



Town of Yountville

6550 Yount Street
Yountville, CA 94599

Staff Report

Agenda Item #: {{section.number}}A

Yountville Town Council Staff Report

DATE: March 4, 2025
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Brad Raulston, Town Manager
PREPARED BY: Brad Raulston, Town Manager

RECOMMENDATION

Consideration, discussion, and adoption of Resolution No. 25-4344 directing the Town Manager to proceed with preparing further designs, plans, entitlements and studies based on the conceptual site plan for potential development of the Yountville Commons site at 6554-6546 Yount Street (APNs 036-070-026 & 036-070-025).

DISCUSSION/BACKGROUND

Preserving and building upon the small-town qualities and social and cultural legacy of Yountville is the guiding mission in crafting a long-term, practical, and inspirational 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 the residents of Yountville.

The project team is presenting the attached slide deck and introducing a “Community Design Workbook” (Workbook) that documents the concepts behind the final conceptual site plan being presented. The ZDRB, PRAC, and Measure S meetings have included the primary elements of the workbook and provided feedback to the team that will be shared at this presentation. In addition to the public forums described above, the project team has also hosted a series of “Dinners & Conversations” where +100 community members have enjoyed a meal in a less formal setting while discussing the project and the concepts. The office hours (aka 1 on 1 “cups of coffee”) have resulted in numerous sessions to listen to residents' ideas and questions. Now that the project team is concluding this idea/visioning process, the Workbook will be used as a reference to reflect what was heard and how that input was realized in the final Conceptual Site Plan for the Commons.

This Idea/Vision process for the Commons was to meet the following criteria:

- **A consensus-built vision** – The vision for the Commons is based on and reflects a shared understanding of priorities developed from input from stakeholders so that the community takes ownership and advocates for the vision.
- **Contextual** – The vision is based on a full understanding of the geographical, environmental, economic, cultural, and social contexts.
- **A small-town pattern of settlement and sustainability** – The vision incorporates sustainable community design concepts and development incentives to maintain the small-town aesthetic. This includes exploring a range of land use and housing options, to create a healthy, walkable, human-centered neighborhood that is an integral part of Yountville.

- **A vision that is consistent with General Plan Policies** – The vision builds on the applicable policies of the General Plan that emphasize enhancing and maintaining the Town’s unique qualities and open space network while allowing for appropriate mixed-use community development.

- **A vision that can be implemented** – The Plan reflects the realities of existing assets and incorporates strategic financing and phasing concepts while meeting Town-wide implementation policies.

This Idea/Vision process for the Commons resulted in the following elements:

1. **Yountville Focused** – The Yountville Commons project prioritizes preserving the town’s small-town charm while integrating new development that aligns with the General Plan and enhances community character.
2. **Local Workforce Housing** – The plan emphasizes affordable housing options for local employees, particularly in hospitality and public services, to reduce long commutes and support a sustainable workforce.
3. **Connected Civic Spaces** – The project aims to create public gathering areas, integrating parks, trails, and open spaces that foster community engagement and social interaction.
4. **Bike & Pedestrian Preferences** – A pedestrian and bike-friendly design prioritizes walkability, reducing car dependency while ensuring safe, interconnected pathways throughout the neighborhood.
5. **Educational Opportunities** – Yountville Commons may provide opportunities, in partnership with established institutions, to leverage Yountville’s world-class hospitality sector. This includes opportunities to provide training and career development while strengthening the town’s reputation for excellence in hotels and restaurants.
6. **Locally Owned & Operated** – While expert builders and operators may be involved, the town intends to control the development process to ensure the Commons serves current and future Yountville residents.

Community Building & The Yountville Commons

Community building is a complex process involving cultivating trust, relationships, and shared values. 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 are intended to build on and contribute to the Yountville community and ensure that a broad range of future residents can share 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

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

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

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

One-on-One Conversations - Every Tuesday (9 am-noon) and last Saturday of each month

There have been numerous 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

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

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

The focus of this meeting was 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 meeting was to review and to receive feedback on the status and approach for public engagement. The project team also provided an update on interim use projects and preview of the ZDRB Study Session, specifically two alternative site designs that showed the variety of solutions considering what is expected to be a part of this new district.

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

The focus of this review was to get feedback on 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. KMA prepared a site model where many of alternatives were shown in context with surrounding properties.

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. Its purpose was to provide a less formal way for the community to understand that common goals often have a variety of viable pathways. The site model was used to elicit feedback and show impacts of some alternative designs.

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

The focus of these late Sunday afternoon gatherings was to informally gather residents for a series of conversations that help clarify issues and gain consensus around the proposed concepts in less formal surroundings. Similar to a neighborhood “potluck” the town facilitated a simple meal with participants bringing cutlery, beverages, and a shared dessert. These events were praised as a chance for neighbors to strengthen bonds and actively participate in the informed decisions around this project.

MARCH 4, 2025 - Presentation of Community Design Workbook and Final Conceptual Site Plan Report to Town Council

The purpose of this meeting will be the culmination of months-long and multifaceted community efforts to describe viable conceptual alternatives for the Commons Site. The final Conceptual Site Plan represents the community ideas and elements that have been developed during the robust outreach efforts during the Idea/Vision Phase. To transition into the regulatory Planning Phase effectively the direction to the Town Manager and the design team must be aligned with the plan provided at this meeting. Future discretionary planning, development, and financing approvals should be consistent with the presented Conceptual Site Plan and the principles and elements associated with that plan.

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. Resolution No. 25-4344
2. PowerPoint Presentation
3. 02-11-25 ZDRB Staff Report
4. 01-30-25 Measure S Staff Report
5. 01-16-25 PRAC Staff Report