

**STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

**DATE:** Regular Meeting of April 7, 2021

**SUBMITTED BY:** Forrest Ebbs, Community Development Director *HEB for FE*

**SUBJECT:** **Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Update**

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

It is recommended that the Planning Commission receive the presentation.

**DISCUSSION**

Every seven years, the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process is initiated by the State of California, Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The purpose of the process is to ensure that each city and county agency in the State of California accommodates their fair share of new housing units to achieve the State's broader housing production goals.

The first step in the RHNA process is the distribution of the regional allocation figures from HCD to the various Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) throughout the State. The City of Antioch is part of the nine-county Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), our local MPO. ABAG received a total of 441,000 housing units from HCD for the 2023-2031 RHNA cycle.

As part of this process, ABAG is responsible for creating a formula, or methodology, that fairly distributes the total allocation to each city and county. A Housing Methodology Committee (HMC) was created to undertake this task. Forrest Ebbs, Community Development Director, along with Mindy Gentry, City of Concord Planning Manager, and Julie Pierce, Town of Clayton councilmember, represented Contra Costa County on the HMC. The HMC worked from October 2019 to September 2020 and developed a methodology that considered a broad variety of factors, including adjacency to employment/jobs, commute times, availability of transit, displacement factors, access to high quality schools, and other equity, economic, and social considerations. The draft methodology was approved by the ABAG Executive Committee on January 21, 2021.

Leading up to the approval, there was extensive debate about the appropriate baseline to be used. The methodology works cooperatively with Plan Bay Area 2050, a comprehensive regional plan developed by ABAG and the Metropolitan Transportation Committee (MTC). This plan predicts growth across the ABAG cities and counties and is intended to be used for major transportation planning and growth projections. It is not

a binding document, but provides helpful and coordinate guidance, a blueprint, for the region. The initial methodology used the Draft Blueprint figures, which were available at the time. The approved methodology used the Final Blueprint figures. This shift from draft to final modified the figures.

It is important to note that the methodology creates a uniform formula for allocation of housing units to all of the cities and counties. Though it produces numerical allocations for each city and county, those allocations cannot be individually modified through the methodology process. Rather, the entire methodology can be debated and changed. In approving the methodology, the ABAG Executive Committee elected to use the Final Blueprint as the baseline and to include additional equity factors recommended by the public and other agencies.

The results of the approved methodology are summarized in the following table:

<b>City</b>	<b>Very Low Income</b>	<b>Low Income</b>	<b>Moderate Income</b>	<b>Above Moderate Income</b>	<b>Total</b>
Antioch	792	456	493	1,275	3,016

The City of Antioch will be expected to plan for the above figures over the timeframe of 2023-2031. This planning will be accomplished primarily through the upcoming Housing Element update. Specifically, the General Plan's Housing Element and Land Use Element must demonstrate that the City can designate the necessary land with appropriate zoning to allow for the development of these units. Though the City is not directly responsible for developing these units (the City is not a homebuilder), it must provide a feasible structure for the private and non-profit sector to develop these units. Ultimately, HCD must certify the City's Housing Element to affirm that the proposed plan can accomplish the housing goals and accommodate the allocation. Failure to have a certified Housing Element can result in loss of access to critical State and federal funding for a variety of City programs.

There remain a few additional steps in the RHNA process. HCD must approve the ABAG methodology and then the final unit allocations are released. Individual agencies may then protest their allocation; The City of Antioch does not intend to take such action. Though the number of units may appear very high and is indeed much higher than past figures, the City of Antioch received a smaller share of the regional growth than in past RHNA cycles. This RHNA cycle was unique in that it was highly responsive to the inequitable distribution of high paying jobs in certain areas, including the Silicon Valley, and the unsustainable reliance on long commutes to these job centers. As a result, a greater percentage of units were assigned to inner Bay Area locales near these jobs. For example, Mountain View (pop. 82,379) will receive an allocation of over 11,000 units and San Ramon (pop. 75,995) will receive an allocation of over 5,000 units. In the past, the

availability of buildable land was a more prominent factor and, as a result, cities like Antioch received a higher percentage of units.

Through the General Plan update process, the City of Antioch will explore opportunities for high density infill housing and the expansion of mixed use development. In addition, remaining unentitled land may be considered for higher density residential development. The City will strategically balance the retention of employment-generating lands with the needs to accommodate additional housing. The City may also need to consider affordable housing inclusionary policies to ensure development of moderate-income housing.

More information about the RHNA process, including figures for all agencies, is available at: <https://abag.ca.gov/our-work/housing/rhna-regional-housing-needs-allocation>