

# City will challenge regional housing numbers

By **HEATHER BOERNER**  
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Calling Monterey County officials "bullies," the Santa Cruz City Council agreed Tuesday to fight a breakdown of housing projections that would ask the city to plan for 3,500 new units by 2007.

## **SANTA CRUZ**

"Salinas, a city of 143,000 people, would be asked to plan for somewhat less than 1,466 new units; Capitola has to build 1,200," said City Councilman Tim Fitzmaurice. "That's not right. They're like bullies. They've decided they can beat up on us. I don't think any judge would look at this and say it's fair."

City Councilman Keith Sugar will represent the city at tonight's meeting of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments Board of Directors meeting. Sugar asked for permission, and received it Tuesday night, to fight the city's share of state housing mandates. The board voted Jan. 19 to split the 23,000 housing units for the Monterey Bay Area almost evenly between the two counties, causing uproar

in Santa Cruz County from officials who said the numbers are prohibitively high.

Sugar said he's working with officials in other Santa Cruz County jurisdictions to fight the housing breakdown, arguing that the area ought to be asked to plan for a total of 6,900 units instead of the 11,218 the board told them to plan for last month. The AMBAG board meets tonight in Marina, but Sugar said he expects the appeal won't be heard for another month.

The Capitola City Council will address the housing mandate at its 7 p.m. session Thursday.

At various times, officials have suggested dropping out of AMBAG in protest, suing AMBAG, or simply refusing to draw up a housing program that the state would approve of.

Ken Thomas, the city planner who has worked on the housing numbers, said the city could suffer if it didn't have a certified housing plan. The state could refuse to give bond money for affordable-housing projects. The Legislature could pass a law that withholds

gas taxes or other funds from jurisdictions that don't have a certified housing element. And the city could leave itself open to a lawsuit from affordable-housing groups or from the building industry.

"The trouble is that the state housing department frowns on in-fill housing, which is the kind of housing we're promoting," Thomas said. "They much prefer the Fresno model, which is that if you need more housing, you simply annex nearby farmland and build tract homes. That's not the kind of housing we're looking for."

But it's not clear whether the city would have much power at the AMBAG board. The vote last month split evenly down county lines, with all 13 Monterey County officials voting for it, and all nine of Santa Cruz County's representatives voting against it.

*The AMBAG board will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the city of Marina Commission Chambers, 781 Neeson Road, Marina.*

*The Capitola City Council will address the housing mandate at its 7 pm. session Thurs-*

## **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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,218</b>

*day, at its council chamber in City Hall, 420 Capitola Ave., Capitola.*

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