



3/10/2016

VIA EMAIL

Arwen Wacht, Associate Planner
City of Sacramento Community Development Department
300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: Natomas Fountains (P16-012)

Dear Ms. Wacht:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the project routing for Natomas Fountains (P16-012) and we offer the following comments. The Natomas Fountains project requests entitlements for a 115,960 square foot retail center on about 12.5 acres within the Coral Business Center PUD. The Project also proposes to change the zoning from Employment Center to Shopping Center and change the General Plan designation from Employment Center Mid Rise to Regional Commercial Center. Our comments relate to the impact the change in land use could have on walking rates in Natomas and Sacramento, and how the design of the site could impact walking for patrons and employees of the stores.

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.

Walking to shopping can contribute to daily physical activity, but the closest residence to the Natomas Fountains proposed site is ¼-mile distant and the trip involves crossing an 11-lane intersection. Considering the limited number of people that would walk to the shopping center and the regional-serving retail uses, Natomas Fountains may have few walking trips from nearby residents.

However, walking to transit can be a large part of one's daily physical activity – a 2005 study found that American transit users spend a median of 19 minutes per day walking to and from transit¹ - and employment uses typically generate more transit riders than shopping centers. The bus stop on Truxel is less than ¼ mile from the furthest point on the Natomas Fountains site and a proposed light rail station for the Green Line to the Airport is just across the street. Transit ridership for the bus stop is already limited

¹ Besser, LM and Dannenberg, AL, *Walking to public transit: steps to help meet physical activity recommendations*, Am J Prev Med. 2005 Nov; 29(4):273-80.

because 8.2 acres of the Coral Business Center PUD was amended to commercial use in 2003 and developed as a shopping center. Amending more of the PUD to commercial eliminates the potential for over six hundred office jobs next to bus and light rail transit and the corresponding public health benefits for commuters walking to transit.

The December 7, 2015 proposed site plan distributed with the project routing has several walkability elements that improve upon the August 7, 2014 preliminary site plan. There is a direct east-west pathway between Pad J and Pad I. Sidewalks have been added on both sides of the driveway from the southern edge of the site to Major C and which intersect with the east-west walkway mentioned above. Also, a sidewalk has been added along the existing drive aisle on the south (effectively the extension of N Freeway Boulevard).

Unfortunately, there are no trees to shade the sidewalk that was added on the south edge. Note that the trees, or columnar shrubs, that currently exist where the sidewalk is proposed do not provide shade. To make this project truly walkable, sidewalks should be shaded by trees.

WALKSSacramento makes the following recommendations:

1. **Maintain existing zoning** to maximize transit use and walking trips.
2. **Add trees to sidewalk-bisected parking islands** to shade walkways. *
3. **Add trees along existing Coral Business Center driveway at south edge of site** to shade the sidewalk. *
4. **Add raised crosswalk between buildings on either side of the existing Truxel driveway into Coral Business Center and remove the speed bump** to provide direct pedestrian route between shopping center phases and maintain traffic calming. *
5. **Add sidewalk along the north side of the existing driveway into Coral Business Center between the new raised crosswalk and the proposed driveway on the south edge of the site** to provide direct pedestrian route between shopping center phases and maintain traffic calming. *
6. **Add sidewalks from Gateway Park Blvd to the fountains area between Building G and Building H** to provide for a pathway that people will be inclined to use. *
7. **Incorporate windows with views into and out of occupied space on Buildings G and H** to provide eyes on the street.

* See the site plan markup on the following page for locations of recommendations 2-6.



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.

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

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