



3/25/2020

VIA EMAIL

Jose Quintanilla, Assistant Planner
City of Sacramento Community Development Department
300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: Tanzanite (P20-009)

Dear Mr. Quintanilla:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the Tanzanite project routing and we offer the following comments in follow-up to our preliminary comments. It's refreshing to see a unique residential project such as this one. Each of the units is alley loaded, which removes the need for driveways from the front yards of the street-facing units. This not only creates a greener and visually superior streetscape; it also eliminates the potential for automobile back-over collisions with children playing in the front yard. Although the alley-loaded design confers some pedestrian benefits, the proposed design creates obstacles to pedestrian access and travel.

Pedestrian access to ADU's is solely via the alleys

The Accessory Dwelling Units are not provided with pedestrian access to the street through their respective lots, so the only route is via the alley. If drivers are sufficiently respectful, pedestrians in the alleys won't be in danger of collisions. There are some alley segments where auto speeds may be too high for pedestrian safety without traffic calming measures.

In addition to the potential safety issue, the alleys will have little of the benefits afforded streets – there will be no trees or other greenery, no sidewalks, no people on front patios or in yards, and the street wall will be garage doors and multiple two-car parking lots. Though the ADU's have a second-floor balcony attached to the living room, there will be negligible eyes on the alley from people within the unit. People walking in the alley will have little of the visual and psychological connection to building occupants they will get when walking on the street sidewalk.

East Commerce Way has no on-street parking

The lack of on-street parking on East Commerce will require guests to park in alley guest spaces or on the private streets. This will add additional traffic on the alleys, and guests may not be aware of the need to drive slowly and share the alley space with pedestrians.

Tanzanite Avenue has no on-street parking

The lack of on-street parking on Tanzanite Avenue will have the same negative effect as that from East Commerce Way described above. The street will function as a minor collector for traffic from the proposed Tanzanite development and the existing subdivisions east of Airport Road. Bike lanes may be necessary at the project buildout traffic levels, so there will be inadequate room in the proposed Right of Way for bike lanes and parking on both sides of the street.

Width of private streets inadequate

Drivers tend to reduce their speed on narrow streets such as the proposed private streets, but when parking they tend to drive up the rolled curb and partially obstruct the sidewalk. This puts pedestrian at risk of being hit when drivers are parking and/or having to walk in the street to avoid the car.

Two-story single-family units may not have direct access to garages

The drawings do not show a paved walkway between the front door of the two-story units and the garage doors on the alley. There are also no gates shown in the front fences in the side yards. We're unable to determine if the rear sliding glass doors have key-locking handles that would resolve the access issue.

Landscaping on lots for south- and west-facing units may be insufficient

Almost half of the SF units face south or west, so maximizing the planting of shade trees will be important to create a hospitable space during much of the year in the front patio space and the space in front of the wall mentioned above. The landscape plan, drawing L.01.01.07, lists date palm as one of the three species of street trees. Date palms will provide little front-yard shade, and shade will be especially important for the south- and west facing recessed patios.

Landscape plan for lots with detached sidewalks not provided

The plan set didn't include landscape plans for the lots on East Commerce Way, which may be the only lots with detached sidewalks.

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 public health and physical fitness, better air quality, a stronger sense of cohesion and safety in neighborhoods, and more sustainable communities and local economies.

Sincerely,

Chris Holm
Project Manager