

# ABAG Low-Income Housing Allocations for Lamorinda

By Jean Follmer

On July 31, 2007, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) released their Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for the period 2007-2014. ABAG determined a need of 214,500 additional housing units in the

Bay Area. Appeals may be filed until January 16, 2008 and final allocations will be assigned on July 31, 2008. According to ABAG, the Lamorinda allocations are as follows:

In Numbers					
Income Group*	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Mod.	Total
Regional Totals	48,840	35,102	41,316	89,242	<b>214,500</b>
Lafayette	113	77	80	91	<b>361</b>
Moraga	73	47	52	62	<b>234</b>
Orinda	70	48	55	45	<b>218</b>

  

In Percentages					
Income Group*	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Mod.	Total
Regional Totals	23%	16%	19%	42%	<b>100%</b>
Lafayette	31%	22%	22%	25%	<b>100%</b>
Moraga	31%	20%	22%	27%	<b>100%</b>
Orinda	32%	22%	25%	21%	<b>100%</b>

\*The Income Groups are determined as: Very Low – households with incomes up to 50% of the county’s area median income (AMI), Low – households with incomes between 50 and 80% of the county’s AMI, Moderate – households with incomes between 80 and 120% of the county’s AMI and Above Moderate – households with incomes above 120% of the county’s AMI.

The weighted allocation method was adopted by ABAG’s Executive Board on January 18, 2007: household growth (45%), existing employment (22.5%), employment growth (22.5%), household growth near existing transit (5%) and employment growth near existing transit (5%). ABAG says the factors are “the mathematical variables that partly determine how the RHNA is allocated to local jurisdictions.” A further explanation can be found at [www.abag.ca.gov](http://www.abag.ca.gov). ABAG states “The four objectives of RHNA include increasing housing supply, affordability, and housing types; encouraging efficient development and infill; promoting jobs-housing balance; and reducing concentrations of poverty.”

According to Niroop Srivatsa, Lafayette Planning and Building Services Manager,

there is “no requirement the units be in a certain place.” At this point, Lafayette is unsure where the additional units would be located. Lafayette mailed three letters to the ABAG Board citing concerns about their allocation and has yet to receive a response. Some of the concerns include topography, congestion and economic impacts. Lafayette’s letter dated November 15, 2006 states “The steep topography to the north of the BART station restricts the City’s ability to permit higher densities north of the freeway and the transit station.” On congestion, it says “Our key arterials (already) serve as thoroughfares for the traffic from other jurisdictions to access the freeway.” It goes on to say, “If Lafayette is required to accommodate more growth than that envisioned in the City’s General Plan, there will be gridlock in the downtown and intersections operating

at failed levels of service.”

At the Lafayette City Council meeting on December 12, 2007, there was discussion of a possible appeal to ABAG. However, Ms. Srivatsa indicated that numbers removed from Lafayette will be assigned to another jurisdiction in Contra Costa County. Further, she said that there needs to be a “technical reason” to appeal and staff does not believe there is a technical reason that would cause ABAG to change its opinion. After some back and forth between Mayor Mike Anderson, Vice Mayor Donald Tatzin, Council Member Brandt Andersson and Council Member Carl Anduri, they asked staff to discover if other jurisdictions were planning to appeal and how much an appeal may cost. The subject was continued to the next City Council meeting on January 14, 2008, two days prior to the ABAG appeal deadline.