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New SDC plan is inadequate, insufficient

Posted on August 20, 2022 by Sonoma Valley Sun

Please join Sonoma Land Trust in urging Sonoma County to engage in a meaningful planning process for the Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC).

On August 10, 2022, the County released its Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Draft Specific Plan for SDC. Despite the Board of Supervisors direction to pursue a specific plan with fewer than 1,000 homes, the Drafts propose 1,000 residential units with extensive commercial development.

This disconnect highlights the inadequacy and inefficiency of our current approach to planning and development. The draft specific plan fails to respond to the challenges of our time—including wildfire, drought, and biodiversity loss.

Further, because the Specific Plan and EIR were released before the State selected a development proposal, the Specific Plan is hypothetical. Neither it nor the EIR disclose the characteristics or environmental impacts of the proposal that will ultimately be accepted by the State.

Aligning the Specific Plan and EIR with the State's RFP, would increase efficiency, save valuable taxpayer resources, and ensure thorough planning and environmental review. Review of the Specific Plan and EIR must be paused pending completion of the RFP process.

Take action now by sending a letter or email before August 24 to the County at: Brian.Oh@sonoma-county.org (Subject Line: "Draft EIR Comments: SDC Specific Plan"). Make sure to cc the Department of General Services at Gerald.McLaughlin@dgs.ca.gov

Urge the County to:

1. Engage in meaningful planning for SDC by aligning the County Specific Plan process with the State's RFP process and by moving forward with the County Specific Plan and EIR only after the State announces the RFP selection on October 24, 2022.

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2. Re-draft the County Specific Plan and EIR to describe and analyze the impacts of the actual proposal that the State selects for the SDC property. Only after a specific development proposal is identified can the County Specific Plan and EIR provide the streamlined process they are designed to provide.

– Eamon O’Byrne and John McCaull, Sonoma Land Trust

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