

greenbelt action

The Bay Area's Land Conservation and Urban Planning Non-Profit

www.greenbelt.org

Summer 2001

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Annual Report

A year of green victories—you made them happen. see inside



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Leaders in land recycling and urban geography join. page 2



We're Opening a Solano/Napa Field Office!

Thousands of acres of farmland and open space are at risk in beautiful Solano and Napa Counties. Greenbelt Alliance will be opening an office in Solano County to complement our highly effective offices in Santa Rosa, Walnut Creek, and San Jose. We are seeking a top-notch Field Representative to lead our efforts. For a job description, visit www.greenbelt.org/about_us/job_opp.htm/.

📧 Get the latest Outings listings and Greenbelt news by e-mail. Sign up at www.greenbelt.org.

Raising a Village From a Parking Lot

Pleasant Hill BART Station Could Be a Model for the Bay Area



BEFORE AND AFTER? People could step off BART into real neighborhoods—not just parking lots. Citizens envision a Pleasant Hill BART station surrounded by shops, townhouses and apartments, and a village green.

They paved paradise, put up a parking lot.” That just about sums up the Pleasant Hill BART station today. From the elevated platform, there are sweeping views of the East Bay hills all around, dominated by the spectacular sight of Mt. Diablo shouldering into the clouds. But in the foreground is a vast bog of parking surrounded by faceless mid-rise office buildings. The ugliness of these 11 acres of asphalt is almost as big a deterrent to potential pedestrians as its physical hazards. And it is a huge waste of one the Bay Area's most precious resources: usable land located near transit.

All this could be about to change—in a way that could be a model for the entire Bay Area. Local residents and Contra Costa County planners envision replacing the parking lot with a real neighborhood, complete with a village green, shops, offices, housing, perhaps even a community hall and childcare center. The village green would connect the BART station with the adjacent Iron Horse Trail, the paved, 33-mile long greenway that is one of the region's great transportation and recreational resources. (The trail is currently interrupted by a “temporary” BART parking lot at this location.) At a recent weeklong “charette,” or public design workshop, more than 300 local citizens worked together with a team of nationally recognized planners and architects to imagine a better BART station.

Aesthetically, the visions were Mediterranean: the view from the train platform was of a tile-roofed “main street” shopping area leading to the Iron Horse Trail with a view of Mt. Diablo beyond. Functionally, the designs combined suburban elements with urban and small-town features. There were thousands of parking spaces; multistory parking structures replaced the sprawling BART lots. But there were also sidewalk cafes and pedestrian-oriented retail areas within walking distance of apartments and townhouses.

“We want to build something that people will be fighting to preserve a hundred years from now,” said Bill Lennertz, head of the design team of Lennertz, Coyle & Assoc. “A real village. A real place.”

What will actually get built at this BART station is still a very open question. Whether the site will be a model for the region or an opportunity lost depends on how competing interests play out. This

charette is an early stage in a long planning process being led by the Contra Costa County Redevelopment Agency. But the fate of this crucial transit node, located just outside the city limits of Pleasant Hill between Walnut Creek and Concord, is important to the whole Bay Area. “Transit villages” are gaining currency among planners, not only in the Bay Area but across the country, as a way to use land efficiently, preserve open space, build stronger, safer

“We want to build something that people will be fighting to preserve a hundred years from now.”

neighborhoods, and reduce automobile traffic. The Pleasant Hill BART station is a prime candidate for this kind of transit-oriented development because there are already 3,000 residents and 5,000 jobs within a quarter mile of the station. Other BART stations where transit villages are being planned or proposed include Fruitvale and MacArthur in Oakland, Walnut Creek, and Richmond.

If you want to see what a transit village looks like, though, you don't need to peer into the future: take a look at the lovely 1890's Mission Revival CalTrain Station and adjacent downtown in Burlingame, or other whistlestop suburbs on the Peninsula where commuters step off the train into real neighborhoods. Planners today are learning good lessons from the past and calling it “the New Urbanism,” attempting to lure people out of their cars with neighborhoods designed for pedestrians.

Attractive townhouses, friendly greengrocers, a pocket park; neighbors meeting at a sidewalk café, geraniums spilling onto the sidewalk...envisioning a pleasing project is one thing. Building it is another. As in any major development, there are many constituencies clamoring to get their way.

BART commuters want parking. Local residents want neighborhood retail, but not a lot of traffic. The developer

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Greenbelt People

East Bay Sprawl Hot Spots

Despite our successful efforts last year to tighten the Urban Limit Line to protect open space in Contra Costa County, several important open space areas remain at high risk of development:

The Camino Tassajara area near Danville

- 1,000 acres of Mt. Diablo hillsides threatened by a new housing development
- 9,000 new daily car trips proposed

The area south and east of Antioch

- 5,000 acres threatened by proposals for the Summerset, Roddy Ranch, and Future Urban Area 1 developments
- Worsened traffic woes on Highway 4 and Vasco Road promised

Brentwood and San Ramon

- Lawsuits being pursued by these cities could poke holes in the Urban Limit Line so they can sprawl outward.

To help, contact Greenbelt Alliance East Bay Field Representative Evelyn Stivers at (925) 932-7776 or estivers@greenbelt.org.



THREATENED: East Bay hills and valleys

More people living near BART means fewer cars on the road.

Percentage of people who WORK near Pleasant Hill station who take BART:

9%

Percentage of people who LIVE near Pleasant Hill station who take BART:

40%



Board Welcomes Ignacio Dayrit

Ignacio Dayrit, a Project Manager for the City of Emeryville Redevelopment Agency, brings to our Board extensive knowledge in urban planning and redevelopment of brownfields—abandoned or underutilized land and buildings which have actual or perceived contamination. Reusing brownfields in urban and suburban areas is an important way to conserve land, protect open space and revitalize communities. Ignacio has spearheaded creative solutions in the reuse and revitalization of underutilized land as Director of Emeryville's Brownfields Pilot Project, helping bring new investment and much-needed housing and retail services to this industrial city. The Brownfields Pilot Project has received worldwide recognition, including an award from the King of Sweden, for its innovative use of Geographic Information Systems and the Internet. Ignacio also serves on the Working Group for the California Center for Land Recycling and the California Redevelopment Association's Brownfields Committee, and participated in the formation of the California Environmental Redevelopment Fund. He was a founder of the Filipino American Coalition for Environmental Solutions. Ignacio holds a Master in City Planning degree from the University of California at Berkeley, and a B.S. in Architecture from the University of the Philippines.

Peter Cohen Joins Greenbelt Alliance Board

New Board member Peter Cohen is an urban geographer, land use planner, teacher, tour guide, hiker, and avid observer. He holds a master's degree in geography from San Francisco State University and is continuing his graduate studies at UC Berkeley. His interests are in urban development patterns, understanding community character, and public advocacy and education. He is also a walking tour



SUSAN MOFFAT

guide with the San Francisco City Guides program. He has been active in Greenbelt Alliance's compact development and urban outings programs for the past five years and helped develop the platform for the organization's new Livable Communities

Program. Peter is originally from New England and has lived in California for the past 20 years.

George Ellman Retires from Board

George Ellman recently retired from our Board after 28 years of leadership, first on the Board of People for Open Space, as we were called back in 1972, and then on the Board of the renamed Greenbelt Alliance from 1987 through 2000. During George's tenure, Greenbelt Alliance published groundbreaking research on open space and agriculture, including



Room Enough: Housing and Open Space in the Bay Area (1983), *Endangered Harvest* (1985), *Reviving the Sustainable Metropolis* (1989), *At Risk* (comprehensive mapping of open space) (1989, 1994, and 2000),

and *Bound for Success, a Citizens' Guide to Urban Growth Boundaries* (1997). George also helped lead Greenbelt Alliance's successful push to establish urban growth boundaries as a key urban planning and open space protection tool in Sonoma County, resulting in passage of these critical limits on sprawl in eight of Sonoma's nine cities. George, who is a biochemist by profession, also served as Mayor of Tiburon and on the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and the National Audubon Society board of directors.

Pleasant Hill BART

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wants a profitable project. The county wants tax revenues. Families and social justice advocates want affordable housing. Bicyclists and pedestrians want safe routes to the station and a complete Iron Horse Trail. Local swim teams don't want their swim club to be paved over to make way for BART parking.

What Greenbelt Alliance Wants

Greenbelt Alliance believes a well-designed Pleasant Hill BART station will not only enhance the neighborhood, but help alleviate regional traffic congestion and preserve open space. Because of the Bay Area's acute housing shortage, especially for essential workers like teachers, firefighters, and other public employees, we favor a plan that includes well over the 345 to 370 housing units currently proposed. We believe affordable housing units should be scattered throughout the plan, rather than segregated or shunted off-site, and that the development should provide at least the 15% of affordable units required by state redevelopment law. Another reason we favor a higher ratio of housing to office space is that studies show that people who live near suburban BART stations use the transit system at higher rates than people who work near suburban stations. We believe any additional parking for offices should be fee-

based, to encourage BART use. Parking is a major traffic generator and should be limited.

We believe the retail should be scaled to be pedestrian-friendly and to serve the immediate neighborhood and BART commuters rather than automobile traffic; the stores should offer daily necessities including groceries in order to reduce car trips by residents of the new apartments. Increasing the number of housing units at the site will help support the kind of complete shopping area that will get local residents to shop on foot.

The station should be designed to maximize linkages with bus routes and the Iron Horse trail, and the convenience and safety of pedestrians and bicyclists should be a top priority. For example, attended bicycle parking should be free and located as close to the station entrance as possible.

To learn more about the proposed Pleasant Hill transit village and see plans and sketches, visit <http://www.co.contracosta.ca.us/depart/cd/charrette/>. To help Greenbelt Alliance work for a better plan, contact East Bay Field Representative Evelyn Stivers at estivers@greenbelt.org or (925) 932-7776. For more ideas on ways to encourage smart growth in the Bay Area visit the Livable Communities section of our website at http://www.greenbelt.org/about_us/livable_communities.html.

Wildflower Outings

This is only a sampling of our Outings. To get a listing of all our Outings in a timely way, sign up for our e-mail newsletter by visiting www.greenbelt.org, or e-mail info@greenbelt.org.

Spare the air by taking **public transportation** to a Greenbelt Outing! We now feature several transit-accessible outings each quarter. Please limit your reservations to two outings each quarter. Call 415-255-3233 to secure reservations today.

Saturday, April 21

Springtime on Mt. Hood, Sonoma County

Spring wildflowers and cascading streams grace Mt. Hood, rising above Kenwood. Get your exercise in this beautiful environment, then reward yourself after this strenuous hike with a visit to a nearby winery. From 8:45 AM to 2 PM. A 7 B

Sunday, April 22

Wildflowers and Wine, San Mateo County

On this fairly challenging hike in the wildflower-covered hills above Mountain View, take in amazing vistas of the Bay Area and sip wine at a local winery. From 10 AM to 5:30 PM. C/M 11 B

Sunday, April 29

Ride the Bus to the Blossoms, Marin County

Head to the Headlands by transit and cut down on pollution on this car-free outing, leaving from SF. Inhale the coastal air and enjoy the diverse Marin

wildflowers along a one-way, moderate hike. From 9:15 AM to 4:30 PM. M 8 B

Saturday, May 5

Flowers of Cinco de Mayo, Alameda County

Make the very strenuous but rewarding trek to Mission Peak! Abundant flowers, spectacular views, and feral goats await you. Transit accessible. Be prepared to car shuttle. Check website or call for info about camping. From 8:15 AM to 5 PM. A 10 C

Sunday, May 6

Coe Cornucopia, Santa Clara County

A challenging hike through rolling terrain with beautiful views of the California countryside. Wildflowers are everywhere in Henry Coe, the Bay Area's largest State Park, near Morgan Hill. From 9:30 AM to 4 PM. C 10 B

Sunday, May 13

Mother's Day at the Rancho, Santa Clara County

Visit Deer Hollow Farm, a working farm with pigs, goats, sheep, and chickens. Then stroll along a creek into a cool, fern-walled canyon to open meadows abloom with wildflowers in Rancho San Antonio Preserve. From 11 AM to 3 PM. E 3 A

Greenbelt Outings Key

Degree of Challenge	Miles	Elevation Gain (in feet)	For Example:
E - Easy		A - Less than 1,000	A hike with a rating of C 7 B is a challenging, seven mile hike with an elevation gain between 1,000 and 2,000 feet.
M - Moderate	# of miles covered	B - 1,000 to 2,000	
C - Challenging		C - 2,000 to 3,000	
A - Advanced		D - 3,000 to 4,000	
HC - Hard Core		E - More than 4,000	

Dalrymple Moved People to Action



Greenbelt Alliance recently said goodbye to **AnnaLis Dalrymple**, our North Bay Field Representative. AnnaLis, a Sonoma county native, joined Greenbelt Alliance in 1997 as an outreach assistant in our North Bay field office and helped mobilize an overwhelming 90% vote against Measure I, a bogus developer-backed "Greenbelt and Farmland Initiative" that would have exacerbated sprawl.

AnnaLis became North Bay Field Representative in 1999 and led Greenbelt Alliance's efforts to pass the Rural Heritage Initiative, or Measure I, which would have protected thousands of acres of farmland and open space in Sonoma County. Although the measure was defeated last November, AnnaLis's success in building support for open space protection—including securing more than 26,000 signatures to put Measure I on the ballot—will be a lasting legacy. AnnaLis was an effective media spokesperson, getting open space protection issues into the pages of the San Francisco Chronicle, the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, and the New York Times. We will all miss AnnaLis' boundless enthusiasm and ability to engage people on open space issues. We will be announcing our new North Bay Field Representative soon.

Gunston Designs Urban Outings

Beth Gunston came to Greenbelt Alliance via a public service internship class through her Urban Studies Program at San Francisco State University. Her interest in urban planning, social justice, transportation, and fighting sprawl prompted us to create a new internship position for her with the Urban Outings program. Urban Outings are tours that highlight examples of infill development, transit-accessible housing, pedestrian-oriented design and other features that make Bay



Area communities pleasant and affordable places to live. On an Urban Outing, the audience (which usually includes city planners, elected officials, developers, community activists, and local residents) visits these existing developments and also examines the potential for smart growth in the future.

Beth's knowledge about urban issues, her research skills, computer aptitude, and dedication to our mission have been of tremendous value to Greenbelt Alliance. She helped create walking tour brochures for our Urban Outings, produced and mailed outings invitations, and researched communities for future outings through internet searches and conversations with specialists in the land use and planning fields. Beth has continued to work with us as a volunteer for the Urban Outings program and is currently organizing an outing in her hometown of Hayward.



Greenbelt Action is the quarterly newsletter of GREENBELT ALLIANCE, the Bay Area's leading land conservation and urban planning non-profit organization, with offices in San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Rosa and Walnut Creek. Founded in 1958, we are dedicated to protecting the region's greenbelt and enhancing the livability of our cities. Memberships begin at \$35 and include a subscription of *Greenbelt Action*.

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Please send comments and questions about this newsletter to Susan Moffat, Communications Director

Meet Our Interns on Our Website

Do you know someone who might want to intern with Greenbelt Alliance? Tell them to visit www.greenbelt.org and check out our Get Involved section. We've got first-person stories by interns about the great time they had working and learning at Greenbelt Alliance.

"One day after work a friend asked me if I felt like I was making a difference. I was proud and overwhelmingly satisfied to be able to answer 'Yes!'"

JAIMIE ATLAS
SUMMER 2000 INTERN

Trouble in Garlic Country

Heading south on 101, just a few miles past the hubbub of Silicon Valley, an unmistakable scent fills the air—garlic. The high-tech campuses give way to rolling farmlands, and you know you're getting close to the Garlic Capital of the World: Gilroy.

This small farming community, nestled at the southernmost end of the Santa Clara Valley, is known the world over for its annual Garlic Festival, when garlic fans descend on the town for homegrown treats like garlic ice cream. For years, Gilroy has been a bucolic retreat from the chaos of nearby Silicon Valley. While most of the Santa Clara Valley—once called the “Valley of Heart’s Delight” for its fertile farmlands—has been paved over to make room for high-tech industry, Gilroy is still surrounded by thousands of acres of prime farmland.

But that will change if poorly planned development goes unchecked. There’s trouble brewing in Garlic Country, threatening to turn Gilroy into just another cookie-cutter, traffic-choked Silicon Valley suburb.

Like many small towns on the outermost edge of the Bay Area, Gilroy is facing tremendous growth pressure. Driven out by skyrocketing housing costs, Silicon Valley refugees are fleeing to these small towns in search of affordable housing. As a result, prime farmland and open space is paved over to make way for subdivisions, strip malls, and office parks. This sprawling new development destroys the local farm economy, and tears apart the fabric of these small towns.



GROWING: Gilroy’s world-famous garlic may be gobbled up by Silicon Valley sprawl, while vacant lots in its old downtown languish.

Nowhere is this threat more real than in Gilroy. Development interests have set their sites on the Gilroy Agricultural Preserve, a 14,000 acre patchwork of family farms that is the last stronghold of farming in Santa Clara County. Developers are asking the city of Gilroy to allow development of a high-tech campus in the heart of the Agricultural Preserve. This development would kick open the door to sprawl throughout the Preserve, signaling the death knell for farming in Santa Clara County.

Proponents of the development argue that Gilroy needs the jobs. And they’re right—Gilroy has a high unemployment rate, and could use some job growth. What they won’t tell you is that Gilroy has plenty of room to grow without sprawling into the

Agricultural Preserve. Downtown Gilroy is riddled with empty lots and boarded-up buildings. There is enough vacant land within Gilroy’s existing city limits to fit the entire city of Mountain View. Building new jobs in downtown Gilroy would give a boost to struggling local businesses, and protect the Agricultural Preserve at the same time.

Greenbelt Alliance is working with dedicated citizen activists in Gilroy to protect the Agricultural Preserve and promote smart growth

that preserves Gilroy’s small town way of life. Together, we will keep the Garlic Capital from becoming the Sprawl Capital. —Autumn Bernstein, *South Bay Field Representative*

Take Action to Protect the Gilroy Agricultural Preserve! Write a letter to Mayor Tom Springer and the Gilroy City Council at 7351 Rosanna Street, Gilroy CA, 95020. Tell them to grow jobs in Downtown, and save the Agricultural Preserve for the garlic! For more information, contact Autumn Bernstein at (408) 983-0539 or abernstein@greenbelt.org.

greenbelt action

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Change Service Requested



A 480-mile Bicycle Ride For Greenbelt Protection

April 22–28 marks our 12th annual round-the-Bay Area bike ride celebrating the Greenbelt. It’s a spectacular ride for a great cause. To ride or to sponsor a rider, call 415-398-3730. Visit our website for a photo gallery of the ride: www.greenbelt.org/events_outings/go_greenbelt.html.

“It’s a long, green ride through some of the most gorgeous landscapes in America, but every year I have to adjust the route to dodge new sprawl developments. That’s why we ride—to remind people of what we have to fight to save.”

STEVE VAN LANDINGHAM
GREENBELT ALLIANCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
AND GO GREENBELT! CYCLIST-IN-CHIEF



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