WE ARE GEN H



Candidate Questionnaire

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, District 2

Generation Housing envisions vibrant communities where everyone has a place to call home and can contribute to an equitable, healthy, and resilient North Bay. That vision is realized through the actions of our elected and appointed leaders across all ten jurisdictions of Sonoma County. Housing is top of mind for every leader, every sector, every community member that calls Sonoma County home.

This questionnaire is designed to offer Sonoma County residents an opportunity to hear from their candidates directly about their vision for the future of housing.

All candidates were given equal opportunity to respond to the questionnaire—inclusion in the questionnaire should not be considered as an endorsement by Generation Housing. This is meant to be an educational resource to residents and voters of Sonoma County.

About Generation Housing

Since January 2020, Generation Housing has built a reputable library of housing resources read and shared by elected officials, government staff, C-suite executives and community members of a diverse audience. Candidate responses will be shared on our social media channels, our website and mailing list of over 5,000 contacts.

Generation Housing does not endorse candidates running for office. This document will be an educational resource for voters and all answers shared irrespective of the candidate.

Learn more

Board of Supervisors, District 2

Sylvia Lemus
sylvia@votelemus.com

Joanna Paun
paun4supervisor@gmail.com

What role do you believe local government (the Board of Supervisors) should play in meeting its RHNA requirements, and do you think it should stretch beyond RHNA to grow a true "housing continuum," which means diverse housing opportunities across income levels to serve our community members as their housing and family needs and assets change over time.

As a member of the Cotati City Council, we've exceeded our RHNA requirements by 2.5 times the number of required units. As a County Supervisor, I am also willing to go above and beyond RHNA requirements—but recognize there are more considerations and constraints regarding putting housing in rural areas that may lack the infrastructure and capacity to take on more housing. One option to address this is by considering transfer agreements between the county and cities to support infill housing.

I believe local government/BOS should treat RHNA as the floor, not the ceiling and should help create a true housing continuum with diverse options for seniors, families, young adults, ADA compliant for people with disabilities, etc.

They should supporting affordable housing options so our communities remain sustainable, diverse, and economically healthy.

How would you characterize the greatest set of challenges facing housing production? And what do you plan to do to help overcome these challenges?

The cost to build new housing is too high — with new affordable housing construction topping $700K or $800K for a single new unit — higher than the cost of some 3 BR, 2 bath homes. Labor and construction costs are as high as ever, and county and state building requirements make this worse. The county is moving in the right direction by basing impact fees on unit size instead of per unit, and more efficiencies like this can be considered to lower the cost of housing of all types in the future.

The lack of home building has created a severe housing shortage and added to the affordability crisis. Additionally high construction costs, lack of infrastructure, permitting issues, neighborhood opposition. I would support streamlined and predictable approval processes, infrastructure investment, and policies that encourage workforce and affordable housing while maintaining environmental standards and community input.

Board of Supervisors, District 2

Sylvia Lemus	Joanna Paun
Generation Housing's current initiative, Housing for Healthy Communities, is part of our effort to continue a move away from exclusionary zoning, and looks at two state laws, SB 10 and AB 1033, that we believe are perfect fits for the North Bay. SB 10 upzones to allow up to 10 units on all parcels within a half mile of transit hubs and infill parcels. SB 1033 allows the separate sale of ADUs as small homes through condoization. Both are great opportunities for increasing affordable-by-design homes as both rent and for-sale products, perfect for young families, middle income workforce, and seniors. These are both slated for action this year, but if they are extended into 2027, could we count on your support for adoption of these bills?	
Yes	Yes
Why or why not?	
I am supportive of both—I recently voted to approve Transit-Oriented Communities zoning in Cotati, and support putting more housing within a half-mile of transit to support this objective by encouraging housing within a 10-minute walk of transit hubs. I am also supportive of for-sale ADU's, to creatively provide more affordable housing, which could be especially appealing to single-occupant households, couples, and seniors looking for smaller homes or more affordable housing alternatives.	I support laws and policies that can responsibly expand housing options and help address the housing shortage in Sonoma County. Both SB 10 and AB 1033 create opportunities to build homes while making better use of existing infrastructure and infill development. And I believe that any adoption should include thorough community engagement, infrastructure planning and upgrades, environmental stewardship, and design standards that fit local neighborhoods.
As part of the General Plan update, the BOS has discussed expanding housing options within Agricultural Zoning. Do you support this effort?	
No	(No response)
What would be your vision for it?	
I think that any proposal to develop Ag lands should only be considered in very limited circumstances. I oppose opening the doors to major development in Ag zoned lands and remote rural areas, which could erode our rural character. There may be limited development I would support on Ag lands—e.g. on-site farmworker housing for employees of agricultural operations. The dairy industry has done this, and if it's low-profile and does not impede on our rural character, could work if done right.	While I recognize the need for housing in all areas of the county, any changes should protect agricultural viability, open space, and environmental resources. This should be done thoughtfully with limited expansion to help address affordability without undermining the long-term preservation of agriculture and the rural landscape we have all come to love and appreciate in our county.

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Streamlining housing development is one of the stronger levers we can pull to help better ensure the timely approval of projects and accelerate the overall production of housing. Generation Housing has proven that collapsing Design Review Boards into Planning Commissions can produce immediate results in terms of the number of permits pulled for housing projects. Do you support collapsing the Design Review Committee into the Planning Commission?	
Yes	(No response)
Why or why not?	
When it comes to this possibility, I am conceptually supportive—so long as design review is thoughtfully addressed at the Planning Commission level, if there are separate Design Review and Planning Commission bodies. Efficiencies in the process are great, so long as design standards continue to be put forward that are in step and in character with their surroundings. Cotati has objective design standards for single-family and plex housing to create more predictability in the process.	I support evaluating consolidation of the Design Review Committee into the Planning Commission before coming to a final conclusion. I understand the intention is to streamline approvals, reduces delays, etc for housing projects. I also believe we should maintain high-quality design standards and public input without slow housing production. This is the intended outcome but I would want to evaluate to look at any negative unintended consequences.
There is work being done on a Housing Bond Measure to be put on the 2028 Ballot. Do you support this effort?	
Yes	Yes
What do you believe your role in that effort is?	
Without the details on the 2028 housing bond, it's hard to definitively answer this question, but if similar to one that was previously considered in 2024 but never made it to the ballot, I may be supportive, though I would want to know how much and for how long taxpayers would be obligated to repay the bonds before formalizing my position. I also believe there needs to be local control on the use of funds, to ensure revenue generated locally isn't subsidizing housing in other Bay Area counties.	My role in this effort would be to build public trust and regional collaboration by ensuring transparency, fiscal accountability, and highlight the benefits to the community. I would work to engage residents, our cities, nonprofits, local businesses, etc to identify priorities, leverage outside funding, and ensure investments support workforce, affordable, senior, and supportive housing that strengthens Sonoma County's long-term economic and community health.

Board of Supervisors, District 2

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Housing is often listed as a top priority here in Sonoma County. What does it mean to you to govern in a way that is consistent with your priorities? For instance, are you prepared to make tough budgetary decisions consistent with that priority? If you have already held elected office, can you provide an example?	
On the Cotati City Council, I've supported housing opportunities of all types—and the City of Cotati has approved 2.5 times the number of housing units required through state mandates. While many units have not yet been built, we have been a leader in allowing housing, which is a priority, and has been addressed through action on housing creation, even though Cotati, nor any governmental agency, can 'force' a developer to construct the housing they're approved for.	One of the hardest issues our community has faced is school budget cuts. We knew temporary state and federal funding would end, but students still needed counseling, intervention programs, and classroom supports. We delayed cuts as long as possible and twice asked voters to continue funding many of those services locally. Voters said no, and while difficult, we had to respect that decision and reconcile our budget accordingly.
Please use this space to share any additional thoughts related to housing in Sonoma County not shared above.	
Housing affordability is a priority. I have adult children and know today's generation & future generations will find it increasingly hard to afford to live here. While I support limits on development in rural areas and areas that don't have the water, parking, and physical infrastructure to support more housing, in infill areas and other appropriately sited locations, we must look at how we can create more for our residents, both through new housing and making existing housing more affordable.	Housing is a defining economic issue in the County. Over the past two decades, prices have increased while the number of families has declined.Seniors are struggling, and we aren't building enough homes for the next generation. In Petaluma, we graduate hundreds of students annually, yet only about 100 new homes were recently built. This gap affects our workforce, schools, and economy. We must increase housing production, primarily in cities, to support long-term affordability and opportunity.