

## David Bolling: short take update on SDC future

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When the State of California announced April 3 that a development team had been chosen to implement Sonoma County's plan for the Sonoma Developmental Center, the news landed with a dull thud for many Sonoma Valley residents.

The chosen developers – The Grupe Company and Rogal & Partners, both well-financed companies with major housing and luxury resort projects in their resumes – don't match the vision for a locally-based, community-driven future that a majority of Sonoma Valley residents say they want.

How the state's selection of Grupe and Rogal will play out over the coming months is uncertain, but already opposition is growing and supporters of the locally-drawn plan for SDC say they may appeal the State's decision and organize a campaign against it.

The local plan – titled “The Next 100 Years at SDC” – proposed four “widely-held” principles:

- Keep the land at SDC in public ownership in perpetuity.
- Make sure the local community has a strong say in the future of the land.
- Protect the open space, and expand the wildlife and riparian corridors.
- Choose a rural scale of development compatible with the Sonoma Valley.

According to the “100 Years” plan, none of those principles are reflected in the state's choice to develop the property.

Said one local opponent of that choice, “With this choice, the property will be lost to the community for all time ... We’ve always thought we had a good case to make for local determination.”

Meanwhile, a lawsuit challenging the adequacy of the County’s Environmental Impact Report for the project is in early stages of what could be a long-term process, and as of this writing the County had not yet presented a formal response to the suit.

*David Bolling is the former editor and publisher of the Sonoma Index-Tribune and Sonoma Magazine. He is founder of Valley of the Moon magazine and a contributor to the Sonoma Valley Sun.*