



SUMMARY MINUTES

ABAG Regional Planning Committee – Housing Subcommittee
Wednesday, February 1, 2017
375 Beale St, San Francisco, California

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Julie Combs.

a. Members Present

Julie Combs, Councilmember, City of Santa Rosa (Chair)
Pat Eklund, Mayor, City of Novato
Michael Lane, Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California
Paul Peninger, AECOM (by phone)
Matt Regan, Bay Area Council
Carlos Romero, Urban Ecology

b. Members Absent

Paul Campos, Building Industry Association of the Bay Area

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

3. Approval of the January 4th Meeting Minutes

Member Romero made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by **Member Regan**. The committee approved the motion.

4. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

5. Session Overview and Updates

The session overview highlighted the topics that would be the focus of the meeting: discussion of the 2015 permit data compiled by ABAG staff, an update on legislative activities related to the committee's priorities, and continuation of the "Three Wishes" discussion.

6. Discussion of Analysis of 2015 Permit Data

The committee discussed the summary analysis of permit data provided by ABAG staff (Attachment 1). In preparation for presenting the data to the full Regional Planning Committee (RPC) in April, staff was seeking the committee's feedback and suggestions about other information that should be included in the analysis.

Member Regan shared a chart from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) showing Annual New Housing Permits Statewide from 1955-2015 (Attachment 2). The chart shows that average housing production over the past 10 years is significantly lower than at any time over the past 60 years.

The committee was particularly interested in additional research into why there were higher percentages of very low- and above moderate-income units located in Priority Development Areas (PDAs) compared to the low- and moderate-income categories.

The committee also wanted to include a pie chart showing the region's RHNA goals by income category as a companion to the pie chart showing the shares of permits issued by income category. There was also interest in evaluating how the Bay Area compares to the rest of the state in terms of meeting RHNA goals.

The committee requested that the presentation to the RPC relate the housing permit numbers to the economic cycle to show that the level of permit activity was significantly lower than the pace of job growth, and that probably the recent increase in housing production is more likely a peak rather than the beginning of a trend. There was discussion about the fact that meeting RHNA numbers does not necessarily mean that the real need has been met, since the Regional Housing Need Determination created by HCD every eight years can become outdated as economic and demographic conditions change.

7. Legislative Update

Staff provided an overview of recently introduced legislation that might be of interest to the committee based on the priorities identified during the "Three Wishes" discussion. **Member Lane** provided some additional information regarding a Senate Infrastructure Package (SB1, SB2, SB3) which is being supported by the League of California Cities.

Staff also provided a progress update on ABAG and MTC efforts to form the Committee for Affordable and Sustainable Accommodation (CASA). MTC and ABAG staff are working with committee co-chairs, Fred Blackwell of the San Francisco Foundation and Leslye Corsiglia of SV @ Home to have a first meeting by March. The details about the size, composition, and

charter of the body are still being worked out. While ABAG and MTC will provide staff support for CASA, the committee is not controlled by or an advisory body of the regional agencies.

Members of the RPC Housing Subcommittee, which is intentionally representative of the diverse perspectives of builders, affordable housing, business, planning and elected officials, expressed a strong desire for representation on CASA and for their work to date to be incorporated into CASA's activities going forward because this diversity is imperative to getting to real solutions.

8. Discussion of "Three Wishes"

Committee members continued discussion of the three policies each has identified as priority policies that are impactful, actionable, and could garner ABAG support and commitment to action. At the prior meeting, the policies were divided into the following three categories:

- More funding
- Balance jobs and housing (particularly related to the potential for jurisdictions to trade RHNA responsibilities)
- Streamline development approvals/inclusionary housing

The discussion at this meeting focused on what it would take to make by-right housing policies work. A major concern for many local governments is that by-right policies require them to give up control over land use decisions. This concern is widespread among jurisdictions, so the committee's conversation explored what conditions would be required to overcome the issue.

It was noted that even when a by-right policy is in place, local governments still set the zoning, building standards, and other requirements. Development can often proceed more smoothly and quickly, since developers have certainty about the rules and are able to design projects that meet the specific standards the jurisdiction has approved.

The committee discussed whether Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) sites and/or PDAs would be appropriate for by-right approvals, since local governments have already identified these areas as places where they are planning for more housing. However, it was noted that jurisdictions—especially smaller cities—do not always have the resources to develop planning standards that are specific enough for elected officials and community members to feel comfortable with by-right approvals. As a result, jurisdictions would need

additional funding for planning and time for updating their standards prior to adoption of a by-right policy.

There was some discussion about whether going forward by-right could be applied as a requirement for PDAs that have received planning grants from ABAG/MTC. There was also discussion about tools that can help by-right work, such as form-based codes, which provide specific guidelines for a project's bulk and massing, minimizing the need for discretionary architectural or design reviews.

The committee was not able to resolve all of the issues raised, and planned to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

9. Evaluation

At the request of Chair Combs, at the end of each meeting, committee members and staff provided feedback about positive aspects of the meeting as well as suggestions to improve future meetings. Positives noted were the structure of the meetings, a focus on the right topics, strong voices and constructive disagreements, and the strong meeting facilitation. Suggestions for change included providing food, fewer agenda items, more details to ground the conversation, ensuring that the meeting facilitation encourages all voices to be heard, and taking steps to connect the committee's work with the CASA effort.

10. Adjourn