



Via Email

March 1st, 2024

City of Sedona Staff, City Council Members and Mayor Jablow

Attention: JoAnne Cook

Re: "Safe Place to Park" Program

Dear Mayor Jablow, Council Members and City Staff:

The Verde Valley Cyclists Coalition (VVCC) is providing comments on the PDF, Item 6a Safe Place to Park packet distributed on 1/31 by the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z), VVCC attended the onsite P&Z visit on 2/6 and presented comments at the P&Z meeting on the same matter. The VVCC is submitting updated comments for the 3/12 City Council Meeting discussing the same matter.

The mission of the VVCC is to advocate for Verde Valley Cyclists by providing memorable, safe riding experiences while preserving and expanding biking access through partnerships. The VVCC's membership is made up of 263 cyclists in the Verde Valley with the majority of our members being mountain bikers residing in Sedona.

The VVCC was supportive of the City of Sedona purchasing the Cultural Park property and spoke in favor of the purchase at the City Council meeting held on November 22nd. The update we provided to the VVCC membership can be found [here](#).

The VVCC continues to be supportive of the City of Sedona taking the lead in developing the Cultural Park with the input of the local community. Through reviewing the packet distributed by the P&Z Commission, we would like to express our concerns with some of the plans outlined in the packet, specifically the "Safe Place to Park" proposal.

As the Cultural Park is adjacent to the Coconino National Forest, there is close proximity to the Western Gateway trail system and specifically the Outer Limits and Bottom Out trails are in close proximity to the proposed "Safe Place to Park" footprint. The Western Gateway and specifically Outer Limits and Bottom Out provide hikers and bikers a relatively "unspoiled" outdoor experience, as no development is in close proximity to them, yet.

The City of Sedona has made amazing progress incorporating art, vegetation, and design throughout the Sedona roadways (e.g. Uptown, Tlaquepaque and the Ranger Station in-progress). However, this same attention to aesthetics and creating a "Sedona" experience is often missed when developments are adjacent to the Coconino National Forest and the extensive trail system contained in our National Forest. New trail heads/connections for new developments need consideration, thus avoiding a spider web of social trails developing that destroys the landscape and the Sedona experience. Setbacks and incorporating green space are common with infrastructure projects, but setbacks (i.e. adequate green space) are typically missed when developments are adjacent to the Forest and our trail systems.



We cannot easily change what has already been built; however, we can do a better job of preserving and respecting our natural space and the Sedona experience with new developments that are adjacent to our trail systems.

During the site visit on 2/6 with P&Z, several concerns were alleviated. However, the plan is still in development and comments were made that things would change as the site was developed and the footprint could change if there was increased need.

So, we respectfully ask the City of Sedona to consider the following suggestions in their execution plans for the Safe Place to Park. We appreciate the City's goal to assist those in need and hope you consider the following points, which would be beneficial to these new residents, the trails and forest.

1. Treat this as if it were a long-term project rather than a fast, short-term solution when making decisions and investments that impact the trails and Sedona experience of the trail users as well as the residents of the Safe Place to Park.
2. The fencing pictured in the packet around the Safe Place to Park boundaries does not create a Sedona experience for the trail users or the Safe Place to Park residents. Consider natural material and/or the beautiful material the City invested in to support Uptown's aesthetics. The Marriott also created a nice natural boundary. Even Forest Service fencing would provide a less obtrusive look to the area than the current fencing pictured in the packet.
3. Work with the Forest Service, the VVCC and other organizations to obtain trail access and trailheads in your plans now. Otherwise, we will end up with a spider web of social trails throughout the Cultural Park to the Western Gateway trail system. We know this is temporary, but the surrounding Forest and trail system will be impacted by temporary solutions.
4. Consider the amount of green space and setbacks between the structures (temporary or permanent) planned on the property and the surrounding trails.
5. Consider the impact to the surrounding trail system and Forest from dumping the gray water from up to 80 adults and children showering daily into the surrounding Forest. The current situation on Crusty in the Soldiers Wash trail system should not be repeated.
6. The Cultural Park is a Gateway into Sedona and should welcome residents and visitors in the same fashion as Uptown and Tlaquepaque. How will the Safe Place to Park be incorporated or phased out in the Master Planning efforts? VVCC would welcome the opportunity to be an active participant in assisting the City with Trails & Trail access in the Master Planning efforts.

The VVCC appreciates your careful consideration of these concerns and suggestions. Our point of contact is Lars Romig: 6 Vista Bonita DR, Sedona, AZ 86336 or via email at Lars.Romig@me.com

Sincerely,
Tracy Randall

President, Verde Valley Cyclist Coalition