



3/17/2017

VIA EMAIL

Tom Buford, Senior Planner
City of Sacramento Community Development Department
300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Downtown Specific Plan

Dear Mr. Buford:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). The DSP is intended to be a key program to implement the Downtown Housing Initiative. WALKSacramento is especially interested in DSP goals such as land use regulations and policies to support bringing 10,000 new housing units to downtown, incentivizing transit-oriented development, and maintaining and improving quality of life and neighborhood livability.

The Notice of Preparation states that Grid 3.0 will be approved as the DSP's Mobility chapter. We hope the chapter has a focus on accessibility, perhaps with a title such as Transportation and Circulation, rather than mobility. It's more important that people are able to get to where they want to go and have multiple options for how they will get there. It's less important to provide ways for people to move quickly and long distance. We also would like to see Grid 3.0 provide the foundation of the chapter rather than the substance. It's commendable that Grid 3.0 was created with substantial community input, but the final report was approved with little discussion. The DSP should include policies, strategies and implementation steps to realize the project goals and explain to the public how the project will be successful.

Analysis of transportation and circulation in the EIR should include impacts to the safety and health of users of the transportation system. Impacts such as pedestrian collision rates and severity, air pollution and noise levels, and per capita amount of physical activity advanced by a supportive pedestrian infrastructure should be analyzed.

The creation of 10,000 new housing units in Downtown Sacramento will, unfortunately, likely result in the need for many current residents to move to more affordable areas. The EIR should examine the transportation impacts that result from people with limited transportation options moving to other locations in Downtown or other areas of Sacramento where the infrastructure and options are different.

Grid 3.0 included the Green Line Light Rail (LRT) Extension to the Airport and the Downtown/Riverfront Streetcar project as significant enhancements of the transit network.

Given the uncertain future for federal funding of public transit, the EIR should include a project alternative that omits the Green Line extension and streetcar components of the transit network.

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.

Sincerely,

Chris Holm
Project Manager