

MEMO TO: County Staff, Dyett and Bhatia, PAT
FROM: SDC Committee of Glen Ellen Forum
DATE: February 4, 2021
RE: SDC Alternatives Ideas and Issues for Consideration

The SDC Committee (comprised of about 15 people with a diversity of backgrounds and interests) has been discussing ideas for alternatives, keeping in mind the market demand analysis, other proposals, campus constraints, public input over the past three years, and community issues. We have compiled notes from our discussion. We request the SDC Planning team and PAT to consider this input in developing alternatives for the site. The committee considered and responded to several questions; a summary of responses is presented below. In general, there is support for a moderate amount of development, balancing economic feasibility with community and open space resources compatibility (minimizing impacts).

1. **If you could realistically save one historic building, which one would it be and why?** (assuming the iconic PEC building is already protected; this is not to say that numerous buildings in the Historic District shouldn't be saved)

- Sonoma House is a critical component and could be repurposed as museum and small event venue due to the surrounding grounds.
- The bus stop (and adjacent stone gates); they are iconic and far more practical to save.
- The little house up by Sonoma Creek on the far side of the Berkland Bridge. It may be the oldest structure on the property. It would make a great ranger cottage.
- The Firehouse

2. **If housing is to be concentrated in one area, where would it be and why?**

- Most people favor housing east of Arnold, with several specifying the south-east quadrant, and a couple favoring out in the John Mesa soccer field/Junior Farm area.
- Support tearing down Powers, Parmelee, Johnson/Ordahl (two story) and Regamey/ Empanan (two story), Walnut, Wagner, Wright and Dunbar. These areas could be used for housing and would allow for green belts between sites.
- Several buildings along Railroad are sturdy and in relatively good shape and should be re-purposed.
- Set any new housing back from Arnold Drive to maintain the open landscaped areas that contribute so much to the campus setting and viewsapes.
- Preferred mix to address shortages: 10% market rate, 20% moderate, 30% low income, 40% very low income; affordable housing and housing for people with developmental disabilities should be a priority.

- Ideally, housing types should be mixed and not segregated.
- Family housing, consisting of moderate to low income, could be concentrated near the vicinity of Dunbar Elementary if it is relocated to SDC campus.
- The bulk of housing seems most appropriately located on the east side of campus. Mixed business and housing between Arnold and Sonoma Creek and mostly residential within the Toyon/ Railroad loop on the east side of Sonoma Creek. The narrow bridge across the creek is a limiting factor for emergency services egress, evacuation, etc.

3. Name several public amenities that, in your opinion, could best serve the local community. Where would you put them and why?

- A Glen Ellen Downtown Plaza – A town square or plaza for Glen Ellen would provide numerous benefits for the community, including gathering places, picnicking, and recreation in a physical center that would bind an otherwise split community. Provide public amenities such as ADA accessibility and public toilets. The location of the plaza could be the loop around the Harney entrance, Sonoma and Wilson streets. The Gym and Oak Valley School could be removed to make room for more open space or repurposed for businesses. Parking for the plaza and businesses could utilize the existing motor pool parking area.
- A Glen Ellen Community Center would be a huge benefit for Glen Ellen and outlying areas. A community center would provide a valuable public venue for town hall meetings, music, arts, education, public presentations, and social gatherings. A community center would ground the community with a sense of shared public ownership and responsibility that would bond and strengthen the community.
- GEHS - Southwest corner of the facility including the Cemetery - visitor center, library and museum and storage for Sonoma County Archives and other Societies (income possible)

4. Name several public services that, in your opinion, could best serve the broader community. Where would you put them and why?

- Relocate Dunbar Elementary School to the site, near residential uses, if possible, or adjacent to the existing SDC sports field. The sports field could serve as the school playground and a public field after school hours.
- An increase in residential and commercial use may require fire and protective services. If so, these services could operate out of the existing facilities on campus.
- A community center could serve as a civic center for local municipal advisory commissions and public benefit non-profits to hold public meetings. The center could also house a community run lending library.

5. Name a few sorts of commercial enterprises you would personally frequent. Where should they go?

- Since there is already a gas station nearby as well as a market, a bank, a bakery, numerous restaurants, a saloon, etc., new residents might not see a need to duplicate. While new residents will need amenities, must balance with maintenance of existing rural setting and not create a new separate city.
- Farmers’ market, a hardware store, non-chain restaurant/bar/music venue.
- Support space for nonprofits to house their offices/workshops/classrooms.
- Non-chain, locally owned, coffee shop, family style restaurant, hardware/garden store, brewpub, thrift store, consignment shop. Restaurants/ brewpub, coffee shop, consignment shop could be located on the plaza.

Commercial Entity	What/Location
Farmers’ Market	The old Laundry (year round use) and grow property
Film Industry Building use	(any building) studio, set use
Culinary School	Main Kitchen
Trade Schools	Paint Shop, Engineer Shop, Carpenter Shop
Recreational Entity (Parks and Rec)	Dues paying membership for pool, gym, ball field, merry go round
Bottled water	Miles of pure spring water lines that could be bottled/ sold
Natural steam springs	Spa development (small)
Medical Groups	Satellite campuses
Artist in Residence program	Anywhere
Vintners’ Association	Museum, office space
Cannabis growing or other agriculture entities like specialty vegetables for restaurants	Wagner area and former dairy (jobs for DD population)
Wine Museum	Income from tourist trade

6. Thoughts on other proposals circulating in the community (CEPEC, Eldridge Enterprise, Campus Project, etc.)

- Not overly impressed with the majority of the proposals that have been floated to the public.
- There is support for interim use of some buildings for co-housing as outlined in the Campus Project proposal.

- Some expressed support for high-concept ideas offered in the Eldridge Enterprise proposal but are wary of the lack of pertinent details (how many housing units and how many square feet of commercial space?). It sounds very large and urban and not necessarily meeting existing needs of the valley.
- There is support for some farming.
- No support for equestrian center – it does not serve the community or valley residents, in general, and is an exclusive use that would likely occur on designated open space lands.
- No support for resort, large event center. Traffic generation from special events has been an issue in Sonoma Valley for years.

7. Thoughts on Institutional Uses?

- People generally like the idea of an institutional use with the caveat that support depends on the type and size of institution.
- Santa Rosa Junior College, Sonoma State (Study Wildlife Corridor, Viticulture Studies, other academics such as ESL for migrant workers)
- UC Davis (Viticulture Extension)
- Kaiser or Sutter – clinics for underserved populations, farmworkers, disabled residents, or urgent care facility
- Since most elder and disabled services have been privatized, these services are assumed to utilize small scale facilities, which should fit well with other mixed use commercial and residential development.

8. Glen Ellen is often described as a donut: village to the north, Glenwood/Marty/Cecilia neighborhoods to the south, open space to the east and west, SDC campus filling the hole in the middle. Should/could we envision the SDC campus as the “heart” of Glen Ellen? If so, what should/could that look like in terms of development?

- People generally like the idea of some sort of public amenity/meeting space such as a plaza/ community center combo that would bring people together from north, south, and center of the donut.
- In a town square model, appropriate services are located around the plaza with public amenities in close proximity. Pedestrian and bike pathways emanate as radii from the center and the connecting street grid that surrounds the plaza.
- However, the CULTURAL INTEGRITY of the property needs to be preserved. To keep the ambiance of the site and Glen Ellen, new construction (especially in the Historic District) should be reviewed carefully.

9. What is your greatest fear in relation to development of the SDC campus? Can you suggest ways to mitigate that fear? [Understanding responses to this question may help with community outreach/engagement to build trust, transparency, etc.]

- Fear that dense redevelopment will have a significant negative impact on the open space and wildlife corridor. We must see the open space, wildlife corridor, riparian corridor, viewscales, etc. for what they are - constraints on development. It's difficult and costly to unpave the proverbial parking lot. To mitigate potential negative impacts on the wildlife corridor, shrink wherever possible the boundaries of the planning site, especially along the northern boundary of the campus and the banks of Sonoma Creek.
- Fear that open spaces are not preserved. To meet the demands of developers, redevelopment of the campus will bleed into the open space; hence the need to make sure the open space is delineated and preferably set aside under a conservation easement prior to the property's sale.
- Resort or other industry that becomes highly disruptive with high volume of trucks and vehicles with related noise and traffic congestion. Would further deteriorate the sense of community by hosting more tourists.
- It being a "mono" development whether that is a resort, a horse farm or a large tech campus. Unless it can be added to the UC or State College campuses, it should not "belong" to one entity.
- Fear that politics will overpower the will of the community.
- Concern that the housing will not be integrated into the existing community and it will look like a bunch of houses and some small shops were just 'plopped' onto the campus. Money and a shortened timeline is driving this process and this may curtail creative thinking.
- Fear that the development footprint will be too large, thus negatively impacting the general quality of life for Glen Ellen and Sonoma Valley residents due to traffic and a more urban feel.
- Fear that what is best for, or compatible with, the community doesn't pencil out and we end up with high density to make it economically feasible, in which case the site is not world class but a heavy traffic generating urban development. The greatest chance of mitigating these fears is finding angel investors and creating a trust with a more forward-thinking and less profit-driven development plan than what will likely be proposed in the alternatives report.
- Fear that the campus becomes an enclave for the 1%, with a focus on accommodating people who don't live here, either as the owners of second home mega-mansions or short-term rentals, or as a resort/golf course/spa.
- This should be a community that uplifts others rather than preys on them. Design this campus with a kind and compassionate vision for all living kind. We can do it! Save it from those who would wish to destroy it.
- Fear that the site could molder away for lack of political will and bureaucratic follow-through, encouraging problematic unregulated activities.

- Fear about inertia and the wearing down of public interest over time; a further downturn of the economy, and corporate developer takeover of the planning process rather than a community-driven, consensus building process. Creative financing, such as a land swap with the school district, or public private partnerships, could go a long way toward achieving community friendly outcomes.
- Fear of a LA/San Jose conglomeration of homes, hotel and fast food restaurants, fuel station and multiple commercial enterprises. This could be the result of a rush job. The consultant should not be providing information slanting to favor the needs of the county while only briefly acknowledging the wants and needs of the community. We have had MANY community forums, workshops and this previous work needs to be acknowledged.
- Fear that a large tech company whose financial might will ruin Glen Ellen neighborhoods. Do not want trails privatized, want water recharge maintained so careful development footprint, i.e., nothing on the north farm area and mountainside. To mitigate fear, we need an open process, multi-use approach so no one behemoth gets to throw its considerable weight around; thoughtful, open, kind and smart management and administration of the campus during and after rebuild.
- Fear that Camp Via will become an estate home, resort, or something equally unacceptable.