4/18/2018 VIA EMAIL

Gurneet Kaur, Design Review Intern
City of Sacramento Community Development Department
300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: 1801 J Street Remodel/Addition (DR18-081)

Dear Ms. Kaur:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the project routing for 1801 J Street Remodel/Expansion (DR18-081) and we offer the following comments on the project design. Our goal is to improve the walkability of the project and neighborhood, and the health of the building occupants' and passersby.

The parking lot is proposed to remain essentially the same – it will be expanded by removal of the CMU building at the rear of the main building and resealed and marked for parking. The vehicle parking capacity of the project site will decrease from the 32 existing spaces to 30 (25 gated and 5 ungated), which is twice the required minimum of 15 spaces. Additionally, there are 7 angled spaces on 18th Street and 6 parallel spaces on J Street in front of the project site.

The 3"-4" high asphalt berm between the sidewalk and the parking spaces in the ungated parking area is inadequate to protect pedestrians from moving vehicles. Landscape planters in place of the berms would provide much better protection for pedestrians.

Figure 1 Asphalt berms next to the sidewalk

The parking lot directly across 18th Street (similar to the project site parking lot in that it has a single-lane driveway) has planters that provide a physical barrier. Wider landscape planters with trees would be optimal for physical separation and pedestrian vista.

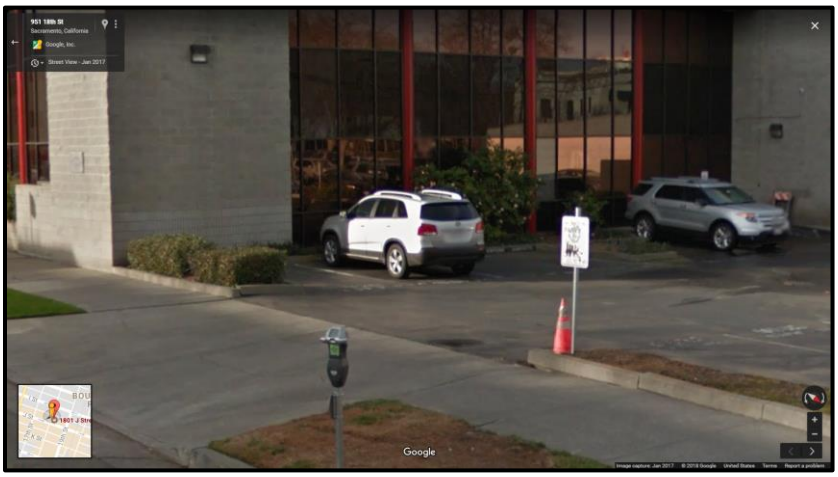

Figure 2 Parking lot with landscape planters instead of asphalt berms

The Design and Building Materials section in the project narrative states "The key goals of the building form and design include promoting natural daylight and connection to the outdoors (City of Trees) for the building occupants," and the Landscape section starts out with "Sacramento is known as the City of Trees." The building will have an exceptional amount of windows – the south elevation appears to be more than 50% glazing, the west elevation is about 33% glazing, and the north elevation is around 25%. The operable windows and sliding glass walls will truly bring the outdoors in, and the views of street trees on J Street and 18th Street will be expansive.

The north elevation, however, faces the project parking lot and the parking areas and rear facades of buildings on 18th Street and I Street. Trees that will be visible will primarily be on the far side of these buildings. Adding trees in the parking lot would shade the asphalt and parked vehicles, which would reduce heat island effects and improve the pedestrian environment. It would also provide a view of greenery and nature from the first level interior space and the open workspace and break area on the second level. Views of the trees, which could be on the far side of the parking lot more than 25' from the building, should improve the well-being of employees and visitors, and it may contribute to the LEED flora and WELL Building biophilia assessments.

Figure 3 View of alley and adjoining properties to the north

We are happy to see the stairwell will be open to the interior space at the landings on both levels, and although there are no windows on the south wall, there are Solatubes above the stairwell to provide daylight. These features will promote use of the stairs over elevator, providing a bit more opportunity for employees to get physical exercise on a daily basis.

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.

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 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

www.walksacramento.org

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www.sacbike.org

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