

The Press Democrat

Letters to the Editor, Friday March 19

Reject gas station

EDITOR: Imagine a plot of land steps away from a bicycle trail, a block from a Santa Rosa Junior College facility, near several eateries and stores, right on a transit line. What would be the best use of that land?

The Santa Rosa Planning Commission will consider on April 10 an application to develop this plot on Wright Road as a gas station. New gas stations were banned in Santa Rosa in 2022, but this project was exempted because its application was submitted before the law's effective date. Yet all the reasons that inspired the city to prohibit new gas stations apply to this project.

Gas stations have a limited future as the world moves toward electric vehicles. In a decade or two when this station will go out of business, the city will be left with a brownfield: a property where redevelopment may be complicated by the presence of contaminants. During its short life, this station will emit benzene and other health hazards into a residential neighborhood and may contaminate the groundwater below it.

There are 10 gas stations within 5 miles of this site. How will building one more of these ecological time bombs benefit the public?

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