



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 5/6/2025

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma

Staff Name and Phone Number: Tennis Wick (707) 565-1925, Ross Markey (707) 565-2543, Wil Lyons (707) 565-7388

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): First

Title:

Sonoma Developmental Center Mixed Use Development, Specific Plan, and Environmental Impact Report Services Contract

Recommended Action:

Authorize the Director of Permit Sonoma to negotiate, finalize, and execute a new agreement through a Sole Source Waiver with Dyett and Bhatia, Urban and Regional Planners with a scope of work for an update to the Sonoma Developmental Center Environmental Impact Report, with a contract maximum amount of \$913,997 and a term ending May 6, 2027 (two years). (First District)

Executive Summary:

In December 2019, the Director of Permit Sonoma executed an agreement with Dyett and Bhatia, Urban and Regional Planners (Dyett and Bhatia), to prepare a Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the former Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) site, with amendments to the contract amount and scope of work approved in September 2022 and August 2023. Also in December 2019, the County entered into an agreement with the California Department of General Services (DGS) for \$3.5 million to fund the preparation of the SDC Specific Plan and EIR, with an amendment to extend the term approved in January 2025 (attached). The Specific Plan and EIR were ultimately adopted and certified by the Board in December 2022. The EIR was successfully challenged in superior court and the Board decertified the EIR and set aside the Specific Plan in December 2024. Eldridge Renewal, LLC ("Applicant"), was selected by DGS to purchase and redevelop the SDC site. In August 2023, the Applicant submitted an SB 330 application for a major subdivision and design review ("development applications") for a mixed-use housing development project on the site.

This item presents a new agreement with Dyett and Bhatia to accommodate tasks related to the review of a revised Specific Plan and environmental analysis of the Specific Plan and development applications, consistent with CEQA and the writ of mandate and court judgment. As the consultant for the original Specific Plan and EIR effort, they possess intimate knowledge of the site and its history. The time required for traditional procurement and to familiarize a new consultant to a conversational level with the project would represent significant delays and cost. Staff recommends that the Board authorize the Director of Permit Sonoma to negotiate and execute an agreement with Dyett and Bhatia for the above scope of work with a contract amount not to exceed \$913,997.

Discussion:

The Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) provided services to persons with developmental disabilities for over 120 years in the heart of Sonoma Valley. At 945 acres, the property includes a large historic campus, agricultural lands to the east, and vast ecological and open space resources. The SDC was the County's largest employer at its peak. In 2018 the State of California officially closed the facility and relocated clients to smaller, community-based care facilities. The State of California, which owns the site, forged a partnership with Sonoma County that allowed the County, together with the community, to chart the future of the SDC. On December 17, 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved a contract (attached) with DGS to accept \$3.5 million from DGS for planning and environmental review services and at the same time authorized a contract with Dyett and Bhatia (Consultant) to provide the County support in preparing the SDC Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report. The culmination of that process occurred on December 16, 2022, when the Board of Supervisors passed the Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan and certified an Environmental Impact Report that charted the future of the site.

In August 2023, Eldridge Renewal submitted a development pre-application vesting their rights under the Gov. Code § 65589.5(d)(5) provision known as the "Builder's Remedy." Under this provision in the Housing and Accountability Act, jurisdictions without a substantially compliant housing element are prohibited from denying, reducing the density of, or rendering infeasible certain housing projects, even if the project is noncompliant with that jurisdiction's Zoning Ordinance, and General and Specific Plans. Sonoma County's Housing Element was out of compliance at time of submittal. A full application package followed on February 16, 2024. The application was deemed complete on March 6, 2025 wherein Permit Sonoma determined the information received was sufficient to begin environmental review under CEQA and process the application.

In January 2023, a lawsuit was filed against the County and DGS as real party in interest, alleging noncompliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In April 2024, the court ruled that the County had not complied with CEQA and subsequently issued its final judgment and a writ of mandamus on October 22, 2024.

On December 3, 2024 the Board of Supervisors voided certification of the SDC Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report and set aside all related SDC Specific Plan approvals as directed by the Writ of Mandamus. The Board further directed Permit Sonoma to revise the EIR in accordance with the Writ and Judgment and bring the EIR back to the Board to consider recertification along with approval of the SDC Specific Plan and related legislative amendments in conjunction with the development application.

Dyett & Bhatia Contract

Permit Sonoma recommends contracting with Dyett & Bhatia to review a revised Specific Plan and prepare an EIR for the Specific Plan and development applications. Dyett & Bhatia possess intimate knowledge of the site, its history, and its unique attributes and remain a vital resource for collaboration between Eldridge Renewal, Sonoma County, and State of California through the application and CEQA processes. A Sole Source Waiver has been retained to procure the work, pending approval from the Board of Supervisors. The work for the project includes updating the Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report that they drafted. Contracting with Dyett

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& Bhatia helps to serve the County in avoiding lengthy and costly timelines required to ensure a new contractor is conversant in the many details and history of the site. For this reason, a Sole Source Waiver has been approved for this contract (Attachment 3).

County staff continue to collaborate with the Department of General Services and the applicant Eldridge Renewal, LLC on the efficient use of existing funding sources for necessary updates to the Specific Plan and timeline expectations regarding the project.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

N/A

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No prepare Specific plan and Environmental Impact Report

9-9-2022: Board authorizes contract amendment with Dyett and Bhatia to cover additional cost

Prior Board Actions Board authorizes second Board authorizes contract amendment with Dyett and Bhatia to cover

12-17-2019: **Additional cost** Board authorizes initial contract with Department of General Services and Dyett and Bhatia to

12-16-2023: Board certifies Environmental Impact Report and adopts Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan

12-3-2024: Board voids certification of the Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report and set aside all related SDC Specific Plan approvals as directed by the Writ of Mandamus issued by the California Superior Court on October 22, 2024.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY24-25 Adopted	FY25-26 Projected	FY26-27 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$913,997	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures		\$913,997	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other		\$232,952	
Use of Fund Balance		\$681,045	
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources		\$913,997	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Approximately \$681,045 of the funding provided by the State of California Department of General Services remains available in the SDC Fund in the Permit Sonoma budget for the completion of this Environmental Impact Report and revision of the Specific Plan consistent with that report. Given that the department's FY 2025-26 Recommended budget was developed before the complete contract costs were known, \$570,877 in SDC Funds were programmed for this project. The department will return to the Board during FY 2025-26 to program remaining funds as needed as part of quarterly Consolidated Budget Adjustments. Any additional funds required to complete this process will be borne by the Eldridge Renewal, LLC (applicant) per the At-Cost Agreement signed by the Grupe Company on behalf of Eldridge Renewal, LLC. on February 16, 2024.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Any costs related to county staff are borne through the above-mentioned remaining funds contracted through the Department of General Services and At-Cost Agreement signed by the applicant team.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 Draft Professional Services Agreement with Dyett & Bhatia, including Scope of Work
Attachment 2 Executed Contract and First Amendment with Department of General Services for the Sonoma Developmental Center
Attachment 3 Executed Sole Source Waiver

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board: