



7/27/2020

VIA EMAIL

Jose Quintanilla, Assistant Planner  
City of Sacramento Community Development Department  
300 Richards Boulevard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, Ca 95811

**RE: River Oaks Marketplace (P19-012)**

Dear Mr. Quintanilla:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the second routing for River Oaks Marketplace (P19-012) and we offer the following comments.

**City Policies**

River Oaks Marketplace is proposed for the eastern half of the vacant southern parcel in the Park El Camino PUD. The PUD has undergone several schematic plan amendments since its creation in 1986 and goals of the project have varied slightly over the years. Originally, the goal was to provide residential in the northern area and highway commercial in the southern area serving freeway travelers and nearby office developments. Later, the entire PUD was to be Community Commercial, then an auto dealership. The last amendment in 2018 was for construction of The CORE apartment project in the northern parcel. Both the northern and southern parcels retained C-2-PUD zoning, and the South Natomas Community Plan land use designation remained Community Commercial. The 2030 General Plan had designated the parcels Suburban Center in 2009. Throughout the history of the Park El Camino PUD, several community associations have asked for development that is walkable and doesn't include auto-oriented uses.

The Suburban Center land use section of the 2035 General Plan states that "*Sacramento has numerous automobile-oriented suburban centers that represent a significant opportunity for transformation and enhancement.*" Opportunities include adding new infill development to parking lots and along adjoining public corridors, integrating residential and office uses into the centers, and adding wide sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, and trees to promote walking and social interaction. River Oaks Marketplace starts with some wide sidewalks and trees, but the configuration of the buildings and parcels is such that future transformation and enhancement envisioned by the General Plan may not be feasible.

The General Plan identifies eleven key urban form characteristics for Suburban Centers. River Oaks Marketplace incorporates about half of the key characteristics, including one- to four-story buildings, lot coverage less than 60%, and attractive landscaping of the public right-of-way. However, three important urban form characteristics of Suburban Centers are not incorporated in River Oaks Marketplace. First, the site plan doesn't arrange the buildings in a "compact development pattern" and, with the exception of the 7-Eleven convenience store, buildings are not "sited adjacent to streets." Second, none of the buildings have "on-street and

internal street fronting façades" with "a high degree of transparency." While the 7-Eleven, McDonald's, and Dutch Bros buildings have entrance elevations with transparency, they do not face public or internal streets. Lastly, River Oaks Marketplace doesn't include "integrated residential and office uses." Although the northern parcel in the Park El Camino PUD is residential, it isn't integrated into the River Oaks Marketplace shopping center. The parcellation and the building pattern do not appear to support future integration of residential or office uses.

### **Design Guidelines**

The Park El Camino PUD Guidelines stipulate that retail, office and restaurant use buildings should be oriented toward public rights-of-way, and the Sacramento Citywide Commercial Design Guidelines includes the guideline to "locate structures to create continuity along the street face." River Oaks Marketplace has street frontage on three sides – Orchard Court to the north, Orchard Lane to the east, and West El Camino Avenue to the south – but to which street should the buildings be oriented?

To the north side of Orchard Court is the 300-unit multi-family residential project The Core. To the east of Orchard Lane is the Cove subdivision with almost 600 single-family homes and townhomes under construction. To the south of West El Camino is existing single- and multi-family residential, and directly across West El Camino from River Oaks Marketplace is the Camino Station PUD, a 20± acre Community Commercial site that is vacant except for an AM/PM convenience store with gas pumps and a car wash.

Orchard Lane and Orchard Court will likely be the primary streets that pedestrians and bicyclists will use to get to River Oaks Marketplace. We expect the southwest corner of Orchard Court at Orchard Lane and the northwest corner of Orchard Lane at West El Camino will see the most pedestrian and bicycle traffic, with less traffic at the west end of Orchard Court and relatively little traffic from the I-80 interchange.

### **Proposed Site Plan**

The Rev1 site plan has the following changes that will improve pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation.

- ✓ The western entry driveway on Orchard Court is now perpendicular to the curb line - the pedestrian crossing is on longer skewed and curved so pedestrians will have better sightlines to see vehicles.
- ✓ The eastern entry driveway on Orchard Court has sidewalks on both sides – allows pedestrians to choose the more convenient route.
- ✓ Pedestrian route to the 7-Eleven entrance no longer requires crossing a drive aisle – less conflicts with vehicles.
- ✓ Pedestrian routes to the Quick Quack Car Wash office and Dutch Bros no longer requires crossing drive-through lanes – less conflicts with vehicles.

The Rev1 site plan has the following changes that will diminish pedestrian and/or bicycle access and circulation.

- ✘ The pedestrian route between Orchard Court and the Quick Quack Car Wash office is indirect – it's farther to walk and requires more turns, and it may encourage crossing at the drive aisle corner.
- ✘ The General Retail/Commercial building replaced with McDonald's – fewer choices for dining.
- ✘ There is no direct pedestrian route between Dutch Bros, McDonald's and 7-Eleven – people may walk through the landscaping and cross drive-through lanes and/or drive aisles where drivers may not expect to see pedestrians.
- ✘ There is a continuous pedestrian route between Orchard Court and West El Camino Avenue that serves no destinations – people may use the sidewalk and cross the parallel drive aisle at non-designated locations where drivers will not expect to see pedestrians.

Pedestrian/bicycle site plan issues identified in our first letter that remain.

- The patio/seating area north of the Quick Quack will be exposed to high noise levels from the car wash exit.
- The sidewalks on 'A' Court and the outdoor space on the south end of The Core apartments will be exposed to high noise levels from the car wash exit.
- The patio/seating area at Dutch Bros will be exposed to high noise levels from the vacuums at Quick Quack.

### **Recommendations**

1. Move the Dutch Bros building to the northeast corner of the site and orient the building so the walkup window is facing the street and the drive lane is on the south. Pedestrians should not have to cross a drive lane or drive aisle to access the building.
2. Replace the McDonald's with the original General Retail/Commercial multi-tenant building and move it to Orchard Court. Orient the building and drive-through lane such that the sidewalk from Orchard Court doesn't cross the drive-through lane or a drive-aisle.
3. Orient the Quick Quack Car Wash building with the exit facing west and the vacuums are on the south side of the building, so that noise isn't heard by patrons of other on-site establishments, pedestrians on Orchard Court, and residents of The Core apartments.

Sincerely,

Chris Holm  
Project Manager