

# Report on ABAG to MCCMC

August 20, 2013

Please direct questions to Pat Eklund, Mayor, City of Novato 883-9116 or [peklund@novato.org](mailto:peklund@novato.org)

**Plan Bay Area:** On July 18, 2013, the ABAG and MTC Board of Directors approved the Plan Bay Area and the Final Environmental Impact Report (which is 7 volumes). After hours of testimony, the ABAG/MTC Boards voted to approve the final:

**Environmental Impact Report and mitigation measures:**

ABAG: 24 Yes, 0 No, 3 Abstentions

MTC: 13 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions

**Plan Bay Area with changes:**

ABAG: 21 Yes, 5 No, 1 Abstention

MTC: 12 Yes, 1 No, 0 Abstentions

As you know, there was considerable discussion on our vote to abstain. As explained in a blog on the Novato Patch (*see attachment*) and in the Marin IJ, of the 11 cities, two (Novato and Sausalito) indicated their support for the Preferred Scenario (Plan Bay Area), one (Corte Madera) voted for the No Project Alternative and eight (Belvedere, Tiburon, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Ross, San Anselmo, Fairfax and San Rafael) took 'No Position'.

During the Marin ABAG delegate committee meeting held on July 10, 2013 in San Anselmo, we had significant discussion on how Marin cities should vote on July 18<sup>th</sup>. Given the majority of the Marin cities took 'No Position', it was suggested, and, I agreed that it was my duty to abstain from voting for or against the Plan Bay Area and the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Also, during our meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, it was agreed that there is value in having the Marin ABAG delegates meet periodically. We will be meeting on **September 12, 2013** at the Central Marin Police Authority located at 250 Doherty Dr., Larkspur, California 94939 to review the changes made to the Plan Bay Area on July 18, 2013 and next steps for Marin Cities.

**Regional Housing and Needs Assessment (RHNA):** The ABAG Executive Board approved the allocations for the 2014-2022 RHNA cycle for Marin:

Jurisdiction	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	Total
Belvedere	4	3	4	5	16
Corte Madera	22	13	13	24	72
Fairfax	16	11	11	23	61
Larkspur	40	20	21	51	132
Mill Valley	41	24	26	38	129
Novato	111	65	72	167	415
Ross	6	4	4	4	18
San Anselmo	33	17	19	37	106
San Rafael	240	148	181	438	1007
Sausalito	26	14	16	23	79
Tiburon	24	16	19	19	78
Unincorporated	55	32	37	61	185
Marin County Total:	618	367	423	890	2298

Attachment: Novato Patch Blog prepared by Pat Eklund entitled: **Marin Cities Vote on Plan Bay Area**

# ATTACHMENT

## **Marin Cities Vote on Plan Bay Area**

**Prepared by: Pat Eklund, Mayor, City of Novato and ABAG Executive Board Member for 11 Cities in Marin County**

NOTE: This is a more detailed version than what appeared in the Marin Independent Journal on July 23, 2013.

On Saturday morning, as I was walking into Rustic Bakery, a resident asked me why I voted to abstain on the Plan Bay Area and the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR). I explained that it wasn't just my vote or the City of Novato's vote – I represent and am voting on behalf of the 11 cities in Marin County on the ABAG Executive Board and there wasn't a consensus.

Since I represent the Marin cities on ABAG, I reached out to my colleagues and encouraged them to have public meetings to garner community feedback. I held several meetings with ABAG delegates on the City Council's to ascertain how Marin Cities should cast our 1 vote (mine) on the ABAG Board.

Of the 11 cities, two (Novato and Sausalito) indicated their support for the Preferred Scenario (Plan Bay Area), one (Corte Madera) voted for the No Project Alternative and eight (Belvedere, Tiburon, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Ross, San Anselmo, Fairfax and San Rafael) took 'No Position'. 'No Position' is just that -- **they chose not to take a position for or against any of the alternatives**. Given the majority took 'No Position', I determined that it was my duty to abstain from voting for or against the Plan Bay Area and the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

As we go forward, I will advocate for ABAG/ MTC to have open dialogues on what worked well and what needs improvement so we don't repeat past mistakes. Both ABAG/ MTC need to find a better way to involve the communities at the local level in updating the Plan due in 4 years. I will recommend we start now by working backwards from 2017 to ensure there is adequate time for a bottom up effort where the public, stakeholder organizations and elected officials are brought into the process early on. I will continue to advocate for enough time that allows each city, town and county to vote.

We, the elected officials on ABAG/ MTC, need to look at options and select the best approach for projecting the population and jobs growth, whether locating housing near transit/transportation reduces GHG emissions as projected, and how needs in our schools, parks and recreation, public safety, etc. can be addressed with the anticipated growth.

I hope that by changing the process and making improvements to the Plan, that we will have a Plan in 2017 that satisfies our individual community values while contributing to the Region's values of preserving our environment while having a prosperous economy where everyone has a place to call home.

Please send me your comments and questions, because we need your feedback as ABAG/MTC progress on the Plan's update in 4 years. Contact me at home: 415-883-9116 or by email: [pateklund@comcast.net](mailto:pateklund@comcast.net).

### ***If you want to dig in, here are the details:***

In January 2012, I was honored to be elected by Mayors and Councilmembers of the 11 Marin cities to be their representative on the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Executive Board. And, as everyone knows, I do my homework, ask pointed questions that get us to the heart of the matter and take the responsibility of representing others seriously.

The "Plan Bay Area" is an integrated long-range transportation and land-use/housing plan for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The "Plan", which ABAG/MTC have worked on for three years, is our Sustainable Community Strategy that identifies how the Bay Area will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15% from cars/light trucks by 2040

as required by Senator Steinberg's SB 375, a State law, while focusing on where housing should be provided based on Bay Area economic growth.

I, along with others, have been actively suggesting changes to the Plan Bay Area over the last three years with mixed success. Never-the-less, the Plan Bay Area and the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) were released in March 2013 with a 45 day public comment period. Almost everyone who commented requested more time, but ABAG/MTC didn't have any time to spare. Unfortunately, ABAG was under a statutory deadline to adopt the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) by July 18, 2013 which is also required to be consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy. Since the Plan Bay Area is our Sustainable Community Strategy, ABAG and MTC had no alternative but to decline requests for extending the public comment period.

ABAG/MTC received over 588 written/verbal comments on the Plan. 400 of those were written comments from individuals of which 171 came from Marin residents many objecting to the potential priority development areas (PDAs) in Tam Valley and Marinwood, recently withdrawn by the Board of Supervisors. Those individuals along with other Marin community members dug deeper and raised additional issues, challenged the population and jobs growth projections, the assumption of GHG reductions, and proposals to streamline California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in PDAs that's perceived as 'gutting' CEQA. Most importantly, the public expressed loud and clear, they want to maintain local control.

In early July 2013, the changes to the Plan Bay Area and Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) were released subject to review and comment. I, along with many others, downloaded the proposed changes to the Plan Bay Area, but the Final EIR was seven volumes. I actually picked up my copy of the Final EIR on a CD on July 12, 2013, but knew it was impossible for me or almost anyone to read seven volumes in six days and comprehend the information well enough to submit comments!

The proposed changes to the Plan Bay Area made sense, but yet again many of us on the ABAG Board felt it was imperative to make additional changes to emphasize local control, the difference between potential and planned priority development areas, how to deal with truck traffic associated with our Ports, etc.. So, additional changes were proposed at the joint ABAG/MTC Board meeting on July 18, 2013. Even as the meeting unfolded, additional changes were being proposed and acted upon by the respective Boards.

Thursday, July 18, 2013 was a tough night. After 3 hours of public testimony, the ABAG and MTC Boards deliberated and voted on various motions making changes to the Plan Bay Area. When the vote on the main motions to approve the Plan Bay Area and certify the Final Environmental Impact Report, I cast an abstention vote on each motion. Again, this was done after having consulted with representatives of Marin Cities I represent on the ABAG Executive Board over the last three months.

The Plan raised a number of very serious issues for Marin – and, due to the extremely short timeframe, we **simply did not have enough time to work with our community members, 'stakeholder' organizations and municipalities to resolve those issues; and, some of those issues couldn't be resolved by their very nature.**

I personally have had concerns about the Plan Bay Area and the process that ABAG/MTC has used to obtain feedback from the public and elected officials. My concerns have focused on the allocation of population and jobs growth projections – they are too high for Marin; funding for transit and roads/streets have been factored into the Plan Bay Area, but funding for our schools, parks and recreation, public safety (police and fire) has not been included; and maintaining local control since this kind of a plan can evolve; and other concerns. Also, ABAG/MTC have not given the public, elected officials and groups that are interested in the Plan enough time to review the documents. It took ABAG 3 years to develop the preferred scenario (Plan Bay Area), however, the alternatives were just disclosed in 2013 with the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report.

Despite these and other concerns, I along with my colleagues on the Novato City Council voted for the Preferred Scenario (Plan Bay Area) – we were one of two cities in Marin. The Plan Bay Area does NOT require the City to change our General Plan or Zoning, nor does it mandate that we have a Priority Development Area. In fact, I have been adamant that the City of Novato does not want high density housing or a Priority Development Area for the current and future Plans.

What the Plan Bay Area does, though, is focuses the housing where the jobs are projected to grow which is in the southern part of the Bay Area. Silicon Valley is a driving force in our SF Bay Area economy and as such, the majority of the growth is anticipated in South Bay. **That is one of the reasons why the City of Novato’s housing allocation (RHNA) for 2014 through 2022 is 415 units**, which is one third of our housing allocation for 2007 through 2014 which was 1241 units. And, it is significantly lower than Novato’s allocation for 1999 through 2006 which was 2582 housing units.

After hours of testimony, the ABAG/ MTC Boards voted to approve the final:

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