

Lower Russian River Town Hall Notes

Affordable Housing

Challenges:

- *Fees are too high to develop second "granny" units.*
- *Lack of sites to build more housing.*
- *Over-the-top flood insurance.*
- *2nd homes/VRBO/crowding out renters and families with moderate incomes.*
- *Lack of jobs, skills, and diverse economy.*
- *No monoculture.*
- *Banks benefit from high values but locals don't. We need more commercial rental space.*
- *Cost of well and septic systems.*
- *House flipping.*

Solutions:

- *County-managed camps.*
- *Affordable housing units mandated in every apartment complex with initiatives, referendums, and recalls until this is accomplished.*
- *Excellent idea to increase bed tax to provide beds for women and children first because they are our present and our future.*
- *Revisit land use planning—sewer in Monte Rio.*
- *Revise laws on newer compost toilets.*
- *Live/work until housing for service worker housing.*
- *Create a surtax on drug cartel style villas of the winery owners' elites.*
- *Limit amount of Air B&B in communities.*
- *Rent Control.*
- *Capturing land in land trusts & helping people with low cost loans own their own homes.*
- *SMART density infill housing with connection to public transportation.*
- *Living wages.*
- *Legalize tiny homes on wheels.*
- *Co-housing: cooperative living solutions.*

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Coast: Protection & Access

Challenges:

- *Protect the coast from developers.*
- *Continue free access.*
- *Vacation rentals.*
- *Funds to keep parks open and in good condition.*
- *Housing and rent control.*
- *Permit amnesty.*
- *Uneducated tourists littering and producing graffiti.*

Solutions:

- *Percent of lottery ticket sales to parks and environmental education, as in Colorado.*
- *Tax marijuana.*
- *Abolish rent control and give people shared mortgages as a way to prevent blight and homelessness & a respect for the environment to future generations to love the world.*
- *Park service flying drones over our beaches is not the answer. Education of children and tourists at beach seminars and events creates awareness.*

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Homelessness

Challenges:

- *Stop the use of bottled water.*
- *Something for children at risk other than CPS.*
- *Encampments, environmental, community impact, violence by/on campers.*
- *Illegal camps pose extreme fire hazard & pollute the river and environment.*
- *Air B&B taking over the area.*
- *Low flow on the Russian River.*
- *Recycle local, recycle here.*
- *Marijuana taxes result in the same disaster as gambling and cigarette taxes for schools and children.*
- *Initiative calling for shelters should not be a nightmare. The public can see homelessness; it cannot be solved by degradation alone.*
- *Contamination of river with excrement.*

Solutions:

- *Have a fund available to assist homeless people due to unforeseen financial hardship.*
- *Create spaces for homeless encampments like Camp Michela where people can create their own environment free from police intimidation and threats of removal.*
- *Managed camps, Housing First—some campers do not strive to be housed so they need options for that too.*
- *Tax winery events, wine and grape sales, and excessive water usage by these wealthy investors.*
- *Fund volunteer groups doing education and outreach so that they can do even more.*
- *Tiny home villages, backyards, and driveways; second units for homeowners as additional income.*
- *Some form of community service during dedicated hours should be a requirement for living in a tent city, small house, etc. Free help just enables.*

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Russian River: Environmental Health

Challenges:

- *Air quality: improper, unclean burning, no "spare the air", oversight on open residential burning.*
- *Failing septic systems within waterways leading into creeks and rivers.*
- *Low-flow: blue-green toxic algae, negative impacts on tourism and the economy.*
- *River access is insufficient: buy land and convert to parks.*
- *Investigate Bohemian Grove in preparation for thermal nuclear war (fallout shelters) and the potential use of the hole in the head in Jenner as a potential fresh water source.*
- *"Autocamp" is allowed: 35 open burn pits in Guernewood canyon, sometime insanity.*
- *Homeless camp results in trash on the river bank and is a fire hazard.*
- *Don't pressure to develop on the Sonoma coast.*
- *Invasive species.*
- *Storm drains to river results in trash.*
- *Wildlife protection.*

Solutions:

- *Enforce air quality regulations, prohibit open residential burning and unclean burning, and make river areas as clean as BAAQMD.*
- *Grants to property owners to fix septic systems.*
- *Connect as many homes as possible to the sewer system.*
- *Ban gas motor boats on the river. Only allow canoes, electric motors, and kayaks.*
- *Build a recreation area center complete with a swimming pool and basketball courts.*
- *Congressional investigation on the relationship between "Grove Members" and professional lobbyists.*
- *Gas powered watercraft banned on Lake Sonoma to improve drinking water quality.*
- *Ban GMOs.*
- *Revive Occidental Community Center gym.*
- *County-managed camps.*

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Tourism Impacts: Wineries, VRBOs

Challenges:

- *Traffic.*
- *County retirement packages.*
- *Protect Sonoma coast from development.*
- *No reasonably priced rentals.*
- *Lack of green infrastructure, complete streets, and bike and pedestrian multiuse pathways.*
- *Poor roads.*
- *Better code of enforcement of VRs, specifically non-permitted VRs.*
- *No affordable rentals for lower income/working families.*
- *Lack of parking at our own homes from nonresident people.*

Solutions:

- *Consistent and reasonable speed limit.*
- *Make "public service" less rewarding.*
- *Balanced options, something for everyone; money incentive to maintain options.*
- *Better connection with SMART to Fulton Road.*
- *Improve sections of roads instead of a few entire roads.*
- *Event permits should address traffic mitigation (officers at night, parking, etc.).*
- *Transit occupancy tax and TOT should be dedicated specifically to roads, housing, etc.*
- *Tax write-off incentives to homeowners participating in lowered rental rates.*

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Other

Challenges:

- *Help our businesses remain open by being supportive and flexible.*
- *Homelessness and shelters.*
- *Sheriff's policies.*
- *Street trash and volunteerism trash.*
- *Winter shelter closes and no net.*
- *Marijuana: non-compliant growers, fire hazard, no community benefit, crime, etc.*
- *Event traffic.*
- *Russian River low flow.*
- *Code enforcement regarding abandoned vehicles.*
- *Palm Drive detachment.*
- *Poor cultural and social awareness and training for law enforcement & EMS.*
- *Flood prevention.*
- *More public river access—new boat launch on South Bank with parking.*
- *Flashing lights at crosswalk—cannot see people crossing at night.*
- *Forestville impacted as well.*
- *Better public transportation system for children, seniors, everyone. "River Shuttle" for local trips.*
- *Restrict VR in residential neighborhoods.*

Solutions:

- *Communication between sheriffs and business owners.*
- *Community involvement.*
- *Safe shelters: where can we go?*
- *Year-round shelter or managed camps.*
- *Bring growers into compliance with permits, taxation, etc.*
- *Shelters with standards for cleanliness and results for permanent housing.*
- *Government accountability and follow-up.*
- *Legalize tiny homes on wheels.*
- *Creative economy: incubator hubs for rural startups.*
- *More public parking.*