

**Press Release 1/3/2021**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Developer Eyes Open Land Next to Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek**

WALNUT CREEK, CA – January 3, 2021 – A developer is currently seeking a change to Contra Costa County’s General Plan; a change that would allow a large-scale complex to proceed on undeveloped land adjacent to Walnut Creek’s Heather Farm Park. Spieker Development Partners ([spk.com](http://spk.com)) wants to build a gated, closed community of multi-story buildings encompassing 451 living units, along with a clubhouse, a recreation building, and a health care center for the project’s residents.

The project cannot go forward without an Amendment to the County’s General Plan. The rare undeveloped property is as big as 30 football fields. It rises from the city park to a ridgeline that, at its crest, gives a spectacular view of Mt. Diablo to the southwest and the Oakland hills to the east. A large and growing group of concerned Walnut Creek residents want to preserve that view and nurture public access to the property. As a first step, they are asking the County to deny the developer’s application for a General Plan Amendment (GPA). To that end, the group has gathered over 950 signatures on their online petition at [SaveSevenHillsRanch.org](http://SaveSevenHillsRanch.org).

California State Law requires that all cities and counties create and adhere to comprehensive General Plans that guide the development and conservation of their communities. This property is in Contra Costa County’s jurisdiction and the developer’s application for a change (a GPA) must work its way through several steps and county entities, ultimately reaching the County Board of Supervisors for a final decision on the application, probably in June 2021. Public hearings are conducted along the way.

Public opinion is not waiting for those hearings. In addition to the petition, informal discussions have exploded on social media from all corners of Walnut Creek, lamenting the proposed “overbuild” and resultant disappearance of this pastoral property known as Seven Hills Ranch. The project will flatten hills and dramatically alter the property’s native landscape through the removal and rearrangement of 18,000 plus dump trucks worth of dirt. In addition, 350 trees will be removed to make way for the development. The project work itself is considered to be oversized as it has as a three to four-year construction timeline which will bring large construction vehicles and the project’s 250 employees onto already crowded Walnut Creek streets, through city neighborhoods.

Petition comments express an overall dismay that an important piece of Walnut Creek’s natural heritage, so easily accessible to an existing city park, is at risk of being lost forever to development.

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