

# YOUR VIEWS

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## Mobilizing for change at SDC

Recently the Sonoma Valley Democrat hosted a community panel that provided updates on efforts to scale back development on the historic campus at the former Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC). The online event drew about 60 people.

The panel organized by environmentalist Teri Shore featured Janis Watkins on the lawsuit filed against the county's SDC Specific Plan EIR, Norm Gilroy on the SDC 100 Year Plan, and Angela Morgan on historic status.

The EIR lawsuit is moving forward under the expertise of environmental attorney Susan Brandt Hawley, a Glen Ellen resident. The goal of the lawsuit is to require the county to revise the EIR to address critical environmental issues and provide accurate analyses for appropriate mitigations.

Watkins reported that the SDC Legal Team will soon be reviewing the Administrative Record. Sonoma County Superior Court Judge Bradford DeMeo has set a hearing on the merits of the case for March 19, 2024.

The SDC 100 Year Plan is setting up an independent special district ready to take public ownership of the historic campus or at least be "at the table" if the current sale to Eldridge Renewal falls through for any reasons--such as it is inconsistent with the county SDC Specific

Plan. Gilroy mentioned that petition gathering for the ISD, other initiatives, and a related lawsuit may begin soon.

Morgan said that the designation of the historic campus as a National Historic District is pending. The new cemetery memorial at SDC is completed. Glen Ellen Historical Society has photographed and documented all the buildings on site. Many historic items like the carousel horses as well as equipment used to make custom shoes are stored safely.

The transfer of 750 acres of open space to state parks is pending, but state officials say it will happen by January 1, and funding is secure. However, Shore pointed out that putting a large sprawl complex in the middle of the wildlife corridor and along Sonoma Creek will fragment the habitat and degrade biodiversity.

After questions and discussion, most folks agreed that we need to raise the issue of overdevelopment at SDC outside Sonoma Valley to the people of California across the state, the Governor's office, and multiple state agencies to generate the political influence needed to overcome the status quo.

Individuals and groups writing directly to Governor Newsom will help put political pressure on the state to re-think the urbanization of these precious lands.

**Teri Shore and Nancy Kirwan,  
Sonoma**