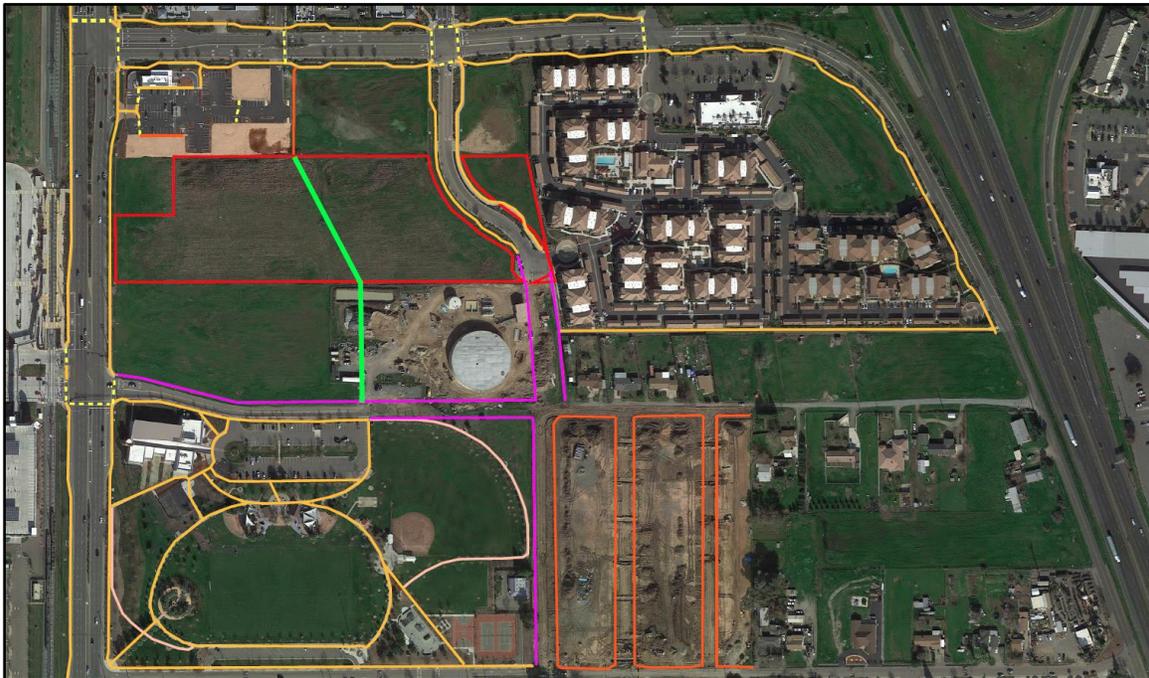


*Figure 1 Superblocks after Kastanis Way and Imagination Parkway are Extended*

Superblocks limit the route choices for pedestrians and make walking trips longer. Since the streets in the College Square PUD do not make a walkable grid, pedestrian easements could be an effective substitute. Creating a pedestrian travelway through the superblock encompassing the Bruceville Apartments parcel would increase pedestrian connectivity.

The development to the north, Quick Quack Car Wash - College Square, was conditioned to construct a 6' solid should the parcel to its south be developed as residential, and it included a north-south walkway along the west edge of the site between W Stockton Boulevard and the southern parcel line. The intent of this walkway in the College Square South development was to provide access between future development to the south and the College Square South restaurant and office uses. Bruceville Apartments has the opportunity, then, to plan its site to take advantage of the potential direct connection to College Square South. There may also be an opportunity to connect to Imagination Parkway and Shasta Park via the unimproved portion of the City-owned Shasta Park Water Facility parcel. From a pedestrian's perspective, this would split the 21-acre superblock in half.

A conceptual pedestrian easement is shown as the lime-colored line in the figure below. Existing sidewalks are solid yellow, existing crosswalks are dashed yellow, planned/under construction sidewalks and walkways are orange, future sidewalks are fuchsia, and the Bruceville Apartments parcel boundaries are red.



*Figure 2 Pedestrian Travelways Existing and Future*

### **Pedestrian Circulation within the Project Site**

The breezeways through each of the residential buildings provide good access to the units, as it affords residents the opportunity to travel in either direction. The breezeway design also allows the buildings to have active living spaces on both of the longer sides, which provides greater "eyes on the street and parking lot." However, it may not be best to consider the breezeways as common space. "Eyes on the breezeway" isn't provided and the semi-enclosed nature of the breezeway could intensify the noise from passing groups of people for residents within the units

along the breezeway. Only the walkways around the perimeter of the buildings should be considered part of the site circulation.

Looking at the site plan one might think there's a continuous east-west walkway from Kastanis Way to Bruceville Road. When the building envelopes and the lack of connections to the street are considered, the walkway is seen as discontinuous at the east end of Buildings 8 and 10, at Building 7 and Building 3, and at the fire truck access driveway. **We recommend re-orienting the buildings or splitting some of them into multiple structures as a way to create a complete circulation network and continuous east-west path of travel.**

The Bruceville Apartments project routing does not indicate that fencing and gates, other than the fire truck access gate at Bruceville Road, will be included. However, it's our experience that many owners or operators of multi-family residential projects return for permission to construct fences and gates to surround their property. Fences at or near the back of the sidewalk degrade the pedestrian environment by limiting the effective room for pedestrians, and they signify that the neighborhood is unsafe. Either negative impact will reduce the number of people walking.

It's not improbable that the Bruceville Apartments project could request such permission. Copperstone Village I and Villages II & III, which are partially adjacent to the Bruceville Apartments site, were approved by Planning Commission in 2008 without fencing and gates, but was subsequently called up and approved by City Council with tubular steel fences and vehicular gates on the project site perimeter. **Although we are not in favor of gated communities, with the possibility that fences and gates may be installed in the future we recommend designing the site and landscape plans to accommodate fencing with setbacks similar to that of the buildings.**

### Access to CRC Station

The west end of the Bruceville Apartments site is less than 150 feet from the CRC light rail station, but the walking distance is considerably longer – approximately 1,360 feet from the site to the center of the station platform via the crosswalk at W Stockton Blvd and approximately 1,060 feet via the crosswalk at Imagination Parkway. A mid-block pedestrian crossing of Bruceville Road at the location studied in the Bruceville Road Pedestrian Crossing Study submitted to the City by Kimley-Horn on November 30, 2016 would reduce the walking distance to about 380 feet.



*Figure 3 Walking Distance to CRC Station*

Since the mid-block crossing will be very beneficial for residents of Bruceville Apartments, it will be important to provide convenient access to it from every building in the project. This makes

improving the site pedestrian circulation network and the pedestrian connection to Bruceville Road very important. Refer to above comments.

### **Project Orientation to the Street**

The College Square PUD Guidelines addresses the relationship of residential buildings to the street only by requiring that building setbacks shall be the same as landscape setbacks (minimum 25 feet from the back of curb) and that buildings adjacent to residential shall have 15-foot minimum setback.

The City of Sacramento Multi-Family Residential Design Principles recommends design features that promote neighborly interaction and provide "eyes on the street," buildings should be physically and visually oriented to the street, pedestrian access to the street-facing buildings should be provided, and parking should not be adjacent to the street. Also, Sacramento City Code *17.600.160 Standards for uses within one-quarter mile of a light rail station* requires that "vehicle parking shall be located to the rear or interior side of the building and not in front of the building," and that "the building's primary entrance shall have direct access to public streets and sidewalks."

To comply with the College Square PUD Guidelines, the City's multi-family residential guidelines, and City Code, the site plans should be revised to **1) move the parking areas on the north and west sides of Building 1 and on the east side of Building 9 to the interior of the project site, 2) move Buildings 1 and 9 closer to the street.**

### **Summary**

- Add walkway connecting Buildings 9 and 10 to Kastanis Way.
- Add walkway connecting Building 11 to Kastanis Way.
- Add walkway connecting Buildings 1 and 2 to Bruceville Road.
- Add walkway connecting Buildings 3, 4, 5 and 6 to Bruceville Road.
- Add pedestrian easement from College Park South to the Shasta Park Water Facility parcel.
- Re-orient or split buildings to create a more continuous pedestrian grid within the site that doesn't utilize breezeways.
- Ensure there is room for fences with setbacks as least as great as the building setbacks should fences be proposed in the future.
- Add convenient connections to Bruceville Road that optimize pedestrian access to the Bruceville Road mid-block crossing.
- Move parking areas near Buildings 1 and 9 to the site interior.
- Move Buildings 1 and 9 closer to the street.

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.

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. 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. Additional benefits include less motor vehicle traffic congestion, better air quality, and a stronger sense of social cohesion and safety in local neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Chris Holm  
Project Manager