



Napa County

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Legislation Text

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TO: Napa County Housing Commission
FROM: Jennifer Palmer, Director of Housing & Homeless Services
REPORT BY: Alex Carrasco, Staff Service Analyst
SUBJECT: Farmworker Housing and Community Needs Assessment

RECOMMENDATION

Director of Housing & Homeless Services requests to update the Commission on the Farmworker Housing and Community Needs Assessment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On January 3, 2023, the Department of Housing & Homeless Services released a request for proposal (RFP) for a Farmworker Housing and Community Needs Assessment. Unfortunately, no proposals were received by due date. However, staff are continuing to search for proposals. Today's discussion provides the Commission with an update on these efforts and an opportunity to answer questions related to the process.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

On August 9, 2022, the Napa County Board of Supervisors established an ad-hoc committee to evaluate the former Carneros Elementary School site as a potential location for a fourth Farmworker Center run by the Napa County Housing Authority. This committee and exploration followed public comments from industry group representatives including the Vintners, Farm Bureau, Grapegrowers, and Farmworker - Cinco de Mayo Committee, asking the County to evaluate the site. Inquiries with the Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD) revealed the existing buildings would require such extensive retrofitting as to make them cost-prohibitive to use, given their proximity to known fault lines.

To continue evaluation of the site for possible acquisition, the County must conduct a Phase 1 Environmental assessment and obtain an appraisal of the property for use as a Farmworker Center. The County requested an exclusive negotiating agreement with NVUSD, which would allow for the necessary time to conduct these assessments and establish reasonable estimates for construction and operating costs. The intent of the exclusive negotiating agreement was to ensure the assessment and appraisal work could be completed without risk of the property separately being sold to another interested party in the interim. The school district declined to establish an agreement and the County ceased to pursue evaluation of the site.

On September 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to conduct a Farmworker Housing and Community Needs Assessment (“Assessment”). The purpose of the Assessment is to collect the necessary data to inform future discussion and planning about farmworker housing and community-based support service’s needs. The County conducted an Assessment in FY 11/12 which was released in 2013. A Grand Jury report in 2018 recommended a new Assessment be conducted. The establishment of the Division of Housing & Homeless Services within the CEO’s office (merging Homeless Programs, County Affordable Housing and the Napa County Housing Authority into a single Department) in July of 2019, followed by the pandemic, both delayed the timing of planning for a new Assessment.

On September 28, 2022, Housing Commissioners approved creation of an ad hoc committee to provide input and direction on a Scope of Work for a Farmworker Housing and Community Needs Assessment RFP. The ad hoc committee consists of two commissioners (Chair Gustin, Commissioner Akemi-Hernandez), a community member interested in farmworker housing (Cass Walker, Gasser Foundation), and Housing Authority staff.

On December 10, 2022, Housing Commissioners discussed the RFP and recommended releasing it, which Housing Authority staff subsequently did on January 3, 2023. Unfortunately, no proposals were received by due date of February 6, 2023. Director of Housing & Homeless Services will provide an update to the Commissioners on the status of outreach and discussion with several possible study partners since then.