

APPENDIX D

Letters from the Sacramento Area Council of Governments



May 12, 2015

Councilmember Hansen
City of Sacramento
915 I Street, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Councilmember Hansen:

This letter is in response to your request for review of the proposed Sacramento Commons redevelopment project in the downtown area of Sacramento. Thank you for the invitation to comment on this project as it relates to the Preferred Blueprint Scenario map and principles. It should be noted that in June and December of 2014, SACOG provided letters of concurrence with the City's determination that the proposed Sacramento Commons project is consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy for 2035 (MTP/SCS). This letter is focused on comments to the project as it relates to the Blueprint and does not impact the conclusions of previous letters of consistency as related to the MTP/SCS.

Auburn
Citrus Heights
Colfax
Davis
El Dorado County
Elk Grove
Folsom
Galt
Istelan
Lincoln
Live Oak
Loomis
Marysville
Placer County
Placerville
Rancho Cordova
Rocklin
Roseville
Sacramento
Sacramento County
Sutter County
West Sacramento
Wheatland
Winters
Woodland
Yolo County
Yuba City
Yuba County

The proposed project was compared to the Preferred Blueprint Scenario. The Preferred Blueprint Scenario is a conceptual map based on the principles of smart growth. This Preferred Scenario is not intended to direct how a specific parcel should or should not be developed in a particular manner, but rather give some direction on how the region needs to develop generally to reap the benefits of the Preferred Scenario. For this reason, it is not possible to apply them at a parcel level. With that caveat, the proposed site plan is consistent with the Preferred Blueprint Scenario map.

SACOG staff evaluated the proposed project, which provides two development options. The first option includes construction of a 300-room hotel, the addition of up to 70,000 new square feet of neighborhood supporting retail, and up to 1,171 new dwelling units. The second option includes the addition of up to 52,000 new square feet of neighborhood serving retail and up to 1,267 new dwelling units and no hotel. Both options include the removal of the 206 existing garden apartments and retaining the existing Capitol Towers (which contains 203 apartments and approximately 4,122 square feet of retail uses).

Findings and Evaluation:

- The Blueprint study revealed the need to aggressively utilize existing redevelopment opportunities and to balance housing and employment in the downtown/midtown area. To achieve the travel benefits that come from locating housing near jobs, Blueprint calls for approximately 50,000 new jobs and 28,000 new housing units in this area by 2050. This is important because people who live downtown generate dramatically lower vehicle miles traveled per household (VMT/HH) than those who live in other parts of the region. SACOG modeling and observed data show that residents of locations like this project will generate less than one-half the VMT of residents of typical suburban locations. The residents will also walk, bike, or use transit at two to four times the rate of residents of typical suburban locations. In addition to its location, these travel benefits are in part due to the higher density housing in the proposed plan. The reduced vehicle miles of travel will generate carbon dioxide (CO₂) reductions per day resulting in significant greenhouse gas emissions savings for the region over time.
- Infill development and redevelopment is a strategy essential to the success of the Blueprint and our Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). The Blueprint Preferred Scenario, the currently adopted MTP/SCS, and the latest scenarios developed for the MTP/SCS update achieve transportation, air quality, and other quality of life benefits by relying in part on infill and redevelopment projects, such as this one, to be developed at the densities allowed in local general plans and zoning codes.
- Compact development and a variety of housing options are critical Blueprint planning principles. The proposed project supports both principles by locating housing near existing jobs and services and providing multi-family housing. The midtown/downtown area of Sacramento represents some of the most compact and diversified land uses in the region. This project fits the spirit and nature of the existing community while promoting the Blueprint principles.

In conclusion, the proposed mixed-use redevelopment plan, its location in a neighborhood that provides a surrounding mix of uses – retail, residential, office, and its close proximity to transit – will assist in implementation of the Blueprint and the MTP/SCS.

Again, thank you for inviting SACOG's input on this project.

Sincerely,



Mike McKeever
Chief Executive Officer

MM:JH:pm



December 19, 2014

Scott Johnson, Associate Planner
City of Sacramento
300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

Re: Sacramento Commons

Dear Mr. Johnson:

SACOG was contacted by the project applicant for Sacramento Commons, with a question regarding how projects like Sacramento Commons compare to regional average in terms of VMT generation of future residents, as well as generation of non-auto (transit, bike and walk) trips. The information provided here comes from the 2012 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategy document.

Sacramento Commons project location has two locational attributes which are beneficial in terms of land use/transportation interactions, and achieving regional goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), passenger vehicle greenhouse gases (GHG), and increasing the utilization and productivity of transit services:

- The project site is located in a "Center/Corridor" community type
- The project site is located in close proximity to the Sacramento Central Business District employment center.

Center/Corridor community areas are characterized by higher intensity development, greater accessibility to employment and services, and in general, better transit service and pedestrian/bike amenities than other community types (see pp.76-79 and Tables 5A.1 and 5A.2 in the 2012 MTP/SCS report). Because of these characteristics, residents of Center/Corridor community areas:

- Generate 29 percent less VMT per capita than average; and
- Are more than twice as many person trips by transit, walk, or bicycle modes than average.

The Sacramento Commons project site is located within the Downtown Sacramento employment center. This employment center is both the largest, and most imbalanced, employment center in the region. The 2012 MTP/SCS improved the jobs/housing balance in the Downtown Sacramento employment center, in large measure by adding new residences either within or in close proximity to the center. Table 3.12 of in the 2012 MTP/SCS shows that the Downtown Sacramento employment center goes from a jobs/housing ratio of 2.25 to 2.00, moving significantly toward a balanced ratio of 1.2. By adding housing in this location, the Sacramento Commons project will provide housing options which allow for shorter commutes, and more commutes by biking, walking and transit.

I hope this information is useful in the City's consideration of this project. Please contact Bruce Griesenbeck at 916-340-6268 with any specific questions.

Sincerely,

Mike McKeever
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Chris Butcher, Thomas Law Group

Auburn
Citrus Heights
Colfax
Davis
El Dorado County
Elk Grove
Folsom
Galt
Isleton
Lincoln
Live Oak
Loomis
Marysville
Placer County
Placerville
Rancho Cordova
Rocklin
Roseville
Sacramento
Sacramento County
Sutter County
West Sacramento
Wheatland
Winters
Woodland
Yolo County
Yuba City
Yuba County

TRAVEL METRICS COMPARISON

Per Capita Travel Metric	Geography	2035 MTP/SCS Rate /1/	Estimate for 1000 Unit High-Density Residential Project 1/2/	Center/Corridor Difference from Regional Avg.
			#	%
VMT/Capita:	Regional Average	17.6	32,384 VMT	
	Center/Corridor	12.5	23,000 VMT	-9,384 -29%
Walk + Bike Trips per Capita	Regional Average	0.34	626 Trips	
	Center/Corridor	0.79	1,454 Trips	+828 +132%
Tran per Capita	Regional Average	0.13	239 Trips	
	Center/Corridor	0.34	626 Trips	+386 +162%

Source: SACOG, December 2014
 1/ 2012 MTP/SCS Figures 5B.3, 5C.8, and 5C.10
 2/ Assumes average 2 persons per household and 8% vacancy rate