



# Bay Area Council

## Overview

Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council is a business-sponsored, CEO-led, public policy organization representing over 275 employers dedicated to promoting economic prosperity and quality of life in the region. The Council mobilizes business leadership on key economic issues such as transportation; housing and land use; energy policy; environmental quality; sustainable economic development; education and workforce preparation; telecommunications and information technology; and water policy.

## Regional Priorities

The recent U.S. recession had a major impact on the Northern California Bay Area economy, especially the information technology sector. The Bay Area has experienced significant unemployment as companies have laid off workers or gone out of business. As a matter of fact, the unemployment rate in the Bay Area was the highest in the state of California. As a result, the Bay Area Council along with the rest of the business community has been focused lately on creating more jobs, promoting a positive business climate, increasing international trade and improving the physical infrastructure in the region.

The Bay Area Council has played a significant role in promoting and leading efforts to address regional civic issues ranging from transportation to housing to workforce development to the environment. For instance, the Council released a Transportation Action Plan which includes three principles that call for the efficient use of existing investments, the need to invest strategically in new capacity and the need to minimize impacts on the environment. The Plan also outlines specific strategies to improve regional mobility.

The Bay Area Council has also developed a three-pronged approach to encourage affordable housing and sustainable land use in the region by increasing public awareness of the housing crisis through research, analysis and publications. The ultimate goal is to change perceptions and decision-making so that governmental and private land use actions will be more supportive of housing; advocating on state, regional and local policies and legislation to secure as much change as possible with targeted efforts on specific problems; and collaborating with other stakeholders to foster actions supportive of housing at the region and local levels and to create a positive policy context for major systemic change.

The Council has also formed partnerships with other organizations to create and implement strategies that promote regional sustainable development such as the Regional Livability Footprint project, an effort to achieve support among public

## COMMUNITY CAPITAL INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

The Bay Area Council, in partnership with the National Economic Development and Law Center, PolicyLink and Urban Habitat, created the Community Capital Investment Initiative (CCII). Among the first of its kind anywhere in the country, CCII is a market-based solution to increase investment and promote smart growth within the Bay Area's most impoverished communities. Through the Bay Area Council's leadership, CCII developed three separate investment funds: The Bay Area Smart Growth Fund capitalized \$75-\$100 million in equity; The Community Equity Fund capitalized \$75-\$100 million in equity investments; and the California Environmental Redevelopment Fund with \$50-\$75 million in the form of debt and equity. The Bay Area Council, in partnership with its community partners, have developed a strategy that aims to integrate place-based strategies promoting neighborhood-serving development; sector-based strategies connecting communities to the regional economy; and people-based strategies strengthening community development capacity.

*For more information, visit [www.bayareacouncil.org](http://www.bayareacouncil.org)*

officials, civic leaders and stakeholder organizations for a preferred land use pattern. This would suggest how the Bay Area could grow over the next 20 years. The Council also helped produce an action plan called "Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area: Economy, Environment, Equity," which was released in November 2003 and is designed to guide government, business and civic organizations and individuals in cooperative efforts that will lead to a more sustainable Bay Area. Finally, the Council also helped create and leads the Community Capital Investment Initiative (CCII), a market-based solution for increasing investment and promoting smart growth. (See box at top.)

### Structure and Operations

The Bay Area Council is funded through membership subscriptions with annual dues based on company size, location of headquarters and nature of business. Typical membership of the Bay Area Council consists of senior ranking executives of member firms such as the CEO or Managing Director. Many of the Council's members participate in the organization by providing pro-bono time commitments, serving on program committees, participating in priority discussions with elected officials, giving legislative input and government testimony, and more.

The Council is in the midst of some organizational changes ever since its President and CEO, Sunne Wright McPeak, was appointed in November 2003 by the newly-elected California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to become the California Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing. McPeak was at the Bay Area Council for seven years and was a leader for the business community in addressing issues related to the economic and social health of the region.