



1/9/2019

VIA EMAIL

Matthew Sites, Associate AIA  
City of Sacramento community Development Department  
300 Richards Blvd, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95811

**RE: Tower 301 (P18-078)**

Dear Mr. Sites:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the Tower 301 (P18-078) project routing and we offer the following comments to improve the walkability of the project.

**Streetscape**

One of the goals listed in the project description is to create active and pedestrian-friendly features along all street frontages. The covered plaza and public view deck along Capitol Mall and the building-wide line of retail shops with some outdoor dining on the 4<sup>th</sup> Street frontage will certainly be activated and pedestrian friendly. However, L Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street will be less activated and pedestrian friendly.

L Street will be activated at street level by only the residential lobby and the corner restaurant space; two-thirds of the building on L street will be louvers and a garage entrance. The street-level elevation on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street will not provide any pedestrian activation since it will be only louvers and a garage entrance. Residential façades do not begin until the level 3, about 20 feet above the street, so there will be little interaction between the occupied residential spaces and the sidewalk, although there will be operable windows and balconies to provide some "eyes and ears on the street." The wall systems on the residential, office and parking decks will provide some visual interest from a distance, but these design elements will not be very apparent to pedestrians on the Tower 301 block.

Activating the entire L Street frontage and at least some of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street frontage would contribute to walkability and implement Central Core Design Guidelines principles D.4.1 (ground level uses) and D4.2 (transparency). Providing additional ground level uses on L Street would build upon the existing and planned development further east on L Street, and it would continue the street activation beyond the eastern half of the block.

The western half of the street-level L Street frontage is devoted to electrical services for the building and will have little human activity. Relocating the electrical services and replacing them with apartments would bring the benefits of residential uses down to the street.

**Public Plaza**

The 14,000+ square foot plaza under the cantilevered office levels plus the "public view deck" above the cantilevered office levels will be valuable public amenities. Public access to the open space provided by the "public view deck" will be somewhat inhibited by the length of the four-story escalator and the potential that many people will not be aware of the public nature of the

view deck. Since it will be much more obvious that the plaza is a public space, it will be important to enhance the design of the plaza and its interface with the public sidewalks that are on three sides of the plaza.

The water features and seat walls in the plaza extend to the edge of the Capitol Mall sidewalk and create several pinch points. The sidewalk pedestrian zone width is generally between 9' and 10.5', but it narrows to 6' at one place and 7-1/2' at four other places. Although this satisfies the minimum width in design guidelines section C.2.1 (pedestrian zone) and exceeds by an exceptional amount section C.2.3 (frontage zones), we feel the Capitol Mall sidewalk should not be restricted because of the anticipated pedestrian activity passing the site.

### **Access to Bike Parking**

It's not clear where bicyclists are expected to access the garage entrances and make their way to the bike racks. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street is one way southbound and the majority of the bike racks are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street side at ground level and basement level in the parking garage. This arrangement may encourage bicyclists to ride on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street sidewalk to access the driveway. As a result, pedestrians will be at greater risk of collisions.

We also note that none of the long-term parking is secured in controlled access rooms or cages, and there is no short-term parking provided for the retail on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, the restaurant at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and L, and the restaurant on the "public view deck."

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 and mental fitness, better air quality, a stronger sense of social cohesion and safety in local neighborhoods, and more sustainable and economically productive communities.

Sincerely,

Chris Holm  
Project Manager