



3/15/2015

VIA EMAIL

Arwen Wacht, Associate Planner  
City of Sacramento  
Community Development Department, Planning  
300 Richards Boulevard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95811

**RE: Heritage Park at Natomas MLRC**

Dear Ms. Wacht:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the February 13, 2015 development project routing for the Heritage Park Multi Level Retirement Community (MLRC) project. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the project.

The Heritage Park MLRC is a proposed 10.1 acre Suburban Center containing a 60 unit assisted living building, a 48 unit memory care building, and 54 cottage homes. The project site abuts Natomas Boulevard to the East, Rose Arbor Drive to the South, existing residences to the West, and a multiuse trail to the North.

Development projects that lead to more walking and active travel are critical to our community's future. 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. Fewer vehicular trips can decrease vehicle emissions and the prevalence of asthma, cardiovascular disease, and other air pollution-related conditions. To create a more pedestrian friendly destination, considerations must be made to the pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, access, and safety associated with a site. Surrounding streetscapes and internal roadways or driveways that are planned and designed to accommodate all users are key in encouraging and supporting active transportation.

After reviewing the project site plan, we offer the following recommendations:

**1. Relocate cottage units closer to Natomas Boulevard**

It is likely that the residents of the 54 cottage homes will be more inclined to travel offsite as pedestrians or cyclists than residents of the elderly care campus. Relocating the cottage homes closer to the street increases access to offsite destinations by reducing the distance between more active community members and the adjacent roadways.

## **2. Provide additional onsite crosswalks and access through landscaped areas.**

There are several location throughout the site where access could be improved by providing additional crosswalks and connections through landscaped areas. Walkways throughout the site will improve connectivity and safety for pedestrians traveling between onsite locations and through the development. Crosswalks should be provided at the following locations to improve connectivity:

- Between the greenhouse/community garden site and the elderly care campus.
- Between cottage 33 and the landscaped area along Natomas Boulevard to create a third crossing opportunity at the site's eastern entrance.

According to the site plan there is only one planned access path through landscaped areas to connect the development with the offsite sidewalk network. Additional access paths are critical to facilitating active travel between the site and offsite destinations. Without convenient access paths, pedestrians may be required to deviate significantly from their path of travel to the main entrances on Natomas Boulevard or Rose Arbor Drive in order to gain access to a sidewalk.

Access paths should be provided at the following locations:

- Between the sidewalk on Natomas Blvd. and the crosswalk leading from the assisted living building at the site's eastern entrance. As planned, this crosswalk ends abruptly in landscaping. Should a crosswalk be placed on the other side of this intersection as suggested above, an access path should continue to the sidewalk at this location as well.
- Between the entry to the 60 unit assisted living building and the sidewalk along Natomas Boulevard.
- Across the landscaped area along Rose Arbor Dr. connecting to the proposed crosswalk at the cottages.

## **3. Maintain the proposed pedestrian access to the multiuse trail. Provide lighting at this entrance to improve security.**

The pedestrian access point in to the adjacent multiuse trail is a great way to encourage active transportation and recreation. Providing access to trails for residents, especially seniors, is an effective way to improve health outcomes. WALKSacramento strongly suggests maintaining access to the recreational trail via the pedestrian entrance. To improve security and encourage use, this entrance should also be well lit.

## **4. Install traffic calming measures throughout the site.**

Traffic calming measures such as speed bumps and raised crosswalks along longer, uninterrupted drives would contribute to slower traffic speeds and a more pedestrian friendly environment throughout the site. Specific areas where these treatments would be most effective are:

- Along the northern drive between the cottages and the community garden.

- Between the memory care building and the cottages to the west.
- Along the western drive between the western property line and the cottages.

**5. Replace the sidewalk along the western property line with shade trees.**

The planned sidewalk along the property line is duplicative of the sidewalk across the street that is both adjacent to homes and well connected to other uses within the site. In fact, rather than providing much benefit to community members, the path may be used as a shortcut to the offsite trail by non-residents. To improve local air quality, shading, and the overall pedestrian environment, the western edge of the property should be lined with shade trees.

**6. Continue the sidewalk on Natomas Boulevard to connect with the entrance to the multiuse trail.**

As planned, the sidewalk along Natomas Boulevard will end short of the northern property line. Continuing the sidewalk to connect with the entrance of the multiuse trail will improve access and connectivity to and throughout the community.

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](mailto:kkumar@walksacramento.org).

Sincerely,

Kirin Kumar  
Project Coordinator

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 & 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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