

Draft PBA 2050 Comment Form submission

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Comment Fred Allebach 7/4/21 Plan Bay Area 2050 Public Comment: Housing Abstract: PBA 2050 externalizes Sonoma Valley housing equity issues to the 101 Corridor and allows a maladaptive, liberal, pseudo-rural status quo to rule. My comment has to do with housing inequity in wealthy North Bay/Sonoma County suburbs and how PBA 2050 does not adequately account for the poor here. While everything in PBA 2050 sounds great, it's optional, and the lived experience for lower-AMI residents is one of ever-increasing crazy price inflation compounded by serious under-production of deed-restricted affordable housing. ABAG should know that low-income housing RHNA under-production is a fact on the ground here. 73% under-produced in Sonoma County in the last 20 years. (https://generationhousing.org/58k_report/) With PBA 2050 being optional, basically conservative local governments can continue a conservative tack and mostly represent wealthy, white citizens. Protecting local character often comes at the expense of integration. This is Miles' Law; you stand where you sit; it's indicative of an entrenched Boomer pattern that is going to take some time to break up. It seems that ABAG has surrendered to allowing "rural" urban clusters to just tip more and more to the wealthy and has abandoned the working class in these types of pseudo-rural locales. That's the PBA track record; one more good-sounding optional plan is not going to change it. Local jurisdictions in Sonoma County, like Sonoma, Sebastopol, Healdsburg etc., have remained overwhelmingly white and sold out to high end real estate and tourism, and ABAG seems content to allow this high-lining while focusing plans on the core Bay Area or along the North Bay 101 Corridor. All poor people now have to live in high rise apartments next to the freeway, rail, and bus, while the rich drive their BMWs out of the foothills in way out of proportion high GHG lifestyle footprints? If GHG reduction is such a big deal, where in PBA 2050 is there accounting the rich and their GHG and high resource use impacts? Why make the poor pay disproportionately? PBA 2050 can't turn a blind eye to the GHG impacts of profligate rural mansion construction and then try to squeeze all mitigations from the poor. And then we all have to pay for fire protection for people living in inappropriate rural foothills places? While Joe Sixpack has to go live in shoe box on Hwy 101? What about the poor people who get reamed by high housing costs in Sonoma? If there isn't great mass transit here in Sonoma, anyone with a car will have to drive to Napa, Petaluma or Santa Rosa to shop and find decent prices. So much for reducing transportation GHGs. VMT metrics need to account for what kind of grocery stores there are. For example, in Sonoma, Whole Foods and high-end markets, plus Safeway, all charge prices that are \$4-\$5.00 more per item than you can get for the same exact thing at Grocery Outlet, WalMart or COSTCO. Sonoma is like living in an airport for prices. Lower income people in Sonoma Valley MUST drive to get better prices. No one in their right mind would take the bus and add three hours onto their trip and then have to carry all groceries back home. Show me one BMW owner who would ever do that... BMWs: low mileage, high GHG footprint. PBA 2050 seems to abandon places like Sonoma and sacrifice the poor to larger planning overlays that don't apply to them here. I think the Plan Bay Area 2050 has some serious blind spots by basically allowing rural urban cluster segregation to continue unabated. The overlay does not work in rural urban clusters like Sonoma Valley, and for all the time you spent on this, some special consideration for this inequitable demographic pattern

should have been created. What has local control gotten us here in Sonoma Valley? A Plantation economy and a segregated other side of the tracks demographic, that the powers-that-be signal will just cost too much to fix, and white propertied stakeholders won't vote for annexation anyway. Message: it costs too much to have a just society, suck it up. Having said that, I do support the 6th cycle unincorporated RHNA allocation for Sonoma County. This is great; make the county (and cities) be responsible for the large (73%) under-production of deed-restricted affordable housing in the last 20 years. Make the county and cities come to grips with unincorporated strip developments like the Springs, make some pressure for more efficient and just jurisdictional consolidation. Annexation to the city. If Sonoma County appeals the unincorporated RHNA, please just transfer the same numbers to the cities in the county. Sonoma can handle a 6th cycle RHNA of 750 if not 1000. If not, you'll just allow one more Coastal Cal fantasy island of over-priced luxury housing to ruin the local poor here. In general, my concern about PBA 2050 is that it all sounds great, but where's the teeth? Where's the beef? If we have a large regional pattern of segregation and serious social inequity that is even more pronounced in places like Sonoma, we need more than optional words and high-minded aspirations to fix it. Housing is where the rubber meets the road here. What we need is easy to get state/ regional tax credit financing, and incentive for free public land to be given for affordable housing, a more flexible UGB, and legal tools from HCD to override local government and abuse of CEQA. If the land is too expensive in central areas, we need to break up the Green Checkmate (NIMBYs using CEQA and zoning code to allow nothing to happen in-town, and Greens not allowing one inch outside a UGB). What's needed for housing is to get real and push UGB edges out some, so as to house and include the people who work here at affordable prices. Why do some get to enjoy rural character and others not? Who is making the rules here and why? Extend bus lines to marginal UGB expansion lots, dilute some of the oppressive Green purity that has so much Bay Area land locked up in open space and none available for decent-priced housing. Some marginal UGB expansion is called for because the Green Checkmate is and has been such an effective stop to affordable housing. The Green Checkmate allows local liberal bourgeoisie, both Blue and Green, to claim to be for affordable housing, but to remain secure in the knowledge that the conditions created will basically prevent any dilution of charming local character. Bottom line, the Bay Area has a glut of green space and a dearth of housing, some green, just some, needs to give, and there will still be way more open space here than in Houston or Atlanta, where housing is affordable but there is way less green. [1]

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