



11/22/2017

VIA EMAIL

Ethan Meltzer, Assistant Planner
City of Sacramento Community Development Department
300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Gateway West-Arena Boulevard Project (P17-057)

Dear Mr. Melzer:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the project routing for Gateway West-Arena Boulevard Project (P17-057). The project proposal includes the rezone of two parcels from EC-50 PUD to C-2, a lot line adjustment, conditional use permits for a gas station and two drive throughs, PUD schematic amendment, right-of-way dedication, and an easement for a bike trail. We offer the following brief comments for a more pedestrian-supportive project that will lead to a healthier community.

We are glad to see that a bike trail is proposed for the open space area within the freeway buffer, and running between Arena Boulevard and the northern edge of the project site within. When the trail is paved along the east edge of the UTI phase 1 and 2 site, a nearly 1.2-mile continuous off-street connection will be made between Del Paso Road and Arena Boulevard. The multiple connections to the trail from the project site added to the existing connections from businesses along the trail and the neighborhoods to the west will create a much better pedestrian and bicycle circulation network for the Gateway West PUD area and the surrounding area.

There are several significant elements of the project proposal that will have undesirable effects on the pedestrian environment. These include the land use change, pedestrian orientation, drive throughs, and the roundabout.

EC -50 versus Highway Commercial

The 5.7-acre project site is currently zoned for employment uses. The Gateway West and surrounding communities, including Sundance Lake, Westlake, and Natomas Central/Westshore are well served for retail by existing development and in the future by planned development. There's a 12-acre community shopping center with a gas station on the adjacent parcel southwest of the project site, an 8-acre neighborhood shopping center about 1.3 miles to the north at Del Paso Road, 30 acres of highway commercial on the east side and 40 acres planned highway commercial on the west side of the Del Paso Road interchange, and about 85 acres of planned shopping center on the east side of the Arena Boulevard interchange. Pedestrian-oriented shopping centers will benefit the community if they're successful; vacant storefronts don't enhance the pedestrian experience. The Gateway West-Arena Boulevard Project may be successful serving either freeway traffic or local pedestrians, but it may not do both well; and if it brings too much retail to the west side of I-5 it may diminish the pedestrian experience across the street as vacancies rise at the community shopping center.

Pedestrian Orientation and Drive Throughs

Pedestrian-oriented retail on the project site could benefit Sundance Lake residents, Gateway West Business Park employees and UTI students and faculty, but it needs to be accessible conveniently and safely by walking. The proposed project, though, places a gas station at the corner, a drive-through lane along almost 250 feet of the Duckhorn streetscape, and parking plus the travel path of vehicles exiting a restaurant drive through between the street and the building. The site plan shows that more than 16,000 square feet of the 25,000 square feet of retail floor space would have no direct pedestrian access that doesn't cross a drive-through lane.

The rear of the 9,180 square foot building with a convenience store and two restaurants faces the street. The building elevation has significant articulation and design features to avoid presenting a blank façade to the street, but there will be no activity along the street other than autos at the drive through. A well design side of building 04 faces the street, but between the sidewalk and the building is parking, delivery staging and the exit path for the drive-through. The west end of the project along Duckhorn Drive does not have a pedestrian orientation.

Roundabout Design

The design of the roundabout may also hinder pedestrian and bicycle access of the site and create unsafe crossings of Duckhorn and the project's main entry driveway. The roundabout design should be address the following concerns. The southbound travel path through the roundabout appears to have very little deflection and vehicle speeds will be high, especially with the two-lane exit, and the sidewalk comes within several feet of the roadway. The northbound entrance has minimal deflection and the westbound entrance has no deflection that will facilitate speeds that are unsafe for pedestrian crossings. The crosswalk to the south of the roundabout is too far from the roundabout and will act like a midblock crossing rather than an intersection crossing, and it is at a wide portion of Duckhorn and the crossing will be three lanes rather than two. The sidewalks on the north-to-east and west-to-north turns should be detached to avoid vehicles driving up onto the sidewalk. Lastly, there are no accommodations for bicyclists to leave the bike lane and use the sidewalk to traverse the roundabout.

WALKS Sacramento 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 don't hesitate to 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

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