



SONOMA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN PLANNING ADVISORY TEAM MEETING #1 SUMMARY

Friday January 24, 2020

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

The Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) Specific Plan Planning Advisory Team (PAT) Meeting #1 opened at 1:00 pm. Milan Nevajda of Permit Sonoma expressed appreciation for those who applied for the PAT and accepted responsibility and time commitment to serve. Mr. Nevajda explained that the collaboration between Sonoma County and the State of California for this project is significant and novel, therefore Sonoma County created the PAT to bring in community members to help navigate the decision-making process. Participants, including Sonoma County staff, Department of Government Services staff, consultant team members, and PAT members, introduced themselves briefly.

Background and Project Goals

Mr. Nevajda presented a brief history of the Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) and project goals and parameters. Mr. Nevajda noted that the majority of the SDC site is undeveloped open space that will be preserved as such, while planning efforts will be concentrated in a 140-acre core campus that includes over 200 buildings. Mr. Nevajda summarized process that led to the SDC's closure, and how grassroots community activism, together with County and State partners, helped cement an agreement between the State and Sonoma County, wherein the State is funding a three-year Specific Plan process led by the County.

The Specific Plan's intent is to outline what the community is excited about and could support for the future of SDC by developing a clear vision that is marketable to potential buyers and prioritizes community buy-in. State Statute §14670.10.5 lays out the framework for the State-County agreement and identifies some elements of what must be considered in the Specific Plan, including affordable housing, conservation of open space, and a 3-year timeline for the Plan.

Mr. Nevajda indicated that there are four phases to the Specific Plan process:

1. Conditions/Background,
2. Visioning/Conceptual Alternatives,
3. Draft Plan/Environmental, and
4. Adoption and Implementation.

The Specific Plan Conditions/Background process will build on work that has been done at the State level and work to address holes and additional data needs. Topic areas that may require further study include market/economic dynamics, context-setting for community compatibility, hazards management, habitat preservation, structural integrity, demolition, historical preservation, and utilities infrastructure.

Mr. Nevajda emphasized the desire to have robust community engagement, and mentioned continued engagement with the SDC Coalition and Leadership team, the Planning Advisory Team



(PAT), and Technical Advisory Committees (TAC) that will be formed as needed (with a known need for historical preservation and infrastructure TACs).

PAT Role

Mr. Nevajda presented on the purpose and goals of the PAT, emphasizing the need for commitment, professionalism, and openness. The three goals of the PAT are:

1. Advise county staff and consultant team on Specific Plan,
2. Review materials before release, and
3. Be ambassadors to the community.

Mr. Nevajda clarified that the PAT is a director's advisory group and is not a formal decision-making group. PAT meetings are not public; however, agendas and meeting summaries will be made available to the public.

Prior Outreach by Community

Vicki Hill and John McCaull, two members of the PAT, shared a list of background documents related to the grassroots community visioning process that occurred. The SDC Coalition was formed in 2013 to keep SDC open. After the State announced that SDC would be closed and transformed, the grassroots organizing group adopted the name "Transform SDC" and shifted its focus to engaging the community. Transform SDC commissioned a study on similar examples and best practices from similar facilities across the country from the Potrero Group in 2018. Community visioning for SDC and other engagement continued after the closure via two workshops, a Glen Ellen Forum in April 2018 and a community visioning workshop in June 2019. Additional information about Transform SDC can be found on their website www.transformsdc.com.

Specific Plan Scope of Work

Rajeev Bhatia of Dyett & Bhatia discussed the goals and scope of the Specific Plan. The project is set up as 12 tasks and is intended to be completed over a two-year period through December 2021. The Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared concurrently to integrate environmental criteria into the planning process and policies. This will create a self-mitigating plan.

The Specific Plan and EIR are intended to streamline future development of SDC to the extent that development would be consistent with the Specific Plan. Mr. Bhatia provided a brief overview of the schedule for the first three months. The consultant team aims to begin background reports and analysis, develop project website and branding, develop a community engagement strategy, and prepare for community kickoff events by the end of March 2020. Mr. Bhatia recommended establishing a schedule of PAT meetings for the first three months. Goals of collaborating with the PAT include utilizing previously collected information, community engagement, and establishing a robust outreach process for the Alternatives phase.



Brainstorming

Linda Blong of the Public Dialogue Consortium led a group discussion on preliminary hopes and challenges related to the SDC planning process, and to begin expressing perspectives and backgrounds from PAT members as it relates to SDC and the Specific Plan process.

Visions/Outcomes

- History and legacy of care is noted and remembered
- Plan capable of being implemented. Practical from market perspective
- Responsive to challenges and opportunities of future. Not just 2020 but 2040 and beyond
- Future forward plan that is economically feasible. Balancing housing, open space, equity, and sustainability
- Community compatibility
- Visionary and inspiring. Culturally thriving. Based on local needs rather than tourism
- Plan that is economically sustainable
- Provides diverse and affordable housing, special needs
- Feasible and viable plan. Able to pay for several hundred million dollars of infrastructure investment needed. Also incorporates open spaces, adaptive reuse, and respect for culture.

Key Issues or Challenges to Achieve Goals

- Financing
- Infrastructure/time this will take
- Market desires
- Community compatibility

Community Outreach Ideas

Ms. Blong presented a draft Community Engagement Strategy for the Specific Plan process for initial comments, which will build upon impressive work that has already occurred. One component of this strategy is Community Conversations, which are short interviews of aspirational and challenge questions aimed at engaging people at existing events such as farmers markets. PDC will also host a Community Kickoff event in April. This round of community engagement will build on existing work to reach out to populations that have not been part of the planning process and receive targeted feedback.

Ms. Blong, Mr. Nevajda, and PAT members discussed ideas for community outreach, including collaboration with Permit Sonoma to engage the entire County of Sonoma in the SDC planning process. PAT members shared ideas for community outreach events and communities to target in the discussion through notecards.

PAT Meeting #1 closed at 3:00 pm.