



SONOMA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION & LAND-USE COALITION

September 23,2022

Mr. Brian Oh  
Comprehensive Planning Manager  
Permit Sonoma  
2550 Ventura Ave.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Via email to [Brian.Oh@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Brian.Oh@sonoma-county.org)

Re: Sonoma Development Center Draft Specific Plan and  
Environmental Impact Report

Dear Mr. Oh —

The Sonoma County Transportation and Land-Use Coalition Appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Draft Specific Plan for the Sonoma Development Center (SDC) and to raise questions regarding its Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Our comments come in the shadow of legislation recently signed by the Governor to address the Climate Crisis by reaching state-wide carbon neutrality, and improvements in available funding for this purpose. We also note that the goal of the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority is to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

We have queries and concerns about two issues in the Specific Plan and DEIR:

**How seriously would construction of a thousand new housing units at the SDC impact greenhouse gas emissions and the County's plans to reach carbon neutrality?**

State law (SB 375 - Steinberg - 2008) calls for reductions in driving (VMT) in order to address the climate crisis. The draft environmental analysis finds that the SDC plan to reduce driving by 15% is not likely to succeed. Sonoma County's Regional Climate Protection Authority aims to reach carbon neutrality by the year 2030, which will require annual reductions in driving at a rate of up to 6% per year. (Please respond to the attached detailed discussion)

**How does the plan to demolish SDC structures impact greenhouse gas emissions at the SDC, as compared with reuse?**

Although the reconstruction of a building may be proportionately more labor intensive than its replacement, the resulting GHG emissions may be significantly increased. (Please respond to the attached detailed discussions)

SCTL C, 55 Ridgway Ave., Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95401-4777  
Address correspondence to [willard@sonic.net](mailto:willard@sonic.net)

Authors of the DEIR note that failure to deliver a specific plan to the Department of General Services within the next few months might upset the effort to retain local control of the future of the property. However, much has changed recently. The State is now committing \$54 billion over the next five years to address the climate crisis. This funding is to be matched by \$9 billion per year of federal climate investments in California.

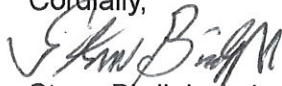
In the light of these changes in the fiscal outlook, shouldn't the State Department of General Services be much less concerned about the need to fund \$100 million worth of remediations to the existing SDC property?

Wouldn't proposed project alternative units at the SDC affect the environment in cumulative ways not yet discussed in the Program DEIR, such as the potential redevelopment of the nearby Hanna Boy's Center and other North Sonoma Valley projects currently in the permitting process or planned within Permit Sonoma? The County's concerns should now be focused on limiting suburban sprawl, and salvaging existing structures wherever possible.

For these reasons the SCTLIC recommends that Sonoma County act now to develop the environmentally superior project, which is Historic Preservation/Reuse. The timeline should be re-negotiated, and the Specific Plan for the SDC should be refocused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND REUSE, and on protection of the site from wildfire risks.

If you wish to discuss any of these issues, please contact me at [scbaffirm@gmail.com](mailto:scbaffirm@gmail.com), or call me at 707-5766632.

Cordially,



Steve Birdlebough, Chair,  
Sonoma County Transportation and Land-Use Coalition

cc: Senator Mike McGuire  
Supervisor Susan Gorin  
Commissioner Jacquelynne Ocana