



## Staff Report

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### ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS (ABAG) REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION PROCESS (RHNA) UPDATE

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

#### Summary/Background

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is required by State law to administer the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) program in the Bay Area. Changes to State law in 2004 allow ABAG to transfer administration of the program to local jurisdictions that create sub-regions. The City/County Association of Governments for San Mateo County (C/CAG) has facilitated and provided staff support for the RHNA sub-region process for the cities and the County. Housing allocations developed through this RHNA sub-region process would be used in the next State-required review and approval of Belmont's Housing Element in 2009.

This sub-regional approach to distributing housing need allocations among member jurisdictions increases the potential for local control and flexibility in how sub-regional housing needs are addressed. This effort has allowed city staff and elected officials to be more directly involved in voicing any concerns about the projected ABAG housing allocations and implementing the sub-regional RHNA process.

In August 2006, the City of Belmont adopted a resolution (consistent with the other 20 Cities and County of San Mateo) agreeing to participate in the Sub-Regional process. This report provides background on the RHNA process and the association with certification of Belmont's Housing Element (due in 2009), and a summary of the actions to date. **No action is recommended or required at this time.**

#### Discussion

California State Housing Element Law enacted in 1980 requires ABAG and other regional councils of government in California to determine the existing and projected regional housing needs for persons at all income levels. ABAG is also required by law to determine each jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need in the nine-county Bay Area. State legislation and the RHNA process are intended to address housing needs for projected state population and household growth, to create a better balance of jobs and housing in communities, and to ensure the availability of decent affordable housing for all income groups.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) enforce State Housing Element Law by requiring certified Housing Elements as part of a community's General Plan. Belmont's current Housing Element covers the planning period from 2001 to 2006. HCD is requiring Housing Element updates that are reviewed and approved in 2009. Failure to secure a certified Housing Element from HCD can result in loss of funding for housing and redevelopment related projects and lawsuits from housing advocacy and social equity organizations.

Since September 2006, City staff and Mayor Feierbach have met with the sub-region cities and county to discuss the methodology for determining housing needs shares. Belmont voiced concerns throughout the process, not in reference to the sub-regional approach, but more specifically centered on the high number of expected production units for the city as a result of the ABAG projections.

Belmont raised issues related to potentially excessive density in the City, scarcity of raw land, infrastructure (i.e. water/sewer) capacity, the need for sensitive development and the provision of open space, and geotechnical/topographical constraints associated with future housing production in the City. These are the same issues that were raised by the City and discussed at the recent Senator Leland Yee study session on June 25, 2007. Other recent actions within the sub-regional process are as follows:

- March 27, 2007 - the Sub-Regional group submitted its Final Methodology for Determining Housing Needs Shares to ABAG; Belmont and two other cities (Millbrae & Colma) did not agree with the Methodology crafted at the time.
- April 2007 – Belmont staff met with C/CAG representatives to discuss the City's concerns and potential housing unit trades/offsets.
- May 17, 2007 – ABAG releases the Draft Regional Housing Allocation number for San Mateo County – a projected need of 15,738 units for the 2007-2014 period.

The projected housing unit share for Belmont to provide (during the 2007-2014 period) is 399 units. This number is derived from an original ABAG draft projection of 460 units, and a negotiated shift of 61 of Belmont's units to the jurisdictions of Redwood City or San Mateo. These two cities (and the County) have agreed to take on additional units from other San Mateo County cities in concert with addressing the ABAG total number of projected units for the County.

On 6/7/07 and 6/14/07 respectively, the RHNA Technical Advisory Committee (i.e. City Staff from the 20 participating cities and county) and RHNA Political Advisory Committee (i.e. Elected Officials from the 20 participating cities and county) reviewed and agreed upon the revised methodology, draft allocated housing shares, and negotiated housing unit "offloads" between jurisdictions associated with the Sub-Regional process.

Finally, C/CAG outlined in their most recent letter to the City (See attachment I) that an additional opportunity is available for the participating sub-regional cities to further negotiate trading of units. All such negotiated trades must be completed by mid-August 2007 in order to be able to forward any revised housing unit shares by jurisdiction into the Final Allocation that is reviewed by the RHNA Technical Advisory & Political Advisory Committees in August/September 2007.

### **General Plan/Vision Statement**

The actions associated with participating in the ABAG Sub-Regional process further the City's General Plan/Housing Element Goals as follows:

#### **Housing Element Goal 2**

*“Provide residential sites through land use, zoning, and specific plan designations to encourage a broad range of housing opportunities.”*

#### **General Plan Goal 1015.4**

*“To maintain and enhance the appearance of the City through controlling the location, timing, design and landscaping of new development and encouraging renovation of older areas.”*

### **Fiscal Impact**

None at this time.

### **Public Contact**

This matter was placed on the agenda and posted as required by the California Government Code.

### **Recommendation**

This item is informational; no action is recommended or required at this time.

### **Alternative**

1. Provide direction to staff on related matters associated with the ABAG Sub-Regional Housing Needs Allocation Process.

### **Attachments**

- I. C/CAG Letter RE: Trade Opportunities between Sub-Region Jurisdictions – June 28, 2007
- II. San Mateo County Sub-Region Draft Housing Share Allocation Workbook – 13 Pages – June 28, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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***PLEASE NOTE:*** Attachments I & II are not included as part of this document. Please contact the Community Development Department at (650) 595-7417 for more information on viewing these attachments.