

# RHNA

## TELLS HER STORY

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*Hi, I'm RHNA.*

*Friends (and enemies) call me Reena!*

*My job is to crunch numbers, and then turn them into goals: to build new housing for all the new workers, families and seniors projected to live in the Bay Area for the next eight years. And to distribute that needed housing fairly to each city.*



RHNA=

# Regional Housing Needs Assessment

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The State of California looks at population projections to determine how much new housing each region will need from very-low income Californians all the way up to high-income people. This year, the State will also look at “unmet needs” from the housing that many cities in the region **DID NOT** produce over the previous years, which will result in even bigger goals than ever before—almost two-and-a-half times as much!

*I then take that “regional determination” of housing needs that the guys in Sacramento hand down, and divide them into allocations for each city. I start by giving numbers to each city according to how many people they already have, so the biggest cities get the biggest numbers and the smallest cities get the smallest numbers. But then I’m allowed to adjust those numbers based on different factors...*



*Do I get cities that performed poorly in the last cycle to make up for their past failures by allocating to them more of this cycle's unmet need? That seems fair, doesn't it?*

*Do I ask "high-opportunity" areas with good schools and resources to do their part in fighting racial inequality by building more, especially low- and moderate-income housing?*

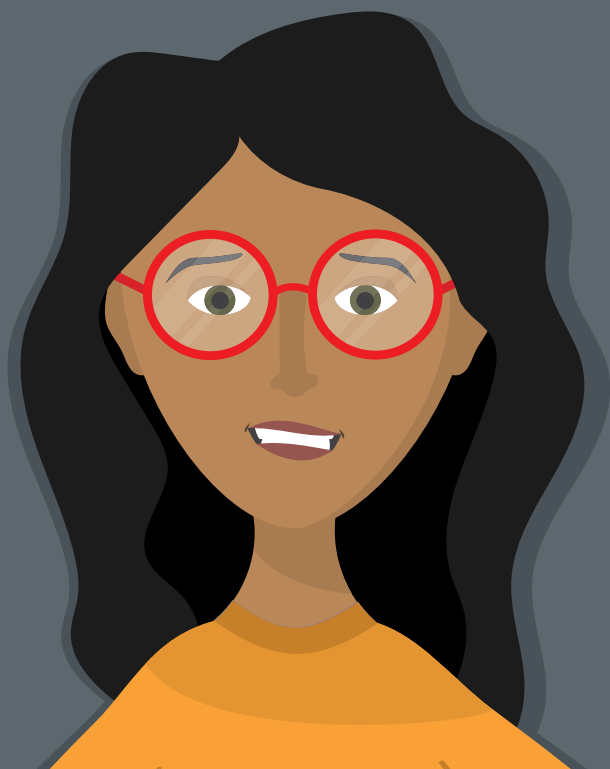
*Some real estate people are pushing me to instead tell cities that performed well in the last cycle that they have to make up for the under-performance of other cities in order to meet the region's "unmet need".*

*Do I put more housing near jobs, or only near transit?*



Is creating new housing something most cities want, or do they see it as a chore?

*I've got to "allocate" all the house-building chores to all my cities, without alienating any of them (because ultimately they are my "bosses"). And some of them don't even think I should be giving them any chores.*



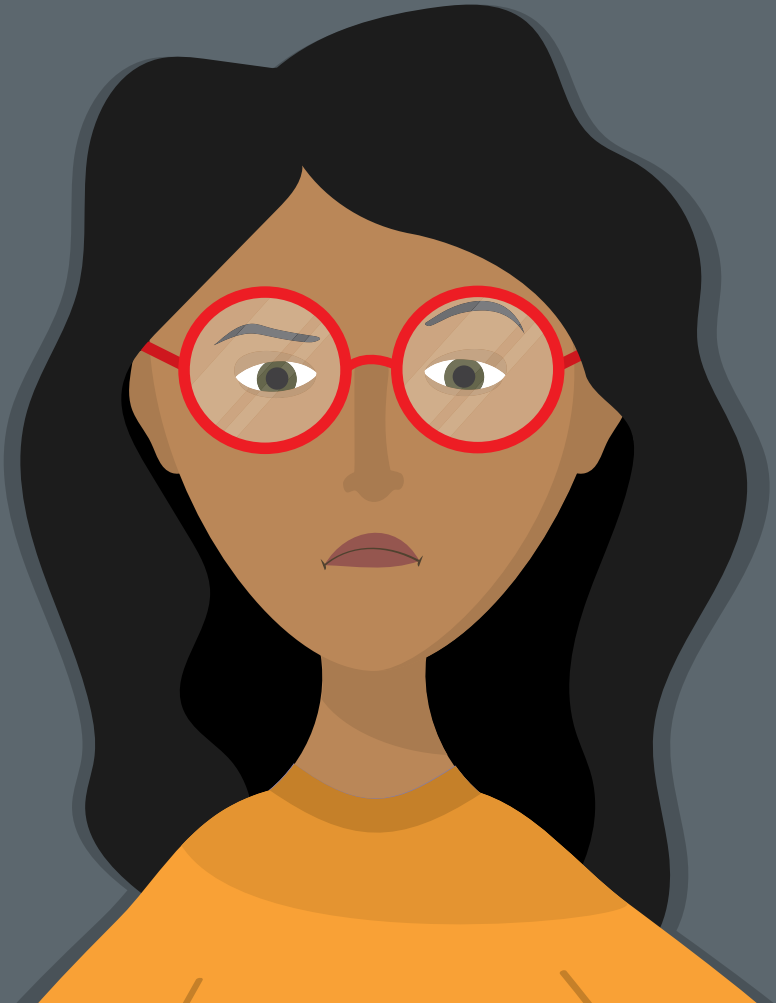
Who do you think Reena will give more housing to?  
She really has a challenging job!

*I can only hope that my cities can and will follow through on their assignments, because the guys who run things in Sacramento haven't given me any power to get my cities to do their chores, or even the power to make cities which have under-performed in the past do more. And they haven't given me any resources to get the affordable housing built! Typical. You want my job?*



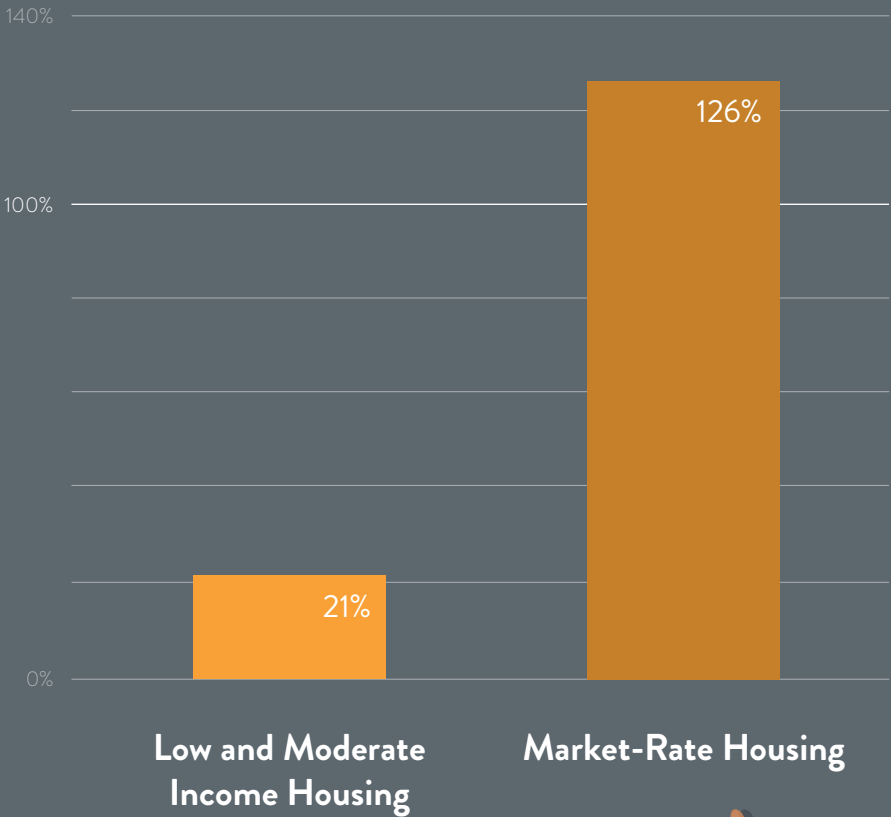
So what's been the effect of RHNA?

*I can tell you what isn't getting built—not enough affordable!  
And what is getting built—LOTS  
of market-rate housing!*





# BAY AREA RHNA PERFORMANCE THROUGH 2018 FOR THE 2015-2022 RHNA CYCLE



\* By 2019, the Bay Area had already exceeded its 8-year RHNA market-rate goals by 126%, but had only completed 21% of its affordable goals.

*And I can tell where the housing is getting built—the big numbers are in the big-three “hot market” cities of San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland. The real estate developers and investors simply LOVE some of my cities, and others they just ignore. They say “the rents aren’t high enough” in the suburbs and the smaller cities—can you believe that?*



After every eight year cycle, Reena ends up looking bad when she fails to deliver on her housing goals for the region.

*Some of my cities exceed their market-rate goals, like San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose. But most suffer from too little affordable, which makes their overall RHNA performance look dismal. This upcoming RHNA cycle things are going to change even more.*



*The guys in Sacramento now  
tell me I have to allocate  
almost two-and-a-half times  
as much housing....*



CURRENT RHNA CYCLE: 2015-2022

COMPARED TO THE NEW RHNA CYCLE: 2023-2030

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**2015-2022**  
**RHNA Goal**

**2022-2030**  
**RHNA Goal**

\* INCLUDING UN-MET HOUSING  
NEED FROM 2015-2022



*The result will be that few of my cities, especially the “big three” cities, will meet any of their housing goals. And because of another law passed by the guys in Sacramento, any city that doesn’t meet these new market-rate goals will be forced to approve all development projects “by right.” It’s kind of like giving real estate developers a blank check to get permits for whatever they want and wherever they want.*



## Do developer's "approvals" result in actual housing?

*I can't make the developers actually build housing—I can only tell my cities to “encourage” building by making the land available and by approving the developers’ requests. Land with an “approval” is worth a lot more on the real estate market, but it doesn’t necessarily mean housing will get built. In fact, a hot market city like San Francisco has over 30,000 units “approved” but not being constructed! It’s frustrating that I’m being used to make land more profitable but I can’t actually get things built.*



*The higher RHNA numbers will make suburban cities zone for more housing at all levels, which may provide more opportunities for combating segregation. But the higher numbers may also force the big cities with gentrifying neighborhoods to speed up market-rate housing approvals, driving up land prices and displacement, and leading to further racial segregation in the region.*





Reena keeps hoping that someday she'll be given the resources and power to make sure the housing the Bay Area needs actually gets built. She would love the power to prioritize public resources like transportation dollars and school dollars to cities that actually meet their housing goals, especially affordable housing. She would love to have the public funding equal to the amount of affordable housing needed every year. And she would love to make developers actually build what they say they are going to build when they get their land rezoned or approved for development.

**Maybe someday...**

*In the meantime, the current RHNA Update is being prepared, and I need help to distribute that needed housing goals fairly to each city.”*





**COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS | JUNE 2020**

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