



To:

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Tennis Wick, Director, Permit Sonoma

Alegria de la Cruz, Director, Sonoma County Office of Equity

January 22, 2021

Dear Supervisors and Director Wick,

We have signed on to other, general letters about the SDC Specific Plan. Our highest priority for SDC is the protection of the open space around the campus. Trusting that this protection is guaranteed by the state, this letter focuses specifically on community engagement, which we feel is fundamental to the success of the entire process.

Decisions about the former Sonoma Developmental Center campus will have multi-generational impacts, because the property could produce enormous benefits such as good-paying jobs that diversify the North Bay's economy, affordable housing, and innovation in climate, energy, and water. Considering how important SDC could be to the future of Sonoma County, we are concerned that critical groups and perspectives have not yet been represented in the community engagement and outreach conducted so far.

The pandemic has made stakeholder engagement difficult, and the budget for it was modest. The amount and breadth of community engagement conducted so far does not, we believe, provide a basis for developing three meaningful land use alternatives that Sonoma County can be proud of and can defend to the state of California.

We request that Permit Sonoma use contingency funds remaining from the state to immediately hire consultants with specialized expertise in community engagement to conduct an expanded stakeholder assessment about the future of the SDC campus, and that the results be integrated as part of the planning process.

To provide Sonoma County with a defensible basis for evaluating alternatives and presenting a compelling proposal to the state, we suggest that the stakeholder assessment include the following elements:

1. Define "community" and "stakeholder" to include interests in Sonoma Valley, Sonoma County, the North Bay, and state agencies such as DGS, Housing Finance

Authority and/or Housing and Community Development, Air Resources Board, CalEPA, Energy Commission, and Resources Agency.

2. Actively pursue groups and interests, more than individuals, that have been under-represented so far, by appearing as part of these groups' existing meetings to "meet people where they are."
3. Produce results that make visible the various interests, their compatibilities, and their friction points.
4. Focus on Latino voices, because the redeveloped SDC campus must help Latinos rise. Key groups may include La Luz Center, Los Cien, Health Action, Lideres Campesinas, Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County, Soluna Outreach Solutions, Comida para Todos/Food for All, Hispanic Chamber, and others that may be suggested by the Office of Equity.
5. Focus on youth voices, because the redeveloped SDC campus must benefit future generations even more than present ones. Key groups may include Raices Collective, Sunrise Movement, Movement Generation, student groups at Sonoma State University, First 5 Sonoma County, United Way, North Bay Jobs with Justice.
6. Focus on indigenous/Native American voices, as the site's original residents, whose cultural activities on the site over millennia should be appropriately acknowledged and whose critical sites should be protected. Key groups might include the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria including Southern Pomo and Coast Miwok, as well as representatives of the Wappo/Onastis people.
7. Explicitly explore with stakeholders the issue of desirable, acceptable, or unacceptable amounts of housing and jobs/employment/business.
8. Engage a firm with deep experience with Sonoma Valley, SDC, natural resources, equity, and housing. We recommend Tania Carlone, Gina Bartlett, or colleagues they recommend at Consensus Building Institute. [Tania](#) ran community meetings for the SDC Coalition in 2018. [Gina](#) conducted stakeholder assessments for Sonoma Valley's groundwater management process in the 2000s.
9. We anticipate this effort could require a budget of \$50,000 to \$80,000.

We believe this deeper stakeholder assessment is necessary for a successful planning process.



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