



MORAGA

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Councils vote to support Plan Bay Area 2050 Housing Allocation Methodology

By Vera Kochan

The Moraga Town Council at its Sept. 9 meeting voted unanimously in favor of sending a letter of support to the president of the ABAG Executive Board for the Plan Bay Area 2050 Housing Allocation Methodology.

The purpose of Plan Bay Area 2050 is to encourage housing development proximate to job centers. With this in mind, there is an expectation of reduced transit and transportation congestion whereby commute times would be shortened, as well as a reduction in greenhouse

gas emissions consistent with Assembly Bill 32, Senate Bill 375, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's policy framework.

The town council wants a more equitable approach to jobs and housing by placing the homes where the job centers are located.

During Lafayette's Sept. 14 city council meeting, members voted to proceed with the resolution but agreed to submit a cover letter expressing some of their concerns regarding taking any action during a COVID-19 climate and its effect on state and local jurisdictions; the fact that high opportunity ar-

reas are the most costly to develop; and that the state's greenhouse gas goals don't apply to Contra Costa County, because a vast majority of jobs are located in other counties such as Santa Clara and San Francisco.

The Orinda City Council unanimously passed the measure at its Sept. 15 meeting, but also had concerns for allocating housing growth near job centers; discouraging housing growth near green fields and protected open space; and discouraging housing growth in small and rural communities.

Each jurisdiction within the state of California must

update its Housing Element, part of its General Plan, every eight years. Moraga's cycle is for 2015-23, Lafayette's is 2014-22, and Orinda's is 2015-23. In June 2020, the California Department of Housing and Community Development resolved that the nine Bay Area counties must accommodate 441,176 new housing units between 2022-30, an increase of 135% from previous housing assignments.

The Association of Bay Area Governments established the Housing Methodology Committee in 2019 in order to decide allocation of city housing units. Committee members include community

stakeholders, elected officials and jurisdictional staff. Representatives from Contra Costa County partake in the process, and the committee as a whole gathers information regarding regional trends, future forecasts and data analysis.

At that time, a 2019 Baseline Methodology was considered whereby Moraga, for example, would have to accommodate between 910 and 1,110 new housing units. The 2050 Plan Bay Area Methodology significantly lowers the town's housing expectations to between 680-860 new housing units.

The REC Club – distance learning with a twist



Lillian Dillon enjoys the "back to school" atmosphere.



William Dillon during a virtual class at the REC Club.

Photos Jasmine Bateson

By Vera Kochan

Moraga's Department of Parks and Recreation has found yet another way to keep the Hacienda de las Flores humming with activity during the coronavirus countywide health mandates.

The Remote Learning, Enrichment & Childcare Club was developed to help with distance learning for students grades K-8. The program, launched on Aug. 17, was created to provide children of the town's essential workers a place to study while their parents were called back to work, once it became evident that schools would not reopen for in-person instruction in the fall.

According to Recreation Supervisor Jasmine Bateson, after an informal survey of local parents' thoughts on the feasibility of the idea, the REC Club was born. Due to popular demand and room for only 24 students a lottery was used to

fill the available spaces with a wait list for the rest.

"The virtual classrooms are set up in the Casita and La Sala buildings where the proctor/student ratio is two supervisors for every 12 students," Bateson explained. "The proctors are either college graduates or students from Saint Mary's College and California State University East Bay who provide the kids with technical assistance, schedule management, and monitoring completion of work. They do not act as a teacher or help the students in any way with their school work." Classes are in session from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Once the schoolwork has been completed, the REC Club converts to a recreation-based program with various activities such as science experiments, individualized arts and crafts, sports and more. The idea is to provide the students an environment much like the

one they would have had if district schools were in session. Besides laptops, school books and other supplies, students must bring their own snacks, lunches, medications and masks.

The REC Club follows a strict health protocol during the day which begins with a COVID-19 screening procedure during each morning's check-in.

Parental feedback has been positive, and many students are enjoying the experience so much that they have asked their parents for later pickup times. Megan Dillon whose children, fourth-grader Lillian and second-grader William, attend REC Club had high praise. "They did a quick turnaround and answered to the crisis quicker than the schools did. Their COVID precautions are strictly followed. It's been invaluable to our family."

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