

What Does “Sustainable” Mean?

A place that is “sustainable” is a place that manages its resources wisely, so that people today – as well as the generations to come – can live well. The United Nations defines “sustainable” development as the ability “...to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” In thinking about the future of the Bay Area, we have translated this United Nations definition into an “e-vision,” which we define as follows:

e-vision: A vision of the future that provides for the **three Es** of sustainable development: a prosperous **economy**, a high-quality **environment**, and social **equity**. The **e-vision** provides for all Bay Area residents and businesses, and celebrates the region’s diverse social, environmental, and economic strengths.

People often talk about “smart growth” as a way to make a place sustainable and to achieve the “three Es.” Smart growth usually refers to places where housing, businesses, and services are close together, and where people can use transit rather than depending on their cars. Smart growth often means efficiently reusing buildings and other spaces in central cities and older suburbs, and preserving open space and farmland. Smart growth offers a way to make the Bay Area an easier and better place to live. It can help create a strong economy, make living conditions equitable (fair) for all, and preserve open space, farmland, wetlands, and other environmental assets.

What a Sustainable Bay Area Will Mean for You

In 2020, 1.3 million more people are expected to live in the Bay Area. If the region is to be home to so many more people, we must become smarter about the way we grow and the places we build.

By developing in a sustainable way, we will make the Bay Area a better place for the people here now and for the people we expect in the future. A sustainable Bay Area will mean:

- More jobs that provide enough income for workers to live in the Bay Area.
- More affordable housing throughout the region.
- Better transit systems.

- Less crowded freeways and roads.
- Preserved open space, farmland, and wildlife areas.
- Cleaner air and water.
- New life for neglected neighborhoods.
- Diverse communities where everyone feels welcome.
- High-quality schools.
- Safe environmental conditions and fair opportunities for people of all races and incomes.

A sustainable Bay Area will be a better place for you and your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. It will be a better place for children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and future generations.

The Draft Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area

The *Draft Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area* is a draft report that suggests actions that political representatives, government agencies, businesses, and citizens can take to use resources wisely and make the region more sustainable.

The *Draft Compact* was prepared by the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, a group of leaders from the business community, environmental organizations, social equity groups, and local and regional government agencies. The Bay Area Alliance has been working since 1997 to draft a plan for a sustainable Bay Area.

The *Draft Compact* recommends these ten Commitments to Action for decision-makers and the public to consider and agree upon:

1. Provide for a diverse, sustainable, and competitive economy that will continue to prosper and provide jobs, allowing all Bay Area residents to enjoy a high quality of life.

Actions to carry out this commitment might include encouraging environmentally-sensitive businesses and businesses that employ the disadvantaged, locating businesses near housing and transit, and encouraging employers to coordinate job training programs with schools.

2. Provide enough housing affordable to Bay Area people of all incomes to keep pace with population and job growth.

Actions might include working with banks, local community groups, and local, state, and federal government agencies; helping to preserve existing housing and repair abandoned housing; and encouraging construction of new housing near transit and services.

3. Invest in a world-class, coordinated regional transportation system that offers people a choice in types of transit and alternatives to driving alone, and helps to make land use more efficient.

Actions might include improving, expanding, and coordinating existing transit systems such as buses, trains, and ferries; and improving biking and walking paths.

4. Preserve and restore the region's natural assets, including San Francisco Bay, farmland, open space, other habitats, air, and water.

Actions might include buying and restoring open space, supporting open space initiatives and bond measures, working with farmers on environmentally-responsible farming practices, and improving air and water regulations.

5. Use resources efficiently, stop pollution, and reduce waste.

Actions might include using water- and energy-saving devices and recycled materials in new buildings, and encouraging households, businesses, government, and farms to reduce their use of harmful pesticides, fertilizers, and other pollutants.

6. Preserve and revitalize neighborhoods.

Actions might include training residents for self-help neighborhood projects, and supporting employers who recruit, hire, and train the unemployed, underemployed, and working poor for jobs with career and income potential;

7. Offer opportunities for high-quality education and lifelong learning to help all residents meet their highest aspirations.

Actions might include supporting school reform programs and bond measures, increasing school funding in the poorest neighborhoods, and offering education on the environment and sustainable living throughout the region.

8. Help make communities healthy and safe.

Actions might include ensuring adequate health care and community facilities, encouraging community policing, and supporting toxic clean-up projects.

9. Help local governments to share revenues and change the way they make decisions that affect their budgets.

Actions might include encouraging local governments to work together to plan land uses and share tax revenues, and supporting changes in state tax laws that affect city and county agencies.

10. Encourage people to discuss sustainable development and other civic issues.

Actions might include supporting child care, youth programs, and elder care so that people have time to participate in community meetings and events; and encouraging discussion of sustainable development and the “three Es” in schools.

The above is just a brief summary. For each of these 10 Commitments, the *Draft Compact* recommends very specific actions that government, businesses, civic organizations, and individuals can take to help create a more sustainable region.

How the *Draft Compact* Will Be Carried Out

The Bay Area Alliance will prepare a final *Compact* based on public comment on the *Draft Compact*. Bay Area Alliance members will then review and approve the final *Compact*. The final *Compact* will guide these member organizations in their actions over the next 25 years.

Three new Bay Area Alliance projects will help carry out the commitments described in the *Compact*:

- The *Bay Area Livability Footprint Project* and *Smart Growth Strategy*. Each county in the Bay Area will hold a public workshop to create maps showing future land development in the county and in the entire region. The maps will show where more housing could be built, new transit lines created, businesses located, and open space protected. The maps will guide local, regional, and state policies to encourage smart growth.
- The *Community Capital Investment Initiative (CCII)*. The CCII will provide information on opportunities for development in existing communities, land recycling, and neighborhood revitalization. Working with the community, the CCII will seek private investment in the poorest neighborhoods in the region. Community members will be encouraged to participate to make sure that the new investment helps their neighborhoods and does not force existing residents and businesses to move elsewhere.

The Bay Area Alliance will regularly measure the success of these projects in carrying out the vision and commitments of the *Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area*.

How You Can Get Involved

The Bay Area Alliance encourages all Bay Area residents to comment on the *Draft Compact*. We especially welcome comments from people from low-income communities of color who may feel left out of the community and regional planning process.

You can participate in the following ways:

- Complete the Summary Feedback form on the *Draft Compact for A Sustainable Bay Area* and fax to the Bay Area Alliance at (510) 464-7970.
- Visit the Bay Area Alliance website (www.BayAreaAlliance.org) to read the *Draft Compact*, fill out the feedback form online, and learn more about related projects and activities.
- Call the Bay Area Alliance at (510) 464-7978 to request a copy of the *Draft Compact*;
- Write to the Bay Area Alliance, P. O. Box 2050 Oakland California 94604.

Thank you for your participation. Your involvement will make a difference in the future of the region.