

Halt the RHNA Process

West Bay Citizens Coalition <westbaycitizenscoalition@protonmail.com>

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To: Regional Housing Need Allocation <rhna@bayareametro.gov>

Cc: Therese W. McMillan <tmcmillan@bayareametro.gov>

External Email

West Bay Citizens Coalition

Empowering West Bay communities to find

locally driven solutions to regional problems

Dear President Arreguin and ABAG Executive Board,

It is essential that you halt the RHNA process as the methodology must be compatible with Plan Bay Area 2050 Blueprint. This requires compatibility with the regional housing number for the region as a whole along with a formula that is based on "jobs growth in already jobs-rich areas".

The issue is that this has produced a proposal that concentrates jobs allocation (and the associated housing for those jobs) within a narrow geographic region of the South Bay (parts of five cities in Silicon Valley). This has resulted in RHNA numbers in those five cities that call for a 32% increase in the total housing stock in these cities over the next eight years.

This is obviously unattainable and will have severe consequences for residents of the West Bay.

- With both huge job growth and huge housing growth in an area that already has the highest land and office and housing costs in the country, building affordable housing within the West Bay will become next to impossible.
- Infrastructure costs necessary for the expanded population will overwhelm already overburdened budgets.
- New taxes and fees will fall on disproportionately on residents who are struggling to make ends meet.
- Dense worker housing will leave little room for families with children (San Francisco already has the lowest share of its population between the ages of 5 and 17 of any city in the country) as an overcrowded Silicon Valley with an increasing share of dense worker housing is likely to join it.
- The decision-making role of land-owning developers is sure to increase, concentrating centralized decision-making authority to the detriment of nearly all residents.
- Effective construction of Below Market Rate Housing will be hamstrung in a context where existing rules put the excessive cost burdens on working residents rather than expanding new businesses.

- There has been no effective discussion of the longer-term consequences of COVID increasing the share of more effective work at home.

Each of these issues deserve close attention and open public discussion. In fact, the current California Code requires the regional planning process to promote alternative ways to improve jobs and housing imbalances within the region (Code Section 65584 (d) (3)). Neither ABAG nor HCD has had such an open discussion but dismissed any such discussion early in the process.

We urge you to halt and reconsider the RHNA process and work with local governments to resolve these issues with what has been a fundamentally broken process based on flawed assumptions.

Best regards,

The West Bay Citizens Coalition

Campbell, Cupertino, Los Altos, Menlo Park, Mountain View,
Palo Alto, Saratoga, Sunnyvale... and growing