



6/29/2020

VIA EMAIL

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

RE: Northlake Residential Design Review (DR20-085)

Dear Mr. Lopez:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the project routing for Northlake Residential Design Review and we offer the following comments to improve the walkability of the Northlake and Meister Way. The project requests site plan and design review for the Northlake subdivision.

In our April 29, 2018 letter on the Greenbriar Phase 1 TM (Z18-096), we strongly recommended retaining the alley-loaded residential units facing Meister Way that had been approved as part of project P11-093. The alley-loaded units would have presented an active Meister Way streetscape with "eyes on the street" and pedestrian activity on the street having the subdivision's only proposed light rail station, the only community commercial site in Northlake, and a neighborhood park. Instead, the project was approved with front-loaded residential units whose back yards would face Meister Way and sound walls required to decrease street noise in the back yards.

WALKSacramento was assured prior to the Phase 1 TM approval that two-story houses with their backs facing Meister Way would provide "eyes on" Meister Way. We reviewed the floor plans for the units with rear elevations facing Meister Way and we found that of the 21 plans within the five product lines, there are no plans that will have good "eyes on" Meister Way. Nine plans will have moderate "eyes on" because there are windows in somewhat-active-use loft rooms that have a sightline to the sidewalk. Five will have weak "eyes on" because the windows are in bedrooms, and seven will have no "eyes on" because they are single story or the second-story windows are too far from the wall for an occupant of the house to see the sidewalk over the wall.

We recommend using the following plans for the lots that back up to Meister Way: Shor 1774, 1945, 2018 and 2190; Lakelet 2362; Watersyde 2704, 2804 and 2968; and Crestvue 2869 and 3178. We also recommend that any plan with an optional rear deck used on a lot that backs up to Meister Way be constructed with the deck so it will have better "eyes on" Meister Way.

On the streets north of Meister Way, only three plans have good "eyes on the street" resulting from an active use on the first floor that looks onto the street, and nine have a loft facing the street on the second floor that provides moderate "eyes on the street." Plans with weak "eyes on the street" include all three models in Lakelet, four of the five in Crestvue, three of the five in Watersyde, three of the four in Alta, two of the four each in Shor, Bleau and Drifton, and one of the four in Wavmor. Because the product lines are not intermingled within the villages of Northlake, we recommend adding floor plans with active uses, such as kitchens, family rooms

and dining rooms, on the first floor at the front of the house in the Lakelet, Crestvue, and Alta lines. Also, because only three of the 33 plans have an active use facing the street on the first floor – one each in Watersyde, Bleau and Drifton – "eyes on the street" would be improved by improving the offerings in every product line.

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 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