

Dear Mayor Fine,

Palo Alto Neighborhoods voted at Thursday's meeting to urge the City Council to rush back from summer break for an emergency meeting to address Plan Bay Area 2050 and the Final Regional Housing Need Determination. Are you aware that these numbers have been unlawfully imposed on the Bay Area counties behind closed doors, in secret sessions, with no public input and without adequate studies and data to support the findings?

To make matters worse, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has announced that unless formally appealed, their regional jobs and housing projections will be finalized by July 10, 2020, giving precious little time for communities to comment and also when many local governments are on break.

California Code (Section 65584.01) requires an open discussion of the impacts of alternate jobs growth levels on the costs and distribution of housing throughout the Bay Area. However, the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC)/Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and HCD have refused to allow any open and transparent discussion – as required by our laws. We are being asked to bear an extraordinary burden without any representation, without any input. We urge Council to insist on transparency and public participation in Plan Bay Area 2050 and the Final Regional Housing Need Determination.

We didn't meet our last RHNA goals for affordable and at-market rate housing, and now we are told to build over 4000 new housing units in Palo Alto. We have also been told we have to add even more jobs as we have been targeted as a "high opportunity area."

Palo Alto is already experiencing an excruciating jobs/housing imbalance which has caused housing costs to skyrocket. Yet commercial building profitability continues to outpace housing profitability, which de-incentivizes private sector investment in housing. We're being set up for an extraordinary Catch 22. If we race to meet the RHNA numbers, our jobs/housing imbalance will only be exacerbated, which is a great irony, isn't it?

Please advocate for Palo Alto and in so doing join with other Bay Area cities in questioning the methods as well as the results of this flawed process. Please come back for an emergency meeting and help us.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Becky Sanders
Sheri Furman
Co-Chairs
Palo Alto Neighborhoods