



# News Release

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## **Planning Effort Launched to Improve Visitors Experience at Sonoma State Historic Park**

California State Parks is launching a year-long planning process to improve the visitor experience of interpretive and educational services at Sonoma State Historic Park. The effort includes an opportunity for community participation at a late January public meeting and in the coming months, via an on-line survey. The process will produce a Sonoma State Historic Park Interpretation Management Plan (IMP).

The IMP will translate the visitor experience goals of the park's General Plan into specific strategies and measurable objectives to engagingly communicate the significance of the park's resources. It will address interpretation of locally popular tourist and school group visitation sites; the Mission San Francisco Solano, Vallejo Home (Lachryma Montis), Blue Wing Inn, the Barracks, and the Toscano Hotel and Kitchen.

California State Parks, Diablo Vista District secured funding earlier this year for the plan which was allocated from Departmental Headquarters for critical project needs. The interpretive planning effort is an operational based priority due to Sonoma State Historic Park's statewide significance, school group visitation, visitor demand for park interpretive opportunities and the park's contributing role in local tourism.

An initial public meeting to gather comments, suggestions and other guidance from the community is scheduled for Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 7pm–9pm at the Vintage House Senior Center, 264 First Street East, Sonoma. The park's General Plan can be viewed by visiting the Park Management section of the state park website at [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).

California State Parks has contracted with Frank Binney & Associates, a professional interpretive planning firm to produce the plan. The Frank Binney & Associates team includes Sonoma-based exhibit designer Tom Whitworth. The firm has helped plan visitor experiences at Yosemite National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Mount St. Helens National Monument and numerous other state and federal parks across the country.

Interpretive planning meetings with the park's treasured park partners, valuable volunteers and docents, and staff are also scheduled to take place soon. A second public meeting will take place in early June.

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