

# THE SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION

*The Community Foundation of the Bay Area*

## **Environment Program – Goal and Objectives**

**GOAL** - To promote environmentally sustainable practices and equitable development that guarantee livable communities and healthy environments.

**OBJECTIVE ONE:** Conserve our natural resources and reduce the impacts of global warming by shifting our current consumption and production patterns toward environmentally sustainable practices.

With less than 5% of the world's population, the United States now accounts for 35% of the annual consumption of the planet's resources, and that number continues to climb. Directly and indirectly, people in the United States now consume over 120 pounds in raw materials each day. The Ecological Footprint, a recognized measure of current regional consumption patterns, estimates that if everyone lived like a Bay Area resident, we would need five Earths to support the production and consumption of material goods that fuel our way of life. On the other hand, California and the Bay Area are also leaders in setting environmental standards, pioneering environmental technologies, developing whole new disciplines of environmental knowledge, and spawning citizen action toward environmental improvement. If there is strong potential in any major metropolitan area to make constructive moves toward greater long-term sustainability, it should be here.

### **STRATEGIES:**

**Public Education:** Support effective communication strategies that focus on creating public demand for sustainable alternatives and reductions in our consumption practices.

**Policy and Advocacy:** Promote innovative policies that create new opportunities for environmentally sustainable production and consumption patterns and encourage sustainable business practices that do not deplete or damage the earth's natural resources by supporting efforts that help institutions, businesses, and industries restructure their performance and evaluate their full costs and benefits.

**Research:** Support sophisticated and innovative research, analysis, and solutions necessary to ground environmentally sustainable practices and provide economically viable alternatives.

**Collaboration:** Facilitate coalition building and advance consensus among diverse sets of stakeholders to reduce environmental waste and prevent the depletion of natural resources.

**Habitat Protection & Restoration:** Support the protection of critical habitats and ecosystems that contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Bay Area.

## **Environment Program – Objectives continued**

**OBJECTIVE TWO:** Promote the elimination of toxins and pollutants and encourage precautionary policies to minimize impacts on the environment and on human health.

From the gold rush to the dot-com era, the development of the Bay Area has brought industrial facilities, oil refineries, and power plants, as well as the associated automobile, diesel truck, and cargo ship traffic that create toxic by-products and release pollutants into our land, water, and air. In addition, modern consumer society has created a more chemical dependent society, resulting in our exposure to an increasing number of toxic chemicals in the places we work, live, and play, including the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. While we struggle to deal with the toxic legacies of generations past, we have steadily introduced thousands of new chemicals into the environment, only a small fraction of which have been tested for their effects on ecosystems, wildlife, and even human health. Many toxins and chemicals persist in the environment long after their use, accumulate, and eventually work their way up the food chain and into our own bodies. In fact, evidence linking various diseases to chemicals in the environment is growing. While toxins and environmentally related diseases are a concern for all Bay Area residents, low-income communities and communities of color are especially at risk due to the disproportionate number of industrial facilities, contaminated sites, and freeways that dot and traverse their neighborhoods.

The costs associated with the manufacture, use, disposal, and remediation of toxic chemicals and pollutants do not currently account for their impact on our environment and health. We need to ensure that we do not continue to add more toxins and pollutants that threaten the environment and human health by promoting policy measures such as the precautionary principle and by encouraging alternative practices and products. A preventative approach to toxic exposures is the best way to protect our economy, environment, and human health. We also need to eliminate or aggressively reduce some of the region's worst toxins and pollutants. To achieve these goals, it is critical that the most impacted communities be engaged, have access to important information, be involved in decision-making processes, and have power to affect change and hold corporations, government, and other institutions accountable.

### **STRATEGIES:**

**Policy and Advocacy:** Promote the advancement of the precautionary principle as a useful framework for improving and protecting public health and the environment and community actions and public policies to address key environmental, health, and justice issues, especially in the most affected communities and ecosystems.

**Community Building:** Facilitate multi-ethnic, community-led coalition building and advance consensus among diverse sets of interest groups to reduce toxins and improve environmental health conditions.

**Collaboration:** Support diverse stakeholders from grassroots groups to public agencies and local governments and engage in partnerships with them, to develop a coordinated vision and effective strategies for fostering an environmentally healthy Bay Area.

**Capacity Building:** Provide funding, training and technical assistance to help build the capacity of grassroots groups and organizations engaged in reducing toxins in the environment and improving environmental health conditions in Bay Area communities.

## Environment Program – Objectives continued

**OBJECTIVE THREE:** Support local and regional land use planning and development practices that promote environmental stability, beauty, and integrity.

Some of the Bay Area's greatest long-term environmental and socio-economic challenges are a result of poorly planned growth. Planning and fiscal rules at the local, regional, and state levels have promoted low-density suburban development, resulting in significant distances between jobs, schools, housing, and services. Beyond long commutes and traffic congestion (a top concern among Bay Area residents), there are many environmental and social consequences of poorly planned growth including an overreliance on automobile transportation; loss of vast areas of open space, critical ecosystems, and productive farmlands; decreased water quality and supply; and increased energy use and air pollution. This pattern of development has also drained critical resources, residents, jobs, and tax-bases away from central cities and older suburbs. This has exacerbated inequalities faced by low-income urban populations by further concentrating poverty and denying equal access to good jobs, adequate transportation, quality schools, important social services, and safe, affordable, and decent places for people.

By 2030, the Bay Area is expected to add almost 2 million more residents. To improve Bay Area communities and meet the future needs of the region's residents, the trends associated with our current development patterns need to be reversed. Building more livable communities means creating equitable, diverse, and vibrant communities; revitalizing older neighborhoods; providing access to well paid jobs, quality education, adequate healthcare and necessary social services; building healthy and well-planned new neighborhoods; and improving housing and transportation choices for all income levels. To achieve this, we must make better decisions about what, where, and how to build next.

### **STRATEGIES:**

**Policy:** Promote the advancement of public policy and development campaigns that create new standards and requirements for equitable and transit-friendly developments, urban designs, and environmental protection.

**Capacity Building:** Build strong regional anchor organizations that involve communities, develop leaders, provide continuity, and bring partners together to advance an environmentally positive land-use and development agenda.

**Research & Policy Analysis:** Support organizations that are supplying the sophisticated and technical research, analysis, and policy frameworks necessary to ground environmentally sustainable development practices.

**Collaboration:** Forge partnerships, facilitate coalition building, and help to advance consensus among a diverse set of interest groups, jurisdictional agencies, and regional players to approach the region's future growth effectively.

**Project Support:** Support and expand the work of projects and programs that aim to improve the environment by influencing the patterns of regional development in ways that promote ecological integrity while decreasing the cultural, social, economic, political, and spatial isolation of people.

**Communication & Education:** Support public education and media strategies that expand public support and demand local and regional development solutions.