

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
DIVISION OF HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

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January 13, 2020

Kome Ajise  
Executive Director  
Southern California Association of Governments  
900 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1700  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Executive Director Ajise:

**RE: Review of Draft Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) Methodology**

Thank you for submitting the draft Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Sixth Cycle Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) Methodology. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65584.04(i), the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is required to review draft RHNA methodology to determine whether the methodology furthers the statutory objectives described in Government Code Section 65584(d).

In brief, the draft SCAG RHNA methodology begins with the total regional determination provided by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and separates it into two methodologies to allocate the full determination: projected need (504,970) and existing need (836,857).

For projected need, the household growth projected in SCAG's Connect SoCal growth forecast for the years 2020-2030 is used as the basis for calculating projected housing need for the region. A future vacancy and replacement need are also calculated and added to the projected need.

The existing need is calculated by assigning 50 percent of regional existing need based on a jurisdiction's share of the region's population within the high-quality transit areas (HQTAs) based on future 2045 HQTAs. The other 50 percent of the regional existing need is based on a jurisdiction's share of the region's estimated jobs in 2045 that can be accessed within a 30-minute driving commute. For high segregation and poverty areas as defined by [HCD/TCAC Opportunity Maps](#),<sup>1</sup> referred to by SCAG as extremely disadvantaged communities (DACs), existing need in excess of the 2020-2045 household growth forecast is reallocated to non-DAC jurisdictions within the same county.

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<sup>1</sup> Created by the California Fair Housing Task Force and commissioned by HCD and the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) to assist public entities in affirmatively furthering fair housing. The version used in this analysis is the 2019 HCD/TCAC Opportunity Maps available at [treasurer.ca.gov/ctcac/opportunity.asp](http://treasurer.ca.gov/ctcac/opportunity.asp).

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Within both the projected and existing need methodologies the four RHNA income categories (very low, low, moderate, and above moderate) are assigned to each jurisdiction by the use of a 150 percent social equity adjustment, which inversely adjusts based on the current incomes within the jurisdiction. An additional percentage of social equity adjustment is made for jurisdictions that have a high concentration of DACs or Highest Resource areas as defined by the HCD/TCAC Opportunity maps. Overall, the social equity adjustments result in greater shares of lower income RHNA to higher income and higher-resource areas.

**HCD has completed its review of the methodology and finds that the draft SCAG RHNA Methodology furthers the five statutory objectives of RHNA.<sup>2</sup>**

HCD acknowledges the complex task of developing a methodology to allocate RHNA to 197 diverse jurisdictions while furthering the five statutory objectives of RHNA. This methodology generally distributes more RHNA, particularly lower income RHNA, near jobs, transit, and resources linked to long term improvements of life outcomes. In particular, HCD applauds the use of objective factors specifically linked the statutory objectives in the existing need methodology.

Below is a brief summary of findings related to each statutory objective described within Government Code Section 65584(d):

*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.*

The methodology generally allocates increased shares of lower income RHNA to jurisdictions that have higher housing costs. In support of a mix of affordability, the highest housing cost cities generally receive higher shares of lower income RHNA. Under this methodology the 15 cities with the highest median housing costs all receive greater than 50 percent of the RHNA as lower income RHNA. Beverly Hills with the 18<sup>th</sup> highest median housing costs receives the 25<sup>th</sup> highest share of lower income RHNA; Westlake Village with the 14<sup>th</sup> highest median housing costs receives the 12<sup>th</sup> highest share of lower income RHNA; Aliso Viejo with the 23<sup>rd</sup> highest median housing costs receives the 38<sup>th</sup> highest share of lower income RHNA; and Villa Park with the 10<sup>th</sup> highest median housing costs receives the 31<sup>st</sup> highest share of lower income RHNA.

*2. Promoting infill development and socioeconomic equity, the protection of environmental and agricultural resources, the encouragement of efficient development patterns, and the achievement of the region's greenhouse gas reductions targets provided by the State Air Resources Board pursuant to Section 65080.*

The draft SCAG RHNA methodology furthers the environmental principles of this objective as demonstrated by the transportation and job alignment with the RHNA allocations.

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<sup>2</sup> While HCD finds that this particular methodology furthers the objectives of RHNA, HCD's determination is subject to change depending on the region or cycle, as housing conditions in those circumstances may differ.

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*3. Promoting an improved intraregional relationship between jobs and housing, including an improved balance between the number of low-wage jobs and the number of housing units affordable to low-wage workers in each jurisdiction.*

Half of the existing need portion of the draft SCAG RHNA methodology is set based on the jurisdiction's share of the region's estimated jobs in 2045. While future looking job projections are important for housing planning, and housing built in the next decade will likely exist for 50-100 years or more, it is also critical to plan for the needs that exist today. This objective specifically considers the balance of low-wage jobs to housing available to low-wage workers. As part of HCD's analysis as to whether this jobs-housing fit objective was furthered by SCAG's draft methodology, HCD analyzed how the percentage share of the region's lower income RHNA compared to the percentage share of low-wage jobs.

For example, under the draft SCAG RHNA methodology Irvine would receive 1.84 percent of the region's lower income RHNA, and currently has 2.07 percent of the region's low-wage jobs, .23 percent less lower income RHNA than low-wage jobs for the region. Pomona would receive .71 percent of the region's lower income RHNA, and currently has .57 percent of the region's low-wage jobs, .13 percent more lower income RHNA than low-wage jobs for the region. Across all jurisdictions there is generally good alignment between low-wage jobs and lower income RHNA, with all but 15 jurisdictions within a half percent plus or minus difference between their share of lower income RHNA for the region and their percentage low-wage jobs for the region.

HCD is aware there has been some opposition to this current methodology from jurisdictions that received lower allocations under prior iterations; however it is worth noting that even if it is by a small amount, many of the jurisdictions that received increases are still receiving lower shares of the region's lower income RHNA compared to their share of the region's low-wage jobs. HCD recommends any changes made in response to appeals should be in the interest of seeking ways to more deeply further objectives without compromising other objectives.

*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 American Community Survey.*

This objective is furthered directly by the social equity adjustment factor included in the draft SCAG RHNA methodology. Jurisdictions in the SCAG region range from as little as 10.9 percent lower income households to 82.7 percent lower income households. The 20 jurisdictions with the greatest share of lower income households, 67.2-82.7 percent lower income households, would receive an average of 31.6 percent lower income share of their RHNA; compared to the 20 jurisdictions with the lowest share of lower income households, 10.9-25.1 percent lower income households, would receive an average of 59.1 percent lower income share of their RHNA. While the social equity adjustment explicitly responds to objective four, it also assists in the methodology furthering each of the other objectives.

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*5. Affirmatively furthering fair housing, which means taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics. Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws.*

HCD applauds the inclusion of the affirmatively furthering fair housing adjustment factor in the methodology. This factor directs more lower income RHNA to higher opportunity areas and reduces allocations in segregated concentrated areas of poverty, as defined in the [HCD/TCAC Opportunity Maps](#), which evaluate access to opportunity, racial segregation, and concentrated poverty on 11 dimensions, which are all evidence-based indicators related to long term life outcomes. 14 of the top 15 highest shares of lower income RHNA are in regions over 99.95 percent High and Highest Resource areas. These include: Imperial, La Habra Heights, Rolling Hills Estates, Hermosa Beach, La Cañada Flintridge, Palos Verdes Estates, Manhattan Beach, Rolling Hills, Agoura Hills, Rancho Palos Verdes, Westlake Village, San Marino, Eastvale, and Hidden Hills. With the exceptions of the cities of Vernon and Industry, the 31 jurisdictions with the highest share of lower income RHNA are all over 95 percent High and Highest Resource areas.

HCD appreciates the active role of SCAG staff in providing data and input throughout the draft SCAG RHNA methodology development and review period. HCD especially thanks Ping Chang, Kevin Kane, Sarah Jepson, and Ma'Ayn Johnson for their significant efforts and assistance.

HCD looks forward to continuing our partnership with SCAG to assist its member jurisdictions to meet and exceed the planning and production of the region's housing need.

Support opportunities available for the SCAG region this cycle include, but are not limited to:

- SB 2 Planning Technical Assistance (Technical assistance available now through June 2021)
- Regional and Local Early Action Planning grants (25 percent of Regional funds available now, all other funds available early 2020)
- SB 2 Permanent Local Housing Allocation (Available April – July 2020)

If HCD can provide any additional assistance, or if you, or your staff, have any questions, please contact Megan Kirkeby, Assistant Deputy Director for Fair Housing, [megan.kirkeby@hcd.ca.gov](mailto:megan.kirkeby@hcd.ca.gov).



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