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January 9, 2016

City of Sedona Planning and Zoning Commission
via Michael Raber, Senior Planner
City of Sedona
102 Roadrunner Drive
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via email mraber@SedonaAZ.gov

RE the Western Gateway CFA

Mike and the Commission,

in reviewing the Western Gateway CFA with regards to the :

the planning documents including the draft CFA and the Sedona Community Plan, the existing conditions on the P and Z site walk and many other site visits, and the presentations during P and Z work sessions,

I have the following comments to add for the planning process:

1 The public's Cultural Park private re-development must integrate into and provide for the city as a whole. Because of the size of potential development here, the public benefits to offset development impacts offer much potential for the city to address its identified public needs, and to begin to heal its deficiencies towards a sustainable future. Past and current uses of the property are public or public oriented. A large hotel and convention center is an acceptable use but only if it is a facility that welcomes the public. It is only an acceptable use if it is integrated into the city of Sedona, not a gated, exclusive resort. The public-use Girdner Trail Head is an important hub and established Vista point, and must stay in its current location on the Cultural Park property. This hub and the current Forest Service access can be the critical draw for new public-use and commercial gathering areas for the city and the region. This would fulfill this public gathering area need that is a major core value of the recently updated Sedona Community Plan. Retaining and enhancing the connecting link of the current forest access road, Vista point and trail head is vital to the successful integration of the Cultural Park redevelopment into the City.

A summary of the basis for this opinion:

1. current zoning of the Cultural Park property is Planned Development for a **public** arts village including a **public** community college and a major **public** amphitheater venue.
2. current **public** access to Forest Service land is on the street named Cultural Park Place, with a continued use, prescriptive easement on Cultural Park property.
3. current **public** use Vista is on the Cultural Park property. The only other established vista point in the City of Sedona is at the airport. There is very limited potential for development there and a major road to cross to access from parking.
4. current **public** use trail heads are on Cultural Park property. Other nearby trail heads will soon offer trails all combined to 3 directions, north, west, and south creating a vast trail system originating at this Cultural Park location.

5. current **public** parking for Vista and Trail heads are on Cultural Park property.
6. current **public** high school and community college is adjacent to the Cultural Park property.
7. major **public** need of community gathering areas identified in the Sedona Community Plan, listed in both Vision Themes and also Major Outcomes of the Plan.
8. Sedona Community Plan Community Expectations for this CFA area specifically identifies the area for **public** events.
9. The Cultural Park property is sufficiently large to accommodate many, major private and **public** uses, and to provide significant public benefits. It may be the last, best place.
10. The Cultural Park property is at the western **public** gateway to the city. It should provide for park-and-ride **public** transit, **public** orientation and the city's positive **public** identity and sense of place.

Background:

The needed expansion of Forest Service trails here and to the south of 89A in the near future will bring much additional public use at the vista and trail heads. And a new orientation center for both the Forest Service and the City, considered for the CFA, would work best here at the current trail head. This is because this high point overlooks much of the National Forest land and all of the red rock formations and mountains encircling Sedona. This offers perfect orientation capability. If other public benefits provided by the land owner allow trading out this choice trail head location, at the very least, the existing picnic tables, trails and some parking must stay at this high point, Vista location. The orientation center, the bulk of the Forest Service parking and the main western trail heads could be lower down on the forest service's large, cleared area. Or, they could be adjacent to the vista but out-of-sight of the hotel development on a more-expensive-to-build sloping site.

I am familiar with Forest Service trail head orientations and protocols: For the Red Rock Ranger District, I have personally designed the Cathedral Rock Trail Head parking on Back o' Beyond Road along with the new connection to the proposed parking area addition. Also, I designed the recently completed Dry Creek Trail Head and Vista amenities off of the Vultee Arch Road. And I have started the planning for the future Mescal Trail Head and Vista on Long Canyon Road.

What was once entirely Forest Service public land that became the public-use Cultural Park should remain as an important public use. The high ground of the northern side of the Cultural Park property is perfect for a visitor's orientation center and trail head hub. Coupled with the existing and new trail heads and the the awesome 360 degree vista point, this location would actually provide better orientation and recreation opportunities for the public than the current, forest service's welcome center on Highway 179. And, located here on Cultural Park property, the hub trail head would be closer to the trails being built on the south side of the 89A than if moved down hill, off of the Cultural Park property.

The current vista and trail head is truly a special place in a City that has many view points. But this vista is one of only 2 established, improved vista points in the City. Even so, among all the views from highways, etc., there are multiple reasons for this Cultural Park Vista's uniqueness. There are the vast, pastoral vistas of the entire northern part of the Verde Valley to the west. Most Sedona view points are of only rocks or mountains. This vista has a more humanistic connection and demonstrates the heritage of the Verde Valley by viewing not only the region's ranching lands and the mining of Jerome and Clarkdale, but also the Sinagua Indian pueblos and sites in the Red Cliffs. And, most important for orientation, it has a 360 degree view of all the rocks, all the trails, all the population centers of Sedona. And, as the representing architect of the owner with international credentials says, it is an A+ view. It also happens to be an

existing, public vista and trail head. With the improvements paid for with Heritage Funds, it belongs to the people. It must remain this way.

If the developers cannot find room on the 40-plus acres of Cultural Park land for the trail head and all its current parking, and cannot see their benefit for having the draw of an orientation center on their property, then at the very least, the public must retain the land at the vista and the trail head and also must retain the access to these and the access to the forest service land to the north. It is best if the forest service access is at the vista so a future hub and orientation center can adjoin this current vista. The public owns these easements through the continued use creating a prescriptive easement. This road has been used for decades as access to the national forest. And in the 1990s an improved trail head and Vista with picnic tables, shade structure, interpretive signs, and a kiosk became a part of the Cultural Park improvements. When the property became privately-owned to create the Cultural Park, obviously, no formal easements were created for this use because everyone understood that all the land of the Cultural Park was to be a public use. That was its core principal in the planning.

However, I strongly feel this CFA planning needs to formalize the public's ownership of the right of way and the vista area. This is required, obviously, because the new owner's site planning of the Cultural Park shows this prime vista land use easement taken from the people. They understand the prescriptive easement that the public has, and yes, are providing access through their property. However they are offering a left-over, "bottom feeder", no-view alleyway access along the timeshare condos on the adjoining property. This leads to a small trail head out-of-view, with no red rock views, down in a hole. Moving the vista down the slope, away from the Cultural Park would be like having a Grand Canyon vista placed away from the canyon rim, in the trees – that is, not very effective, meaningful or beautiful. This is not a public benefit. It is a public detriment. It is a public taking.

The current CFA Draft for the Cultural Park area is very specific to not show any potential uses in the small Vista area. This is a great start! However, page 48 of the Draft allows these preservation measures to be ignored or traded out. This will guarantee development will occur here. The owner's proposed site plan takes this vista from the public domain. My wording amendments to page 48 of the CFA Draft are attached. The amendments will preserve the current public space as it exists,.

I cannot support any Gateway CFA planning if this link of Vista and trail head area, and the current road access from 89A to the national forest lands, is not preserved. In fact, I find this link to be pivotal to the public benefits of the re-development of the Cultural Park. I think all of the planning for the Cultural Park portion should evolve around this vital, existing, public-use link. Please see page two of attachments of my planning ideas.

My understanding of the citizen participation for the Sedona Community Plan 2020 update repeatedly asked for community connections via gathering spots. The Community Plan approved by voters includes in its guiding principals a substantial amount of sustainable town building: indeed, 4 of the 6 Major Outcomes and 3 of the 6 Vision Themes talk of a traditional town-scape:

Here are the Sedona Community Plan Major Outcomes that apply:

Housing diversity: denser, lower cost housing – walkable neighborhoods that are village-like

Community Gathering Places: best ones are informal – for “unexpected encounters” walkable streetscapes connecting uses with pedestrian streets and alleyways. Make it a dynamic

place that attracts tourists and locals for a “critical mass” of life.

Economic Diversity: create something that doesn't exist in Sedona – that it becomes a draw for tourists, future locals and locals. The successful destination ski resorts are in existing, walkable little towns, not by accident. And the most successful in North America, Whistler and Vail, have towns that were created by the ski corporations in the image of the walkable villages in Europe. That is what people are drawn to, that is where the life is.

Reduced Traffic: create a neighborhood that is self-sufficient, that supports itself, that doesn't require additional traffic into central Sedona for local shopping. And Create multiple developments that provide hubs for park and ride for all of Sedona.

Here are the SCP Vision Themes that apply:

Community Connections – that is integration!

Walk-ability

Sense of Place: create something that tourists, future locals and locals see as the “there that is there” as opposed to “there is no there there”. Same idea as stated in **Economic Diversity** above .

easiest way to achieve all this is through a traditional town-scape with uses that are ***integrated in three ways:***

1 integrated in its own walkable mix of uses – residential, hospitality, bars, restaurants, shops for locals and tourists, museums, schools....everything! Open to the public and walkable. Only a “wellness” center could perhaps be gated.

2 integrated into the existing essential institutions that are a walkable distance away

3 integrated into the fabric of the city: the best way is to create something at the Cultural Park that is visible from the highway, something that draws tourists, future locals and locals. The community draw, the gathering place has to be visible from the highway to be a constant reminder to those passing on the highway – that “that place is happening”, “I need to be there”.

But the key word to this planning is **“integrated”**

As an aside, I know that Sedona's uptown can be this gathering place again someday. I know that it will be rediscovered by locals. But currently it's considered not cool, it is only for the tourists. I say, “take back uptown”!.....For a draw for liveliness, it needs things like theaters, other entertainment venues, local wineries tasting rooms, etc. But maybe the biggest thing is that tourists, future locals and locals don't go to Uptown for recreation. Sedona is all about recreation in many, nature-inspired forms. But *there is no connection to the national forest in uptown*. There are no trail heads there. You can't get to the creek. There really isn't a local draw. Unlike this Gateway CFA, there are no schools there. There is no medical center. There isn't even a post office. Whats more, there's no 19th hole of the golf course or no beer after a hike, because.... there is no hike! There really isn;t any integration into the whole of Sedona.

Which brings me back to the vista and trail head being a vital link to the 3 integrations of the Cultural Park. The existing vista and trail head could be like Sedona's public beach front – the obvious draw to the town. People will go there to view the vista, yes, and to learn, to orient, to hike, to recreate, to have fun. The vista and trail head are the special draw for the new gathering places. The Cultural Park Place road in its current location takes you directly to the vista and

trail head. It is the *main street* of the potential gathering places. It is the strand, the promenade that takes you to the beach. Actually it is better - It takes you to a sublime, A+ view point. Directly around the vista point should be other public places: bars, restaurants, ice cream shops, outdoor small theaters, etc. that can be part of the hotel or separate entities. They should all have big windows and nice patios. But there should not be private homes or lodging rooms directly adjoining the vista. This would potentially cause complaints about *those folks* enjoying the Vista and trail head. That said, the vista and trail head access should be closed at sunset.

Currently, there are no other Vistas or trail heads connected to a population center in Sedona. It would be unique and a strong draw. The vista and trail head would be a walkable destination from the entire Cultural Park development and the new park-and-ride transit. That same transit would bring the locals to the Cultural Park. Walking along the way to the Vista are the stores, restaurants, and the gathering places that the locals so strongly voiced a need. And, as the owner's A+ representing architect says, "because of its size, this is the last place in Sedona that this can happen". Well, this cannot happen if a gated resort takes the place of this potential gathering place. And if it does, then, what is the community's draw to this development? The same Cultural Park Schematic Concept by the owner shows a "Community Core (CC) that is hidden from public view. Is this a draw? It is on a dead end street that leads to a gated wellness center. Is this a draw? Will their proposed trail head location, that is out of view, moved down in a hole, be a local draw? Or will the locals say "Lets go hang at the proposed "Campus of Innovation"? I don't think so.

For me, as I have stated since we started this process in April 2015 in many public hearings, any development change from the current public and semi-public Cultural Park must remain a public benefit, open to the public. It must integrate into Sedona and support and provide for Sedona. I have stated the streets must be public rights-of-way, not private, gated dead ends. I have stated a hotel is fine as long as it is a public-welcoming, city-style hotel, not an exclusive, private resort. I have stated the Vista must stay in its current location as a public area. All this must happen and be written into the CFA. This CFA needs big teeth, strong words and deliberate planning to provide for the public, and to protect the public's rights. That is the government's mission, and my mission, *to work for the people*. The owner's rights include the ability to develop their A+ property, but with responsibility to the city of people and their guests. That responsibility must be of the quality to match the scenery.

Here are my other concerns for the Gateway CFA:

2 The pedestrian connection across the highway (Loop Road to Cultural Park) is very important, even if some walking distances are currently great as discussed on the site walk. It is an important connection across the highway for the hotels, schools and future commercial patrons. And it is very important for trail connections from one vast hiking area in the south to the other in the north. This is especially true since, due to steep topography off of the Loop Road, the area for significant parking is only to the north of the highway, as is currently located in the Cultural Park.

Also, it is important at this entrance to Sedona that when driving in on the highway, for the street-scape to announce visually and physically that one is now in a town (not just some development along a highway), and to announce that this is a walking (and hiking) town.

Therefore, the following roadway improvements should be planned considerations:

a. physically narrowing the driving surface from highway widths to boulevard widths should occur at the start of the median at the high school or where the speed limit lowers to 40 MPH;

b. an art-filled roundabout at the cultural park drive (and the medical center drive);

c. If these items a and b are not accomplished, then add a tall (so as to not block the distant, low-angle red rock views) pedestrian bridge over the highway at Cultural Park Drive. A simple, rustic-looking walking bridge could function for safe crossing and not block red rock views but actually frame them, such as the traffic lights currently do when driving in to town. Mobility challenged folk's accessibility can be accomplished at the surface level across the highway. A street-level crossing is more convenient and the distant views are the same as from a bridge, so it is acceptable per ADA code's to not provide accessibility to the walking bridge.

3 The highway as well as Navoti Road should be considered complete streets. The highway should be made over as a boulevard with drive lanes narrowed from highway width to city street width, there should be bike lanes added, and the sidewalks landscaped with shade trees. Shade trees can be along both sides, but would be best on the east side, where there are not as many red rock views to be blocked by trees.

4 Throughout the West Gateway CFA, all streets should be publicly dedicated, with good, village-like connections – not curving, dead-end suburban subdivision roads. All development should be “permeable” to access for the general public. Local's services, stores and dining establishments should be encouraged in the mix of development. Dense development with nearby open space will encourage walking. This will create potentially multiple, walkable, neighborhoods with primary focus on people and their connections with each other.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to meet to discuss these items.

Thanks for your valuable time and efforts, Eric

Mike Raber - Fwd: CFA Gateway Comments

From: Eric Brandt <eba3617@gmail.com>
To: Mike Raber City Sedona <MRaber@sedonaaz.gov>, Audree Juhlin <AJuhlin@sed...>
Date: 1/12/2016 12:03 PM
Subject: Fwd: CFA Gateway Comments
Attachments: CFA page 48 amended wording.jpg; Eric Brandt Western Gateway CFA notes.doc; 16.01.11 culture park site plan.jpg

Hi Audree and Mike,

as promised, here is the site plan for the ideas that I have for the Cultural Park. My 16.01.11 concept site plan is attached. These ideas address the Sedona Community Plan Community's Expectations for the CFA, and the Plan's Visions and Outcomes as they apply to the Cultural Park property. Because of the owner's plan's specific areas of land uses, and the likeliness of the owner following through with their ideas for development approvals, and because it was easier to copy..... I have followed the lead proposed by the land owner's conceptual site plan.

Please let me know if would like to meet to review any of my ideas. For convenience, I have also attached the same documents that I emailed to you yesterday.

Thanks again, Eric
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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Eric Brandt <eba3617@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 11, 2016 at 12:43 PM
Subject: CFA Gateway Comments
To: Mike Raber City Sedona <MRaber@sedonaaz.gov>
Cc: Audree Juhlin <AJuhlin@sedonaaz.gov>

Hi Mike and Audree,

I have compiled my notes and comments for the West Gateway CFA, and they are attached. I apologize in advance for the long-winded-ness.....I find this issue regarding the Cultural Park re-development to be very important for the people of Sedona and our visitors. I did not realize the full depth of my concerns until I wrote this report.

I also want to do a quick plan to demonstrate my ideas, as mentioned in my comments. I will follow up today with a Cultural Park site plan.

Please distribute this, as may be lawful and appropriate, to the P and Z board members.

Thanks, Eric

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Slight alteration

Trailhead

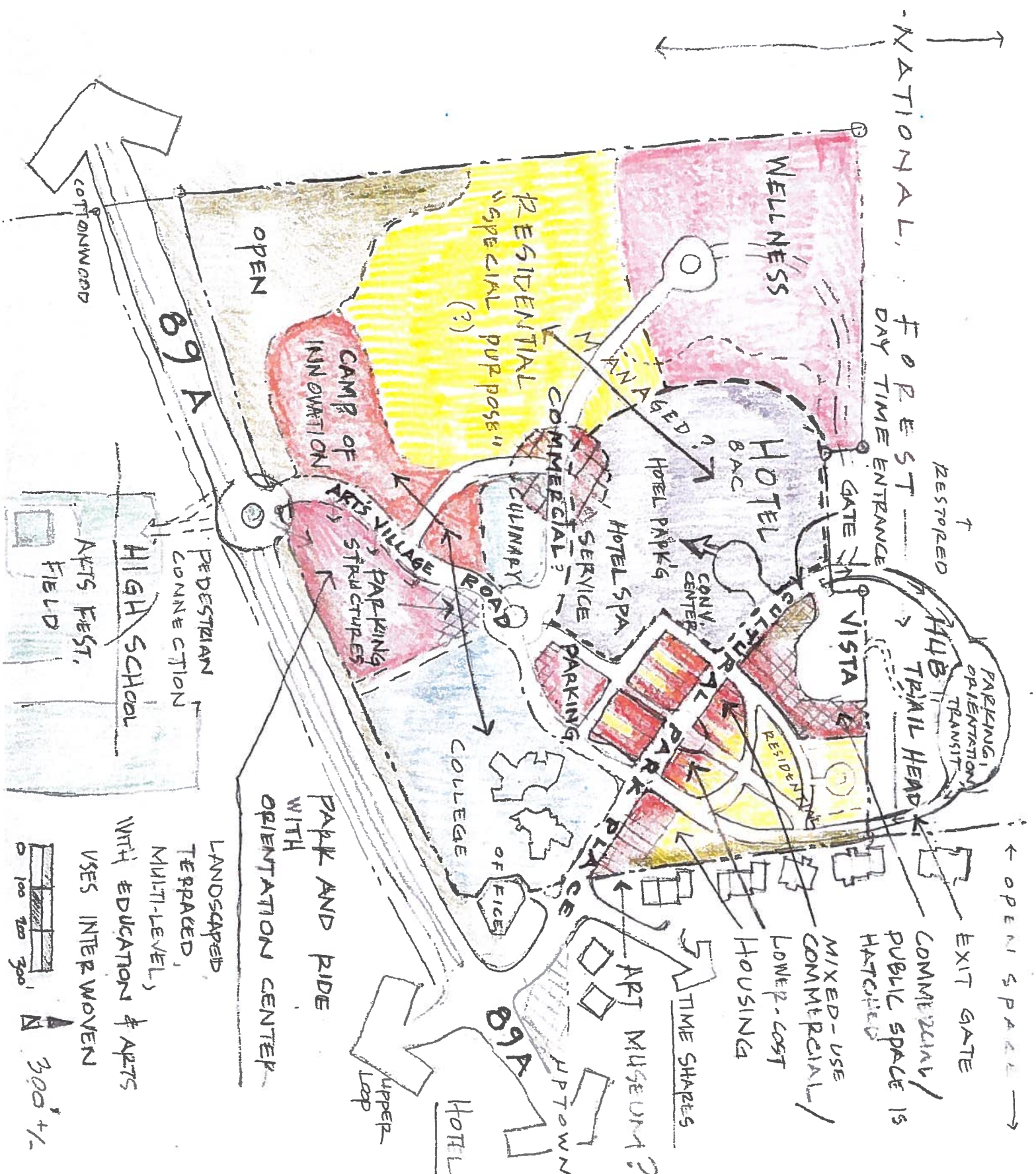
The Girdner Trailhead was recommended in the National Forest Plan as a "hub" trailhead that should accommodate a variety of trail users and centralize forest access away from sensitive areas. A hub trailhead would include car and trailer parking, toilets, bike racks, and provide for equestrians and transit. The Girdner Trailhead is also in an area where the USFS is planning to expand the trail system in response to heavy use and unauthorized trails. Moving this site onto National Forest land could allow for more significant improvements and parking than its current location and take pressure off other crowded and more environmentally-sensitive trailhead sites. Providing visitor information at this site has the potential advantage of combining environmental education, area information, amenities and parking all at a key recreational destination. This location is also a major vista point and photo opportunity.

EXPANSION

Development Criteria

The area on the accompanying map is the existing trailhead location. ~~Relocation~~ may be possible with new development but public vehicular access and parking with an approximate area of at least 0.8 acres must be provided.





CONCEPTUAL PLAN

SEDONA CULTURAL PARK

JAN 11 2016

ERIC BRANDT ARCHITECT

Mike Raber - Western Gateway Engage Sedona Comments

From: Lauren Browne
To: Mike Raber
Date: 1/12/2016 11:02 AM
Subject: Western Gateway Engage Sedona Comments

Hi Mike,

Here's the three comments from the Western Gateway question I posted:

Diane Phelps, June 24, I think we have commercialized that entrance big-time with Marriot Courtyard addition, too late for adding charm. Could it be new business/educational center?

Rick Reynolds, July 20, This would be a great spot for a museum and cultural center. The area would also be great for live work spaces for artists with galleries and studios.

Paul Friedman, July 24, Yavapai College has a wonderful building there that is well-used by OLLI--close to 1,000 local residents attend programs. But there is no "campus" around it where people can stroll, sit (in the shade) to talk or read, picnic, etc. like they can at most colleges. I suggest the city try to get some close-by land and landscape it for this purpose...

And that's it! Let me know if you have questions!

Lauren