



Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC)

SCALE DOWN SDC

LAWSUIT IS LAST CHANCE TO GET EIR RIGHT!

The deeply flawed Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the former Sonoma Developmental Center site—in the heart of Sonoma Valley in Glen Ellen—allows for large scale development and provides no enforceable measures to reduce wildfire risk, prevent traffic jams, protect the wildlife corridor, or preserve the history and legacy of care at SDC.

In response, two advocacy groups, SCALE (Sonoma Community Advocates for a Liveable Environment) and Sonoma County Tomorrow, Inc., filed a lawsuit against Sonoma County to challenge the faulty EIR approved by the County.

The lawsuit seeks to force the county to revise the EIR to meet the mandates of state law to protect the environment and community from harm.

- **The EIR contains zero measures to prevent environmental harm to the lands and community.** Instead, the county approved a “self-mitigating” Specific Plan with weak “Conditions of Approval” that fails to meet the fundamental requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.
- **The EIR allows a scale of development that will overwhelm this rural area.** It allows up to 1,000 new residential units, with as many as 2,400 residents. It allows 410,000 square feet of nonresidential space including a new hotel, retail, and offices.
- **The EIR did not accurately study wildfire evacuation risks and traffic effects,** saying that adding 2,400 residents and 1000 jobs to the site would have virtually no impact on wildfire evacuation time, unlike the experience of residents when this area burned in 2017 and 2020, putting lives at risk.
- **The Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor and Sonoma Creek that traverse the SDC lands remain at risk from the large development.**

SEE KEY ISSUES ON BACK PAGE

HELP US WIN A BETTER SDC! DONATE TO SDC LEGAL FUND!

ONLINE: <https://scaledownsd.org/donate> OR
<https://www.sonomacountytomorrow.org/donate>

Checks: Send a tax-deductible donation to Sonoma County Tomorrow, Inc., Sonoma Developmental Center Legal Fund, PO Box 983, Sebastopol, CA 95473



HELP DEFEND
COMMUNITY AND OPEN
SPACE!

ADDRESS HIGH
WILDFIRE RISK

PROTECT WILDLIFE
CORRIDOR AND CREEK

PRESERVE HISTORY –
DON'T DEMOLISH

HOUSING FIRST –
NO HOTEL



SCALEDOWNSDC.ORG
SONOMACOUNTYTOMORROW.ORG

KEY ISSUES AT SONOMA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER THAT EIR FAILED TO RESOLVE



High Wildfire and Evacuation Risk The EIR evacuation report, which contained no underlying assumptions or methodology, declared that adding 2,400 residents and about 1000 jobs to the site would have virtually no impact on travel time. The county needs to revise the analysis and provide real-world solutions such as scaling back the development, a viable evacuation plan, and requiring buildings that are more likely to survive a wildfire.

Open Space, Wildlife Corridor, Sonoma Creek The EIR fails to adequately analyze biological impacts of the SDC development. While 750 acres of open space around the campus are being transferred to parks, and setbacks along the creek were widened, the county still must do baseline studies and require long-term protections for open space, wildlife corridor, biodiversity and Sonoma Creek. The 100- foot creek setbacks aren't enough.

Historic Preservation The EIR allows removal of historic structures and landscaping. It is essential to preserve the historic, architectural, and aesthetic character of the SDC campus, and to permanently protect and manage selected buildings and structures within the historic district. The EIR should require adaptive reuse of historic buildings, where feasible and as required by state law, to reduce waste in landfills, and use less energy than demolishing buildings and constructing new ones.

Housing First Justified as an opportunity to develop low-income housing, only 20% affordable housing is planned, the rest is market rate.

A Housing First! approach should prioritize affordable residential housing over commercial/hotel development, with a focus on housing for people with low and very low incomes, essential workers, and individuals with developmental disabilities.

Then and Now Resident and staff numbers at SDC reached a peak over 50 years ago when there was very little growth in Sonoma Valley. Arnold Drive and Highway 12 were still low-traffic rural roadways. As an institution, SDC tread lightly on the environment and adjacent community. The campus was open, peaceful, and not occupied with uses that generated a substantial amount of traffic (e.g., hotel, restaurants, etc.). Highway 12 is now a major thoroughfare while Arnold Drive serves as a busy commuter route. The EIR uses comparisons between now and 50 years ago to downplay environmental impacts at SDC.

Cumulative Growth Fuels Climate Change

The SDC EIR fails to evaluate cumulative growth impacts in rural Sonoma Valley. It ignores new developments such as proposed housing and hotel next to Hanna Center and a major new housing project at Elnoka on Highway 12. The EIR must adequately evaluate how SDC will add to the urbanization of the region and address and mitigate measures to prevent increased driving and associated climate-changing emissions from tailpipes (GHGs).

Conflicts with Longstanding Land Use The SDC development conflicts with decades of city centered growth and open space protection strongly supported by Sonoma County voters.

