10/30/2020 VIA EMAIL

Angel Anguiano, Assistant Planner
City of Sacramento Community Development Department
300 Richards Blvd., 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: Delta Shores MDR 5 and MDR 8 (P20-024)

Dear Mr. Anguiano:

Sacramento needs to grow and evolve in such a way that everyone can live healthy lives, regardless of race, income or ability. The way we design the built environment will determine the level and quality of our access to other people, shelter, food, recreation and services. Critical to access is the land use mix and the transportation network. The Delta Shores Planned Unit Development (PUD) was approved with neighborhood-serving mixed-use and compact residential and commercial development, regional-serving commercial development, and a multimodal transportation network.

The vision for Delta Shores focused on high-quality architecture and walkable neighborhoods. In support of the project goal for an integrated community promoting interconnected and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and easy access to transit, the PUD Guidelines intended that new development would achieve the design goal of creating a pedestrian-friendly transit-oriented community. These project and design goals also align with numerous goals for land use and urban design, mobility, and air quality in the City of Sacramento General Plan.

The Delta Shores MDR 5 and MDR 8 project fails to meet many of the goals and design elements in the PUD guidelines and the General Plan. The primary failures are the lack of neighborhood connectivity and the inadequate level of walkability streets.

Neighborhood connectivity, at least for the two subdivisions proposed so far with this project, have only two connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and there are no connections to immediately adjacent residential parcels. All travel, whether active transportation or motorized, will require leaving the neighborhood and travelling along the network of streets that separate neighborhoods until one gets to the entrance to the destination neighborhood or parcel.

Each of the streets to which the internal residential streets in MDR 5 and MDR 8 connect, and most of the streets in the project area bounded by Cosumnes River Boulevard and Delta Shores Circle South, are essentially collectors, even if identified on the maps as Residential Local Streets. The PUD Guidelines states that "Streets should be laid out in a pattern that allows motorists to make internal connections between adjacent residential neighborhoods without needing to drive to an exterior major road or collector street." This requirement of the PUD Guidelines ensures that neighborhoods are connected such that trip routes can be short and convenient and alternative routes are available.

The lotting for MDR 5 and MDR 8 does not bode well for adequate walkability on the collectors and Residential Local Streets in Delta Shores. All of the MDR 5 and 8 lots along the collectors

and the Residential Local Streets back up to the external streets, so the streetscape will have walls or fences behind the sidewalk. An important element of walkability is the comfort level pedestrians experience, but street walls consisting of the backs of houses and fences will create a sense of isolation for pedestrians. As a result, people may feel that walking is not safe and they may choose not to walk.

The disconnected neighborhoods and isolated streetscapes could have an egregious effect on the number of children walking to the centrally located elementary school and park. Children can be sensitive to route choice; for example, they may want to avoid a particular street because of dogs or people. The disconnected MDR 5 and 8 subdivisions offer few internal route choices, and for many houses the choice will be between an inconvenient route and a long, inconvenient route.

The PUD guidelines require a street network that discourages regional cut-through traffic, but the proposed network that relies on streets external to neighborhoods to connect neighborhoods may instead facilitate regional cut-through traffic on the collectors and Residential Local Streets. The widths of the collectors and Residential Local Streets will add to their attractiveness for cut-through traffic.

It's admirable, and atypical for new development proposed in the City of Sacramento, that every street in the project area is proposed to have detached sidewalks. Shade trees can be planted in the landscape planter between the travel lanes and the sidewalk, and pedestrians have physical separation from traffic that makes for a safer and more pleasant walking experience. However, the 71' and 86' rights-of-way widths of the streets diminish the walkability. The connections of the MDR 5 and 8 internal street network to the external street network at only two locations for each subdivision and the rear yards fronting the external street network may result in few cars using the on-street parking on the external street network, especially during the day when children are walking around their neighborhoods. These effectively wider streets will encourage higher traffic speeds and more cut-through traffic; both of which will make street crossing more dangerous for all pedestrians, especially the young and old.

We see a potential solution to all of the problems we've identified. First, the single-unit residential areas, whether designated the approved Traditional Neighborhood Medium Density or the proposed Traditional Neighborhood High Density, should incorporate, as recommended in the General Plan, "street frontages with rear, alley, and side garage access" to facilitate houses facing the external streets at the boundaries of each neighborhood, e.g. Street E and Street F at two of the boundaries of MDR 5 and MDR 8. Street-facing rear-loaded houses on the external streets will provide "eyes on the street," slow traffic, and transform the on-street parking into a functional use of the pavement.

Second, a small-area fused grid network should replace the existing internal neighborhood street network for adjacent residential subdivisions. This type of street grid would prevent cut-through traffic in neighborhoods while providing excellent active transportation connections between several adjacent neighborhoods and reduce the area of land devoted to streets. Figure 1 shows an example of a small fused grid quadrant.

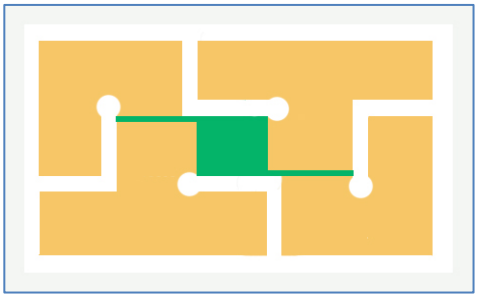

Figure 1 ***New Urban Fused Grid Quadrants***
UrbanGrammar https://flic.kr/p/a7VQGB

With street-facing houses on the collectors and Residential Local Streets, fused grid quadrants could be combined in a manner similar to that in Figures 2 and 3. While traffic calming on the streets that separate the quadrants would still be needed to eliminate regional cut-through traffic, convenient connections for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists would be provided between neighborhoods and throughout the entire project area. Additional benefits include increased intersection density and shorter block lengths for pedestrian and bicyclists.

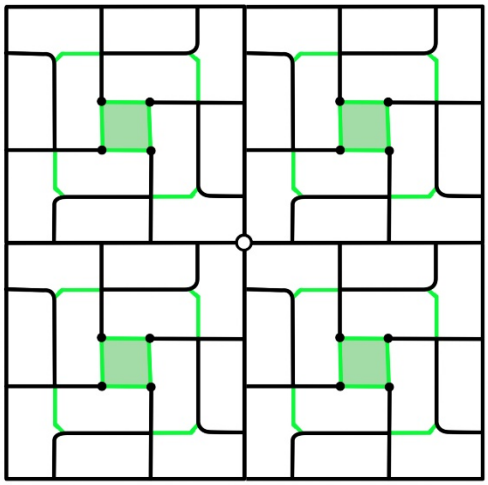

Figure 2 ***Fused Grid - four quadrant diagram***
UrbanGrammar https://flic.kr/p/T2X6U5

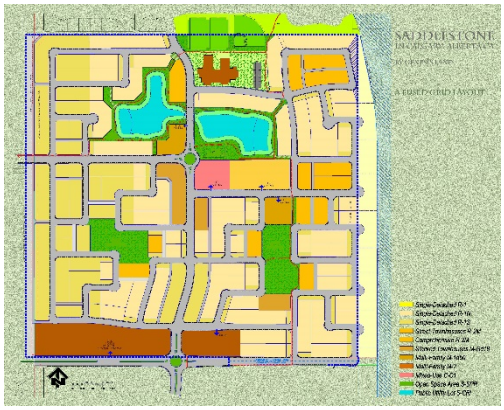

Figure 3 ***A Fused Grid Layout***
UrbanGrammar https://flic.kr/p/9n9cg5

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

cc: Anis Ghobril, City of Sacramento Traffic Engineering