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## CITY OF SAN RAMON

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June 26, 2012

Ken Kirkey, Director of Planning and Research  
Association of Bay Area Governments  
101 Eighth Street  
Oakland, CA 94607

**SUBJECT: Comments on the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) 2014-2022  
Draft Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Methodology**

Dear Ken:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft RHNA Methodology. The following comments have been prepared for inclusion in the public record in anticipation of the ABAG Executive Board meeting on July 19, 2012.

Overall, the City of San Ramon supports ABAG's and MTC's effort to bring a greater jobs/housing balance to the region. As you may be aware, San Ramon has made significant progress in the last decade to bring our community closer to reaching this regional goal. Between 2000 to 2008, the jobs/housing ratio moved significantly lower from 1.51 to 1.24 in the City of San Ramon. With the policies set forth in the newly adopted *San Ramon General Plan 2030*, including the designation of two Priority Development Areas (PDAs), it is anticipated that San Ramon will reach its goal of a 1.05 jobs/housing ratio by General Plan buildout in 2030. Additionally, the City's Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Element and associated Climate Action Plan will ensure that the anticipated balanced growth will not conflict with the implementation of AB 32—the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.

In general, San Ramon finds the main components that make up the RHNA methodology acceptable with exception of the income allocation strategy and the transit factor used for non-PDA areas. Our understanding is that the income allocation strategy determines the difference between the regional proportion of households in an income category and a jurisdiction's proportion in that category. This difference is then multiplied by 175 percent in an effort to be more closely aligned a jurisdiction's income distribution with the region's distribution.

San Ramon's concern over the income allocation is the use of an overly-aggressive 175 percent multiplier. The choice of 175 percent appears to be arbitrary and comes with little explanation as to

why such a high value was selected. The primary justification provided in the previous housing cycle was a 175 percent adjustment made the most meaningful adjustment for jurisdictions that currently do not have a large supply of affordable housing. San Ramon questions why a 100 or 150 percent adjustment was not studied as an alternative for this cycle. Has ABAG analyzed the construction data since the factor's inclusion in 2009 to determine what impact this adjustment factor has had on creating more affordable units in affluent communities? Is there historical data that supports why an adjustment of 175 is ideal to reaching the stated objective?

The 175 percent income adjustment is unrealistically high and ultimately defeats the region's goal of meeting the housing needs in a sustainable and balanced approach. For example in San Ramon, our 2009 to 2014 below-market rate allocation is over 2,600 units which equals approximately 75 percent of our 3,463 total assigned units. It is impractical to expect that a community of less than 25,000 residential units (in 2008) could add 2,600 new "affordable" units in a 7.5 year span. By comparison, in communities with successful inclusionary housing ordinances where 25 percent of new development is reserved for below-market rate units, San Ramon will need to approve over 10,000 new units in 7.5 years to even come close to adding the requisite 2,600 affordable units in our community.

It appears this same flawed methodology is being repeated in the impending housing cycle. With yet another estimated allocation of over 75 percent of our draft RHNA as below-market rate units, the message that the regional agencies sends to our community is mixed: 1) San Ramon should plan for a much higher production of units beyond what we are allocated in order to reach our exorbitantly high allocation of affordable units, contrary to the region's sustainable land use goal, or 2) we will keep assigning an unrealistic RHNA, knowing that these allocations can never be met thus resigning the region to face an even greater shortage of housing units in 2023.

With regards to the fair-share component, San Ramon would encourage the Board to give more weight to the transit factor in non-PDA areas. Given the intent of SB 375 to more closely align land use and transportation planning, not enough emphasis is being made to allocate units to jurisdictions with no PDAs. By using a Jobs-Housing Connection Strategy and an income allocation component, this already heavily burdens jurisdictions that have a high employment base and lower percentage of affordable units to take a greater share of the region's allocation. If a community opted-out of establishing a PDA and also has a strong network of transit, this factor should carry more weight because jobs and affordability are already greatly emphasized in other components of the methodology.

The City of San Ramon encourages the Executive Board to take into consideration the above comments and decrease in the income adjustment percentage as well as weight the transit factor more heavily in non-PDA areas. If you have any questions regarding the information in this letter, please contact Cindy Yee, Associate Planner at (925) 973-2562 or via e-mail: [cyyee@sanramon.ca.gov](mailto:cyyee@sanramon.ca.gov).

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Sincerely,



Phil Wong  
Planning/Community Development Director

Cc: City Council/City Manager  
Debbie Chamberlain, Planning Manager  
Cindy Yee, Associate Planner

c12.045 Ken Kirkey ABAG RHNA 2014-2022 Draft Methodology Comment Letter