



October 8, 2020

Southern California Association of Governments
3403 Tenth St #805
Riverside, CA 92501

RE: City of Barstow RHNA Appeal

The City of Barstow appeals its current RHNA number

Total - 1516 Very-low income - 171 Low income - 227 Moderate income - 299
Above moderate income - 819

Based on Local planning factors and information on affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH), we would like to argue that our percentage of very low income already exceeds 1/3 of the population and should only be 5% of the RHNA allocation.

We would appeal that our population has decreased but this is not a factor of appeal in the 6th Cycle.

**The City of Barstow submits that it's modified RHNA be 881 dwelling units
Split into the following categories of**

Total - 881
Very Low Income - 60
Low Income - 60
Moderate Income - 234
Above moderate income - 527

Numbers Justification Population

The population in Barstow is 23,916 people. In the last 10 years the population has increased 0.52% or 0.0052. In the last two years the population has decreased by -.135% or -0.00135.

Using the 10-year average of 0.52% as a population increase, we would have 1,273 additional people. The average household size in Barstow is 2.84. This is from 2014-2018 (US Census). 2.84 is slightly below the California average household. Using these numbers Barstow would need 448 additional households by 2029.

Using the optimistic number of 1% growth in Barstow we would have an additional population of 2502 people. Using Barstow's average household of 2.84, Barstow would need 881 dwellings.



We submit this number of 881 dwellings as our Modified RHNA number, which is assuming twice as much growth as the average growth experienced over the last 10 years.

Income

The median household income is \$39,585. This is low compared to California's \$75,277.

Persons in poverty 36%, which is over 1/3 of our population. There is a significant amount of section 8 housing because rent is low. Many of the high-end jobs such as the hospital workers in Barstow commute from neighboring communities such as Victorville, Apple Valley and Hesperia. In multiple studies, we have received feedback that some working professionals who commute here want new single-family homes. Most of the available housing in Barstow is from the 50's and 60's.

Barstow's priority is to create new attractive single-family residential housing for the working professionals.

Using the previous method of allocating population percentages in income categories for 881 homes would be.

- Very Low Income 94
- Low Income 123
- Moderate Income 167
- Above moderate income 497

Our preferred numbers would be

- Very Low Income 60**
- Low Income 60**
- Moderate Income 234**
- Above moderate income 527**

Affordable Housing

Cost of building – an affordable single-family residential house can cost around \$190 thousand to the homeowner if they build an 1835 square foot-tract home.

Extra laws in the last few years such as requiring solar panels, EV car hookups, fire sprinklers in non-fire prone areas as well as other small costs adds at least an additional \$22 thousand to the cost of building a single-family home. This means that building legislation adds between 9 and 10% to the cost to a small home, driving up the final cost above what is considered affordable. Considering that most homes built in the Barstow area are this type of small single family residential; these extra legislations have reduced the likelihood of building



desired housing by commercial developers in Barstow. Most single-family homes built in the area are from the 50's and 60's.

The only people who build single family residential homes now are publicly funded projects and those wealthy enough to pay the extra fees. Those who can afford these fees often build outside of Barstow on large pieces of land.

Developers call weekly or bi-weekly if they can build tiny houses because these buildings do not have solar requirements. Tiny homes are able to avoid state regulations, but they are not the type of housing that working professionals want.

The City of Barstow believes that we would be in a better position to meet our RHNA number, if restrictions were lifted for houses under 1900 square feet and under .2 of an acre, so that these houses are no longer required to have solar panels (\$15 thousand), Electric Vehicle hookups, or indoor fire sprinklers in areas not fire prone due to desert that lacks vegetation.

If Barstow was free to lift these regulations in areas that are desirable for development such as around the community college, the City would likely see a boom in housing production.

Employment

Barstow is a driving distance of 114 miles and a time distance of 1hr 40 minutes during light traffic and 2 hours and 30 minutes during a morning commute with no accidents to arrive in the Greater Los Angeles area. Due to this extreme distance to the Greater Los Angeles area Barstow does not appeal as a commuter town into the Greater Los Angeles area.

Barstow has a great asset of cheap and available land. The city of Barstow is trying to attract manufacturing employers to the area. An increase of employment opportunities may raise the city's population to the optimistic growth of 1%, but no developers interested in buying land are likely to begin hiring until after 2029. Accompanying workers are unlikely to affect this 6th RHNA cycle. Without an increase of employment opportunities Barstow is unlikely to grow in population.

Available Housing

Much of the market rate housing is within the range of affordability. Barstonian Apartments offers two-bedroom units between \$825 to 1,075 a month Zillow/Trulia 8/31/2020. Rates range anywhere from \$425 to 995 per month for a one-bedroom apartment. Studio apartments range between \$399-450 per month for a studio to \$1,200-1,600 per month for a four-bedroom house.



We do admit there are 264 homes for sale on Trulia but only 8 available to rent. This is reflective of the fact that it is easy to get section 8 housing due to low rental prices and so most houses rent but also due to the section 8 tenants there are few homeowners in the older areas of the city. Most homeowners have moved to Apple Valley/Hesperia. We are keen on changing this fact and bringing homeowners into Barstow by building new housing or finding funds to support the renovation of old housing.

Statistics

Table A-6: Housing Composition in Barstow

Housing Products	2000		2010		2017	
	Number of Units	Percent of Units	Number of Units	Percent of Units	Number of Units	Percent of Units
Single-Family Units						
- Single-Family Detached	5,042	57%	5,446	57%	5,532	57%
- Single-Family Attached	252	3%	202	2%	202	2%
Multi-Family Units						
- Multi-Family (2-4 units)	1,096	12%	1,330	14%	1,326	14%
- Multi-Family (5 or more)	1,488	17%	1,742	18%	1,742	18%
Mobile Homes	965	11%	835	9%	854	9%
Total	8,843	100%	9,555	100%	9,656	100%
Sources: California Department of Finance, 2000, 2010 and 2017						

The city has plenty of affordable land and vast areas zoned for housing. When we receive applications, we process them in two weeks and work with landowners to get the building plans up to code. Some of the housing tract plans on file were designed at the expense of the city in an attempt to help the landowner move to completion of the housing process. We are pro-growth, but the demand is not present.

Should you have any additional questions, please contact my office at;

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Sincerely,

Rebecca Thorpe Merrell
 Contract Planner
 City of Barstow