
MEMORANDUM

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Subject: Comparison of ABAG Year 2010 Projections and General Plan Buildout
Estimates; EPS #3083
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This is page 1 of 4. If you do not receive all pages clearly, please call (510) 841-9190.

This memorandum summarizes our comparison of the ABAG Projections '94 Year 2010 forecasts with the General Plan Buildout estimates prepared by each city in the Santa Rosa Long-Term Wastewater Project Study area. Agreement regarding the demographic inputs for the study area are critical for sizing the project components and determining the demand fee and service charges needed to finance the project. When comparing the ABAG forecasts to General Plans, it is important to understand the differences between the two.

What are the ABAG Forecasts?

As stated in Projections '94, the ABAG forecasts should not be interpreted as the either the floor or ceiling of growth. The forecasts represent an area's development potential based upon current zoning, general plans and other local development policies, in conjunction with economic and demographic demand within both the region and the subregional areas between 1990 and 2010. In general, the ABAG projections assume that supply of land does not constrain growth in the region. The ABAG projections are used for a number of purposes, including:

- allocating Federal and State funds for infrastructure projects;
- setting housing needs determination as part of the five-year update cycle for housing elements;
- Congestion Management Agencies planning process; and
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District forecasts of stationary and mobile sources of air pollution.

What are General Plan Buildout Estimates?

The General Plan buildout estimates represent the development capacity of the community as stated by the land use policies in the General Plan. The buildout estimates include the development potential in the existing city limits and the city's sphere of influence. The buildout estimates represent the city's vision of the ultimate development of the

community. The General Plan buildout estimates are used for a number of purposes, including:

- planning future infrastructure improvements;
- determining the nexus and fee amounts for fee impact programs; and
- the environmental review of a city's General Plan - they are used to evaluate transportation impacts on the planned road network;

The buildout estimates presented in this memo are based on EPS's review of each city's General Plan. Further research will be conducted to confirm the estimates with each City.

Comparison of ABAG Projections '94 and General Plan Buildout Estimates

Table 1 summarizes the comparisons. For the entire study area, the ABAG Year 2010 forecast exceeds the planned capacity stated in the General Plans by 5,500 housing units and 29,600 jobs. The magnitude of the difference is approximately six percent for housing and 23 percent for jobs. The population estimates also vary between the cities and ABAG. The ABAG population forecast is six percent greater than the cities estimate. Variations in persons per household factors used by the cities and ABAG account for the greater difference in population than housing.

The only discrepancy in terms of total housing supply is in the City of Rohnert Park. In Rohnert Park, the City's General Plan states that the buildout capacity is just over 15,000 units. ABAG projects almost 20,000 housing units as of 2010 in Rohnert Park. There are significant differences between the buildout estimates and ABAG projections of jobs in Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park. ABAG projects that Santa Rosa will have 20,000 more jobs than the City identifies as their buildout conditions. The ABAG projections exceed Rohnert Park's buildout estimates by 8,400 jobs.

As stated above, EPS will conduct a due diligence review of the city buildout estimates. City estimates of buildout capacity for jobs tend to be based on simplified assumptions of employment density. For example, the City of Rohnert Park estimates its employment capacity by assuming 25 employees per acre. A closer examination of the assumptions used by each city in estimating their employment buildout estimates may be necessary for this study.

Next Steps

Agreement on the population and employment numbers that will be used in the EIR/EIS is critical to the definition of the project description. We recommend that the following three steps be authorized to define the population and employment numbers.

1. Meet with project team and city legal staff to discuss the legal implications of using ABAG projections versus the General Plan estimates.
2. Complete a due diligence review of each city's buildout estimates.
3. Obtain and review Sonoma County Planning Department's assessment of the ABAG forecast procedures.

Table 1
Comparison of General Plan Capacity and ABAG Projections '94 Year 2010 Forecast
Population, Housing Units and Jobs
Santa Rosa Long Term Wastewater Project

City	Population				Housing Units (1)				Jobs			
	ABAG 2010	General Plan at Buildout	Difference	Percent Difference	ABAG 2010	General Plan at Buildout	Difference	Percent Difference	ABAG 2010	General Plan at Buildout	Difference	Percent Difference
Santa Rosa	179,800	174,500	5,300	3.0%	73,805	72,900	905	1.2%	119,000	98,500	20,500	20.8%
Sebastopol (2)	10,400	10,418	-18	-0.2%	4,305	4,359	-54	-1.2%	6,810	6,600	210	3.2%
Rohnert Park	50,200	40,000	10,200	25.5%	19,940	15,059	4,881	32.4%	28,430	20,000	8,430	42.2%
Cotati (3)	9,600	10,649	-1,049	-9.9%	3,833	4,066	-234	-5.7%	2,800	2,331	469	20.1%
Total Study Area	250,000	235,567	14,433	6.1%	101,882	96,384	5,498	5.7%	157,040	127,431	29,609	23.2%

(1) ABAG data is based on the projected number of households, assuming a 5 percent vacancy rate.

(2) Employment estimates are based on ABAG projections. No buildout estimates were published in the city's General Plan.

(3) Employment estimates are based on ABAG projections. No buildout estimates were published in the General Plan. The population estimate assumes 2.75 persons per household and a 5% vacancy rate.

Sources: General Plans for each City; ABAG Projections '94; Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.