

M E M O

To: Housing Methodology Committee
From: Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Staff
Date: March 19, 2007
Re: Draft ABAG Housing Program 2007

Summary

The purpose of this memo is to outline some ideas for activities that ABAG could undertake as part of a regional housing program. Proposed components of the housing program would broaden ABAG's partnerships with public, non-profit, and private sector agencies. In particular, the housing program is proposed to include: an annual housing conference and report, technical and outreach assistance, and incentives for regional priority areas (FOCUS).

ABAG staff would like to receive the committee's feedback about the proposed activities and suggestions for other housing-related activities that could benefit local governments. We would also like input on the proposed Housing Methodology Committee role in the regional housing program.

Housing Conference 2007

ABAG is planning to hold its first annual housing conference, which is scheduled for June 28, 2007. The conference is part of efforts to expand the scope of ABAG's housing activities and to develop stronger relationships with community stakeholders. Over the past year, ABAG staff has been working with several Bay Area non-profit organizations that are interested in smart growth issues to explore opportunities for them to participate in ABAG's housing activities.

One element of the housing conference would be the release of the second edition of ABAG's annual housing report (see below). In addition, other potential subjects include information about recent local successes and a "how-to" workshop component. In developing the content for the conference, it is important to avoid duplication of ABAG's Spring General Assembly, which will discuss FOCUS, and the transit-oriented development (TOD) marketplace, where local land use plans are presented to a team of developers who offer insights on implementation feasibility.

Annual Housing Report

To build on the success of ABAG's housing report, *A Place to Call Home*, staff is planning to release a second version at the June 2007 housing conference. The most substantial change to the report is the addition of information about the current Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process and its relationship to the region's FOCUS effort.

Based on the RHNA schedule, this edition of the report would include the draft allocations, which are expected to be released at the ABAG Executive Board Meeting in May. By including this information about RHNA, the 2007 housing report would be a substitute for ABAG's document about the previous RHNA cycle, the *Regional Housing Needs Determination for the San Francisco Bay Area: 2001-2006 Housing Element Cycle*.

Other ideas for updating the content of the report include adding information about financial incentives for housing, inclusionary housing best practices, and examples of local housing solutions. The report might also be an opportunity to develop and calculate some local and regional indicators to measure progress toward the region's goals for growth.

Housing Outreach and Technical Assistance

During the 1999-2006 RHNA cycle, ABAG produced *Blueprint 2001: Housing Element Ideas and Solutions for a Sustainable and Affordable Future*. The report provided local governments with an overview of housing element law, ideas about community engagement, information about financial incentives for housing, and a wide variety of programs and strategies for increasing housing choices in the region. As part of the housing program, ABAG is considering updating this document to reflect changes in housing element law and to provide new examples of housing activities and programs that would assist Bay Area local governments in meeting their housing goals. If undertaken as a task, it is expected that this document would be completed in the spring of 2008, in time for local governments to work on updating their housing elements.

In addition to updating this document, ABAG is considering a conference series in 2008 that would provide training sessions to local government staff and elected officials. Potential topics include strategies for housing element updates, interacting with HCD, communicating about land use and development issues, and working with community groups and the public.

Regional Priority Areas (FOCUS)

ABAG is currently engaged in a multi-agency regional planning effort, called FOCUS, to identify both development and conservation "priority" areas. The goal is to promote growth in existing communities, near transit and job centers, and to support conservation of key natural resource areas—the same objectives that were incorporated into the RHNA methodology.

Once priority areas are defined, grants and additional outreach and technical assistance will be directed to them to facilitate housing development. This is consistent with the directive adopted as part of the RHNA methodology to direct state and regional incentives to those jurisdictions that will receive large RHNA allocations. The incentives being considered at this stage include money from the state-wide infrastructure bonds and funding from the Regional Transportation Plan. (See Agenda Item 2)

Role of the Housing Methodology Committee (HMC)

Several members of the HMC have expressed an interest in continuing to meet as a way to assist in the implementation of the regional housing program. In order to achieve this goal, the HMC could potentially become a housing advisory committee to ABAG's Regional Planning Committee (RPC). This option would have to be discussed and approved by both the RPC and ABAG's Executive Board.