

REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION



TO: Housing Methodology Committee
FR: Deputy Executive Director, Policy
RE: HMC Revised Norms Summary Memo

DATE: November 7, 2019

Overview

The Housing Methodology Committee (HMC) has been convened to advise ABAG staff on the RHNA allocation methodology for the 6th RHNA cycle (2022-2030), and to ensure the methodology and resulting allocation meet statutory requirements and are consistent with the development pattern included in Plan Bay Area 2050.

To support the HMC in reaching this challenging goal, committee members worked together to consider a set of draft norms – behavior guidelines that members agree to adhere to during proceedings – at their first meeting on October 18, 2019.

HMC members worked in small groups to react to and provide feedback on the draft norms proposed by ABAG staff, as well as offer additional norms they felt should be considered. The draft norms were:

- We will focus our discussions on how best to increase housing for all income levels in the Bay Area.
- We will remain professional and respectful in all of our interactions.
- We will use our time together wisely, arriving prepared by reading the packet materials shared ahead of each meeting.
- We will prioritize a thoughtful, robust process that makes transparent the “how” and “why” of our path towards recommendations.
- We will use the modified consensus and “fist of five” decision making tools.
- If interested, we will ask any “blocking,” “stand aside,” or 1’s and 2’s to share written thoughts within 3 business days to be included in the HMC meeting notes.
- We will share ideas or comments about the methodology with the entire group rather than directing them solely to ABAG staff.

HMC Discussion and Feedback

In small groups, HMC members spent approximately 20 minutes reviewing the draft norms and brainstorming new ones to support the flow of their future meetings. Following small group discussions, HMC members shared their feedback via a report-out to the entire group.

Several modifications were suggested to the seven draft norms which HMC members evaluated. Suggested updates fell into the following categories:

- **Focus on developing a regionally beneficial methodology that will increase housing for all income levels**

Comments included:

- Focus discussions on a fair methodology for all levels of income in the Bay Area during meetings.
- Be mindful about how decisions will affect the region when voting.
- Increase housing in all income areas.

- **Engage in respectful discussions**

Comments included:

- Respect facilitators.
- Limit interruption of the speakers while they are mid-presentation.
- Be concise in questions and comments.

- **Further modify the proposed modified consensus decision making framework**

Comments included:

- Implement a voting method using red, yellow, and green cards.
- Consider when and how to comment at meetings if you block a vote or stand aside; take advantage of the opportunity to clarify your position by email afterwards.
- Revisiting big decisions at future meetings if there is not consensus.

In addition to suggested modifications of the proposed norms, HMC members made the following suggestions for new norms to be considered by the group:

- **Actively encourage participation by all members**

Comments included:

- Make sure everyone gets to speak once before you speak twice.
- If you have not spoken yet, try to speak up.
- Implement W.A.I.T. (Why Am I Talking?).
- Think about your desired outcome when speaking to the group and how your comments will support final decisions being made in May.
- Be sure participation is equitable among members and identify appropriate times for questions and comments.

- **Streamline meeting logistics**

Comments included:

- Use standing up name placards to indicate a comment, rather than raising hands to speak.
- All cell phones should be on silent.
- Focus on the meeting and avoid monitoring emails.
- Ensure all tech is working properly at meetings.
- If meetings need to go over time, the HMC should take a vote as a group to determine if the meeting will continue or adjourn.

- **Share materials with members as early as possible**

Comments included:

- Share materials early enough to allow for feedback from constituents prior to meetings – ideally one week, but no less than three days before meetings.

ABAG Staff Responses

After reviewing the suggested modifications and additions to the draft norms, ABAG staff has offered feedback on two of the suggestions related to streamlining meeting logistics:

- First, the suggestion to use placards to indicate comments as opposed to raising hands to speak may prove challenging for the facilitators depending on the room set-up and their line of sight. Staff are open to trying this but would like to reserve the right to transition back to hand-raising if it proves too challenging for facilitators.
- Second, the suggestions to continue discussions beyond the allotted meeting time may not be feasible for many HMC members, and thus pose a challenge to same-day meeting extensions proposals. Staff suggest meetings be extended ahead of time whenever possible.

Proposed Updated Norms

Based on HMC member comments and conversation on the norms, staff propose updated norms to guide the HMC's work:

- We will focus our discussions on developing a regionally beneficial methodology to increase housing for all income levels and areas throughout the Bay Area.
- We will remain professional and respectful in all of our interactions.
- We will use our time together wisely, arriving prepared by reading the packet materials shared ahead of each meeting.
- We will prioritize a thoughtful, robust process that makes transparent the "how" and "why" of our path towards recommendations.
- We will use a modified consensus, three-card decision making tool.
- If interested, we will ask HMC members showing "red" cards or "standing aside" to share written thoughts within 3 business days to be included in the HMC meeting notes.
- We will share ideas or comments about the methodology with the entire group rather than directing them solely to ABAG staff.

- We will actively encourage participation by all members of the HMC by limiting our comments if others have not yet had a chance to speak and implementing W.A.I.T. (Why Am I Talking). Additionally, we will ask ABAG staff and facilitators to identify the proper times for questions and comments to encourage active participation by all HMC members.
- We will support streamlining meeting logistics by silencing cell phones and limiting distractions. Additionally, we will ask ABAG staff to ensure technology works.
- We will ask ABAG staff to make every effort to give members time to gather feedback from constituents before meetings by sharing packets at least one week in advance when possible and no less than three days prior to a meeting.
- We will think regionally and bring the voices of those who are not present to our conversations.

The attached memo shows these updated norms with track-changes to show the updates suggested based on feedback from HMC members. In addition, more detailed feedback from each of the groups can be found in the October 18 meeting notes. Staff thanks the HMC members for their thoughtful feedback on how this large committee can best work together.