

What Our Partners Are Saying

“We haven’t had the opportunity to work with [GCC partners] in West Oakland, and it’s hurt us. We’re missing connections with the ‘on-the-ground’ community networks and liaisons fostered by [GCC partners].”

—ELOIS THORNTON, PLANNER,
CITY OF OAKLAND

“We have a Latino community that we’ve always tried to engage, and GCC assisted in trying to get them out.”

—KEN MACNAB, FORMER PLANNER,
CITY OF SANTA ROSA

“[GCC partners] bring real people out and put a true face on the need for affordable housing.”

—TOM LIAO, DEPUTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR,
CITY OF SAN LEANDRO

Great Communities Collaborative

Current Funder Network

- The San Francisco Foundation (Co-Chair)
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation (Co-Chair)
- Ford Foundation
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation
- The California Endowment

Current Advisory Board

- Allison Brooks, Bay Area Joint Policy Committee
- Ellen Wu, Urban Habitat
- Brian Prater, Low Income Investment Fund
- Carlos Romero, Youth United for Community Action
- Derecka Mehrens, Working Partnerships
- Dianne Spaulding, Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California
- Jeff Hobson, TransForm
- Jeremy Madsen, Greenbelt Alliance
- Shiloh Ballard, Silicon Valley Leadership Group
- Miya Yoshitani, Asian Pacific Environmental Network

In addition to the foundations and organizations listed above, GCC works with many other partners throughout the region, including advocacy groups, community-based organizations, and think tanks.

Learn more about Great Communities Collaborative at greatcommunities.org.

Regional agency staff feel that GCC partners are effective stakeholders in the regional planning process, and their technical knowledge and collaborative style of engagement distinguishes them amid a process that is growing increasingly contentious.

Great Communities Collaborative

GCC Evaluation 2014 Interim Report: Moving Forward to Implementation



Great Communities Collaborative is a network of organizations dedicated to creating healthy, thriving, and affordable neighborhoods in the Bay Area, anchored by transit and linked to all the opportunities and amenities that make a good community truly great. We shape regional and local policy, plans, and projects by mobilizing residents; convening regional policy leaders, community groups, businesses, and public agencies; and forging financial solutions.

This report is a look back at GCC’s wins, and what they mean for our work moving forward. It summarizes findings from the first year of a three-year evaluation of the impact of GCC’s work conducted by ICF International that focuses on two key aspects of GCC’s work: the eight station area plans that were adopted between 2006 and 2013 and the regional planning work influencing Plan Bay Area.

Great Communities Collaborative is an initiative of
The San Francisco Foundation.

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Moving Forward to Implementation



GCC Is Advancing a Policy Framework for Equitable TOD

This framework ensures station area plans create affordable neighborhoods and meet community needs while fostering support for transit-oriented development (TOD).

- Three of the eight GCC station area plans prioritize developer incentives for affordable housing.
- All eight plans include TOD-appropriate parking policies.
- Four plans include new open space.
- All eight station area plans include improved active transportation facilities.
- Both station areas where local hiring and job skills training was a priority address this outcome.
- GCC has consistently been successful in expanding the scope of station area plans beyond the traditional focus of land use and transit planning to address housing affordability and other key issues for residents.

Station Area Plans Are Moving From Paper To Pavement

Station area plans articulate a general vision for the communities around transit stations, but livable transit communities aren't made out of visions; they're made of buildings and infrastructure.

- Almost all GCC station areas have made some progress crafting follow-up plans and policies.** Follow-up plans or policies specify in greater detail how implementation of station area plans will proceed.
- Five of the eight GCC station areas have built infrastructure improvements called for in their station area plans.** Public infrastructure projects create transit, sidewalks, sewers, and other infrastructure that supports station area development.
- Half of the eight station areas have had development projects either approved or constructed, and all of these projects include affordable or multi-family housing.** Private development projects build out space for residents and businesses envisioned in station area plans.

Adopted station area plans include policies addressing key GCC priorities over 80 percent of the time, and two thirds of the time these policies are mandatory.

GCC Is Securing Commitments to Build More Housing, Affordable Housing, and Jobs Near Transit

GCC's station area work aims to concentrate housing and jobs around stations to make it easier for more people to take transit and create more vibrant and walkable communities. Collectively, the eight GCC station area plans included more than 20,000 new housing units, more than 2,500 of which were affordable, and more than 27,000 new jobs. More than 10 percent of planned housing units in GCC station areas are affordable, which is more than double the regional average.

Planned New Housing Units, Affordable Housing Units, and Jobs For Year 1 Station Areas

	Total planned new housing units	Total planned new affordable housing units	Total planned new jobs
Antioch: Hillcrest Ave. eBART	2,500	375	5,600
E. Palo Alto: Ravenswood	835	167	4,851
Oakland: Intl Blvd.	4,468	–	6,700
Pittsburg: BART	1,168	169	1,300
Pittsburg: Railroad Ave. eBART	1,845	554	2,197
San Leandro: Downtown	3,431	515	2,662
Santa Rosa: Downtown	3,409	511	1,316
Santa Rosa: N. Santa Rosa	2,940	441	2,803
Total	20,596	2,732	27,429

GCC Is Moving Forward To Implementation

GCC is shifting its focus from planning to implementation, both by moving specific station areas toward development and by addressing systemic obstacles to implementation. Based on the results of the evaluation, both the successes and missed opportunities identified, ICF International offers the following recommendations for GCC's work. GCC is already engaged in pursuing some of these recommendations.

- Identify strategies to further the implementation of station area plans** that align with GCC's expertise and priorities, potentially including: displacement-mitigation strategies, outreach to spark development in station areas, and catalyst funding for site acquisition or key community amenities. This means developing a strategy for selecting communities where GCC can engage in

implementation. Tracking and engaging in the many different decisions that affect implementation is labor-intensive, so GCC will need to be selective about where to focus.

- Consider alternative strategies to address housing affordability.** GCC could engage in housing element updates or support affordable housing projects on key opportunity sites near transit.
- Assess opportunities for engagement at the sub-regional level.** Implementation challenges cut across station areas and cities. Instead of targeting individual station areas, engage cities, county transportation agencies, and transit agencies.
- Begin early in crafting a consensus platform for engagement in the next regional plan while engaging in the implementation of the existing plan.** Compromise between conflicting agendas is more likely in the calm before the planning process begins.

Successes

Over the years, GCC has crafted a unique niche 1) bridging advocacy gaps where no single organization can do the work alone; 2) securing resources for equitable TOD; and 3) creating the equitable TOD advocacy infrastructure of non-profit and public sector partners:

Bridging Advocacy Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively engaging local communities, particularly low-income residents and traditionally under-represented stakeholders, to constructively participate in the development of station area plans. Ensuring that plans address the issues that matter most to local communities, such as affordable housing, parks and public space, and jobs for residents. Successfully advocating for the inclusion of key outcomes in local and regional plans, such as affordable housing, TOD-appropriate parking policies, tenant protections, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and financial incentives for local governments to build more and affordable housing.
Securing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocating for increases to regional funding for station area planning and implementation, which has steadily increased over the past 15 years, and grew dramatically through Plan Bay Area. Securing funding to support equitable TOD, including a \$5 million Sustainable Communities grant for the Bay Area Prosperity Plan and the \$1 million grant to implement the International Blvd TOD Plan in Oakland. Creating new funds for implementation, including \$60 million in investments from Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), foundations, and private financial institutions for the regional Transit-Oriented Affordable Housing fund.
Creating equitable TOD advocacy infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building a reputation among staff and policy-makers as a professional, effective collaborative that combines a high degree of technical expertise with effective community outreach. Building capacity among local partners to engage in planning on an ongoing basis and support the implementation of station area plans.

Highlighting Our Impact

- Pittsburg has turned down applications for projects that don't conform to its station area plans—an indication that it sees the potential for TOD.*
- Santa Rosa has striped bike lanes and upgraded sewers to spur growth along 3rd Street in its downtown.*
- In San Leandro, the city has approved a technology campus and a 200-unit senior/affordable housing project adjacent to the BART station, and GCC members provided crucial support to keep the project moving forward.*