



6/20/2018

VIA EMAIL

Ethan Meltzer, Assistant Planner
City of Sacramento Community Development Department
300 Richards Blvd, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95835

RE: Duckhorn Drive Apartments (DR18-146)

Dear Mr. Melzer:

WALKSacramento has reviewed Duckhorn Drive apartments (DR18-146) routing and we offer the following comments. The proposal for 368 dwelling units on a vacant 14.68-acre property in the River View/Parkview PUD in North Natomas incorporates several elements that will support walking. The project will provide seven pedestrian access points – four at the bike paths and three at Duckhorn Drive. These connections will support walking and biking to nearby destinations, including three parks, an elementary school and a community-sized shopping center. As commercial development in the PUD continues, there will be many jobs within walking distance. Walkways on the site that are well shaded provide good connectivity between the buildings. Long-term bicycle parking distributed throughout the project site will facilitate bicycling by the apartment residents.

Even though the project provides the pedestrian and bicycle elements mentioned above, there are several guidelines in the Multi-Family Development section of the PUD Guidelines supporting safe and convenient access and mobility within the community that are not met. 1) Multi-family developments larger than 200 units and 8 acres should be divided by a public street or pedestrian access, 2) multi-family buildings should be oriented to the street with windows, front doors and other entry features, and 3) site design is expected to encourage orientation to the street and ease of access.

The City of Sacramento General Plan policy LU 4.1.11 discourages the creation of gated communities in an effort to promote social cohesiveness and maintain aspects of an efficient transportation network, and policy NN.LU 1.14 provides that apartment complexes in North Natomas Planned Unit Developments larger than 200 units and 8 acres shall be split into multiple complexes separated by a local street or other linkage. The shape of the site, it's relatively short frontage on Duckhorn Drive, and it's location up against the freeway don't reduce community connectivity, but the backs of the buildings facing Duckhorn Drive and the gating of the complex inhibit social cohesiveness.

It's important to create a street that welcomes people walking and gathering. The project will create a streetscape on its side of Duckhorn Drive that will look nice and provide a shaded walkway because of the landscaping with trees between the street and sidewalk and between sidewalk and buildings. The west side of Duckhorn Drive is well landscaped and has single-family homes behind a sound wall. This also looks nice and pedestrians will have a shaded path of travel, but the sound walls isolate people on the street. The PUD was approved with commercial land uses on the east side of

Duckhorn, and the street-facing uses and activity on the east side would alleviate, somewhat, the isolation a pedestrian might feel walking on the west side. The PUD Guidelines encouragement for multi-family buildings along the street to face the street and provide doors and other entry features can do even more to activate the street and create a connection between pedestrians and residents of the apartments.

Although the buildings along Duckhorn Drive have their backs facing the street, there are patios and balconies that will bring some of the apartment complex activity towards the street. To better alleviate the separation the fencing and gates create between the apartment residents and the community, additional gates should be provided so that each of the three apartment buildings have at least one direct walkway to the Duckhorn Drive sidewalk. Local examples include The Lofts at Parkview, an open apartment complex nearby the project site at Duckhorn Drive and San Juan Road, and the gated complex Villagio Luxury Apartments at Arena Boulevard and Innovator Drive.

Public access to the freeway landscape corridor bike path has been included along the northern end of the project site. The River View/Parkview PUD Guidelines, the North Natomas Community Plan, and the City's transportation plan also includes a bike trail along Natomas Crossing Drive between Duckhorn Drive and the freeway landscape corridor bike trail. Duckhorn Drive Apartments, however, doesn't provide direct access to the Natomas Crossing Drive trail. There appears to be adequate room in the area between Buildings #12 and #13 to extend the on-site pedestrian/bicycle path from the front-of-building sidewalk to the Natomas Crossing Drive ROW and any pedestrian/bicycle easement along the southern edge of the project site.

The project plans show a sidewalk from Duckhorn Drive near the south side of the main driveway that provides access to the clubhouse and two pedestrian gates. Residents and visitors approaching the apartment complex from the north will be inconvenienced by having to cross the driveway twice in order to walk to the clubhouse. There appears to be adequate room for an additional sidewalk between Duckhorn Drive and the clubhouse on the north side of the main driveway.

In summary, we recommend the project provide the following.

- **Add gates and sidewalks directly between Duckhorn Drive and each of Buildings #1, #2 and #3 so that each building has at least one unique access route.**
- **Connect the sidewalk between Buildings #12 and #13 to the Natomas Crossing Drive bike path easement.**
- **Add a sidewalk on the north side of the main driveway from Duckhorn Drive to the clubhouse entrance.**

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 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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