

From: [Devina Douglas](#)
To: [Sheikhali Monet](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 3011 Dutton Meadow project, Concept Review Colgan Creek
Date: Tuesday, August 10, 2021 2:12:38 PM

Dear City of Santa Rosa,

I am writing to you to **vehemently oppose further development of the general Roseland Area, including this project, at this time.**

Before presenting my specific concerns, we wanted to take a moment to remind you of the obligations the City has to us. In October 2020, the City Council created a statement that their mission is “to provide high-quality public services and cultivate a vibrant, resilient and livable City,” a “tier 1 goal” of which included addressing climate change. In January 2020, the City declared a climate emergency that “threatens humanity” and made a subsequent declaration that it is committed to reaching carbon neutrality by 2030. Relevant to this goal, the City’s most recent “bicycle and pedestrian masterplan” has goals including “designed bicycle and pedestrian facilities that are accessible and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities to use” as to increase the percentage of citizens who walk and cycle to work/school. And lastly, the City has a stated 2030 Vision which includes ensuring the City has “thriving neighborhoods, a multi-cultural community, and breathtaking stretches of open space, creeks, and greenbelts.” The proposed Dutton Meadows development seems to stand in stark contrast to these goals and Vision.

My concerns are centered around three main areas: (1) traffic, (2) other non-traffic related infrastructure, and (3) general over-population.

Traffic

Nearly every Roseland resident I speak with, myself included, has serious complaints about the traffic on Hearn Avenue *as is*. Per the traffic studies conducted by the City in 2019, during rush hour, sections of Hearn Avenue see over 2,200 cars per hour. Traffic sometimes slows to 3.5 mph. During busy times, the drive from Dutton Meadow to Santa Rosa Avenue can take up to 25 minutes, despite it taking only one minute and five seconds to make that same drive when traffic is light. As part of the 2009 Environmental Impact Report related to the proposed Walmart, the intersections on Hearn Avenue were given “F” ratings. ...And things have only gotten worse, traffic-wise, since then as the City continues to approve housing developments. I am horrified to think what could happen to one of us if we suffer a medical emergency and ambulances cannot get to us in time, or get us to the hospital in time, because they get stuck in traffic.

A nagging issue here in SW Santa Rosa is the difficulty surrounding access to, and departure from, US 101. The Hearn Avenue overcrossing is insufficient to meet the demands of traffic currently, which one can’t help but notice in the afternoons—*every* afternoon, weekday or weekend—as traffic on the US 101 southbound Hearn Avenue exit backs up on to the freeway, sometimes backing up almost to Corby. Of note, the City recently approved the high-density housing near the intersections of Petaluma Hill Road, Yolanda and Kawana Springs Road—totaling over 600 new housing units; the residents of that housing will soon be adding more congestion to the 101 on/off ramps. Until the overcrossing is widened, or another overcrossing is put in in the SW Santa Rosa area, the City cannot allow more housing to go

into south Santa Rosa.

The stop-and-go traffic resulting from these traffic back-ups is not only bothersome, it's dangerous, affecting the health of residents, and adversely contributing to climate change. The exhaust generated from idling vehicles is poisoning our residents and adding greenhouse gases to our air. And the brake dust generated by stop and go traffic introduces lead and asbestos into the air. Many of our neighborhood kids walk or ride bikes to school, and they have the greatest exposure.

Lastly, with the addition of the just-installed stoplight at the SMART train tracks, there will be even more idling of cars on Hearn.

The City MUST conduct another traffic study before approving any new development in the South Santa Rosa area. That said, please be reminded that it would not be possible to do an accurate traffic survey now due to the COVID shelter in place orders drastically affecting road usage and schools being shut down. If a study were to be conducted during the pandemic, the analysis would be based upon assumptions and predictions for behavior dramatically altered during this period.

Other non-traffic infrastructure concerns

I have serious concerns that other infrastructure may not be adequate. Sonoma County finds itself in another drought, and water levels in Lake Sonoma are reaching historic lows. The City must ensure its growth doesn't outpace its resources, especially in light of the fact that our area supplies water to so many vineyards and now cannabis industries, which requires a tremendous amount of water. Further, water rationing will certainly become more frequent in the coming years. This affects us not only in the sense that every new house moves the City closer to reaching its water allotment, it can hit us in the wallets as the City assesses a "water shortage" surcharge between 5-30% during mandatory water conservation periods. Those of us in SW Santa Rosa are among the City's most financially strained residents already. Also, not only does the City have an obligation to make sure there's adequate water coming out of our kitchen faucets, given the devastating fires we have had throughout our region, it has an obligation to ensure there is enough water to successfully fight fires. With what appears to be yet another epic drought in California's future—which will likely last several years—our water supply and distribution system will be critical. Increasing demands this system should be done very carefully, yet the City keeps moving ahead with development around here without taking the current situation into account.

In discussions with Councilman Alvarez, we learned that the City has already made note of the fact that water and sewer infrastructure "needs attention" in our region. We urge you to not approve developments that place additional demand on the City's finite water resources until after these improvements and replacements have been made.

I also have concerns about the levels of service we can expect to receive from the police. Already, our area feels neglected by law enforcement. Our mailboxes and cars get broken into, the police won't even respond. Police officers who have been assigned to patrol our area for years tell us they "didn't even know [our subdivision here] existed." Our homes get broken into, and the police come out to provide us with written reports to hand off to our insurance companies, informing us they don't have the time to actually investigate the crimes. This has to stop. We demand that the City not increase the areas over which law enforcement needs to patrol until it can provide us with some real level of policing service.

General Overpopulation of this area

We have seen so much population growth within our area, without any real improvement in infrastructure and support services, leading to a deterioration in our quality-of-life. For example, community residents have reported that they drove through the area near a subdivision off Dutton Meadow, (near Pebblecreek,) and felt the area was so over-congested with parked cars it was hard to navigate the streets. There are so many cars in this area that cars are commonly parked in the bike lanes and in red zones. Adding hosing such as that proposed in this development will further strain the parking situation in our area.

The City is supposed to be providing six acres of park per 1000 residents in an area. Right now, our area has a total of 24 acres of parks for approximately 18,000 residents. Yes, the new development—in later phases—includes park space, but it is not enough. Related, it is our understanding that the developer doesn't even yet own the property upon which it intends to build the park. How can we believe the park will be forthcoming, when the developer may never be able to acquire the land where the park is to exist. We are falling woefully behind with regards to places in which we can recreate close to home.

It is my understanding that the Dutton Meadows Project Plan was initially put into place nearly 20 years ago, however there have been many changes to the City since then. Roseland has been annexed into the city. The population of the SW Santa Rosa area has grown substantially. Multiple subdivisions have been approved and built, and currently there are multiple subdivisions under construction. At the time of that General Plan, SW Santa Rosa did not have a representative on the City Council. All of this begs the question: should the city continue to work to achieve the development goals of an old and out-of-date plan?

There is little that should make the City believe it's in the City's best interest to move forward with this development now, especially in light of how many ways the development conflicts with the City's goals and vision. The strain it will place on the infrastructure diminishes the quality of the public services we receive and makes the City less resilient. It makes our area feel less "livable." It adds to problems with pollution, making it more difficult to achieve carbon neutrality. It makes riding our bikes and walking along the streets more dangerous to our safety and health. And it takes away yet another open space. So tell us, how can the City believe this development, under the current circumstances, is what is best for us right now?

Honor the commitments you made to this City, and deny approval for the Meadowood subdivision until the infrastructure, and health and safety issues have been addressed first.

-Devina Douglas

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