Alameda Creek Watershed Center Planning
Meeting with Sunol Residents at Sunol Yard Conference Room
June 17, 2011

Introductory remarks:
The purpose of the meeting was to recap and review the discussion and follow-up items from the May 24 meeting as well as to begin discussing the planning efforts for and get input on the interpretive elements for the Alameda Creek Watershed Center. Approximately 20 community members and other interested parties participated in the meeting.

Recap and review of May 24 meeting
SFPUC staff discussed the May 24 meeting summary and several follow-up items from the meeting with the group and asked for revisions to the summary from the group. One follow-up item that was discussed was how weddings are conducted at the Pulgas Water Temple. It was explained that two hours are allowed for the set up, ceremony and clean up and no receptions are allowed at the site. Despite the limitations, it is a well used site. The current cost is $200, but the cost may increase. The site is also open to the public during weddings.

Additional feedback on uses:
- The Sunol Water Temple site is attractive to bicyclists, so there should be bike parking and lock-up areas near the site.

General Feedback
- The group expressed some confusion about the physical parameters for the Watershed Center project, and requested a layout map of the project area and boundaries. SFPUC staff confirmed they would have a map of the project site at the next meeting.
- A community member requested SFPUC staff fill out the Sunol survey and share their responses, so the community can get a sense of where the SFPUC is coming from.
- The group wanted to know how their ideas and concerns are being handled, and if the SFPUC has responded to the input from residents about the center so far. It was explained that some Sunol Residents did not fill out the survey because they assumed the SFPUC would fail to respond to the community’s needs.

Input about facilities, grounds and access:
- It is important that the focus of this project and the Watershed Center does not shift away from the surrounding grounds at the site, especially the old picnic area.
- Re-opening the old picnic area behind the temple is very important for Sunol residents and visitors to the site. There could be an old-fashioned picnic ground without tables and barbeques, so maintenance would be minimized.
- The parks run by the East Bay Regional Park District are good examples of how to open up space in a controlled way as well as a good model of public inclusivity at their parks. Sunol Residents hope there will be a similar welcoming feeling at the Watershed Center site.
- The group asked about the hours of operation during the week and weekends.
- It is important that more access to the area surrounding the temple is more accessible and available to the public. The park should welcome the public.
- The layout and resources in the picnic area will inform the types of audiences it will attract. For example, installing barbeques would draw large crowds for sustained periods, whereas bringing in only picnic tables would encourage people to eat at the site and leave soon after to explore the rest of the park.
- The scenic views of the Sunol Water Temple must be maintained when the building for the Watershed Center is erected.
- The Watershed Center buildings should not detract from the beauty of the temple.
- A more attractive, less industrial gate to the Sunol Water Temple Site would be good and would complement the historic nature of the area. It was suggested that the spouting fish/dolphins gargoyle could be fixed, so they can function again.
- The group asked what would be the maximum number of people who could be accommodated at the Watershed Center. It was suggested that the capacity would be limited by parking, restrooms and building capacity.
- If the Watershed Center becomes an attraction with lots of visitors, what kinds of people will come and how will the staff ensure good behavior?
- There was a suggestion to look at Crystal Springs and Pulgas Water Temple for ideas about site or guest limits for events.

**Input on surrounding facilities**
- There were concerns about the existing box-like buildings at the Sunol Yard, and the plans to build others in the future. The sewage treatment plant in Livermore by the airport has an attractive way of concealing its industrial-type buildings. The SFPUC could look at that site and develop new ways to make the site’s pipelines and industrial-looking facilities in the Sunol Yard more aesthetically pleasant.
- There should be a screening in place for the box-like buildings.
- There could be a contest for the community to design a mural or some kind of art for the metal buildings.
- The SFPUC should plant fast-growing trees on the sides of the driveway to hide the industrial buildings.

**Planning the interpretive elements**
SFPUC staff provided an overview of the June 6 meeting to start discussing the planning efforts for the interpretive elements for the Watershed Center. Themes and sub-themes for the Center are being developed now, and they will be shared with the group at a future meeting.

**Input on interpretative elements**
- The Sunol residents want to emphasize the historic value of the site at the Center.
- There was a question about if the group will have a chance to see the list of the interpretive elements being considered for the site. Staff explained the list will be shared with the group once it has been developed.
- It was suggested that the SFPUC approach Boy Scout troops to conduct volunteer work at the site.
- Someone suggested that the SFPUC check out the wonderful chronological history presentation along the pavement at the Cloverdale Creamery. Visitors walk through the history as they walk up to the creamery.

**Watershed Center website:**
Visit [www.sfwater.org/sunolvalley](http://www.sfwater.org/sunolvalley). The website contains background information on the Watershed Center as well as all the handouts from each meeting and a schedule for all future meetings.

**Follow-up items:**
The next meeting will be postponed until Friday, August 19, 2011 at 10 a.m. at the Sunol Yard.