



## Sustainable Sonoma Council

### Notes

November 28, 2018

Sonoma Community Center, room 110

#### Attended:

Chip Allen (alternate for Peg Van Camp)  
Lorraine Ashton  
Norma Barnett (alternate for Stephanie Hiller)  
Mark Bodenhamer  
Linda Bruce (alternate for Ann Colichidas)  
Tom Conlon  
Richard Dale (Steering Committee)  
Nicole Ducarroz (alternate for Socorro Shiels)  
Priscilla Essert  
Rachel Hundley  
Doug Hanford

Celia Kruse De La Rosa  
John McCaull  
Melanie Parker  
Diana Sanson  
Gary Saperstein (Steering Committee)  
Cynthia Scarborough (Steering Committee)  
Cathy Wade Shepard  
Teri Shore  
Veronica Vences  
Tim Zahner

#### Welcome and connect

- Introduce Terri Updegraff and Jennifer Blackwood, meeting assistants from SSU.
- Check in question: “Share one sentence about what’s on your mind about housing affordability in Sonoma Valley.”
- Good [press](#) coverage of Voices of Sonoma Valley, the report based on SuSo’s listening sessions. Index Tribune 11/23, Press Democrat 11/26, Kenwood Press 12/1, VOM Magazine November and January.
- Remember that SuSo isn’t only about housing. Our main purpose is to be a forum that creates alignment among diverse stakeholders.

#### Agenda Item: Unpacking housing affordability

Objective: to define SuSo’s goal of housing affordability in a way that is powerfully motivating for all/most interests, that “activates” all participants. What does “housing affordability” look like when Sustainable Sonoma says it? Let’s flesh out the details where the devil might live.

Phrase-length version of SuSo goal: “housing affordability” (not “affordable housing”)

Sentence-length version of SuSo goal from previous meeting: “Sustainable Sonoma will bring our community’s different sectors together to increase and preserve housing that is affordable to everyone who lives or works in Sonoma Valley, to create diverse, pleasing neighborhoods that respect our

environment and support a vibrant local economy.”

We worked through the pink-highlighted words to unpack this statement.

**Draft revised version for SuSo Council review:** “Sustainable Sonoma will bring our community’s different sectors together to increase, improve, and preserve housing that is affordable for people who live or work in Sonoma Valley, within already-developed areas, to create diverse, safe, complete neighborhoods.”

General input: Avoid all-or-nothing words like “everyone.” We like words like intentional, balanced, innovation. Specific concepts were unpacked as described below.

### Increase

**Draft revised version:** Clearly define what we want and where. Encourage intentional development. Increase balance, innovation, diversity, equity.

- In general: Intentional development. Encourage the right kind of development in the right places. Develop definitions for exactly what we want. Bring balance to our unbalanced community.
- Equity in terms of cost and beneficiaries. Every part of the community needs to share the burden of more/denser housing, not just the neighborhood “over there.”
- Pathways for upward mobility in housing, multiple paths to ownership.
- Explore innovative funding streams, balance cost with sustainability
- Value innovation over regulation, create exciting new things people will want to do.
- Assistance for renters and new renters. Don’t benefit homeowners at the expense of families renting.
- ADU’s & JADU’s

### Preserve

**Draft revised version:** Do not reduce number of existing affordable units, including mobile home parks. Improve substandard housing.

- Minimize changing the number of existing units that are affordable. This is different than saving every old building, i.e that are unsafe e.g. lead paint.
- Improve substandard housing

### Protect tenants (newly separated out)

**Draft version:** Rent stabilization. Just-cause eviction.

- Rent control is problematic for real estate and landlords (You are asking landlords to not cover their expenses.) but may be critical for tenants. NEEDS MORE DISCUSSION.
- Rent stabilization and just-cause eviction are more broadly accepted than rent control; keep separate

### Affordable

**Draft revised version:** Homes that are affordable across the income spectrum. Focus on middle class and below. Enable upward mobility. Define affordability as a % of household income.

- Affordable to who, how far up the income spectrum? This issue needs more discussion--we do not have consensus.
  - “All levels” is too broad. “Most levels” better. Focus on low income up to middle income, or low-middle, i.e. teachers. Our goal should

People are having to choose rent over medication, or rent over food. “These are lives we are talking about.”

be quite specific. We know it's people from a certain economic level down facing housing challenges.

- Win support from whole community by going with "all"
- Spread the cost of below-market housing between public and private.
- Better metric than household income as % of MHI is housing cost as a % of household income.
- Greenbelt Alliance uses "homes that are affordable across the income spectrums". Use "homes" not "housing".

People (replace "everyone" with "people")

**Draft revised version:** People facing housing challenges. Includes commuters, youth, families, homeless, poor, fixed income, up the income spectrum. Greater need up to middle income. What is the limit on who and how many people?

- Examples given that 60% of hospital staff commutes, plus short term staff, majority of Parks staff commutes.
- Inventory issues relevant to affordability.
- Developers need to be on board and they are not in the room.
- "Accessible to all" or define more narrowly? How is middle income defined here? Define "balance" here.
- "Affordable to people who are facing housing challenges." Want to make this as comprehensive as possible and keep as many people possible on board.
- Open to upper income, but emphasize "greater need".

Diverse

**Draft revised version:** Ethnicity, age, socioeconomic, LGBTQ+. Types of employment including employers, entrepreneurs, employees. Types of home and households. Integration, understanding, respect.

- Types of diversity: add LGBTQ+, employers, entrepreneurs, employees. Instead of... "young and old" use "age", "Latino/white" use "ethnicity".
- Diversity in types of housing.
- Integration leads to understanding, which leads to respect

Pleasant neighborhoods

**Draft revised version:** Innovative, dynamic, practical, dense, attractive, safe. Integrated with surroundings. Promotes community connection. In transit and commercial hubs. Transit, walkable, bikeable to parks, amenities, gathering places, schools, work.

- Intentional community neighborhoods, dynamic communities, is not just housing.
- "Livable" instead of "pleasing". Livable, joyful, cohesive, attractive, with character.
- Look at SOMO, One Planet Living. [Link](#).
- Access to services, shops. Village concept. Storefronts with housing on top. See [here](#) for "complete" neighborhood definition.
- Innovative, practical, smaller, and denser. Many physical types of housing.
- Increase heights and densities in transit and commercial hubs.
- Government be more intentional and focused about asking for what we want.
- Integrated with surrounding community, community character, appropriate for Sonoma
- Amenities should be separated from essentials. Are amenities really for residents?
- The physical construction of neighborhoods can create connections. Promote connection (community gathering places, housing is close to schools, rentable bikes)
- Environmentally safe.

### That respect our environment

**Draft revised version:** Low climate footprint. Water smart, fire smart, non-toxic, energy efficient. Renewable and all electric energy ready. Infill, not sprawl. Inside Urban Growth Boundary and urban service area. Pragmatic about cost associated with additional regulation.

- Construction and design standards include energy efficient (renewable energy, “all-electric-ready”), water smart, fire smart, air quality smart, doesn’t remove habitat, environmentally safe e.g. no pesticides and toxic materials.
- How to offset cost associated with additional regulation?

### And support a vibrant local economy

**Draft revised version:** Home affordability part of attracting desirable businesses. Tax on businesses part of equitable revenue generation.

- Equitable generation of revenue, taxing businesses not a sole solution, spread the burden.
- Vibrant economy is a result of better housing, not a criterion for achieving better housing.
- How to attract vibrant businesses that we want

Other major topics not covered: a) vacation rentals b) second homes c) housing on agricultural land d) SDC 3) city, county and state initiatives already underway

Unresolved issues: a) affordable to who, how far up the income ladder b) how far can we go on tenant protections c) how far can we go on environmental standards.

## **Agenda Item: Action Priorities -- Where should SuSo begin on housing?**

What are the opportunities? We are a unique coalition. What is the landscape, where are our leverage points?

### **SuSo’s Resources Today**

Summary of past, present, desired finances and staffing. Call from Steering Committee chair to contribute via donations, organizational resources, connections to expertise or resources.

### **Action Priorities--see separate document for notes on this activities**

Activities by priority:

I. High-visibility education of Council and community on housing affordability: needs, shortfall, barriers, levers, types of opposition and support. Understand what’s going on with housing initiatives in Sonoma County and Bay Area. Learn from successful initiatives in other similar places. Improve communications.

II. Build capacity of Sustainable Sonoma to deliver, including fundraising (private and public) for our collective work , increasing engagement.

III. Present on listening session results, targeting missing stakeholders like project developers and increasing community’s understanding of what Sustainable Sonoma is doing. Ask how audiences view housing affordability and how they can contribute.

Lower urgency:

IV. Develop criteria for when Sustainable Sonoma undertakes, endorses, or promotes a specific project. Draft criteria exist.

### **Potential future agenda items**

- Asset survey of the Council in relation to housing affordability: connections, knowledge, bandwidth, funding, staff/time, expertise, relevant work underway.

- Unresolved issues: a) affordable to who, how far up the income ladder b) how far can we go on tenant protections c) how far can we go on environmental standards.
- Job description and assignments for work group lead and roles



**Sustainable Sonoma**  
**11/28/18 Sustainable Sonoma Council Meeting**  
**Work Group Notes**

**Revised Proposed Work Groups:**

1. Understand housing initiatives in Sonoma County and Bay Area and learn from successful initiatives elsewhere: housing needs, shortfall, barriers, levers, opposition, and support.
2. Produce high-visibility education events for the Council and community on housing affordability.
3. Build the capacity of Sustainable Sonoma to deliver, including fundraising (private and public) for our collective work.
4. Present on the Voices of Sonoma Valley report, increasing community's understanding of what Sustainable Sonoma is doing.
5. Develop criteria for when Sustainable Sonoma undertakes, endorses, or promotes a specific project.

**Notes as transcribed from flipcharts:**

*(Note that Work Group titles below do not exactly match the titles above, based on outcome of meeting)*

**A. High visibility education of Council and community on housing affordability: needs, shortfalls, barriers, levers, types of opposition and support.**

- It's all economics: the costs of housing are higher than what's affordable. Look at other solutions to \$\$
- Yes, we need to receive presentations from experts + successful models. Definitely.
  - multifamily housing developers
  - Private developers
  - Planners
  - Will help greatly with public awareness
- Combine with "B." Agree! Yes.
- Video series on the issue c.f. the Roseland annexation in S.R.

*Signed by Tim Zahner, Tom Conlon, Veronica Vences, Cindy Scarborough*

## **B. Understand what's going on with housing initiatives in Sonoma County and Bay Area.**

- Find out what other groups are doing and what county planning is considering at this point.
- Willing to work on or research this to develop collaborations + not attack this alone.
- Interested in promoting ADU, JADU as an easy and quick solution
- Seems similar to "C" and "A"
- Visit the idea of SOMO (One Planet)
- Critical to make connections with associated similar groups - legal
- See my note on C
- Look @ community/cohousing already successful
- Presentation to SuSo on housing goals for Sonoma Valley from city + county
- Presidio Trust and SDC
- Beyond SoCo - across USA - other countries
- Conduits to/from Agency on aging housing efforts
- Join a town hall on "housing innovation" with the city!

*Signed by Doug Hanford, Rachel Hundley, Cathy Wade Shepard*

## **C. Learn from successful initiatives in similar places.**

- Carrots & sticks
- Gives us ability to learn from other endeavours and provides a starting point with a large socio-economic issue. Early win - speaker series can educate us and bring other allies/supporters to the table
- CityLab.com, Council of New Urbanism, CA Forward Economic Summit - 1M homes initiative
- Research innovative ideas of other communities - presentations to SuSo
- Group with "A" and provide workshops for Council
- Presidio trust ⇌ SDC
- A+B+C = knowledge to go forward

*Signed by Veronica Vences, Tim Zahner, Cathy Wade Shepard*

## **D. Develop criteria for when SuSo undertakes, endorses or promotes a specific project (draft criteria exists)**

- Sounds risky, may be safer to avoid "endorsements"?
- Important, but later priority - once we're nearing need for this

- After A+B+C
- Pull the trigger on a project even if not perfect to have a success
- The “everyone” issue is critical to this

*Signed by Rachel Hundley, Cathy Wade Shepard, Tom Conlon*

**E. Present on listening session results. Ask 1. How audiences view housing affordability and 2) how they can contribute**

- Important to close circle with local community as to progress of SuSo
- Target groups that will be key in project: developers, etc.
- “Community” (or part of it still confused and at times suspicious of what SuSo up to. A priority.

**F. Build capacity of SuSo to deliver, including fundraising for our collective work**

- Early win w/ Impact: reach & publicize \$50,000 match (surpass!)
- Meet with legislators to discuss public housing
- Look at the upcoming HEAP of grants coming from Sonoma County. RFP will be issued in January, due in Feb, earmarked for homeless support, capital or operating, but could be an opportunity for an early win (esp. If you partner w/ existing org)
- Essential element in order to grow, sustain and deepen the work. Commitment from supporters to rally around an action item (volunteer, durable, etc.) in order to continue the engagement.

*Signed by Rachel Hundley, Cindy Scarborough, Richard Dale, Veronica Vences*

**Other**

- Fire resources \$
- One family at a time - small project
- Get a win so have success story to talk about
- Giving campaign
- Zoom/Google hang out “in between” meetings
- Likely 2019-2021 specific plan for SDC as part of County General Plan, huge housing opportunity!
- CFSC Resilience Fund
- Mobile home renters that are getting evicted with the option to purchase their rented mobile homes (in addition to paying the ground lease) can’t find the \$\$\$ to purchase the mobile home and are getting kicked out

*Signed by Nicole Ducarroz, John McCaull, Stephanie Hiller, Rachel Hundley*