

Want a Project Built or a Regulation Changed? Act Now

If there is a publicly-funded project your company would like to see built in the Bay Area or an economically-stimulative regulation you would like to see modified (which doesn't require legislation), get ready to act. Early next week, the Bay Area Council Economic Institute will release the process rules and appropriate sub-team contacts for the quick but massive regional response to the Federal and State stimulus opportunities.

As a reminder, The Economic Institute has been asked by the California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency (BT&H) to coordinate regional partners to develop a Bay Area Economic Recovery Workplan. The workplan will be used by BT&H and other state agencies to facilitate the allocation of federal stimulus funds available through the state, and other funds allocated by the state for economic development purposes. It will also be used to support decision making regarding regulatory and policy measures that may streamline the flow of these funds to communities, and the implementation of longer-term strategies to enhance state and regional economic competitiveness. While the immediate focus will be on the allocation of federal and other stimulus funds, generally on a 120-day timeline, the workplan will also provide a longer-term framework for regional economic development and growth strategies. It will not, however, preclude independent proposals by cities, counties or partner organizations. It's trite to say these days, but this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity not to be missed. Watch for the announcement Monday or Tuesday.

Washington Going "Regional?!" Looks Like It

Jim Wunderman and Sean Randolph were in D.C. this week for a meeting that was so startling that one participant said they had to "stagger over to the sink to put a cold washcloth on my overheated forehead." Republican Transportation Secretary Roy LaHood and Democrat Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan have formally partnered to build "sustainable communities" by driving regions across the U.S. to integrate housing, transportation, and land use planning and investment. Last year, after decades of work, the Council helped secure SB-375 in Sacramento, the "holy grail of Smart Growth" based on these principles. Now we are helping realize that bill on a federal level. The federal government is backing this move with stunning amounts of money, right into the Bay Area Council's sweet spot. More to come.

Quote of the Week

"At a time when whoever serves as governor resembles Gulliver staked out by Lilliputians, Feinstein in the twilight of her career is unlikely to abandon the rarefied air of the Rayburn Building ..." – An op-ed [in the L.A. Times](#) about Sen. Feinstein running for Governor.



Article of the Week

On Thursday, [California's bond rating was downgraded](#) to the worst among the 50 states by Fitch Ratings due to the State's economic and budget woes.