

The Sonoma Mountain Community Services District

LAFCO Application Plan for Service

Prepared by



September 16, 2024

Plan for Service for the Sonoma Mountain Community Services District

Presented by the Organizing Committee for the formation of the District on September 16, 2024

Introduction.

The need to form a Special District to represent the community in the Sonoma Valley was first recognized in the period between 2018 and 2022 after the former Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) was closed by the State.

At that time, and in the years between then and the time this application is filed, the issues around the long term future of the more than 900 acres at SDC have been discussed in some detail. Discussion and public meetings and hearings were particularly concentrated after the State declared the property surplus and initiated a planning process for its future, and later after a legal challenge was filed against the EIR for the proposed Specific Plan for the SDC (recently decided in the community's favor).

Public concern became known, and has continued to build, for the future of the Sonoma Valley after an RFP was issued by the State for the sale of the SDC to a private developer, and most recently after an extremely dense proposal was filed for the SDC property. At the same time, debate and community concern has expanded as several other development proposals of a similar size and implications for the Sonoma Valley have been filed on other nearby properties. In the process it has become clear that a stronger form of independent representation is needed for the community in the unincorporated areas of the central Sonoma Valley,

As the planning process began in 2018, there was, and there still is, a very strong and ever growing movement in the community in the Sonoma Valley that advocates that the property and buildings at SDC should:

- a) remain in public ownership in perpetuity, and
- b) be managed long term by the community in which the SDC has played such a strong and important part over the past 130 years - the community in the Sonoma Valley.

Among the management models considered for SDC was the San Francisco Presidio Trust, which is the federal agency that was formed to take over, and adaptively reuse and manage, the lands and buildings of the former Presidio Army Base for the benefit of the people of San Francisco and the State of California.

Further investigation showed that, while the Presidio property is seemingly very similar to SDC in terms of historic buildings and historic landscapes, the circumstances under which it operates are very different from those at SDC. The Presidio is located in the incorporated area of the City of San Francisco, and that area which has always been very active in the "saving the Presidio" campaign. As a federal agency, the Presidio Trust which was formed to manage the Presidio, has strong working relationships in Washington DC, including access to federal funds and strong political representation in Congress. And, in an action taken with foresight, the Presidio Trust also has access to private funds and donations through the members of its "Partnership for the Presidio".

In contrast, SDC is located in the unincorporated area of Sonoma County where the County has, despite constant urging from the people of the Sonoma Valley, shown no interest in taking over, or preserving, the land and buildings in the Historic District and campus area. In parallel, the State's primary objective, as owner, seems to be to sell off the property as quickly as possible, and at the highest profit to the State.

Nevertheless, the intent of the community to keep the land in public ownership and have local control has remained strong, and the Presidio model has remained of interest as a way to combine the governmental authority needed to enter into contracts and raise federal and state funds with the private-sector ability to build a knowledge base, run programs, and obtain grants and donations from the non-profit and corporate sectors.

Concept.

This proposal for a new independent district to serve the Sonoma Valley is part of a concept that contains elements of the Presidio Trust model, but that is adapted to fit present day conditions in the Sonoma Valley while at the same time looking to the future. The concept combines:

1. The proposed **Sonoma Mountain Community Services District** which, as a governmental agency, will have the structure and the elected representation to:
 - provide an independent voice for the community on the west side of in the Sonoma Valley, and on Sonoma Mountain,
 - have the authority to act by providing a broad range of services and networks to the community in the Sonoma Valley, as described in this application,
 - request and obtain governmental grants, loans and other funds in the implementation of its objectives
 - have standing, as an Independent Special District formed under the Cortese, Knox, Hertzberg Act, to take authority for all or part of the SDC property when the opportunity arises.
2. The **Sonoma Mountain Community Trust** which, as a tax exempt 501.(c).(3) not-for-profit organization which is already established and funded, will serve as both a knowledge hub in support of the District's activities and programs and, where appropriate, as a source of donations and grants in support of the District's, and the community's, work.

Additionally the Organizing Committee for the formation of the District is supported by **Sonoma Valley Next 100**, an established local tax-exempt non-profit that has raised a substantial amount of donations from private sources in recent months in support of the formation of the District and other actions toward responsible growth in the Sonoma Valley.

As at the Presidio, these organizations, working in tandem, can be a powerful force for change and to bring new attention to old problems in the Sonoma Valley. This application to LAFCO applies only to the formation of the Sonoma Mountain Community Services District, but in several areas it refers to the combined strategy described here.

Responses to required conditions.

Following are our responses to the items required in LAFCO's "Application Requirements & Checklist" document:

Item 1. Funds have been deposited with LAFCO from which the filing fees associated with this application can be paid.

Item 2. We are not aware of any Fish and Game filing fees that are owing due to filing this application.

Item 3. Funds have been deposited with LAFCO from which the filing fees associated with this application can be paid.

Item 4. LAFCO has on hand the applicant's "Notice of Intent to Circulate a Petition", together with other related information about publication, the petitioners, and fees.

Item 5. The required documents are enclosed.

Item 6. Digital files are included for the items listed.

Item 7. A digital copy and 13 paper copies of the map are attached.

Item 8. The signed map will be provided after the draft has been reviewed and approved.

Item 9. It is our understanding that no environmental documents are required with this application.

Item 10. There are no agency document filings under this item.

Item 11. The application addresses the subsections in this Item as follows:

- a. No changes in land use are anticipated through the action of forming the District. Changes in land use initiated by the District or others at a later time will be fully cover under CEQA and other regulations and review at the time the land use applications are made.
- b. The description of services, with enumerations, is contained in this application.
- c. The level and range of services, and the context for those services, is contained in this application.
- d. There are no actions to increase service level capacities contained in this application.
- e. There are no specific conditions imposed by this application to structures, roads, sewers or water facilities.
- f. The application contains an indication of the timing of services when the District is formed.
- g. The application contains a description of how the District's services will be financed.

Item 12. No information is provided to this item since it does not seem to apply to this application.

Item 13. This is not an application for city annexation of developed property.

Background.

In making this application, it is tempting to look only at the Sonoma Valley as it exists today, and to base its terms on the needs, governance and growth patterns of the past.

But the real purpose of forming the new District is to provide the people of the Sonoma Valley with both a much needed independent voice now and the ability to act for themselves over the long-term future. The next ten years, the next thirty, even the next one hundred years. The plan for services presented here takes that long range view.

The Sonoma Valley of today is clearly at a tipping point. Proposals for growth at urban-levels now face the community in the valley from every side. Some are in the District (most notably the redevelopment of the SDC property) . Others are nearby and affect the District and its upstream and downstream services and safety routes (the Hanna development project, the Springs development, Kenwood Ranch, and others soon to come). They threaten the survival of the valley's sensitive environment and to potentially change, even erase, its rural setting over the decades to come.

At the same time, wildfires tear our community apart year by year. They displace residents, many of whom later move away or sell, creating community instability and rapid change. In the aftermath, insurance policies, vital to residential financing, are cancelled, and rising construction and financing costs couple with the lack of available insurance coverage to make it even more difficult to rebuild at affordable costs for those who decide to stay.

The likelihood of rapid future growth has also become a reality for the Sonoma Valley. Housing expansion allocations mandated by the State, and implemented by ABAG, threaten to consume more and more of our land with large scale developments – our public lands, our private lands, our heritage lands, and our agricultural lands. The rising costs of building and financing make it difficult to pay for housing that can be afforded by the young families and essential workers who are both the foundation and the future of our community.

And, in the rush to deal with the challenge head on, many of our County's long-established principles of city-centered-growth are being abandoned. Like in the Silicon Valley and other parts of California that have experienced this before, sensitive open space lands are being threatened and historic buildings and landscapes are slated for wholesale destruction. All to make way for the new urbanization of our rural setting.

The Sonoma Valley has also become the often forgotten stepchild in County decisions as intra-district competition for becomes increasingly competitive in the unincorporated areas of Sonoma County. The result has been that local public input (some provided by thousands of people in hundreds of meetings over many years) has been broadly ignored at a County level. At the same time, investments have been reduced for improvements that are needed for vital services in the Sonoma Valley, often resulting in long delays for the implementation of even the most shovel-ready projects in the community.

Meanwhile, the Valley's already limited local services are being called upon to serve what will be a rapidly growing population – our rural roads required for mobility, our limited networks for water supply

and sanitation services, and our evacuation routes that are vital in future wildfires. All are at risk of being overwhelmed as the demand on them increases exponentially, and as climate change radically alters the context in which everything that happens in our Valley is planned for, and implemented.

Additionally we live in a society that typically separates resources into public and private realms. There are public and private agencies, public and private lands, public and private schools, etc. This dichotomy is important in respect to citizen rights, regulatory laws, and management responsibilities.

However, our natural resources, like those on Sonoma Mountain and on the Valley floor, include water, land, and air, and much of our public and private infrastructure such as roads, sewer and water supply are irrevocably interconnected with each other. Our interdependence is most apparent when the resources become scarce due to a major accident or a natural disaster.

Yet public and private resources share boundaries and limitations, and are vulnerable to threats, both predictable and unforeseen, that we can only face if we work locally and if we work together. Recent wildfire disasters have taught us that we, as a community, are better off when private and public entities cooperate to protect ourselves, our community, and our shared resources. That cooperation will be one of the cornerstones of the Sonoma Mountain Community Services District in the Sonoma Valley.

The realists among us recognize that central government can only do so much with the resources they have available. It is also clear therefore that it is time for a community like ours with the means (financial, intellectual and volunteer) to act for ourselves, wherever and however that can be done. Ultimately, the people of the Sonoma Valley are inspired and motivated to:

- **Tap our own resources** - which are extensive, but underused. A way to be ourselves, and act for ourselves,
- **Look forward** - in the context of what has gone before, and with what we value in that.
- **Be in-charge of our own future** - while working with the County and in support of other agencies.
- **Be heard** - at a time when it is clear, that we, as a community, have not been heard in the past.

These are the challenges of our present, and our future, in the Sonoma Valley. They are also our opportunity – if we plan carefully and if we have the tools, like the new District and its sister non-profits, to cope with those challenges and realize that opportunity.

Plan for services within the affected territory.

The Cortese, Knox, Hertzberg Act was created with the intention of creating the opportunity for local action and self governance in the unincorporated communities of California through the formation of Special Districts. The initiative fostered by the legislation has been successful in meeting those objectives in many locations throughout the State over time, and the Districts it has created have been reported to: “provide access to a multitude of services that enhance our communities” and “safeguard our communities” while “working arduously to keep our families healthy, and help our states thrive”.

Meeting the challenges identified in these pages, and realizing the opportunities they offer for the future of the Sonoma Valley, will be both the mission and the purpose of the new Sonoma Mountain Community Services District (SMCSD). Looking forward, and working through its five member elected

Board and its staff, the District will provide the community in the unincorporated areas of the Sonoma Valley with ways to:

- **Have an independent voice** to speak out on, and plan for, the issues that concern the community in the years ahead
- **Comment**, as a local agency with standing, on decisions being made by others at the County, State and Federal levels that affect our way of life – now and over the decades to come.
- **Act for ourselves** at the local level, where needed, as we craft new ways for a growing and diverse population to live here,
- **Protect and enhance** the vital scenic and environmental resources that brought us here and, for many, kept us here, in the first place.
- **Keep public ownership intact**, wherever possible and especially on key lands and historic resources like those at the former Sonoma Developmental Center, all for the benefit of generations to come.
- **Provide essential services** where they are not being provided by others,
- **Combine forces with our neighbors** which are already at work on problem solving in nearby cities and districts, but which are clearly overwhelmed by the multiple demands and competing decisions they are facing.
- **Match the limited funds and resources** available from those agencies and, working with them, actually get things done in the near term in the Sonoma Valley before the demands of growth overwhelm us.
- **Create a better future** for the people of the District and in the Sonoma Valley.

In making this proposal, it should be clear that it is the intention that the District will not engage in any of the following:

- Contravention of the authority of any other existing agency in the carrying out of its work, including engaging in competition with other agencies for funding. In fact it is intended that, wherever possible, the District will work collaboratively with other districts, cities and agencies in the Sonoma Valley to carry out its work, and to help others carry out theirs.
- Exercise of land use authority, which by State law remains with the County of Sonoma in the unincorporated areas of the Sonoma Valley. As would be normal for a landowner, the district will retain authority for what is proposed on the properties it controls through ownership or lease (subject to land use approval by the County), and for projects that it undertakes under the categories of service approved by LAFCO in the formation of the District
- Overlapping of territory where it would interfere with the jurisdiction and functions of other established agencies. The boundary of the District has been shaped to avoid potential overlaps with a future annexation of the Springs area to the City of Sonoma and, where territorial overlaps occur with agencies that provide services like water and sanitation, it will be made clear that the District will not have authority for, nor does it intend to provide, competing services in those areas.
- Direct engagement in the building of housing. Current State law does not provide direct authority to Special Districts to engage in the building of housing, though the State has recently placed a high priority on the provision of affordable housing both, in the incorporated areas of California and in unincorporated areas like the Sonoma Valley.

General Services.

In its general work, the District will conduct research, surveys, and investigations regarding the conservation of resources on Sonoma Mountain and within the District; take preventive and control measures and perform works of improvement where needed; publish reviews and the results of surveys and investigation or research; and disseminate information regarding best practices, control measures, and works of improvement. It will also develop funding from grants, fundraising, endowments and Special District funds.

Community Network.

The District will also work to provide a community network hub that links district stakeholders and voters to provide information, obtain citizen input, and provide access to resources and support from the District and partnering agencies. A critical role of the District will be to unify, and give voice to, District residents so they can effectively participate in the stewardship and protection of shared community resources, particularly on Sonoma Mountain. To achieve this aim, the community must have the opportunity to engage in the discussions and development of priorities and plans of action.

The SMCSO will engage the community through a communication network that links residents and neighborhoods throughout the District. To achieve District-wide coverage, The SMCSO proposes to establish a neighborhood-based outreach network that includes existing homeowner associations, Firewise communities, and other neighborhood groups to ensure broad representation and diverse points of view. Representatives of neighborhood associations will be engaged to assist with outreach to residents, encourage participation, and facilitate neighborhood actions.

The District's proposed Neighborhood Network is based on existing emergency preparedness outreach programs and organizing principles that have proven to be effective at disseminating information, engaging residents and motivating people to take action. While the network will be utilized for emergency preparation planning and preparation, the communication network will also facilitate citizen input and participation on a broad array of issues within the purview of the SMCSO, including community services, natural resource management, public safety, etc.,

As a complement to the internal community communication network, the District will also serve as a link to outside resources, including public and private resource agency services and information that will benefit District residents. These agency resources often provide services that can help improve public infrastructure, fire safety, environmental quality, etc. The District's ongoing communication with outside agencies will ensure that District residents learn about projects and plans that could affect the greater community early in the process. Issues of community-wide significance will trigger a community dialogue to address any issues that could adversely affect the community and take action quickly to resolve them proactively.

Neighborhood Safety.

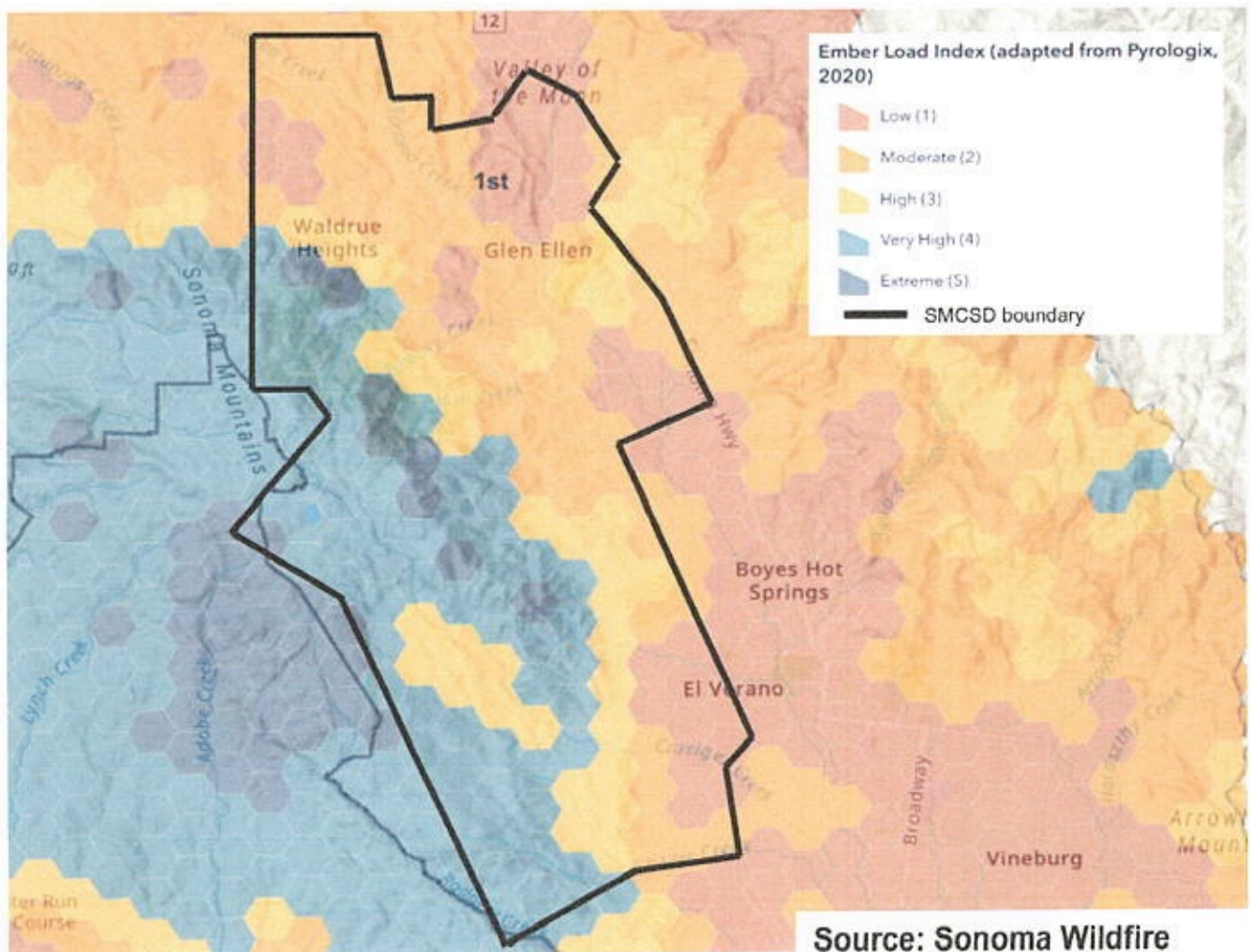
The risk of wildfire is rated as either "very high" or "extreme" throughout the territory of the proposed District (see map), with ratings driven in large part by very high or extreme vegetation load indices on

the eastern slope of Sonoma Mountain. Recent data indicates that, in the case of a wildfire or earthquake, evacuation times could rise to as high as six to nine hours.

The eastern side of the Sonoma Mountain range has not experienced a major fire in recent times – perhaps in the last 100 years - and the ember load index is classified as either “very high” or “extreme” based on burn probability and taking into account the surface and canopy fuel characteristics, climate and topography, and the potential for downwind ember travel.

Based on recent experience, fires, and the threat of recent fires in the Sonoma Valley, have typically been associated with winds from the north and east. Should fire break out, however, on the eastern side of the Sonoma Mountain range under a wind from the west (the prevailing “down valley” wind that comes from the Ocean), the entire mountain, and the floor of the Sonoma Valley below it, would be significantly exposed.

The topographical nature of the District, coupled with the limited road capacity in the area, combines to leave the community significantly exposed in times of wildfires or earthquakes. Transit to the north-west is limited to the Hwy. 12 corridor, and to the south-east to either Hwy. 12 or Arnold Drive. All roads have just a two-lane capacity.



The impact of wildfires has led to insurance companies either canceling home insurance policies or passing on significant rate increases. In April 2024 State Farm announced that 21.7% of homes within the 95442 zip-code (Glen Ellen) would have their policies cancelled. Recently insurance companies (including State Farm) have begun offering wildfire mitigation discounts with up to 8% discounts for a home with an IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home designation

While it is: a) the responsibility of the Sonoma Valley Fire District to respond to fires, and b) the responsibility of the Sheriff's office and our local police officers to monitor evacuation in the event of a fire, it is the responsibility of the community itself, in its many forms, to prepare for evacuation in the event of a fire. Local fire prevention strategies have been initiated in various parts of the community on the west side of the Sonoma Valley, but there is presently no coordinated action to consolidate and combine those strategies into a unified and integrated whole led by an agency with area-wide authority on Sonoma Mountain and on the valley floor at its base.

The District will provide that authority, and will improve public safety on Sonoma Mountain and in the Sonoma Valley by elevating the community's emergency preparedness role in three areas:

- Coordinate role of the existing Fire Safe Councils and assist with the formation of other neighborhood groups to encourage participation, using the COPE (Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies) or MYN (Meet Your Neighbors) models already established and tested for organizing and preparing communities for disasters.
- Implement a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) throughout the District with specific neighborhood delineations.
- Build an evacuation education program and ensure all within the community have developed a Personal Evacuation Plan (PEP)

In providing this service, the District will build on the model for Fire Safety action established in the Geyserville area of Sonoma County where, with the active cooperation of the local Fire District, a well-organized community effort was established and funded. The effort in Geyserville combined an existing Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) with several formerly uncoordinated Fire Safe Councils, and worked to fund and undertake comprehensive fire safety initiatives including organization of evacuation and the provision of additional fire breaks.

As will be the case in the Sonoma Valley, the initiative required the cooperation of local property owners for its success. The task was made easier by the fact that the participants were already neighbors with some of the members of the organizing entity - and that the organizing entity provided the unified organizing skills necessary to get the job done (skills which the District can provide).

Implementation of such a program in the Sonoma Valley will be accomplished through a cooperative agreement or other alignment to be negotiated with the Sonoma Valley Fire District. Preliminary discussions in principle will take place during the period of LAFCO review, and final negotiations for implementation by the District will occur when the elected Board is in place.

The topography and habitat in the Sonoma Valley, and particularly on the east slopes of Sonoma Mountain, provide a particular challenge to the implementation of a similar program in the District. The territory of the District is the location of a highly sensitive riparian corridor on Sonoma Creek and its tributaries, and a very active, and highly permeable, wildlife corridor on Sonoma Mountain. Both will require particular understanding to arrive at a blend of vegetation management and clearance that works both for wildfire management and for habitat protection – a concern that is discussed in the Habitat Mitigation section of this application that follows.

Habitat Mitigation and Environmental Protection.

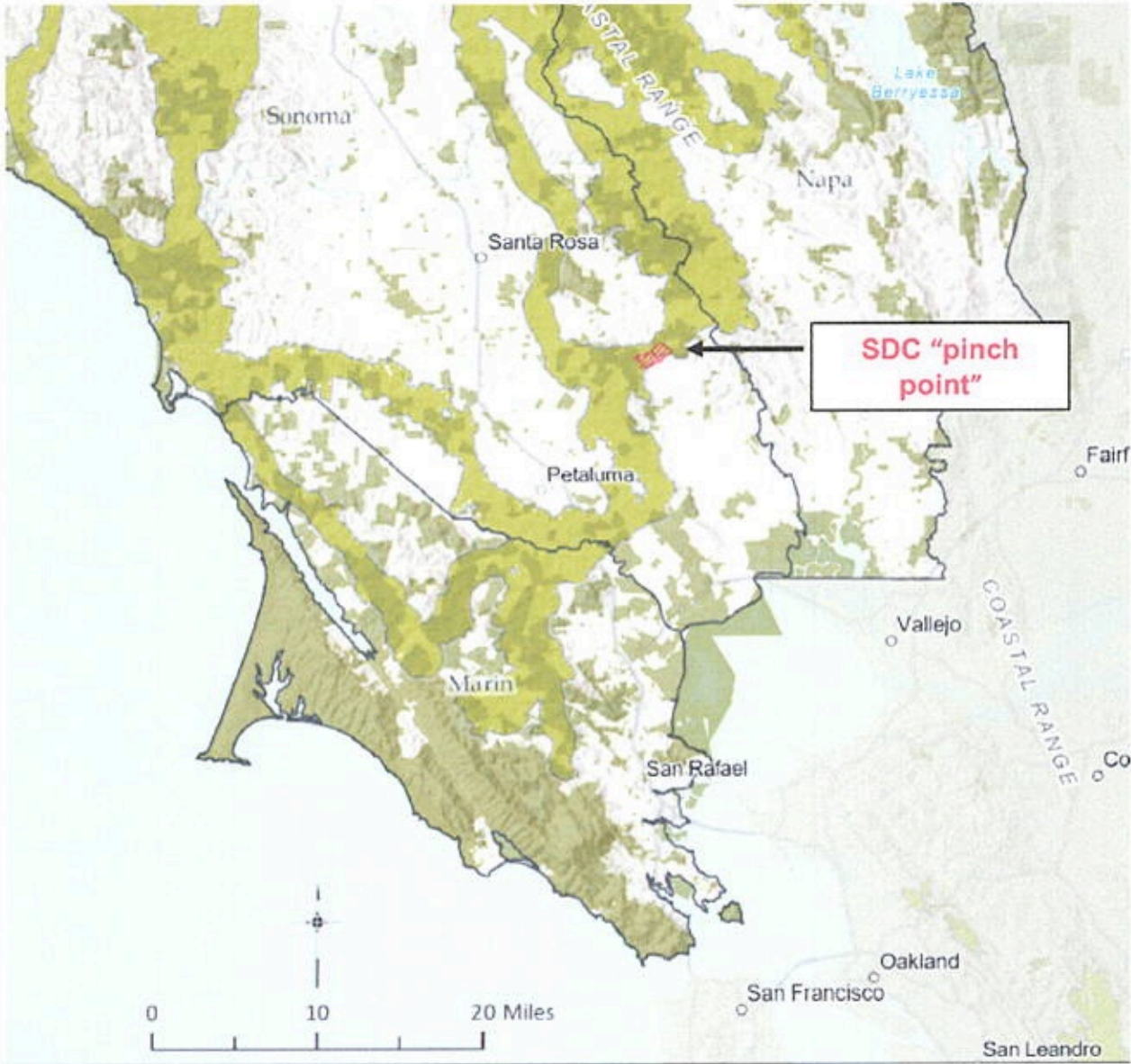
Located in the shadow of Sonoma Mountain, the Valley of the Moon has qualities that make it unique. They range from its topography and rural characteristics to its riparian features, its human population, and its long-standing economic bond to agricultural activities.

A little known, but treasured, aspect of the territory is the role that the valley and its mountain plays in providing a conduit for animal migration. Migrations take place across a significant distance (see map), extending from the Blue Ridge Mountains near Lake Berryessa on the western edge of the Sacramento Valley to the Point Reyes National Seashore and the Pacific Ocean in Marin to the west. A key area within this wildlife corridor are the 945 acres of the former Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC), which are widely recognized as a vital “pinch point” on the migratory pathway between these two regions.

The SDC was founded in 1891, and for last 133 years it has enabled migratory wildlife transit – with little intrusion from human behaviors and urban features such as lighting for streets or buildings, traffic congestion and noise, large congregations of people, and the intrusion of domestic animals.

Redevelopment with the emphasis on increased and significant housing density, and the introduction of commercial buildings and a hotel, represents a significant threat to that environment.

The case to sustain and protect the wildlife corridor was spelled out throughout the planning process for the SDC, yet the plan submitted does little to quell concerns. The introduction of the planned 960 homes compacted into a small area either side of Arnold Drive and along Sonoma Creek, along with a 100-room hotel that is currently slated to be built immediately adjacent to the wildlife corridor, would likely result in a significant increase in traffic; elevated light pollution; and noise from residents, hotel guests, hotel staff and delivery vehicles, all to the detriment of the wildlife corridor and the animals it supports – and on which they depend.



Currently there is no governing body within Sonoma County whose primary mission is to protect the wildlife corridor on Sonoma Mountain, or even elsewhere in the County. While Sonoma County Regional Parks, California State Parks, Sonoma Land Trust, and the National Park Services all have disparate responsibilities and interest with regard to natural resource preservation, none has an overarching responsibility for the wildlife corridor.

With the prospect of the planned subdivision of the SDC property, there is a strong likelihood that that property alone could be fragmented into as many as 18 separate ownerships. Over time, the resulting ownership patterns will be a mix of private and public ownerships, each with its own alliances and policy priorities, and many with profit as their motive. Decisions, many made in boardrooms around the world, are likely to provide very little understanding of the sensitivities of the wildlife habitats and movements on their properties in far away Sonoma Valley.



At the same time, and taking known and predictable development trends into account, we can expect the Hanna property and other properties in the area to also face similar division and fragmentation of management and responsibility.

So, at the local level where there is a mix of privately and publically managed properties on Sonoma Mountain and in the District, there is a need to educate home owners and property owners and managers alike. They need to know, and care about, the details of: a) improving the resistance to fire (including vegetation and underbrush removal) on their properties and b) the protection of vital habitat in the watershed.

In promoting that education, the District can support organizations like Sonoma Ecology Center and Master Gardeners and their “Resilient Landscapes Coalition” to shift the paradigm by educating homeowners and landowners and by educating landscape professionals. Support can also be obtained from the Sonoma RCD, Gold Ridge RCD, and the Sonoma Land Trust , all of which have experience, and have done extensive research, on this topic.

The SMCSDD, through its territory on Sonoma Mountain and the valley floor, will be in a unique position to overcome the fragmentation now occurring, and to provide the leadership, continuity, understanding, and institutional support needed to protect this invaluable resource in perpetuity. The District’s mission will be to harmonize human needs for development with the need for wildfire safety while working within the carrying capacity of the natural system of the lands within its jurisdiction – and, where necessary, reaching out to others to influence decisions. Regardless of what level and character of human development occurs at the SDC, its impact on the wildlife corridor matters.

But the situation is dire. Compromised, animals will change migratory paths, or even abandon them altogether – the consequences of which we must recognize and meet. Securing passages for wildlife crossings under roads and around and through newly developed lands will fall within the remit of the SMCSDD.

In its work on Sonoma Mountain, the SMCSO will work cooperatively with organizations and agencies like Jack London Park Partners, the Sonoma Land Trust, Sonoma Mountain Preservation, the Glen Ellen Historical Society, the Ocean Conservancy, the Sonoma Ecology Center, the Sierra Club, and other non-profit organizations who have worked, and continue to work, to preserve the wildlife corridor. Migration patterns will be mapped on the slopes of Sonoma Mountain, and clusters of important habitat areas will be identified, all as the baseline for a comprehensive guide for local action.

Additionally, the SMCSO will work, in cooperation with the Sonoma Mountain Community Trust, to play a leadership role in creating opportunities for education and the exchange of ideas and knowledge. Their activities will include conferences where experts with experience in multiple counties within the corridor can come together with others from across the state and the world, sharing perspectives and aligning on initiatives to secure this and other wildlife corridors, while reducing the risk of wildfires.

As a governmental entity, the SMCSO will combine good science and good public policy for implementation at the local, regional, and state levels, building public-private partnerships and creating joint powers authorities focused on the wildlife corridor and wildfire response and prevention.

Watershed management.

It is not the intention that the Sonoma Mountain Community Services District (SMCSO) become a conventional water district. The Sonoma Valley is served well by the Valley of the Moon Water District for the provision of traditional water related services to consumers within its boundaries.

It is, however, the intention in forming the District, to work to better understand of the water ecosystem that exists on the western side of the Sonoma Valley – from the ridge line of Sonoma Mountain, down its eastern slopes to the valley floor, and ultimately to its contribution to sustainable yield of the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Subbasin.

This is a critical time for water in the Sonoma Valley, and there are several variables which will either ensure a future that meets both human and wildlife, riparian and environmental needs, or will jeopardize historic qualities and potentially bring irreparable harm. These variables include: the quantity and quality of water that falls in the watershed and its capture for current and future use; the extraction of groundwater to meet residential and commercial needs – both current and future and including protection of the riparian corridors of Sonoma Creek and the Public Resource Trust associated with them; the projected population growth of the future as it is driven by new development; and access to, and management of, water resources on Sonoma Mountain as a whole and with the boundaries of former Sonoma Development Center (SDC);.

Current forecasts developed by the Valley of the Moon Water District (VOMWD) do not yet reflect developments already proposed and future developments to come as the demands caused by the local RHNA allocations and the effects of recent State housing legislation come to bear. An extrapolation of recent forecasts suggests that likely water demand, water supply and sub-basin depletion are not in equilibrium and that options to increase groundwater pumping will only further deplete the subbasin – stretching further the gap between demand and sustainable yield.

At the same time, a recent ruling by the Sonoma Superior Court is calling the County's management of surface and underground water a violation of both the Public Trust Doctrine and the California Environmental Quality Act, both of which safeguard fisheries and public resources. Stream-flow in the Sonoma Valley is vulnerable to periods of drought, and lack of stream-flow is the single largest factor holding back the recovery of the salmon and steelhead which, over thousands of years, have adapted to thrive in Sonoma Creek where summer stream-flows often dwindle.

It is therefore envisaged that the District will work, in collaboration with the Sonoma Mountain Trust, to establish a coalition of organizations in the Sonoma Valley, including the Sonoma Valley GSA, VOMWD, Sonoma Water, Sonoma Valley Sanitation District, Sonoma Ecology Center, Sonoma Land Trust, and others. The objective will be to build a more holistic perspective on water in the Sonoma Valley that will embrace and resolve the apparent impending imbalance between the demand for, and the available supply of, water in the Sonoma Valley.

The work of the coalition will provide a much broader and richer understanding of the impact of future development (both timing and magnitude) and valuable context for necessary investments in infrastructure. Its analysis and products will also inform the residents of the SMCS D, and of the Sonoma Valley at large, and it will provide a better understanding of the interdependencies that will govern their quality of life, safety, and confidence in the future.

Recreation and Parks.

The District will work in several areas of parks and recreation which will benefit the community in the Sonoma Valley. They include:

Historic preservation and adaptive reuse. There are many buildings, properties and spaces within the District and the Sonoma Valley that have historical significance. Many have already been preserved by adaptive reuse, others are excellent prospects for the process. Some date back to the formation of California as a state in 1850. Buildings such as Jack London Village, El Verano Inn, the CJ Poppe Building, Gaije House, Abbot's Passage, the Benzinger Family Winery House, and the Glen Ellen Community Church were all built before the end of the 19th century. The Jack London Saloon and the Chauvet Building were built with bricks from local kilns in the early 1900's.

The Sonoma Mountain Community Services District (SMCS D) will work with the Glen Ellen Historical Society to recognize, sustain, and build awareness of the rich history that exists within the boundary of the District, including on properties like the SDC where development plans present a challenge to the preservation and protection of historical sites and the community's access for learning and recreation.

In 1905 Jack London bought the first of his ranches on Sonoma Mountain. Today, within the Jack London State Historic Park are many buildings with architectural and agricultural significance. They include the Pig Palace, the Silos, the Barns at the Beauty Ranch; the Cottage and Wolf House; the House of Happy Walls (now a museum); Jack London's Lake and Dam. Since 2012, the park has been managed by Jack London Park Partners – a non-profit organization formed by the local community in 2010 to avert closure due to a budget crisis at State Parks. We are committed to cooperating with them in their efforts, and to ensuring that strong financial structures underpin our local heritage.

The largest and most pressing historic preservation issue within the Sonoma Valley is the preservation of key sites at the Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC), a public facility which opened in 1891. The property in Eldridge is historically significant, is in a Historic District, and is recognized for its service to those with developmental disabilities for 130 years.

The most historically significant structures are located on the west side of Arnold Drive including the Sonoma House mansion dating back to 1891 and the iconic Professional Education Building (currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places). The SDC is also home to a traditional carousel – originally constructed in 1918 and relocated to the SDC site in 1973. Moving the carousel to within the historic area would be a major attraction for both the local community and visitors. Structures on the east side are also considered historic by some experts - being built approximately 70 years ago.

The entire campus is currently under consideration for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. An application for Sonoma County Landmark status has also been filed. Structures and cultural landscapes such as stonework walls, bridges, bus stops and water runoff channels represent an integral part of the cultural history that should be preserved.

Community Facilities. Elsewhere, the northerly end of the Sonoma Valley is without a community center for public meetings. Many community groups (such as the Boy Scouts, The Town Band, Citizen Band Radio Club and Alcoholic Anonymous) held meetings on the SDC campus prior to its closure. That need for community meeting space and events, once filled by these and other organizations, still exists.

The few meeting halls that are in the area have only limited availability, with usage often limited by the by-laws or insurance policies to congregational events or to meetings of home-owners in the area in which they are located. Few have the meeting technologies in place that are needed to meet modern day meeting and communications standards. There are also proposals in the area for a small special events venue for public activities that could be created to host social gatherings such as small concerts, weddings and art shows. And, when the District is in place, there will be a need for a meeting space that can accommodate the working groups and meetings associated with both the District's activities and programs and ancillary activities including possible the child care programs for the local community described later in this document.

The District will serve both as a motivator and, where appropriate, an active participant in each of these initiatives undertaken by the community, and it will work to assist with research, acquire property, and find funding and implement projects of benefit to the community as the opportunity arises and as its Board authorizes.

Land Protection. The east slope of Sonoma Mountain is both a very important scenic view-shed for the Sonoma Valley and the City of Sonoma and an important part of both the watershed and the wildlife migration area on the west side of the Valley.

Numerous properties on the mountain are protected (see map), either by public ownership, as in the case of the Jack London State Park, or through conservation easements purchased from, or donated by, private owners in the local community. Some trail networks exist, others are contemplated but not yet in place.

The District will work, as a neighbor-among-neighbors and working closely with Sonoma Mountain Preservation and the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, to negotiate for additional open space and trail acquisitions or conservation easements within the District, and to fill in gaps in the network of protected properties and protect the most visible or most vulnerable properties near the ridge and on the slopes of Sonoma Mountain.

Childcare. Child care and pre-school programs are allowed activities under the legislation that enables the formation of Community Services Districts in California. Numerous studies have shown that children’s experiences in their early years influence future cognitive, social, and emotional development, school readiness, and future academic performance. Quality care and education supports children’s optimal growth and development in all these areas. These programs feature play-based learning and developmentally appropriate materials and practices. They provide opportunities for children to be immersed in reading, and engaged in rich language experiences and creative expression.

Currently there are limited pre-school/childcare options for residents of the Sonoma Valley. According to the Sonoma County Office of Education these are:

- Flowery Elementary School - 17600 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma, CA 95476
- El Verano Elementary School - 18606 Riverside Drive, Sonoma, CA 95476
- Prestwood Elementary School - 343 East MacArthur Street, Sonoma, CA 95476
- Sassarini School - 652 Fifth Street West, Sonoma, CA 95476
- Sonoma Charter School - 17202 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma, CA 95476
- Woodland Star Charter School - 11700 Dunbar Road, Glen Ellen, CA 95442

Planned developments - totaling over 2200 units (Springs, Hanna, SDC – see map) will likely lead to a even larger shortage of existing pre-school opportunities for new residents, and none are located with easy access to child care and day care services.



The Sonoma Mountain Community Services District (SMCSD) will partner with Sonoma County's Community Child Care Council (4Cs), Sonoma County's First Five initiative and California's State Preschool Program (CSPP) to ensure every child within the SMCSD has convenient access to affordable care and early education.

Similarly, the SMCSD will work to ensure an early education facility is part of the development plans for the SDC. This would increase the likelihood of attracting low to medium income residents to the new development.

Childcare Funding.

Three sources of funding – either through grants or low interest loans - have been identified.

Facility Construction: The California Department of Social Services has appropriated grants for new construction and major renovation of child care programs. Additional sources of grants or low interest loans are available under the US Dept. of Agriculture Community Facilities Program that targets small communities with populations under 5,500

Public Childcare: The Office of Head Start has made available grants for Head Start Expansion, Early Head Start Expansion, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grants. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Child Care and Development Division (CCDD), is administering applications for the General Child Care and Development (CCTR) program funds to provide direct services for California children from birth to age thirteen in Center Based and/or a Family Child Care Home Education Network

Additionally, the Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP) grant is designed to increase access for young children birth to five years old in inclusive early care and education programs. It supports the inclusion of children with disabilities and exceptional needs.

Private Childcare: Several programs offer potential for grants including The California Endowment, The Packard Foundation and the PNC Foundation's "Grow Up Great" program - earmarking funds for grants to nonprofit organizations that work to improve school readiness

There is successful precedent for the accomplishment of incremental but aligned services. The Windsor School District (WSD) recognized that parents living within the district boundaries had few options if they wanted to enroll their 4-year-olds in an early learning program. WSD sought to secure annual funding of "universal" transitional kindergarten, an initiative aiming to eventually serve all 4-year-olds in California with no birthday cutoffs for enrollment. Transitional kindergarten precedes kindergarten, and it is geared toward 4-year-olds who are learning developmental skills to prepare them for kindergarten curriculum the following year.

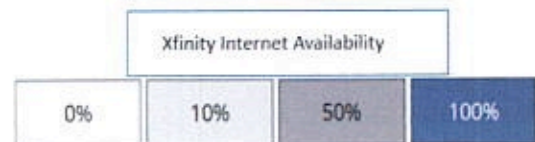
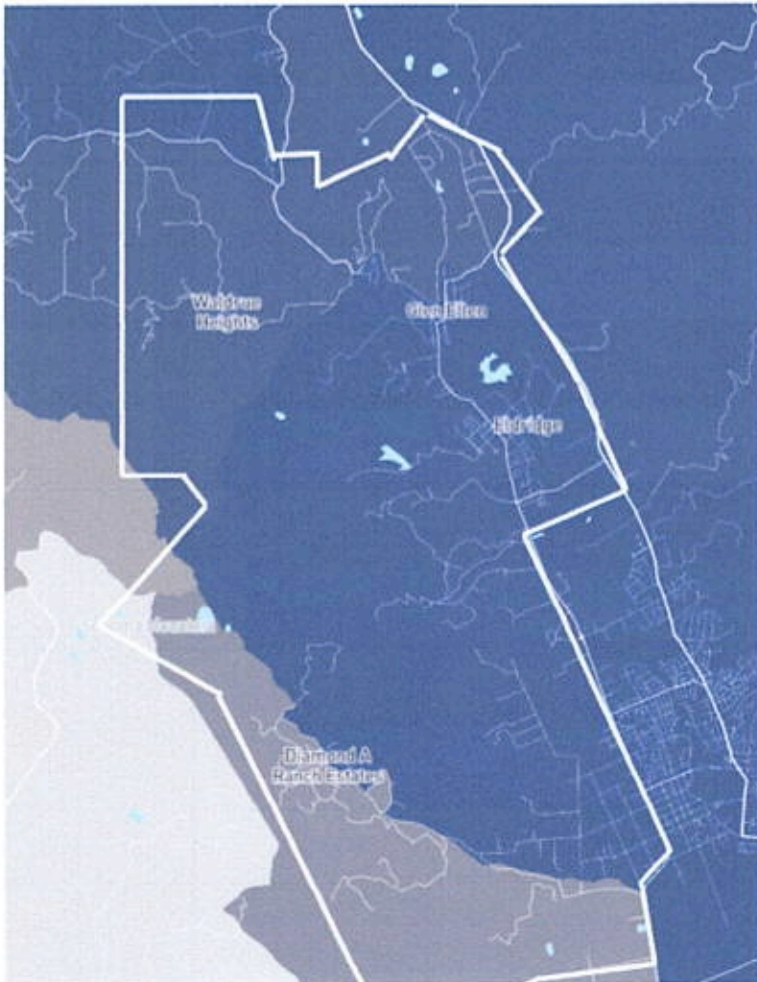
The school district received \$3.1 million in annual funding through programs like those identified here, and, in 2024, 12 new classrooms opened their doors to all 4-year-olds in the district, putting Windsor years ahead of the County’s current timeline for adopting universal prekindergarten.

If it can be done in Windsor, it can be done in the Sonoma Valley. And the new District can help. In fact, like with many other services outlined in these pages, without the District it may never come about.

Communications.

Broadband.

The challenges facing the Sonoma Valley in providing residents and businesses with the broadband service they need to function and prosper in the digital future are not unique. They are however important, not only for day-to-day communications, but also for public safety, especially at times of urgency or danger, like in a wildfire or an earthquake. Both are an ever-present threat in the Sonoma Valley.



Source: ISP Reports

While factors such as the Digital Divide, Broadband Infrastructure, Broadband Adoption (including affordability), Ownership Models, and Funding are consistent themes at the systems level, customer satisfaction with service is vital to the operations level, and in the selection of service providers by the residents of the valley. On that level, customer satisfaction in the Sonoma Valley is “spotty” at best, with many residents within the District reporting poor reception in localized areas and frequent outages and unreliability in the services provided to them. And the map below provided by ISP Reports shows that areas within the District above Glen Ellen and on the eastern slope of Sonoma Mountain have less than optimum internet availability.

Within the Sonoma Valley, Xfinity cable is the primary provider of broadband service. Availability is mixed despite the broadband backbone running along Arnold Drive. ISP Reports, the independent reviewer of Internet Service Providers (ISP), categorizes the 95442 zip-code as a C+ for ISP. Average download speeds for those with Xfinity service is a respectable 1200Mbps.

In August 2023, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved a \$1.5mm investment in broadband infrastructure. This was allocated from existing Broadband American Rescue Plan Act funding to expand low-level network design. This followed the County’s participation in Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA). GSCA is comprised of and governed by Supervisors of 39 rural California counties and is designed for the purpose of increasing access to reliable, affordable high-speed internet for the residents and businesses of those counties. Under the GSCA model, GSCA would build, own, and operate broadband infrastructure in member counties.

Enhancing network scope and scale is essential on many fronts, including: education and health; remote working; communication and safety in times of wildfires and earthquakes; enabling lower income households to close inequality gaps. Opportunities within the Sonoma Valley lie in expanding “middle mile” infrastructure and building out “last mile” segments to business sites and residential areas.

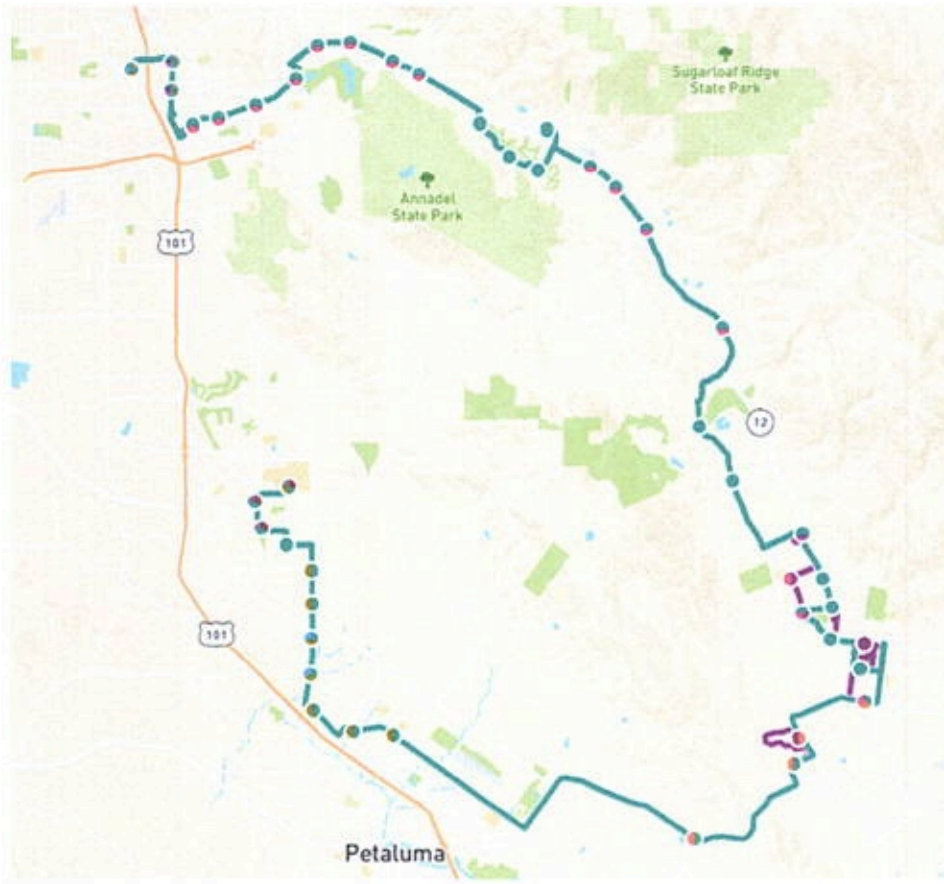
Developments at the former Sonoma Developmental Center, Hanna and elsewhere in the Sonoma Valley should embrace and ensure high speed internet capability (both download and upload speeds), and will also be essential in attracting tenants for any commercial space. Cost effective availability to units targeting low and middle-income households is an essential step in closing the digital divide. The District can assist with that, and in the process create a revenue source which will also support other activities.

Transportation.

The Sonoma Valley of today is served today by Sonoma County Transit (SCT) – which operates a trunk line bus service that connects the communities of Santa Rosa and Sonoma. SCT’s present service is a broad loop (see map) that begins in Coddingtontown and terminates in Sonoma Plaza, and vice versa.

Between Monday and Friday, the service runs just 8 times a day in each direction, and connects single points in Glen Ellen, at the Sonoma Developmental Center and the Hanna Boys Center, and in Boyes Hot Springs and El Verano before reaching the Plaza. As a trunk route without feeders, however, most of the

service stops are a long way from where the majority of the population lives and works in the valley, making it inconvenient for residents to use, and therefore limiting ridership.



Source: Sonoma County Transit

An additional route, operating in the morning and evening rush hours only, makes stops at Maxwell Village Shopping Center, Railroad Ave/Cherry Ave, Agua Caliente Road/Lake Street, and Highway 12/Madrone in an attempt to serve peak hour needs. SCT also provides an extension service from the Sonoma Plaza that connects via Hwy. 116 and Petaluma to the SSU campus to the west. There is no public transit system that connects the Sonoma Valley to the Napa Valley in the east.

Recent presentations by SCT to the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission made it clear that there is no County-wide based initiative, and very little allocation of funds, to extend or improve the system in the Sonoma Valley. If there is to be any improvement to the system, it will have to come from the community itself, and that is where the District may be able to intercede on behalf of the community.

A plan filed with the State in 2023 identified the serious lack of transportation options in the Sonoma Valley and suggested an innovative approach that might be followed up by the District. With all electric vehicles, several feeder routes connecting to the trunk routes, more frequent activity of the trunk routes, and short time headways that would attract riders due to their convenience, the system could create jobs and open up a number of new business opportunities in the Sonoma Valley.

Like the original, and highly successful, model in Curitiba, Brazil, the system would be affordable as its operators are paid by the mile traveled and not be dependent on the more traditional, but highly

volatile, revenues from fares. And, though the network was originally proposed as a mobility solution to serve just the future development at SDC, it clearly has the potential to provide a high level, and more frequent, level of service throughout the Sonoma Valley.

With the evident need for better mobility in our growing community, and with concerns about emissions and climate change growing year by year, it is clear that an improved transport network is a priority for the Sonoma Valley. And that, over time, such a system could be sponsored by the District, as one of a number of initiatives that it can bring to our community.

For that reason it is requested that “Transportation” be included one of the categories under which the District will be allowed to work once it is formed.

The District and the SDC.

One of the objectives in forming the Sonoma Mountain Community Services District is to provide the community in the Sonoma Valley with a local public agency that has the standing to play a proactive part in the future of the Sonoma Development Center property. Even, under the right circumstances, to take over the long term development and management of the site itself on behalf of the community.

The fact that such a public agency is not presently in place has already proven to be a significant problem in negotiations between the community and the State and others. And, even with a District in formation, it is difficult to discuss terms of participation if it is not clear that the District will have the authority to operate under the categories of service that are necessary to fulfill the obligations the community would take under any agreement reached.

The Plan for Services in this document has so far focused primarily on the services and benefits that the District will provide to its communities, independent of services to the SDC. However, should participation in the future of the SDC prove to be possible in the future, it will also be necessary to have LAFCO’s clear agreement on:

- a) the additional service category authorizations that the District would have available to serve and manage SDC if that becomes possible, and
- b) how the District could access those authorizations expeditiously, and without a lengthy process and vote, should the opportunity, arise.

The categories of service that are allowed under State law to Community Services Districts, and that will be needed if the opportunity for participation in the SDC is negotiated, include:

- Streets, roads, sidewalks and rights of way (facilities already in place at SDC),
- Street lighting and landscaping (facilities already in place at SDC)
- Power generation (including creation of a micro-grid)
- Cemeteries (should the management of Jack London State Park elect not to take over management of the existing memorial and cemetery at SDC)
- Fire protection (unless agreement is reached with the Sonoma Valley Fire District to provide those services)
- Water supply (unless agreement is reached with Valley of the Moon Water District to provide those services)

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If, as we believe may be the case, it will be difficult for LAFCO to provide a blanket authorization of all of those categories, we ask that those services be approved as "Provisional Categories of Service" to be approved in principle and authorized when requested for use with SDC. We are open to discussing any provisions or arrangements that need to be incorporated into this Plan for Services to facilitate a solution.

Categories of Service.

In summary, following are the categories of service under which the District will operate as an Independent Community Services District if this application is approved as presented. Categories are referenced by their designation in Government Code Section 61100:

Baseline categories:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| (e) Recreation and Parks | (ae) Habitat mitigation and environmental protection |
| (f) Community Recreation Programs | (af) Broadband (communications) |
| (p) Transportation | |
| (s) Community facilities | |

Provisional categories (for use at SDC):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (a) Water | (l) Roads sidewalks & rights of way |
| (d) Fire protection | (u) Power generation |
| (g) Street lighting and landscaping | (ab) Cemeteries |

The relationships between categories of service and the types of activity described in this document are shown in the attached chart. A pilot program to allow the district to sponsor housing at SDC is listed, but is not a part of this application to LAFCO.

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Proposed District services related to functions on SDC site and in District.

Gov. Code 61100	Category	Types of activity	Collaboration	Revenues	Use of categories	
					District-wide	Provisional for SDC
(a)	water	SDC & SM: West Sonoma Valley & Sonoma Mtn watershed & groundwater-recharge management	SVGSA, SQW, VMWD	grants, contracts		✓
(d)	fire protection	SDS & SM: Safe-to-home evacuation trails and streets. Sonoma Mtn. area-wide vegetation management	SVFD, CalFire, FEMA	grants, FFS		✓
(e)	recreation and parks	SDC historic landscape conservation, historic buildings. Open space acquisitions & leases.	SCRIP, GEHS, SLT	FFS	✓	
(f)	community recreation programs	SDC historic interpretation programs. Child care and pre-school programs	GEHS, SCRIP	FFS	✓	
(g)	street lighting and landscaping	SDC: Management & upkeep of existing facilities	SDC management	FFS		✓
(i)	streets, roads sidewalks & RoWs	SDC: Management & upkeep of existing facilities	SDCmanagement	FFS		✓
(p)	transportation	SDC & SV: Locally-owned valley-wide feeder network linking to existing transit	SCTA,	grants, revenues	✓	
(s)	community facilities	SDC: Historic museum and interpretative facility	GEHS, SCRIP,	land leases, FFS	✓	
(u)	power generating	SDC: microgrid	SVCP, PGE	Grants, FFS		✓
(ab)	cemeteries	SDC: Memorial management & upkeep	GEHS	Grants, FFS		✓
(ae)	habitat mitigation & environmental protection	SDC & SM: wildlife corridor, riparian corridor. Viewshed integration.	SCRIP, SLT	FFS	✓	
(af)	broadband	SDC & SV: Local communications, emergency preparation	SVFD, CalFire, FEMA	FFS	✓	
Pilot program	Affordable & specialized housing	SDC & SV: Essential workers, teachers, veterans, disadvantaged residents, people w. developmental disabilities	City, County, specialist developer	Land leases, FFS		✓

Key:

- CalFire - CalFire
- PGE- Pacific Gas & Electric
- SDC - Sonoma Developmental Center
- GEHS- Glen Ellen Historic Society
- SCRIP- Sonoma County Regional Parks
- SVGSA- Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency
- VMWD- Valley of the Moon Water District
- FEMA- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- SCTA- Sonoma County Transportation Agency
- FFS- Fees for service

Compliance with CEQA.

No property or buildings will be changed or constructed through the formation of the District. It is intended that the evaluations required under CEQA will take place over time as each project sponsored by the District, or on land controlled by the District, is reviewed, thus ensuring compliance with CEQA at the time when the details are most clarified and the evaluation can be made most effectively. No information or declarations regarding CEQA compliance are therefore included with this application.

Financing the District.

Financing of the Sonoma Mountain Community Services District’s work and administration over time will be a combination of fees for service, grants, revenues from programs and, where appropriate, land lease and other payments from properties. Extensive research is under way to identify sources of financial assistance in the categories outlined in this application document, and some of the early results of that research is included below.

The development of the District will proceed in three phases, and the financing of the District will reflect that progress. The phases include:

1. Transition and start up

2. Operational phase in support of the community in general
 3. Operations and activities in association with the SDC property.
1. The Transition Phase will start immediately upon approval of the District at an election, and it will continue through the period during which the new five-member elected Board is seated. The Start Up phase will follow immediately, and will continue for up to two years

Work has been under way for some time toward the start up of the District. For almost two years, the Organizing Committee has been working with Sonoma Valley Next 100 (a tax exempt non-profit organization) and its predecessor organization to make the advance connections, and to develop the funding, necessary to facilitate the work of the District after the LAFCO review and subsequent election is complete, and to complete the transition during the period in which the District's initial Board of Directors takes office.

In some cases, Sonoma Valley Next 100 will begin, through its already established team of talent and volunteers, to locate funding for the District's initial studies and to develop some potentially revenue-producing activities that are consistent with the categories allowed and that can be taken over by the District when it becomes operational. Staffing for all of the work in the transition and start up phases will be provided through Sonoma Valley Next 100, who will work under the direction of the District's Board. The Start Up phase will also include the work needed to find and arrange for any bridge funding necessary to the early work of the District.

It is not expected that the District will require funding for the transition and start up phase that would be classified as an obligation that would require a super-majority vote of the people in the initial election at the time the District is formed. However, as with other districts established elsewhere in California, provisions may be made to allow the approval of a parcel tax or similar financing at a later time and/or within a prescribed period. A vote of the people would be required at that time to authorize the imposition of the tax.

2. The Operational Phase will begin when the District has selected projects, and the funding and/or revenue streams to support them, in place. It will continue through the life of the District, and it may be divided into stages or divisions at the option of the District's Board. Generally it is expected that the District will begin its work with projects and programs that have funding in place through continuing grants or contracts, some of which will have been acquired and funded initially during the start up period. Initial work may also include conferences and Town Hall meetings arranged in cooperation with the Sonoma Mountain Community Trust.

During the operational phase, it is anticipated (at the advice of bond counsel) that the District will form a Community Finance District (CFD) through which it can sell revenue bonds or other financing to support its work. Generally, it would be the intent to, wherever possible, avoid placing additional financial obligations on voters in the District.

3. With decisions being made rapidly by the State and the County with regard to the future of the SDC property, it is reasonable to anticipate that any opportunity for involvement of the District (and through it the community) in SDC will come within the next five years.

Extensive analyses made by Sonoma Valley Next 100 over the past four years indicate that it should be possible to facilitate development and adaptive reuse projects at SDC without placing additional financial obligations on the voters of the District. Part of that solution could be an Enhanced Infrastructure Finance District (EIFD) that would be formed by the District as an independent entity, but that would use deferred tax revenues from just the new construction at SDC to service the bonds it produces, all without additional burden on the voters of the District. Additionally involvement in the SDC could be a source of revenues for the District through user fees and from proceeds from land leases, etc. Economic projections for this kind of use are available through Sonoma Valley Next 100, but they are considered confidential and can only be released under special conditions.

Potential funding sources in support of the District.

The District has a broad range of sources to call upon for support of the programs proposed. Research for this section of the application is ongoing, and it will be updated as new sources are identified.

Watershed resource management.

<https://water.ca.gov/Work-With-Us/Grants-And-Loans> California State Dept. of Water Resources offers a number of grant and loan programs that support integrated watershed management activities addressing environmental stewardship, water supply reliability, flood risk, groundwater sustainability, drought, and more.

<https://rosefdn.org/environmental-grants/california-watershed-protection-fund/> A private, non-profit foundation, the California Watershed Protection Fund supports projects designed to improve water quality and protect watersheds across California.

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Grants/Restoration-Grants> Funding for planning and implementation projects that enhance resiliency to drought and climate change through restoration, protection, or enhancement of riparian and aquatic habitat and river channels, reconnection of historical flood plains, or improvements to ecological functions.

Addressing Climate Impacts – There is a wide variety of funding for projects addressing urgent degrading of water and habitat conditions due to climate change impacts.

Restoration of Wetlands and Meadows - Funding for the restoration of meadows and non-coastal wetlands consistent with the [Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy](#) (opens in new tab) and [Pathways to 30x30](#) (opens in new tab).

Wildlife Corridors - Funding to support connectivity projects that advance multi-benefit and nature-based solutions, consistent with the [State Wildlife Action Plan](#), the [California Wildlife Barriers Report](#), and the Fish Passage Annual Legislative Report.

Resource Conservation Districts <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/rcd> Public Resources Code Division 9 established Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) to conserve soil and water, control runoff, prevent and control soil erosion, manage watersheds, protect water quality, and develop water storage and distribution.

RCDs are special districts of the State of California, set up to be locally governed agencies with their own locally appointed or elected, independent boards of directors. California RCDs implement projects on public and private lands, and educate landowners and the public about resource conservation. RCDs are a vital link between federal, state, and local programs, helping these agencies meet their conservation goals. RCDs conduct: watershed planning and management; water conservation studies; and water quality protection and enhancement projects.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) provides assistance to [California's Resource Conservation Districts](#) (RCDs) in their mission to develop a land stewardship ethic that promotes long-term sustainability of the state's rich and diverse natural resource heritage. This support can take the form of financial assistance through [grant programs](#), as well as information and technical support through publications.

Wildfire Mitigation Many of the fire mitigation funding programs are available to local governments. Following is a list of grants which are available to a broader spectrum of applicants beyond local and state governments.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/grants/cwdg> The **Community Wildfire Defense Program (CWDG)** is a grant program intended to help at-risk local communities plan for and reduce wildfire risk. The CWDG Program prioritizes at-risk communities:

1. In an area identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential,
2. Are low income, or
3. Have been impacted by a severe disaster that affects the risk of wildfire.

The program provides funding to communities for two primary purposes:

- Develop and revise [Community Wildfire Protection Plans](#)
- Implement projects described in a Community Wildfire Protection Plan less than ten years old.

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safety-awards> Provides grant funding directly to eligible applicants for fire prevention programs, and supporting research and development of fire protection plans. Under the FP&S Grant, Wildland Urban Interface [WUI] projects such as community risk assessments, adoption or reinstatement of WUI fire codes, and WUI education/awareness projects are eligible.

<https://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants/wildfire-prevention-grants> Funds for projects in and near fire threatened communities to improve public health and safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

<https://www.nfpa.org/en/education-and-research/wildfire/firewise-usa/firewise-usa-resources> NFPA and the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) have developed a Wildfire Research Fact Sheet series featuring the wildfire research being done at the IBHS research facility to create more resilient communities.

<https://www.nfpa.org/Education-and-Research/Wildfire/Preparing-homes-for-wildfire> Research around home destruction vs. home survival in wildfires point to embers and small flames as the main way that

the majority of homes ignite in wildfires. Embers are burning pieces of airborne wood and/or vegetation that can be carried more than a mile through the wind can cause spot fires and ignite homes, debris and other objects. Included are methods for homeowners to prepare their homes to withstand ember attacks and minimize the likelihood of flames or surface fire touching the home or any attachments. Experiments, models and post-fire studies have shown homes ignite due to the condition of the home and everything around it, up to 200' from the foundation. This is called the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ).

<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/public/fire-management-assistance> Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) Program is available for the mitigation, management, and control of fires on publicly or privately owned forests or grasslands, which threaten such destruction as would constitute a major disaster.

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/hazard-mitigation> FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program provides funding to develop hazard mitigation plans and rebuild in a way that reduces, or mitigates, future disaster losses in their communities. This grant funding is available after a presidentially declared disaster.

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/regional-catastrophic> The Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP) funds the implementation of the National Preparedness System. RCPGP supports the building of core capabilities essential to achieving the National Preparedness Goal of a secure and resilient nation by providing resources to close known capability gaps in Housing and Logistics and Supply Chain Management, encouraging innovative regional solutions to issues related to catastrophic incidents, and building on existing regional efforts.

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities> Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) supports reduction in hazard risk. The program aims to support communities as they build capability and capacity. BRIC also encourages and aids innovation. It helps partnerships grow; supports infrastructure projects; and fosters flexibility and consistency.

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/post-fire> Wildfires can destroy homes, businesses, infrastructure, natural resources, and agriculture. They can also increase secondary hazards and leave areas prone to floods, erosion, and mudflows for many years. FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) has Post Fire assistance available to help communities implement hazard mitigation measures after wildfire disasters.

<https://wildfiretaskforce.org/wildfire-prevention-grants/> CAL FIRE's [Wildfire Prevention Grants Program](#) provides funding for fire prevention projects and activities in and near fire threatened communities that focus on increasing the protection of people, structures, and communities. Funded activities include hazardous fuel reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education with an emphasis on improving public health and safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Child care Facility construction/ renovation

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-and-development/infrastructure-grant-program/major-construction> The California Department of Social Services has appropriated grants for new construction and major renovation of child care programs. Funds shall be used to make extensive

alterations, structural changes, and/or major renovation to existing child care facilities, and for construction to build new child care spaces.

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-and-development/infrastructure-grant-program/minor-renovation-and-repairs> Minor Renovation and Repairs grants for minor renovations repairs, modernization, or retrofitting of existing child care facilities to increase or recover capacity due to a declared disaster, mitigate future disasters, address needs related to health and safety, licensing, or the COVID-19 pandemic, and for other existing facilities for use as child care facilities. Funds shall be used to preserve, enhance, or expand existing child care spaces.

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program> This program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings. Funds may be used to purchase, construct, and/or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment and pay related project expenses. Examples of essential community facilities include:

- Community support services such as child care centers, community centers, fairgrounds or transitional housing
- Educational services such as museums.
- Utility services such as distance learning equipment.

Public Childcare Program Funding

https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/federal_and_state_funding_for_child_care_and_early_learning_edited.pdf Early childhood professionals, such as child care providers, teachers, and consultants, receive federal and state funding to provide a variety of services to children in low-income working families. Federal and state funding for early childhood services are available through a complex maze of funding streams and government agencies.

<https://www.ccrcca.org/headstart/programs/california-state-preschool-program-ages-3-5/> California State Preschool Program (CSPP) is an age and developmentally appropriate program designed to facilitate the transition to kindergarten for three (3) and (4) old children in educational development, health services, social services, nutritional services, parent education and parent participation.

The focus of the CSPP program is on literacy, number skills, social development, health and safety. Parents are encouraged to participate in the classrooms as volunteers and are eligible to serve on the program-wide Parent Advisory Committee. The California State Preschool Program provides children with a daily snack and helps families access community resource

<https://www.ccrcca.org/parents/funded-child-care-options/> EHS-CCP offers full-day, full-year child care to ensure children receive healthy early experiences and developmentally appropriate activities to help them realize their full potential. EHS-CCP also provides comprehensive support to families to make sure their child's health and wellness and family goals are met. It serves children ages 0-3 in a child care setting or 0-4 in a family child care home.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/profile.asp?id=5995> The goal of the Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP) grant is to increase access for young children from birth to five years old in inclusive early care and education programs. It supports the inclusion of children with disabilities and exceptional needs, including children with severe disabilities, in early care and education settings pursuant to Part B and Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-and-development/contractor-resources/general-child-care-and-development-ctr-expansion/fy-24-25> The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Child Care and Development Division (CCDD), administered applications for the General Child Care and Development (CCTR) program funds to provide direct services for California children from birth to age thirteen in Center Based and/or a Family Child Care Home Education Network.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs/funding> OHS funds opportunities in individually defined service areas across the country where Head Start and Early Head Start funding is available. The Sonoma Valley is in a defined Head Start and Early Head Start service area.

Private Childcare Program Funding

<https://www.calendow.org/grants/> The California Endowment

<https://www.packard.org/initiative/california-communities-initiative/> Through the California Communities initiative, they support partners addressing many of the complex and connected issues that matter to families. This includes increasing families' access to stable and affordable housing; ensuring access to clean air and water and building resilience to the impacts of a changing climate; and strengthening community voice, networks, and anchor organizations that bolster communities, including early childhood education

<https://www.pnc.com/en/about-pnc/corporate-responsibility/philanthropy/pnc-foundation.html> The PNC Foundation's priority is to form partnerships with community-based nonprofit organizations in order to enhance educational opportunities, with an emphasis on early childhood education, and to promote the growth of communities through economic development initiatives.

Broadband <https://sonomaedc.org/current-initiatives/broadband> The Access Sonoma Broadband Action Plan is an existing Sonoma County plan that was approved on June 8, 2021 by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. The purpose of the plan is to explore the creation of a publicly governed broadband entity. This entity could deploy, own, and manage broadband infrastructure within Sonoma County, reducing the cost barriers for broadband providers, and closing the regional digital divide. The District could partner with Access Sonoma Broadband to fund a fiber optics "backbone" to provide universal broadband to the Sonoma Valley.

<https://ispreports.org/internet-service-providers-sonoma-ca/> An industry breakdown of local providers by quality. Interactive for a specific location.

<https://ispreports.org/internet-service-providers-sonoma-ca/> The BEAD (California Broadband) report.

<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/broadband-implementation-for-california/broadband-caseworkers/broadband-funding-and-programs> The “last mile” BEAD/ broadband funding program.

<https://www.ntia.gov/funding-programs/internet-all> An overview of US government funding source for broadband programs.

<https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/funding-programs> A compendium of US government funding for broadband initiatives.

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-programs> US Dept. of Agriculture funded broadband initiatives for rural areas.

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Mapping the Boundary.

Section 54900 -54903 of the California Government Code requires, though the State Board of Equalization, the submission of “geographic descriptions, maps and fees” as part of the process of obtaining approval for a new district like the Sonoma Mountain Community Services District.

Work has been under way for almost a year on the preparation of the maps and boundary description required to meet the requirements of Sections 54900 -54903. The results of that process are included below and, where appropriate, as attachments to this application.

In the early stages of the LAFCO process, the Organizing Committee was informed by the Executive Officer that all maps and boundary descriptions for “changes in boundary” (which includes establishment of the boundary for a new district) were subject to the requirements of the California Board of Equalization (BoE), and that LAFCO generally followed BoE’s recommendations in approving the maps and boundary descriptions contained in new applications.

The Organizing Committee therefore contacted representatives of the Board of Equalization, and that began a lengthy process that resulted in the form and content of the maps and boundary description presented in this application.

From the beginning it has been the intent of the Organizing Committee, for the purpose of comprehensive environmental and resource management, and for the design and delivery of programs and services, to include the entire easterly face and watershed of Sonoma Mountain within the boundary of the proposed district. To do that, the district was defined as extending:

- a) from the ridgeline on the west to Arnold Drive and Highway 12 on the valley floor, and including the community of Glen Ellen and the lands and buildings of the Sonoma Developmental Center,
- b) from Diamond A, George Ranch and Grove Street in the south to the intersection of Dunbar Road and Hwy. 12 in the north,
- c) all bounded on the east by a cut-off line that follows Arnold Drive and Hwy 12.

That configuration corresponds closely to the territory that is included in the westerly portion of the already established Sonoma Valley Fire District. For ease of reference, it was decided to adopt that same westerly portion of the SVFD boundary for the new district now being proposed.

Based on that intention, a map and boundary description was prepared for the proposed Sonoma Mountain Community Services District that:

- a. conforms on three sides (north, west and south) to the existing established boundary of the Sonoma Valley Fire District (SVFD),
- b. follows, on its easterly boundary, the centerline of Arnold Drive north from a point-of-beginning where the boundary of the SVFD crosses the centerline of Arnold Drive, crosses the valley south of Madrone Avenue in an eastward direction to a point on Highway 12, and follows the centerline of Hwy 12 northward to the point where the centerline intersects with the boundary of the SVFD.

The initial map for the district was first submitted to the State Board of Equalization on August 23, 2023, and agreement was reached on the use of the SVFD boundary in the description of the new district. Following additional input, and after obtaining consulting services in support of the application, an updated packet was developed that contains a revised map and a written geographic boundary description prepared by land surveyor Phil Danskin (license #4794) of Danskin-Sanfilippo & Associates (also attached). Both were submitted to the Board of Equalization on June 19, 2024, along with a request for its review and approval.

In the discussion which followed, a second “context map” (see attached) was required by BoE (see attached) in order to illustrate and clarify the relationship between the new district boundary and the SVFD boundary. That map references the Point of Beginning (POB) for the new district, the course directions and two turning points along Arnold Drive and Hwy 12, and the end point on Hwy 12, all of which are contained in the written geographic boundary description. The BoE also required some minor modifications of the base map, along with the submittal of: a) a digital shape file of the district boundary, b) a digital shape file of the coordinates for the starting point, the change of direction points, and the end points of the easterly boundary along the center line of Arnold Drive and Hwy. 12; and c) copies of five maps that describe the detail of the two tract maps referenced in the geographic description in the Madrone Avenue area.

Also submitted, and accepted by BoE, were digital files that contain a list of the AP parcels and property ownerships in the district, and a list of the registered voters in the proposed district. They are attached to this application.

Agreement was reached with the Board of Equalization on August 26, 2024, as confirmed in a message received from Devin Byrne, Research Data Analyst in the Tax Area Services Section of the Board of Equalization in Sacramento CA. It advised that the “current revised map material is suitable to establish the boundary change” and advised the Committee to “proceed with LAFCO”. It is our understanding that final approval by the BoE will require the payment of fees (to be determined), and the submittal of certain tax-related forms that cannot be completed until the review of the LAFCO application and/or the subsequent election has been completed.

The maps and boundary descriptions prepared with the cooperation of the State Board of Equalization are presented for LAFCO approval as part of this application.

Summary.

The information presented here appears to cover all of the requirements listed on the “Application Requirements & Checklists” page of Sonoma County LAFCO. If any material is missing or needs explanation, please let us know through our authorized agent and it will be provided.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this Plan for Service for the Sonoma Mountain Community Services District.