

Dear Sierra Valley Residents,

Concerning The Sierra Hot Springs Development Proposal

I have read the Draft Initial Study and Master plan documents. I have read them several times. I have a thorough understanding of 1) scope of the proposed development and 2) its impact, as described in the documents. While studying these documents I sought to identify benefits to the people living in Sierra Valley. I found none.

The proposed Master Plan is not by any stretch of the imagination a “reasonable amount of development” for Sierra Valley and its small communities. I support a right-sized approach, one that has no negative impact on our air quality, natural resources, traffic noise pollution, traffic congestion, water quality, wildfire danger, cell phone and internet services.

The Sierra Hot Springs proposal is a large scale self-contained commercial development project whose goal is to keep all guests inside the Sierra Hot Springs compound for the entire duration of their stay. With the exception of gasoline and fire protection, everything that a guest needs will be located inside the Sierra Hot Springs compound. So, not a single guest dollar will be spent at Sierraville, Sattley or Loyalton small businesses.

Northstar, Squaw Valley and DisneyWorld have a similar business model. They maximize their revenue by ensuring that most guests remain on-site and spend until their stay is over. The town of Kings Beach on Lake Tahoe was a thriving community in the 1980s before Northstar was developed and sucked all the evening foot traffic away from Kings Beach restaurants. Same thing happened to Tahoe City due to the development at Squaw Valley.

Think about it, Sierra Hot Springs will drain foot traffic from Sierraville, Loyalton and Sattley because guests that today, patronize our lodging, restaurants and markets, will disappear. They will eat at the Sierra Hot Springs restaurant, sleep in Sierra Hot Springs lodging and campgrounds, patronize the Sierra Hot Springs market etc. The only thing missing from these plans is a gasoline station.

We will not get business from the Sierra Hot Springs 50+ employees either, because they will live within the compound. And, their jobs are not the type that provide a middle-class lifestyle where a person can raise a family, buy a car, a house and afford an occasional vacation. No, these are jobs where you lose your accommodation if you leave. These are jobs for cleaners, massage therapists, maintenance people, cooks, bus boys, bartenders and waiters. These are jobs without benefits or a good career path. These are jobs for students from South America and elsewhere.

And, you can forget about guests leaving the compound for recreation - no, they will be spending their time and their money on yoga classes, meditation classes and other activities in one of the 5 new conference centers (misleadingly called workshops in the plans). Dearwater airstrip will become busier, thus increasing noise and air pollution over Sierra Valley. Private planes buzzing Sierraville from Dearwater are already a nuisance.

Guests will have lots of accommodation to choose from - the 60 unit hotel, 11 cabins, a dormitory, the RV/trailer park and the 7.5 acre 150+ person tent campground surrounding wetlands and sensitive habitat.

As each guest arrives, they will check into the Administrative office, where they will pay Sierra Hot Springs the appropriate fees for lodging. Guests will buy their provisions at the Sierra Hot Springs market and deli and fix their meals in the Sierra Hot Springs Communal Kitchen or at one of the open air cooking facilities in the campground. Many guests will eat their breakfast, lunch and dinner at the Sierra Hot Springs restaurant which seats 60 people. And, if the restaurant is at capacity, 40 guests will be seated on the restaurant's patio for their meal.

So despite looking diligently, I cannot find any benefits to Sierra Valley businesses. What I see is negative impact to Sierra Valley residents due to diminished air quality, traffic, noise, increased wildfire danger due to a new high voltage overhead electrical line, propane tanks, 123 wood burning fireplaces and 716+ people driving to the compound, plus massive disruption due to 20+ years of construction 7 days a week.

I have about 91 concerns with the project. You can download them from shsprings.org.

A self-contained development such as this provides no benefit to Sierra Valley businesses and residents.

- Surely, it would make more sense to build the 60 unit hotel in downtown Loyalton, which has an ideal vacant lot for such a building Main Street. This would breathe new life into Loyalton.
- Surely, it would make sense to build 50% of the proposed Conference Room space in Loyalton, and 50% at the Hot Springs site. Such an arrangement would be terrific for Loyalton and right-sized for Sierraville.
- Surely, it would make sense to cut the proposed campground in Lemmon Canyon to 20-30 spaces and make it summer-only camping, to avoid the site becoming a ghetto like Loyalton's former trailer park. A year-round campground, with a communal kitchen, communal bathrooms and communal showers and communal open air cooking facility, is likely to become an eyesore. Loyalton's trailer park was full of vermin and trash and it still is not 100% cleaned up.
- Surely it would make sense to use Loyalton's newly cleared trailer park - and rejuvenate it and build some sites for trailer parking there - rather than Lemmon Canyon. The City Council has been thinking about how to use that site.
- Surely we are not going to agree to a 20+ year Development Plan, where we will suffer from 20+ years of construction for 7 days a week. Surely?

Please get your feedback via a letter to Sierra County Building and Planning Department by their deadline of January 25, 2019. To help you identify the issues that matter most to you and your family, please read the Draft Initial Study and Masterplan document. You can find copies on the County web-site and on shsprings.org, where you will also find a document with my specific concerns about the proposed project and its impacts.

Surely, we can do better than this for Sierra Valley business and residents. Surely we can strike a balance between our needs and that of Sierra Hot Springs.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Chambers
Sierraville

