



9/30/2019

VIA EMAIL

June Cowles, Senior Planner  
City of Rancho Cordova Planning Department  
2729 Prospect Park Drive  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

**RE: The Ranch (DD9725) 4th Submittal**

Dear Ms. Cowles:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the 4<sup>th</sup> submittal for The Ranch (DD9725). The submittal significantly changed the tentative subdivision map. Revisions related to our March 6, 2018 comments on connectivity, street cross sections, and sidewalks include the following: there are now twenty-two cul-de-sacs, rather than seventeen, and at many locations the pedestrian connections through the cul-de-sacs are still not indicated on the TSM; external connectivity improved with the addition of a gated entry on North Campus Road, but usefulness of the proposed pedestrian gates at three other locations will be dependent upon adjacent development plans; minor residential streets did not change - all residential streets still have attached sidewalks rather than detached sidewalk; pedestrian push buttons were added at three intersections on Chrysanthy Boulevard, but the attached sidewalk on the south side of Chrysanthy Boulevard along the wetland preserve remains 10' wide; and the park in the active-adult community now has 5' attached sidewalks rather than primarily 7' detached sidewalks.

**Chrysanthy Boulevard Crossings**

Chrysanthy Boulevard is a minor arterial having two travel lanes in each direction and a curbed median. There are several intersections (Street 'V'/Street 'K', Street 'Z'/Street 'I', Court 'Z', Court 'CC'/Street 'H', Street 'FF'/Street 'UU', and Street 'OO'/Street 'ZZ') and two trail crossings (near Court 'Z' and near Court 'CC'/Street 'H') where pedestrians and/or bicyclists will expect to cross Chrysanthy Boulevard.

The Small Lot Tentative Subdivision Map shows a 14'-wide landscaped median on Chrysanthy Boulevard and only two intersections with a left-turn lane – westbound at Court 'CC'/Street 'H' and eastbound at Street 'FF'/Street 'UU'. The 14'-wide medians at intersections will allow pedestrians to make a two-stage crossing with the opportunity to rest or pause within a median refuge area, but left turn lanes eliminate the refuge area. It's not apparent why there are two intersections that have left turn lanes for one direction of traffic, but we encourage reevaluating the intersections with the goal to eliminate left turn lanes so that median refuge areas are included in each of the Chrysanthy Blvd crossings.

The applicant's August 20, 2019 response to comments stated there will be no signals required on site based upon warrants analysis. The June 26, 2018 response to comments stated that "traffic

controls via pedestrian push buttons on 4-way stops will be installed on all roadway crossings." Since there will be no signals on Chrysanthy Boulevard and none of the four-way intersections appear to meet stop warrants, we're curious as to how pedestrians will be expected to cross. The following discussion assumes Chrysanthy Boulevard to be uncontrolled and only the minor streets will have stop signs.

The Small Lot Tentative Subdivision Map shows pedestrian push buttons at two of the four-way intersections and at the Court 'Z' right-in/right-out intersection. We believe the number of intersections with pedestrian push buttons is inadequate and the type of signaling device should depend on the location.

The main entrance (Streets 'FF' and 'UU') into the Four Seasons active-adult community is one of the intersections proposed to have pedestrian push buttons. This intersection will be a primary vehicle path for the north and south areas of Four Seasons, and it will also be a primary pedestrian crossing location for residents of Four Seasons due to the intersection's proximity to the Four Seasons recreation center.

Residents of the Four Seasons community may have a typical age of 55-65, but as they remain in place their mobility may be diminished and they will not be able to cross four-lane intersection as quickly and safely as younger pedestrians. Using a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) will improve driver yield compliance and allow for safer crossings, but the projected traffic volume (14,651 in the DEIR) on Chrysanthy Blvd is very near the 14,999 maximum for which an RRFB is recommended by the Federal Highway Administration. Pedestrian hybrid beacons (PHB or HAWK) are recommended for 15,000 or greater average daily traffic volumes.

**WALKSacramento recommends installing a PHB at the Chrysanthy Blvd/Street 'FF'/Street 'UU' intersection, or installing an RRFB with underground infrastructure that will enable future conversion to a PHB signal.**

The second intersection with proposed pedestrian push buttons is at Court 'CC'/Street 'H'. This intersection is one of three that provide vehicular access to the Parkview neighborhoods north of Chrysanthy Blvd, so there may be significant vehicle turning movements at the intersection for which pedestrians may need additional protection. Also, a major bike trail meets Chrysanthy Blvd approximately 100' east of the intersection, so there may be significant bike traffic crossing Chrysanthy Blvd at the east leg of the intersection.

**WALKSacramento recommends installing a PHB at the Chrysanthy Blvd/Court 'CC'/Street 'H' intersection, or installing an RRFB with underground infrastructure that will enable future conversion to a PHB.**

The bike trail that crosses Chrysanthy Blvd at Court 'CC'/Street 'H' is part of the trail network that will provide access between Sunridge and development west of Sunrise Boulevard. The trail could have significant usage by local and regional bicyclists, and the right-angle diversion from the trail alignment to the corners using the sidewalk may be an annoyance to bicyclists and conflict with pedestrians. The landscape corridor from the trail to the corner is 27' wide on the south side of Chrysanthy Blvd and 71' wide on the north side, so there may be room to separate the bike facility from the sidewalk and connect to the corner from an angle. Alternatively, the sidewalk could be widened and separate bicycle and pedestrian spaces could be marked. In either case, the holding area at each of the corners should be expanded to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians at the same time.

**WALKS**Sacramento recommends revising the sidewalk adjacent to Lot 1 in Village 11 and Lot 1 in Village 7 that connect to the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection of Chrysanthy Blvd at Court 'CC' and Street 'H', respectively, so that bicyclists and pedestrians are separated and have room to wait at the corners.

### **Nature Trail and Class I Trails**

The Ranch Special Planning Area Handbook describes the trails on page 65 and illustrates the cross sections on page 67. Nature trails appear to be within 50' Protected Area Transition Zones adjacent to development areas. Class I trails are proposed for within the SMUD 200' easement Open Space areas. Nature Trails and Class I trails have the same cross section consisting of a 10'-wide pavement with 2'-wide shoulders on each side, though Nature Trails may be permeable or non-permeable and the Class I trails have a minimum width of 14'.

Part of the trail network depicted in Exhibit 31: Trail Map on page 66 of the Special Planning Area Handbook for The Ranch includes the 10'-wide attached sidewalks on the segment of Chrysanthy Boulevard that crosses the Wetland Preserve. Caltrans requires a minimum 5' landscape or barrier separation between a bike path and roadway to prevent bicycles from entering the roadway.

Mixing of pedestrians and bicycles on the attached sidewalk will contribute to greater risk of sidewalk users moving or falling into the Chrysanthy Boulevard travel way. Lot P, on the south side of Chrysanthy Boulevard west of Street 'Z', appears to be within the Chrysanthy Boulevard 25'-wide landscape corridor adjacent to the protected Wetland Preserve area and contains a 12'-wide detached sidewalk.

**WALKS**Sacramento recommends revising street section D to provide either separate pedestrian and bicycle facilities or a wider sidewalk with a painted line between the pedestrian and bicycle areas plus markings and signs indicating the space for each mode.

**Should the trail network segments along Chrysanthy Boulevard remain shared-use, the Special Planning Area Handbook text and exhibits should be revised to indicate there are no trails adjacent to Chrysanthy Road except within Lot P.**

### **Chrysanthy Boulevard Bike Lanes**

The barrier to pedestrian and bicycle circulation imposed by the active-adult community gates has not been diminished in the latest site plan. Connections to future development east of The Ranch, especially the regional shopping center site, have been practically eliminated with the proposed conversion of Grantline 220 to gated active-adult housing. The east-west route via residential streets may be open to only residents of each active-adult community, assuming there's reciprocal access, but the travel path will be restricted by the lack of sidewalks on one side of each street in Grantline 220.

Residents of Parkview in The Ranch will have to rely primarily on Chrysanthy Boulevard, which is not particularly pedestrian or bike friendly, to get to the regional shopping center site in Grantline 220. Chrysanthy Boulevard has walls on both sides except on the block east of Rancho Cordova Parkway and where it crosses open space and wetlands preserve areas. The walls on both sides isolate pedestrians from the neighborhoods, and walls also effectively eliminate "eyes on the

street" that would contribute to a sense of safety for pedestrians. The proposed bike lanes are standard width with no separation from the outside travel lanes. The 2019 FHWA Bikeway Selection Guide indicates buffered bike lanes would be preferred for ADT up to about 7,000 and speed under 35mph. Many bicyclists and potential bicyclists will not feel comfortable riding in a standard bike lane on Chrysanthy Boulevard with the projected 6,150 cumulative baseline ADT, much less the projected 14,651 cumulative baseline plus project ADT.

The alternative to Chrysanthy Boulevard is the perimeter trail along the north side of Four Seasons, but the trail will connect to Americanos Boulevard and Chrysanthy Boulevard in Arista del Sol and the rest of the journey will be via the sidewalk or bike lanes on Chrysanthy Boulevard.

In their March 2, 2018 letter, SABA requested that a 2'-wide marked buffer be incorporated between the Chrysanthy Blvd bike lanes and travel lanes. The applicant indicated in their June 26, 2018 response letter that they were not opposed to the suggestion. More people would feel comfortable riding on Chrysanthy Blvd if there's greater distance between the bike lanes and the travel lanes. This would lead to fewer people preferring to bike on the sidewalk and pedestrians would be safer. Perhaps more pedestrians would choose to use the Chrysanthy Blvd sidewalks.

**WALKSacramento recommends adding a 2'-wide painted buffer between the bike lanes and adjacent travel lanes on Chrysanthy Boulevard.**

## **Fencing**

The Special Planning Area Handbook for The Ranch states on page 82 that "Open view fences shall be installed along all lots backing to preserve parcels and most open space lots."

However, the handbook is silent about side yard fencing of lots adjacent to wetland preserve and open space areas. North of Chrysanthy Boulevard on the east side of the open space, 16 of the 22 lots have their side yards facing the open space, and on the west side three blocks have five lots with side yards facing the open space. When the applicant returns with house plans for design review, it will be important to place houses with floor plans having active living space windows on the sides of the houses facing the open space to provide "eyes on the open space."

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.

Sincerely,

Chris Holm  
Project Analyst