



April 3, 2009

Attn: Committee for Measure A for a Vibrant Downtown

Re: Greenbelt Alliance endorsement

Greenbelt Alliance, the Bay Area's advocate for open spaces and vibrant places for 50 years, enthusiastically endorses **Measure A for a Vibrant Downtown**. At Greenbelt Alliance we take a regional perspective on how best to accommodate growth in the nine county San Francisco Bay Area. The region is expected to add 1.7 million people in the next 25 years. Growth that is poorly planned will lead to more traffic congestion, air pollution and lost farmland. However, sustainable development in the right places, such as in downtowns and transit corridors, absorbs that growth while easing the pressure to develop valuable habitat and watershed lands.

This is why Measure A is good for Morgan Hill. Measure A proposes to take 500 homes that would otherwise be built on the rural edge of town in low density fashion and redirects them to the downtown core as more compact condos and townhomes. This is done without raising the population cap of 48,000 by 2020. Morgan Hill's greenbelt is a critical piece to this idyllic community's identity. It provides a buffer between San Martin and San Jose. Oak-studded hillsides and local farmland give Morgan Hill a flavor that is hard to replicate. And once these lands are lost to development, they are lost forever.

Another reason why Greenbelt Alliance supports Measure A is due to climate change. 40% of the Bay Area's greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation and the majority of that is from single occupancy vehicles. Allowing more people to live downtown, within walking distance of Caltrain, shops and restaurants, gives them more options for how to move around without using a car. This is great for the environment and great for downtown merchants.

Morgan Hill residents value the pastoral setting of their community. However, more low-density development on the edge of town, far from services, will lesson Morgan Hill's appeal as a smaller, rural community. Morgan Hill can have the best of both worlds- a vibrant, walkable downtown and a fully protected greenbelt. Both require action. One action is to **vote Yes on Measure A on May 19<sup>th</sup>**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michele Beasley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michele Beasley  
Senior Field Representative