



Frequently Asked Questions about RHNA

Topics:

- x Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Overview
- x Regional Housing Needs Determination (RHND) from HCD
- x ABAG Housing Methodology Committee
- x RHNA Methodology
- x Connections between RHNA and Plan Bay Area 2050
- x RHNA Subregions
- x RHNA Appeals Process
- x Unincorporated County Transfers of RHNA Units
- x RHNA and Local Jurisdictions

REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION (RHNA) OVERVIEW

What is RHNA?

Local housing is enshrined in state law as a matter of “vital statewide importance” and, since 1969, the State of California has required that all local governments (cities, towns and counties, also known as local jurisdictions) adequately plan to meet the housing needs of everyone in our communities. To meet this requirement, each city or county must develop a Housing Element as part of its general plan (the local government’s long-range blueprint for growth) that shows how it will meet its community’s housing needs. There are many laws that govern this process

2020, which was followed by a [public comment period](#). After considering the public comments received, the RPC and Executive Board approved the draft RHNA methodology in January 2021.

Following [HCD's findings](#) that the draft RHNA methodology furthers the RHNA objectives, in May 2021 ABAG adopted a final methodology and draft allocations for every local government in the Bay Area. See the report entitled [Draft Regional Housing Needs Allocation \(RHNA\) Plan: San Francisco Bay Area, 2023-2031](#) for a detailed overview of the final RHNA methodology and

Elements and increased scrutiny of small, large, and nonvacant sites when these sites are proposed to accommodate units for very low - and low-income households.

Is ABAG's prior RHNA available to review?

Yes, you can find more information about the [2015-2023 RHNA](#) on the ABAG website. You can also view documents from the [2007-2014 RHNA](#) and [1999-2006 RHNA](#)

REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS DETERMINATION

additional housing units necessary to meet the housing need. The final step is an adjustment related to cost-burdened households, which results in the RHND for the region.

ABAG HOUSING METHODOLOGY COMMITTEE

What was the Housing Methodology Committee?

For the past several RHNA cycles, ABAG has convened an ad-hoc [Housing Methodology Committee \(HMC\)](#) to advise ABAG staff on the RHNA allocation methodology. The HMC for the 6th Cy

formula, that shares responsibility for accommodating the Bay Area's Regional Housing Needs Determination (RHND) by quantifying the number of housing units, separated into four income categories, that will be assigned to each city, town, and county to incorporate into its Housing Element. See the report entitled [Final Regional Housing Needs Allocation \(RHNA\) Plan: San Francisco Bay Area, 2023-2031](#) for a detailed overview of the final RHNA methodology and how it furthers the RHNA objectives and addresses the methodology factors in Housing Element Law.

What are the objectives and factors that must be considered in the RHNA methodology?

The RHNA objectives provide the guiding framework for how ABAG must develop the methodology. ABAG is required to demonstrate how its methodology furthers each of the objectives. The RHNA factors include a longer list of considerations that must be incorporated into the methodology to the extent that sufficient data is available.

Summary of RHNA objectives [from [Government Code §65584\(d\)](#)]:

1. Increase housing supply and mix of housing types, with the goal of improving housing affordability and equity in all cities and counties within the region.
2. Promote infill development and socioeconomic equity; protect environmental and agricultural resources; encourage efficient development patterns; and achieve greenhouse gas reduction targets.
3. Improve intra-regional jobs-to-housing relationship, including the balance between low-wage jobs and affordable housing units for low-wage workers in each jurisdiction.
4. Balance disproportionate household income distributions (more high-income allocation to lower-income areas, and vice-versa)
5. Affirmatively further fair housing

Summary of RHNA factors [from [Government Code §65584.04\(d\)](#)]:

1. Existing and projected jobs and housing relationship, particularly low-wage jobs and affordable housing
2. Lack of capacity for sewer or water service due to decisions outside jurisdiction's control
3. The availability of land suitable for urban development
4. Lands protected from urban development under existing federal or state programs
5. County policies to preserve prime agricultural land
6. The distribution of household growth assumed for regional transportation plans and opportunities to maximize use of public transportation and existing transportation infrastructure
7. Agreements between a county and cities in a county to direct growth toward incorporated areas of the county

8. The loss of units in assisted housing developments as a result of expiring affordability contracts.
9. The percentage of existing households paying more than 30 percent and more than 50 percent of their income in rent
10. The rate of overcrowding
11. The housing needs of farmworkers
12. The housing needs generated by the presence of a university within the jurisdiction
13. The housing needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness
14. The loss of units during a state of emergency that have yet to be rebuilt or replaced at the time of the analysis
15. The region's greenhouse gas emissions targets provided by the State Air Resources Board (1595.109)

Element that local governments will select the specific sites that will be zoned for housing and the policies and strategies for addressing a community’s specific housing needs such as addressing homelessness, meeting the needs of specific populations, affirmatively furthering fair housing, or minimizing displacement. The following table distinguishes between the narrow scope of RHNA and the broader requirements for jurisdictions’ Housing Elements:

Must demonstrate local efforts to remove governmental and nongovernmental constraints that hinder locality from meeting the need for housing for persons with disabilities, supportive housing, transitional

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN RHNA AND PLAN BAY AREA 2050

How are RHNA and Plan Bay Area 2050 related?

[Plan Bay Area 2050](#) is the Bay Area's long-range regional plan for transportation, housing, the economy, and the environment, focused on resilient and equitable strategies for the next 30 years. Adopted in October 2021, Plan Bay Area 2050 establishes a blueprint for future growth and infrastructure. Plan Bay Area 2050 must meet or exceed a wide range of federal and state requirements, including a per-capita greenhouse gas reduction target of 19 percent by 2035. Plan Bay Area 2050 serves as the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) for the San Francisco Bay Area.

By law, the RHNA Plan is required to be consistent with the development pattern from Plan Bay Area 2050. These two planning processes seek to address the Bay Area's housing needs over different time horizons: Plan Bay Area 2050 has a planning horizon of 2050, while the 6th cycle of RHNA addresses the need to address short-term housing needs, from 2023 to 2031. To achieve the required consistency, both the overall housing growth for the region, as well as housing growth on a more localized level, must be greater in the long-range plan than over the eight-year RHNA cycle.

How was Plan Bay Area 2050 used as part of the RHNA methodology?

Data from the [Plan Bay Area 2050 Final Blueprint](#), which was adopted as the Preferred Environmental Impact Report Alternative in January 2021 by MTC and ABAG, was incorporated into the RHNA methodology as the baseline allocation. The baseline allocation is used to assign each jurisdiction an initial share of the RHND. A jurisdiction's baseline share is then adjusted up or down based on how the jurisdiction scores relative to the rest of the region on the factors included in the RHNA methodology.

The baseline allocation is based on each jurisdiction's share of the region's total RHND. The baseline allocation is based on each jurisdiction's share of the region's total RHND. The baseline allocation is based on each jurisdiction's share of the region's total RHND.

What are the reasons a jurisdiction or HCD could submit an appeal?

State Housing Element law allows an appeal to be filed **only** for the following three reasons :

1. ABAG failed to adequately consider the information submitted as part of the local jurisdiction survey (see [Government Code Section 65584.04\(b\)](#) for more details about the survey). ABAG conducted this survey in early 2020 and [received responses from 72 jurisdictions](#).
2. ABAG failed to determine the jurisdiction's allocation in accordance with the information received from the jurisdiction.

Elected officials and staff from each county were on the [Housing Methodology Committee \(HMC\)](#) to represent the jurisdictions in that county. The HMC made recommendations about the allocation methodology to the [ABAG Regional Planning Committee \(RPC\)](#) and the RPC made recommendations to the [ABAG Executive Board](#) which has the authority to make final decisions. Local governments could provide feedback on the proposed methodology during the [public comment period](#), and have had the opportunity to provide public comment at meetings throughout the RHNA process. In summer and fall 2021, local governments had an opportunity to file appeals on the draft RHNA allocations issued on May 25, 2021.

How does RHNA impact local jurisdictions' general plans? What is a Housing Element ?
California's [Housing Element Law](#) states that “designating and [(t)1 (tg-)-1 (i)1.2 (nt)tg-ii an7(tg-)-1 (i)ts

Will my jurisdiction be penalized if we do not build enough housing?
For [jurisdictions that did not issue permits for enough housing](#) to keep pace consistent with