Database Implementation for SB-166 “No Net Loss”

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Introduction - RHNA Housing Law

A major regulatory approach to the California housing crises is to project population growth, anticipate future housing needs, assign local jurisdictions housing units for which they must maintain capacity, and monitor each jurisdiction’s progress through mandated reports. This part of Housing Element Law, known as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), is a contested, data-intensive program to ensure cities are planning for housing capacity across a range of income categories.

In the past 8 years, California legislature has given RHNA legislation “teeth” by decertifying the Housing Elements of those jurisdictions who do not maintain adequate residential sites or simply cannot produce data to demonstrate compliance.

Projected need	Existing need	Income categories
Household growth 2020-2030	Transit accessibility (HQTA population 2045)	150% social equity adjustment minimum
Future vacancy need	Job accessibility	0-30% additional adjustment for areas with lowest or highest resource concentration
Replacement need	Residual distribution within the county	

Southern California Association of Governments. (March, 2020). SCAG Final RHNA Methodology. https://scag.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/scag-final-rhna-methodology-030520.pdf

What is SB 166 “No Net Loss”?

SB 166 “No Net Loss” requires that jurisdictions adequately zone for affordable housing and specifies they must be able to show compliance “at all times.” While such data-intensive regulatory mechanisms are well-intentioned, they put burdens on local jurisdictions whose day-to-day jobs do not involve or support frequency of data management or data entry to keep these reports up-to-date and in necessary formats. **The challenge is to use existing software to *integrate* a workflow into city employee’s work that captures relevant housing data, so a No Net Loss Report can be generated ad hoc.**

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Summary of Deliverables

1. **Develop a procedure to track housing unit count by affordability, actual units constructed, and net change in overall site capacity.**
2. Evaluate densities in select zones to develop a target density for each zone
3. Work with IT to determine how data from the government management software can be used to view overall time and time between submittals.

Deliverable Highlight: Goal 1

Data used to demonstrate "No Net Loss" compliance requires data similar to that of the Housing Annual Progress Reports (APR). Analysts at Rancho Cucamonga produce the Housing APR by compiling disparate sources such as staff report documents, spreadsheets, and software data fields. Furthermore, planners and analysts struggled to keep various databases up to date with the same metrics. Introducing another spreadsheet specific to "No Net Loss" would only add to this burden. **So, developing this procedure means more integral changes to data management and data entry tasks that are more closely aligned Housing APR data requirements, are accessible to IT personnel for automatic reporting, and are supported by planners everyday work.**

Current Practices

How is relevant housing data currently tracked? On what software?

New Database Scheme

What data fields should the new database contain? What data does RC need for reporting or future studies?

Database Platform

What forms of data do IT work with? What software supports the needed reporting functionality?

Conclusions and Future Work

Enforcing compliance "at all times" has significant implications for municipal data practices and infrastructure. It necessitates complex data storage and coordination between Planning and IT departments to design and maintain (eg. a policy change may affect the necessary data fields).

This analysis is timely considering the recent more complex policies that require the use of data and digital simulation tools. My further research aims to investigate this interplay between policy, its technical and temporal requirements which demand new skills and technologies from local governments.