

SIERRA • CURTIS

Neighborhood Association

May 9, 2017

Daniel Abbes
Garrett Norman
City of Sacramento Planning
300 Richards Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95811

Sent via email to: DAbbes@cityofsacramento.org and GNorman@cityofsacramento.org

RE: Comments on applications DR15-374

Dear Messrs. Abbes & Norman,

Thank you for considering our comments for the above-cited development application, including site plan and design review entitlements for the proposed southernmost portion of the Crocker Village commercial shopping area by Petrovich Development Corporation (PDC). The application requests approval of Buildings Retail 1,2 and 3 and Building 4 (M1, M2, M3), and has many flaws that must be addressed by the developer prior to approval.

This Application Must Meet General and Specific Design Considerations

The City adopted very specific design guidelines for Crocker Village in 2010: Resolutions 2010-575 and 2010-176. This application is the second site plan and design approval sought for commercial structures in the Crocker Park Village development where the City will apply not only its typical standards, such as parking requirements, but also these detailed Curtis Park Village PUD Development Guidelines. The City adopted these Guidelines and Resolutions to achieve an urban mixed-use, pedestrian scale neighborhood that would be compatible with the historic neighborhood in which it is located. See *Attachment I* for a drawing, from the developer's investor's own website, of what the developer proposed when requesting permission to develop.

Proper application of these Guidelines will add value to the large and very successful public investment in light rail, public housing, City College, and the pedestrian bridge by enhancing urban infill uses and safety while moderating suburban-level, auto-oriented design and land allocation. It also will better blend in with Black Pine's urban-style townhome development on Crocker Drive.

Section 1.1 of the Guidelines describes the vision and context of this development as incorporating the values of new urbanism and smart growth. We ask the City to carefully apply its adopted vision and context as you consider each critically important design aspect

of the proposed commercial buildings. Decisions made now regarding the design of the commercial buildings and the type of neighborhood-scale shopping center they create will make or break the infill function of the entire commercial and residential development. The commercial portion of the village will either build on the successes surrounding the site or become a suburban, auto-oriented aberration that degrades the promise of the site and the adjacent historic neighborhoods.

Most importantly, site plan and design review decisions made by the City on these first two building approvals will set a precedent for the remainder of the commercial development and potentially for other areas like Land Park Drive and Freeport Boulevard grocery developments. As such, we request that the City apply its approved Guidelines to ensure an urban, pedestrian-scale neighborhood shopping center.

There Are Too Many Parking Spaces for the Amount of Retail

The application requests more parking spaces than the City's standard requires. We ask that the City flatly reject this request and approve no more than the minimum number required. Although many shoppers may arrive by car, the Guidelines require that the commercial area be as pedestrian (including seniors, transit riders and college students) and bike-friendly as possible. Planning for shoppers arriving by foot and by bike needs to be prioritized at or above those arriving by car. By limiting the number of parking spaces to the City's requirement, over 8,100 square feet would be available for other uses such as providing inviting small areas to gather and socialize—again, see *Attachment I*. Imagine patrons of a City College sporting or arts event meeting up for an outdoor meal at tables made available by fewer parking spaces.

In addition, the City should not approve any parking spaces for commercial buildings that are not seeking site plan and design review at this time. It appears that the applicant is seeking approval for a parking lot that would serve up to 111,797 square feet of commercial space. Applying for more parking spaces than needed for the buildings specifically proposed in this application is a gross overstepping of bounds, and certainly not compliant with Sacramento's expressed desire to be environmentally friendly.

Urban infill and pedestrian uses and safety need to be prioritized above auto-oriented convenience.

The Parking Area and Design are Completely Contrary to the Guidelines

This application creates a huge dominant central parking area with very little visual relief and minimal accommodations for pedestrian safety, which are clearly required by and defined in the City's Guidelines. For example, there is only one four-foot-wide pedestrian connection (east-west) through this sea of parking. This design will not be safe for pedestrians (seniors, transit riders and college students) navigating the parking area b

foot. There should be at least 2-3 additional well-defined pedestrian connections across the parking area and they should be wider than 4 feet. Section 4.3 of the City's Guidelines requires strong pedestrian linkage to parking areas. Breaking the parking into smaller areas and including plenty of shade trees and landscaping would help to resolve this safety and design shortcoming. Good examples of this are the Pavilions shopping center on Fair Oaks Boulevard and The Fountains in Roseville.

Building Orientation is Contrary to Guidelines

This proposal is deficient on many levels in terms of pedestrian access and building orientation to sidewalks:

- Both proposals need to orient buildings at the edge of pedestrian walks on city streets, not on parking lot walkways. This type of orientation is detailed in the City's Guidelines. The submitted drawings show the buildings to be exclusively oriented to the parking area. This orientation fails to facilitate pedestrian activity along Crocker Drive and adjacent streets and reinforces a suburban layout.
- Functional doors (preferably as the main entrances) and real windows should be added all along Crocker Drive to avoid long stretches of flat walls or walls with fake architectural details typical of mass-produced architecture.
- Sidewalk entrances should be located along the Crocker Drive side of the buildings to invite pedestrian activity and make the street more interesting. The City's Guidelines also are clear about entrances at corners to activate both street frontages.
- Building main entrances should be oriented to streets or public spaces whenever possible.
- Special attention should be paid to the connection of the required eight-foot wide pedestrian arcade between the park and the commercial center to ensure easy and inviting bike and pedestrian access to the commercial center from the north.
- The City's Guidelines clearly state that window size and placement, as well as judicious use of open spaces, should be used to change the visual perception of mass and make the buildings more interesting from the street and from the parking areas. Further, corporate "chain" architecture should be avoided and clear-glazed fenestration provided on at least 50% of each building façade that abuts a pedestrian way to create a better pedestrian experience.
- Use 360 degree architecture especially for buildings on corner lots or with high visibility to make them more aesthetically pleasing from all angles.
- Avoid long flat walls with no windows/entrances. Real windows should face Crocker Drive as well as inviting entrances. Inviting outdoor spaces where shoppers could relax and spend time would lend a more urban sense to this commercial space. The Fountains in Roseville achieves this effect by creating the equivalent of shopping streets within the town center format. The design of the proposed buildings has much of a mass-produced feel and does not meet the overall requirements of th

Guidelines.

Bicycle Infrastructure is Sorely Lacking

To further entice shoppers on bicycles, bicycle parking facilities should be plentiful, well-designed and located as close as possible to all entrances. The City's new Active Transportation Manager should review and approve increased dedicated bike facilities for both of these commercial developments. A great example is the covered bike racks at the new Natural Foods Co-op in Midtown (but without the screen).

Landscaping Must Avoid the Errors Along Crocker Drive

Crocker Drive cork oaks are falling over because of shallow root systems and too-narrow dirt strips. We ask the City to ensure that Public Works Urban Forestry section has reviewed and approved the tree species selection and parking lot planter size in the proposed landscape plan.

The development is off to an excellent start with the townhomes along Crocker Drive, 92 beautiful units of affordable senior housing, and the pedestrian bridge connecting the development to light rail. This very large infill development has adopted planning guidance, if implemented, to make it an economic draw for students and visitors to Hughes Stadium as well as shoppers from the existing and surrounding neighborhoods and to set a truly excellent precedent for future infill throughout Sacramento. We ask the City to fully implement their adopted Design Guidelines and related agreements, and make Crocker Village the outstanding place it is meant to be.

Sincerely,



Eric Johnson
President, Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association.

Cc: Councilmember Jay Schenirer (jschenirer@cityofsacramento.org)

Attachment


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Attachment I



 [Read More](#)

CURTIS PARK – PCCP PROVIDES \$41 MILLION SENIOR LOAN TO PETROVICH DEVELOPMENT COMPANY TO FINANCE CURTIS PARK VILLAGE IN SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Sacramento, Calif, October 9, 2013 – PCCP, LLC announced today it has provided a \$41 million full recourse senior loan to Petrovich Development Company to refinance an existing senior loan and to provide future funding for the completion of infrastructure at Curtis Park Village.

