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## **ECONOMY TOPS LIST OF BAY AREA'S CONCERNS, BAY AREA COUNCIL POLL SHOWS**

**SAN FRANCISCO, April 10, 2008** — Bay Area residents think the economy is the most important problem facing the region, with 22 percent identifying it as the region's top concern in the 2008 *Bay Area Council Poll* of 601 residents released today. Last year the economy did not register in the top three concerns, with only seven percent citing it as such.

In the first of a series of results, the *Council Poll* found that transportation was second in the list of concerns with 18 percent, a 15 point drop from last year, perhaps due to rising economic concerns. Housing remains a top issue for area residents, with 15 percent citing this as the most important problem facing the Bay Area, up by four points from last year. The results of the *Bay Area Council Poll* help the Bay Area Council develop its annual work plan, plus help guide the region's policymakers in their decision-making.

"What a difference a year makes," said Jim Wunderman the president and CEO of the Bay Area Council. "Last year the economy didn't register in the top three concerns of area residents – now it's front and center. The economic downturn has clearly hit home with Bay Area residents."

The economy is listed as the top concern by residents across the Bay Area, excluding Alameda, where transportation and crime concerns took precedence, at 19 percent and 18 percent respectively. Transportation registered as the second biggest problem in most counties. An interesting exception was the North Bay where residents cited housing as their second biggest concern, just one percentage point behind "the economy."

### **Quality of Life Still Good, while Economic Concerns Weigh Heavily**

Despite the perceived economic downturn, residents still believe that the overall quality of life in the Bay Area is good, with 71 percent reporting that things are going well on the whole. This positive outlook differs greatly from their economic point of view. Whereas last year 53 percent of respondents said the region was in good economic times, today only 32 percent feel this way, and 60 percent say these are bad economic times. Asked about the next 12 months, a mere 16 percent predict a better economy, 34 percent anticipate no change, and 45 percent think it will get worse.

### **Economic Woes Hitting Home**

For the first time since the dot-com bust, the majority of bay area residents feel they are worse off financially than they were one year ago. Thirty-seven percent report that they are financially worse off, 29 percent say they are the same and 33 percent cite improvement. Last year only 24 percent reported being worse off and 42 percent felt they were better off compared to the year before.

Looking ahead, most Bay Area residents forecast little change to their current state of affairs. When asked how they think they will fare financially one year from now, 53 percent predict no

change, 30 percent believe they will be better off and only 13 percent think their financial situation will get worse.

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### **About the Bay Area Poll**

A total of 601 residents of the nine-county Bay Area were surveyed in English and Spanish by Field Research Corporation during the period of March 4-14, 2008. Survey respondents were selected using a random probability sampling technique that gives all residents with telephones (listed or not) an equal chance of being selected for the survey. The sample was stratified to obtain representative samples in each of six Bay Area regions: Alameda County, Contra Costa County, San Francisco County, San Mateo County, Santa Clara County and the North Bay counties of Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma. After the completion of interviewing, the sample was weighted to conform to actual population estimates of the nine-county Bay Area. Findings are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

### **About the Bay Area Council**

Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council ([www.bayareacouncil.org](http://www.bayareacouncil.org)) develops and drives regional public policy initiatives and researches critical infrastructure issues. Led by CEOs, the Bay Area Council presents a strong, united voice for hundreds of major employers throughout the Bay Area region whom employ more than 501,000 workers, or 1 of every six private sector employees in the Bay Area..