

Association of Bay Area Governments

Regional Planning Committee

December 4, 2019

Agenda Item 7.a.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)

Subject: Update on Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Housing Methodology Committee (HMC).

Background: Staff will provide an update on Housing Methodology Committee discussions.

RHNA is the state-mandated¹ process to identify the number of housing units (by affordability level) that each jurisdiction must accommodate in the Housing Element of its General Plan. The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is responsible for identifying the total level of housing need for the San Francisco Bay Area, and ABAG must develop a methodology to distribute the overall regional need to each local government. This process is repeated every eight years, and for this cycle the Bay Area is planning for the period from 2022-2030.

The HMC is a key part of ABAG's approach to creating the RHNA allocation methodology. Through the HMC, ABAG staff seek to facilitate dialogue and information sharing in order to enable coordinated action to address the Bay Area's housing challenges.

Issues: **New Appointments to Housing Methodology Committee**

On November 21, the ABAG Executive Board ratified the appointment of Councilmember Susan Adams from the City of Rohnert Park as the elected official representative for Sonoma County and Tom Brinkhuis and Kevan Rolfness as alternates from HCD.

Update on Housing Methodology Committee Discussions

The [Housing Methodology Committee](#) had its first two meetings on October 18 and November 14. Agenda packets for the HMC meetings are available at <https://mtc.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

The HMC's discussions to date have focused on:

RHNA overview: Staff provided an overview of the RHNA process and how recent legislation has changed the process compared to previous RHNA cycles.

¹ Government Code §65584

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Determining how the HMC will make decisions and work together: The HMC has agreed to use a modified “consensus” decision-making framework to guide the conversation about developing the allocation methodology. Given the size of the committee, a process that required full consensus for all decisions would be very time consuming. This modified consensus approach encourages discussion and dialogue to maximize agreement while ensuring that decisions favored by the majority of the group can move forward. The approach also enables staff to report on the range of opinions expressed at HMC meetings. The HMC also adopted norms for how members will interact with one another. Staff’s proposed norms were modified based on feedback from the HMC to include developing a regionally beneficial methodology, actively encouraging participation by all members and thinking regionally and bringing the voices of those who are not present into the conversations.

New equity framework: Some of the most impactful recent changes to RHNA are related to the new objective that the RHNA plan must affirmatively further fair housing and consider jobs-housing fit. While RHNA has always included an emphasis on ensuring an equitable distribution of housing need, these changes make the focus on equity more explicit. Staff convened a panel of experts to provide ideas about the two key concepts for affirmatively furthering fair housing: 1) overcoming patterns of segregation and 2) eliminating the barriers that create disparities in access to high-resource neighborhoods and about the concept of jobs-housing fit, which centers on the relationship between the wage levels of jobs in a location and the affordability of available housing. ***Desired goals and outcomes for the RHNA process:*** HMC members discussed their desired goals and outcomes for the RHNA process and methodology. At the December HMC meeting, the committee will build on this initial conversation to start identifying potential factors to include in the allocation methodology to advance these goals and outcomes.

Local Jurisdiction Survey: As part of Housing Element Law, ABAG is required to survey local governments to gather information to inform the development of the RHNA methodology. As in past RHNA cycles, the survey includes questions related to the factors in Housing Element Law that must be considered in the methodology. Changes to state law enacted in 2018 also require the survey to include questions related to affirmatively furthering fair housing. These 2018 laws reflect a 2015 federal regulation

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issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

ABAG staff focused on the following priorities in developing the survey:

- Minimize response burden for local jurisdiction staff to increase response rate
- Avoid asking jurisdictions for publicly accessible and readily available data
- Focus on factors mandated by statute and most directly impacted by RHNA
- Support local jurisdictions in their understanding of new Housing Element requirements

The HMC reviewed a draft of the Local Jurisdiction Survey at its November meeting. While staff received a diverse range of comments, some of the common themes included:

- The need to better explain the survey's purpose and process, including the expected audience, how the information will be used by the HMC, and the expected level of effort from respondents.
- Requests to define terms used in the survey and explain the source and methodology for all data and analyses provided and to identify places where the survey is seeking new data.
- Recommendations for fine-tuning the language and design of the questions to make it easier for respondents to complete the survey.
- Suggestions for additional information to request from local jurisdictions.

Staff has developed two options for the proposed survey. The first option (Attachment A) is expansive and incorporates all feedback received to the extent feasible.

The second option is more narrowly focused on only requesting information related to the factors mandated by the statute and topics that are most directly impacted by RHNA (Attachment B). It places greater emphasis on minimizing the response burden for local staff in an effort to increase the likelihood that jurisdictions submit a response.

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Next Steps:

Staff is seeking input from the RPC on the Local Jurisdiction Survey, which has been updated to incorporate feedback received from the Housing Methodology Committee. Staff will make further revisions based on the feedback received and send the survey to planning directors, housing staff, and city managers in every Bay Area jurisdiction in January 2020.

The next meeting of the Housing Methodology Committee is December 19, 2019 at the Alameda County Transportation Commission offices (1111 Broadway, Oakland).

Recommended Action:

Information


Attachments:

A. Proposed Local Jurisdiction Survey – Option 1 (Longer Version)

B. Proposed Local Jurisdiction Survey – Option 2 (Shorter Version)

C. Presentation

Reviewed:


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