

No to Plan Bay Area 2050 - Exacerbates the Jobs to Housing Imbalance in Palo Alto

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I am concerned about the consequences of Plan Bay Area 2050 and its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation process. ABAG's concentration of jobs and housing growth in our local South Bay communities creates high levels of congestion, pushes up extraordinarily high housing costs, increases local taxes and weakens local zoning control. In addition, it does not take into account the impact of such development on infrastructure for roads, schools, parks, etc. Furthermore, it assumes that existing transit is infinitely expandable to meet higher demand and that such transit is reliable and takes workers where they actually work. I understand that ABAG's current vision has come about because ABAG decided that their priority strategy for the Bay Area should be to concentrate growth in already jobs-rich areas, such as Palo Alto. This approach ignores affordable housing, housing speculation, the historic droughts, the drain on our power grid, density and changing work patterns. It also ignores the already existing imbalanced jobs-housing ratio.

ABAG, the unelected regional planning agency, used in-house technical committees to arrive at their jobs and housing concentrations and failed to hold any effective public discussions as required by code. ABAG ignored California Government codes requiring them to hold open meetings to explore ways to disperse jobs throughout the Bay Area. ABAG wouldn't even look at the benefits of dispersing new jobs around the Bay Area, preferring to place both new jobs and new housing in one of the costliest areas of the country and refusing to consider the impacts of changing work patterns such as working remotely. As such, how can we be expected to support it or accept it?

In past planning cycles, Palo Alto has met all of its ABAG Regional Housing Needs Assessment goals for housing targeted at market or above area median income. Please do not ask us to accept more housing or more jobs until we can get our jobs housing imbalance correct and until we can house the people that need it the most, i.e., those at 80% or less of area median income. I believe ABAG should be compelled to enter into an open public discussion of the

impact of concentrated jobs and housing growth. Accepting their recommendations as currently envisioned would be disastrous for our city.

Susan Kemp

Palo Alto Resident