



March 3, 2010

Elise Gumm, LEED AP, Associate Planner
City of Sacramento Development Services Department
300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: Del Paso Nuevo, Phase 6 (P08-102)

Dear Ms Gumm:

*WALKS*Sacramento would like to submit the following comments on Del Paso Nuevo, Phase 6. We are aware the project was heard by the Planning Commission on February 11, 2010 and continued to March 11. The staff report indicates that ten of the 81 homes for Phase 4 have been constructed and that street improvements for Phase 5 have been constructed but none of the 95 approved homes have been constructed. Although staff has recommended approval of Phase 6 and the project returns to Planning Commission in less than two weeks, we would like one issue resolved.

The Special Planning District Development Guidelines, Del Paso Nuevo contains the following statements.

The narrow streets offer a safe and defensible public amenity where pedestrians and bicyclists have priority over automobiles. (p. 6)

Separation of moving vehicles and pedestrians should be accomplished with street trees and/or parked cars, while preserving pedestrian dominance of streets. (p. 31)

The public landscape transforms an otherwise ordinary city street into an open space amenity that can add value to adjacent properties, enrich the overall community, and encourage a pedestrian-friendly environment. (p. 32)

We prefer that all streets, even low volume residential streets, have detached sidewalks. Pedestrians are safer and more comfortable walking on sidewalks separated from traffic by planter strips and trees. Parked vehicles on a street with attached sidewalks help to separate pedestrians and traffic, but for much of the time when pedestrians are present on some streets there may be few parked cars. It may be difficult to predict parking patterns, though.

Trees are integral to providing a pleasant and attractive environment for pedestrians. The shade from street trees provide protection from the sun during hot Sacramento summers in addition to reducing the heat island effect, removing particulates from the

air, and creating a permeable barrier between vehicles and pedestrians. Large trees planted in front yards between attached sidewalks and houses can provide close to the same benefits as street trees with the exception of creating a safer separation.

Trees also provide an economic benefit to homeowners. A study by employees of the US Forest Service and National Institute of Standards and Technology found that in Portland a street tree increases a home's resale value by almost \$8900 and can add up to \$20,000 to the combined value of homes within 100 feet of the tree¹.

Aerial images from March 27, 2009 show that trees have not been uniformly planted in previous phases of Del Paso Nuevo. There are landscape strips without trees and there are front yards adjacent to attached sidewalks without trees. However, the Del Paso Nuevo Special Planning District Development Guidelines states on page 34:

Street trees in residential areas should be located a minimum of 4'-0' and a maximum 6'-0' from the sidewalk edge, except in the case of split sidewalk where tree will be located at the center of the planter strip, and spaced according to the Street Tree Matrix.

*WALKS*Sacramento recommends the following be included in the project's conditions of approval to ensure that street trees will be planted.

- 1. Landscape planters shall have street trees spaced at an average of 25' to 30'.**
- 2. Each home fronting a street without a landscape planter shall have at least one street tree in their front yard. Trees shall spaced at an average of 30' and be planted 4' to 6' from the sidewalk.**

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and recommendations. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me at (916) 709-9843 or cholm@walksacramento.org.

Sincerely,
Chris Holm
Project Analyst

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¹G.H. Donovan, D.T. Butry, "Trees in the city: Valuing street trees in Portland, Oregon", *Landscape and Urban Planning* 94 (2010) 77-83, http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html (accessed February 28, 2010).