

BTSSC
ARC DSEIR
Comments on “Project Description”
Todd Edelman, Commissioner
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<https://www.cityofdavis.org/home/showdocument?id=14159>

To start, before I get into any specifics about technical details, I have some questions about descriptive terms in the Project Description. I hope that it is fair for me to assume that since they are front and center in the - quite frankly - epic level of documents for the ARC proposal, they have been chosen quite carefully. Some of my comments here go into a fair bit of analysis.

Page 1: *“live/work environment”* has for decades described a type of housing that is combined with the workplace of the residents of the housing. This is not present at ARC.

Page 1 We’re told that ARC is *“10 miles west of Sacramento”* and that it *“sits strategically between the Bay Area and the State Capital of California.”*, which is it?

Page 1: *“adjacent to rail”* - Is perhaps half of East Davis between and the Depot normally described as “adjacent to rail”?

Page 1: *“adjacent to the developed community on the south”* It is of course blocked by I-80 with no safe cycling infrastructure aside from the bridge some distance to the west.

Page 1: *“limited supportive retail”* meaning that the closest retail is limited to the Target and its neighbors, the only supermarket across a more or less motor-vehicle only road across I-80. There’s no safe and direct way for anyone at ARC to do major supermarket shopping by bicycle, and there are no plans in the works, including of the developer, to change this. During non-congested periods it’s actually well-placed for shopping trips by car at the Ikea, Home Depot and Walmart in West Sacramento.

Page 1: *“jobs/housing balance”* this implies a connection between who lives there and who works there, but there’s actually no way to know if anyone who works there will want to live there given the peripheral location and self-described *“limited supportive retail”*.

Page 3: *“12. Encourage recreation and non-automotive modes of transportation by creating trail connections and safety improvements that enhance and encourage pedestrian/bicycle circulation and connectivity between the project site and surrounding areas.”* - There’s only a concept to have a crossing of Mace to the west. There’s no plan for a similar improvement to the supposedly-*“adjacent”* south. The area is distant from nearly all of Davis, including its two main high schools, post office, City hall, County offices, bikeable supermarkets, public pools, library, farmers market, and so on. It’s quite a long journey to UC Davis by ANY means of

transportation, especially at night, in the heat or the rain. How will a journey by a promised shuttle from the area of the UC Davis Campus, then to Davis Depot (sometimes waiting for a late train) and on to ARC be competitive with a private car?

Page 9: *“For improved safety on the Mace Curve, ARC would extend the existing bike lane around the inside of the Mace Curve, filling a long-derided gap and completing the connection, thereby bringing more employees safely to work and children safely to school.”* A bike lane here is not enough, not for a 45-50 mph road.

Page 11: *“As a result of user demand-driven build out, parking fields may be converted to parking structures over time to accommodate development at greater densities”.* To be clear, parking structures will be built if there’s demand for them? How much increased capacity? Is this part of the transportation study?

Page 13: (Phasing): *“jobs are created onsite”* - well, this is mainly a jobs project, so of course jobs will be onsite. But, more important, this references the “jobs/housing balance” mentioned earlier in this document. The intention here is that people will find jobs at ARC and then get settled at ARC, but in the end the results will likely be somewhere between a miracle and this illusion. If everyone who gets a job at ARC lives off-site and if everyone who lives at ARC doesn’t work there, the City of Davis has no right to require different results. The applicant confirms that housing here “will be available to the community at large”, and this definition of community can mean anyone within the greater region, resulting in high VMT. The very long phasing can also mean a construction site that to some will forever seem unfinished. On one hand perhaps never a basic feeling of calm, and on the other I-80 noise starting at one end and construction noise at the other, early in the morning. And the sometimes ungainly vehicles of construction companies, just one innocent, yet blind corner away from a child who, not surprisingly, ventures into the off-limits construction areas. I get some of this feeling when visiting the Cannery. The support for onsite housing also came from in one email received in the last hour, but on this element the sender is clearly another victim of this illusion.

Page 15: (Sustainability Features): “Transit Plaza”: One major access point for transit means long journeys by foot for many visitors, and on the other hand many “dedicated stops” across the site significantly increase the total journey times for any existing transit routes that already serve the area. Further, the value of any Transit Plaza or bus stop is determined in part by its relative distance to the final destination compared to car parking.

Page 15: (Sustainability Features): *“...help establish the use of bicycles as a predominant mode of transportation to the site”.* Not even junior high schools do so well. The only local destination that has a majority bicycle mode share is UC Davis, and based on everything from location, to parking costs and regulations to users it’s completely different than anything possible with ARC.