



GREENBELT ACTION

The Bay Area's Advocate for Open Spaces & Vibrant Places Since 1958

SPRING/SUMMER 2011



Residents in South Santa Clara County visited Morgan Hill's community garden on a walking tour co-organized by Greenbelt Alliance to understand sustainable choices.

Harvesting in the Shadow of Silicon Valley Support grows for farms in Santa Clara County

MICHELE BEASLEY
SENIOR FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

South of San José, the vista changes. From the urban environment of the Bay Area's largest city, you enter Coyote Valley, a treasured landscape that connects the Santa Cruz Mountains to Mount Hamilton Range. Further south still, around Morgan Hill and Gilroy, the air fills with the smell of garlic and tilled soil. These are the last remaining acres of the Valley of Heart's Delight, producing our mushrooms, bell peppers, and cherries in a valley ringed with oak-studded hillsides. For some, this is quintessential California.

Can this pastoral setting thrive in the figurative shadow of Silicon Valley?

Southern Santa Clara County's hills and farmlands supply the region with local food and clean water, yet these lands still face

relentless pressure to be developed into sprawl subdivisions and retail centers. This spring, Greenbelt Alliance, in partnership with Committee for Green Foothills, launched a conversation about the future of working landscapes in the county. We invited people to a watershed tour, hosted a panel about food, and led a walk around downtown Morgan Hill. The investigative series culminated in a Community Design Day to encourage people to envision a thriving and protected region.

WORKING FARMERS

"What struck me was the sense of responsibility people in South County have for their landscape and wildlife—whether for fish, fowl, water or flowers. That passion can and should inform sensible conversation," said Scott Herhold, a local

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The Viability of Farming the Greenbelt Report assesses ways to promote agriculture

MELISSA HIPPARD
CAMPAIGNS DIRECTOR

Imagine the San Francisco Bay Area without the grazing land and farms that bring us local produce, fresh meats and dairy products, and the inspiring landscapes and ecosystems that define the region.

Keeping the region's agriculture competitive and economically viable is a challenge. From 1984 to 2008, the Bay Area lost over 200,000 acres of agricultural land to development, including 12% of its total cropland and a disproportionate 18% of its prime cropland. As a result, agricultural production value declined 11% over that 18-year period. The Bay Area Agricultural Sustainability Project—a collaboration between Greenbelt Alliance, Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE), and American Farmland Trust—released

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Sustaining Our Agricultural Bounty An Assessment of the Current State of Farming and Ranching in the San Francisco Bay Area



Courtesy of Haley Goat Farm

A White Paper by
American Farmland Trust
Greenbelt Alliance
Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE)



THOUGHTS ON GROWING SMARTER

From the Executive Director

The excitement was palpable one April evening at a vacant car dealership on Broadway in Oakland. The old auto row was the perfect setting to launch a vision for a walkable, livable destination in place of the declining car-centric strip. As I chased my son through the crowd and listened to the enthusiasm for the Better Broadway vision, I greeted elected officials, city planners, union leaders, and advocates from housing and environmental groups.

That evening reminded me again how important it is for Greenbelt Alliance to

bring people together. We conduct research, send emails, and write articles. That work is important but it can't stand alone. Change happens when people gather and talk, exchange ideas and build a sense of camaraderie. Bringing people together also generates hope; it creates the people power necessary to make Greenbelt Alliance's Grow Smart Bay Area goals a reality.

Our Grow Smart goals are to protect the greenbelt, encourage good development within our cities and towns, and create a region where quality of life is higher for everyone, no matter your socio-economic status. Bringing people together is essential if we are to inform and mobilize people about how thoughtful land-use decisions can be good for our communities and our planet. Just this spring, in addition to the Oakland gathering, we've held a walking tour in Southern Santa Clara County to talk about water and farming; an affordable homes tour

in Marin County; and a green building forum with Google in Mountain View.

We have also been proud to co-host with the Silicon Valley Community Foundation the YouChoose Bay Area forum series across the region. These events gave hundreds of residents the opportunity to use the interactive YouChoose Bay Area website to envision the consequences of how we grow and get around. Leaders will incorporate feedback into the region's Plan Bay Area, a blueprint for reducing greenhouse gas pollution. You can learn more by visiting www.youchoosebayarea.org.

Sometimes bringing people together makes for strange bedfellows—environmentalists and developers, cyclists and union activists, farmers and urban planners. Building these types of unique partnerships is one of Greenbelt Alliance's strengths. Sparking these relationships is a critical step to creating a better Bay Area. ■

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OUR MISSION: *To make the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area a better place to live by protecting the region's greenbelt and improving the livability of its cities and towns. We work through public policy development, advocacy, and education, in partnership with diverse coalitions.*

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Founder Dorothy Erskine (1896–1982)

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A Vision for a Better Broadway

Coalition ignites action in Oakland

MARLA WILSON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

If you have strolled up Broadway in Oakland, heading north from 19th Street BART, you may have noticed something in the past few years. The area previously dubbed “Auto Row” for its plentiful car dealerships is facing an identity crisis, as many dealerships have packed up and left. In their wake, they have left vast empty showrooms and vacant parking lots. Now, in the age of \$4-per-gallon gasoline, Oakland is faced with the challenge of how to repurpose this space to something less car-oriented and more climate-friendly.

For years, the City of Oakland has considered using this part of Broadway to create an exciting new retail district.

Oakland loses out to neighboring cities when it comes to certain kinds of retail, losing sales tax revenue that could support vital city services and help severe budget shortfalls. In 2008, city staff began to create the Broadway-Valdez Specific Plan but the first drafts brought back regrettable memories of the area’s car-oriented past and failed to provide sufficient housing for people who work nearby. The planning process then hit roadblocks and languished for over a year.

Greenbelt Alliance used this time to work with other organizations to create our vision for the area. A coalition of environmental, housing, and labor organizations agreed to endorse a platform that asks for a walkable, mixed-use neighborhood, with 1,800 homes, 300 to 500 of them affordable. We also envision new shops and jobs so

Oakland residents don’t have to drive to other cities.

In April, the coalition launched our Better Broadway vision in one of the vacant dealerships. Over 100 people attended, including several decision makers, to hear about the bright possibility for the area. Oakland Councilmember Libby Schaaf perhaps said it best: “I don’t know how anyone on the Oakland City Council can turn down a coalition like this. I’m so excited that I have the opportunity to vote for a vision like this.”

Following the outpouring of support, the City of Oakland resumed its planning process with renewed focus. This spring, Oakland is holding a series of public planning meetings. A concept for how to revitalize the district will be released this summer, and Greenbelt Alliance and the members of the coalition will make sure this plan reflects our collective vision for a Better Broadway. Download the vision at www.greenbelt.org. ■

Getting down with American roots

Marley’s Ghost at Bluegrass for the Greenbelt June 4

ALEX CHEN
COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

Drawing inspiration from bluegrass, folk, country, R&B, reggae, and gospel, Marley’s Ghost has recorded nine genre-defying albums in the last quarter century. The band members are Mike Phelan, Dan Wheatman, Jon Wilcox, Jerry Fletcher, and Ed Littlefield Jr. Their latest effort, titled *Ghost Town*, was produced by the legendary Jack Clement.

GREENBELT ALLIANCE: How would you describe Marley’s Ghost?

JON WILCOX: I was the founder of Marley’s Ghost with Dan Wheatman. The band has been around, off and on, for 25 years. Somehow we’ve stayed alive even though we’ve all done different things occasionally. I like to think of the band as basically an updated folk group.

GA: What is the story behind the name Marley’s Ghost?

JW: *A Christmas Carol* is certainly the main reference. If you know the band’s repertoire,

there is an element of honoring the past and the future. And at the time the band was put together, Dan and I were huge Bob Marley fans.

GA: Which artist had the biggest influence on your music?

JW: I think the biggest influence was the New Grass Revival. They were breaking all the rules—playing acoustic music with energy. At the same time, there was something roots-y as well as modern about it.

GA: What do you like about the Bay Area?

JW: San Francisco is the best city in the world for one thing, and I’ve seen many of them. I’ve been playing the Freight & Salvage in Berkeley for 30 years. The Bay Area is really the spiritual home of the band.

GA: What environmental issues are you passionate about?

JW: I’m from Santa Barbara, so most of the people down here are heavily involved with saving the ocean. Just about everyone in the band is rabidly environmentalist. ■



BLUEGRASS FOR THE GREENBELT

Who: Marley’s Ghost; Laurie Lewis & The Right Hands; The Kathy Kallick Band; The Turtles with AJ Lee; Arann Harris and The Farm Band and more

When: 10 a.m. to dusk, Saturday, June 4 (Camping begins 2 p.m. Friday, June 3)

Where: Dunsmuir-Hellman Historic Estate in the Oakland hills

Tickets: \$30; \$40 at the door. With camping, \$50; kids 12 and under free

Info: www.bluegrassfortheGreenbelt.org



Whitney Merchant The Live Local initiative raised its visibility in January with a revamped website, a monthly e-newsletter, and a series of events to help create more supporters for affordable homes in **Marin**. In January, Greenbelt Alliance trained people from environmental, housing, business, and social justice organizations on how to use the Live Local message to connect affordable housing with Marin's green values. In March, we organized a tour of affordable homes to showcase what medium and high density housing actually looks like. Participants met residents, including Anthony Taylor, who has become a chef, and Nancy Kutcher, who raised her daughter in a place they could rent affordably. Learn more at www.livelocalmarin.org and sign up to receive the Live Local e-newsletter.



Michele Beasley Along El Camino Real in **San Mateo County**, a new grassroots effort is building support for a revitalized "Grand Boulevard of Meaningful Destinations." Greenbelt Alliance, in partnership with the Grand Boulevard Initiative and San Mateo County Health System, has begun convening local leaders who will advise us as we go out into the community to talk about the benefits of adding more homes, jobs, shops, and parks to this vital corridor. Would you like us to present to your group? Contact me at mbeasley@greenbelt.org.



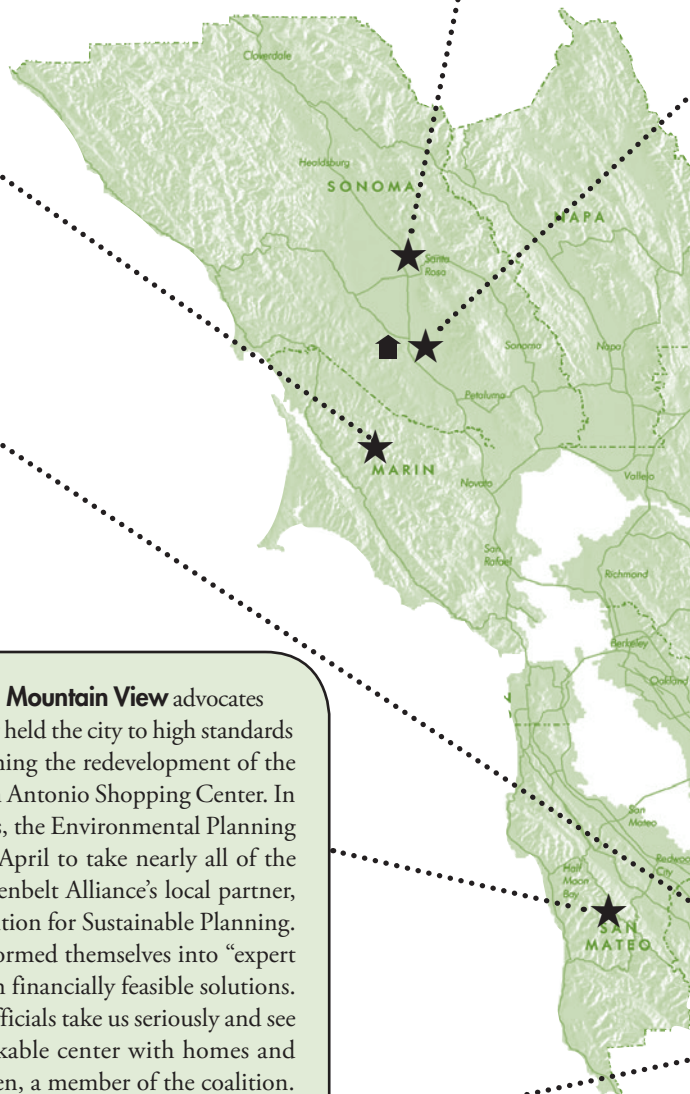
Ellie Casson Suds Jain is a member of a new group, Green Action. Its goal is to increase civic participation and make **Santa Clara** a more environmentally sustainable city with a distinct sense of place. Greenbelt Alliance is helping get this group off the ground and coordinating its early efforts. The monthly meetings are the first Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Jain says, "I like being a part of Green Action because I find out new ways to get involved."



Ellie Casson **Mountain View** advocates successfully held the city to high standards while planning the redevelopment of the 16-acre San Antonio Shopping Center. In a surprising turn of events, the Environmental Planning Commission decided in April to take nearly all of the recommendations of Greenbelt Alliance's local partner, the Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning. MVCSP members transformed themselves into "expert advocates," equipped with financially feasible solutions. "It was thrilling to have officials take us seriously and see the importance of a walkable center with homes and shops," said Jarrett Mullen, a member of the coalition.



Amanda Bornstein **Santa Rosa** is creating a plan that will guide future growth around the North Santa Rosa station of the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit line. Greenbelt Alliance is leading a coalition of allies to reach out to neighbors and stand together for a plan that promotes a livable, vibrant neighborhood with access to homes, stores, and services. We are also holding a walking tour in June called "Living Near Transit: Transit-Oriented Development 2011." Participants will visit important landmarks and see the potential near the station. Visit www.greenbelt.org to learn more about this work.



OUR FIELD WORK
 ★ campaign
 🏠 endorsement

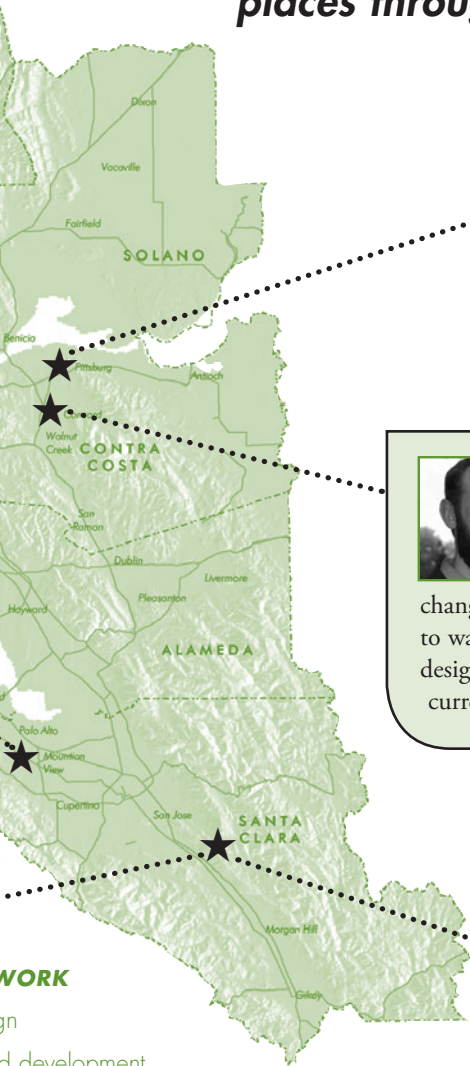


Marla Wilson Imagine if you could walk out your front door and be in a park in two minutes and to a store or a movie in five minutes. This lifestyle will become a reality for nearly 1,900 families who will live in Sonoma Mountain Village, a **Rohnert Park** development endorsed by Greenbelt Alliance. Just a half-mile from the future Cotati SMART train station, the development features a central town square lined with shops, offices, restaurants, and a cinema. Nearly one in three homes will be offered at below-market rates. The project earned the One Planet endorsement—the first in North America—for its plan to provide 100% of its energy from renewable, on-site sources. “This will be the kind of neighborhood where you’ll enjoy getting a cup of coffee, or walking the dog,” said Rohnert Park Vice Mayor Jake Mackenzie. “And it’s also the kind of place where you’ll be able to catch the train, or go to work at Sonoma Mountain Village.”



Stephanie Reyes This spring, Greenbelt Alliance and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation hosted a series of workshops to help residents connect issues they care about—like water, energy, and cost of living—to decisions about where and how we grow as a region. “The Bay Area is full of civically engaged residents who care deeply about their community,” says Greenbelt Alliance intern Alessandra Davidson. “They are members of their local service club, involved with a neighborhood association, or leaders in their church. These are the people I personally invited to the workshops.” Thanks to Alessandra’s tireless volunteer work, every workshop was packed with residents passionate about the future of their community. Learn more at www.YouChooseBayArea.org.

Advocating for open spaces and vibrant places throughout the Bay Area



Matt Vander Sluis When **Pittsburg** began fast-tracking the annexation of one of the most significant ridgelines in Contra Costa County on behalf of Seeno Developers, Greenbelt Alliance and allies kicked into gear. The annexation would pave the way for development of thousands of houses on the majestic hills that separate Pittsburg from Concord. We submitted a comment letter to the City of Pittsburg showing how the annexation proposal would violate state laws and numerous local and regional policies. Upon receiving our letter, the city abruptly suspended its process and reported that it is working with the developers to respond to the issues we raised.



Matt Vander Sluis In **Concord**, Greenbelt Alliance and other members of the Community Coalition for a Sustainable Concord successfully persuaded the City Council and Planning Commission to approve a series of modifications to the plan for the future reuse of the Concord Naval Weapons Station. The plan is moving in the right direction, with changes to enhance the sustainability features—particularly providing more opportunities for residents to walk, bike, and take transit. Now, project proponents will have to demonstrate how the density and design of their projects help people drive less. Want to know more? Sign up at www.greenbelt.org to keep current on Contra Costa news.



Michele Beasley The **Santa Clara County** Open Space Authority has brought Andrea Mackenzie on board as its new General Manager. For nearly ten years, Andrea ran the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and is the current President of the Bay Area Open Space Council. Greenbelt Alliance looks forward to working with Andrea and the Open Space Authority more in the future. Congratulations, Andrea!

WORK
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d development

...farms in Santa Clara County *continued from page 1*

resident who joined the watershed tour.

Tim Chiala, a third generation Morgan Hill farmer and one of the panelists, talked about Timptations, his community-supported agriculture program that delivers boxes of fresh vegetables to people throughout Silicon Valley. That's one of the hopeful signs of change for farmers; marketing efforts that connect South County farmers with consumers are increasing. To raise the profile of urban edge farms, Greenbelt Alliance is working with the new Santa Clara County Food System Alliance.

THREATENED FARMS

Over the past decade, South Santa Clara County has faced numerous threats, from a plan to turn Sargent Ranch near Gilroy into a luxury golf course community to

placing a High Speed Rail station on working farms in Gilroy. Today, South Santa Clara County advocates are working together on our shared goal of preserving the area's working landscapes.

This goal is made easier with help from other partners. In March, five land trusts announced the Living Landscapes Initiative, an effort to protect redwood forests, landscape links, and the Pajaro corridor in and around Silicon Valley. With a goal of protecting 10,000 acres in the next three years and a \$15 million initial budget, this partnership aims to preserve the lands that are critical to the health and well-being of the region. Greenbelt Alliance has been complementing these efforts with community education about the importance of vital links in the greenbelt, like Sargent Ranch.

Greenbelt Alliance helped create the South Valley Environmental Collaborative, which brings open space advocates together

in Gilroy to inform and support each other's work. And we tap the expertise of others; students from De Anza College have documented the comings and goings of bobcats, badgers, and mountain lions across Coyote Valley for years.

The wildlife and agricultural lands of Southern Santa Clara County can thrive in the shadow of Silicon Valley. We're inspired by people like Jean Myers, a true steward of the land. Myers opened her 14-acre property, where both the Uvas and Little Arthur creeks cross, to participants of the watershed tour. Each year, she plants one hundred seeds of native riparian trees; five or so end up making it. Her efforts are paying off, with steelhead trout returning in significant numbers.

By connecting leaders and advocates with Myers and others like her, we can harness the untapped energy of South County residents to put in place permanent protections. ■

Farming the Greenbelt *continued from page 1*



those findings in March after assessing the state of farming and ranching in the region. "The Bay Area's agricultural land is not a placeholder for future development nor simply preserved open space that will help prevent urban sprawl and all of its undesirable consequences—though that is surely one of its important functions," the report's authors concluded. "We envision a working landscape that continues to enrich the region for many generations to come as an irreplaceable environmental, cultural, and historic resource that supplies healthy food to the region's residents and visitors, while supporting farm and ranch families."

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES

The report, "Sustaining Our Agricultural Bounty," found an industry that struggles

to compete in the global marketplace, but thrives when taking advantage of regional and local markets for food and agritourism. Bay Area farms, most of which are small operations, must overcome unique disadvantages that their rural counterparts may not have to face. These challenges include development pressures, escalating land values, competition for water, lack of local distribution infrastructure, and regulations on value-added production (such as making grapes into wine).

However, the Bay Area also has its advantages. Local farms can benefit from their proximity to seven million potential customers as well as the region's growing demand for local and sustainable food. For example, Perry Farms in Alameda County, which grows the majority of the county's vegetable crops on less than 100 acres, sells 80% of their harvest to Veritable Vegetable, a San Francisco-based distributor that reaches all of the western states.

Marketing is another important tactic: Over the past few years, Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust has worked with local growers to develop the Brentwood Buy Fresh Buy Local marketing campaign through advertising, billboards, and events. And in San Mateo County, the "As Fresh As It Gets" works to centralize distribution as well as promote the county's food.

NEXT STEPS

To accommodate the Bay Area's expected growth, strong land-use policies and other strategies are needed to foster an environment that allows local farms to succeed. In March, Greenbelt Alliance and our Agriculture Sustainability Project partners met with over 65 government officials and leaders from around the region to discuss the findings of the report. Participants brainstormed ideas about how to address the challenges Bay Area farms face and how to work together to take advantage of the opportunities. In the coming months, Greenbelt Alliance will be working with our allies to sift through the ideas and to turn the best ones into action.

A sustainable future must include prosperous farmers, as the Hall family understands. They diversified their Napa vineyard and adapted to "create a modern, commercially successful version of the family farm." Long Meadow Ranch produces grapes, olives, grass-fed beef, eggs, and heirloom fruits and vegetables. Its products are sold to restaurants, in a storefront at the Ranch, at the St. Helena Farmers Market, and online. Their farm is protected by easements granted by the Napa Valley Land Trust, preserving it as a unique rural environment for future generations.

Read the report and its county-by-county assessment at www.greenbelt.org/reports. ■

New Board Members Boost Greenbelt Alliance

SARA BARZ
COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE

These three influential and knowledgeable leaders will add to the strength of Greenbelt Alliance's board of directors.



TERESA ALVARADO

Outdoors lover and San José mover-and-shaker Teresa Alvarado brings her depth of experience in the public sphere to the Greenbelt Alliance board.

Currently the Communications Manager for the Santa Clara Valley Water District, Alvarado previously served as the first executive director of the Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley. Alvarado, who holds degrees from San José State University and Tufts University, is also a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government Executive Education Program.

A big believer in the value of community service, Alvarado serves on the Santa Clara Valley Water District's Independent Monitoring Committee and the City of San José's Envision San José 2040 Task Force. In the nonprofit world, Alvarado sits on the boards of the Rotary Club of

San José and Hispanas Organized for Political Equality.

Alvarado lives in San José and enjoys jogging, hiking, and camping in the greenbelt.



SAM LICCARDO

San José City Councilmember Sam Liccardo fell for Greenbelt Alliance during the successful push for a citywide inclusionary housing policy in San José. "It became immediately evident that this was an environmental organization that 'got it' with regard to the interconnectedness of our policy choices, including land use, economy, transportation, and equity," he said.

Liccardo serves on several regional bodies, including the Valley Transportation Authority and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Liccardo is currently an Executive Board member of the Association of Bay Area Governments and First Vice President of the Santa Clara County Cities Association.

Liccardo chairs the Envision San José 2040 Task Force and the Transportation and Environment Committee. A graduate of Georgetown University, he has a master's degree and law degree from Harvard.

He admits to a bit of a "vibrant places"

bias. "Of course, I'll still sneak out of downtown on my bike on many weekends to explore the Bay Area's incredible hillsides and Bay Trail."



JOHN KRIKEN

To John Kriken, livability is critical for our sustainability as a region.

"Open spaces, diversity, mixed use, beautiful buildings and landscape are all necessary to build a livable region," said the consulting partner of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. "Our city buildings must be competitive to suburban and rural choices for living and working."

And Kriken knows a thing or two about designing for livability. A faculty member of UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design, Kriken has received over 30 national design awards and last year published his first book, *City Building: Nine Planning Principles for the Twenty First Century*.

Kriken also has served on the boards of the Fort Mason Cultural Center, SPUR, and the North of Market Planning Coalition.

A graduate of UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design, Kriken holds a master's degree from Harvard University. A Bay Area native, he lives in San Francisco. ■

EVENTS AND NEWS

HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR NEWS?

Greenbelt Alliance wants to know your reading preferences when it comes to news and updates from us. Look for a survey in the June Newswire or go to act.greenbelt.org/news_survey. We want to hear from you! Questions? Please call Communications Director Jennifer Gennari at 415-543-6771 ext. 318. ■

GREENBELT OUTINGS

Become a member and enjoy these two members-only outings. Find more at www.greenbelt.org.

This summer, join Greenbelt Alliance members on two outings that will take us from the wooded hills of Contra Costa County to the rocky seashore of San Mateo.

SUNDAY, JULY 24

9:45 AM TO 12:45 PM

TOURING TAO HOUSE

In July, we'll tour Tao House, home of playwright Eugene O'Neill from 1937–1944. Now a National Historic Site, the area remains an open space oasis above the San Ramon Valley.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 14

8:30 AM TO 12:30 PM

TIDE POOLS AND BEACHES

In August, Gael Erickson will lead us on an exploration of the rocky shore and tide pools of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve in Half Moon Bay. We'll start early to take advantage of the low tide. ■

CHARLES MCGLASHAN

Greenbelt Alliance mourns the unexpected loss of Marin County Supervisor Charles McGlashan, who died March 27 at the age of 49. An environmental hero, he championed clean energy in Marin, a single-use plastic bag ban, and the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail transit line. McGlashan was also a Greenbelt Alliance board member since 2007. "His passion for equitable housing choices and knowledge of Marin County will be sorely missed," said Jeremy Madsen. "We've lost a friend." ■



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INSIDE ACTION:

**GROWING SUPPORT IN
SANTA CLARA COUNTY**

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**FARMING THE
GREENBELT**

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**MARLEY'S GHOST
AT BLUEGRASS**

(PAGE 3)



**A VISION FOR A
BETTER OAKLAND**

(PAGE 3)

*Catch Laurie Lewis
and more at
Bluegrass for the Greenbelt
June 4*



Dove Weiland