



5/19/2021

VIA EMAIL

Arturo Carrasco-Becerra
City of Sacramento Community Development Department
300 Richards Blvd., 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: 920 San Juan (P21-008)

Dear Mr. Carrasco-Becerra:

Thank you for routing the 920 San Juan (P21-008) project to WALKSacramento. This proposal to construct 82 single-unit detached and attached rental homes will be a valuable addition to the housing stock in South Natomas. The project site is within a 10-15 minute walk of two community shopping centers, an elementary and a middle school, a community park, and several churches. The Niños Parkway Trail borders the site on the west, and San Juan Road on the south edge of the site has two bus routes providing connections to downtown, Arden Fair, Kaiser Morse hospital, and major commercial areas and the library in North Natomas.

We're glad to see the project proposes a gated pedestrian connection to the Niños Parkway Trail. The trail goes by the two nearby schools and makes a nearly continuous connection to the Jedediah Smith Memorial Bike Trail along the American River. Unfortunately, the trail doesn't have a crossing at San Juan Road and the closest crossings of the 5-lane, high-speed roadway are over 800' to the east and over 1,300' to the west. The center lane between the trail heads may be an ideal location for a two-stage signalized crossing using the median area for a protected refuge island. This would create two 28'-30' crossings rather than one 72' crossing.

The proposed entry for 920 San Juan is directly across San Juan Road from the Peace Lutheran Church driveway. Because the sidewalks on the church's property provide a convenient and continuous path to the public streets that border the community park, the middle school, and the elementary school, there will be a strong desire by 920 San Juan residents to access the park and schools via the church property. Relocating the 920 San Juan driveway so it's not aligned with the opposite driveway may lessen the desire to cross at this unsafe location. However, a location that's between the Peace Lutheran Church driveway and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints driveway to the east may create two desire paths. The solution may be to install signalized crossings at the proposed driveway location and at the Niños Parkway Trail.

On the project site, we first note that sidewalks are proposed on only one side of the private streets. This street design will require half of the community residents to walk in the streets to get anywhere. A "shared street" like this can be safe for pedestrians, but there must be significant traffic calming features designed into the roadway. However, there's no indication such features are included or anticipated.

We also note the side without sidewalks doesn't have a curb and gutter. This is very beneficial for shared streets because the driveway-street transition will be level and smooth, without the fall and rise of a curb and gutter. The level surface, assuming the driveway lip is sufficiently small,

will make it easier for people with physical impairments or people pushing a stroller/pulling a wagon to cross the transition between the residential driveway to the street.

Parking on the private streets will be in great demand as more than 80% of the residential driveways will be too short to park a car. This could result in cars being parked on the street at all hours, which will provide some traffic calming and help create a safe shared street.

The landscape drawings show many trees, but the street trees are ornamental varieties that will provide some shade on sidewalks, but none on streets pavement and parked cars. The pavement will be solar heated and the air will be hotter for pedestrians, and cars parked in the sun will have higher evaporative emissions.

The small front and rear yards of the residential lots will provide little private outdoor space for residents, and the tot-lot and pool area will provide some common outdoor space. The detention basins areas could provide additional common outdoor space if they fronted the street and included a walking path around the basin.

Development projects that lead to more walking and active travel are critical to our community's future. Human beings need moderate exercise, such as walking, for about 30 minutes a day in order to prevent the development of chronic disease and overweight. Only 30% of the population in the Sacramento region is active at this minimal level, often due to limitations placed by a built environment not suited to walking and other types of physically active travel. If more people could obtain regular exercise by walking and bicycling to their regular destinations, in lieu of driving, it could yield significant health improvements. Reduced driving would also decrease vehicle emissions and the prevalence of asthma, cardiovascular disease, and other air pollution-related conditions. More trips by walking and bicycling could help reduce the current expensive burden on the health care system of providing medical care to more and more people with chronic conditions due to inactivity and poor air quality.

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.

Please notify WALKSacramento of future routings or notices for this project.

Sincerely,

Chris Holm
Project Manager