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# The Downtown Laguna

—Richard Nichols

What does the downtown district of a small town and a swamp (today called a wetland) have in common?

In the case of Sebastopol, these two elements have more in common than many people might imagine.

The Downtown Plan and the Laguna Plan could have an enormous impact on our City. They are both about quality; the attractiveness and economic health of the downtown and the restoration of the Laguna. Both plans are directed towards practical double solutions to the problems.

At the first public downtown forum a participant made a statement which directed the group towards a consensus agreement. She said that driving to Sebastopol was very pleasant because the countryside was attractive, but as one approached town, the attractiveness declined. Everyone realized that what downtown Sebastopol lacked was greenery. All agreed a more park-like setting and a plaza would be an asset. Pedestrian use would be encouraged and the downtown would become a pleasant destination with enhanced economic viability.

Likewise, the Laguna Plan halts wetland destruction and begins restoration efforts to

transform the Laguna into a fully functioning wildlife park. What the two have in common is that they are both worth saving, and saving them together, just blocks apart, will help them both succeed. The downtown core can be connected directly to the Laguna via pedestrian corridors. The city can be the urban destination for those seeking a wildlife experience. Both environments will improve and benefit the other.

If we will maintain, restore, respect and care about our habitat—the Downtown and the Laguna—we and all other creatures will be better for it.

Sebastopol Tomorrow endorses the Laguna Park Plan and the Downtown Plan, and encourages a coordination of the two for a sensitive transition between urban Sebastopol and the Laguna. The cooperation of the community in working together with government to achieve these goals is essential. Together we can make a difference!

*Editor's Note:* This article was first published in 1988. With minor deletions for space, and the substitution of "Plan" for "Study" throughout, Richard's words are as current today as ever. Thank you citizens of Sebastopol for turning visions into workable, fundable realities. We're almost there!

## TURCHIN AMENDMENT

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Turchin observed, "If [we] can do it for the new Super Playground, I don't see why we can't do it for the Little League."

Since County Parks has recently decided against building a proposed Senior Center at Ragle Ranch, that site can also be considered for the new Senior League field. And although the County doesn't have funds for the field, Little League does.

"We need to find a creative solution to turn a lose-lose situation into a win-win situation," says Turchin.

## General Plan Update

—Jude Kreissman

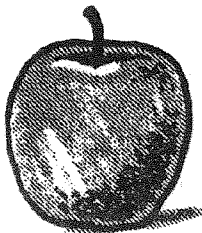
The first six general plan neighborhood meetings revealed the following areas of overwhelming consensus:

- Most participants value a small neighborly town and hope to maintain this character in Sebastopol.
- There is support for affordable housing inter-mixed with (and above) the shops which will be developed and already exist in the Downtown.
- There is a general consensus that the Atascadero Creek and Laguna areas should be protected from development.

A final city-wide meeting for additional public comment will be held on Saturday, June 13, 10:00 to 12:00 at Pine Crest School. If you missed earlier meetings or have additional comments to make, please attend and share your ideas.

## Doms Publisher of County-wide Newspaper

Former Sebastopol Tomorrow Director, Juliana Doms is now the publishing editor of *Sonoma County E.I.R.*, a new monthly newspaper containing in-depth coverage of local environmental issues. Of special interest to local citizens' groups will be sections devoted to each of the cities and unincorporated areas. Every month Sebastopol readers will be able to turn directly to their local information to see what's happening right now. A subscription (\$29/year) is a must for environmentally and politically aware citizens. We encourage our members to grab a free copy at Copperfield's—then call 823-8744 for a subscription.



### I'd like to join Sebastopol Tomorrow.

I want to support local citizen action to protect our environment, our economy and our cultural community through participation, education and advocacy.

- \$10.00/year       \$30.00/year       \$100.00/year  
 \$20.00/year       \$50.00/year       \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I can send a check equal to 5 hours of my usual wages to support the efforts of people who have time to volunteer.
- I want to pledge monthly contributions of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

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### Sebastopol Tomorrow

PO Box 2249, Sebastopol, CA 95473 823-9807