



March 15, 2010

Elise Gumm, LEED AP, Associate Planner
City of Sacramento Development Services Department
300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: 7th & H Mixed Use Housing (P10-007)

Dear Ms Gumm:

WALKSacramento has reviewed the proposed 7th & H Mixed Use Housing. The following comments are based on the February 19, 2010 project routing.

The 7th & H Mixed Use Housing project proposes an eight story building with 150 studio and one-bedroom residential units, 19 structured parking spaces, common spaces for residents including rooms, kitchen, laundry, and outdoor patios, a 3,000 square foot medical clinic, and 2,000 square feet of ground floor retail.

Using stairs instead of elevators can provide light to moderate physical activity as part of daily life. Factors associated with stair use include the distance from the stairs to elevators and to the nearest entrance, and the number of turns from the stairs to the closest entrance¹.

WALKSacramento is pleased with the stairwell near the southeast corner of the building. The first floor landing near the mail boxes and seating area is a prominent location that will provide a convenient alternative to the elevators and does not require additional turns in a hallway to be accessed. The windows in the southeast stairwell provide good day lighting and allow a view to the outside for people using the stairs. The stairwell in the northwest corner of the building doesn't have windows, though. Including windows on the north-facing wall could increase use of these stairs.

Stair use can also be affected by the building occupant's awareness of the stairs and the environment in the stairwell. Placing an informational or motivational sign near the elevator can encourage use of the stairs instead of the elevator. This sign should be specific to using the stairs – not a fire exit map.

Another way to increase use of the stairs is to provide an environment similar to the hallways, including flooring, wall coverings, artificial lighting, and signs indicating the floor number. The last recommendation we have is to use doors with windows and

¹ Ishak A. Mansi, MD, FACP, Nardine Mansi, AIA, Hayam Shaker, MD, and Daniel Banks, MD, MS, FACP, "Stair Design in the United States and Obesity: The Need for a Change", *Southern Medical Journal* 102 no. 6 (June 2009): 610-614.

side windows to provide “eyes on the stairs” and a better connection between the open areas and the stairs.

In summary, *WALKSacramento* makes the following recommendations:

1. **Add windows to the stairwell located in the northwest corner of the building.**
2. **Place signs next to elevators to encourage stair usage.**
3. **Construct stairwell interior to the same standards as used for hallways.**
4. **Use side windows and doors with windows at stairwell doorways.**

WALKSacramento encourages people to walk and bicycle in their communities. The benefits include improved physical fitness, less motor vehicle traffic congestion, better air quality and a stronger sense of cohesion and safety in local neighborhoods. *WALKSacramento* reviews land-use development proposals and provides recommendations to create neighborhoods, schools, shopping centers, office buildings, parks, and streets that are more walkable, bikable, and transit friendly.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and recommendations. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me at (916) 709-9843 or cholm@walksacramento.org.

Sincerely,
Chris Holm
Project Analyst

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