



Sonoma Developmental Center Update for Early 2023

Governor's Budget Proposes Transfer of SDC's Open Space Lands to State Parks

After more than a decade of advocacy, scientific research, legal analysis, and community organizing, we are pleased to report that Governor Newsom's FY 23-24 budget proposes the transfer of SDC's open space to the California Department of Parks and Recreation by the start of the new fiscal year in July 2023. The draft budget—which must be approved by the Legislature by June—allocates \$3 million for hiring new park personnel to manage and steward the land.

As Senator McGuire put it in his recent [press release](#):

“SDC is truly a special place. The open space and wildlands have always been a treasured part of the property and thanks to today's state investment, the open space will be protected forever. Sen. Dodd and I made a promise to the community years ago that the vast majority of the SDC property would be permanently protected. And, today, that promise was kept. Over 80% of the property will be permanently protected by the state.”

Sonoma Land Trust looks forward to partnering with state and county park agencies, Jack London Park Partners, and the Sonoma Ecology Center to improve habitat health, wildlife corridor permeability and safe and enjoyable public access at SDC. The transfer to State Parks will also allow the Sonoma Valley Wildlands Collaborative to study and address deferred fire safety and vegetation management problems, which will improve forest and grassland health and decrease wildfire risks for Glen Ellen.

Sonoma County Approves SDC Specific Plan with Reduced Housing Units

In December, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved the final [SDC Specific Plan](#) on a 4-1 vote to guide the next several decades of housing and commercial development.

Some of the highlights from the Board compromise include:

- Reducing the number of housing units to 620 base units, subject to the County's affordable housing program and with a maximum buildout of 750 total units
- Expanded environmental protections
 - Doubled the riparian corridor setback for Sonoma Creek to 100 ft
 - Increased wildlife permeability throughout the entire property and put in restrictions on fencing and lighting to benefit wildlife
 - Expand the community separator and wildlife corridor buffer areas on the north end of the campus which will require building removal and habitat restoration
- Providing at least 1.25 acres for homes to be built for individuals with developmental disabilities
- Any road connecting Arnold Drive to Hwy 12 will be for emergency access only



DGS Selection of Campus Developer Still Pending

The missing piece of the puzzle will be determined when the California Department of General Services (DGS) chooses a development team through their [SDC campus RFP process](#). Without knowing who is selected, it is too early to determine how the broad framework of the Specific Plan will align with the economic and environmental feasibility of a specific redevelopment proposals. Once the developers are selected, Sonoma Land Trust intends to work with the county and the development team to undertake some of the long-delayed wildlife studies for the campus that will help inform building design and location to ensure that the permeability of the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor.

Lawsuit Filed under California Environmental Quality Act Challenging SDC Specific Plan

Two community coalitions—Sonoma County Tomorrow, Inc., and Sonoma Community Advocates for a Livable Environment (SCALE)--have filed a lawsuit under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) contending that the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for SDC Specific Plan violates CEQA's requirements to provide accurate analyses and lacks required and appropriate mitigation for a wide range of environmental impacts.

As the Jan 20th press release states, "Because the county's EIR doesn't adequately study or mitigate the environmental impacts of such high-density development based on real-world conditions, holding the county responsible for doing the job right is imperative."

For more information go to www.scaledownsd.org.