

From: [jevy.koff.ca](mailto:jevy.koff.ca)  
To: [Marcella.Aranza](mailto:Marcella.Aranza)  
Subject: Re: New comment submitted on MTC website  
Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020, 2:21:50 PM

<https://mtc.ca.gov/whats-happening/news/regional-agencies-seek-input-future-bay-area/comment-5071>

On 7/27/20, 9:23 PM, "no-reply@mtc.ca.gov on behalf of Metropolitan Transportation Commission" <no-reply@mtc.ca.gov on behalf of no-reply@bayareametro.gov> wrote:

\*External Email\*

Name: Sherman Lewis

Email address: [REDACTED]

Text of comment: Is the road to global warming paved by the CASA Compact? The compact is well thought out and has a large number of worthwhile policies. However, it is fundamentally flawed in seeing an increase in housing as a solution while failing to acknowledge the underlying cause of the problem, excessive job increases in a few extreme job surplus locations with great externalities imposed on the surrounding region. Because the fire is on under the kettle, there will be no way to solve the problem. More housing allows more workers allowing more job location surplus externalities.

What is enough?

Are supply and demand are solving the problem? As housing prices go up, people double up or leave the region. Those with the money have housing and Airbnb can help you monetize that extra bedroom. When people can't afford to come for jobs here, jobs leave to go there. More housing does get built. Homelessness is not a market problem; it's a social problem needing more funds for its housing component, a problem separate from the main housing shortage.

What should be our policy for knowing much is enough? One definition could be the housing needs assessment. Another could be when supply increases enough for prices come down.

But no common definition deals with sustainability: we have enough housing when it is sustainable. There is an inconsistency between our desire to tame the climate change monster and our desire to increase housing and its concomitant increases in fossil burning and population.

Are we on a path to sustainability or on a treadmill of ever-more housing with no end in sight?

Who is responsible?

The regionalists are trying to pull a fast one on local government, and local government ideology makes it complicit in the scam.

The regionalists are ignoring the real cause of the housing crisis, which is the power of some local governments to make decisions that create a regional crisis with impunity. They do so by approving land uses with job increases for which they have no housing for the workers and no transportation infrastructure capacity.

The assumption is that jobs are good, so too many jobs in San Francisco and four Silicon Valley cities are good. The money economists will tell you it's good. The real economists, the ones that look at economic values not monetized by markets, will raise some questions: What is the cost of time lost in congestion? What is the increment in housing prices created by irresponsible land use decisions? They can measure fairly precisely the congestion cost using MTC's computer network models and the increase in housing costs.

Those costs are called job location externality costs. You should ask questions. If your city wants the housing as in the interests of your city, fine, go ahead. But if you don't want it, don't let the regionalists push you around, trying to make you solve problems that are not your fault.

A city that wants sustainability will take a comprehensive approach, not just declare a climate emergency while making decisions that increase the use of fossil fuels. There are three limits you should respect to be sustainable: accommodate your own population growth; do not have a job surplus that stresses the region, and provide housing for your low-income workers and the lowest incomes.

There are several things you need to do, and here I get in line with CASA: get rid of zoning requirements for parking, implement modern market parking charges like SF Park, unbundle parking, protect neighborhoods with parking permit programs, implement land-based financial support for short corridor transit, facilitate public cars (taxi, e-hail, car share, car rental), provide rapid bus in short corridors, design for walking and bicycles, support densities high enough in centers and short corridors to support walk-in business and transit, and (I have a longer list). One term for this is Walkable Neighborhood Systems.

The problem is public support and the difficulty of educating constituents who don't want to listen but who do want to complain. It takes time. When Berkeley merchants were negative on parking charges, staff took the time to educate them. The merchants then understood their benefit from improved turn-over and more efficient use of parking and asked that hours be extended later than staff was proposing. In other places a few people complain about the lack of free parking and the response is to provide more. This is not an easy cultural change, and many electeds are just as much a part of the car culture as their constituents, the problem of democratic consensus supporting bad policy.

Sprawl and car dependency will be with us a few decades more; the challenge is to channel new growth into centers and short corridors based on non-auto modes.

Sherman Lewis [REDACTED] July 27, 2020

The comment was posted at the following url:

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