

ABAG Report to MCCMC¹

April 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This report highlights: (1) Doorway Housing Portal; (2) CALENVIRONSCREEN; (3) Vital Signs Website and Data Updates; and, (3) SB 979 (Strickland): Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA).

DOORWAY HOUSING PORTAL:

On April 8, 2026, the ABAG Housing Committee discussed and approved a fifth amendment to the contract with Exygy Inc. (“Consultant”) in an amount not to exceed \$269,300 for web design services to update the Doorway Housing Portal for a total contract amount not-to-exceed \$5.08 million.

The Doorway Housing Portal (fact sheet is attached) was launched in 2023 and is a comprehensive, user-friendly site that allows housing seekers to find and apply for housing opportunities from their phones or personal computers. In February 2025, the Portal was expanded to include the lottery and application functionality, additional work on public data and reporting, along with research on affordable housing placement. Through another contract, funded by the Regional Early Action Planning Grant of 2021, the Doorway Housing Portal functionality was improved to include map rendering and having a listing search. Following is the link to the: [Doorway Housing Portal](#). It can also be accessed by typing in: <https://housingbayarea.mtc.ca.gov/>

CALENVIROSCREEN:

CalEnviroScreen is a statewide environmental screening tool developed by CalEPA’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) to identify disadvantaged communities (DACs) throughout the state. The tool is used to determine eligibility for certain state funding programs. This update, Version 5.0, includes new indicators and updated census data, including new tract geographies. These changes affect the scores and rankings of census tracts throughout the Bay Area and across California, but maintain the tool’s statewide composite methodology, resulting in a continuation of the chronic under-representation of Bay Area disadvantaged communities in the state’s definition.

After updating CalEnviroScreen 5.0, the Bay Area accounts for just 5.4% of the state’s DAC tracts, despite making up over 19% of the state’s population. In the previous version, the Bay Area accounted for 5.8% of the state’s DAC tracts, meaning this is a slight decrease in DAC tract representation for the Bay Area. Additionally, when evaluating all census tracts within the Bay Area, it appears that just 6.9% of the region’s census tracts are designated as DACs. This contrasts with the rest of the state, where 29% of all other census tracts are designated as DACs. This disparity means that any given Bay Area census tract is more than four times less likely to be designated as a DAC than a tract outside the region, underscoring a structural inequity in how statewide metrics treat Bay Area socioeconomic disadvantage. This could make it more difficult

¹ Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilmembers (MCCMC). For questions, contact Councilmember Pat Eklund; City of Novato at: pateklund@comcast.net; and/or 415-336-9913 (cell).

for Bay Area communities to compete for state grant funding. Because of requirements from AB 1550 (Gomez, 2016), the limited geographic spread of DAC tracts within the Bay Area may present challenges to local agencies and jurisdictions in both applying for and spending state grant funding. Not only does the Bay Area's relative lack of DAC tracts compared to other regions present a hurdle to obtaining funding, but requirements that a certain percent of funding be spent on projects physically sited in DAC tracts limit agencies' flexibility in using funds once they are allocated. This is especially visible in affordable housing projects, which may struggle to obtain funding unless physically located in environmentally sensitive areas, and transportation projects, which often benefit disadvantaged communities but cover long corridors that are not fully included in the DAC definition.

VITAL SIGNS WEBSITE AND DATA UPDATES:

Vital Signs is ABAG-MTC's interactive website (<https://vitalsigns.mtc.ca.gov/>) that tracks key trends shaping the Bay Area across five topic areas: land & people, transportation, the environment, the economy, and equity. Through interactive charts, maps, and narratives, the site provides performance metrics that help MTC-ABAG, partner agencies and residents of the Bay Area make informed decisions towards achieving policy goals.

The latest Vital Signs data refresh includes indicators in four of Vital Sign's five topic areas and covers 17 of the 41 indicators currently tracked. Overall, many indicators have stabilized since the pandemic, while longer-term shifts in population, travel patterns, housing production, and equity persist. Regionwide population is down modestly versus pre-pandemic, while housing production is down sharply. Transportation indicators point to stabilization, with vehicle miles traveled and commute mode shares leveling off as remote work plateaus. While economic indicators appear strong, structural inequalities persist and are widening. Equity measures continue to highlight challenges, particularly in the availability of middle-wage jobs and poor housing affordability.

SENATE BILL 979 (STRICKLAND): REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION (RHNA)

SB 979 would change the current RHNA State housing law by subjecting final RHNA determinations to judicial review and the existing administrative appeals process. **ABAG has opposed this legislation.** Current law requires each city and county to adopt a general plan that includes a housing element to plan for housing needs across all income levels. As part of this framework, the CA Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), in consultation with regional councils of governments, determines the total regional housing need. ABAG and other councils of government (COGs) are responsible for allocating this need to individual jurisdictions through the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process. Local governments must then update their housing elements to demonstrate how they will accommodate their assigned share of housing. State law also establishes a RHNA appeals process. Local jurisdictions or HCD may appeal a COG's draft RHNA allocations. The COG is required to issue a final determination on these appeals, which is not subject to judicial review.

Doorway Housing Portal

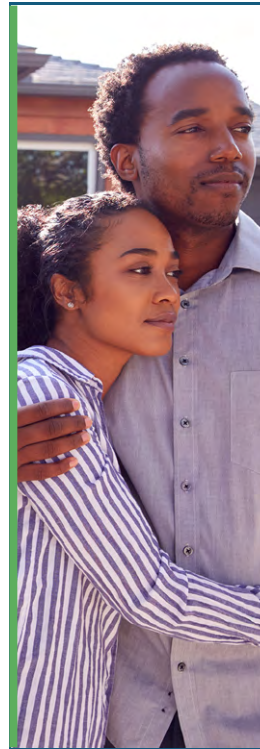
Searching for an affordable home in the Bay Area is much harder and more time-consuming than it should be. It is often paper-based, different for every property, and with unclear eligibility criteria and placement processes.

To make the search easier, the **Bay Area Housing Finance Authority** has launched the **Doorway Housing Portal**, at www.housingbayarea.org. Housing seekers can use the portal to search for housing on their phone or computer and complete an application in less than 10 minutes. The portal will transform the housing search process across the region: in addition to saving time, housing seekers will be able to determine eligibility upfront, apply for multiple listings, and get up-to-date lottery, waitlist and placement information. The Doorway Housing Portal is based on the open-source code from the DAHLIA San Francisco Housing Portal, a proven approach to making it easier to find and apply for affordable housing.

The Doorway Housing Portal Will:

- Create a one-stop shop for housing seekers' needs
- Allow applicants to get up-to-date lottery and waitlist information
- Simplify the lease-up process for developers and property managers
- Provide important data about affordable housing demand, which will help create more housing resources

The portal also will grow the shared technology platform so regional partners can share costs, making it less expensive to operate, and create shared tools that cities and counties can use to help simplify the process of building and leasing affordable housing.



The Doorway Housing Portal provides a simple and equitable way for residents to find and apply for affordable housing in the Bay Area, and builds a shared technology platform with transparent processes from marketing to move-in. The Portal helps people, housing providers and local governments, and provides critical data to shape policy and attract more housing resources.

Doorway Is Committed to:

- Promoting the fair and equitable allocation of housing resources across the Bay Area
- Respecting local jurisdictions' need for flexibility
- Promoting transit-oriented communities
- Supporting collaborative, cost-effective work across the region
- Generating useful data that benefits housing policy work while protecting individuals' privacy

For More Information:

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