



4/13/2016

VIA EMAIL

Garrett Norman, Assistant Planner
City of Sacramento Community Development Department
300 Richards Blvd., 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: The Crossings (P15-061)

Dear Mr. Norman:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the March 8, 2016 project routing for The Crossings (Student Housing). Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the project.

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. A 30-minute walk is about one and a half miles. 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.

The Crossings project will have a resident community that should be physically active and able to take advantage of active transportation options. The low number of vehicle parking spaces implies that most trips will be made by modes other than cars. However, there are several factors that limit the opportunities to make such trips. Since the residents will be Sac State students, many daily trips will be to campus, assuming that a shuttle service is provided by Sac State or The Crossing. There will be many trips for shopping, services, work and recreation that will need to be by other modes. Walking will be an infrequently used mode since the closest destination, assuming the Ramona Avenue extension is constructed, is the south end of Sac State, and it's about a half-mile distant; the 65th Street transit center and light rail station are more than a half mile, the Home Depot center is almost a mile and the Target center is over a mile. Without the Ramona Avenue extension, all those destinations will be 1.5 miles to 2.5 miles from The Crossings.

The project proposes to house 750 students in 225 residential units having shared kitchens and living rooms, and from one to four private bedrooms with attached bathrooms. This is a much different living arrangement and social structure than that of the typical non-student apartment complex. The vehicle trip generation rate is unknown and may be much higher than the project design can accommodate.

WALKSacramento recommends the project Initial Study include an analysis of student housing complexes of similar design with similar land uses and transportation system within ½ mile of the study sites.

Two of the residential buildings and the commercial building are at the street and each building has an entrance facing the street. Each of the residential buildings also have entrances directly into their center atrium areas at the interior facing sides. There's sidewalks on each side of Building 'B', but there's a sidewalk on only one side of Building 'A'. **WALKSacramento recommends adding a sidewalk from the street on the west side of Building 'A' to provide convenient access from all directions.**

It may be just an oversight on the landscape drawings, but there are no sidewalks providing access to the lobby entrance of each residential building. **WALKSacramento recommends revising the landscape drawings to show the lobby access and conform to the site plan's identification of 'Accessible Path of Travel'.**

The 10'-wide decomposed granite running track along the west, south and east edges of the project site will provide residents an opportunity for recreational walking. Trees placed between the path and the 6' CMU wall at the property edges will provide shading for people using the path. However, the frequent use of evergreen trees on the landscape drawings indicate that much of the path will not be shaded.

WALKSacramento recommends providing more shade on the perimeter decomposed granite path to improve the walkability and encourage greater use of the path.

The February 23, 2016 letter from the applicant's project manager indicates the running track will be lighted but the site plan and landscape plans don't show lighting locations or configuration. Since the track is on the perimeter of the site, users will be no closer than 100 feet from the nearest building or occupied area. Providing track lighting is a good idea to improve personal safety. Lighting levels on the track relative to parking lot should allow surveillance of track users while at the same time adequate illumination of the parking lot. Also, a track and parking lot lighting system with motion control would provide users with light and an awareness of the presence of other people in the area.

WALKSacramento requests that lighting details be supplied as part of the project application.

Also related to personal safety, the parking lot area between the Center for Innovation building and the residential buildings is shown on the landscape drawings as having low hedges that are specified as 36" to 48" tall. While the drawing indicates this is for safety, the height of the hedges could block the view of people and vehicles in the parking lot.

WALKSacramento recommends avoiding hedges in the parking lot that could block views of people and cars.

The Ground Level Plan for the residential buildings shows parking for 13 bikes in the elevator lobby. However, the plans for levels 2 and 3 don't have the bike parking in the lobbies, and drawings for levels 4 and 5 were not included in the routing. None of the plan drawings show visitor bike parking for the residences or the Center for Innovation and commercial spaces. **WALKSacramento recommends providing adequate short-term and long-term bicycle parking and identify all locations for such parking.**

Tree shading of parking lots is important to reduce heat island effects and air pollution from parked vehicles. There is a significant portion of the parking lot in the landscape drawings that appear to be excluded from the shade calculation as required by the City. **WALKSacramento recommends the project provides shading of at least 50% of the paved area surrounding the buildings on the project site.**

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

www.walksacramento.org

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