

The intersection of a proposed casino near Windsor and a neighborhood residents call 'the country'

Written by Administrator
Saturday, 26 February 2022 18:14 -

From his front yard, Josh Terry points across Shiloh Road to the land directly across the street from his childhood home.

In some ways, it looks the same as it did decades ago.

For one, it's still beautiful.

Tall trees line a now-dry waterway that eventually links up with Pool Creek west of Highway 101. On the western bank is a large stump of a long gone, indiscernible type of tree.

Terry says trees like that one used to dot the entire expanse of the land across the street, land now mostly covered with wine grape vines.

He remembers running across the property as a kid to see a buddy of his who lived on the other side.

Today, he would have to dodge traffic to get to the field. The speed limit on the narrow, two-road is 45 mph, but it's regularly exceeded. There are no sidewalks. In many places there is no shoulder.

"I learned to ride my bike on this road," he said.

Today, that would be folly.

A transformative idea is in the works

Under [a plan to build a 2,500-machine casino and 400-room hotel](#) on the corner of Old

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Redwood Highway and Shiloh Road on the southeast border of Windsor, this still-country road will form the northern border of what could become a massive entertainment complex.

The Koi Nation purchased the property for \$12.3 million in September, and its leaders have unveiled plans for the 68-acre site that include six restaurants and food service areas, a meeting center and spa, and a live entertainment venue.

Koi officials have inked a crucial partnership with Global Gaming Solutions, a business owned by the Chickasaw Nation, a tribe that operates 23 casinos in Oklahoma.

They have also reached a deal with the Northern California Carpenters Union which ensures that any general contractor on the project will employ union labor.

The project would transform the area.

Old Redwood Highway, the precursor to Highway 101 decades ago, would mark the western edge of the development.

At the point where Shiloh and Old Redwood Highway meet is Esposti Park, with its ball fields and small parking lot that has been the launching point for many a group bike ride.

Houses line the northern side of Shiloh Road here, and the two entrances and exits to the Oak Park subdivision, are directly across the street from the proposed development.

Neighbors describe this as the country. It's no place for a casino, they say.

‘ ... So unnecessary and so sad’

On the stretch of Shiloh Road east of Old Redwood Highway, anti-casino signs are posted in

nearly every yard.

At one entrance to the Oak Park subdivision, a large, professionally printed red sign reads “No casino in our residential neighborhood!”

The post of a roadway sign warning of a narrow bridge is painted with a vertical “No casino” message.

So too, is a sign noting the area is maintained by the Rotary Club of Windsor, now painted with an anti-casino message.

Katey Douglass lives across Shiloh from the land at the heart of the deal. It’s incomparably beautiful every month of the year, she said.

“We watch the colors change,” she said. “It would be really horrible to let that go to waste ... to take away all that beauty is so unnecessary and so sad.”

The majority of homes in Oak Park — on Mathilde Drive, Chris Street, Lea Street, Leona Court and Gridley Drive — have “No casino” signs in the front yard.

Neighbors say they are trying to be unified and thoughtful about their approach. Some, many of whom have lived here for more than two decades, declined to speak on the record, saying they want to speak with one voice.

Others spoke freely about why they chose to live here and why they are now worried about the proposed development just a stone’s throw from their front doors.

Caroline Pollard came here 20 years ago.

“It was calm, quiet and the people are lovely. It was a beautiful neighborhood. It’s still a nice neighborhood and that is why people are so upset,” she said.

She worries most about traffic and noise.

“They go fast enough as it is,” she said. “At night you know there is going to be traffic after people are in bed; the noise is going to be really bad.”

As an eight year resident of Oak Park, Wes Caldwell calls himself a newcomer. That’s how established the neighborhood, and the neighbors themselves, are, he said.

Yet despite the passion, he expects the fight will largely be out of neighbors’ hands.

“That guy doesn’t make a difference,” he said pointing to a neighbor’s home. “They don’t make a difference. I don’t make a difference. The supervisors have nothing to do with it. Nothing.

Read more <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/benefield-the-intersection-of-a-proposed-casino-near-windsor-and-a-neighborhood-residents-call-the-country>