

Council may lead housing-quota challenge

Housing-2000

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Santa Cruz can't plan for 3,500 new homes by 2007. And what's more, it shouldn't have to.

At least that's what City Councilman **KEITH SUGAR** thinks. He will ask his colleagues their opinions tonight and hopes to lead a delegation of Santa Cruz County officials in a revolt against the numbers at a Wednesday meeting of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments.

"I'll be asking them (his fellow council members) to join other Santa Cruz County jurisdictions in a challenge or appeal of the allocation," said Sugar of his plans for tonight's meeting.

"What we're doing is tantamount to asking Monterey County to reconsider its allocation. AMBAG was established to create regional solutions to regional issues, and Monterey County thwarted that objective by acting in a purely parochial way and giving Santa Cruz County far more than its fair share."

What's at issue is the amount of housing reasonable for the area to accommodate. At a Jan. 19 meeting, the AMBAG board voted to split a state-mandated figure — 24,000 units — equally between the two counties. But the vote was purely along county lines, with all 13 of the Monterey County officials voting for it and all nine of the Santa Cruz County officials voting against it.

The AMBAG board is expected to

approve the draft of the fair-share numbers Wednesday, after which local cities and counties have 90 days to request changes.

But local officials are considering more than just asking for changes to the numbers. Capitola is considering changing its height limits for homes to accommodate the 1,200 the area is asking them to plan for.

In Santa Cruz, Mayor Christopher Krohn said the 3,500 housing units the city would be asked to plan for is "undoable" and that the city might consider suing the state to reconsider the mandate.

At a local town hall meeting, some residents suggested the city buck the state and not offer a certified housing element. The city would not be banned from receiving state hous-

ing grants, the way other smaller jurisdictions would, but it could be hindered in its attempt to receive money for university student housing. Councilman Scott Kennedy suggested the city pull out of AMBAG if the regional group is going to "cram down our throats" such large numbers.

Sugar said all three of those are "viable options."

The council will consider the housing issue at its 3 p.m. session at the council chamber at City Hall, 809 Center St.

The AMBAG Board of Directors meeting will be 7 p.m. at the Marina Commission Chambers in Marina Airport, 781 Neeson Road, Marina.

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Santa Cruz County will have to plan for 11,218 homes by 2007.

Here's how the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments suggests the county should divide the total, by city:

■ Capitola	1,186
■ Santa Cruz	3,491
■ Scotts Valley	918
■ Watsonville	2,133
■ Unincorporated area	3,490
TOTAL	11,218