



Legislation Text

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To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma

Staff Name and Phone Number: Brian Oh, (707) 565-1931

Vote Requirement: Informational Only

Supervisorial District(s): First

Title:

2:30 PM - Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan- Update

Recommended Action:

Accept an update on the Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan process and hear public comment on potential project priorities. (First District) (Informational Only)

Executive Summary:

This Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) Specific Plan informational update will provide an opportunity for staff to update the public and the Board of Supervisors on the status of the SDC Specific Plan process. The update will include an overview of the Background Reports, an update on visioning efforts for the site, and a summary of input from various stakeholders. This discussion will serve as a forum for additional input on the development of Vision Statement and Guiding Principles as well as key issues to be considered in preparation of various Specific Plan concepts.

Discussion:

Sonoma Developmental Center

The Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) is a nationally-recognized institution in the heart of Sonoma Valley. The SDC provided services to persons with developmental disabilities for over 120 years. In 2018 the State of California officially closed the facility and relocated clients to smaller, community-based care facilities. At 945 acres, the Specific Plan Area includes a large historic campus, agricultural lands to the east, and vast ecological and open space resources.

The State of California owns the SDC site and forged a unique partnership with Sonoma County through a 2019 agreement and state legislation (Government Code section 14670.10.5) that secured funding and allows the County, community and stakeholders to develop a plan to guide future uses and development of the site. Sonoma County is now undertaking a Specific Plan process to set a vision for SDC which will consider land uses, transportation, economic viability, historic preservation, and conservation of the site's important natural resources. Ultimately, the local planning and development efforts will need to satisfy a number of interests, including state and local goals related, but not limited, to housing, economic development and sustainability.

Project Background and Overview

Prior to formal initiation of this SDC Specific Plan effort in early 2020, community members embarked on

multiple grassroots planning exercises. In May 2015 over 200 people participated in a community workshop that kicked-off the Transform SDC process. Through that workshop possible re-use options were explored and areas for further inquiry and investigation identified. Likewise, the Glen Ellen Forum (GEF), Glen Ellen Historical Society (GEHS), Sonoma Land Trust (SLT), and Sonoma Ecology Center (SEC) partnered to prepare draft goals and guiding principles for redevelopment of the SDC site. In April 2018 they held a workshop attended by more than 250 people and in June 2019, the SDC Coalition (including GEF, SLT and SEC, among other groups) presented a draft vision statement and guiding principles at a community workshop attended by about 170 community members. In addition, the state commissioned the August 2018 Existing Conditions Assessment prepared by WRT that provides an in depth site profile (available at <https://www.sdcspecificplan.com/documents>).

The Specific Plan process began in early 2020 and is slated to be completed in the first quarter of 2022, along with an Environmental Impact Report. Phase One, Issues and Opportunities Identification, started with project kick-off meetings and self-guided virtual tours (available at <https://www.sdcspecificplan.com/>), followed by initial community outreach and preparation of background studies. The attached Community Profile and Background Report are published to the project website, <https://www.sdcspecificplan.com/documents>, and can be reviewed as Attachment 1. The Community Survey report (Attachment 2) is also available on the project website. Planning Advisory Team meeting summaries and Community Conversations reports have also been posted summarizing these outreach efforts and results to date. Currently the project is at the tail end of Phase One.

Phase Two, Concept Development will commence after the January 26, 2021 Board of Supervisor's meeting and includes the development of three concepts for the future redevelopment of the SDC site and broad community outreach to identify a preferred alternative. The purpose of developing multiple concepts is to identify a preferred alternative, which will be fully analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Phase Three, Draft Plan Preparation, will include preparation of the draft Specific Plan based on the preferred concept selected in Phase Two and the EIR.

At Phase Four, Plan Finalization, the draft plan will be refined and public hearings to adopt the SDC Specific Plan and certify the EIR will be held.

Throughout all phases of the project, the community will be engaged to participate and provide input through public workshops, stakeholder meetings, and public hearings. Summaries of such activities will be added to the project website.

Community Engagement

Building on the previous community outreach efforts, additional opportunities will be provided throughout the planning process. Community engagement is ongoing but has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project kickoff event was held virtually and included a week of online visioning exercises and webinars about SDC. The project team is continuing to adjust to ongoing limitations on in-person public engagement, particularly as it relates to reaching those that have been previously underrepresented in the initial engagement activities. Approaches used to date include:

A) Project website

- B) Communitywide Kick-off event
- C) Key stakeholder/informant interviews
- D) Planning Advisory Team meetings
- E) Webinars
- F) Technical Advisory Committee meetings
- G) Community Conversations
- H) Community Workshops
- I) E-mail blasts
- J) Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission public meetings

Outreach in the first phase of the Specific Plan process employed all of the approaches listed above. The early community conversations focused on several demographic groups that were significantly under-represented in earlier workshops, including the Spanish speaking community, the disability community, and young people.

As detailed in the SDC Community Conversations Report #1, September 2020 and in the Report Addendum, October 2020 (Attachment 3), the planning team conducted seven focus group interviews in June and July 2020, which include young people, groups representing people with disabilities, and nearby neighbors. Due to initial low participation by members of the Spanish speaking community in the community conversations, in September 2020 additional efforts were made and 46 responses were received, 75% of which identified as Hispanic/Latinx. Public input through the Community Survey and Community Conversations in large part mirrors the themes which emerged through the grassroots planning efforts and are as follows:

- A) Protect the natural environment and resources
- B) Develop SDC to be inclusive, accessible, inviting and safe
- C) Keep the historical Main Building, add updated buildings
- D) Create a center for the community to thrive together
- E) Include community health and education services
- F) Include opportunities for small businesses
- G) Include activities for youth and families
- H) Include affordable, accessible, diverse housing
- I) Concern about traffic and traffic safety problems if development occurs

A virtual community workshop was held on November 14, 2020 at which the big takeaways from the Background Report and a summary of the community conversations and community survey were presented. Workshop participants provided input on the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles and small group discussions were held about the vision for the future of the SDC site. The workshop concluded after each small group facilitator reported out with a summary of their group's comments. A recording of the workshop, the workshop presentation and meeting summary is available on the project website at:

<https://www.sdcspecificplan.com/meetings> and the meeting summary is also available in Attachment 4.

In addition, based on the feedback received from the community conversations, more focused discussions regarding key topics were conducted in November and December 2020. The topics included the following agencies:

Mobility/Transportation: Regional Parks, SC Bicycle Coalition, SC Transportation Authority

Open Space/Recreation: Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Sonoma Land Trust, Sonoma Ecology Center

Affordable Housing: Housing Land Trust, Burbank Housing, EAH Housing

Water Infrastructure/Needs: Valley of the Moon Water District, Sonoma County Water Agency

Real Estate: North Bay Realtors, Builders Exchange, The Lok Group

Local Government: City of Sonoma

Furthermore, monthly meetings are taking place with our state counterparts such as the Department of General Services and State legislative staff to ensure that planning of the site is being well-coordinated and communicated with our partners at the state level.

Project Schedule

Phase One, Issues and Opportunities Identification will be complete after the January 26, 2021 Board of Supervisors meeting. Phase Two, Concept Development is projected to be complete by July 2021.

The draft Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report will be prepared in Phase Three based on the preferred concept selected in Phase Two. The SDC Specific Plan and draft Environmental Impact Report for public review are expected to be available October 2021 with the final Specific Plan adopted at the beginning of 2022. The full project schedule can be reviewed as Attachment 5.

Project Team

Permit Sonoma retained a consultant team to oversee the completion of the SDC Specific Plan. Dyett & Bhatia was selected to be the Specific Plan consultant, with a team of sub consultants assisting with technical matters related to community engagement, transportation, and engineering. Emmanuel Ursu of Metropolitan Group (M-Group) has also been hired to support the project. The project continues to be supported by Permit Sonoma staff and County Counsel. Coordination with the California Department of General Services is also ongoing.

Additionally, multiple teams of both subject matter experts and community members were formed to help guide the planning process, including a Planning Advisory Team and Technical Advisory Committee. These teams have been essentials in helping staff identify key community contacts and strategies to maximize public engagement opportunities. Many of these stakeholders have been involved with the SDC site since before the initiation of this planning effort as participants in previous planning efforts, or with other community or professional ties to the site.

Legislative Priorities

The agreement between the County and the State pursuant to Government Code Section 14670.10.5 recognizes the exceptional natural areas (open space), natural resources, and wildlife habitat of the SDC site and explicitly states the intent to preserve lands outside the approximately 180-acre core developed campus and its related infrastructure as natural areas, public park land, and open space. Through the Specific Plan process, the precise boundaries between the core campus and the open space areas will be determined. The agreement also recognizes the importance of the site to the local community, economic development, and housing potential.

Taking into account the enacted legislative priorities, County-State agreement, and significant community

input to date, the project includes the following general priorities to shape future use of the property:

- A) Create a framework for future land use with extensive community involvement;
- B) Realize the property's potential for positive county-wide economic and environmental benefits;
- C) Preserve, restore and manage natural areas while providing passive recreational uses;
- D) Provide affordable housing opportunities;
- E) Provide services and housing opportunities for the disabled community;
- F) Assess and address infrastructure and service needs on the property to respond to future land uses identified for the site;
- G) Demonstrate methods to build a sustainable community that provides a housing/jobs balance, sustainably manages and uses ground and surface-water, manages storm water using green infrastructure and low-impact development, provides renewable energy, and substantially reduces carbon

Vision for the Future of the SDC Site and Guiding Principles

Drawing from the grassroots community engagement efforts that preceded the Specific Plan preparation process, community input received to date through the Specific Plan community engagement strategy, and the provisions in Government Code section 14670.10.5, the Specific Plan consultant prepared a draft Vision and Guiding Principles for the project and presented it for public input at the November 14, 2020 workshop. The draft was refined with the workshop input and the updated draft Vision and Guiding Principles) are in Attachment 6. This version of the draft Vision and Guiding Principles will be discussed and potentially further refined by the Planning Advisory Team at its January 8, 2021 meeting and will be presented at the January 26 Board meeting for public discussion and input. The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles are critical to Phase Two as they will guide preparation of Specific Plan and establish broad benchmarks for the Specific Plan.

Key Issues for Specific Plan Concept Development

In Phase Two: Concept Development, three concepts for potential development will be prepared and a comparative analysis will be conducted. Phase Two is scheduled to be completed by July 2021. The concepts will need to incorporate the enacted Legislative priorities, along with the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, and may include variations on such elements as:

- A) Land uses and mixes, including amount and type of housing and location of retail and other commercial uses,
- B) Building sizes,
- C) Building heights,
- D) Adaptive reuse/demolition of existing structures,
- E) Floor area ratio (FARs)/densities,
- F) Open spaces,
- G) Internal circulation/new streets,
- H) Parking strategies, and
- I) Other elements as appropriate.

A Concepts report will be prepared and include visualizations for each concept to model the design of streets and spaces within the planning area.

In addition, development prototypes for three distinct land use and circulation concepts that respond to the existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints identified as well as input received from the initial outreach and engagement with stakeholders will be prepared and evaluated. Up to eight building prototypes to illustrate the development potential of the 3 concepts, representing varied development scenarios/zoning intensity will be included. These prototypes will illustrate a range of land use mixes, building densities/intensities, and heights which will influence development potential and feasibility of implementing the desired prototypes. Along with these prototypes each scenario will include a set of development statistics and a planning level cost estimate which illustrates the construction costs per unit, and overall development cost at a planning level for the feasibility analysis.

Prior to initiating work on the development prototypes and draft alternatives report, Dyett and Bhatia will facilitate a discussion at the December 15, 2020 meeting regarding the key issues to consider in drafting the three Specific Plan Alternatives.

Prior Board Actions:

On December 17, 2019, the Board of Supervisors Authorized the Director of Permit Sonoma to (1) execute an agreement with the State of California and accept \$3.5 million from Department of General Services to prepare a Specific Plan and associated environmental impact report for the SDC site; and (2) execute an agreement with Dyett and Bhatia to prepare the Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report in of the amount of \$1,475,949.

FISCAL SUMMARY

N/A

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

N/A

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1- Community Profile and Background Report, September 2020

Attachment 2- Community Survey Report # 1, September 2020

Attachment 3- SDC Community Conversations Report #1, September 2020 with Addendum, October 2020

Attachment 4- Community Workshop #1 Report, November 2020

Attachment 5- Project Schedule

Attachment 6- Draft Vision and Guiding Principles, December 2020

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A