



9/30/2015

VIA EMAIL

Jessica Jordan
City of Rancho Cordova Planning Department
2729 Prospect Park Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

RE: Veranda at Stone Creek (DD9609)

Dear Ms. Jordan:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the routing for Veranda at Stone Creek (DD9609) and we offer the following comments to improve the walkability of the new development.

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 to the resident population of this area. 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.

"Eyes on the street" is important for promoting pedestrian activity because people feel safer and more comfortable walking in areas where they don't feel isolated and can be seen by other people in case they need assistance. The Veranda at Stone Creek house plans will provide good "eyes on" for the pedestrian realm. Each of the four plans have either "active living areas", e.g. the kitchen or family/great room, at the front of the house with windows and doors overlooking the sidewalks leading to the homes. Homes with sides facing the private drives also have "active living area" windows facing the street.

Bedrooms, bathrooms and stairwells provide for "eyes on the alley." While these living areas aren't as effective as "active living areas", there are several mitigating factors. One, the alleys are short and have surveillance opportunities at the intersection with the private drive, and two, the alleys are predominately for vehicles.

The Project Description provided by the applicant identifies Veranda at Stone Creek as "an open community, without gates, to provide maximum connectivity to the surrounding uses." The project site is located between existing residential and a community park, and with vacant land zoned RC regional commercial to the north and BP business and

professional office to the south. There are future bike trails within the open space corridors along the northern and western edges of the site. These bike trails will provide connectivity through the middle of the 72 acre superblock on which project sits, so connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists in the surrounding area will not be negatively impacted by Veranda at Stone Creek.

The incorporation of the tubular steel fence with three gates along the south, west and north property lines as proposed will reduce connectivity for the future residents. However, access to surrounding land uses, such as the existing elementary school and the future regional commercial could be improved by adding sidewalks connecting the front-door walkways to the gated sidewalk at Alleys 1, 4 and 6. This will provide pedestrians a route to the bikeways without having to walk through the alleys or walk away from the bikeway to get to the alley with the pedestrian gate. It can also improve the "eyes on the alley" so that bicyclists are safer. **WALKSacramento recommends adding a sidewalk along the inside of the western tubular fence between the north side of Lot 8 and the northwest corner of Lot 51 that connects all of the front-door sidewalks.**

The tentative subdivision maps includes cross sections for the private drives and alleys, but not for Spoto Drive. The drawing appears to show an attached 6' sidewalk and the Project Description indicates there is a planned 6' walk within the Right of Way. The east side of Spoto Drive has an attached sidewalk, but there is a bike trail roughly adjacent and parallel to Spoto Drive providing a north-south travel. The west side lacks such a bike trail, even though there will be the bike trail on the west side of Veranda at Stone Creek. The City of Rancho Cordova Pedestrian Master Plan Design Standards appropriately require a detached sidewalk on all streets other than standard residential streets. **WALKSacramento recommends constructing a detached 7' sidewalk with 6' planter along Spoto Drive.**

The bike trail to be constructed along the north side of Veranda at Stone Creek in the future should connect to the bike trail in Stone Creek Park on the east side of Spoto Drive. The design of the trail head should take this into consideration, allowing for a bicycle and pedestrian crossing.

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.

Sincerely,
Chris Holm
Project Manager

Attachment: 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

www.walksacramento.org

WALKSacramento
909 12th Street, Suite 203
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 446-9255

www.sacbike.org

Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates
909 12th Street, Suite 116
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 444-6600