

Public Comment Regarding Cannabis Ordinance
and Program Update

Received September 29, 2021 through
September 30, 2021

From: [Darin Bartow](#)
To: [Cannabis](#)
Subject: FW: Please listen to what a vast majority of voters want
Date: Wednesday, September 29, 2021 8:41:36 AM

From: Susan Gorin <Susan.Gorin@sonoma-county.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 29, 2021 8:41 AM
To: Darin Bartow <Darin.Bartow@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Fwd: Please listen to what a vast majority of voters want

Susan Gorin

1st District Supervisor
County of Sonoma
575 Administration Drive, Room 100A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Phone - 707-565-3572
Susan.gorin@sonoma-county.org

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jeffrey Spragens <spragens.jeff@gmail.com>
Date: September 29, 2021 at 8:13:39 AM PDT
To: Susan Gorin <Susan.Gorin@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Please listen to what a vast majority of voters want

EXTERNAL

Please designate Bennett Valley as an exclusion zone where commercial cannabis cultivation and processing is forbidden. Please include Enterprise Road as it cannot safely handle regular commercial traffic.

As we have learned from Covid there is a need to use scientific analyses to set policy. Here we need to study odor to establish setbacks, and to assess the effects of cannabis cultivation on water supply and wells. The EIR also needs to study narrow roads, shared roads, fire safety, improved enforcement, canna-tourism, public safety, and aesthetics (visual blight from plastic hoop houses and greenhouses that resemble self-storage units). The cumulative effects of all these issues must be analyzed.

Please resist The cannabis industry who wants to allow cultivation in rural residential- and agricultural residential-zoned properties. This would allow commercial marijuana to be grown in areas currently banned on Bennett Ridge, Pressley Road, and parts of Sonoma Mountain Road.

If you have concern for the future of your district, please help.

Jeff Spragens. 6700 Sonoma Mountain Road

Sent from my iPad

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From: [district2](#)
To: [Cannabis](#); [Kyreen Gonzalez](#)
Subject: FW: Cannabis Land Use Ordinance comments
Date: Thursday, September 30, 2021 10:46:59 AM
Attachments: [Cannabis Comments to BOS 2021.docx](#)

Tina Thomas

Board of Supervisors Aide, Second District David Rabbitt

County of Sonoma

Email: tina.thomas@sonoma-county.org

Phone: (707) 565-2241

From: James Johnson <shanjam1159@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2021 9:55 AM
To: district1@sonoma-county.org; [district2 <district2@sonoma-county.org>](mailto:district2@sonoma-county.org); [district3 <district3@sonoma-county.org>](mailto:district3@sonoma-county.org); [district4 <district4@sonoma-county.org>](mailto:district4@sonoma-county.org); [district5 <district5@sonoma-county.org>](mailto:district5@sonoma-county.org)
Subject: Cannabis Land Use Ordinance comments

EXTERNAL

Hi

Please see the attached comments/recommendations.

Sincerely,

James A. Johnson

James Johnson
2555 Mark West Station Rd
Windsor, CA 95492

THIS EMAIL ORIGINATED OUTSIDE OF THE SONOMA COUNTY EMAIL SYSTEM.

Warning: If you don't know this email sender or the email is unexpected, **do not** click any web links, attachments, and **never** give out your user ID or password.

Date: September 30, 2021
Subject: Cannabis Land Use Ordinance Comments
To: Susan Gorin, District 1 Susan.Gorin@sonoma-county.org
David Rabbitt, District 2 David.Rabbitt@sonoma-county.org
Chris Coursey, District 3 Chris.Coursey@sonoma-county.org
James Gore, District 4 James.Gore@sonoma-county.org
Lynda Hopkins, District 5 Lynda.Hopkins@sonoma-county.org

It has been nearly 5 years since I last commented on the Cannabis Land Use Ordinance. In that time, some things have changed but at the same time there's a general frustration that a handful of concerned citizen groups seem to have more sway than a majority of voters in the Board's decision to move on to Phase 2 – much like a few senators holding up the Build Back Better Reconciliation bill in Congress today.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the staff at the Permit and Resource Management Department and the Planning Commission for their careful consideration of so many issues in the Initial Study that led to the drafting of the Negative Declaration, passage of the Ordinance and which has gotten us to where we are now – what I'll call Phase 2. Today, as I did in 2016 and with much of the same language, I would like to comment on the Cannabis Land Use Ordinance and suggest amendments be made to the general plan by including a Board mandated Cannabis Policy Council.

Before I make one specific comment, I'd like to thank Crystal Acker and Scott Orr for organizing the community visioning meetings that brought together divergent points of view and to encourage them to pursue the creation of a Cannabis Policy Council for Sonoma County. Furthermore, near the end of my letter, I suggest that language be adopted that would include a Cannabis Policy Council by General Plan Amendment.

Such a council would be invaluable to Sonoma County citizens and appears to be directly relevant to County land use planning and the General Plan much the way our basic necessity of water is covered in the Water Resources element and influenced by such bodies as the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

My comment and ideas suggested below would only be justified with a smooth transition from Phase 1 Ordinance compliance to Phase 2. In order to gauge such a transition, I would ask that a Cannabis Policy Council, outside of the Board, PRMD Director and Commission, be appointed and given equal consideration to conduct a community assessment mapping just as you would a biotic habitat mapping; I would ask that a Cannabis Policy Council be given equal consideration to study the impacts of sustainable cannabis growing on local food security just as you would a community food assessment study; I would ask that a Cannabis Policy Council be given equal consideration to research a healthy edible cannabis access strategic plan as you would a Department of Health Services Strategic Plan; I would ask that a Cannabis Policy Council be given equal consideration to prepare a countywide medical cannabis management action plan as you would a countywide sustainable groundwater management plan.

In light of the above, a Cannabis Policy Council and accompanying General Plan policy amendment encouraging diversified local cannabis production and sustainable land uses that could complement agricultural activities will contribute to future specialty crop

economic viability while protecting against negative impacts on local food security and community health. Below are my specific comments on the Cannabis Land Use Ordinance.

1. “Cottage” growers are currently required to have 10-acre minimums for outdoor cultivation, up from the originally proposed 2-acre minimum. Many RR parcels are less than this. What is the possibility this size limitation could be reduced or removed altogether during Phase 2 under a special category with neighborhood consent as “Agricultural Processing Regeneration Zones” while maintaining setback minimums to those parcels beyond the Regeneration Zones? This would be treated like a county easement agreement whereby a neighbor is permitting you “grow access” by formalizing a relationship across their property and in essence, broadening your parcel boundaries. As such, language in the Cannabis Land Use Ordinance could state: 1) *consideration of allowing cottage size commercial cultivation with a zoning permit and a 2 acre minimum lot size within Rural Residential zones with the goal of encouraging agricultural cottage industry when exception criteria are met*, and include the “Exception: When there exists a lawfully recorded perpetual and exclusive covenant to an easement appurtenant and right-of-way between adjoining land-owners of two or more contiguous lots to achieve setback requirements from one lot to an adjoining lot.”

In addition to the support for an ordinance, I suggest policy and program language be adopted as a General Plan Amendment:

Add the following Objective LU-6.9: **Create a Sonoma County Cannabis Policy Council and invite the recommendations of the council where questions of planning, management and use of county resources are involved.**

Sonoma County Cannabis Policy Council (SCCPC)

The Sonoma Cannabis Policy Council is a broad-based coalition of community leaders, organizations and interested citizens who gather information and make recommendations regarding local cannabis planning and policy formulation. Cannabis policy development is a systemic approach to the cultivation of a healthy and sustainable cannabis production, processing and food manufacturing system. It fosters policies that benefit the land, economy, and well being of all residents.

The Sonoma County Cannabis Policy Council offers a valuable service to the county by providing the county with a cooperative framework for action that addresses cannabis policy issues and assists residents in gaining a useful understanding of the cannabis culture, production, processing, handling, and delivery system.

Add the following Policies and Programs LU-6j:

Policy: Support for Sonoma County Cannabis Policy Council

“The Sonoma County Cannabis Policy Council shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Department of Health Services and the Board of Supervisors on cannabis issues and provide a forum to discuss cannabis related topics of concern to the community. The County shall encourage and support activities of the Sonoma County Cannabis Policy Council and shall invite the recommendations of the council where questions of planning and use of county resources are involved.”

A primary goal of cannabis policy is to generate information that provides a better understanding of the current status of Sonoma County's cannabis production and processing system and to identify positive examples for how farmers, consumers, processors, and marketers are benefiting by focusing on cannabis. A few primary areas of concern I believe can and should provide the foundation for identifying and evaluating cannabis policies that lead to an equitable and sustainable production/processing system for county residents are:

- Access to healthy medicinal cannabis for patients through direct markets
- Sustainable management of Sonoma County's resources
- Promotion of diversity in Sonoma County foods, fiber, fuel, culture, and people
- Promotion of prosperous, independent cannabis farms and businesses in Sonoma County
- Agricultural/food entrepreneurship and support for cannabis processing
- Addressing water and energy consumption, production and distribution in the cannabis production system through Best Management Practices.
- Agricultural Processing Regeneration Zones and Cottage Operations for retail sale by personal growers
- Information and collaboration opportunities
- Dispensaries in underserved locations
- Impacts of cannabis on schools and neighborhoods
- Cannabis Assistance Programs for shut-ins
- Cannabis education
- Select Sonoma/Appalachia program
- Corrections facility medicinal cannabis use
- Support for farmers' markets
- Cannabis production, Farmland preservation and impacts on food security
- New market development
- Increasing Sonoma County agriculture visibility
- Expanding and stabilizing the farm workforce especially during harvest season
- Role of University of California Cooperative Extension

Program: Inter-agency Cannabis Policy Council

The county shall create an inter-agency Cannabis Policy Council to bring together representatives of all county agencies involved in the production, acquisition and use of cannabis products, the promotion or regulation of cannabis related businesses, or the delivery of medicinal cannabis assistance programs to develop an integrated program of procurement from local agriculture. The Sonoma County Cannabis Policy Council shall consist of Council Members representing a broad spectrum of government agencies and non-governmental entities including:

- The Directors from each of the following agencies: Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD), Agriculture Commissioner, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education (SCOE), Department of Economic Development, Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (SCWMA), Department of Information Systems, Department of Environmental Health.
- Nine representatives from incorporated city councils
- Two representatives from the Sonoma County Growers Alliance
- Two representatives from the sustainable agriculture community
- One representative from higher education

- One representative from K-12 education
- One representative from community-based urban development
- One representative from rural development
- One representative from the public health sector
- One representative from the cannabis-processing sector
- One representative from the cannabis-retailing sector
- One representative from the non-food manufacturing sector
- One representative from the marketing sector
- One representative from organized labor
- One representative from the energy sector
- One representative from the water sector
- One representative from the local community

Sincerely,
James A Johnson
Windsor