

PULSE OF THE PUBLIC

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More spending for

Larson Park

EDITOR: I agree wholeheartedly with the editorial in the Jan. 25 editorial in the Index-Tribune regarding the funding of the Larson Park improvements. It seems that the county has earmarked nearly \$2 million to create the Springs plaza at the Church Mouse site. Now that the plaza project has been put on hold many of us Springs residents feel that the money should be spent on the upgrades at Larson Park. This park was one of the nicest recreational locations in the Valley in the '70s but it was abandoned by the county and left without maintenance or repairs for years. Today, the only thing that looks new is the nicely paved parking lot that is empty most of the time.

The Larson Park Master Plan was developed in a series of public meetings that many of us attended to determine the best use of the park. This Master Plan was approved by the board of supervisors in 2021 but to date no funding has been earmarked for this project.

The Master Plan is great and would provide the following:

1. Group picnic area with grill.
2. Community garden.
3. New baseball field.
4. A new racquetball facility with three tennis courts and four for pickle ball courts.
5. Basketball court.
6. Two children's play areas.
7. New full-sized soccer field.
8. Additional parking and new landscaping with shade trees.

Sonoma County Regional Parks claims that they support diversity and service all neighborhoods in Sonoma County.

if we never do anything? Let's keep the funding in Sonoma Valley and start phase one of the Larson Park upgrades.

Noel Barbulesco

Sonoma

Environmental harm at SDC

EDITOR: Mountain lions and now black bears pad their way across Sonoma Valley via an ancient wildlife corridor that threads through the lands of the former Sonoma Developmental Center.

Endangered salmon swim and spawn in Sonoma Creek that runs through the middle of the historic old campus.

Families from Sonoma and the Springs explore the open trails and access nature close to home. The oak woodlands and grasslands of the SDC lands serve as a greenbelt buffer as wildfires rage down from the hills above. These are the reasons that we filed a lawsuit against the county of Sonoma.

The county and its consultants failed to fully study or provide measures to prevent the significant environmental and human harms that will result from building a new town in the middle of rural Sonoma Valley at SDC. In fact the SDC Environmental Impact Report (EIR) contains zero enforceable measures to address the harms to the environment, climate and community from the giant new development.

Instead the county claims that there will be few if any negative environmental or wildfire safety impacts and that the SDC Specific Plan will be "self-mitigating," even with up to 1,000 homes (per the EIR), 2,500 residents and cars, a hotel, 400,000-square-feet of commercial

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But the residents of the diverse Springs community see Measure M funds allocated for Maxwell Park and projects all over the county but nothing for Larson Park (or anything in the Springs area). The \$2 million earmarked for the Springs plaza would be a drop in the bucket to complete the plaza project and would barely pay for design and preliminary reports. Most of us would never see this plaza in our lifetime.



Cracks run through the tennis/pickleball courts at Larson Park in the Springs.

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space, restaurants, retail and visitor events. That approach fails to meet even the most fundamental requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It cannot stand.

Allowing SDC development to go forward at this scale with a flawed EIR undermines decades of open space protection, city-centered growth and sprawl prevention — the very policies that make Sonoma County so popular. A lawsuit is our last resort to protect these lands from overdevelopment, and stop the county from skirting CEQA.

Our lawsuit will force the county and the state to do the studies and revise the EIR and Specific Plan

to meet to mandates of state environmental law. In the process we hope to protect the SDC’s history, natural resources and waterways forever for mountain lions, bears, salmon and the people of Sonoma Valley and the State of California. Join us at scaledownsdc.org.

Teri Shore

Sonoma County Tomorrow