



# Sonoma Mountain Preservation

March 18, 2024

To: Wil Lyons, Permit Sonoma Planner

RE: Eldridge Renewal Proposal for Redevelopment of the SDC Core Campus

Dear Mr. Lyons,

We are writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of Sonoma Mountain Preservation to express our objections to the redevelopment plan submitted by Eldridge Renewal for the 180-acre core campus of the former Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) in Glen Ellen and to request that Permit Sonoma reject the plan and send the developer back to the drawing board.

## **Locate the Resort Hotel outside the Wildlife Corridor**

Primary among our concerns is Eldridge Renewal's relocation of the four-story, 150-key resort hotel from the central campus onto the knoll currently occupied by the Paxton/Goddard buildings in the northwest corner of the campus.

The developer may argue this location only abuts the critical pinch point in the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor, but the site lies within the corridor itself. Mapmakers and developers have drawn lines on maps, but wildlife doesn't abide by human-made constraints.

The developer has argued that hotel traffic will have less impact the wildlife corridor than residential development, but people staying in hotels are there to party. The lights will be on all day and all night. People will come and go all day and all night. It will be a human corridor, not a wildlife corridor. A hotel in that location will put a crimp in a pinch point that is already delicate and tenuous. Demolition and construction also will constitute a major disruption to the corridor.

Additionally, a four-story hotel on that elevated site violates the Sonoma County Design Guidelines drafted by Sonoma Mountain Preservation and adopted by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in 2010. These guidelines protect the visual integrity of Sonoma Valley's mountain backdrop, which have been adopted by the county to preserve the viewsheds in Sonoma Valley, and require structures be **"substantially screened when viewed from public roads."**

We'd prefer to see the hotel eliminated from the plan altogether, given it will generate additional human and vehicular traffic on the campus with negative impacts to both the environment and the safety and

integrity of surrounding communities, but at minimum, the hotel should be located in the center of the campus, as per the SDC Specific Plan.

**Scale Back Density of Housing Units**

The Eldridge Renewal proposal also disregards the health and well-being of the wildlife corridor, the health and well-being of the people of Sonoma Valley, and provisions of the county-approved SDC Specific Plan by increasing the number of dwelling units to 930, while also minimizing the number of those units deemed “affordable.” SMP urges Permit Sonoma to require that the developer scale back the total number of dwelling units to the 620 approved by the Board of Supervisors at minimum.

Eldridge Renewal’s proposal is grossly out of proportion to the carrying capacity of both the campus and the Sonoma Valley as a whole and seriously impacts associated infrastructure, including water resources, traffic impacts, and the ability of new residents and residents of surrounding communities to evacuate in the event of wildfire.

We urge Permit Sonoma to take whatever action it deems necessary and appropriate to guarantee the Eldridge Renewal proposal does not move forward, and to enforce, at minimum, the provisions of the county-approved SDC Specific Plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Arthur Dawson*

Arthur Dawson  
Chair  
Sonoma Mountain Preservation

*Tracy Salcedo*

Tracy Salcedo  
Vice Chair  
Sonoma Mountain Preservation

cc: Susan Gorin  
Rebecca Hermosillo  
Tennis Wick  
Jason Kinney