



December 27, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Darcy Goulart, Planning Manager
City of Rancho Cordova, Community Development Department
2729 Prospect Park Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA 95760

RE: The Preserve Draft Environmental Impact Report (SCH #2019100515)

Dear Darcy Goulart:

Civic Thread has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report for The Preserve (SCH #2019100515) and we offer the following comments.

While the development will be sited in an area that is currently mostly undeveloped and does not offer many connection opportunities, we commend the applicant for including the Morrison Creek Trail in the project, which will provide important recreational opportunities for residents and provide connection to other sites as this area of Rancho Cordova gets developed. We are also glad to see that green infrastructure elements have been included in the project, which will contribute to a pleasant walking and biking environment.

Ensuring that high connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists is built into a development from the beginning is critical to fostering a built environment that is conducive to active transportation, netting benefits for air quality and public health. While multiple areas on the development tentative map are in close proximity to the Morrison Creek Trail, it is unclear whether there are accessible connection points to the trail. As a general best practice, making connection points to the trail as frequent as possible will be more effective in increasing convenient access to open space. To that end, we recommend the following:

- 1. CRPD Neighborhood Park 2 on Parcel F: include a connector path through the park from Street 'H' to the Morrison Creek Trail. The Morrison Creek Trail follows the north edge of the park, but would have greater connective value if a**

dedicated path was put in for bicyclists to access the trail from the street (see Figure 1).

2. **Parcel L:** It is unclear whether this parcel has a path that connects the Street 'C' cul-de-sac to the Morrison Creek Trail through Parcel L. Without bicycle/pedestrian connection points, cul-de-sacs reduce internal connectivity within neighborhoods. The distance to the trail from the Street 'C' cul-de-sac is short and will provide connective benefit if a path is installed (see Figure 2).
3. **Parcel M:** We are glad to see that a sidewalk goes through Parcel M to the street. We recommend including a path on the other side of the street that connects to the Morrison Creek Trail and a marked pedestrian crossing that connects the two pathways. Bike ramps should be included at each curb (see Figure 3).
4. **Parcel D:** Include a pedestrian/bicycle connector path to the Morrison Creek Trail at CRPD Neighborhood Park 1 at the closest point at the intersection of Street 'K' and Street 'L' with a bike ramp at the curb (see Figure 4).
5. **Parcel J:** Per our letter submitted in July 2019, if Parcel J at the west end of Street 'D' is part of a neighborhood bicycle travel way, widen the parcel to at least 25' and construct a 10'-wide sidewalk that's bifurcated at the eastern terminus and includes bike ramps at the curb. Parcel J is a logical entry point to access the Morrison Creek Trail but needs to be widened to allow for a sidewalk and landscaping on both sides (see Figure 5).



Figure 1. Parcel F proposed connector path through neighborhood park. Connector path could also connect at the left corner of the park to reduce amount of construction necessary.



Figure 2. Parcel L proposed connector path.

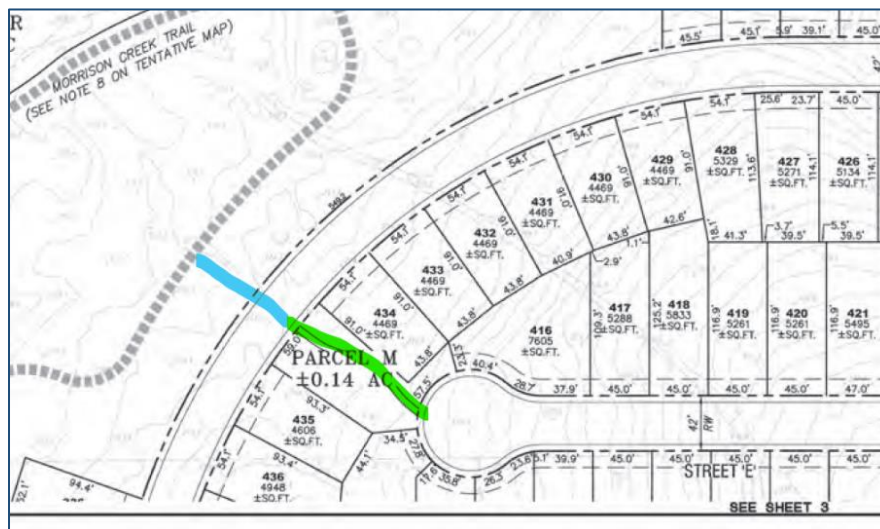


Figure 3. Parcel M connector path.

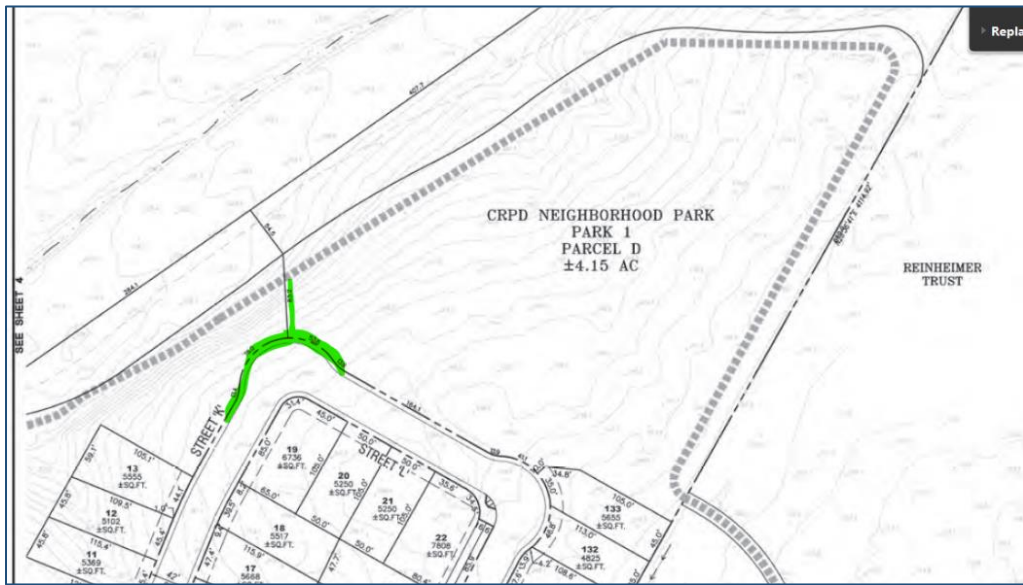


Figure 4. Parcel D proposed connector path.

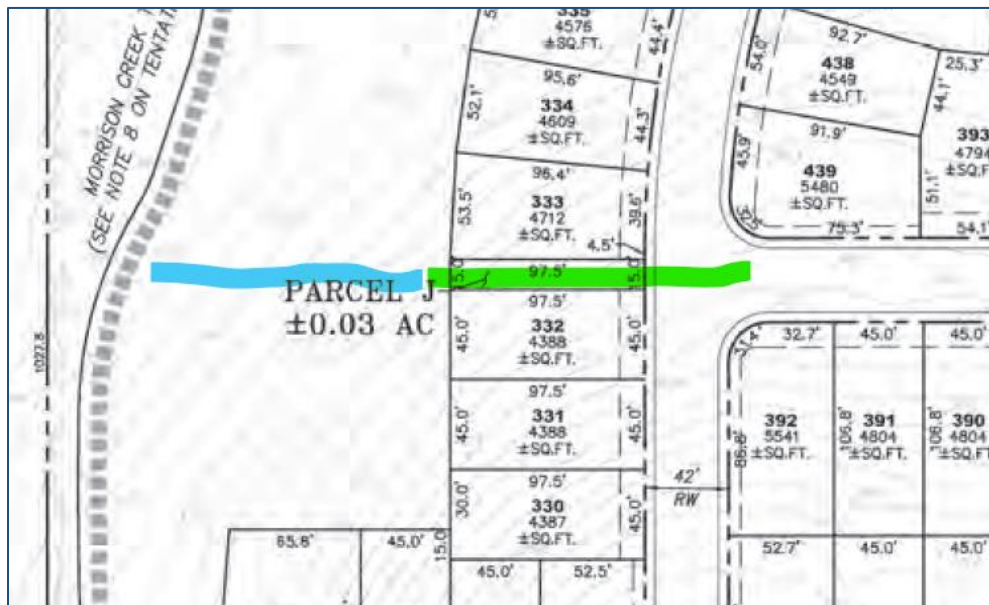


Figure 5. Parcel J proposed connector path.

The Preserve DEIR also proposes a zoning change from Agricultural 80 to low-density residential (RD-5), which allows 4.1–5 units per acre. While this is in keeping with the project objective “Develop a residential mixed-density community that is consistent with the General Plan conceptual land use designation for the Grant Line West Planning Area”, **consider rezoning a portion of the project area to RD-6 or RD-7, which would allow for higher-density single family homes and duplexes and increase the density to 5.1–6.0 or 6.1–7.0 dwelling units per acre, respectively.** Benefits of this include the potential for a more diverse set of housing options and potentially greater affordability for residents, as well as making it more likely that the development achieves the goal of a mixed-density community.

An important component supporting a mixed-density community will be transit access. The DEIR notes that the nearest bus stop is 1.5 miles away from the site at Borderlands Drive and Canyonlands Drive, providing hourly service from Sacramento Regional Transit Route 175. To access the bus stop on foot, residents will need to walk 30–45 minutes, which is unlikely to be appealing if they have access to a car. While it is more likely that residents may choose to access this bus stop via bicycle, the bicycle infrastructure on the most direct routes is lacking. The most direct bicycle routes are through the Camden at Somerset Ranch development, following either Raymer Way and Rockdale Drive to Americanos Boulevard, or Edington Drive to Americanos Boulevard. Raymer Way, Rockdale Drive, and Edington Drive do not have bicycle infrastructure. Americanos Boulevard then connects to Douglas Road, which provides access to Borderlands Drive and the bus stop. While Americanos Boulevard and Douglas Road both have Class II bike lanes, on Douglas Road the lanes run parallel to a road with two travel lanes on either side. We recommend the following to improve connectivity and cyclist and pedestrian safety:

- 1. The developer should work with the City of Rancho Cordova on offsite improvements to upgrade the bike lanes on the stretch of Douglas Road in between Americanos Boulevard and Borderlands Drive to Class II-B buffered bike lanes to increase bicyclist safety and comfort. At a minimum, high visibility markings such as green paint should be applied to the lanes along Americanos Boulevard and Douglas Road (see Figure 6).**
- 2. A portion of the Americanos Boulevard bike lane going southward has a painted buffer that separates the main travel lane from the bike lane and right-hand turn lane onto Douglas Road. Because this is an important connection from the Plan Area to surrounding areas, we recommend including as an offsite**

- improvement the addition of conflict striping as the bike lane transitions from the side of the road to the center to accommodate the right-hand turn lane.
3. We also recommend working with Sacramento Regional Transit to scope the inclusion of a bus stop within the development itself in later stages of the project.
 4. Please consider the comfort and safety of cyclists and pedestrians when implementing measures to improve Level of Service, as slower traffic (lower LOS grades) tends to be safer for those using active transportation. Improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists will help the project meet its VMT goals.
 5. Consider the inclusion of a mobility hub at a central location on site to provide car sharing options for residents that may wish to forgo vehicle ownership.



Figure 6. Suggested area to upgrade bike lane on Douglas Road between Americanos Boulevard and Borderlands Drive to provide safer cyclist access to nearby bus stop.

Finally, to facilitate placemaking efforts, **please consider the inclusion of an additional small-scale neighborhood park/playground in the center of the Plan Area** to improve access to open space and offer urban cooling benefits.

Development projects that lead to more walking and active travel are critical to our community's future. Civic Thread 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 Civic Thread of future routings or notices for this project. Thank you for your consideration of these comments and recommendations, and please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn Canepa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kathryn" and last name "Canepa" clearly legible.

Kathryn Canepa
Project Manager, Civic Thread