



Sonoma Developmental Center

Annual Report

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| BACKGROUND | 2 |
| JURISDICTION AND OPERATIONS..... | 2 |
| OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE..... | 3 |
| Operations | 3 |
| Maintenance | 4 |
| PLANNING AND DISPOSITION..... | 5 |
| Agreement Between DGS and Sonoma County..... | 5 |
| County Planning – To Date..... | 5 |
| PROJECT EXPENDITURES..... | 9 |
| Department of Developmental Services..... | 9 |
| Department of General Services..... | 9 |
| 1. Maintenance and Operations..... | 9 |
| 2. Site Evaluation, Planning, and Decommissioning | 11 |
| 3. Pending Contracts | 11 |
| Sonoma County | 11 |
| CONCLUSION | 12 |

BACKGROUND

The 2019 Budget Act provides General Fund support for the continuing costs of security and maintenance during the closure of the Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC). Through a Budget Change Proposal, the Department of General Services (General Services) requested \$43.7 million over a period of three fiscal years: 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22.¹ The request was based upon data provided by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

The Budget Change Proposal also authorized a unique partnership with Sonoma County that provides \$3.5 million to expedite a planning process. This facilitates the quicker disposition of the property and avoids additional operating costs for the campus.

In addition to the funding provided in the Budget Act, Government Code Section 14670.10.5 was created to outline the priorities of the administration and Legislature. Particularly, the statute recognizes the state's commitment to affordable housing and protection of the open space surrounding the core campus at the former SDC.

Given the unique circumstances of the former SDC, the Budget Act of 2019 requires General Services to submit an annual report to the Legislature on the status of the disposition of the campus by March 1 of each year through 2023. This is the fourth annual report, which includes Sonoma County's progress toward meeting goals and the center's decommissioning progress.

JURISDICTION AND OPERATIONS

Although this is not the department's typical approach for handling surplus property, General Services agreed to take jurisdiction of the campus during its disposition process. However, pursuant to the agreement, DDS is still responsible for the operations and maintenance of the campus during shutdown. On June 28, 2019, DDS and General Services entered into an interagency agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities for operations of the former SDC. DDS formally transferred jurisdiction of the SDC property to General Services on July 1, 2019.

¹[Link to DGS' Budget Change Proposal](#)

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Operations

In keeping with General Services' 2019 Budget Change Proposal and the subsequent interagency agreement with DDS, existing DDS staff were to be retained to operate the campus. As time progresses and attrition occurs, if DDS is unable to backfill vacancies, the state would supplement the staff with contracted resources, particularly for fire protection and campus security. In addition to DDS personnel, General Services assumed that some general maintenance work would be contracted out, and that supplemental security measures (via staffing or contract) would be required.

Generally, these assumptions have proven accurate, and the campus is being maintained as represented in the 2019 Budget Act. DDS staff continue to maintain the campus, and General Services entered into a contract with the California Conservation Corps in September 2019 for general maintenance services, including clearing vegetation surrounding the dams, fire fuel reduction, and trash and litter pickup.

With respect to security, due to the number of instances of theft, vandalism and trespassing that have occurred combined with attrition of DDS' Office of Protective Services staff, DGS entered into an agreement with a private security firm to provide 24-hour, 7-day-per-week patrols.

Given the already low number of state firefighters at SDC as of July 2019, attrition – coupled with challenges in recruitment – resulted in concerns over insufficient shift coverage. General Services entered into a contract with the Sonoma Valley Fire District (formerly known as the Valley of the Moon Fire District) in November 2019. The district is providing supplemental shift coverage for fire, rescue, and emergency medical services at SDC. This arrangement has worked out well by improving coordination between the SDC's fire personnel (also known as Eldridge Fire) and their counterparts in the local fire district.

Maintenance

While DDS generally continues to maintain the campus in accordance with the state's spending assumptions for the site, three significant changes to the site have occurred since July 2019, as reported in the 2020 annual report: the closures of the central utility plant in August 2019 and the water treatment plant in September 2019, and higher-than-anticipated attrition.

In addition to these more significant changes to the campus, a number of other activities have been completed or are underway. These include:

1. Reducing the inflow and infiltration of stormwater into the sanitary sewer system in cooperation with the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District.
2. Removal of aboveground fuel tanks at the central utility plant, underground fuel storage tanks at the former motor pool, and underground fuel storage and generator at the Tallman Building.
3. Decommissioning the water treatment plant.
4. Repair of the spillway, saddle dam, and valve indicator at Lake Sutzenfield.
5. Removal of vegetation on the dam faces and installation of staff gauges at Fern Lake and Lake Sutzenfield.
6. Removal of damaged or decayed buildings and removal of an abandoned mobile home at Camp Via.
7. Repairs to storm culverts on Orchard Road.
8. Ongoing evaluation of options to address maintenance and repairs needed for reservoir dams, bridges and culverts, sanitary and storm sewer systems, water distribution systems, street lighting and electrical systems, tree service, fire fuel reduction, landfills, and other health and safety issues.

PLANNING AND DISPOSITION

Agreement Between DGS and Sonoma County

The Budget Act of 2019 provided \$3.5 million in funding to expedite Sonoma County's planning process. While General Services and the county agreed that a written agreement specifying roles and responsibilities was in the public interest, both parties recognized that such an agreement should not delay the county from beginning its planning work. As such, the county began its planning process concurrent to finalizing the agreement with General Services. In December 2019, General Services and the county executed the agreement, and General Services provided the budgeted funding. Pursuant to the agreement, the county is required to provide General Services with quarterly reports in arrears that include the county's costs for land use planning services (including consultant costs and staff time) and provide an overall progress report.

The agreement stipulated that the county would prepare a Specific Plan in an expedited process to facilitate the disposition of the property within a three-year period. The agreement also requires that the county provide quarterly reports to the state for annual reporting, including the county's costs for land use planning services (including consultant costs and staff time), and a progress report that compares the current status with the project schedule and includes a list of deliverables completed and the estimated dates for completion of the remaining deliverables.

County Planning – To Date

On May 24, 2019, the county issued a request for proposals (RFP) for consultant services to prepare a Specific Plan and a program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the site.

The county selected Dyett and Bhatia as its consultant and began initial preparations for the Specific Plan. This included developing an outreach strategy, given the essential role of local participation with respect to the long-term success of the final disposition of the property.

As part of the county's outreach strategy, the county established a Planning Advisory Team (PAT). The purpose of the PAT is to represent community interests; review Specific Plan-related materials and documents; share information and encourage public participation in the planning process; and to perform an advisory role as an extension of the planning team.

In mid-December 2019, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors authorized the formal commencement of developing the Specific Plan.

The state hosted a county-led staff kickoff meeting and tour of SDC with the county's consultant on January 24, 2020. Following the meeting and tour, the county held the first meeting of the PAT at the site. Originally scheduled to occur monthly, the PAT subsequently met on April 3, 2020, September 4, 2020 and September 11, 2020.

Due in part to circumstances beyond the county's control, including the 2020 Glass Fire and COVID-19 pandemic, the Specific Plan fell behind schedule. The community engagement strategy was modified in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in-person group meetings were shifted to virtual online meetings. The first public workshop scheduled for September 30, 2020 had to be rescheduled due to the Glass Fire, which forced the evacuation of thousands of residents from the Sonoma Valley, including from the SDC site and nearby communities. The Glass Fire was fully contained on October 20, 2020, and the workshop was rescheduled and held on November 14, 2020.

The original schedule called for the release of the Draft Specific Plan in March 2021 and for posting the RFP in May 2021. However, the county released the Draft Specific Plan in June 2022. Due to the delay in the release of the Draft Specific Plan, the state released the Request for Qualifications (RFQ)/RFP in May 2022, following the county's filing of the Notice of Preparation.

The Draft Specific Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report were circulated for public review in August 2022. The Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) was published in October 2022 with four supplementals issued between October and December 2022.

After many years of public outreach and community engagement, on December 16, 2022, the county adopted the SDC Specific Plan, certified the FEIR, adopted a statement of overriding consideration, amended the general plan, and rezoned the property. Through December 16, 2022, the county expended \$2,242,978 toward planning efforts.

On January 18, 2023, local stakeholders filed a challenge to the FEIR.

The schedule for land use planning and disposition per the agreement between General Services and the county is shown in the Gantt chart below. The table that follows shows the current status of the county's contract deliverables through 2022:

Status of Contract Deliverables

| Contract Deliverable | Complete | Percent Complete | Estimated Date for Completion |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A. Robust Community Engagement Strategy (and implementation thereof) | Yes | 100% | December 2022 |
| B. Comprehensive Conditions Report on the property and its setting | Yes | 100% | March 2021 |
| C. Economic Market Demand Report | Yes | 100% | March 2021 |
| D. Water Supply Assessment and coordination among water agencies | Yes | 100% | March 2022 |
| E. Project Conceptual Alternatives & a Preferred Plan Framework | Yes | 100% | January 2022 |
| F. Draft Specific Plan with Infrastructure and Financing Strategies | Yes | 100% | June 2022 |
| G. Public Draft Initial Study and Notice of Preparation | Yes | 100% | February 2022 |
| H. Public Draft Environmental Impact Report | Yes | 100% | June 2022 |
| I. Draft Final Environmental Impact Report and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program | Yes | 100% | July 2022 |
| J. Final Draft Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report | Yes | 100% | August 2022 |
| K. Public hearings for EIR certification and Specific Plan adoption, including any general plan and zoning amendments identified as necessary for consistency | Yes | 100% | December 2022 |

PROJECT EXPENDITURES

Department of Developmental Services

Based upon an accounting of costs from DDS for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, DDS has expended \$4,746,709. For the period of July 1, 2022 through February 28, 2023, DDS has expended \$1,543,255.

While these costs are generally lower, compared to estimates provided in the 2019 Budget Change Proposal, DDS' vacancy rate has been higher than expected due to attrition. Additionally, as the central utility and water treatment plants have both been shut down, utility costs for the campus have declined.

Department of General Services

As General Services is not directly maintaining the campus, most of its expenditures differ in type from those of DDS. While General Services has already transferred \$3.5 million in planning funds to the county and is responsible for payment of utilities and regulatory permits and fees, most of the other General Services costs summarized below are more accurately described as encumbrances. These encumbrances can be categorized as maintenance/operations and site evaluation/planning related to decommissioning the SDC.

1. Maintenance and Operations

- a. General Services previously entered into a three-year contract for \$600,048 with the California Conservation Corps for clearing vegetation from the dam faces, fire fuel reduction, trash and litter pickup, and other general maintenance work.
- b. General Services previously entered into a contract with Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue in the 2019-20 fiscal year; the contract will be renewed for fiscal year 2022-23 to ensure appropriate fire and rescue coverage. As a result of economies of scale from the consolidation of the Sonoma Valley Fire District with other fire districts in Sonoma County, the annual cost beginning July 1, 2023, will be approximately \$512,100 to cover one-third of the monthly shifts.
- c. General Services finalized a \$300,000 contract with Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District to reduce inflow and infiltration of stormwater into the sanitary sewer system.

- d. General Services finalized a contract to address deferred tree maintenance in the core campus, including removal of trees that present a hazard, for \$295,521.
- e. Due to increased instances of theft, vandalism, trespassing and total attrition of DDS' Office of Protective Services staff, General Services intends to finalize an agreement with a private security firm to provide 24-hour, 7-day-per-week patrols.
- f. Through the end of fiscal year 2022-23, General Services issued contract task orders with retained consultants totaling \$2,651,121 for the following work:
 - i. Review of regulatory inspection reports.
 - ii. Hazardous materials testing.
 - iii. Work plan development and oversight.
 - iv. Arborist surveys and assessments.
 - v. Finalization of Department of Parks and Recreation forms for the historic resource inventory and evaluation assessment.
 - vi. Comprehensive documentation of historic resources, including high-resolution photography.
 - vii. Evaluation of electrical systems and repair of existing street lighting systems required for public safety.
 - viii. Evaluation and recommendations for repairs and inspection protocols for infrastructure flagged in regulatory inspection reports, i.e., dams and bridges.
 - ix. Title chain work.
 - x. Evaluation of the sanitary sewer system and assistance with regulatory compliance.
 - xi. Evaluation of the water distribution system to reduce the number of water line failures.
 - xii. Finalization of reservoir emergency action plans.
 - xiii. Safety evaluation of building flagged in Tier 1 seismic report.
 - xiv. California Environmental Reporting System compliance.
- g. General Services has expended \$1,786,967 for civil engineering and environmental services support for annual regulatory compliance, permitting, and decommissioning efforts, operational support and asset management.
- h. General Services had expended \$1,679,643 for utilities, permits and fees.

2. Site Evaluation, Planning and Decommissioning

- a. General Services expended a total of \$2,268,622 for: removal of hazardous materials and an abandoned mobile home at Camp Via; construction of a cage over the geothermal well pit; removal of underground storage tanks and aboveground storage tanks at the motor pool and central utility plant; removal of a brine tank at laundry; repair of the Lake Suttentfield spillway, saddle dam and valve indicator; installation of staff gauges at reservoirs; repair of two major water line leaks; removal of debris at dairy; filling Butler pool; repair of drain culverts on Orchard Road; removal of a tree-damaged carport and replacement of fencing and door canopy on one of the residential buildings; water treatment plant cleanup and bulk chemical removal; Harney Bridge repair; installation of chain link security fencing around the Main Building (Professional Education Center); and construction of a memorial project at the Eldridge Cemetery.

3. Pending Contracts

- a. General Services anticipates entering into the following contracts before the end of fiscal year 2022-23:
 - i. Contract for regulatorily required repairs, maintenance and operation of diversions, reservoirs and storage.
 - ii. Contract for regulatorily required sanitary sewer system repairs.
 - iii. Additional decommissioning and disposition efforts, including: hazardous materials testing and disposal; dam and bridge repairs; characterization and development of remedial action work plans for historic landfills; updating a wildfire management plan, and development of a vegetation and watershed management plan; evaluation of the landscape facility and fuel center; and land surveying.

Sonoma County

Through December 16, 2022, the county has expended \$2,242,978 on activities related to the Specific Plan.

CONCLUSION

General Services, in conjunction with DDS, continues to maintain the SDC campus. In addition, Sonoma County, although delayed by the Glass Fire and the COVID-19 pandemic, completed the Specific Plan in December 2022 and General Services is working toward completing the disposition of the property.