

From: [Kristen Altbaum](#)
To: [MTC Info](#)
Date: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 10:53:55 AM

External Email

April 22, 2020

Re: Item 7a Plan Bay Area 2050 Projections and 12a Proposed ABAG MTC Committee Work Integration

Dear ABAG Executive Board,

Item 7a: Plan Bay Area 2050 Projections

Projections for jobs in PBA 2050 are no longer even close to being accurate. *Approving a housing plan now without updating these projections is irresponsible. The effects of Covid-19 are considerable and will be with us a long time, plus projections are higher than the Department of Finance's projections for the region, which were done before the pandemic and shelter-in-place orders!*

RHNA numbers should be based on realistic job projections for the next 5 years, not the next 30 years! This is normal procedure with a 4-year update cycle.

Basing this next cycle of RHNA allotments on pre-pandemic job growth is setting up every city in your region to fail miserably. Since senate bills established monetary fines on our cities for non-compliance, YOU MUST REDUCE the allocations!

Why on Earth is building more market-rate housing the only solution touted and required? Telecommuting; educating the public about carpool apps/ride share; jobs decentralization strategies and economic revitalization in more affordable towns; and cohesive mass transit between transportation associations is vital for a healthy and balanced economy. MTC's public communication is absent these solutions and the public is aware that developer interests/mega corporate interests and the real estate lobby is what's driving "transportation" politics in this state. Folks have had enough. Cities have had enough. Citizens and cities pay a huge price when bad practices are mandated: Rich cities get richer. Poor cities get poorer. We have more gentrification, more fire risk, more congestion, higher real estate prices, lower quality of life, more social problems.

How do current practices work to increase quality of life standards in CA? THEY'RE NOT! Common sense says that we don't have a housing allocation problem - WE HAVE A JOBS ALLOCATION PROBLEM! - THIS PROBLEM IS MAGNIFIED IF YOU LOOK AT THE NATIONAL SCALE AND THE FACT THAT GOOD PAYING JOBS ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY ON THE EAST AND WEST COASTS! WHEN WE TURN A BLIND EYE TO JOBS CENTRALIZATION STRATEGY, FOR MONEY AND POWER (CEO'S ARE TOP DEMOCRATIC DONORS AND HEAVILY INFLUENCE HOUSING POLICY, ALL WHILE WANTING TO KEEP THEIR OWN SIGNLE FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS PRISTINE) - SOCIETY PAYS A HUGE PRICE!

PLEASE DO NOT TURN A BLIND EYE. PLEASE DO NOT BE SWAYED BY GREED/MONEY/POWER/SPECIAL INTERESTS. Many jobs will be lost due to Covid-19 and cities' tax revenues will suffer! Please change your RNHA allocations now.

Thanks!

Kristen Altbaum

Northeast Lafayette for Reduced Traffic

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From: [DEBORAH CALLISTER](#)
To: [MTC Info](#)
Subject: ABAG Exec meeting 4/23/2020
Date: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 8:45:06 AM

External Email

Dear ABAG Executives,

The numbers you are about to vote on for the Plan Bay Area 2050 are pre-COVID 19 numbers and are obviously inaccurate! This is not a time to proceed with business as usual. Rather, decision-makers need ample time to take several steps back and to accurately assess the fall-out from this unprecedented pandemic before proceeding with any major decisions. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this crucial matter.

Sincerely,
Deborah Callister, PhD
Lafayette, CA 94549

April 21, 2020

Re: Item 7a Plan Bay Area 2050 Projections and 12a Proposed ABAG MTC Committee Work Integration

Dear ABAG Executive Board,

I am the Vice Mayor of the City of Lafayette but am responding as a private resident.

Item 7a: Plan Bay Area 2050 Projections

Simply put, the Projections for jobs in PBA 2050 are erroneous. These projections are **higher** than the Department of Finance's projections for the region, which were done ***before the pandemic and shelter-in-place orders***. Not a single person, professional or not, is projecting substantial job growth in the near-term for our region. We will be lucky if we get anywhere close to where we were before the pandemic as we know our retail sector will likely collapse. And our hotel and restaurant industries will have a very slow comeback as well. ***Approving this plan now without a proper way to update these projections in a year or longer is ludicrous and is a dereliction of duty.***

The process moves forward by first approving the Plan Bay Area 2050 now, then create the RHNA Draft and Final Methodology, and in 2021 create the Final Plan Document, Final EIR, and hear the RHNA Appeals. It finishes with the final RHNA numbers for our next cycle starting in 2024. These numbers are all driven by the jobs forecasting and the need to build housing for workers. This Plan Bay Area 2050 was created as if our economy was going to continue to grow. We are facing an unprecedented disruption of our lives and our economy – we must respond to this as well as we possibly can.

What do I suggest? The only way that you can pass this PBA 2050 is to pass it with an order to also update the projections next year and possibly the year following when the forecasting will be far better than now. By then the Department of Finance may have better projections as well for our region.

Why do I care? MTC staff says that the 2050 projections are still on target so we will be back to massive job growth by then. However, the RHNA numbers for this next session need to be based on realistic job projections for the next 5 years, not the next 30 years! There is a normal 4-year update, so our numbers need to be based on the near-term, not the long-term projections. If jobs do make a comeback, we can update at the 4-year interval.

By basing this next cycle of RHNA allotments based on pre-pandemic job growth is setting up every city in your region to fail and fail miserably. Since SB35 and SB330 established monetary fines on our cities for non-compliance based on our RHNA numbers, it's in everyone's best interest to partner together during these unprecedented times and come up with better solutions than to just make up absurd allocations when there is no indication that we will have massive job growth in the near-term. And the fact that the inputs, assumptions and data used in the projections is not being openly distributed adds to mistrust in the projections. We are a public entity and every part of this process needs to be transparent and shown to local leaders as well as to the public. And now more than ever these assumptions need to be re-evaluated due to the massive downturn in our economy.

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This PBA 2050 has only a single hammer – build more market-rate housing. That’s the only solution being presented by staff. I know that they are a group of very smart people, so why don’t they have any other solutions when this one is controversial for trickling-down to low-income solutions? I would like to challenge them as we challenge ourselves to learn from this pandemic and aim for the sky on real new solutions! If we don’t learn a great many things from this unprecedented time, we are failing as elected officials.

Want to tackle climate change? We have the experiment running right now! Our Earth is taking a breath of very fresh air right now. Why aren’t we pushing on solutions that force businesses to require telecommuting for a substantial portion of their workforces who can be effective at home? Why can’t we try to get our local colleges and universities to require less days that students must travel to school? Work on legislation and methodologies that take workers and students off the roadways! Clearly this works great, and then cheaper housing can be built farther away and VMT will still be down per week.

Want to solve homelessness? I know the Governor and some Mayors are buying and renting hotels and motels. Many of them will go bankrupt after this shelter-in-place – we should be able to buy many at likely discounted prices since traveling will take a very long time to recover.

Want more land for building housing? Many, many retailers are likely to close, as many were on life-support before the pandemic. It’s also likely that many shopping malls and strip malls will close. Encourage local officials to start rezoning those areas if they haven’t already, especially in the West and South Bay.

We know that WIMBY’s, Wall Street In My Back Yard, and the large investment firms are actively at work preparing for massive buys in our distressed market after the pandemic. A correct Plan Bay Area 2050 would be taking this into consideration in the near-term and use it to help drive strategy.

“A growing number of property investors are preparing for what they believe could be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to acquire distressed real estate assets of bargain prices.”¹

But none of these solutions are part of this PBA 2050 since it assumes a non-pandemic economy. You must allow some time for all of us to better understand where our economy is heading in a post-pandemic environment. If you simply wait for a year to update the job projections, maybe it will be very clear how to solve our homelessness crisis and tackle climate change in our new normal.

Please add an update to the Plan projections if you pass this PBA 2050 now and have an update at least next year before final RHNA allocations. We need to be working together on solutions not further alienating our leaders and our residents. Imposing nonsense RHNA allocations next year will just further alienate and divide everyone. It’s a time to come together and build a better future.

¹ **CityWatch LA**, The WIMBY’S (Wall Street in my Backyard) are Taking Advantage of the Covid-19 Pandemic to Enrich Themselves, DICK PLATKIN Dick Platkin, April 16, 2020

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Item 12a Proposed ABAG MTC Committee Work Integration

Item 12a is a proposal to integrate Committees between ABAG and MTC. I absolutely oppose this concept. ABAG is a regional entity composed from elected officials. MTC is not, as it allows for non-electeds to be part of the process. You must stay independent and continue to function as a watchdog for MTC. Do not do any more merging, especially of committees.

Summary

The time is now to pass a ***Leadership Test*** during this pandemic. This test requires leaders to act in an honest, urgent and iterative fashion, recognizing that mistakes are inevitable and correcting course without assigning blame is the way to deal with them. I encourage each of you to rise to the occasion and provide for the iterative process in order to guarantee the validity of this effort. We only get one try, and it's now.

Thank you for your consideration on these two important topics.

-Susan Candell

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Anita Enander
Council Member
City of Los Altos
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April 22, 2020

ABAG Executive Board (via email)
c/o Fred Castro (via email <fcastro@bayareametro.gov>

I write as an individual council member from the city of Los Altos regarding items 7A and 12A on your agenda for April 23, 2020.

Item 7A (Plan Bay Area 2050):

Please begin a significant outreach and information campaign to cities and counties before moving forward with the draft Blueprint. This may necessitate requesting a delay from the State. After listening to or attending several presentations and meeting meetings, most recently on April 7, and reviewing the answers to the Executive Board questions posed on April 9, it is apparent that the underlying assumptions are erroneous and that local city councils have not been briefed. An one indication: The disparity between staff projections and State Department of Finance should cause us to all pause are reassess the assumptions being used. Cities and counties deserve to have direct, thorough knowledge and the opportunity to question or influence the elements. I know that some outreach plans were truncated by SIP orders, but the need did not disappear. The process should not proceed without thorough, local briefings.

Further, the uncertain effects of COVID-19 are likely to be much more profound than staff is apparently assuming. The Bay Area did not regain its pre-2008 recession level of employment until 2014. Yet, staff is assuming that the effects of COVID-19 will be transient and can, in any event, be re-evaluated in 4 years. This ignores the immediate impact that the PBA 2050 and associated RHNA assignments will have on cities. To dismiss the impact as a “blip” ignores the real impacts that derive from recent State legislation that severely limits city authority to conduct land-use planning – and could impose significant fines - if we get this wrong. We cannot afford even a 4-year “oops.”

While a delay seems outside of any past precedent, COVID-19 is unprecedented in our lifetimes. Whether a delay is possible or not, please immediately begin direct briefings to local jurisdictions with much more specificity than was presented at recent meetings, and defer further action on the Blueprint until every jurisdiction has the information needed to comment on the assumptions and data underlying the model.

Item 12A (ABAG/MTC governance)

I oppose the Phase I consolidation recommendations. We need greater representation of cities on important policy committees, not less as would result from the consolidation of committees. I understand the desire for greater efficiency in staff's support for committees. However, the need for wider, more diverse participation has never been greater than when our Region is under the stress of strong recent job growth/precipitous decline, state Legislative action, and other economic impacts from COVID-19.

This is not the time to pursue what amounts to a further consolidation of the two agencies and a reduction in the number of city and county elected officials involved in important Regional issues.

1. Legislative Committees should continue to work together, but remain as separate committees. The same person should not sit on both. The ABAG representatives need to reflect greater diversity of cities and counties.
2. Planning Committees: ABAG should retain separate committee responsibility for Housing. This is one of, if not the most important policy responsibility for ABAG. It should not be integrated with the MTC Planning Committee. This area needs the greater wisdom and participation of more of our cities, whose representatives can speak to the huge diversity of issues in the region than would occur in a combined committee.
3. Similarly, I oppose merging MTC's Policy Advisory Council with ABAG's Regional Planning Committee. We already have too few people participating in these important activities.

At a minimum, all ABAG appointments for city positions should be made by the respective county-wide organizations of cities (e.g. conferences of mayors or county-based city associations). Appointments should not be made by the President (ABAG) or Chair (MTC) nor the respective Executive Board/Commission. The same representative should not sit on both the ABAG and related MTC committees. ABAG Executive Board members and MTC Commissioners should not sit on multiple committees. This is a time for engaging more representatives from our cities and counties, not for consolidation.

Thank you for your consideration of the above,

Anita Enander

From: [Jean Follmer](#)
To: [MTC Info](#)
Subject: ABAG Exec meeting 4/23/2020 Public Comment, Items 7a and 12a
Date: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 10:22:14 PM

External Email

Dear ABAG Executive Board:

I'm a member of the Lafayette School District Governing Board and I'm writing to you as a private citizen.

The numbers you've cited are substantially wrong. As you know, nearly 23,000,000 jobs have been lost in the United States during last month and 3,000,000 of them are in California alone. And the pandemic is far from over.

It would be irresponsible for you to pass these items at this time. You are in no position to adopt any type of projections that are the result of pre-pandemic forecasting and modeling.

Please show leadership and defer these items until accurate numbers can be projected. You are in no position to responsibly adopt Plan Bay Area 2050.

Sincerely,

Jean Follmer
Lafayette, CA

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Linda Riebel](#)
To: [MTC Info](#)
Subject: ABAG Exec meeting 4/23/2020
Date: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 7:46:06 PM

External Email

Dear ABAG Executive Board,

Since your organization has so much power over my town and my life, I'd like to share my thoughts.

The coronavirus pandemic has changed **everything**. Projections about the future are just guesses. To pass requirements for cities to build more housing is to engage in sheer speculation.

We don't know:

- how many more people will **die**,
- how many residences they will leave **vacant**,
- how many businesses will dry up and blow away (making **jobs disappear**),
- how many people will decide to stay far, **far away from urban megalopolises**,
- whether universities will go entirely online forever (leaving **dorms vacant**),
- whether **young people will decide to stay put** rather than start a family and want a larger home,
- whether **building materials** from abroad will be available or at what cost,
- how long it will take for the **hospitality industry** to recover,
- and whether people who lose homes in this crisis will **ever be able to buy or rent again**.

You can probably add to this list of unknowns. Please take all this into account. We are in a once-in-a-century situation. To honor your obligations to work for the betterment of the Bay Area, you should **cancel any numbers that were devised before the pandemic**.

Like many of us, you'll need to start over. I hope and trust you will do the right thing.

Sincerely, Linda Riebel, Lafayette

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Linda Riebel, Ph.D.

Past President, Friends of Opera San Jose
Faculty, Saybrook University
Board, SaveNature.Org
Board, Sustainable Lafayette (2008-2014)