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## PROPOSED ALPINE COUNTY PARK UPDATE

### December 10, 2021

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Dear Donors and Supporters,

We want to thank you for your support of Preserve Alpine's Heritage and, for those who have donated, thank you again for your financial contributions. To update you on our progress, what follows is a brief overview of the key elements of the proposed Alpine County Park ("Project") as presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR"), a summary of the major points that were included in our formal response to the DEIR and our conclusion requesting denial of the Project, as proposed.

A DEIR is required by the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). CEQA requires the DEIR to describe the Project, the existing property condition, and analysis of the potential adverse effect of the Project, identify areas of lessening or reducing these effects; determine significance of impact after mitigation; and evaluate feasible alternatives that meet the basic objectives of the Project and reduce negative effect.

The DEIR describes the Project as a 25 acres park on the County's 96.6 acres adjacent to Wright's Field Preserve. The Project would include turf areas, a baseball field, an all-wheel area, bike skills area, basketball and pickleball courts, game stable station, equestrian staging area, corrals, a nature play area, a community garden, a volunteer pad, picnic area with shade structures and tables, trails, parking area to accommodate 250-275 single vehicle spaces and 10 ADA spaces all covered by solar panels, administration building, and additional parking in equestrian staging area.

The Project's objectives as defined in the DEIR included a place for Alpine residents to gather; create active and passive recreational uses and open space; natural and cultural resource management to observe a portion of the property; integrate and preserve natural features; enhance quality of life and protect health and safety.

As required by CEQA, the DEIR had four alternatives to the proposed Project identified: no Project, larger sports complex, reconfigure the Project but keep same elements, and reduce park to 20 acres. Our comment letter focused on the lack of discussion on other viable alternatives that meet the objectives of the Project, that should have been addressed in the DEIR. One of those alternatives, that was not discussed, is creating a nature-based passive park and relocate the sports facilities to other areas of Alpine that either have existing sports facilities, like the County joint project with the Alpine Union School District for its Joan MacQueen Middle School project, or a location that is closer to the targeted users of facility, e.g., skate and bike park closer to downtown Alpine. In this alternative there would be no need for the size of parking contemplated in the proposed Project or the administration and volunteer residence buildings. The sports facilities would be joint use projects with other government or nonprofit entities. The County has a history of doing this in Alpine, especially for soccer and baseball facilities.

As stated above, our letter supported a passive community park and less environmentally harmful locations for regional sports parks. The proposed Project would result in significant impacts on biological resources, transportation and safety, greenhouse gas, energy, air quality, wildfire, water supply and wastewater, visual resources, and noise. The DEIR fails to adequately disclose, analyze, and mitigate these impacts and should be modified and recirculated to comply with CEQA's mandate of full disclosure.

Our letter, supported by a report from a biological expert, found multiple deficient areas in the DEIR, including the lack of consideration, on the County's part, on the impact the Project would have to Wright's Field Preserve, the home to multiple special status species.

We also pointed out significant transportation and safety concerns, also supported by an independent expert. In our expert's report he states, "In my over 50 years of traffic engineering and transportation planning experiences, I believe that this is one of the worst Transportation Impact Studies whose unsupported conclusions were then carried forward into the Draft Environmental Impact Report."

In addition to our letter, we also worked with other individuals and entities that also had concerns about the Project to coordinate our comments.

Our conclusion was that the DEIR is legally inadequate and cannot provide a basis for project approval. The Project is inconsistent with applicable regional policies. We request denial of the Project, as proposed.

We have asked the County to provide a link to the public of all the DEIR comment letters both in favor of and opposed to the Project. If it agrees, we will provide you that link.

It will most likely take several months for the Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR") to study all responses, including ours. At this time, it is very unclear what DPR will decide to do.

In the meantime, we will continue to gather information, keep you informed, and fundraise for this and other projects that support our mission to preserve Alpine's heritage. On the subject of fundraising, we are still in great need of continued donations. The donations we've received to this point are just enough to pay for the consulting fees associated with the response letter and our insurance. We anticipate the expenses for the next phase of the proposed Project and future project expenses will require an additional thousands of dollars and we are asking for your help. We have set bold goals, but goals worth fighting for, and with your help, goals we can achieve!

Please spread the word that donating to and volunteering for Preserve Alpine's Heritage is a worthwhile investment of money and time for ensuring a bright future for our Alpine community.

Thank you for your continued support,

Preserve Alpine's Heritage Board of Directors

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#### **Donate Today:**

- **Online via Credit Card or PayPal**
- Mail a check to: Preserve Alpine's Heritage, P.O. Box 1584, Alpine, CA 91903



Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our shared mission of preserving Alpine's unique natural, cultural, and rural heritage.

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