



March 18, 2024

Dear Senator Dodd, Senator McGuire, and Assemblymember Connolly,

On January 31, 2024, we sent a letter expressing our concerns about the transfer of jurisdiction (TOJ) of a 50-acre parcel in the southeastern corner of the former Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) property to CalFire. We have yet to receive a response to that letter, and hope you will promptly respond to the queries included in this follow-up letter.

We would like to reiterate how grateful we are for the transfer of ~650 acres of open space surrounding the 180-acre core campus to California State Parks. This is a significant promise kept, and we are thankful our elected officials and the state agencies agree that open space is a natural bounty worthy of preservation in perpetuity.

We also would like to be clear that, as part of a community that survived the 2017 Wine Country firestorms, we are grateful to CalFire for its service during the firefight and in the years since, as the agency has steadfastly supported vegetation management, home-hardening, and other programs intended to protect lives and property in anticipation of future wildfires.

That said, the concerns we first voiced in January remain. The proposed relocation and expansion of CalFire's Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit Headquarters and Glen Ellen Fire Station, as outlined in the Capital Outlay Budget Change Proposal submitted to the California Legislature on January 1, 2024, presents a significant threat to the viability of the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor and a significant reduction in the amount of open space intended to be set aside via legislation authorizing the SDC planning process. (Section 14670.10.5(a)(9): *"It is the intent of the Legislature that the lands outside the core developed campus and its related infrastructure be preserved as public parkland and open space."*)

Though we've been told specific surveyed parcel boundaries have not yet been established, the proposed CalFire development lies within the voter-approved community separator (Figure 1-4, SDC Specific Plan), which requires a vote of the people to alter. The parcel encompasses a seasonal stream, pristine oak savanna, portions of the Eldridge Marsh, and the western outlet of a Highway 12 underpass that serves as a documented route used by wildlife to safely traverse the busy roadway and access the Mayacamas Mountains.

In addition, the parcel is linked to the campus by a proposed road that was only considered by Sonoma County for emergency vehicle access (Figure 3-1, SDC Specific Plan), not as a link between development on the campus and development alongside Highway 12.

Given these disappointing developments, and pulling from our intimate knowledge of the both land and the planning process, we reiterate the following questions and concerns:

- 410,000 square feet of commercial development has been designated for construction on the SDC core campus via the SDC Specific Plan. Is it possible to rescind the proposal as set forth in the COBCP and relocate the new CalFire facilities on the core campus?
 - This would ensure CalFire facilities and personnel are closer to, and better able to protect and serve, the people who will be living on the redeveloped campus and in surrounding communities.
 - Necessary infrastructure, including sewer, water, power, and transit, already exist on the campus and will be updated as part of the campus redevelopment, representing a potentially significant reduction in the costs of CalFire's headquarters relocation.
 - The SDC Specific Plan calls for construction of an up-to-date firehouse as part of the campus redevelopment. Relocation of CalFire's Glen Ellen station to the campus is a logical, expedient way to satisfy the needs of both CalFire and the redevelopment.
 - As proposed, the new CalFire headquarters complex would be built on property that burned in 2017 and that the state's own Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps place within or near high and very high fire severity zones Relocating the facilities on the core campus, which did not burn in 2017, may save them from damage and destruction in future fires.
- It is concerning that this significant development project outside the core campus was not part of any public planning process. This lack of transparency begs the questions: Who is responsible for this plan? Why was the community not informed of this drastic increase in development on the SDC property?

Again, we are forever grateful to CalFire for its heroic work during the 2017 Nuns Fire, and wholeheartedly support the agency's expansion as part of the existing development on the 180-acre campus. We are, however, fundamentally opposed to carving out an additional 50 acres for development in an environmentally sensitive and fire-prone area, and deeply disappointed to find out that this transaction has occurred without transparency.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Sonoma Mountain Preservation, we look forward to prompt responses to our questions.

Sincerely,

Arthur Dawson

Arthur Dawson
Chair
Sonoma Mountain Preservation

Tracy Salcedo

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Vice Chair
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