4/16/2018 VIA EMAIL

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

RE: Natomas Crossing - Quadrant B Office (P8-014)

Dear Ms. Haenggi:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the project routing for Natomas Crossing - Quadrant B Office (P8-014). The project proposes to construct 1,250,000 square feet of office space, a 17,160 square foot daycare center, parking for 6,375 autos, of which 1,904 would be in a multi-story garage, parking for 327 bicycles, and a Class I bike path on two EC-50 parcels and one SC parcel comprising Quadrant B of Area #3 of the Natomas Crossing PUD. The project includes five multi-story office buildings and a single-story private daycare building.

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 project narrative indicates the employee density is planned to be 6.8 employees per 1,000 square feet of office space. With a project size of 1,250,000 square feet, the stated density indicates there could be 8,500 employees. It will be important to provide safe and convenient access for employees and visitors using active transportation whether there are the proposed 8,500 employees or the 3,425 minimum required for EC-50.

The proposed location will be close to existing and planned residential on both sides of the freeway, and commercial and retail both across the street and within walking distance to the north and south. A planned Class I bike path is in the adjacent freeway landscape corridor, and there are existing bike lanes on East Commerce and Arena Boulevard.

The freeway landscape corridor bike path will be essential for effective bike and pedestrian access to the project site, especially for travel from west of I-5 and south of Arena Boulevard. The Quadrant B

Office bike path and the freeway landscape corridor planned bike path the to the north and south of the project will provide a critical low-stress route for bicyclists of all ability levels.

Employees living west of I-5 that will bike or walk to work will likely prefer to use the planned Snowy Egret overcrossing or the future Natomas Crossing Overcrossing rather than the Arena Boulevard interchange. Although the Arena Boulevard interchange was considered advanced in its provisions for biking and walking when it was constructed, it's not a safe or pleasant environment to walk or bike because of the traffic speeds on the through lanes and the on ramps. Hence, in addition to the freeway landscape corridor bike path, the Snowy Egret and Natomas Crossing Drive overcrossings will be important links in the active transportation circulation network the project area and for North Natomas south of Del Paso Road.

Potential for active transportation trips

- 10 minute walk to three apartment complexes, one condominium complex, hundreds of single family homes, three neighborhood shopping centers, one highway commercial shopping center, and one elementary school.
- 10 minute bike ride to nearly all residential in Natomas Crossing, Gateway North, Gateway West, Cambay West and Park View; shopping and services in at least ten shopping centers ranging in size from neighborhood to regional, two elementary schools, a high school, and nine parks ranging in size from neighborhood to regional.

Project elements supporting active transportation

- Long-term bike parking provided at CALGreen mandatory number is 255% over the minimum number required by City ordinance.
- Paved bike path.

Project elements recommended to maximize active transportation and health benefits

- Add a pedestrian walkway between daycare building and office buildings that minimizes exposure to vehicle movements to provide safe and convenient walking route for staff and parents.

Locating the daycare building at a far corner of the project site will contribute to parents parking in front of the daycare for drop off and pick up, and parking in another spot that is more convenient to their work location. This will generate more automobile circulation in the parking lot and more cold or warm engine starts. A walkway in the landscaped area between the parking and East Commerce would provide a safer and more convenient walking route. Note that the walkway crosses the entry/exit driveway in two stages so only one direction of traffic is confronted by the pedestrian. See Figure 1.

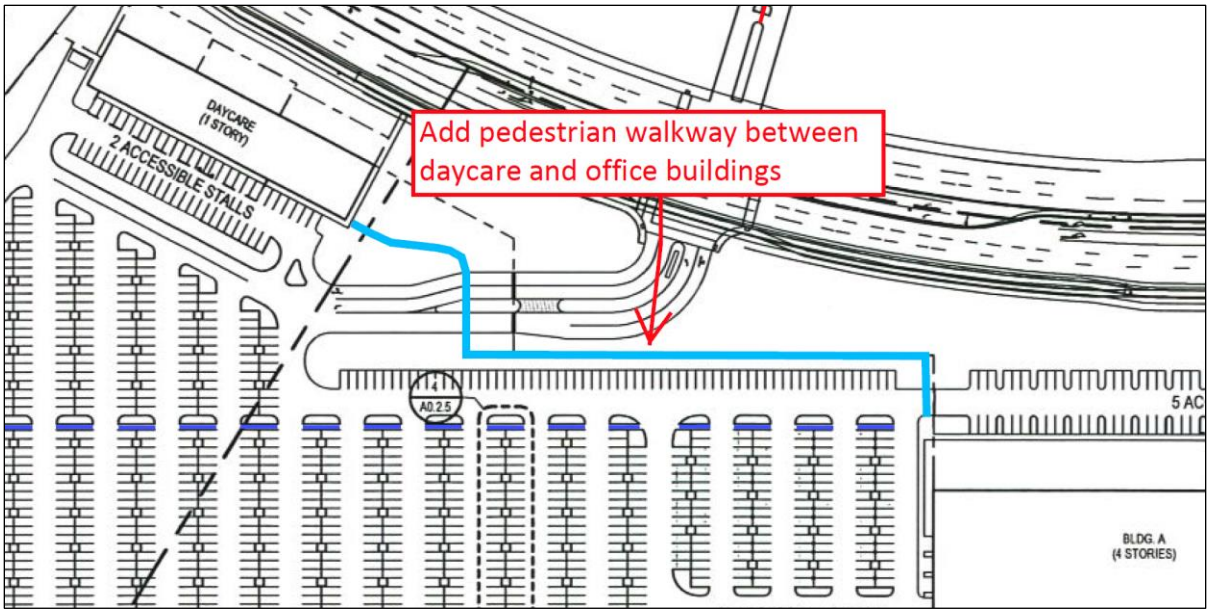

Figure 1

- Add a pedestrian walkway between Building B and intersection of East Commerce and Arena Boulevard that minimizes exposure to vehicle movements to encourage walking to and from nearby residential and retail.

The southwest corner of East Commerce Way at Arena Boulevard is almost directly in line with the Quad B Office linear courtyard and pedestrian walkway through the south parking lot. However, the proposed pedestrian route from the corner requires travelling over 2000' to get to the lobby, whereas if a pedestrian gate was added near the corner, the distance to the closest building entrance would be about 800' shorter.

Minimizing the distance to the corner is important because of the destinations beyond the intersection will be attractive to employees. There's a neighborhood shopping center diagonally across the intersection of East Commerce Way at Arena Boulevard, and the other two corners will have restaurants, retail and commercial in the future. In addition to the land uses on the corners, there will be pedestrian trips from/to nearby residential located to the south and southeast. See Figure 2.

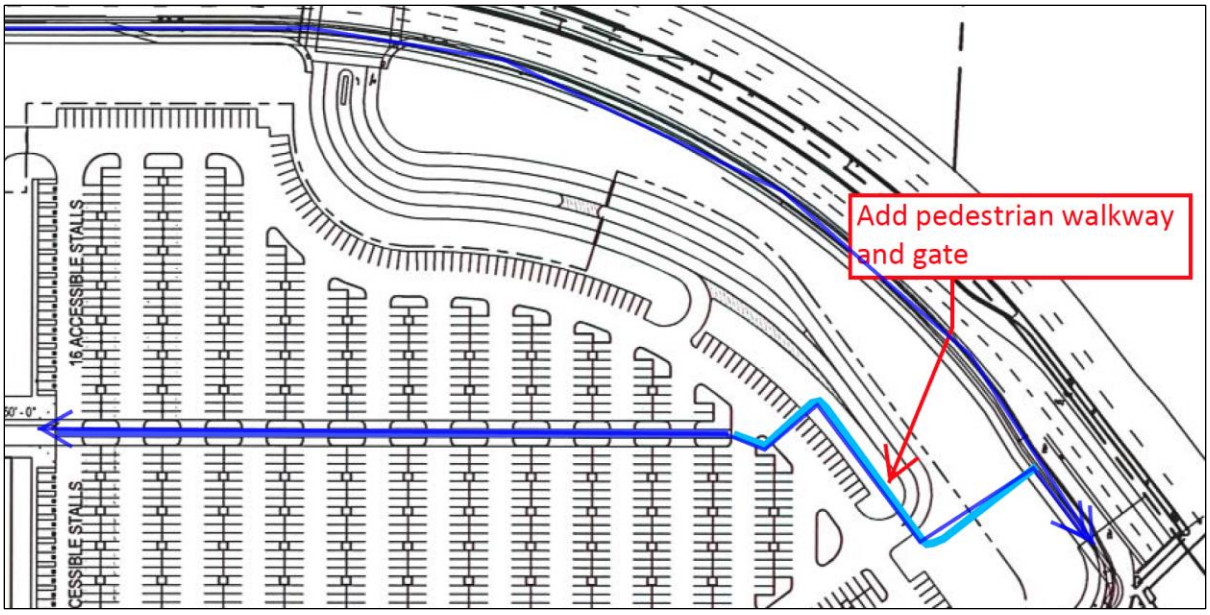

Figure 2

- Add a pedestrian walkway between Building C and the bike path to encourage employees to take walks during, before and/or after the workday.

The project drawings show a 6' sidewalk and pedestrian gate between the bike path and the parking lot northwest of Building C. Bicyclists will use the parking lot drive aisles to access the on-site bicycle parking and the sidewalk to the bike path, but pedestrians should have a dedicated walkway. See Figure 3.

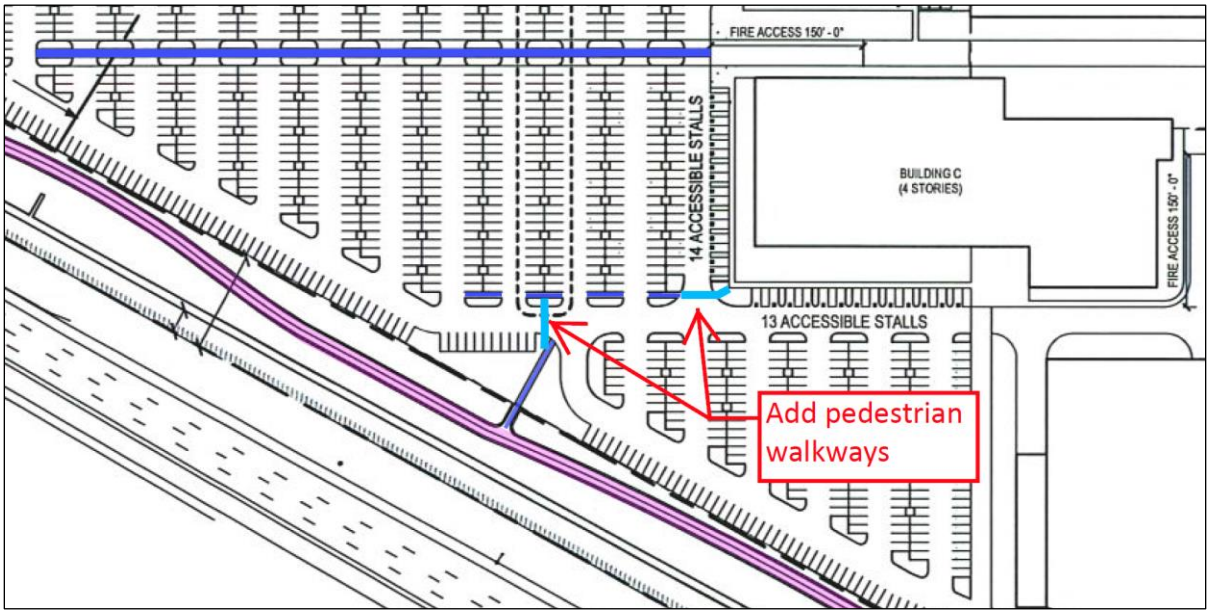

Figure 3

- Add a bike path access to project site near the northwest corner of site to provide a convenient route to the daycare building for employees wanting to bike to work.

The bike path at the northwest corner of the project site will connect to the planned Snowy Egret overcrossing and the continuation of the bike path along the freeway up to Del Paso Road. These will be important routes providing primary bicycle access to residential on the west side of I-5 and the commercial at Del Paso Road and the residential north of Del Paso Road. See Figure 4.

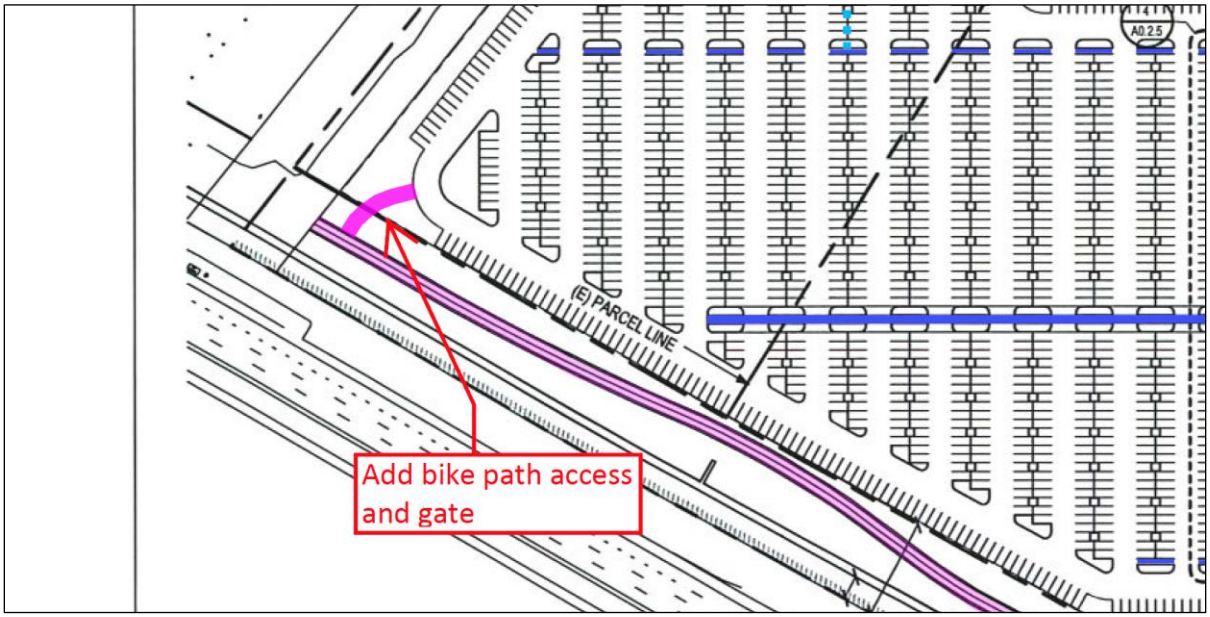

Figure 4

- Add bike path access to project site near the bike path's 90° turn where the maintenance access from Arena Boulevard connects to the bike path.

Bicyclists that park at the south end of the office buildings and start or end their trips south of the project site may not find the proposed gate to be convenient. Adding bike path access and gate would shorten trip distance and be more direct for some employees. See Figure 5.

Figure 5

- Extend the bike path to the intersection of East Commerce and Arena Boulevard to allow bidirectional travel and connections to bike lanes on East Commerce and Arena Boulevard and the future freeway buffer bike trail south of Arena Boulevard.

Connecting the bike path to Arena Boulevard at the proposed location - where the existing maintenance access curb cut at the beginning of the I-5 on ramp - will be unsafe for several reasons: the speed limit is 45 mph, only a westbound bike lane is available for bicyclists, eastbound bicyclists will have only the sidewalk available to them and some eastbound bicyclists may go the wrong direction in the bike lane.

Extending the bike path to the corner will allow bicyclists to access signalized crossings of Arena Boulevard and East Commerce Way, and allow safe and legal travel in all directions rather than only to the west. Conflicts with pedestrians will also be minimized. In addition, the bike path terminus on Arena Boulevard is at the corner in the City of Sacramento Bicycle Master Plan. See Figure 6.

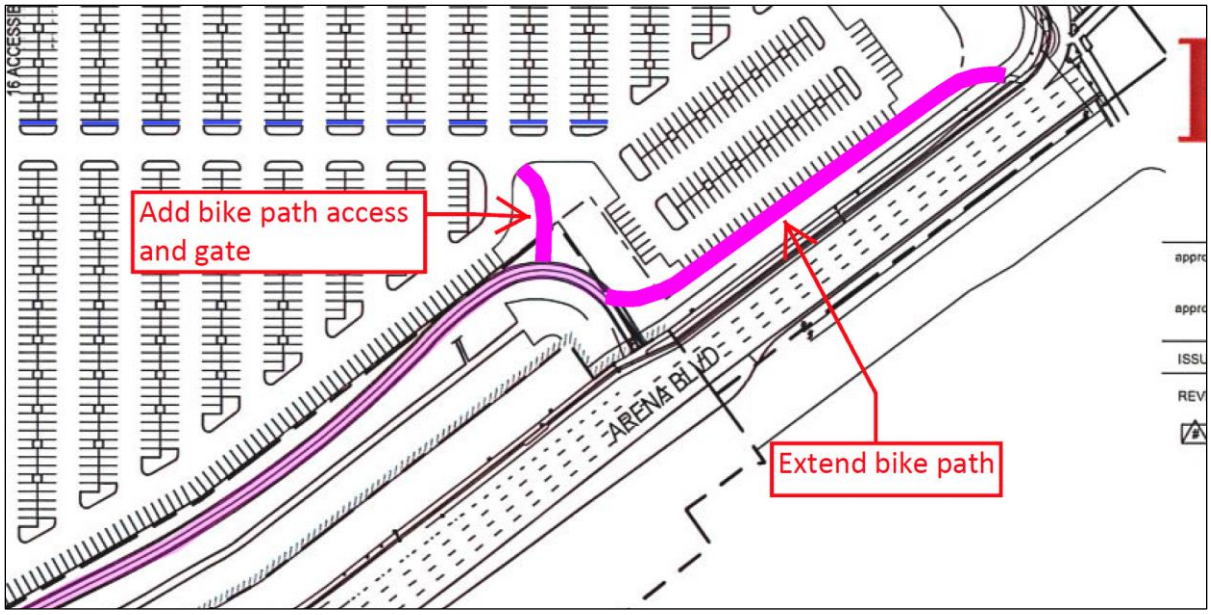

Figure 6

- Add trees and shrubs along outer edge of the fence to soften views of the fence and parking lots so a more pleasant and hospitable environment is presented to pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers.

The development area standards 2.f. in the PUD Guidelines for Natomas Crossing to which each area must adhere includes "Screen the bumpers of automobiles from adjacent pedestrian spaces where possible, but not at the expense of safe and convenient access to the parked vehicles." Also, the site specific design criteria 1.d. (6) states "Internal surface parking lots should provide multiple pedestrian linkages to adjacent properties. Wall or fences greater than four feet are discouraged around parking lots." and 1.e. (6) states "No fencing, walls, planted hedges, or other similar barriers will be permitted to exceed three feet (3') in height within the front yard areas."

The proposed high security steel fence is open and will allow two-way surveillance. Trees and shrubs along the outer edge of the fence would soften the appearance of the fence. However, the fence plantings should allow views of the sidewalks and bike path from the parking lot, and vice versa, to provide "eyes on the street" so pedestrians and bicyclists feel safer.

Should the project site be revised such that the single rows of parking along the north, west and south sides of the site are eliminated, we encourage the applicant to move the fence to the edge of the drive aisle and plant additional shade trees.

- Add shade trees along the bike path in the freeway landscape corridor to provide shade and reduce freeway traffic noise.

The bike path in the freeway landscape corridor not only provides access to the project site, it is part of the circulation system for pedestrians and bicyclists in Natomas Crossing and beyond in North Natomas. The project site fence and cars parked facing the bike trail will detract from the open-space

nature of the bike trail. Landscaping that lessens the visual impacts of the project can encourage greater use of the bike path. However, fence plantings should allow views of the bike path from the parking lot, and vice versa, to provide "eyes on the path" so pedestrians and bicyclists feel safer.

Trees on the west side of the path will provide the most effective shading of the path, but trees should also be planted on the east side of the path to help lessen the visual impact of the fence and the row of single loaded vehicle parking facing the path.

The two diagrams below are taken from the North Natomas Landscape Corridor Guidelines. We highly recommend that the Natomas Crossing Quadrant B Office bike path incorporate the illustrated design elements, including trees on both sides of the bike path, and significant setback distance of parking areas from the bike path. See Figures 7 and 8.

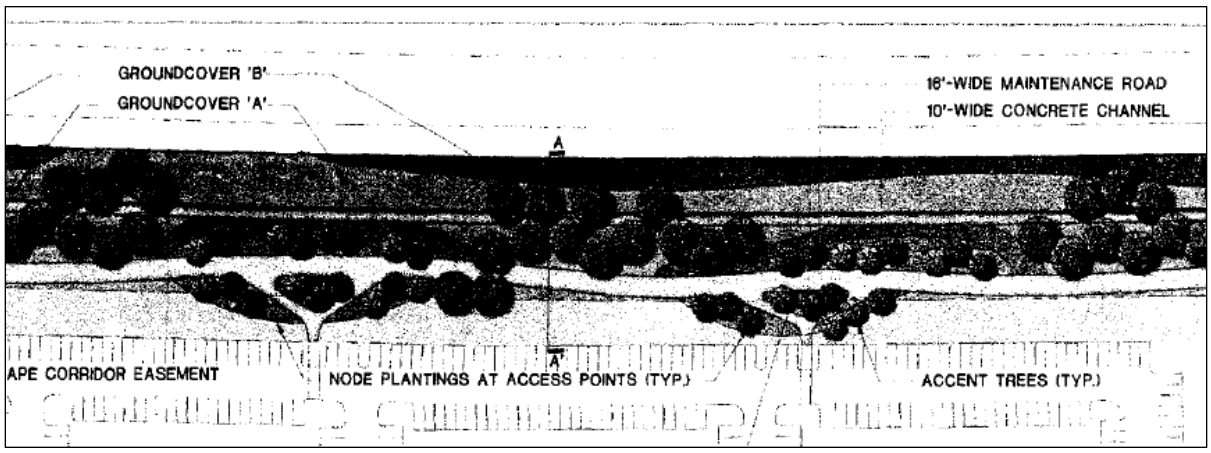

Figure 7

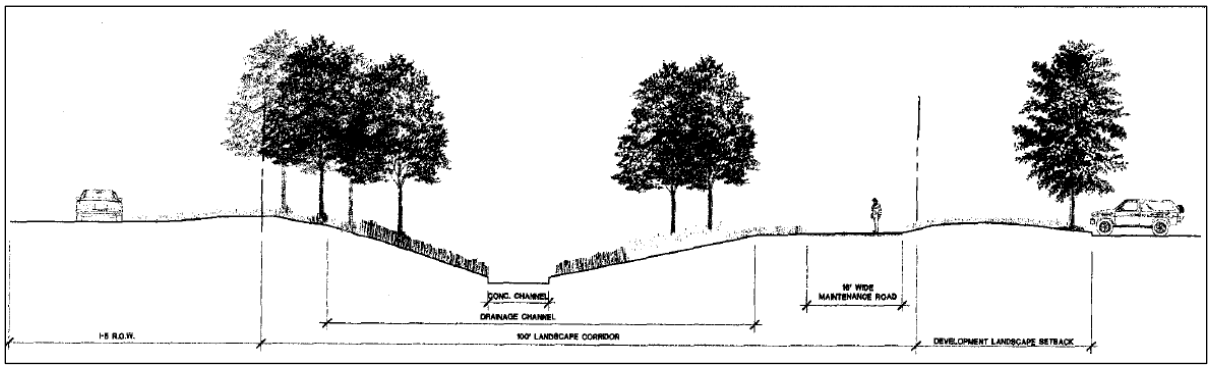

Figure 8

- Add shade trees at the back of the sidewalks on East Commerce and Arena Boulevard to shade the pedestrian environment and bike lane.

The landscaping plan for Phase 1 shows trees along East Commerce Way planted in groupings of three or more, but because of the varying distance from the street, the distance between adjacent trees

that shade the sidewalk can be up to 100'. We recommend revising the planting plan to provide more continuous sidewalk shade and more bike lane shade.

- Add more short-term bicycle parking to encourage visitors to use bicycles.

The project proposes to provide 8 short-term bicycle parking spaces to meet the CALGreen mandatory minimum of 5% of visitor vehicle parking, even though the City of Sacramento ordinance requires 26 spaces for Phase 1 and 63 for the full project. We believe that 8 short-term spaces may be inadequate. For example, if friends or family members of only 0.5% of the employees wanted to visit and park their bicycle at lunch time, there could be a demand for between 18 and 29 bike spaces.

There appears to be over 10,000 square feet of landscaped area between the visitor parking and each of Buildings A and B. Although the two areas are out of view of the building's shared entrance lobby, they could be used to provide the 55 additional required short-term bicycle parking spaces.

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.

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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