

Plan Bay Area 2050 (No)

Keith Bennett <[REDACTED]>

Tue 7/20/2021 6:06 PM

To: EIR Comments <eircomments@bayareametro.gov>

External Email

To Association of Bay Area Governments

I would like to register my clear opposition to the Bay Area Plan 2050 and the RHNA. To put it bluntly, we have too many jobs in the Bay Area and these new jobs lead to population growth, putting pressures on the local communities, including housing, transportation, water, sewage, etc. The employers then expect the local communities to pay for the costs they are imposing. Infrastructure is needed as soon as someone takes a job in the area, and that infrastructure needs to be paid for. It is much faster and easier to build office space than housing.

A office typically allows about 150 - 200 square feet of space per tech worker (this is the amount I allocated as CEO of a start-up). However, assuming the goal is to support families, each tech worker corresponds to 2 - 4 residents. People usually expect at least 250 square feet / person of residential space, and actually aspire to more. A small apartment / condo suitable for a couple aspiring to have a family is therefore 800 square feet. So, for each 150 - 200 square feet of office space, 4 - 5 times as much residential space is required. The cost of such new construction is at least \$500 / square foot, in addition to land. At 8% ROI, the rental cost must be at least \$32K / year (for 800 square feet), which is quite high for many people we need in our communities. In other words, construction of new market-rate housing will continue to push people we need locally out of the area.

In addition to personal residential space, quality of life depends upon urban amenities, whether it's schools, hospitals / clinics, stores or restaurants, not to mention offices for governmental services. In short, a lot of infrastructure is required to support each new worker.

This doesn't address the community infrastructure requirements, such as water, sewage or transportation at all.

The Bay Area's Growth plan needs to:

- 1) Reduce the jobs-housing imbalance in jobs-rich areas by emphasizing conversion of offices (which are perhaps less necessary due to the work-at-home possibilities) into residential housing, either by completely replacing the building or remodeling,

2) Requiring new office construction to also build new housing sufficient to house workers as part of the project

3) Requiring impact fees for office developments to cover the added costs to communities. As a result of Proposition 13, and the relatively low turnover of office properties, property taxes paid by corporations now do not cover their fair share of expenses.

4) The large tech companies can easily afford to fund "affordable" housing for the essential workers (including teachers, government employees, tradespersons, etc. displaced by their employees). They have huge (\$100 billion) amounts of cash which is not earning (significant) interest. They easily can invest that money into housing for their employees and the community without requiring the return on investment. It's simply a cost of business (and a better investment than cash) for them. Done properly, these companies would become much better participants in the community. Google once promised "Do No Evil." Inadvertently, these companies are doing evil. Bay Area Plan 2050 should direct them to "Do Good."

Please do not approve the plan as written. It is the wrong way and further concentrates jobs where they aren't needed without offsetting the impacts.

Thank you,

Keith & Atsuko Bennett

