



**CITIZENS TO RENEW CITY OF SONOMA'S
URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY**

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May 15, 2020

City of Sonoma UGB Ad Hoc Committee
Planning and Community Services Director David Storer
No. 1 The Plaza
Sonoma, CA 95476

VIA EMAIL

Re: Comments on City of Sonoma's Draft Urban Growth Boundary Ballot Measure

Dear City of Sonoma UGB Ad Hoc Committee and Planning Director Storer,

Citizens to Renew City of Sonoma's Urban Growth Boundary thanks you for moving forward on renewing the existing Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) for another 20 years by placing a measure before the voters on the November 2020 ballot.

We appreciate the work of the Ad Hoc Committee and city staff to implement the policy revisions and clarifications that were decided at the Joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting on January 27, 2020, at Vintage House.

We support the decision to renew the existing UGB for another 20 years and the new provisions requiring 100 percent affordable housing for exemptions to the UGB. This demonstrates a strong commitment to providing affordable housing when no options are available inside the UGB.

We also support the many other important clarifications made through the public process and by city staff and attorney that significantly improve the text and provisions.

While we agree with and support almost all the ballot measure language, and we respectfully urge you to consider making three key policy revisions before finalizing the text. These recommendations are designed to align with direction given at the Jan. 27, 2020 City Council and Planning Commission Joint Meeting, ensure consistency with the city Development Code and to maintain the clear intent of the UGB and the voters.

Please see attached matrix with detailed comments and recommendations that compares key text and provisions from the existing UGB with the city's first draft of the UGB, and the current draft.

Here is a summary of the three key policy revisions we believe will improve the UGB ballot measure:

- 1. Please retain the affordable housing exemption at a gross total of 5 acres per year for a maximum of 20 acres over 20 years.** The City Council and Planning Commission unanimously rejected in public session to allow a "net" calculation that removes undeveloped land from the total 5-acre per year. The revised draft UGB measure retains the "net" provision and is inconsistent with the city Development Code, where development is assessed on total acreage, not developed footprint. We are concerned that the

revised text expands the “net” approach to exclude hazardous waste and adds a vague added phrase that is undefined: *and/or similar physical condition*.

2. **Please retain the affordable housing provision that requires that the City Council make a finding that no existing vacant or undeveloped residentially designated land within the UGB is available before granting an exemption.** Without this finding, it allows the City Council to make an exemption for any affordable housing development proposed outside the UGB. This undermines the intent of the UGB to focus growth inside the city UGB and the will of the voters. Deleting the need for this finding to make the exemption essentially expands the UGB by 20 acres and may trigger CEQA.
3. **Please require a vote of 4 out of 5 Council members to approve an exemption to the UGB.**

In addition, we would like to see the very good “Effects” language proposed in the first revised UGB draft to be retained and reinserted in the final. See attached matrix.

We would be happy to make ourselves available for a call or Zoom meeting with the Ad Hoc Committee, Planning Director and/or City Manager should you have any questions about these recommended revisions.

The *Citizens to Renew City of Sonoma’s Urban Growth Boundary* was formed by Sonoma community residents and business owners. It is registered with CA FPPC as a 501 c (4) organization. We are advocating for renewal of the City of Sonoma’s existing Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) with a vote of the people before it expires in December 2020.

We are grateful to live and work here in Sonoma. Although it is small, the strength of our community is tremendous and unmatched. We must continue to honor and cultivate Sonoma’s legacy to ensure that, when we pass on our city to the next generation, it will be even more beautiful, healthy, and strong, both structurally and economically. We will work hard to pass the UGB ballot measure in November.

Sincerely,

Jack Ding
Treasurer

Vic Conforti
Architect

Carol Marcus
Architect, Former Sonoma Architectural Review
Commissioner

Nancy Evers Kirwan
Community Activist

Johanna Patri
American Institute of Certified Planners

Bill Willers
Architect, Former Sonoma Planning Commissioner

Teri Shore
Regional Director, North Bay
Greenbelt Alliance

Attachment: UGB Comment Matrix

CC: Sonoma City Council
Sonoma Planning Commission