

4/14/2015

VIA EMAIL

Antonio Ablog
City of Sacramento Planning Department
300 Richards Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: Delta Shores Regional Commercial Center

Dear Mr. Ablog:

The 2008 Delta Shores Planned Unit Development Guidelines included a conceptual plan for a pedestrian bridge providing a connection across the commercial loop roadway between the Village Center and the high-density residential uses on the east side. The pedestrian bridge would assure pedestrians and bicyclists a safe and convenient route to pedestrian-oriented entertainment and small-scale commercial uses in the Village Center portion of the regional commercial center. Figure 1 shows the Town Center at the top and the high-density residential at the bottom with the bridge between them as approved in 2008.

The proposal for the Delta Shores Regional Commercial Center relocates the Village Center, now called Main Street, from the location identified in the PUD Guidelines to a new location approximately one-quarter mile to the north. The benefits of the pedestrian bridge, such as a safe crossing of a six-lane arterial, convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to the smaller scale retail destination, and replacement of auto trips with walking and biking trips will not be realized with the current proposal. The proposed bridge would likely see little use since it lands between a main access driveway and the drive-through driveway for a fast food restaurant, and there are few destinations nearby, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 1: Planned Unit Development Guidelines (2008)

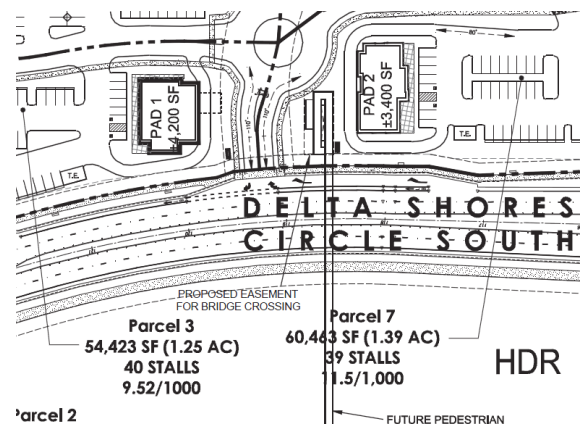


Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan (2015)

Move the pedestrian bridge to the Main Street.

The reconfiguration of the commercial site has not only left the pedestrian bridge disconnected from the pedestrian oriented Main Street, but it has provided no direct crossing of Delta Shores Circle South between the Main Street and the high density residential uses to the east. The Main Street will be a major pedestrian draw, so it is imperative that the bridge connects the adjacent residents to the Main Street.

The nearest crossings to the Main Street are at Cosumnes River Boulevard to the south and Loop Road D to the north. Cosumnes River Boulevard, more than 500 feet away, is an eight lane intersection directly off of the interstate on/off ramp. The sheer width of the intersection coupled with high traffic volumes will create a barrier to safe and convenient travel on foot or bike, discouraging active transportation and encouraging mid-block crossings to the Main Street. Unprotected mid-block crossings are dangerous to pedestrians who are less visible to drivers and who may misjudge travel distances, as well as to motorists who may not anticipate pedestrians.

Loop Road D is almost 500 feet away from the Main Street. Anyone walking or bicycling from the center of the high density residential area across the street from the Main Street will need to use the intersection at either Loop Road D or Cosumnes River Boulevard to make a legal crossing. Such a travel path would be about 500 feet on each side of Delta Shores Circle South. According to the City's Pedestrian Crossing Guidelines, a distance of over 300 feet between controlled intersections allows for the consideration of a mid-block crossing.¹ Once again, rather than traveling out of their way to access the most pedestrian oriented features of the site, a pedestrian may instead cross mid-block.

The location of the pedestrian bridge is ineffective as proposed. Located over 1,200 feet from the Main Street, pedestrians and bicyclists using the bridge would need to travel nearly a quarter of a mile to access the more pedestrian focused area of the site. The landing of the bridge, roughly at the site's midpoint, provides equally distant access to the Main Street and the large big box stores to the south and west. The bridge was envisioned and planned to connect pedestrians with the Main Street, not the big box stores.

The bridge also does not adequately accommodate for bicyclists as proposed. Considerations must be made toward the space afforded to bicyclists and pedestrians on the bridge as well as the ease of travel on the bridge's approach and landing. Due to the diminished effectiveness of the bridge due to its location and design, as well as the lack of any safe, direct, and convenient crossing opportunities to the Main Street, the bridge must be relocated further north to the entrance of the Main Street.

¹ City of Sacramento Pedestrian Crossing Guidelines, pg. 33

Provide bicycle facilities at each of the site's driveways.

The second issue related to access that must be addressed is the poor accommodation of cyclists at the site's driveways. Without adequately designed facilities for cyclists entering the site, most riders may be compelled to instead ride on sidewalks. This would be acceptable if the widened sidewalks include design elements such as lane delineations and stamped or colored paving. Bicycling on conventional sidewalks creates a hazard to both pedestrians and cyclists, especially in areas of heavy foot traffic such as is proposed at this location. Should this become the case, pedestrians and bicyclists alike will be discouraged from accessing the site due to the perceived danger and lack of comfort at these intersections. SABA and WALKSacramento are willing to work with staff and the applicant to ensure that the driveways are adequately designed such that safety and convenience are provided for all modes.

Provide bicycle facilities internally within the site.

Finally, the lack of internal bicycle circulation creates another barrier to bicyclist and pedestrian travel. Without appropriately designed facilities, bicyclists may feel more comfortable riding on sidewalks. The issue of internal circulation becomes even greater of an issue if the bridge cannot be relocated to the Main Street. If non-motorists are encouraged to use the bridge at its proposed location, high volumes of bicyclists and pedestrians are likely to try to share the conventional sidewalk facilities as they travel north to the main street. If the internal circulation is not designed in a manner that safely and adequately accommodates for all modes of transportation, bicyclists and pedestrians may be discouraged from accessing the site. Again, we recommend that staff and the applicant work with SABA and WALKSacramento to ensure that internal circulation is adequately designed for bicyclists and pedestrians.

WALKSacramento, SABA, and Breathe California are dedicated to building communities that encourage active transportation and lead to improved air quality. Thank you for your consideration of these comments and recommendations.

Sincerely,

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