



Legislation Text

File #: 22-1711, **Version:** 1

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Becky Craig, Acting County Executive Officer
REPORT BY: Becky Craig, Acting County Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Evaluate Former Stonebridge School Property for Potential Farmworker Center

RECOMMENDATION

SET MATTER 9:30 AM

Acting County Executive Officer requests the following actions:

1. Authorize the Acting CEO to negotiate and execute an agreement with the Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD) for NVUSD to forego negotiations with any other party for the sale of the former Stonebridge School property, for a limited time while the County conducts an appraisal and a Phase I environmental assessment of the property; and
2. Authorize an appraisal and a Phase I environmental assessment be prepared for the former Stonebridge School property, located at 1680 Los Carneros Avenue (APN: 047-182-011), contingent on the prior execution of the agreement in Action Item No. 1 above; and
3. Create a new Capital Improvement Project (CIP) within the Public Works Capital Improvement Program (Fund 3000, Org 3000550) for the Carneros School Property Project (Project 23020), contingent on the prior execution of the agreement in Action Item No. 1 above; and
4. Approval of a Budget Adjustment for the following (4/5 vote required), contingent on the prior execution of the agreement in Action Item No. 1 above:
 - a. Increase appropriations by \$35,000 in Capital Improvement Fund (Fund 3000, Org 3000000) with the use of its available fund balance; and
 - b. Increase appropriations by \$35,000 in Project 23020 offset by the increase in revenue from the transfer from the Capital Improvement Fund Budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Board of Supervisors created an Ad Hoc committee on August 9, 2022, to evaluate the viability of NVUSD's former Stonebridge School property for a Farmworker Housing Center. Staff acquired all available site studies

from NVUSD; however, a Phase I environmental report is not available, and the existing appraisal performed by NVUSD did not evaluate the County’s intended use. This information is needed for the County to further evaluate whether to acquire the former Stonebridge School land and have a new Farmworker Housing Center with associated infrastructure constructed on the site. Based on a preliminary review of the site, although the existing buildings are not expected to be usable due to their location on top of an earthquake fault, the parcel appears capable of accommodating a 60-unit farmworker dormitory with ancillary services outside of all necessary exiting setbacks that constrain the property.

Further CEQA review would need to be performed prior to committing to purchasing the property. If the site is acquired, construction of all improvements will be subject to state prevailing wage laws and County contracting procedures.

PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Staff reports.
2. Public Comments.
3. Motion, second, discussion and vote on the item.

FISCAL & STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact?	Yes
Is it currently budgeted?	No
Is it Mandatory or Discretionary?	Discretionary
Discretionary Justification:	Assess potential for a fourth farmworker housing site
Is the general fund affected?	No
Future fiscal impact:	Land acquisition and annual operational expenses
Consequences if not approved:	Continue operating three farmworker housing centers
County Strategic Plan pillar addressed:	Healthy, Safe, and Welcoming Place to Live, Work, and Visit

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: Evaluating land acquisition is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable. In addition, these actions are categorically exempt under Class 6 of CEQA (Section 15306) as basic data collection, research, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded. These actions are also statutorily exempt under Section 15262 of CEQA, as feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the board has not approved, adopted, or funded that require consideration of environmental factors.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors created an Ad Hoc Committee on August 9, 2022, to evaluate the viability of purchasing the NVUSD’s former Stonebridge School property for a Farmworker Housing Center. Staff connected with the seller’s representative and agent to discuss the parcel. The seller forwarded available site studies for staff to review. A Phase I environmental report was not provided, and

NVUSD's appraisal assumes a vineyard as the best use and does not anticipate the County's intended use and thus does not provide an appropriate value for site based on that use.

Both reports and a CEQA evaluation are required for the County to commit to acquisition of the parcel. If purchased, the County would then move forward to construct the facilities. Based on a preliminary review of the site, the 10-acre parcel appears capable of accommodating a new 60-unit farmworker dormitory with ancillary services. The majority of the existing buildings are located within existing setbacks for the earthquake fault and natural gas pipeline, and thus are most likely not usable, or may require significant upgrades to meet current codes (refer to attached map). Staff recommends that any new Farmworker Housing Center be constructed outside of all necessary site constraints. It is unclear how much the new facilities might cost, but \$7-\$10M is a likely estimate. A funding source for purchase or construction has not yet been identified.

To cover the approximately \$600,000/year operating costs (in today's dollars), the state grant currently shared by the other three centers will need to double (\$250,000 to \$500,000 annually) and the assessment/fees paid by vineyard owners will need to be raised to the maximum allowed. More specifically, the assessment for County Service Area (CSA) 4 would have to be increased from the current rate of \$12 per acre to \$15 per acre. In addition, nightly rents for farmworkers using all the housing centers would increase from \$15 per night to \$18 per night.

Once completed, the appraisal and Phase 1 analysis will be reviewed by the Ad Hoc Committee for further direction and recommendations. Staff may sole source the contracts for the studies in order to expedite their performance. Should the Board want to move forward with the property purchase, a CEQA assessment will then be prepared prior to the County's acquisition of the site, analyzing the potential environmental impacts of a farmworker housing center. During this time, staff will negotiate a price and terms of sale with NVUSD, for recommendation by the Ad Hoc Committee and consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

Recognizing the possibility that the property could be sold to someone else while the County is conducting the appraisal and Phase 1 environmental assessment, the requested actions are contingent on the Acting CEO first negotiating and executing an agreement for NVUSD to refrain from negotiating the sale of the property to anyone else until the reports are complete and reviewed by the Ad Hoc Committee. This will mitigate the risk that the County will end up wasting public funds studying property that is no longer available for sale. Such an agreement will not commit the County to purchasing the property, as further CEQA analysis would need to be finished before such a commitment could be made.