NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Environmental Impact Report for the

Sonoma Developmental Center Campus Specific Plan and Eldridge Renewal Project

Date:	August 29, 2025
To:	State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties and Organizations
Project Title:	Sonoma Developmental Center Campus Specific Plan and Housing Development Project
Comment Period:	August 29, 2025 through September 29, 2025
Scoping Meeting:	September 25, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. PST Location: Altimira Middle School Multi-Purpose Room Zoom Link: https://dyettandbhatia.zoom.us/j/83943750136 Phone: (669 900 6833) | Meeting ID: 839 4375 0136
Lead Agency:	County of Sonoma
Project Location:	15000 Arnold Drive, Eldridge, CA 95431
Lead Agency Contact:	Wil Lyons, Planner III County of Sonoma 2550 Ventura Avenue Santa Rosa, California 95403 sdc@sonomacounty.gov

The County of Sonoma will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Sonoma Developmental Center Campus Specific Plan (Proposed Plan) and Eldridge Renewal Project (Proposed Project). The Proposed Plan and Proposed Project, location, and potential environmental effects are described below. Pursuant to CEQA Section 15060, the County has determined that an EIR is required for the Proposed Plan and Proposed Project and an initial study has not been prepared.

Public agencies and members of the general public are invited to provide comments in writing as to the scope and content of the EIR. Specifically, the County needs to know the views of Responsible and Trustee Agencies as to the potentially significant environmental issues, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures that are germane to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Proposed Plan and Proposed Project. Responsible Agencies will need to use the EIR prepared by the County when considering permits or other approvals for the Proposed Plan and Proposed Project.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, the public is encouraged to submit responses at the earliest possible date, but responses must be submitted no later than the close of the NOP review period, which runs as follows: August 29, 2025 through September 29, 2025

Please send written responses to Wil Lyons, Planner III, at the address shown below. Public agencies providing comments are requested to include a contact person for the agency.

PROJECT TITLE:

Sonoma Developmental Center Campus Specific Plan and Eldridge Renewal Project

BACKGROUND:

In December 2022, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adopted a specific plan to guide development and conservation on the site of the now shuttered Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) and certified an accompanying Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (SCH #2022020222). The SDC Specific Plan envisioned a vibrant community with 620 base dwelling units, plus such additional units as may be requested by a project applicant and are permitted in accordance with State Density Bonus Law, 230,000 square feet of commercial/office space, and a 120-room boutique hotel in a walkable setting, with new and adaptively reused buildings, enhanced open spaces and creek setbacks, and vibrant community gathering spaces.

One month after the adoption of the SDC Specific Plan, Sonoma Community Advocates for a Livable Environment (SCALE) filed a lawsuit alleging that the plan's environmental impact report failed to comply with CEQA. In October 2024, Sonoma County Superior Court ruled for SCALE in certain respects, primarily regarding mitigation for significant impacts, analysis of biological resource impacts and wildfire evacuation, amongst other issues. Subsequently, the Board of Supervisors voted to decertify the EIR and repeal the approval of the SDC Specific Plan, while also directing staff to return with a specific plan and EIR that incorporated review of the pending Eldridge Renewal development application.

In August 2023, the County received a Senate Bill (SB) 330 Preliminary Application for a project involving a major subdivision, design review, and density bonus applications for a mixed-use housing development across three parcels on the SDC campus. The applicant, Eldridge Renewal, proposes to construct and operate 990 new homes (attached and detached residential homes, apartments, co-housing, and independent living residences) and 250,000 square feet of commercial space including office, retail, research and development, and micro-manufacturing uses and a 150-guest room hotel and conference space, as well as community facilities. This development would be located within the core campus area on the SDC site together with approximately 70 acres of outdoor public parks, active recreational areas, and open space areas including walking trails, sports fields, children's playgrounds, and dog parks. Under State law, the County is restricted in its ability to deny, reduce, or render infeasible the density of the project, even if it conflicts with the General Plan, Specific Plan, or zoning ordinance. However, the project is still subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Accordingly, this EIR will identify and address the potential environmental impacts of both the SDC Campus Specific Plan and the Eldridge Renewal Project.

SPECIFIC PLAN AND PROJECT AREA:

Established in 1891 in the heart of the Sonoma Valley, the SDC was a State-run residential care facility created specifically to serve the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. The SDC site is located about six miles north of the City of Sonoma and about 15 miles south of Santa Rosa, between the unincorporated communities of Glen Ellen and Eldridge, as shown in Figure 1. With a total area of approximately 945 acres, the SDC site consisted of a developed core campus covering approximately 180 acres and approximately 765 acres of agriculture, recreation, and ecologically valuable natural areas adjacent to the Sonoma Valley Regional Park and the Jack London State Historic Park. While operational, SDC was also the valley's largest employer, with ties to adjacent communities of Glen Ellen and Eldridge. In 2018, the State of California officially closed the facility, and relocated clients to smaller, community-based care facilities.

In January 2024, the State transferred approximately 650 acres of open space on the SDC site to the California Department of Parks and Recreation, exempting water rights and associated infrastructure and the SDC Cemetery areas. The land transferred is adjacent to Jack London State Historic Park (SHP) and will provide a connection from Jack London SHP to Sonoma Valley Regional Park, maintaining a critical regional wildlife linkage connecting the Marin Coast to Blue Ridge and Lake Berryessa. The property includes high-quality oak woodlands, mixed evergreen forests, coast redwood and riparian forests, grasslands, and wetlands. In February 2024, the State transferred approximately 58 acres of open space from the SDC site to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) for its proposed Lake Napa Unit Headquarters facility project. Together with these transfers, the boundaries of the core campus on the SDC site were also revised. The historic boundaries of the SDC site and land transferred in 2024 are shown on Figure 2.

The Campus Specific Plan and Eldridge Renewal Project Area (Project Area) are co-terminus, as shown on Figure 3. The Project Area consists of a 160-acre core campus and surrounding 49-acre wildfire buffer.

Access

Primary access to the Project Area is provided by Arnold Drive, which intersects with Highway 12 just over two miles north of the Project Area, and with Highway 116 just over seven miles to the south. Madrone Road, south of the community of Eldridge, provides an east-west connection to Highway 12. Transit service is provided by Sonoma County Transit (SCT), which operates three lines (Routes 30, 34 and 38) providing fixed route bus service to the Project Area.

Natural Setting

The Project Area is part of the Sonoma Valley landscape and ecosystem, an area of diverse topography, rich biodiversity, and natural habitats including redwood forests, oak savannas, and coastal prairies. The Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor, one of the most important east-west connectors for wildlife traveling across the Sonoma Valley, passes through the northern portion of the Project Area. Two creeks bisect the Project Area: Sonoma Creek from north to south and Mill Creek from east to west. Throughout the Project Area, mature trees of all different species, including redwoods, oaks, and bay laurels, cool the air, provide habitat for birds and other animals, and enhance the sense of place.

Existing Development

Existing development in the Project Area consists of buildings and structures that are part of the former Sonoma Developmental Center, closed in 2018. Existing buildings and structures are in varied states of repair, with many in significant disrepair. The former boundaries of the core campus constitute the Sonoma State Home Historic District (SSHHD) which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and as a California Historic Landmark. SSHHD contains a significant concentration of buildings, structures, objects, and landscape features that are united historically by plan, purpose, and physical development.

The SSHHD comprises 75 contributing historic resources, 65 of which are located in the Project Area, almost exclusively to the west of Arnold Drive. There are two individually significant buildings or complexes: the Main Building (Professional Education Center, or PEC Building), is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and Sonoma House (Residence 140) and its support buildings and structures, which were found eligible for listing. There are also historic landscape elements that help create the character of SDC. The Central Green, which acts as the heart of the campus, is planted with pollarded sycamore trees that frame views of the historic Main Building to the west and the beautiful Mayacamas Mountains to the east. This axis continues down Harney Street, across the bridge over Sonoma Creek, lending organizational legibility to the campus by visually connecting the east and west sides. The north-south axis along Sonoma Avenue further structures the site layout, and the historic Ball Fields provide structured, active open space visible from Arnold Drive.

LEAD AGENCY CONTACT

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PROJECT SPONSOR

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PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Based on the State goals for the SDC site articulated in Government Code Section 14670.10.5, the following objectives have been established for the SDC Campus Specific Plan and Eldridge Renewal Project:

- Create a vibrant and sustainable mixed-use community within the core campus of the SDC site;
- Prioritize the production of housing and promote a variety of housing types within the core campus, including affordable housing and housing for individuals with developmental disabilities;

- Establish facilities to support employment uses within the core campus that further economic development for the Sonoma Valley;
- Emphasize fire safety and community resilience to natural and human-made disasters;
- Establish objective design standards and guidelines for development on the Core Campus which are sensitive to the surrounding natural and open space context and which promote a cohesive sense of place and walkability within the core campus; and
- Incorporate measures that support the long-term fiscal sustainability of development on the SDC site, including infrastructure funding and financing strategies as well as development standards and guidelines intended to reduce operating costs.

In addition, the Eldridge Renewal Project is intended to redevelop the SDC Core Campus in a way that is shaped by the vision, principles, and policies of the SDC Campus Specific Plan. The Eldridge Renewal Project has its own set of objectives as follows:

- Support the County and the State in their goals to provide a diversity of housing types and affordability levels at the site, integrated into and distributed throughout the development, at an intensity and density that provide housing opportunities for a wide range of household types including the "missing middle," and significantly increases the County's supply of housing, consistent with the General Plan Housing Element goals and the Association of Bay Area Governments' current and future Regional Housing Needs Allocations.
- Create a high-quality residential and mixed-use community that takes advantage of previously developed but currently unused property that can easily be served by sewer, water, energy, and roadway infrastructure.
- Establish objective design standards and guidelines which will ensure that all residential development will incorporate relevant best practices in mitigating potential spread of wildfire and minimizing reliance on non-renewable resources.
- Incorporate the existing natural terrain and character of the Project area into the design of the development, retaining and preserving existing natural resources, to the greatest extent feasible.
- Organize the site design to preserve significant historic landscape features, including trees as identified in applicable County ordinances.
- Create a range of public gathering and recreation spaces within the Project site.
- Adaptively reuse the historic Main Building, Firehouse and several of the agrarian and industrial buildings at the focal point of the historic main green for commercial and institutional uses. Their reuse for commercial and institutional uses is to preserve some of the architectural character of the early 20th century community hub, in a financially feasible and programmatically useful manner.
- Create design and development flexibility through a comprehensive development plan with design guidelines to ensure that the Project will be responsive to market conditions and demands as they change over time.
- Provide the new community with wildfire hazard protective infrastructure and facilities on site, including adequate emergency access and evacuation routes, space for a new fire station, and designated evacuation command center.
- By utilizing best practices in sustainable design, and the special opportunity provided by the SDC's large acreage, establish a high level of sustainability in Project resource management systems.
- Provide a high-quality mixed-use Project which incorporates essential amenities and infrastructure, adequately supporting the long-term success and financial feasibility of the Project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SDC Campus Specific Plan

The SDC Campus Specific Plan is intended to guide creation of a sustainable, mixed-use community within the Core Campus of the SDC site while fostering climate-resilience and connectivity to and collaboration in stewardship with the surrounding open space and parkland. A vibrant mix of housing and employment uses would be integrated into the core campus with the highest densities and intensities focused around the Central Green, envisioned to remain the heart of the community. To help address a pressing need for housing in Sonoma County, the Plan would provide for a range of housing types to meet the needs of various demographic groups, including affordable housing, workforce housing, mid-income housing, housing for individuals with developmental disabilities, senior housing, and market rate housing. The Plan also seeks to foster an active jobs center for the broader Sonoma Valley with a range of office, research and development, creative services, micro-manufacturing, institutional, and other supportive uses in new or adaptively reused buildings within the core campus. New uses would generally be located along the existing street network to encourage development of a walkable and pedestrian-friendly environment with parks, gathering spaces, diverse activities, and connections to surrounding trail systems.

The Plan would also establish a 49-acre wildfire buffer that rings the core campus on its western, northern and eastern perimeters. The buffer would consist of managed open space areas providing defensible space and transition from the core campus to surrounding open space habitat. The Plan would establish requirements for fuel management within the wildfire buffer as well as measures to protect the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor, a critical east-west link for wildlife traveling across the Sonoma Valley. Within the core campus, the Plan would establish riparian setback areas along the creeks to create floodable areas for stormwater management and ensure adequate riparian corridors for wildlife movement.

The SDC Campus Specific Plan identifies necessary infrastructure improvements and outlines funding and financing tools available for capital improvements, which include development impact fees, special assessment districts, tax increment financing, federal and State grants, and other County resources. A new emergency vehicle access and bicycle connector from the Core Campus to Highway 12 is envisioned to further enhance site connectivity and improve emergency evacuation options. The preferred alignment for this connector is along the southern boundary of the site. The Plan also outlines strategies for potential implementation of greywater and recycled water systems in new residential and commercial facilities in order to conserve potable water and reduce water waste. Greywater or on-site treated wastewater could also be used for landscape irrigation, groundwater recharge, and other water supply needs with a goal of meeting at least 50 percent of the total irrigation needs through these means.

The project also includes a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation of the campus from Public/Quasi-Public to align with the designations of the Specific Plan and an expansion of the urban service area to include all of the Core Campus. The project also includes a zoning ordinance amendment to change the zoning of the campus from Public Facilities (PF) to align with the designations and development standards of the Specific Plan.

Eldridge Renewal Project

The Eldridge Renewal Project proposes to redevelop the core campus with residential, commercial, and institutional uses, as well as public gathering and recreational spaces. Key project components include:

- A total of 990 residential units with a diverse array of styles of attached and detached residential homes, apartments, co-housing, and independent living residences. With a commitment to make at least 20 percent of the total units affordable to lower income households, the Eldridge Renewal Project is eligible for State and County density bonuses for inclusionary housing. Accordingly, the Project would involve 785 new market rate units, 5 independent living homes, and 200 affordable units;
- Approximately 130,000 square feet of commercial uses, including office, retail, research and development, micro-manufacturing and other uses that form an active jobs center for the broader Sonoma Valley;
- A 150-room hotel and ancillary uses and amenities with a parking structure (approximately 120,000 square feet in total);
- Approximately 67 acres of outdoor public parks, active recreational areas, and open space areas including walking trails, sports fields, children's playgrounds, dog parks, a community center and gym, and riparian corridors;
- Various public infrastructure and utility network improvements;
- Approximately 3,030 parking spaces for automobiles (on-street and off-street) and commensurate outdoor parking spaces for bicycles distributed throughout the site; and
- A designated area for a new fire station and evacuation command center.

PROPOSED SITE PLAN

The Eldridge Renewal Project proposes to redevelop the core campus with residential, commercial, and institutional uses, as well as public gathering and recreational spaces. The proposed site plan is shown on Figure 4.

Residential Uses

The site plan accommodates 990 new housing units in a variety of building types, apartments,mixed use buildings, townhomes, detached homes, co-housing, and independent living residences. Of this total, 200 units or slightly more than 20 percent would be deed restricted for lower income households with the remainder made available at market rate.

Apartments/Mixed Use

Apartment buildings and mixed-use structures with ground-floor commercial uses would be provided along the Central Green and major streets. Typical building height would be two to three stories and a variety of unit sizes would be provided, including studios and one-bedrooms, as well as larger 2- and 3-bedroom units. One building would also be entirely dedicated to housing for low-income seniors. Off-street parking would be provided in landscaped parking lots, with additional on-street spaces. Screened service areas and access would also be provided.

Townhomes

Townhomes would be constructed along Arnold Drive, the eastern end of the Central Green, and to the north and south of the Main Building, providing a traditional "missing middle" housing type which lies in the range of density in between that of the mixed-use apartments and the detached housing neighborhoods.

The townhomes would mostly be parked and served by rear-loaded garages accessed by a mid-block alley. The front doors would face the street with porches and stoops to activate the street with pedestrian-scaled elements and activities. Building height would be two to three stories. Periodic landscaped parklets between groups of townhomes would form a pedestrian network linking the community.

Detached Homes

A total of 368 detached homes, including courtyard homes, hillside homes, and large and small detached homes would be provided in compact, walkable neighborhoods throughout the core campus. A mix of 1-, 2- and 3-story configurations would be offered with landscaped front setback and small side yards and backyards. Architectural features would include porches, stoops and bays, and a mix of roof shapes. Some of the detached units would be served from an alley at the center of the block and garages, trash, and services would have access via this alley.

Co-Housing

Co-housing and communal living facilities would be provided in 3-story buildings similar in height and articulation to the apartments and townhomes; however, they would offer shared indoor and outdoor spaces such as kitchens, living rooms, roof decks and unfenced back yards that facilitate communal gathering.

Deed-Restricted Housing for Persons with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

Five home sites would be situated on lots designated specifically to accommodate housing created for the comfort, enjoyment, and safety of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Each site would be designed with residents for up to five individual residents, with private rooms as well as shared space, plus room for caregivers.

Employment and Visitor-Serving Uses

The site plan incorporates a variety of commercial amenities, regional destinations, civic spaces, and workplaces focused primarily around the Central Green and in the western part of the core campus, as detailed below.

Town Center

The historic Main Building (PEC Building) and Firehouse (Station 36) would be adaptively reused for flexible non-residential uses, including office, retail, and entertainment uses. Mixed use buildings would be grouped around the Central Green. Design elements to facilitate active ground floor uses would include transparency in building façades, integrated signage, wider sidewalks to allow for increased pedestrian presence and front doors opening to the Central Green for both residents and commercial uses. Additional parking with landscaping and screened service and loading areas would be located behind the buildings.

Small Business + Innovation Center

Consisting of two adaptively reused buildings (the former Maintenance Shop and Paint Shop) and three new buildings located behind the Main Building at the western end of the core campus, the Small Business

+ Innovation Center would provide space for office, research and development, creative services, micro-manufacturing, or other job-generating uses. Pedestrian links would be provided to connect the Center with the mixed-use areas and the Central Green.

Institution

An Environmental Center would be constructed north of Mill Creek in the southwestern part of the core campus on the site of Sonoma House, which would be demolished. Designed in a sustainable modern style to respond to the ecological sensitivity of the area, the facility is intended for a research, study, and interpretive center that could house an environmental research and education entity. Linkages to the surrounding waterways, trail network and preserved open spaces would be provided.

Hotel & Conference Center

In the northwest portion of the Core Campus, a 150-key boutique hotel, conference facilities, ancillary uses and amenities, and parking structure would be constructed.

CIRCULATION AND PARKING

Roadway Network

Figure 5 shows the proposed circulation plan, which includes two-way streets serving as the major arterials, limited one-way streets and alleys serving the neighborhood areas, and fire access roads. Key existing roadways that would be maintained include Arnold Drive, Sonoma Street, Holt Road, Manzanita Street, Grove Street, Harney Street, Wilson Street, and Railroad Avenue. Palm Street, Walnut Street, Park Street, Laurel Street, Redwood Street, Toyon Street, and Seventh Avenue would be realigned, while several new streets and alleys would be constructed. New and upgraded sidewalks and street crossings would be constructed.

Active Transportation Network

New multimodal paths, bicycle paths, and shared facilities would be provided to provide connections within and through the core campus, as shown on Figure 6. Arnold Drive would be reconfigured as a "complete street" with bike lanes, pedestrian paths, and enhanced transit facilities.

Parking

On-site parking areas consist of attached and detached garages, on-street parking spaces, and surface parking lots. On-street, parallel parking would be provided throughout the site, with parking lots generally located behind buildings. In total, the Project would provide approximately 3,030 parking spaces distributed throughout the site, including approximately 2,300 off-street spaces in surface lots and garages. Each parking lot will have one ADA parking space per 25 spaces. In addition, 25 percent of each parking lot would be EV charging capable. Bicycle parking would be provided throughout the site.

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

The Eldridge Renewal Project would redevelop the site infrastructure and utility network that historically served the site, as detailed below.

Water Supply and Conveyance

The Eldridge Renewal Project would utilize a public water system under the regulatory authority of the State Water Resources Control Board and in conformance with the California Health & Safety Code. The Project would repair or replace the existing water treatment plant and repair and reconstruct the off-campus and on-campus distribution system. The Applicant (Eldridge Renewal) has obtained a conditional will serve letter from Valley of the Moon Water District (VOMWD) to provide water service to the Project, subject to a future negotiated agreement, LAFCO approval, and other conditions to the development and operation of the public water system. Regardless of provider or operator, the project would utilize the SDC self-contained water system that consists of lakes, natural springs, wells, a raw water and potable water distribution system, a 1.8-million-gallons-per-day water treatment plant, 1.95-million-gallon treated water storage, and 840 acre-feet surface water reservoirs that have capacity to provide drinking water, irrigation, and fire suppression. Figure 7 shows existing water infrastructure that services the Project Area.

Sanitary Sewer

Existing sanitary sewer conveyance infrastructure would be replaced. The principal means of treatment for wastewater is expected to be conveyance to the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District (SVCSD) for treatment via connection to the SVCSD sewer main along Arnold Drive/Redwood Street, subject to a negotiated agreement and LAFCO approval. A connection to a to-be-developed private tertiary treatment plant which could be located east of the core campus on the site of the now-abandoned SDC treatment facility is under consideration as a supplementary form of treatment. Such facility could create a source of recycled water to be used for on-site irrigation of landscaping.

Stormwater Management

Historically, the property was served by a Sonoma County-maintained storm drain system, which includes all on-site storm drains, pipes, catch basins, and manholes. The Project would continue to use this system, but with upgrades and by incorporating bio-retention areas that function as soil and plant-based filtration features that remove pollutants and enhance water quality through natural processes.

Energy

Energy would be provided by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) or by Sonoma Clean Power, using PG&E infrastructure. The Project's residential and non-residential buildings would be constructed using current standards and requirements as regards to building insulation, appliances, heating and cooling systems and energy management. The residential components of the Project would not be served by natural gas. The use of natural gas on-site would be limited only to on-site equipment with particular demand profiles that cannot be effectively met with electricity.

Development of a distributed energy system - an electrical "micro-grid" connected to PG&E's larger system, but that can be isolated from the larger grid in case of emergency - is proposed as an option to provide backup power to essential functions in the Project Area. The micro-grid would be located outside of the Project Area on State-owned land that was part of the SDC site. The micro-grid would generate and store electricity from one or more sources including solar, geothermal, and methane gas co-generation, capturing and burning the methane gases that are emitted from site-generated solid waste.

Waste

Recology Sonoma-Marin would provide waste collection, recycling, and processing services to the Project Area. The Project would adopt a dual-stream waste management approach, separating recyclables from non-recyclable waste for all residential and non-residential land uses.

LANDSCAPING AND TREE PROTECTION

Landscaping Plan

The Project would retain the stepped topography and grid orientation of the historic campus. The Central Green would be preserved between Arnold Drive and Sonoma Street along Harney Street. The ballfield would be relocated slightly to the north, along the northern boundary of the core campus to provide additional wildfire buffer. The landscape surrounding the Main Building would be expanded and designed to support extensive programming as a central site for community gatherings and events. The open space network would include parkways throughout the site, and pocket parks and green linkages create a system of open space that allows for off-street pedestrian connections from east to west. On the east side of the Project Area, the Agrihood would be organized around planted lands. Stormwater runoff would also be directed to bio-retention facilities and landscaped areas within the street network. Overall, approximately 40 percent of the core campus would be comprised of pervious surfaces, as shown in Figure 8.

Creek Setbacks

Figure 9 shows riparian buffers, or creek setbacks, proposed under the Project. All Project structures would maintain at least a 100-foot setback from top-of-bank for Sonoma Creek and a 50-foot setback from top-of-bank for Mill Creek, and in many cases even greater setbacks.

Tree Preservation and Protection

Figure 10 shows the location and tag numbers of existing trees in the Project Area proposed for preservation. Woodland areas along the creek corridors and the Core Campus edges are also proposed to be preserved. Trees that were determined to be in poor health or have died off would be replaced with a framework of native canopy and understory trees. Native valley oaks are proposed to replace the trees along Arnold Drive.

WILDFIRE BUFFER AND RESILIENCE STRATEGY

The Project incorporates a wildfire resilience strategy that involves the use of fire resilient tactics including fire resilient materials, home hardening, vegetation management, defensible space standards (including a 5-foot buffer of defensible space around buildings which excludes flammable materials), as well as a perimeter wildfire buffer. Additionally, a 300-foot-wide wildfire buffer would be established around the core campus. No residential or commercial structures would be permitted within the fire buffer. This buffer would be managed as landscaped open space in accordance with regional fire resiliency best practices including:

- Constructing and maintaining a managed landscape buffer.
- Removing downed logs or stumps within 100± feet from a building or structure.
- Mowing or grazing grasslands.

- Limiting shrubs and brush.
- Managing fuel loads.
- Providing fire resistance landscaping.

Additionally, Project site and circulation design ensure that every parcel within the site has two points of ingress and egress during an emergency, and a future emergency-use-only roadway connecting the Project Area with Highway 12 to the east is proposed for construction as part of the Project. A site has also been reserved in the Project Area for the construction of a new fire station for the Sonoma Valley Fire District, to serve on-site residents and businesses as well as the surrounding community, subject to LAFCO approval. Figure 11 illustrates the Project's wildfire resilience strategies.

Phasing and Buildout

The horizon year of the Specific Plan is 2040. Development of the Eldridge Renewal Project would occur in three staggered phases over a period of approximately 9.5 years between March 2027 and August 2036. Each phase would consist of demolition and site preparation; installation of infrastructure and utilities; and construction. The extent and approximate timing of each phase is illustrated on Figure 13.

Phase 1 is projected to include the construction of 241 residential units as well as a 150-room hotel, conference center, ancillary uses and amenities, and associated parking structure. Preservation and adaptive reuse of the historic Main Building is proposed as part of this phase and the renovated structure would host a wide array of programs, potentially including a food hall, a movie screening room, co-working spaces, an event hall for fundraising, pop-up shops, community space, and a private library. Residential construction would consist of apartments, detached courtyard homes, attached duet and triplet units, and 50 units affordable to lower income households located in the apartment buildings just north of the mixed-use buildings that line Central Green. This phase would also involve development of parks and active recreational areas to serve residents and visitors, including the Central Green and the relocated ballfield. Demolition and site preparation would start in March 2027 and construction would be completed in August 2032.

Phase 2 is projected to include construction of an additional 469 residential units and commercial uses in the western portion of the site. Preservation and adaptive reuse of three existing buildings is proposed as part of this phase: Station 36, the Paint Shop, and the Maintenance Shop. This phase would involve construction of an agrihood with large and small detached homes east of Sonoma Creek and south of Harney Street as well as construction of a variety of other attached and detached housing types in the western part of the core campus, including an affordable apartment complex consisting of 100 units for low-income seniors in the southwestern corner of the of the core campus. This phase would also involve development of parks and active recreational areas to serve residents and visitors, including the Firehouse Park and open space along the western perimeter of the campus. Demolition and site preparation would start in August 2030 and construction would be completed in February 2035.

Phase 3 is projected to include construction of the final 280 residential units and commercial uses in the eastern and southern portions of the core campus. Residential uses would consist of large and small detached homes, townhomes, and 50 affordable apartment units in two buildings south of Mill Creek and east of Arnold Drive. Public-serving uses would include an environmental center with space for research, study, and interpretive center, with facilities for training and education along Orchard Road north of Mill Creek. This phase would also involve development of parks and active recreational areas to serve residents

and visitors, including the Redwood Park, Confluence Park, pocket parks, and agricultural land in the agrihood. Demolition and site preparation would start in February 2033 and construction would be completed in August 2036.

Though the Eldridge Renewal Project does not propose accessory dwelling units/junior accessory dwelling units (ADUs/JADUs), the EIR will also consider the potential for development of ADUs/JADUs and related environmental impacts within the planning horizon of the Specific Plan.

Table 1 shows projected development by neighborhood, including residential development by housing type, non-residential square footage, and projected jobs based on typical employment density for the proposed non-residential uses.

Required Permits and Approvals

SDC Campus Specific Plan

- General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation of the campus from Public/Quasi-Public to align with the designations of the Specific Plan
- Zoning Ordinance Amendment to change the zoning of the campus from Public Facilities (PF) to align with the designations and development standards of the Specific Plan
- Expansion of the urban service area to include all of the Core Campus
- Environmental Impact Report

Eldridge Renewal Project

- Major Subdivision and Design Review for a mixed-use development across three parcels on the Sonoma Development Center campus (APNs 054-090-001, 054-150-005, and 054-150-010)
- Environmental Impact Report
- Building Permits
- Demolition, Grading, and Excavation Permits
- Tree Removal Permit
- LAFCO Approval for Public Water, Sanitation, and Fire

Table 1: Buildout Summary

Neighborhood	*Single Family Units*[1]	*Multi-Family Units*[2]	*Total Housing Units*	*Office (sq ft)*	*Institutional (sq ft)*	*Public (sq ft)*	*Hotel (sq ft)*	*Retail (sq ft)*	*Utilities (sq ft)*	*Total Non-Residential (sq ft)*	*Population*[4]	*Jobs*[5]
Arnold Drive	206	50	256	-	-	10,000	-	-	-	10,000	630	22
Core North	107	2	109	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	268	-
Sonoma Creek	22	2	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	59	-
Town Center	54	124	178	28,000	-	46,250	-	32,000	-	106,250	438	254
Core South	32	-	32	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	79	-
Western Slope	35	-	35	-	-	-	120,000	-	3,500	123,500	86	201
Mill Creek Bend	19	106	125	-	8,000	-	-	5,000	-	13,000	308	29
Agrihood	120	-	120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	295	-
Eldridge Place	80	1	81	-	-	-	-	-	500	500	199	-
Walnut Court	30	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	74	-
Total:	**705**	**285**	**990**	**28,000**	**8,000**	**56,250**	**120,000**	**37,000**	**4,000**	**253,250**	**2,475**[7]	**506**

1. Single-family units include: courtyard home, hillside home, detached large home, detached small home, duet, triplet, and townhome.
2. Multi-family units include: mixed use/apartment, cohousing, apartment, and independent living residences.
3. Population count projected from the State Department of Finance (DOF) 2024 average household size of 2.46 in Sonoma County.
4. Job count projected based on typical employment density for the associated employment category.
5. Total housing unit count includes the proposed 990 housing units.
6. Total population count includes the estimated population from the proposed 990 housing units.

Sources: Eldridge Renewal, LLC; 2025; State of California, Department of Finance, E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State — January 1, 2020-2025; SCAG, Employment Density Study Summary Report, 2001

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

The EIR will evaluate potentially significant environmental impacts associated with the adoption and implementation of the Proposed Plan and Project. Consistent with the State CEQA Guidelines (Appendix G), the following environmental resource categories will be analyzed in relation to the Proposed Plan and Project:

- Aesthetics and Visual Resources
- Agricultural and Forest Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Historic, Cultural, and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Energy, Climate Change, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Geology, Soils and Seismicity
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use, Population, and Housing
- Noise and Vibration
- Mineral Resources
- Public Facilities and Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

All of the resource categories listed above will be considered in the EIR; however, given the local context of the Proposed Plan and Eldridge Renewal Project Area, the following issues will be central to the environmental analysis:

- **Aesthetics and Visual Resources.** Arnold Drive is designated as a Scenic Corridor between Highway 12 and Highway 116, including as it passes through the Project Area, and given the extent of development proposed, consideration of potential adverse impacts to public views of the Project Area and its surroundings will require a particular focus. Additionally, an assessment of the potential for light and glare impacts from the proposed Eldridge Renewal Project will be needed, particularly in view of the Project's proximity to the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor.
- **Air Quality.** The Eldridge Renewal Project would involve demolition of existing structures in the Project Area, extensive grading and site preparation, and construction of 990 new residential units and 250,000 square feet of non-residential uses. Development would take place in three overlapping phases and residential units from the first phase may be occupied while site preparation and construction of subsequent phases is ongoing. Careful consideration of construction-related air quality impacts on sensitive receptors, including a human health risk assessment will be required. Additionally, an analysis of operational air quality will be needed in consideration of increased vehicle traffic and the use of gas-powered equipment on-site.
- **Biological Resources.** There is an established regionally important wildlife corridor that adjoins the northern edge of the Project Area, linking large habitat areas of the Sonoma and Mayacama mountain ranges. This corridor is a critical habitat connection for special-status species, as well as other local wildlife, including mountain lions. As such, the EIR will need to evaluate potential impacts to the functioning of the wildlife corridor. Rigorous analysis will be required to identify potential impacts and inform mitigation strategies that can reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts at both the programmatic and project level.
- **Soil Erosion and Water Quality.** Approximately 136 acres of the 160-acre core campus would be disturbed and modified to prepare the site for construction of the Eldridge Renewal Project. The potential for erosion from wind and stormwater during site preparation and construction will

require careful consideration, as will the potential for impacts to water quality in Sonoma Creek and Mill Creek. The potential for operational phase stormwater quality impacts will also require analysis.

- **Historic Resources.** Development under the Proposed Project would entail the demolition of all but four historically contributing resources. The buildings proposed for adaptive reuse include the National Historic Register-listed Main Building, and the Maintenance Shop, Paint Shop, and Fire House (Station 36), which were originally documented as part of the Sonoma State Home Historic District (SSHHD). The SSHHD has been determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and qualifies as a historical resource under CEQA. As such, given the presence of historic resources throughout the Project Area, the potential for demolition and new development to adversely affect historic resources will require careful consideration and analysis.
- **Hazardous Materials.** Given the age and condition of existing buildings and structures in the Project Area, there is potential for exposure or accidental release of hazardous materials with building demolition or adaptive reuse, as well as new construction under the Proposed Project. Therefore, Proposed Project provisions for pre-development remediation, community protection, and methods of demolition and construction will need to be thoroughly studied and the need for additional mitigation will be evaluated.
- **Wildfire Risk.** The 2017 Nuns Fire caused evacuations throughout Sonoma Valley and burned several utilitarian buildings in the open space area just short of the eastern side of the SDC Core Campus. As such, future wildfires could put residents of the Proposed Project and existing residents of surrounding areas at risk from wildfires. Given the history of wildfire events near the Project Area, wildfire risk will require careful analysis and the need for mitigation will be considered.
- **Emergency Evacuation.** Emergency evacuation risk will be a central focus the environmental analysis. Arnold Drive is the only existing direct access route to and from the Project Area and the roadway serves other communities of the Sonoma Valley as well. A new emergency access road connecting Railroad Avenue to Highway 12 along the southern boundary of the Project Areas is proposed. The capacity of existing and proposed roadways will be analyzed under various evacuation scenarios and mitigation measures will be proposed as appropriate.
- **Transportation.** While the SDC Campus Specific Plan will incorporate requirements for transportation demand management and the Eldridge Renewal Project proposes over 250,000 square feet of employment uses in the Project Area, given the situation of the site in a rural context away from major employment centers it is anticipated that residential vehicle miles travelled (VMT) per capita will exceed the applicable significance threshold. A detailed analysis of VMT impacts and potential mitigation measures will be conducted, considering feasible mitigation that could be imposed.
- **Tribal Cultural Resources.** Evidence indicates Native American presence on the SDC property for millennia, predating the establishment of the SDC. The land was historically inhabited by the Yukian ancestors of the Wappo and Pomo peoples, with Miwok control of the area by the time of

the California incursion. Native American consultation, site surveys, and records searches will be conducted to inform an analysis of potential impacts to tribal cultural resources, and mitigation measures will be proposed as appropriate.

SCOPING MEETING:

A scoping meeting will be conducted on Thursday, September 25, 2025 to collect oral comments from agencies and members of the public regarding the scope and content of the EIR in accordance with CEQA Section 21083.9. The scoping meeting will be held in a hybrid format with opportunities for participation in person and via Zoom. An agenda is presented below. The first hour of the scoping meeting will be structured as an open house with stations presenting information on the SDC Campus Specific Plan and Eldridge Renewal Project to allow in-person attendees an opportunity to learn more about the Proposed Plan and Project and ask questions. At 7pm, there will be a formal presentation follow by opportunities for public comment on the scope and content of the EIR in person and via Zoom. Information presented at the scoping meeting will be posted to the project website and interested parties and public agencies are also encouraged to submit written comments during the 30-day scoping period.

EIR Scoping Meeting on the Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan

and Housing Development Project

Thursday, September 25, 2025 | 6:00 PM

Altimira Middle School Multi-Purpose Room

17805 Arnold Dr, Sonoma, CA 95476 and via Zoom at: https://dyettandbhatia.zoom.us/j/83943750136

Phone: (669 900 6833) | Meeting ID: 839 4375 0136

SCOPING MEETING AGENDA

6:00pm	Open House begins
7:00pm	Presentation in-person and via Zoom
7:20pm	Public Comments on scope and content of the EIR

For project information, please visit
https://permitsonoma.org/sdcproject

Para ver este Aviso de Preparación en español o para aprender más información sobre el Plan Específico del Campus de SDC y el Proyecto de Renovación de Eldridge, visite:

https://permitsonoma.org/sdcproject

Please contact Wil Lyons at 707-565-7388 or Wil.Lyons@sonomacounty.gov with any questions regarding this notice or the scoping meeting.

Digitally signed by Scott Orr
DN: cn=Scott Orr, ou=Permit Sonoma, email=scott.orr@sonoma-county.org, c=US
Date: 2025.08.27 10:51:27 -07'00'

Scott Orr, Interim Director
Permit Sonoma

Date

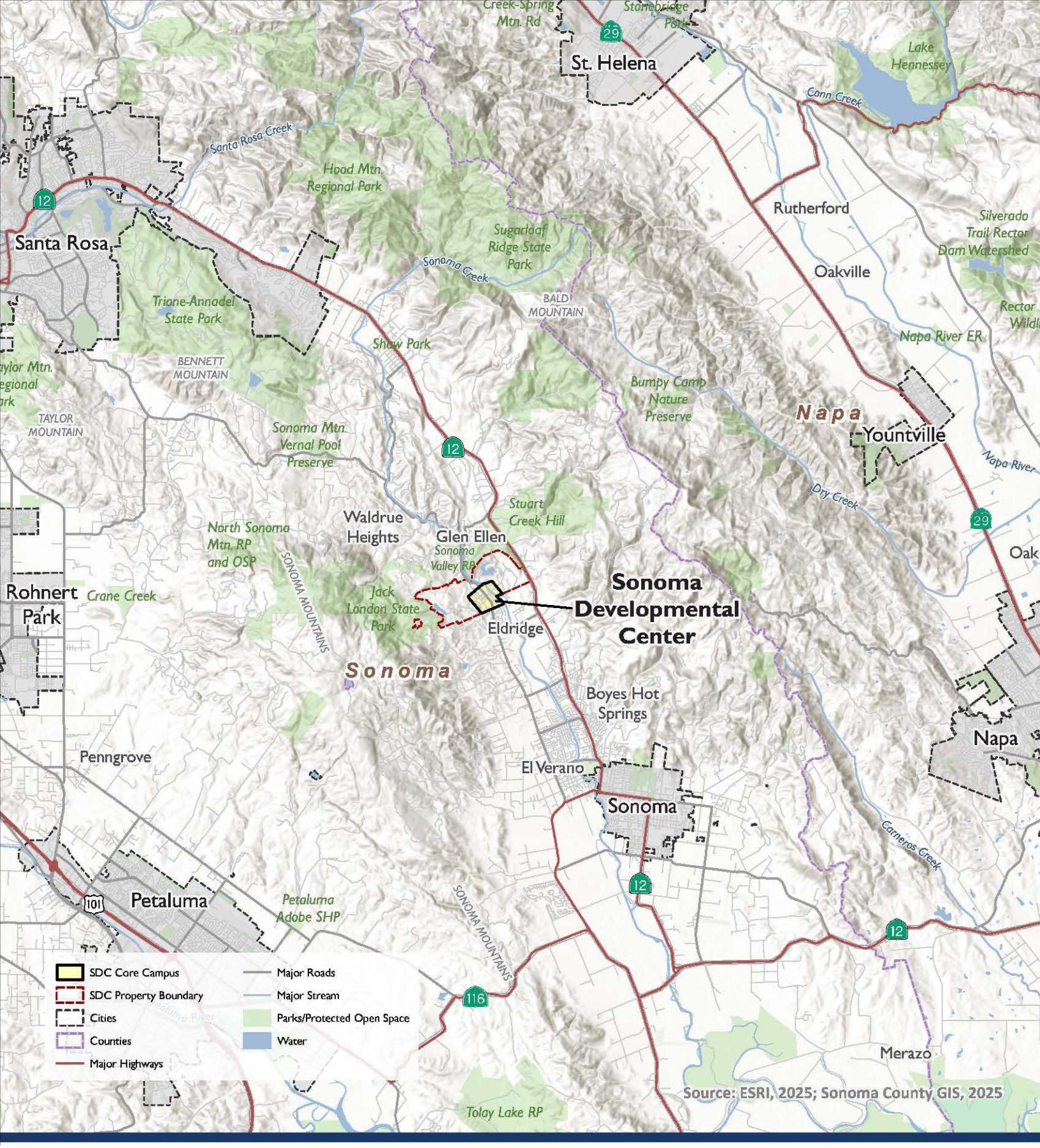


Figure 1:
Regional Location

Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan/Eldridge Renewal Project
Draft Environmental Impact Report

0 ½ 1 2 MILES

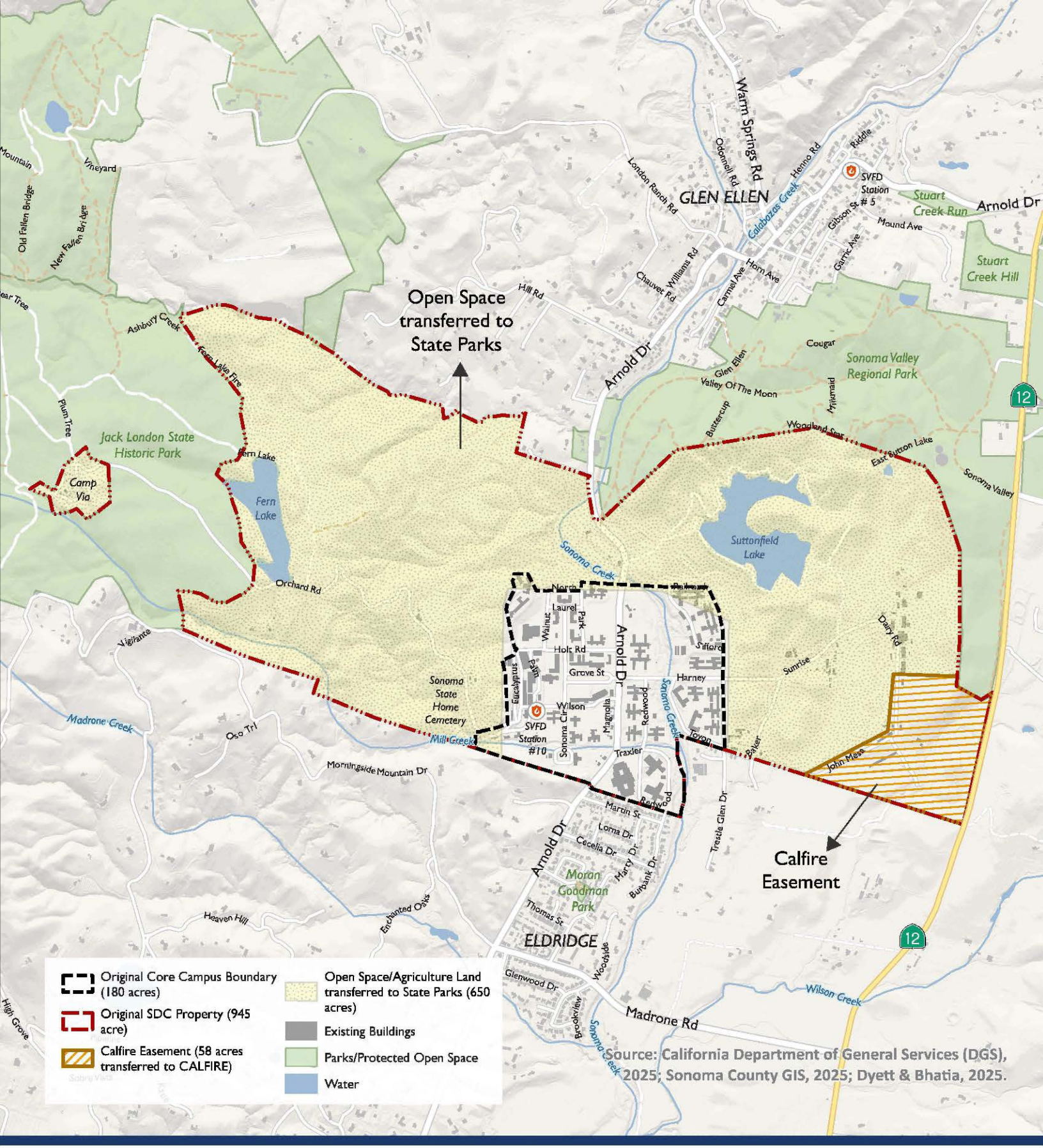


Figure 2:

Historic Boundaries of the SDC Site

Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan/Eldridge Renewal Project
Draft Environmental Impact Report

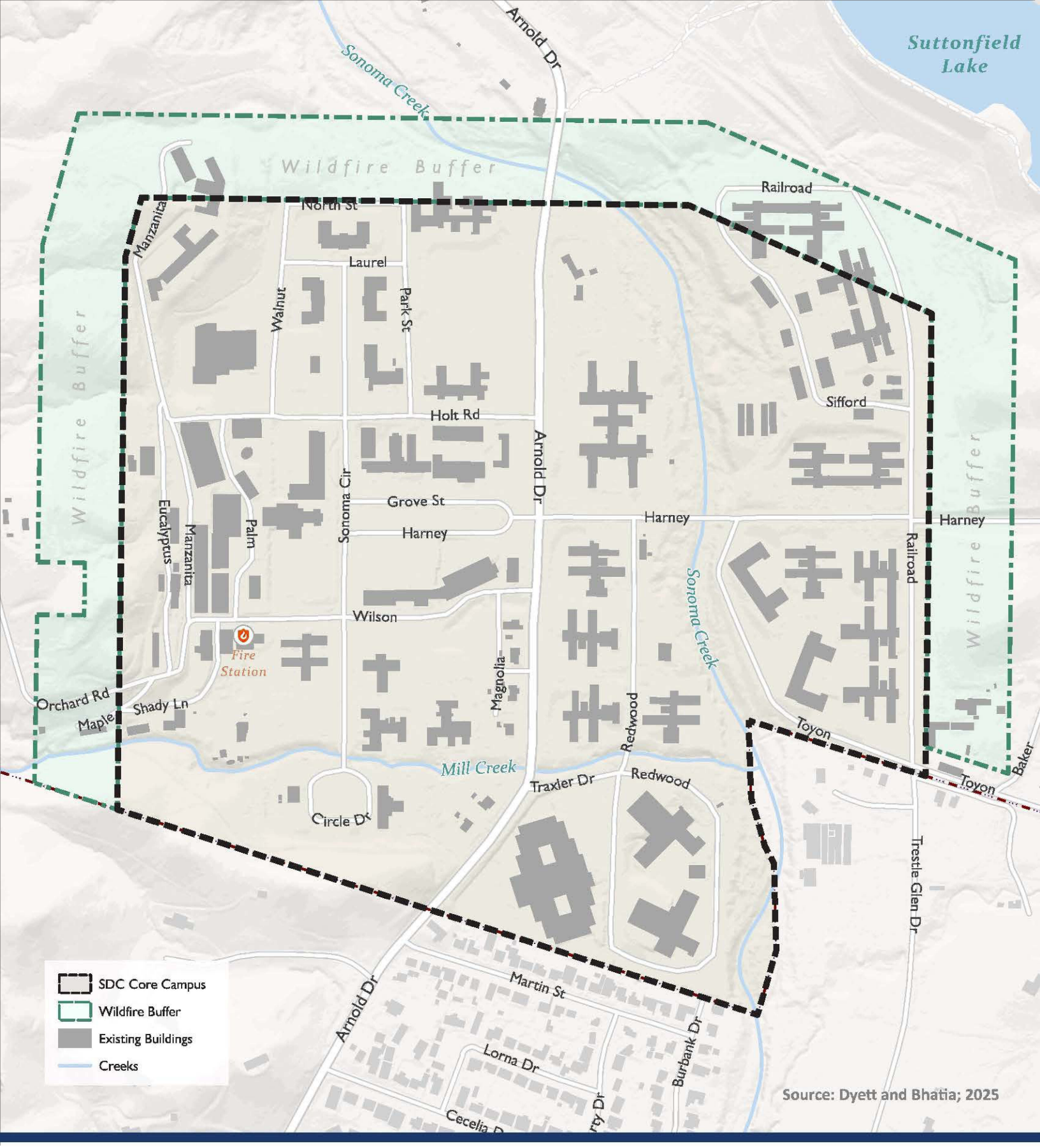


Figure 3:

Specific Plan Update and Eldridge Renewal Project Area

Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan/Eldridge Renewal Project
Draft Environmental Impact Report

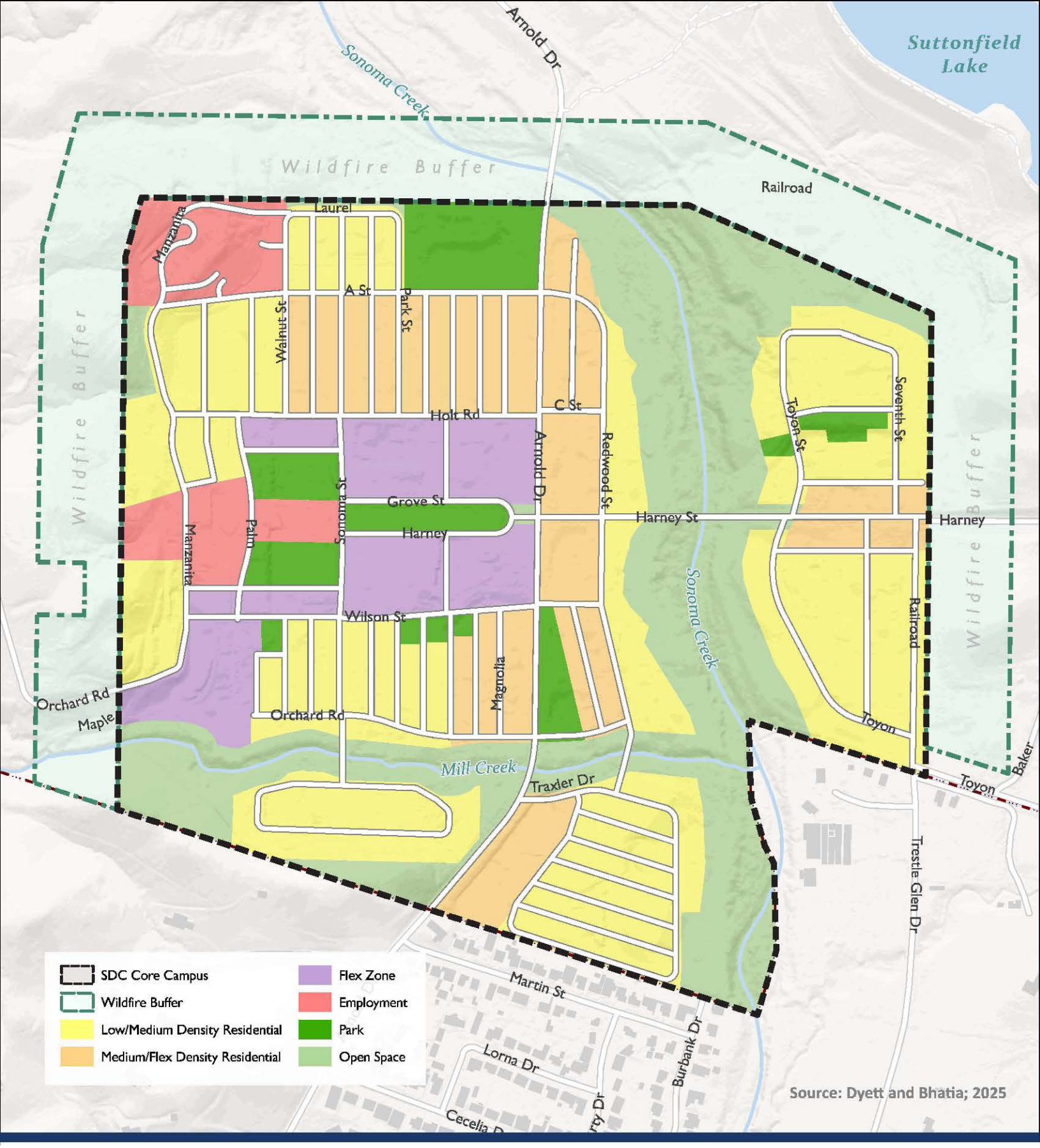


Figure 4:

Specific Plan Update Land Use Diagram

Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan/Eldridge Renewal Project
Draft Environmental Impact Report

0 100 200 400 FEET

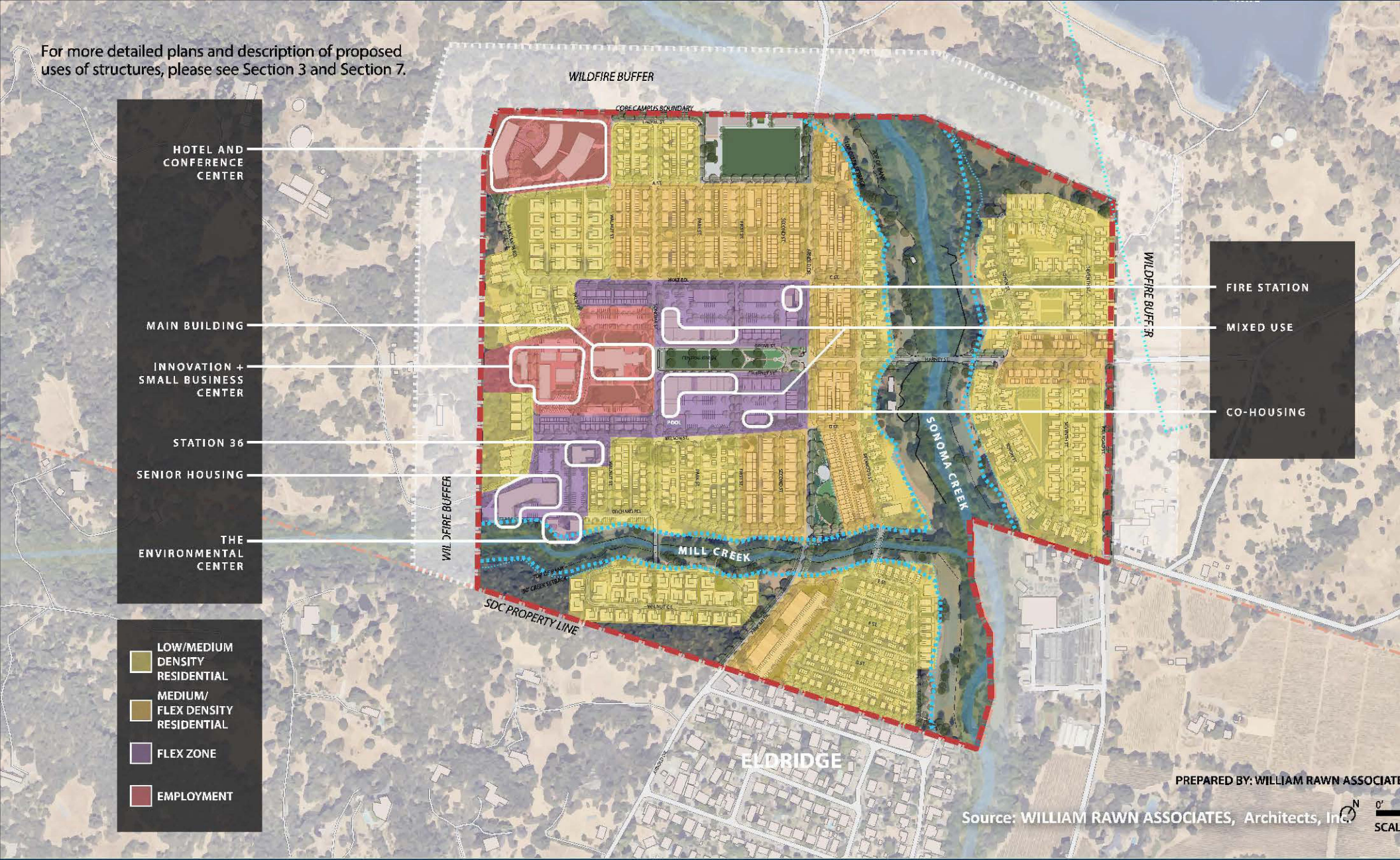


Figure 5:

Eldridge Renewal Project Site Plan

Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan/Eldridge Renewal Project
Draft Environmental Impact Report

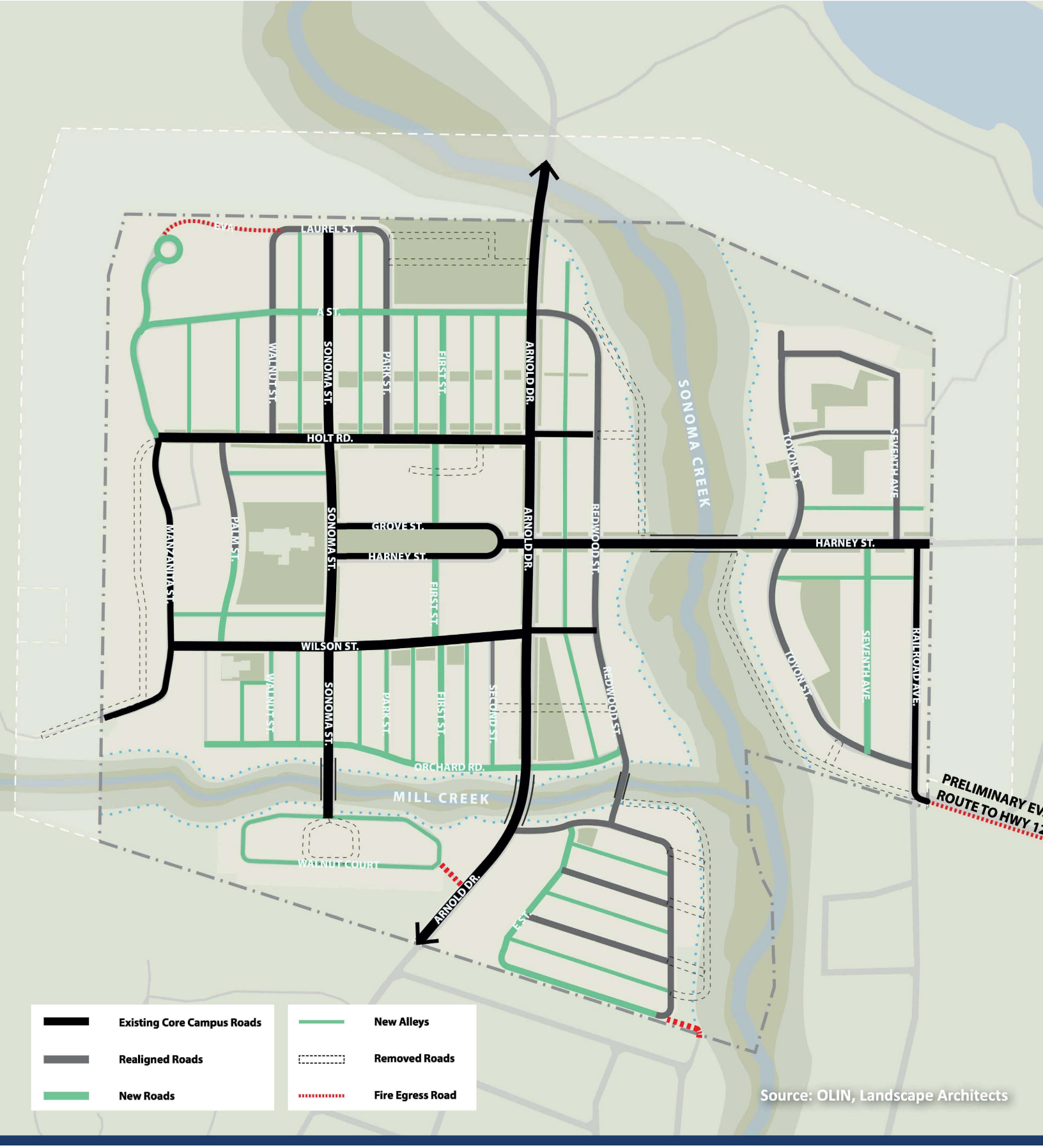


Figure 6:

Eldridge Renewal Project Circulation Plan

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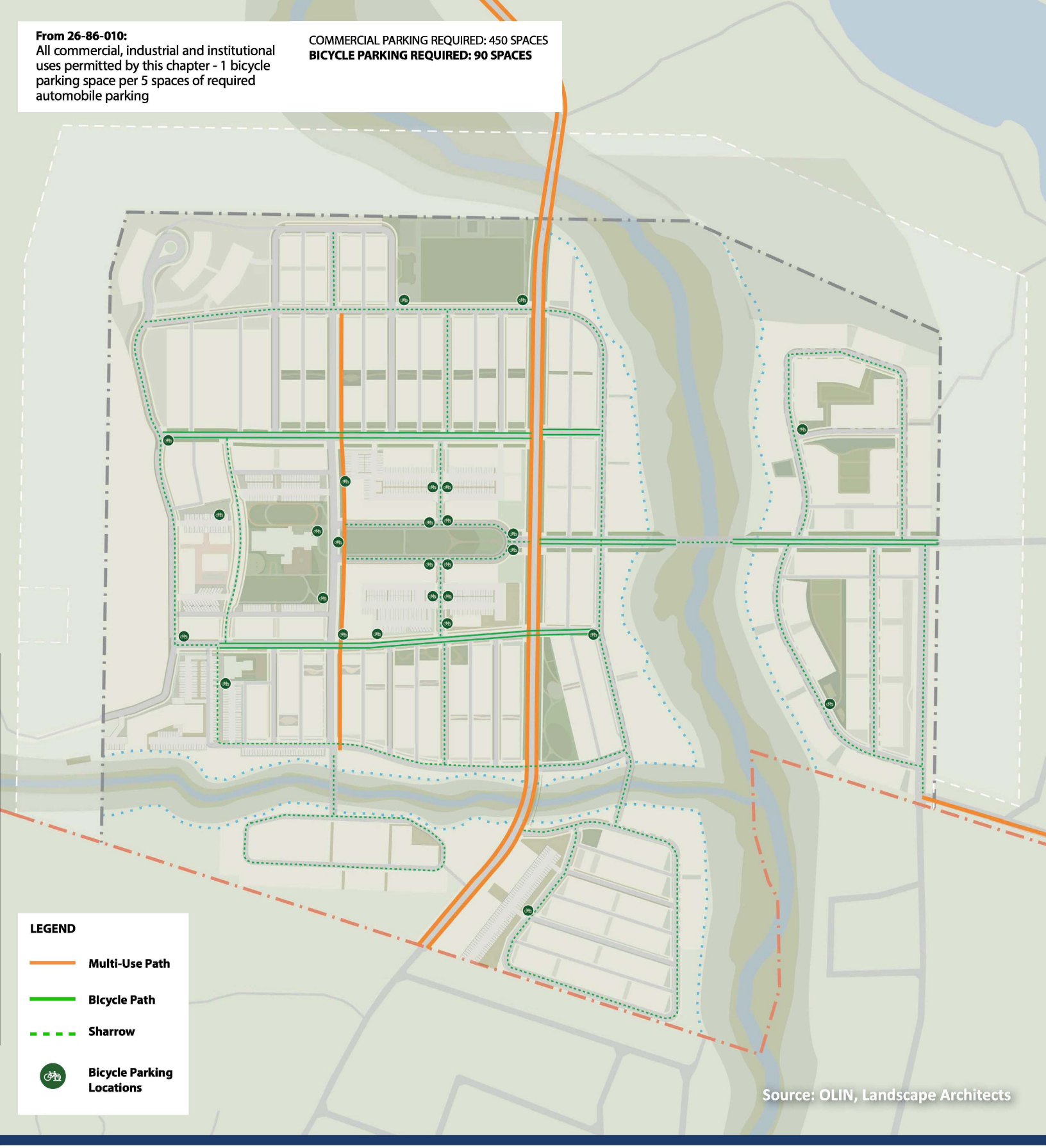


Figure 7:

Eldridge Renewal Project Bicycle Network Improvements



Figure 8:
Water Supply Infrastructure



Figure 9:
Open Space and Pervious Surfaces

Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan/Eldridge Renewal Project
Draft Environmental Impact Report



Source: WILLIAM RAWN ASSOCIATES, Architects, Inc

Figure 10:
Creek Setbacks

Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan/Eldridge Renewal Project
Draft Environmental Impact Report

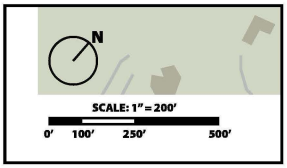




Figure 11:
Tree Protection Plan

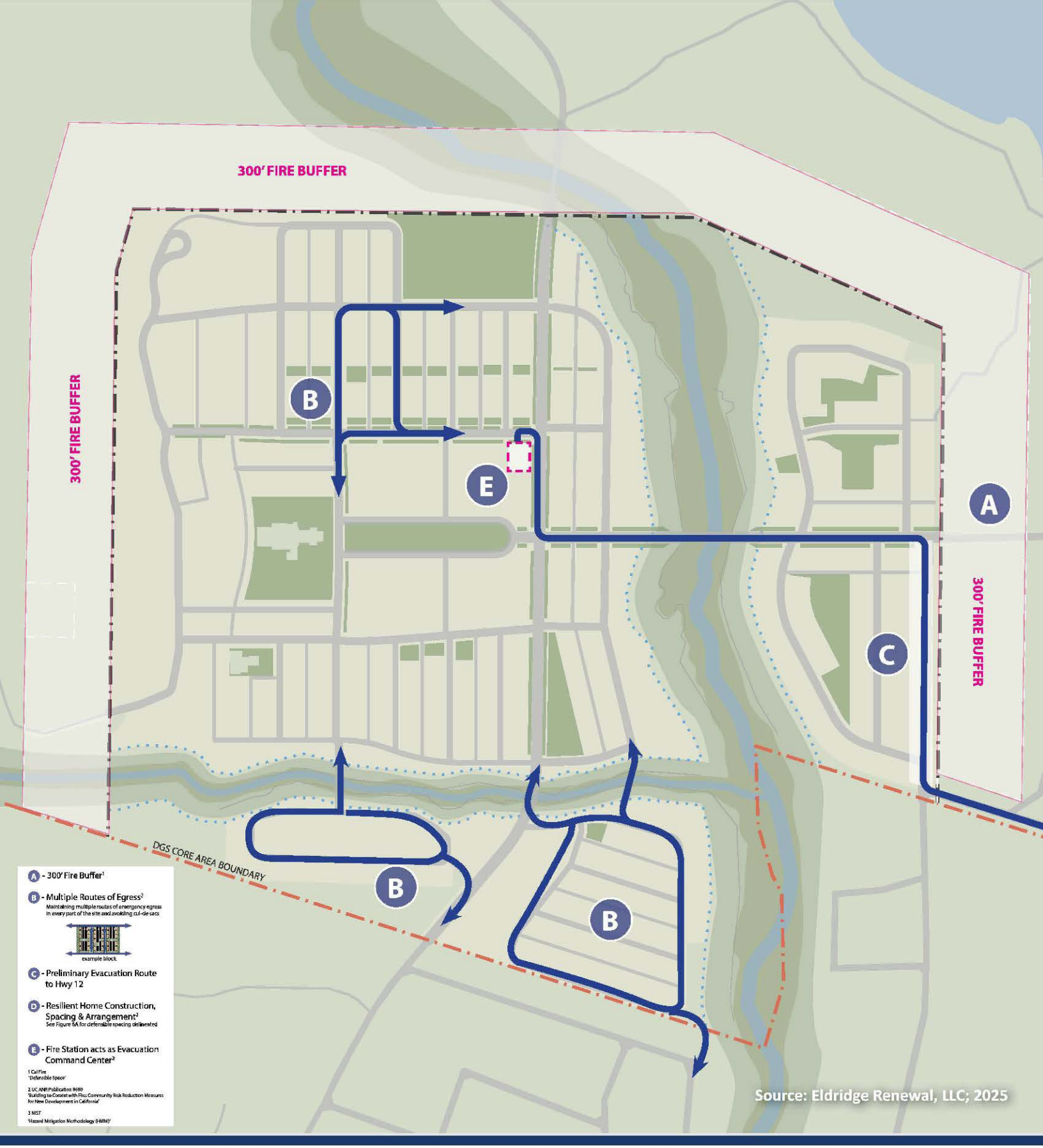


Figure 12:
Wildfire Resilience Strategy

Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan/Eldridge Renewal Project
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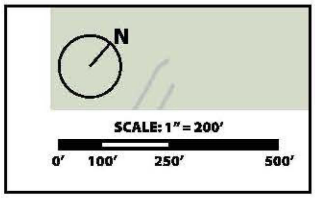




Figure 13:
Project Phasing