



APPENDIX to North Sonoma Valley Municipal Advisory Council Letter of 01/06/22.

This appendix provides additional details in support of the concepts presented in the main body of the NSV MAC letter dated January 6, 2022. These details are a compilation of information provided in public comments on the SDC Specific Plan Alternatives Report (November 2021), a community survey, and NSV MAC input. These details should be addressed in the Specific Plan policies and design guidelines.

All “community survey” references below are to the non-affiliated survey conducted by Sonoma Valley resident Dr. Shannon Lee, Professor of Marine Biology at California State University, Sonoma, in December 2021 ([link](#)).

OPEN SPACE

General Information:

- Community input consistently emphasizes the singular opportunity the SDC campus represents in terms of protecting the open space and wildlife corridor in the context of a vibrant, sustainable community.
- Over 90% of the community survey respondents ranked “preservation of open space” as of the highest priority.

The Community Supports:

- Prioritizing the transfer of park-adjacent properties to Sonoma Valley Regional and Jack London State Historic parks, with continued public access to trails and open space.
- Protecting the wildlife corridor, its permeability and related resources from the wide range of impacts associated with over-development of the campus.
- The wildlife corridor is not separate from SDC campus—animals are not cognizant of boundaries—and its protection is integral to all aspects of the site plan.
- Pursuing the development of performance standards to support housing and other development, as outlined in the Sonoma Land Trust’s memo to the NSV MAC, Springs MAC and Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Council in follow-up of the November 18, 2021 joint meeting.

HOUSING DENSITY

General Information:

- The SDC site is outside of an urban growth area and surrounded by community separator lands and the rural village of Glen Ellen.
- Based on current United States’ census definitions, the Eldridge “census designated place,” including the SDC campus and the Glen Ellen community just south of the SDC, could add approximately 450 housing units, i.e., through redevelopment of the SDC campus, and still be within a rural (vs. urban) designation, assuming average occupancy in Sonoma County of 2.61 people per dwelling unit.
- Maintaining a rural designation for the site’s development is consistent with the Guiding Principles established for the site plan in that new development must complement the surrounding communities of Glen Ellen and Eldridge/Glen Ellen.

The Community Supports:

- The creation of additional housing on the SDC site, particularly affordable housing, *however at a substantially lower density—450 or fewer housing units—than in any of the draft alternatives published to date. (The number of housing units in all three plan alternatives is 990 or greater.)*



- 89% of community survey respondents support no more than 450 housing units; 65% of those supporting between 400-450 units, and 24%, less than 400 units.
- Related to this and to complementary community development as mentioned above, 87% of community survey respondents cited “preserving the rural character of Glen Ellen” as “very important.”
- The community does not prioritize market rate housing.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Community Supports:

- A higher percentage of mixed level affordable housing than the 25% of the published alternatives. Specifically:
- 76% of community survey respondents think that 25-50% (or more) of the SDC housing should be affordable; 49% of all respondents would push that percentage higher, with at least 50-75% of housing units affordable. Over half of that 49% would prefer that 75%+ of all housing be affordable.
- Housing to include housing for individuals with developmental disabilities (as indicated in state statute); community comments also support senior and veterans housing and related services.
- Housing should be fully accessible (to disabled), as outlined in letters from representatives of the disabled community.
- The survey showed little support for estate homes (81% of respondents opposed) or 3-story apartment buildings (68% opposed), however during the NSV MAC discussion of 12/15/21 it was acknowledged that 3-story housing may need to be considered to achieve higher levels of affordable housing.
- Adaptive re-use of existing buildings (see below) may alleviate need for 3-story structures.
- The community generally agrees that clustered housing and integrated affordability level housing should be considered.
- **The state of California has prioritized the creation of affordable housing, as has Sonoma County. The state must reconcile this priority with its fiscal responsibility with respect to the SDC property by defraying the significant site remediation costs.**
- Housing clusters and siting should be designed to support open space priorities as identified above.
- Housing should be located away from Arnold Drive to preserve the existing visual and historic character and density of the SDC campus.

ADAPTIVE REUSE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

General Information:

- ALL responsible structural studies of the single-story buildings on the east side of the SDC campus indicate that re-use of the buildings is both financially feasible, and a likely positive use of existing resources.
- It is important to note that all of the studies related to the re-use option were conducted using old financial data. Local new construction costs have escalated sharply in the past few years, and particularly in the past 12 months.
- The discussions of adaptive re-use have focused on perceived low demand, and the potential unwillingness of people to live in buildings that have been re-designed. However, there are examples of creative, livable residential re-use designs throughout urban environments both locally, and in other regions of the US, including lofts in old train stations, apartments in old manufacturing facilities, etc.



- Additionally, those discussions regarding design do not take into account the changes we have seen in the past couple of years alone. Tiny houses, re-purposed shipping containers, etc., are designs that are now considered livable and comfortable despite the out-of-date view of such designs.

Community Benefits:

- The re-use option will reduce greenhouse gases associated with demolition and construction. It will reduce air quality problems since the impacts of dismantling of concrete, wood and toxics will be considerably reduced as compared to that of demolished whole buildings.
- The roadways will not be further burdened by the weight and number of overloaded trucks.
- Public safety will be improved due to reduced traffic flows.
- The unique and beautiful architectural nature of the existing buildings will be preserved.
- The re-use of the buildings will be less expensive, and less time consuming, resulting in a more rapid occupancy schedule.
- Local job creation will increase with the use of adaptive re-use of existing buildings due to the nature of the specialty construction skills required for the work.
- “Proof of concept,” or the demonstration project aspect of the work, will serve as a model for additional other communities or similar projects.

The Community Supports:

- The community survey found that 49% of all respondents find **adaptive reuse of buildings to serve at-risk populations** to be of highest or high priority combined.
- In addition, a total of 64% of all respondents find **adaptive reuse of buildings to serve special needs populations** to be of highest or high priority combined.
- In addition, the community has indicated support for alternative housing types, e.g., co-housing, that could be implemented to make reuse financially feasible.

Potential funding sources:

- Grants
- Developer funds

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Sewer Treatment / Water Recycling

General Information:

- The Sonoma Valley Sanitation District Treatment Facility is located approximately 13 miles from the SDC Campus. The area surrounding the current treatment facility, located at the end of 8th Street East, routinely floods during the wet season.
- Untreated effluent is discharged into Nathanson Creek during flood events.
- Climate change, and associated sea level rise, will result in operations at the current location becoming increasingly difficult to maintain and sustain.
- Flood events will increase as groundwater levels rise.
- Discharges into Nathanson Creek will increase.

Community Benefits:

- A sewage treatment facility would be sited on the SDC site—a location in the Sonoma Valley which is resistant to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise.



- Localized water recycling makes re-use financially feasible since the Sonoma Valley Sanitation District does not, and will not, have the funds to create a large-scale water recycling program from its current location at the end of 8th St. East.
- Currently the Sanitation District pays a fine every time it has to dump overflow into the Nathanson Creek system. This happens multiple times a year. Adding additional homes to the sanitation system design will likely cause more frequent overflow problems.
- Localized water recycling and storage is part of a fire resiliency plan.
- Wetlands associated with water treatment could be associated with a wildlife preserve and fire break, adding to climate resiliency.
- Groundwater recharge in the upper Sonoma Valley would benefit the groundwater plan requirements.

Potential funding sources:

- Grants
- Reduced penalties for discharges into the Nathanson Creek system could be applied to the construction of a treatment facility.
- Recycled water sales.
- Local sewer district fees including SDC development, the existing town of Glen Ellen and potential expansion into areas that are currently served by underperforming septic systems in (e.g., London Estates).
- Infrastructure requirements associated with SDC development would require an upgraded sewer treatment and water recycling plan.
- Developer funds.

Energy Resiliency / Microgrid Construction

General Information:

- An energy sustainability plan and microgrid design should accompany any SDC development.
- Community Choice Aggregation is available in 23 municipalities and counties in California, serving 11 million customers.
- The Climate Center, located in Santa Rosa, is among the main organizing and lobbying organizations responsible for the development and adoption of Community Choice Aggregation.
- PG&E has shown itself to be an increasingly unreliable source for the electric grid.

Community Benefits:

- A move towards a localized, sustainable energy infrastructure can serve as an emergency preparedness resource.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- Lower energy costs will attract potential commercial interests, and reduce operating costs for a sewage treatment plant, public school, etc.
- Local job creation will increase due the highly skilled workers required for construction, and the administration and monitoring of the system.

Potential funding sources:

- Grants
- Local rate payers



FIRE SAFETY / CLIMATE RESILIENCY:

Fire Safety / Protections

General Information:

- Many of our appendix items address this indirectly, including water treatment and wetlands as fire protection; microgrid as protection against large scale electrical grid failure or neglect; adaptive reuse of the reinforced concrete buildings and the open space designation as fire protection. A community center could be used for any number of emergencies.
- Additionally, fire protection building code and WUI (Wildlands Urban Interface) requirements are codified. Evacuation plans and roadway preparedness are big questions; it's our understanding that the EIR will address these issues.

Climate Resiliency

General Information:

- The Sonoma Valley wildlife corridor on the SDC campus is critical to maintain the quality of our water, forests, and wildlife in a rapidly changing and warming environment.
- Keeping landscapes connected via habitat linkages or corridors is the most frequently recommended approach to maintain ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change as it provides an "escape route" for plants and animals to relocate when their habitats are no longer viable.
- Linking also allows resources, including water and nutrients, to pass between habitats that are increasingly confined by human development to maintain ecosystem health for humans and wild residents.
- In 2015, when the SDC was still operational, a [paper prepared for Sonoma Land Trust](#) by researchers from the University of California, Berkeley, not only documented how the SDC's wildlife corridor maintains connectivity, but also addressed what it will take to ensure its integrity.
- The SDC "has high potential for landscape permeability and therefore is expected to allow for free passage of wildlife if left undisturbed," the researchers wrote. They also cited a state mandate—"a cornerstone of California's State Wildlife Action Plan"—that places a priority on making sure development does not encroach on such corridors.
- The researchers noted that protecting the corridor "will require preventing further development, especially in the northern portion of the SDC; as well as reduction in traffic speeds, artificial lighting, invasive species and domestic animal control, limiting human access, and a move toward wildlife-friendly fencing throughout the corridor."

Community Benefits:

- Clean and abundant water: connected creek corridors protect our streams and groundwater.
- Reduced wildfire risk: well-managed landscapes have less fuel to carry and spread flames.
- Climate change resilience: plants and animals can move through corridors to cooler places.
- Room to roam: connected landscapes maintain healthy flows of plants, animals, and resources.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

General Information:

- The community supports and recognizes the importance of preserving the historic, architectural, and aesthetic character of the SDC campus, including permanent protection, preservation and management of selected buildings and structures,



- This would include the historic cemetery, and related landscapes that sit within the boundary of the historic district of Sonoma Developmental Center.
- Inclusion of a museum, archival research center, library, and visitor center (The Gateway to Sonoma Mountain) on the grounds contiguous with and complementary to the Historic Cemetery, Open Space and Wildlife Corridor.
- This management structure is compatible with the goals of the Sonoma Land Trust, co-housing advocates, disability rights supporters, the numerous stakeholders that contributed to past community forums, and the recent community survey conducted and presented to the NSV MAC.

Community Benefits:

- In addition to bringing people together through public events, lectures and workshops, a museum will help provide a sense of community and place by celebrating our collective heritage.
- Museums educate, inspire, foster dialogue, curiosity, self- reflection and serve to help future generations comprehend their history and recognize the achievements of those who came before.
- Fosters partnerships and collaboration with the larger community and other non-profits
- Adaptive reuse of buildings to house research, museum and visitor centers will be effective in reducing our carbon footprint preparing for a future of fire safety, climate resiliency and sustainability of Sonoma Valley
- Historic preservation and reuse of historic buildings reduces resource and material consumption, puts less waste in landfills and consumes less energy than demolishing entire buildings and constructing new ones. Destruction of historic buildings unleashes vast amounts of embodied carbon into the atmosphere contributing to an already overtaxed and warming planet and adding to our carbon footprint.
- An historic district ensures that we are protecting and revitalizing the character of our town and ensuring that the most iconic and diverse collection of architectural buildings, sites and object are preserved for future generations
- Documentation supports that well preserved and revitalized historic districts are an economic boon to a community and affect property values in a very positive way.
- Historic districts are a vibrant, social and economic center for towns and are regarded as world class destinations.

The Community Supports:

- Preservation and rehabilitation of historically significant buildings, structures, landscapes and historic cemetery. These buildings include Sonoma House, McDougall, Oak Lodge, Hatch, PEC and King.
- Preservation of the SDC Library and other sources of written knowledge.
- Preservation of historic artifacts and digital archives currently stored on campus.
- Preservation of the knowledge possessed by individuals associated with SDC, Eldridge and Glen Ellen.

Potential Funding Sources:

- Glen Ellen Historical Society has already received grants and funding from private philanthropists to support a museum and visitor center.
- The Board of Directors of GEHS and general membership include experienced legal, development, grant writing, fundraising and cultural heritage professionals engaged in raising funding for the project.
- Establishment of "Friends of Glen Ellen Historic District" will be instrumental in organizing fundraisers and events providing financial assistance. Modeled after the Friends of Jack London, this



will have a self-generating funding source which includes an event/community center, museum, visitor center that includes historic tours and a world class archival and research hub

- Federal and State Grants
- State Historic Preservation Office Funding
- National Park Service Historic Preservation Funding
- National Trust for Historic Preservation Funding
- Privately Funded Grants
- Scholarships and Research Fellowships
- Governor Newsom’s 2021 Executive Order for 30 x 30 State Funding

COMMERCIAL SPACE / JOB CREATION:

The Community Supports:

- The community has expressed support for innovative or educational use of commercial space at a scale that is compatible with the semi-rural Valley.
- Although it is the NSV MAC’s understanding that it is premature to designate too specifically, community suggestions have included a non-profit hub and a trade skills vocational center.
- Community comments have also noted that we have no identified tenants for commercial space at this time, and that the level of demand for commercial space is uncertain, reflective of significant changes in work patterns.
- Community comments have also noted that it’s not clear that we have a shortage of jobs in Sonoma Valley—versus a shortage of affordable housing—and that *the scale of the commercial space designation needs to be appropriate for this rural community.*
- Commercial space ranked second lowest for “not important / neutral” as a re-development priority in the community survey.
- However, when survey respondents were asked to prioritize commercial development, a Community Center was the most popular (77% of survey respondents supporting), following by an Innovation/Research /Climate Hub at 60%.
- Hotel / Resort was the least popular with 10% support from community survey respondents.

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL

The community is supportive of commercial space to be set aside for community-oriented usage to potentially include:

Community Center

General Information:

- Glen Ellen currently does not have a community center.

Community benefits:

- Potential uses and needs: emergency shelter, temporary emergency health clinic, community meetings, live performances.
- Provides a great boost to the local economy, providing jobs, both in the building and running of the facility. It also provides opportunities for the town to raise money through events, performances and weddings.
- Provides an opportunity for youth to congregate in a safe space promoting strong relationships through sports and recreational activities.



- Can be associated with the local Dunbar School for general assemblies, meetings, and activities, resulting in reduced project costs.

Potential funding sources:

- Grants
- Community fundraising
- Adaptive re-use of an existing building

Relocate Dunbar School to SDC campus

General Information:

- Dunbar school currently serves grades K-5 and is located 3.5 miles from the SDC Campus. The current Dunbar campus is aged and located in a rural setting which requires either busing or car transportation for the commute.
- It is acknowledged that the Sonoma Valley Unified School District would need to run demographic and other feasibility studies as part of any determination to relocate.

Community Benefits:

- Job creation for the SDC development through school administration, maintenance, and enhanced school campus use by the public.
- The relocation allows for greater use of foot traffic to school from the proposed SDC campus development and the south Glen Ellen area.
- Reduced bus and individual car trips through Glen Ellen.
- Reduced greenhouse gases.
- Reduced bus maintenance and fuel costs.
- Multiple studies have indicated that school campus proximity to neighborhoods and housing promotes increased school campus use and greater neighborhood/ community continuity.
- Modernized Dunbar School campus

Potential funding sources:

- Grants
- Local school construction bonds
- Sale of existing Dunbar school campus as surplus land
- Developer funds. Most developments of the scale proposed for the SDC campus would require new school construction.

SITE GOVERNANCE

General Information:

- Many members of the public have requested consideration of establishing a trust to implement the Specific Plan rather than a private developer. A trust would open opportunities for financing and site management that would broaden the potential for successful redevelopment AND community compatibility.
- The model of the Land/ Government-owned Trust for SDC governance and development was introduced at the first public meeting in 2016. Local community response was supportive of the Trust model for SDC governance.



- The SDC Planning Resource Committee was convened to consider the feasibility of forming a “State-Owned” trust, and to examine the required land disposition, land planning, development management, and infrastructure improvements issues.
- In 2018, the SDC Planning Resource Committee received a proposal from WRT Consulting for a financial assessment study of SDC site development potential, with an emphasis on: conservation of wildlife habitat and open space areas, protection and re-use of historic structures, adaptive re-use of existing buildings, and potential redevelopment off-setting revenue uses for the central SDC campus.
- It is important to note WRT Consulting performed the original Existing Conditions Assessment of the SDC site under a contract with the California State Department of General Services.

Community Benefits:

- The non-profit government trust model reduces the profit incentives associated with private developers. Development companies generally generate a 25-30% profit on a specific project.
- Local trust governance allows for far more development financing opportunities. Public funding (governmental in nature), private funding (traditional lending sources: banks, pension funds, insurance companies), private non-profit funding (land trusts, housing trusts, other types of trust related grants).
- Local trust governance may allow for affordable housing occupancy formulas which enable a larger percentage of local workers and residents to live in the newly constructed homes. A private developer cannot make the housing available ONLY to local residents and workers. Any applicant, no matter their location of residency or occupation, is eligible for occupancy.
- A community housing trust-based model would only be responsible for the work associated with SDC campus development.

Potential funding sources:

- Private non-profit grants
- Private fund raising
- Governmental grants
- Traditional developer fund resources
- Income from commercial development