



January 31, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Jose Quintanilla
City of Sacramento, Community Development Department
300 Richards Boulevard, Third Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: Panhandle 105 (Z21-124)

Dear Jose Quintanilla:

Thank you for routing the Panhandle 105 project to Civic Thread (formerly WALKSacramento). After reviewing the site, we are pleased to see strides towards promoting active transportation within the entirety of the Panhandle, specifically within the reviewed section of the proposed Meritage Homes developments. We acknowledge the decision made to reduce lot size, taking from each backyard to provide more open space for shared trail and amenity use for community members. The planned additions for elementary and middle/high schools will further support the project's vision for protected accessibility within the proposed site. The Small Lot Tentative Map (SLTM) of Panhandle 105 will be central to the planned trails, various classes of bike lanes, future school sites, and green space.

As Civic Thread is recognized as a leader in Safe Routes to School programming for the Greater Sacramento Region, our immediate concerns will regard bicyclist, pedestrian, and vehicle safety and access around the project site. We offer the following recommendations to improve the health-supportive features of the project.

While the SLTM has a health focused vision, the existing conditions of the roads that surround it are not supportive nor protective of walking, biking, or rolling. During a typical timeline of planned communities such as the Panhandle, the development of houses may occur years prior to the development of the school sites. This would create a period where youth community members may have to attend school outside of the proposed site, with the nearest schools being Natomas Middle School and Inderkum High School. The route from the proposed SLTM to the mentioned schools would direct travelers

walking, biking, or rolling to go west on Club Center Drive, then south on Natomas Boulevard. While Club Center Drive offers mostly striped Class II Bike Lanes, once it meets Natomas Boulevard, the bike lanes disconnect as a right turn lane for vehicles appear. This unprotected transition would be difficult for young and/or new bicyclists to navigate through the flow of vehicles. Upon turning on Natomas Boulevard, there is no indication of a bike lane either striped or sharrow for 0.4 miles until North Park Drive. These conditions would be especially unsafe for those travelling to Inderkum High School, an age group most likely to ride a bike to school.

As this development is in review, we call for the re-envisioning of the bike lanes surrounding it. While we understand changes to the road cannot be made overnight, we continue to advocate for safer routes to school and healthy destinations. Currently, there are no bus stops near the undeveloped land, however we hope to see those additions to support other protected modes of active transportation and further accessibility. These bus routes would also serve as a faster mitigation to unsafe travel conditions for our pedestrians, bicyclists, and rollers.

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 to promote physical health and well-being. 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. A 30-minute walk is about one and a half miles. 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 to the resident population of this area. 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 people with chronic conditions due to inactivity and poor air quality.

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.

Sincerely,

Pristina Zhang

Pristina Zhang, MPH
Project Manager