



November 29, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Ron Bess, Associate Planner  
City of Sacramento, Community Development Department  
300 Richards Blvd. 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95811

**RE: SAC Music Hall and Performing Arts (P20-041) Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration**

Dear Mr. Bess

Thank you for providing Civic Thread with the opportunity to review the following IS/MND. The SAC Music Hall and Performing Arts project will cover 6.36 acres with the construction of a new entertainment and venue/music hall including an independent restaurant. The project is located in the Manufacturing, Research and Development and Solid Waste Restricted Overlay (MDR-SWR) zone and Sacramento Center for Innovation (SCI) Specific Plan. It is located south of and nearby to Sacramento State University and several high frequency transit stops including two light rail stations.

**Alignment with Relevant Plans**

- **SCI Policy LU 3.1.6**- SAC Music Hall's inclusion of an independent restaurant providing lunch and dinner. (IS/MND pp. 4)
- **(SMAQMD) BMP 1**- Allowance of solar power to offset GHG emissions associated with natural gas. (IS/MND pp. 52-55)

In addressing potential concern others may have with the conflicting guidance of the project and relevant planning documents such as the SCI or SMAQMD BMP we offer the following comments. With the stated goal of SCI Policy LU 3.1.6 to, "encourage the business-serving retail and commercial uses within walking distance of the University, businesses, and transit stops" the project is supportive. The restaurant, as part of the SAC Music Hall is stated within the IS/MND plans as operating independently and to that end, will be providing lunch and dinner both on show nights as well as nights without shows. The resulting effect of this is direct trip capture and minimization of future

employee trips that may have otherwise prompted the use of private vehicles to obtain lunch outside of the SCI planning area.

Additionally, the project's use of natural gas within the restaurant remains in direct alignment with SMAQMD's BMP 1. As the IS/MND states, the elimination of natural gas was, "determined to be infeasible for the proposed project" and will be used in the restaurant only. Further compliance on this matter is realized in SCI's statement concerning the opportunity to further reduce the overall natural gas energy use with inclusions of integrated solar electric features which the SI/MND is stated as providing and is calculated as "enough to offset the GHG emissions associated with the use of natural gas."<sup>1</sup>

### **Transportation and GHG Emission Reduction Strategies**

- *Charge for parking and reduce overall number of provided spaces.*
- *Coordinate with CSUS for use of "Flexible Parking" near Folsom Boulevard and Ramona Avenue.*
- *Increase bicycle parking and locate it along northeast elevation.*
- *To the greatest extent possible, coordinate show schedules with transit hours of operation.*
- *Coordinate with the City to include wayfinding and placemaking signage along Ramona Drive directing and highlighting the SAC Music Hall to those walking or biking.*

Private vehicle and rideshare trips are cited as the primary means of transportation to and from the venue. Implementing TDM policies that transfer the financial cost and social burden of parking onto the consumer and reduce overall vehicle parking provisions have been shown to be a highly effective means of shifting travel behavior.<sup>2</sup> Little data has been collected on the acceptable walking distances of patrons to special event venues, however studies have shown that willingness to walk longer distances, more than 1 mile, or for longer durations of time, 30 minutes, are more widely adopted than the standard ¼ or ½ mile pre-conceived notions, particularly in the case of recreational or social trips as these would be.<sup>3</sup>

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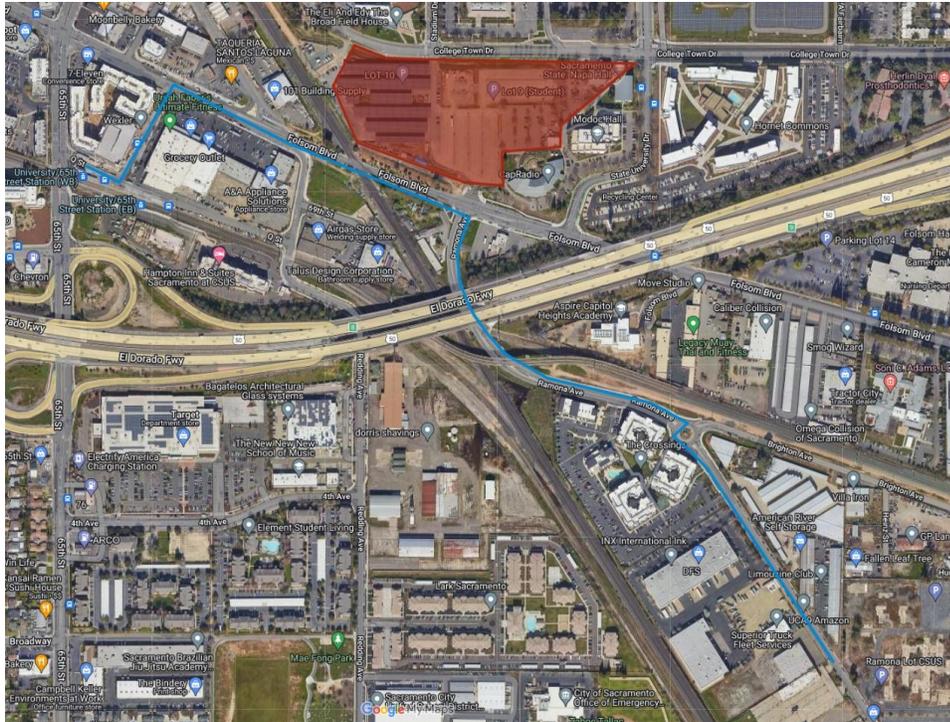
<sup>1</sup> Source: SAC Music Hall and Performing Arts Center- Mitigated Negative Declaration.

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0965856416301525>

<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3377942/>

By charging for parking and reducing the overall number of spaces provided, the financial burden is placed on those willing to pay. This price should be high enough that a desired percentage of drivers would be willing to shift to alternative modes. It is important not to bundle the price of parking into the ticket price. Unbundling prices ensures that those who choose not to drive and do not contribute to GHG emissions, congestion, or noise pollution would not subsidize the cost of those who do drive. The venue operator can then use the money generated from parking to support and enhance the shuttle services provided. Depending on the price charged for parking and resulting mode shift, the developer should consider reducing the parking provisions to the minimum required of 389.

Another opportunity that should be explored is a collaborative partnership to use the auxiliary parking facilities at the southern end of the CSUS campus nearest to the Folsom Boulevard and Ramona Road intersection (red shaded area in image below). This would help to utilize lots while demand from students is lower and fill it with the evening demand of venue patrons. Coordinated shuttle services should be considered in conjunction with this strategy. In addition, this reduces the total walking distance to .75 miles using Lot 9 as a starting point. Nearby transit light rail stations are 1 mile to the 65<sup>th</sup> station when traveling along Folsom Boulevard, from which a continuous sidewalk network exists (blue line in image below) or .7 miles from Power Inn light rail station.



It remains a concern that the primary value of the shuttle service rests on its ability to connect patrons to and from transit and the venue. Should the run times of shows release patrons after SacRT transit has ceased operating, the value of the service will likely decrease, however if such was anticipated to be the case, a more robust park and ride system utilizing flexible parking as mentioned above could be pursued. There is great value in reducing the number of vehicle trips within the SCI planning area. By doing so and with future development, the surrounding area has the opportunity to be more pedestrian friendly and activated, encouraging walking and biking trips. Additionally, fewer cars means few opportunities for collisions to occur, particularly as most traffic will occur during evening hours with little light.

Finally, based on the renderings it appears that the “wavy” racks are still being used despite our recommendation to use racks that comply [Sacramento Bike Rack Design Standards](#). We reiterate our concern that wavy racks are unintuitive and not supportive of bicycles during use. We recommend the use of “staple” style racks. The placement of the racks behind the building on the southeast elevation, perhaps to hide them from potential theft or damage, may serve the opposite effect. Not only are they not intuitive to find without directional signage which would render their “hidden” location ineffective, but they force cyclists to either interact with pedestrians along the walkway or vehicles in the pick-up and drop-off area. We strongly recommend, in addition to increasing the

number of provided bike parking spaces and utilizing “staple” style racks, to relocate the racks to the northeast elevation where they will be immediately located by users, protected by high pedestrian activity before shows and protected by “eyes on the street” due to their proximity to entrance and exit doors and windows where a constant sense of them being visible by someone inside is present.

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.

Thank you for considering our comments providing Civic Thread with the routing information. We look forward to continued participation in the project moving forward.

Sincerely,

David Moore  
Project Coordinator