



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

October 7, 2020

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Ben Berto, Planning and Building Services Director
Garrett Toy, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Discussion of Preliminary Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) and Authorization for Mayor to Sign Letter from Town Council Regarding Recommended Methodology.

RECOMMENDATION

Review the attached draft Town Council letter to the MTC/ABAG Executive Committee regarding the preliminary Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) and Recommended Methodology and authorize the Mayor to sign a finalized letter.

BACKGROUND

The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has determined that the Bay Area region needs to plan for an additional 441,000 new housing units between 2022 and 2030. These units are distributed among Bay Area jurisdictions pursuant to a methodology approved by the Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC/ABAG). A RHNA Methodology Committee, comprised of a group of Bay Area stakeholders, including one elected official and one planning staff person from each Bay Area County, and other non-governmental stakeholders, has been meeting for the past year to develop a methodology to determine how each jurisdiction's housing unit quotas.

Novato City Mayor Pro Tem Pat Eklund and Elise Semonian, Planning Director for San Anselmo, were Marin County's representatives on the RHNA Housing Methodology Committee (HMC). Additional background information regarding the process to identify an appropriate methodology to distribute the State's Regional Housing Needs Allocation among all Bay Area jurisdictions is included in the ABAG memo and the report to the Marin County Councils and Mayors Committee by Pat Eklund in Attachment 2 (see pages 4-5 of report).

As summarized in Mayor Pro Tem Eklund's report, based on the recommendation of the HMC, the following chart represents a rough estimate of the number of units each Marin County jurisdiction would have to plan to accommodate between 2023 and 2031, the 6th and next 8-year RHNA housing cycle.

	2050 Households (Bay Area Blueprint) Unmodified Allocation				
	vl	I	Mod	Mod+	Total
Belvedere	50	30	20	60	160
Corte Madera	210	120	110	270	710
Fairfax	160	90	80	200	530
Larkspur	300	180	150	390	1,020
Mill Valley	250	140	120	320	830
Novato	580	340	130	860	2,110
Ross	40	20	20	40	120
San Anselmo	230	no	110	280	750
San Rafael	750	430	450	1,150	2,780
Sausalito	200	120	120	300	740
Tiburon	190	110	90	240	630
Unincorporated Marin	1,160	670	560	1,440	3,830

MTC/ABAG's Executive Board is scheduled to vote on whether to accept the methodology recommended by the HMC on October 15, 2020.

DISCUSSION

The draft letter in Attachment 1 discusses concerns with the methodology recommended by the HMC. Specifically, the letter notes that the methodology recommended by the HMC allocates new housing units to an area that lacks available land, adequate transportation infrastructure, is removed from existing and future job generators, is at high wildfire risk with severe evacuation constraints, quantities inconsistent with the growth patterns and policy objectives more carefully considered in Plan Bay Area 2050. The letter recommends two modifications to the proposed methodology:

- 1) Utilize Plan Bay Area 2050 household (HH) growth rates between 2019 and 2050 as the baseline for the RHNA allocation.
- 2) Reduce the 40% allocation factor to High Resource Areas for moderate and market rate units utilized in Recommended Option 8A

The first recommended modification in the letter has been raised by several other suburban communities in the Bay Area (see comment letters in Attachment 3), which are seeing a relatively greater proportional increase in RHNA than communities high job generation and robust public transportation and other infrastructure.

While the above RHNA numbers are preliminary and only approximate the housing allocation that Fairfax will ultimately receive through the RHNA determination process, the estimate represents 8X the number of housing units assigned to Fairfax during the current 2014-2022 RHNA cycle. For comparison, the number of housing units is approximately the number of units

that have been developed in Fairfax in the last five decades. It is very unlikely to be achieved even under the most aggressive housing development scenario.

Similar concerns about lack of awareness about inherent housing development constraints and resulting very low likelihood of attaining the preliminary projected RHNA housing numbers have been expressed by every commenting jurisdiction with which staff is familiar (see attached representative comment letters).

Even if the RHNA methodology is modified as recommended, under the State's allocation of 441,000 housing units for the Bay Area for the 2023-2031 time period, the Town will find it very difficult to plan for or facilitate development as required by the State in this next (6th) RHNA cycle.

FISCAL IMPACT

n/a

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Draft Letter to MTC/ABAG Executive Committee
- B. ABAG Memo and Report from Pat Eklund
- C. Comment letters from other Bay Area jurisdictions