

**Focusing Our Vision (FOCUS) Background
for the
Housing Methodology Committee
August 24, 2006**

Summary

At the July 27, 2006 meeting of the Housing Methodology Committee (HMC), several HMC members expressed a desire to ensure that there is consistency between the 2006-2014 regional housing need allocation (RHNA) and the Focusing Our Vision (FOCUS) program.

FOCUS is a multi-agency effort spearheaded by ABAG and MTC in coordination with the Bay Area Quality Management District (BAAQMD). FOCUS builds upon the Smart Growth Strategy/Regional Livability Footprint Project. This pioneering effort was the first smart growth vision for a metropolitan region in California. The vision resulted in a series of regional policies established in 2002 that direct growth to transit corridors and existing communities as part of a “Network of Neighborhoods.”

As you know, there is a FOCUS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that is charged with taking the Bay Area Vision to the next level through the identification of areas well suited to accommodate development (Priority Development Areas, PDAs) and areas that should be protected and preserved (Priority Conservation Areas, PCAs). Several HMC members also serve on the FOCUS TAC.

In keeping with the fact that FOCUS builds upon the Smart Growth Livability Footprint Project, the FOCUS goals in large part build upon principles adopted by the regional agencies in 2002 as part of the Footprint Project.

The FOCUS goals have recently been stated in the following terms:

- Strengthen and support unique existing communities
- Create compact, healthy communities with a diversity of housing, jobs, activities, and services to meet the daily needs of residents
- Increase housing supply and choices
- Improve housing affordability
- Increase transportation efficiency and choices
- Protect and steward natural habitat, open space, and agricultural land
- Improve social and economic equity
- Promote economic and fiscal health
- Conserve resources, promote sustainability, and improve environmental quality
- Protect public health and safety



The objectives of RHNA are:

- (1) Increasing the housing supply and the mix of housing types, tenure, and affordability in all cities and counties within the region in an equitable manner, which shall result in each jurisdiction receiving an allocation of units for low and very low income households.
- (2) Promoting infill development and socioeconomic equity, the protection of environmental and agricultural resources, and the encouragement of efficient development patterns.
- (3) Promoting an improved intraregional relationship between jobs and housing.
- (4) Allocating a lower proportion of housing need to an income category when a jurisdiction already has a disproportionately high share of households in that income category, as compared to the countywide distribution of households in that category from the most recent decennial United States census.

The FOCUS goals and RHNA objectives are not in conflict and have substantial overlap.

Conclusion

As described at the outset of the current HMC and FOCUS TAC processes, it will not be possible to directly coordinate the current 2006-2014 RHNA methodology with the identification and local adoption of PDAs and PCAs due to RHNA-related time constraints beyond the control of ABAG. However, there is an opportunity to develop the 2006-2014 RHNA methodology in a manner that to the extent possible reflects the FOCUS goals. As noted in the companion memo, beginning with the 2003 edition, *Projections* has assumed the "Network of Neighborhoods" land use pattern.