



Staff Report

Agenda Item #: 7A

Zoning and Design Review Board Staff Report

DATE: November 12, 2024

TO: Board Members

FROM: Brad Raulston, Town Manager

PREPARED BY: Brad Raulston, Town Manager and Brendan Kelly, AIA

TITLE

Yountville Commons Study Session

DISCUSSION/BACKGROUND

Preserving and building upon the small-town qualities and social and cultural legacy of Yountville is the guiding principle in crafting a long-term, practical, and inspirational neighborhood place for the former Yountville Elementary School site. The school site has been renamed the Yountville Commons (The Commons) to help define a vision for this property and reinforce that this asset is for the benefit of all residents of Yountville.

This staff reports provides the Town Council with a preview of the ZDRB Study Session where concepts will be introduced based on the feedback from engagement and outreach efforts to date including the study sessions with the PRAC and Measure S Committee. The visioning process is roughly halfway through, and the project team is proposing some new ideas for engaging the community. As is outlined below, the goal is to return to Town Council in March for “conceptual approval” so we can transition into the planning phase of the project.

The project team is introducing a “community design workbook” that will help guide the concepts and ideas for the vision, or conceptual approval being sought next year. The ZDRB will review the workbood and provide feedback to the team that will be shared with the total community at an open house/community roundtable proposed for November 14. After that meeting, the project team will host a series of “dinners & conversations” where the community can enjoy a dinner while discussing the project and the concepts. Meanwhile, 1 on 1 “cups of coffee” will continue as needed. At the conclusion of this process, this document will be updated to reflect what we heard and how that input was realized in the vision for the Commons.

Community Building

Community building is a complex, years-long process involving cultivating trust, relationships, and shared values over time. It requires a series of decisions by many individuals and groups, each contributing to the whole in different ways. No single entity can control, or force community development, as organic interactions, shared experiences, and evolving needs shape it. True community emerges gradually, through collaboration and collective investment, rather than from a single orchestrated event. These specific meetings listed above are intended to build on and contribute to the Yountville community and ensure that a broad range of future residents can share in this valuable legacy.

Sharing information, collaborating around viable alternatives, and empowering shared decisions are the proven methods to keep a community like Yountville thriving no matter the challenge.

Public Engagement (*in progress*)

The public engagement process for envisioning the next chapter for the school site began with several Town Council meetings in the Spring of 2024 as the potential sale of the Yountville Elementary School Site was announced. The Yountville General Plan has a policy for the Town to identify and expand potential housing sites and the Town Council responded to this specific goal quickly. (Source: ***Expand Housing Sites: Identify and rezone additional sites suitable for high-density residential development to meet Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals. (Chapter 6, Program 1, Page 14).***

MAR 26, 2024 - Open House (complete)

The first Open House to solicit opinions from Yountville residents occurred before the purchase of the school site on Mar 26 (3-6 PM) to solicit input on housing options, open space, and recreational opportunities, as well as to collect other ideas.

AUG 6, 2024 - Town Council Study Session & Public Comment (Complete)

After the purchase of the school site, the public engagement process was presented in an open study session with the Town Council on Aug 6. The intent was to explain that the General Plan policies and best practices ***require a spectrum of engagement methods***. Reliance on a single method, no matter how passionately stated, cannot replace the existing Town requirements which range from sharing of background information through multiple venues for collaboration to active participation and empowerment as decisions are made. Specifically, the primary engagement approaches being used are the following:

- Study Sessions
- Open Houses
- One-on-one conversations/Office hours
- Dinners and Conversations
- Website
- FAQs
- Informal polling

The engagement approach falls into three basic categories:

- **Inform**

Description: Build awareness about both the challenges and opportunities for the school site

Purpose: To provide the community with balanced and objective information to help them in understanding the existing context, challenges, opportunities, and potential solutions.

Methods: FAQs, Open Houses, Town Websites, News Articles

- **Consult and Involve**

Description: Test ideas and concepts to build knowledge and obtain feedback on the analysis, concepts and objectives

Purpose: Receive feedback and comments, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations.

Methods: Study Sessions, Office Hours/Interviews, Expert Panels, Dinners and Conversations

- **Collaborate and Empower**

Description: To partner with the community throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered, including the development of alternative concepts and the identification of the preferred vision for the site.

Purpose: To build a shared vision with stakeholders that they will support and advocate for. "We will implement what you decide."

Methods: Presentation of Alternatives, Dinners and Conversations, Distribution of Community Design Workbook, Informal Polling

One-on-One Conversations - Every Tuesday (9 am-noon) and last Saturday of each month (*ongoing - Thru December 2024*)

There have been dozens of residents who have made appointments to meet with Kelly + Morgan Architects at the Commons Hall classroom. These participants live throughout the town and have a range of interests and

concerns along with hopes and aspirations for the Commons Site.

AUG 19, 2024 - Open House - “This - “Not that” Vision Exercise (Complete)

The focus of this three-hour event was to elicit feedback using specific visual styles of urban amenities, housing types and neighborhood scale, and overall stylistic preferences.

SEPT 19, 2024 - Park and Rec Commission (PRAC) Study Session & Public Comment (Complete)

This Study Session focused on topics ranging from the new dog park to the existing but unused Little League Field. There are a number of Park & Recreation uses that are being temporarily located in and around the former school site according to the priorities of the existing Yountville Park & Rec Master Plan.

OCT 24, 2024 - Affordable & Workforce Housing Oversight Committee (MEASURE “S”) Study Session & Public Comment (complete)

The focus of this meeting is to focus on the existing policies from the General Plan’s Housing Element and how it applies to the school site. Specifically:

1. **Expansion of Potential Housing Sites:** (Chapter 6, Program 1, Page 14).
2. **Facilitation of Public Involvement:** (Appendix A, Section A.1, Page A-2).
3. **Address Workforce Housing Needs:** (Chapter 6, Policy 4.1 and 4.5, Page HO-15, and HO-6).
4. **Encourage Higher-Density Multifamily Housing:** (Chapter 6, Section 6.6, Policy 4.3, Page HO-6)
5. **Encourage Mixed-Use Development:** (Chapter 6, Policy 5.2, Page HO-7)
6. **Promote Affordable Housing Development:**
7. **Integrate Recreational Uses:** (Chapter 6, Section 6.6, Policy 5.3, Page HO-7)
8. **Support Parks & Trails:** (Chapter 6, Section 6.6, Program 12, Page HO-14)
9. **Increase Housing for Seniors and Special Needs Populations:** (Chapter 6, Program 10, Page 17)
10. **Promote Energy Efficiency and Sustainability:** (Chapter 6, Program 5, Page 14).

NOV 5, 2024 - Interim Report and Update to Council

The focus of this will be to review and to receive feedback on the status and approach for public engagement. The project team will also provide an update on interim use projects and preview the ZDRB Study Session.

NOV 12, 2024 - Zoning & Design Review Board (ZDRB) Study Session & Public Comment

The focus of this will be the review of a first draft of a series of alternatives that accommodate housing, open space, and civic uses with integrated infrastructure such as emergency access, parking, a range of mobility options, and stormwater management among other regulated code compliance for the site.

NOV 14, 2024 - Community Roundtable & Vision Discussion

This event will focus on a series of informal and facilitated small-group conversations about the range of alternatives soon after getting feedback from the ZDRB. It's meant to be a low-pressure way for the community to understand that common goals often have a variety of viable pathways.

DECEMBER 8, JANUARY 12, FEBRUARY 16 - “Dinners & Conversations”

The focus of these late Sunday afternoon gatherings is to informally gather residents for a series of conversations that help clarify issues and build consensus around the proposed concepts in less formal surroundings. Similar to a neighborhood “potluck” the town will facilitate a simple meal with participants bringing cutlery, beverages, and a shared dessert. Hopefully, it can be the basis for monthly get-togethers for neighbors to strengthen bonds and actively participate in the informed decisions around this project.

MARCH 4, 2025 - Presentation of Community Design Workbook (DRAFT) and Final Community Engagement & Outreach Report to Town Council

The focus of this event will be the culmination of months-long and multifaceted community efforts to describe viable conceptual alternatives for the Commons Site. For the Planning Phase to begin, this document must show that a variety of existing required policy goals have been achieved, including the involvement of the community as documented in the final Community Engagement report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Exempt per California Environmental Act (CEQA) Guideline, Section 15061(b)(3)

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

Is it Currently Budgeted? N/A

Where is it Budgeted? N/A

Is it Mandatory or Discretionary? Discretionary

Is there a Staff Resource Impact? Nominal

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Is item Identified in Strategic Plan? Yes

If yes, Identify Strategic Goal and Objective. **Engaged Residents:** The Town embraces our residents' commitment to community as seen through volunteerism, civic engagement, and public participation that enhances the quality of life in Yountville.

Briefly Explain Relationship to Strategic Plan Goal and Objective. Public engagement with the Yountville Commons project supports the strategic goal of engaged residents by creating opportunities for community members to actively shape the project's future and promotes a sense of connection and shared responsibility.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Community Design Workbook
2. Site Alternatives
3. This / not that
4. Residential Amenities
5. Parks and Recreation MasterPlan
8. Housing Policies