



12/31/2016

VIA EMAIL

Matthew Diaz, Associate Planner  
City of Rancho Cordova Planning Department  
2729 Prospect Park Drive  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

**RE: Rancho Cordova Homewood Suites (DD9678)**

Dear Mr. Diaz:

WALKSacramento would like to provide comments on Homewood Suites (DD9678) with the goal of improving the walkability of the proposed project. The Homewood Suites project proposes to construct a 105-unit 4-story hotel with pool, basketball court and 142 parking spaces at the southeast corner of White Rock Road and Quality Drive. The site is within 10-minute walking distances of two shopping centers, about 20 multi-story office buildings, 7 hotels, Rancho Cordova City Hall and stops for 3 bus routes. Many of the streets in the area have low- to moderate-traffic volumes and speeds with substantial tree canopy behind 6'-wide sidewalks which can provide for a pleasant walking and biking experience. Homewood Suites can take advantage of this environment to provide a "home base" for their guests that's walkable and encourages walking with some changes to the proposed site and architectural designs.

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 changes to Homewood Suites that we recommend relate primarily to pedestrian circulation. This involves adding to or revising sidewalks between the streets and the building, and adding a section of sidewalk between two other sidewalks. Pedestrian movement and experience could also be improved by changes to the stairwells.

The project description states “The main entry is inviting, open, engaging and clearly defined to pedestrians passing through.” The 6’ high shrubs and Japanese Maples that about the street side of the drive aisle at the main entry will significantly diminish the visibility from the sidewalk along White Rock Road. However, even if pedestrians have a clear view of the entrance, the site design doesn’t offer easy access. **WALKS** recommends adding walkways and a raised driveway crossing between White Rock Road and the building’s main entrance. See Figure 1. A raised crossing rather than a marked crosswalk is preferable because it should discourage temporary parking on the crossing by guests while they check in.

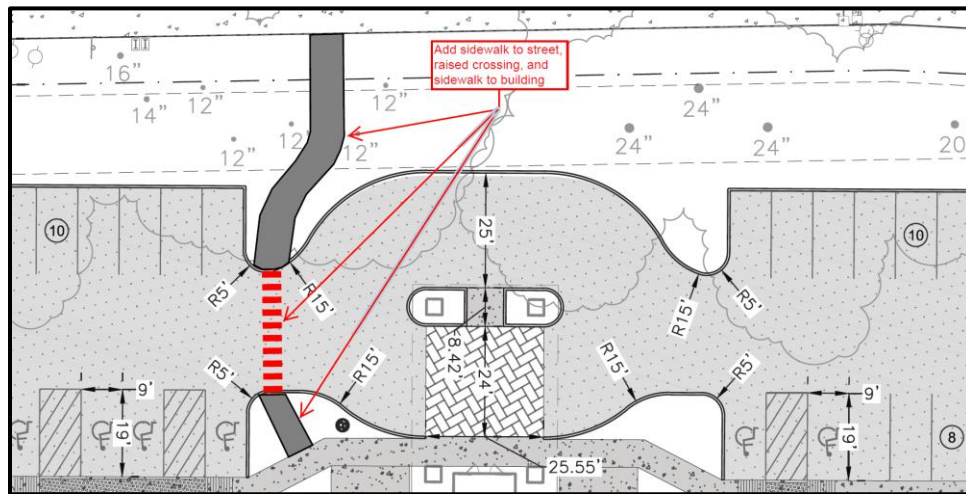


Figure 1 Additional access to main entrance

There is a pedestrian walkway provided from the northeast corner of the building to the White Rock Road shared driveway. It appears this design will require construction of a curb ramp on the adjoining property, and the curved section of sidewalk that attaches to the public sidewalk narrows as it approaches the street. **WALKSacramento recommends continuing the walkway from the northeast corner of the building by extending the sidewalk to White Rock Road entirely on the west side of the driveway.** This would eliminate the need to provide the crosswalk and curb ramps on both sides of the driveway. See Figure 2.

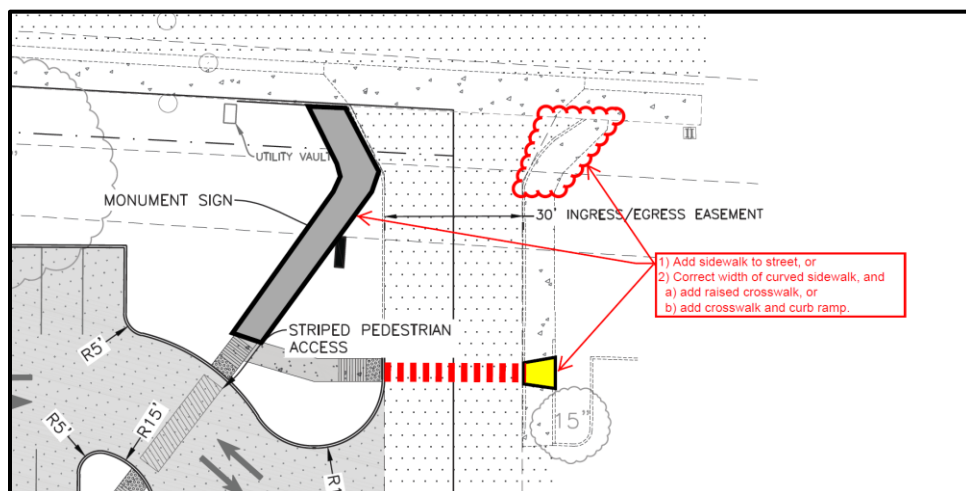
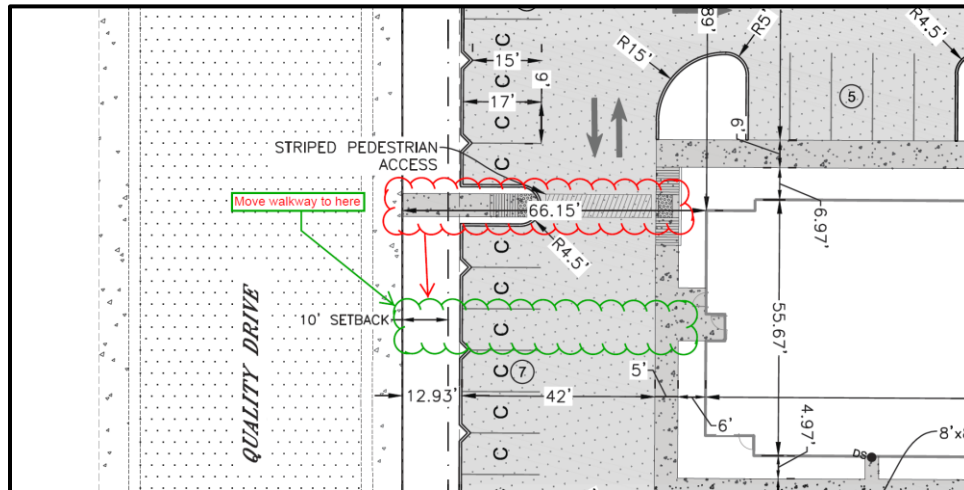


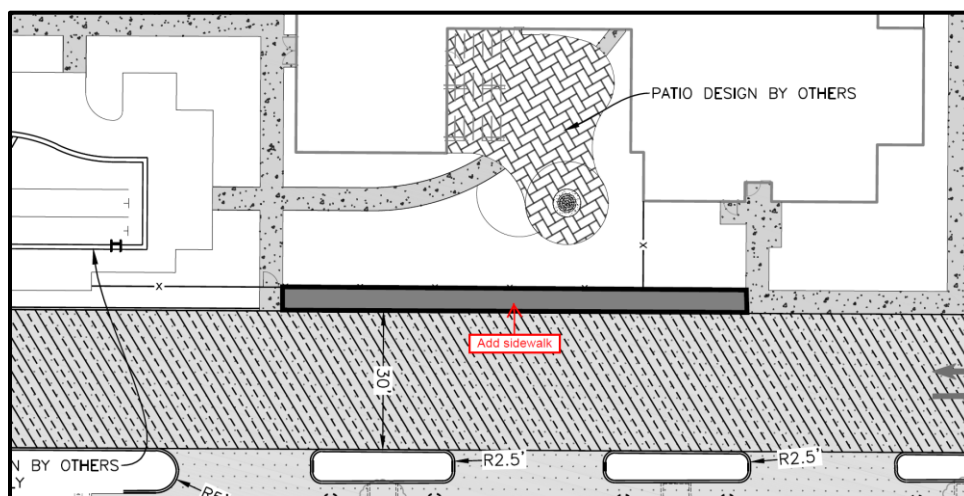
Figure 2 Revised sidewalk at northeast corner of site

Access between Quality Drive and building entrances is not direct; it requires either several turns to get to the west door, or walking around the corner of the building and down the sidewalk to get to the main entrance. **WALKSacramento recommends moving the sidewalk and striped pedestrian access between Quality Drive and the building so that it directly approaches the west entrance door.** See Figure 3.



*Figure 3 Revised pedestrian access from Quality Drive*

There's no continuous walkway along the south side of the building; adding a section of sidewalk between the pool-area and south-door sidewalks would provide more complete and safer pedestrian circulation. **WALKSacramento recommends adding a sidewalk between the pool area and the door near the southeast corner of the building.** See Figure 4.



*Figure 4 Additional sidewalk on south side of building*

The sidewalks on the perimeter of the building are 6' wide on the north and east sides, and 5' everywhere else. Slightly wider sidewalks would allow for people to more easily walk side-by-side or to pass others, especially when luggage is in tow.

**WALKSacramento recommends increasing the sidewalk widths to 7' or 8'; areas with less pedestrian activity should have 6' minimum width sidewalks.**

The project description states that “Windows throughout the hotel will allow pedestrians passing by to see some of the hotel’s many features;” but we’re not sure to which windows this refers, other than suite windows with views of the guest rooms. Fortunately, each floor of the building has east-west corridors with windows or doors at each end and north-south corridors with windows at the south end. These windows and doors at the exterior end of the hallways provide daylighting, a view corridor that proceeds to the stairwell, and additional vantage points for natural surveillance of the parking lot and hotel grounds. Use of the stairwells is encouraged and pedestrian safety in the parking lots is improved with this design. Using stairs instead of the elevator can provide additional daily physical activity, so stairwell design that encourages stair use is better for the physical health of guests. **WALKSacramento recommends adding windows to the exterior wall of the stairwells and using interior finishing comparable to the hallways to encourage greater use of the stairs.**

None of the prior recommendations resolves the site’s lack of pedestrian orientation to the street that results from single- and double-loaded parking aisles between the building and the streets. The Marriott Courtyard Sacramento Rancho Cordova that’s across White Rock Road from the Homewood Suites site is somewhat better in that it has only a driveway and porte cochère between the building and street. However, the Homewood Suites could create much more of a pedestrian orientation by eliminating the on-site parking and drive aisles along White Rock Road and Quality Drive, and moving the building closer to the streets.

For example, a building design similar to the Homewood Suites Sacramento-Roseville could be used as shown in Figure 5 with a long-axis mirrored orientation. Perhaps a similar architectural design could provide a pedestrian entrance on White Rock Road and a main entrance with porte cochère on the parking lot side of the building. A site plan that places the building near the street could provide several benefits, including more direct pedestrian access from the street, less sidewalks constructed around the building, more efficient parking lot utilization with increased tree shading, and a more pedestrian-oriented relationship to the street.



*Figure 5 Alternate site design with street-adjacent building*



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 or [cholm@walksacramento.org](mailto:cholm@walksacramento.org).

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](http://www.walksacramento.org)*

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