



March 4, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Jose Quintanilla
City of Sacramento Planning Division, Community Development Department
300 Richards Blvd, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: Northview Lofts (P22-003)

Dear Jose Quintanilla:

Thank you for providing Civic Thread the opportunity to comment on the Northview Lofts, which proposes to rezone a vacant parcel from zone R-1A to Multi-Unit Dwelling zone (R-3) and to construct a 19-unit apartment complex. We are supportive of the rezoning to a higher density residential use and pleased to see that this apartment complex will be in walking proximity to a nearby shopping center, Ninos Park, Ninos Community Garden, and the GreenHouse Community Center. Several food markets are available at the shopping center, and a BelAir and Grocery Outlet are located a mile away and are accessible on a bicycle via West El Camino Ave.

In addition, the Northview Lofts offer close access to several bus stops offering weekday and weekend service (Route 88) on West El Camino Ave, and access to Discovery Park and the American River Bike trail, which provides access to the Central City, is available via Northgate Blvd. With the variety of uses close to the site, it is an excellent location to build multifamily housing.

There are several features about this development that we would like to commend the developer for. First, we are pleased to see that only the minimum required vehicle parking spaces are proposed. Given the proximity of the site to community resources, recreation, and amenities, it is possible that residents may be able to live without a car, due to the site's accessibility via walking, biking, and rolling. Providing minimum parking makes for a more efficient use of space and may encourage households to own fewer cars or even go car free. In addition, the design of the apartment building puts "eyes on the street" via the placement of glass doors and patios facing Northview Drive, which will contribute a feeling of safety to the urban environment.

We note that the development currently does not have a set-aside of affordable units. Therefore, we encourage the developer to make at least a small portion of the units subsidized to make the Northview Lofts more accessible to lower-income members of the community. In addition, if the cost of an assigned parking space is included in the rent, the developer might consider uncoupling parking from rental prices and offering lower-cost rental units without an assigned parking space, thus allowing other residents to utilize multiple parking spaces for a greater fee.

We also offer a few suggestions to further improve the Northview Lofts and surrounding built environment for people walking, biking, and using mobility devices.

- Currently 12 bicycle parking spaces are proposed, which is the minimum required number. We recommend doubling the amount of bicycle parking to provide 19 long-term parking spaces (one for each unit) and 5 short-term spaces, for a total of 24 bicycle parking spaces. Adding more bicycle parking increases the convenience and accessibility of using a bike as a main mode of transportation. One bicycle rack is currently proposed at the southwest corner of the apartment building. We suggest including an additional rack at the northwest corner of the building near Northfield Drive to provide more convenient access for the residents of the units on that side of the building. One location to consider for an additional rack is near the common space, close to the mail kiosk, across the sidewalk from the guest spaces. Bike racks should be located as far into the site as possible while still being easily accessible from the main entrances, to prevent theft. The developer can reference the City of Sacramento's [Bike Rack Design and Placement Design Standards](#) to identify the most appropriate bike racks for the space.
- The sidewalks along Northfield Drive and Northview Drive bounding the site are narrow (approximately 4' wide) and have rolled curbs. Markings on Google Maps aerial imagery indicate that the Northfield Drive and Northview Drive intersection is often used by drivers for donuts (see Figure 1), emphasizing the need to implement measures to ensure the safety of building residents and walkers. We encourage the developer to work with the City to improve these sidewalks to result in a better and safer pedestrian environment. General best practice to encourage walking is to include sidewalks that are 5' wide at a minimum. Rolled curbs should be replaced with vertical curbs that have ADA compliant curb cuts and truncated domes at appropriate locations, to ensure that the full width of the sidewalk is available to people using wheelchairs and that vehicles parked along the curb do not encroach onto the sidewalk.



Figure 1: Aerial image of Northfield Drive/Northview Drive intersection showing vehicle skids in donut formation.

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. We are excited to see Northview Lofts move forward in the planning process and provide housing that encourages a strong active transportation mode share from its residents.

Thank you for reviewing our comments. Please notify Civic Thread of future routings or notices for this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn Canepa".

Kathryn Canepa
Project Manager, Civic Thread