

BAY SMART COMMUNITIES

For a Sustainable Future

A bird's eye view of the San Francisco Bay Area presents dense urban and suburban development punctuated by open space, city parks, creeks, and rivers. But a closer look at our cities and neighborhoods reveals a region suffering from a housing crisis, the worst traffic in the country, and daily threats to water quality and wildlife in the Bay and its tributaries—problems that will only worsen as the population continues to grow and the climate continues to change.

To protect the Bay and our region's most vulnerable residents in these uncertain times, we need a broad coalition of interests advocating for smart, sustainable, and equitable development practices; **we need Bay Smart Communities.** Failure to prioritize the Bay as our communities undertake major development and infrastructure projects will threaten the ecological, economic, and recreational value of the Bay to our region and its residents. New development and redevelopment also put many residents at risk of displacement from the Bay Area, limiting enjoyment of the Bay to the wealthy and weakening the public support the Bay needs to survive and thrive.

Bay Smart Communities is Save The Bay's effort to re-imagine the Bay Area's upland planning and development policies - and our region's future - to benefit San Francisco Bay.

We are proposing ecologically sound and equitable policies to ensure that the Bay Area's growth benefits the Bay and builds broad and deep support for it among the region's many diverse communities, with special care to engage those who have suffered environmental injustice.

A Bay Smart Community will:



Protect waterways and enhance freshwater resources through green stormwater infrastructure, urban canopy, and sustainable landscaping practices



Invest in bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit infrastructure to reduce roadway runoff, greenhouse gases, and particulate emissions



Prevent displacement and enable access to the Bay shoreline



Promote environmental justice and facilitate equitable and inclusive infrastructure planning

Bay Smart Stormwater Management



Urban runoff is the largest source of pollution in the San Francisco Bay. Petroleum, fertilizer, trash, PCBs, and other pollutants threaten wildlife and water quality in the Bay. Natural filtration strategies like rain gardens, bioswales, and street trees can filter these pollutants while greening our neighborhoods, providing benefits like decreasing urban heat islands and encouraging active transportation. Capturing and filtering stormwater to use as a local water source also reduces polluted runoff into the Bay. Bay Smart Communities will advance these strategies through general plan updates, ordinances requiring green stormwater infrastructure and sustainable landscaping practices, and incentivizing onsite rainwater capture and harvesting.

Bay Smart Housing and Transportation



The Bay Area's strong reliance on single-occupancy vehicles doesn't just impact local and regional air quality, but also exacerbates water pollution in the Bay. Stormwater runoff from our roadways is contaminated by a variety of chemicals that come from cars which are toxic to Bay wildlife. Traffic congestion also impacts our quality of life, but in unequal ways; residents who live in more affordable areas further from urban centers are disproportionately impacted. Our region is simultaneously experiencing a housing supply and displacement crisis that is pushing low income residents away from jobs—threatening regional diversity and exacerbating environmental impacts.

Planning policies that promote affordable transit-oriented development (TOD) and accessory dwelling units can significantly reduce energy use and improve air quality, water quality, human health and fitness, and social cohesion. We must also work regionally to close major funding gaps to protect residents from displacement, preserve existing affordable housing, and produce housing at all levels of affordability.

Just, Equitable, and Inclusive Urban Planning



Low income communities and communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by redlining, pollution, and poor enforcement of environmental regulations. Bay Smart policies will reverse these trends and advance environmental justice by reducing pollution impacts on disadvantaged populations, protecting these same residents from flooding and other climate change impacts, and incorporating residents into community and infrastructure planning processes. As communities implement the urban greening and housing strategies described above, care must be taken to make equity and inclusivity major pillars of these efforts and to ensure that these actions do not exacerbate displacement.

Creating Bay Smart Communities will help our cities to be resilient and sustainable places that support the people who live here and also enhance the Bay for future generations. Despite the many challenges our region faces, we have the tools improve quality of life and the health of the Bay. Our community and elected leaders must prioritize these strategies so that the Bay Area can thrive—now and into the future.