

AT RISK:

The Bay Area Greenbelt



2012

Greenbelt Alliance thanks the many people around the Bay Area who helped to provide the information compiled in this report as well as our generous supporters:

Funders

Anonymous
Arntz Family Foundation
Matthew and Janice Barger
California Coastal Conservancy

The Clarence E. Heller Foundation
The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
JEC Foundation

Expert Advisors

Nicole Byrd
Executive Director, Solano Land Trust

Dick Cameron
Senior Conservation Planner, The Nature Conservancy

James Raives
Senior Open Space Planner, Marin County Parks

Paul Ringgold
Vice President, Stewardship, Peninsula Open Space Trust

Tom Robinson
Conservation Planner, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

Bill Shoe
Principal Planner, Santa Clara County Planning Office

Beth Stone
GIS Analyst, East Bay Regional Park District

John Woodbury
General Manager, Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District

Greenbelt Alliance Staff

Lead Researcher
Adam Garcia, Policy Researcher

Intern Researchers
Derek Anderson
Joe Bonk
Samantha Dolgoff
John Gilbert
Marisa Lee
Bill Parker
Ramzi Ramey

Authors
Jeremy Madsen, Executive Director
Stephanie Reyes, Policy Director
Jennifer Gennari, Communications Director
Adam Garcia

Field Researchers
Melissa Hippard, Campaigns Director
Michele Beasley, Senior Field Representative
Amanda Bornstein, Senior Field Representative
Ellie Casson, Field Representative
Whitney Merchant, Field Representative
Matt Vander Sluis, Senior Field Representative

Editors
Jennifer Gennari
Stephanie Reyes

Mapping

John Kelley, Senior GIS Specialist, GreenInfo Network
Tim Sinnott, Senior GIS Specialist, GreenInfo Network

Design

Adam Hoffman, BlueNeckdesign.com

Photo credits

Photography by Greenbelt Alliance except
Cover: Scott Hein / heinphoto.com
p1, 29: Courtesy of Frog Hollow Farm
p2: Lech Naumovich Photography
p3, 10: Brian Murphy
p29, 31: Adam Hoffman
p30: © 2011 Kathryn Hargis, courtesy of Peninsula Open Space Trust

TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 2 Foreword
- 3 Executive Summary
- 4 Introduction

REGIONAL RESULTS

- 6 At Risk
- 8 Policy Protection

COUNTY SPOTLIGHT

- 12 Alameda County
- 14 Contra Costa County
- 16 Marin County
- 18 Napa County
- 20 San Mateo County
- 22 Santa Clara County
- 24 Solano County
- 26 Sonoma County

- 28 Investing in Bay Area Lands
- 31 Conclusion
- 32 Greenbelt Mapper
- 33 Methodology

FOREWORD

by Wendy Tokuda



“Something about putting your feet on real soil, taking a moment to look up into the upper branches of a tree, or growing your own food, keeps us grounded.”

Almost every day now, I walk the trails in the East Bay Regional Parks. Within a few miles of our home in Oakland, I can hike into deep, silent Redwood forests and see vistas with no buildings in sight—all within the city. I know the plants and birds of these parks as intimately as my own garden, adding to my joy of living in the Bay Area.

Just saving the greenbelt is not enough. We have to take care of it, too. Most days on the trail, I carry a tool the color of the Golden Gate Bridge. I use it to pull French broom, an invasive plant with bright yellow flowers in the spring. It may seem an odd habit to some. My daughter asked me, “Mom, are you weeding the forest?” But it is my meditation, and it connects me to the earth in the most hands-on way possible.

At home, we try to grow as much of our own food in our backyard organic garden and what we can’t grow, we buy at the farmer’s market, from local farms.

I wish more people could enjoy these parks in our neighborhoods, and these farms in our counties. Something about putting your feet on real soil, taking a moment to look up into the upper branches of a tree, or growing your own food, keeps us grounded. It’s healthier for us and for the planet.

Greenbelt Alliance has conducted its signature research on the risks facing the greenbelt for more than two decades. What it shows is that taking care of the landscape and stopping sprawl will benefit all of us—from the children playing in the parks to the farmers selling asparagus at local markets.

We have to grow smart and carefully. I believe we have to protect the wild and fertile lands we have left, so our children and grandchildren will grow up feeling the green of this wonderful earth.

Wendy Tokuda recently retired from daily TV anchoring after 35 years. She now reports on “Students Rising Above,” profiling low-income students who want to go to college.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We know we're fortunate. The Bay Area's open spaces provide fresh food, clean water, homes for wildlife, and places to play. Yet if the Bay Area is to remain one of the world's most attractive places, we must not only fight against development in the wrong places but also invest in this landscape we treasure.

Safeguards work

It's easy to look around at the Bay Area's golden hills, farms, and parks and celebrate the progress we've made to protect our natural and agricultural lands. Conservation groups, by buying land or the rights to develop it, have brought the regional total of land permanently preserved to 1.1 million acres—out of about 4.5 million total acres.

In addition, voters and leaders around the region have enacted a variety of growth management measures, protecting over 2 million more acres. Yet these rules are often tested, requiring vigilance to make sure they are not broken.

Risk still exists

Even so, sprawl still threatens to shrink the greenbelt. More than 322,000 acres—the equivalent of 10 cities the size of San Francisco—remain at risk of development.

Compared to six years ago, major advances in open space protection and a sluggish real estate market have reduced the amount of land at high and medium risk of development by 20%. Those 322,000-plus acres that remain at risk deserve protection for all the benefits they provide.

Fund what we value

Protecting the land, however, is only a first step. Even lands not at risk of sprawl development can be threatened in other ways. Agricultural land can lie fallow if farmers can't make a living; habitats can succumb to invasive species if they are not properly stewarded; parks can close without sufficient funding.

Greenbelt Alliance, the champion of the places that make the Bay Area special, believes we must properly invest in our landscape so that it is nurtured for years ahead. The region's quality of life and economic health depends on a greenbelt of agricultural land, wildlife habitats, watersheds, and parks.

Vital lands identified

Everyone—from environmentalists to farmers to business owners—has an interest in seeing the Bay Area thrive. To identify where to take action, *At Risk: The Bay Area Greenbelt 2012* will help. Visit greenbelt.org/greenbelt-mapper to see where lands provide key benefits, where policies are effective, and where pressure to build exists.



INTRODUCTION

In twenty-five years, as many as two million more people will live in the Bay Area. Where we build new homes and jobs will impact the region's natural areas, parks, and farms. How much of a threat does development pose to the region's greenbelt?

To answer that question, Greenbelt Alliance researched the state of the Bay Area's open space. *At Risk: The Bay Area Greenbelt 2012*, the sixth release of this signature research, provides a snapshot of working farms and natural areas facing sprawl development pressure in the nine counties.

The Bay Area has had tremendous success in protecting our agricultural and wild lands. But our work is not yet complete. Over 322,000 acres remain at risk of development. Some of these places lack protection measures. Others may have strong protections in place but experience repeated attempts to loosen or remove those protections due to high development pressure. And policies expire; most protection measures are put in place for a set amount of time, perhaps 20 years, and must then be renewed.

In addition, simply protecting and preserving the landscape isn't enough if we want to have a thriving greenbelt of farms, wildlife habitat, and recreational areas. We need to invest in and manage these places as well.

As in the rest of the country, the economic downturn that began in 2008 has had profound impacts in the Bay Area. Unemployment remains stubbornly high. Unable to pay their mortgages, thousands of people have lost their homes. In the Bay Area, the pain is most acute in outlying communities far from job centers. One outcome of this crisis is a renewed understanding of the need to provide affordable homes near jobs and services.

From crisis sometimes comes opportunity. The down real estate market has decreased the pressure to build on the greenbelt. This is part of the reason that 77,300 acres of Bay Area open space is currently at high risk

We classified our findings in three ways:

RISK

High Risk: Greenbelt lands that are likely to be developed in the next 10 years.

Medium Risk: Greenbelt lands that are likely to be developed in the next 30 years.

Low Risk: Greenbelt lands that are not likely to be developed in the next 30 years.

Urban: Lands that are developed at a density of at least one residential unit per 1.5 acres, or the equivalent density for commercial or industrial development. This information is largely based on a map created by the State of California's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Project.

PROTECTION

Permanent Protection: Greenbelt lands that are permanently protected from development, including most public lands, land trust properties, and conservation easements. This information is largely based on a map created by the Bay Area Open Space Council.

High Protection: Greenbelt lands that are protected by one or more policy measures that prohibit most development on that land.

Medium Protection: Greenbelt lands that are protected by one or more policy measures where development is intended to be limited but is still possible with a special permit.

Low Protection: Greenbelt lands that do not fall under any protective policy measures.

VALUE

Wildlife habitat: Greenbelt lands that are identified as part of the Conservation Lands Network and are important for preserving wildlife habitat.

Food production: Greenbelt lands designated as high quality farmland and ranchland, primarily by California's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Project.

Water resource: Greenbelt lands that help preserve water supply and quality; these include groundwater basins, lands that provide water filtration, and wetlands.

Public parks: Greenbelt lands that are publicly accessible parks and trails.

of development over the next 10 years in contrast to 2006 when there were 125,200 such acres. There are several cases around the region where property owners, who were once committed to seeing their lands developed, are now willing to see their property conserved through conservation easements or sold to a land trust or open space district.

Unfortunately, another outcome of the weak economy is that conservation organizations have less funding to permanently protect and steward our natural and agricultural lands. Because of this lack of funding, land trusts and open space districts aren't able to fully take advantage of the new willingness of many property owners to commit their lands to conservation.



Take action

Every resident of the Bay Area benefits when we protect the region's vital lands and promote good development within cities and towns. Here's what you can do to preserve what makes the Bay Area special:

1. Advocate for increased funding for conservation protection and regional funding for cities and towns that keep growth within existing urban areas.
2. Help establish protection measures in areas that remain at risk. Apply tried and true policies in places that lack them, and seek new ways to protect land where needed.
3. Fight threats to the landscape, especially sprawl that breaks urban growth boundaries that define where growth should and should not go.
4. Vote to renew good growth management measures such as hillside ordinances and urban growth boundaries.
5. Support ways to help the region's farmers thrive, by finding new markets and making food processing local. Buy locally grown produce to support Bay Area farmers.
6. Rally for constructing homes, offices, and public facilities not on the greenbelt but within existing cities and towns.

REGIONAL RESULTS

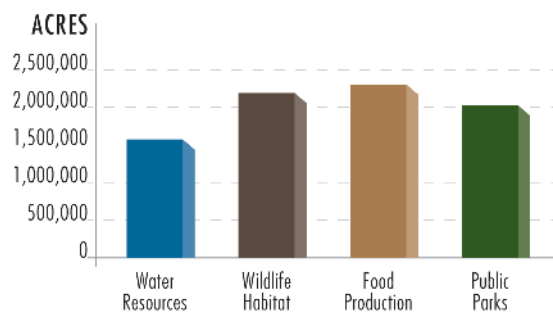
At risk: Sprawl development persists, threatening valuable lands

The geography of the San Francisco Bay Area defines this region, with rising ridges and verdant valleys. The nine counties that ring the Bay total 4.5 million acres of land, with 788,500 acres of cities and towns.

The land is valued for many reasons, beyond the pleasing vista. Fields produce food, valleys collect fresh water, and forests shelter animals. The Bay Area has more than 2.3 million acres of farmlands and ranchlands, 1.24 million acres of important water resources, almost 2.2 million acres of wildlife habitat, and just over 1 million acres of parks. These numbers add up to more than the total 4.5 million acres in the region because many lands provide multiple benefits simultaneously. For example, many wildlife habitat areas are also important for water filtration. And some public parks also include cattle grazing land.

Nonetheless, fertile valleys remain under threat from large urban expansion projects, and rural sprawl and high-end estate homes continue to gobble up arable land and hillsides. As a result, 322,800 acres remain at risk of development in the Bay Area. Of those acres, 77,300 are at high risk (likely to be developed within 10 years) and 245,500 are at medium risk (likely to be developed in 30 years). This threat remains highest in the flat lands and agricultural valleys of Contra Costa and Santa Clara counties and on the vast acreage of unprotected land in Sonoma County. The County Spotlight section beginning on page 12 highlights specific places that are at risk for sprawl development throughout the region.

Bay Area Open Space Values

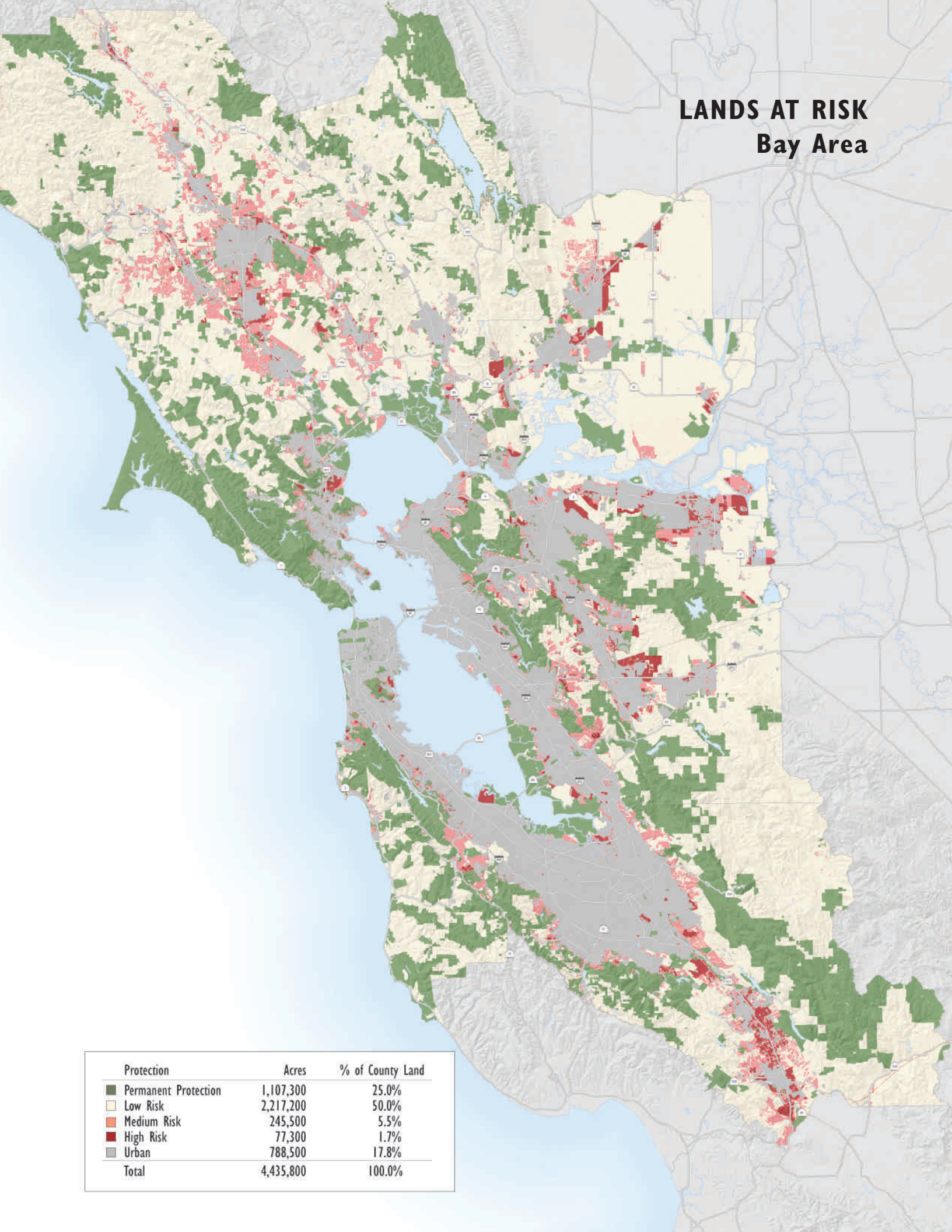


Numbers add up to more than total acreage because some lands serve more than one value.

The slide in the real estate market has had the side effect of easing pressure to build on open space and increasing opportunities to permanently protect these lands through acquisition. As a result of these factors, in combination with protection policies, the amount of land at high and medium risk of development is down by 20%, or 78,500 acres, since 2006.



LANDS AT RISK Bay Area



Protection	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	1,107,300	25.0%
Low Risk	2,217,200	50.0%
Medium Risk	245,500	5.5%
High Risk	77,300	1.7%
Urban	788,500	17.8%
Total	4,435,800	100.0%

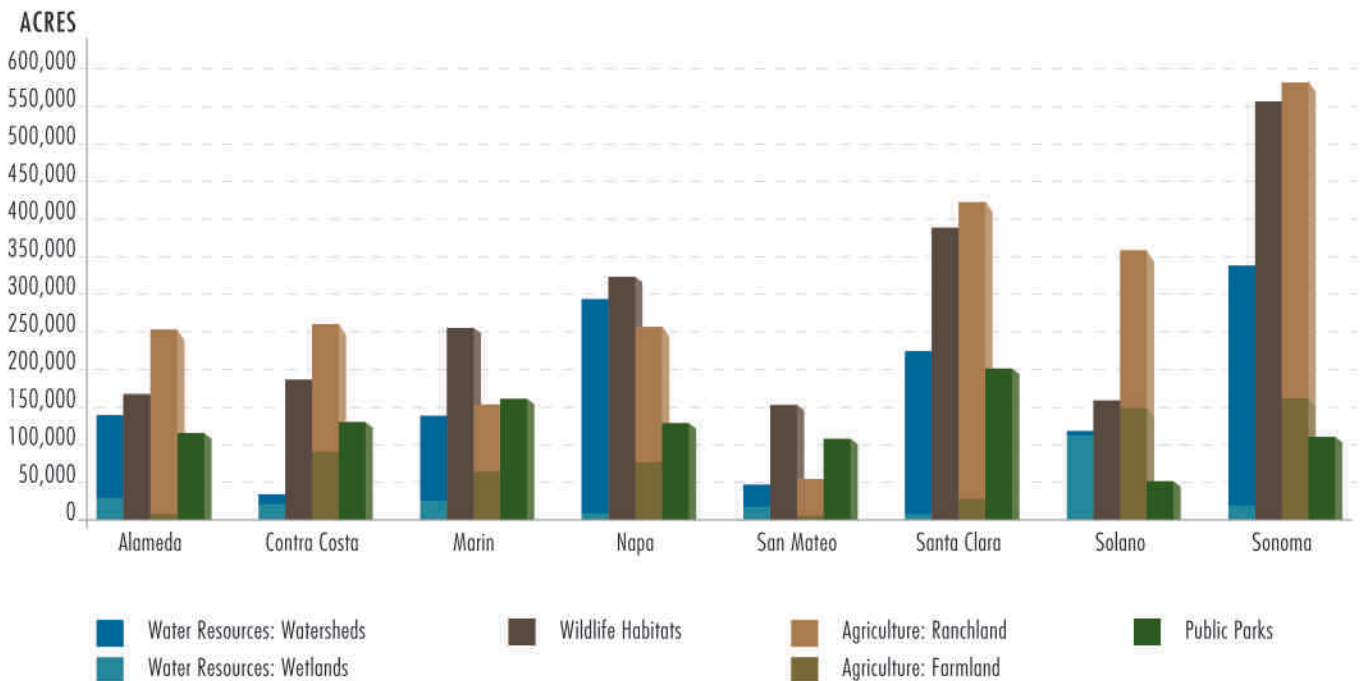
Policy protection: Good measures protect lands, yet require vigilance

Fortunately, many advocates have worked to save the Bay Area's landscape. More than one quarter of the greenbelt, 1,107,300 acres, is now permanently protected, thanks to conservation groups buying either land itself or the rights to develop land.

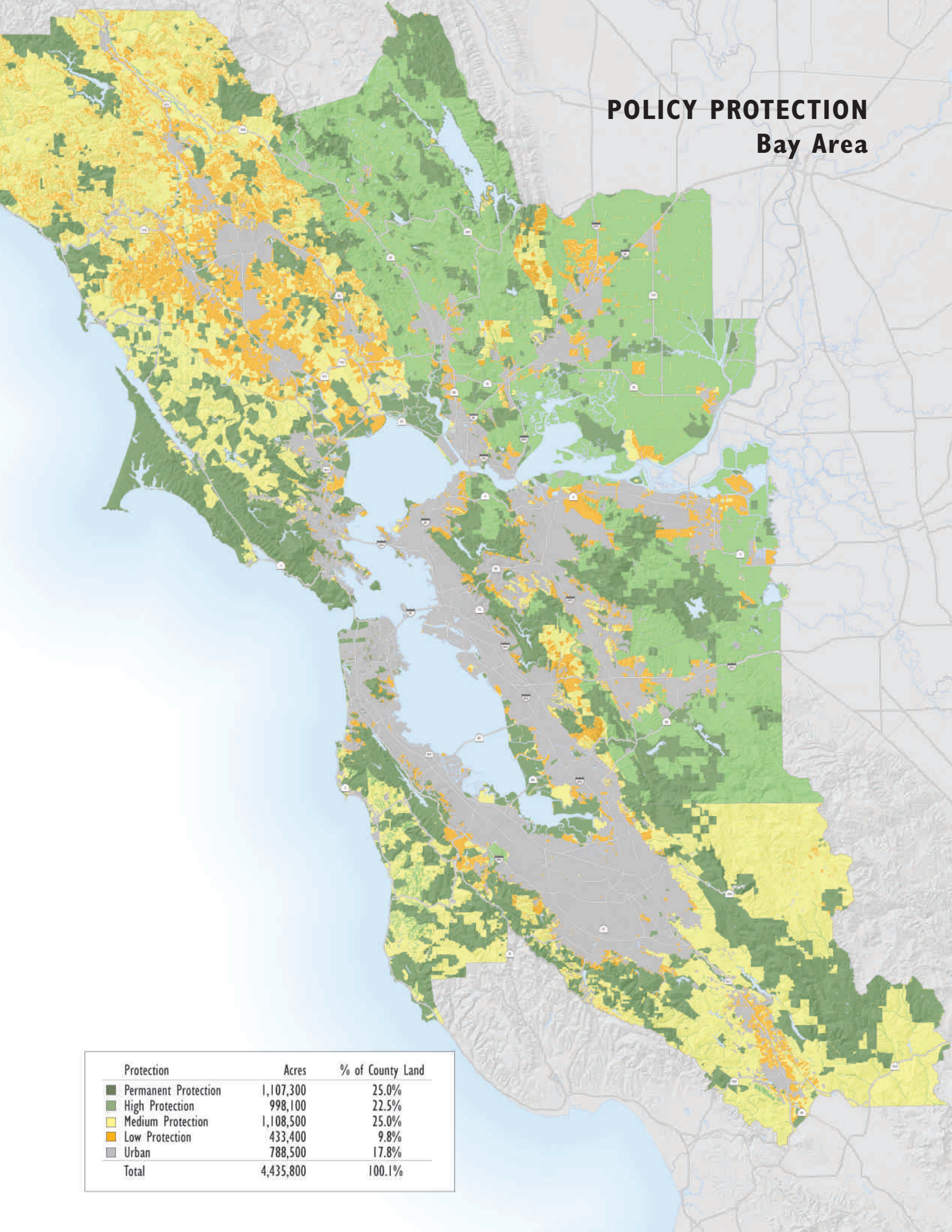
For a long time, buying land has not been the only way to stop sprawl. Good growth management measures protect almost 2 million more acres, with 998,100 of those acres at a high level of protection and 1,108,500 acres at a medium level of protection. These measures ensure that farmers can grow crops in fertile soil, ranchers can graze cattle, animals can live unthreatened in the natural world, and people can hike ridgelines.

Greenbelt Alliance and others have worked for decades to pass growth management measures to protect lands. In some cases, voters approved rules such as urban growth boundaries that draw a line defining where development should and should not go. Other effective policies that have slowed sprawl are agricultural protection measures that require voter approval to re-zone farms and ranches for development, and hillside ordinances that demand city review before a building permit is issued. Solano County's 2008 renewal of its Orderly Growth Initiative protected 340,700 acres of agricultural lands. And Sonoma County now has urban growth boundaries around every city in the county, thanks to the adoption of Cloverdale's boundary in 2010.

Open space values by county



POLICY PROTECTION
Bay Area



Protection	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	1,107,300	25.0%
High Protection	998,100	22.5%
Medium Protection	1,108,500	25.0%
Low Protection	433,400	9.8%
Urban	788,500	17.8%
Total	4,435,800	100.1%

Open space protection and growth management measures are as varied in their effectiveness and goals as the Bay Area landscape. The reason for the policies may be to protect wildlife or a vista, or to keep agriculture as a viable part of a community's identity. Greenbelt Alliance inventoried policies that protect land from "urbanization"—development of at least one home per 1.5 acres, otherwise known as suburban sprawl. However, urbanization, while the focus of this report, is not the only threat to landscapes. Many counties are at risk of rural development, in the form of ranchettes or rural estates on tens or even hundreds of acres of land. While growth at this scale may not seem significant, rural development that breaks up landscapes—for example with fences around private lots—prevents wildlife migration and makes food production unrealistic.

Some policies largely prohibit urbanization, while others simply require additional hurdles or permits before development can proceed. Even those that prohibit

most development often still permit some development, of a specific type or under certain circumstances. For example, under Napa County's Measure P, farmland is protected from suburban sprawl development unless a development proposal is expressly approved by a vote of the people. And Measure P still permits some agriculture-related business development. Most policy protection measures must be renewed periodically to remain in effect.

One interesting dynamic is that, while land may enjoy a high level of policy protection, it can still be at risk for development. This is because some areas are so attractive to developers that they continue to attempt to change or remove policy protection measures. Even places with policy protection measures in place require constant vigilance to protect against sprawl.

Despite these caveats, policy measures are essential ways to protect our landscapes. Policy measures protect more land than open space districts and land



trusts can afford to buy; almost twice as much of the region's land is protected through policy than through purchase. In addition, policies can help safeguard important lands until they are able to be permanently protected. For example, Cowell Ranch outside of Brentwood was targeted for sprawl development until the majority of the six-square-mile area was included for protection by the county's urban limit line in 2000. In 2002, the Trust for Public Land raised the necessary funds to purchase the area, now known as Marsh Creek State Park.

And policy protections can stop sprawl in its tracks. The County Spotlight section highlights policy protection victories throughout the region.

Understanding where policies have been established and the degree to which they successfully protect lands helps pinpoint which lands are most at risk of development. *At Risk: The Bay Area Greenbelt 2012* successfully tracks efforts by city, county, and regional leaders making headway toward protecting open space lands. The sidebar shows the wide range of policies reviewed and catalogued in this report; read about the Greenbelt Mapper on page 32 to access more detailed information.

Determining and adopting the best strategies to maintain the greenbelt in each county will ensure future generations will experience and enjoy the Bay Area's natural lands and agriculture.

Types of policy protections

PERMANENT PROTECTION

Greenbelt lands that are permanently protected from development, including most public lands, land trust properties, and conservation easements.

URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARIES OR URBAN LIMIT LINES

A line drawn between urban and rural lands defining where growth can and cannot occur. Depending on the details of the policy, changes to the boundary can be approved by either elected officials or voters.

COASTAL ZONE PROTECTION

Measures taken under the California Coastal Act to protect important coastal resources for public enjoyment, safeguarding natural landscapes, and reducing impact on existing urban development.

BAYLANDS PROTECTION

Measures taken under the Bay Plan by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission to protect the open water, wetlands, marshes, and mudflats of the greater San Francisco Bay, and areas 100 feet inland from the high tide line.

HILLSIDE PROTECTION

A measure that reduces or prohibits development on a city's or county's hills based on the slope or distance from a ridgeline. Intended to preserve the scenic value of an area and/or reduce the threat of landslides.

GREENBELT RESERVES

An area temporarily set aside by a local jurisdiction for agricultural use or wildlife habitat yet susceptible to future growth.

CRITICAL HABITAT

Areas essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species under the Federal Endangered Species Act that may require special management and protection.

HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

A plan prepared for an area under the Federal Endangered Species Act to protect endangered species habitat while still allowing some development to occur.

AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION

A measure that prohibits conversion of agricultural or natural lands to other uses without a vote of the people.

WILLIAMSON ACT PROPERTIES

A specific property enrolled in a contract with local governments for the purpose of restricting land use to agricultural or related open space uses. In return, land owners receive reduced property tax assessments than the full market value, with local governments receiving the lost property tax revenues from the state.

FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION

Areas subject to flooding where development is prohibited. In limited cases, some development may be allowed with a special permit.

RIPIARIAN PROTECTION

A policy that limits or prohibits new construction within a certain distance from rivers and streams to avoid the adverse impacts of urban development, such as pollution runoff, erosion, and habitat degradation.

ALAMEDA COUNTY



Diana Ip and her daughter play at Oakland's Lake Merritt.

“Having green space keeps us sane mentally and physically. It’s not a luxury, it’s a necessity.”

Josh Seidenfeld and Diana Ip, residents of Oakland, love taking their daughter to Lake Merritt and Redwood Regional Park. And all that open space is next to a great city. “I love the food, the cultural diversity, and the incredible green-space of the Bay Area,” Josh says.

Alameda County, with its urban side and rural eastern side, has a long record of positive conservation efforts, including protecting scenic East Bay hills and ridgelines and creating much-loved parks. The East Bay Regional Parks District includes more than 112,000 acres of public land in Alameda and Contra Costa counties—a total of 65 parks including over

1,200 miles of trails. The district is a national leader in acquiring lands and making them publicly accessible for hiking, biking, and other outdoor activities.

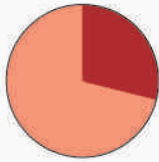
Of the land that is neither permanently protected nor already developed, 87% is protected by policy measures. The vast majority of that land enjoys high protection, thanks in large part to Measure D, the Save Agriculture and Open Space Lands Initiative. Passed by voters in 2000, Measure D requires voter approval to increase development capacity on county land and requires cities to abide by the urban growth boundary in the eastern part of the county.

However, despite strong policy protections on much of Alameda County’s land, some 30,000 acres remain at risk of development. Doolan Canyon, the area between Dublin and Livermore, remains ground zero for ongoing land-use battles, including a controversial proposal to develop as many as 1,990 units of sprawl housing.

Preserving parks is important to Josh and his family. “I can’t imagine raising a child in a place where she couldn’t run around and experience the power of nature,” he says. “Having green space keeps us sane mentally and physically. It’s not a luxury, it’s a necessity.”

LANDS AT RISK Alameda County

Lands At Risk



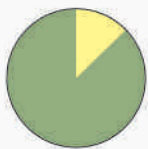
Size of circle represents proportion of total acres at risk relative to other counties

At Risk	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	106,100	22.4%
Low Risk	187,400	39.6%
Medium Risk	23,300	4.9%
High Risk	9,400	2.0%
Urban	146,900	31.1%
Total	473,100	100%



POLICY PROTECTION Alameda County

Policy Protection



Size of circle is proportionate to total acres protected relative to other counties

Protection	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	106,100	22.4%
High Protection	166,900	35.3%
Medium Protection	24,900	5.3%
Low Protection	28,300	6.0%
Urban	146,900	31.1%
Total	473,100	100.1%





CONTRA COSTA COUNTY




Phil O'Loane stands in the infield in San Ramon.

Standing by the bench, Coach Phil O'Loane hollers to one of his daughter's teammates across the softball field. Just beyond the field rise the San Ramon hills, a natural boundary to the city with a view of cows grazing in pasture land. Phil, now a San Ramon city council member, had no idea two years ago the role he would soon play in helping protect this landscape from urban development.

The area east of San Ramon, including the Tassajara Valley, is protected by urban growth boundaries that prevent the jurisdictions of San Ramon, Danville, and the county from expanding eastward.

In 2010 the San Ramon City Council attempted to expand its growth boundary, allowing sprawl development across 1,579 acres. Phil co-lead a successful effort by residents to stop the expansion, convincing 71% of voters to oppose the city's measure.

Now Phil advocates to make open space protection a citywide priority. However, the threat of sprawl in the Tassajara Valley still looms large. A powerful developer is pushing the county to approve a major development outside the growth boundaries. Approval of this sort of development would eviscerate the integrity of the



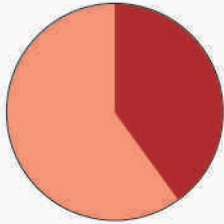
“For two decades, because we’ve worked together, voters have approved urban limit lines to manage growth. We need to be stalwart and vigilant in our defense of open space.”

growth boundary and put open space lands across the county at risk of similar attacks. Phil has stepped forward to protect his city from this proposal as well.

Phil's effort in San Ramon is a model for other communities in Contra Costa County. For example, large swaths of the eastern county have been deemed fair game for development in Pittsburg, Antioch, Brentwood, and Oakley. Contra Costa County has the most acres at high risk of development of any county in the region—over 18,000. More action is necessary to preserve the hills, valleys, and rich farmland to help protect this land for future generations.

LANDS AT RISK Contra Costa County

Lands At Risk



Size of circle represents proportion of total acres at risk relative to other counties

At Risk	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	119,100	25.8%
Low Risk	141,000	30.5%
Medium Risk	28,200	6.1%
High Risk	18,600	4.0%
Urban	154,700	33.5%
Total	461,600	99.9%

0 2 4 8 12 16 Miles



POLICY PROTECTION Contra Costa County

Policy Protection



Size of circle represents proportion of total acres protected relative to other counties

Protection	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	119,100	25.8%
High Protection	131,900	28.6%
Medium Protection	12,300	2.7%
Low Protection	43,600	9.4%
Urban	154,700	33.5%
Total	461,600	100%

0 2 4 8 12 16 Miles



For definitions of risk and protection levels see page 4.

MARIN COUNTY



“Enjoying open space provides a nice balance to the fast pace of our lives.”

Marla Fields and her family enjoy biking.

Marla Fields and her husband moved to their home in Novato thirteen years ago, and now have two children, ages 10 and 12. They live near the San Francisco Bay Trail with views to the west of Marin’s permanently protected ridgelines. “I love going for family bike rides, hiking Mount Burdell, and walking the trails with my dog,” she says. “Enjoying open space provides a nice balance to the fast pace of our lives.”

Marin is home to many national, state, and county parks. Over 80% of county land is protected—part by purchase and part by policy. The Marin Agricultural Land Trust

maintains conservation easements of more than 44,100 acres on 68 family farms and ranches. Even so, Marin’s hillsides are still vulnerable to the construction of “McMansions.”

But just because there shouldn’t be more houses in the hills doesn’t mean there shouldn’t be development in Marin County. The lack of home choices has made Marin the regional leader in in-commuters, with 60% of its workforce driving in from other counties. To give employees the chance to live locally, new development needs to be near 101 and future Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit stations. The county’s largest challenge is to

communicate to residents the benefits more homes will have on the environment and the economy.

As an advocate for Stand Up for Neighborly Novato, Marla speaks with many members of her community. “I hear so many sad stories of people who are suffering due to the high cost of rents in Marin,” she says. “Even at a visit to my Novato dentist, the office assistant told me she would love to move from Santa Rosa to Novato, but as a single mom, she cannot afford to rent in Novato.” Providing more homes will improve the air quality in Marin and allow working farms and protected parks to thrive.

LANDS AT RISK Marin County

Lands At Risk



Size of circle represents proportion of total acres at risk relative to other counties

At Risk	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	185,400	55.6%
Low Risk	96,300	28.9%
Medium Risk	7,100	2.1%
High Risk	2,200	0.7%
Urban	42,300	12.7%
Total	333,300	100%

0 1.5 3 6 9 12 Miles



POLICY PROTECTION Marin County

Policy Protection



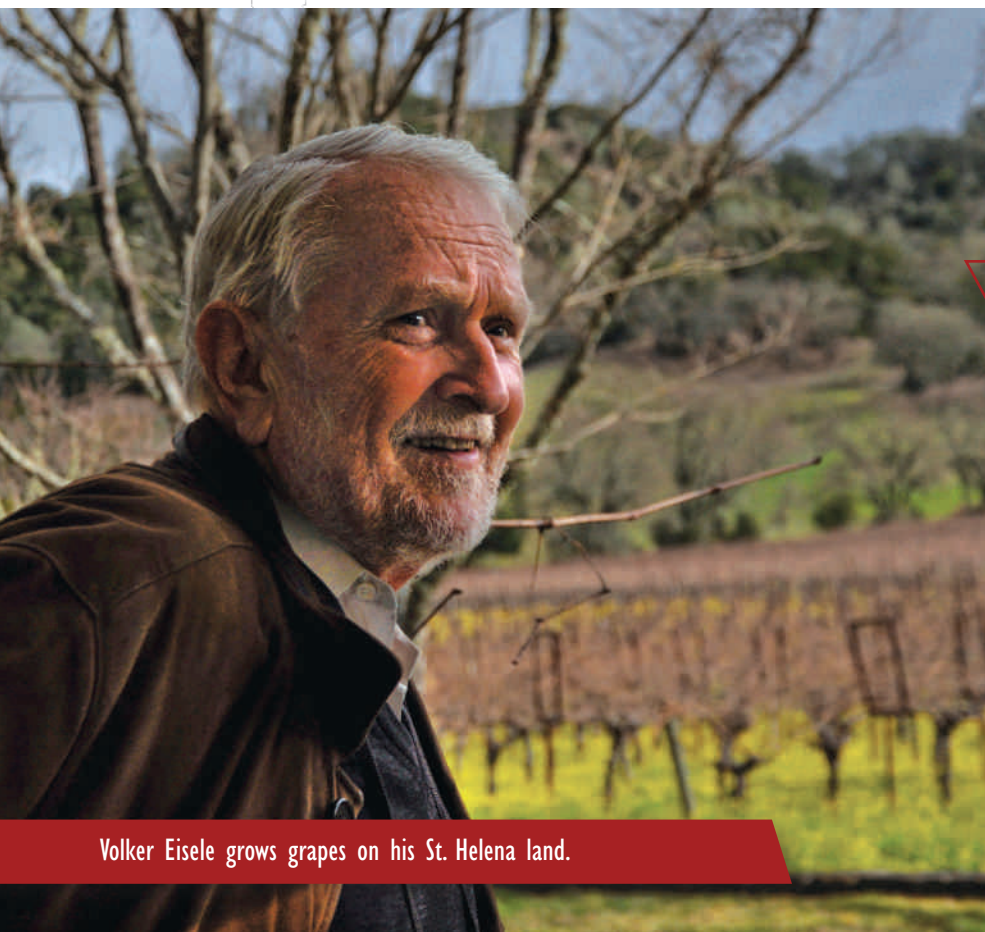
Size of circle represents proportion of total acres protected relative to other counties

Protection	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	185,400	55.6%
High Protection	5,200	1.6%
Medium Protection	94,300	28.3%
Low Protection	6,100	1.8%
Urban	42,300	12.7%
Total	333,300	100%

0 1.5 3 6 9 12 Miles



NAPA COUNTY



Volker Eisele grows grapes on his St. Helena land.

“When everyone else was developing, [Napa] put in the growth control measure.”

Since 1971, Volker Eisele has grown grapes on his land in St. Helena. Volker, who served on the Greenbelt Alliance Board of Directors for many years, has no time for sentimentality. He remains a staunch fighter against sprawl and was the driving force behind Measure J, Napa County’s landmark agricultural initiative that helped nurture its wine industry.

Measure J, approved in 1990, requires a two-thirds vote of county residents before agricultural land can be developed for anything other than agricultural uses. “If you analyze each step we have developed, it doesn’t look like

much,” he says. “It’s the combined attributes that make a difference.” He adds, “Napa is swimming against the trend. When everyone else was developing, we put in the growth control measure.”

In 2008, the measure was renewed as Measure P, protecting the county’s rural character for another 50 years. “It passed with two-thirds of the vote, which shows the general consensus of the community,” he says. As a result of this long history of protection, Napa County has the lowest level of at risk land in the region, with only 1% of its acreage at risk of development.

Volker is concerned about park closures, the loss of public land, and the growth of rural estates. Agricultural land in Napa County, unfortunately, is often sold into 100 to 200 acre parcels for large estate homes. While growth at this scale may not seem significant, rural development that breaks up landscapes—for example, with fences around private lots—prevents wildlife migration and makes food production unrealistic.

LANDS AT RISK Napa County

Lands At Risk



Size of circle represents proportion of total acres at risk relative to other counties

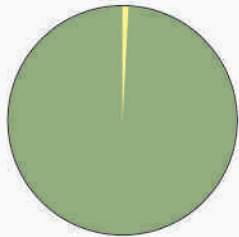
At Risk	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	122,700	25.4%
Low Risk	330,900	68.5%
Medium Risk	5,800	1.2%
High Risk	700	0.1%
Urban	23,200	4.8%
Total	483,300	100%

0 2 4 8 12 16 Miles



POLICY PROTECTION Napa County

Policy Protection



Size of circle represents proportion of total acres protected relative to other counties

Protection	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	122,700	25.4%
High Protection	322,000	66.6%
Medium Protection	3,000	0.6%
Low Protection	12,400	2.6%
Urban	23,200	4.8%
Total	483,300	100%

0 2 4 8 12 16 Miles





SAN MATEO COUNTY



Gita Dev revels in open space.

Gita Dev loves the abundance of open space and county parks in San Mateo County.

And no wonder. The county is a leader in open space protection, both through direct purchase of land and through policy protection. The county is fortunate to have both the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District and the Peninsula Open Space Trust; together, these organizations permanently protected an additional 2,500 acres since 2006. San Mateo is second only to Marin County in the percentage of its landscape that is permanently protected: 38% of total acres.

“There are a lot of trails that go through my neighborhood and connect up to the preserves,” says Gita. Windy Hill Open Space Preserve is a favorite of her family’s because it’s also dog-friendly. She also appreciates the wildlife coming through the community. “Quite a bit of wildlife goes back and forth—deer, rabbits, foxes, possums, all kinds of birds.”

San Mateo County’s urban/rural boundary is a unique policy approach that limits the intensity of development based on a series of criteria, including how steep the hillside is and the quality of the soil. The complex formula can



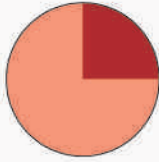
“There are bobcats that live right around our house and eat the squirrels!”

still allow some land outside the boundary to urbanize; this leaves much of the county under only medium protection. Nonetheless, San Mateo has a relatively low level of land at risk of suburban sprawl (only 6%) because most land outside the boundary has steep slopes and is difficult to develop. Much of the threat to open space in the county is primarily from rural estate homes on large, undeveloped parcels of land.

The most controversial development site in San Mateo County in recent years is the 1400-acre Cargill salt ponds site in Redwood City; a developer is proposing to restore a portion of the site to wetlands and develop a portion as homes, parks, and sports facilities.

LANDS AT RISK San Mateo County

Lands At Risk



Size of circle represents proportion of total acres at risk relative to other counties

At Risk	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	111,000	38.6%
Low Risk	86,700	30.1%
Medium Risk	14,000	4.9%
High Risk	3,600	1.3%
Urban	72,400	25.2%
Total	287,700	100.1%



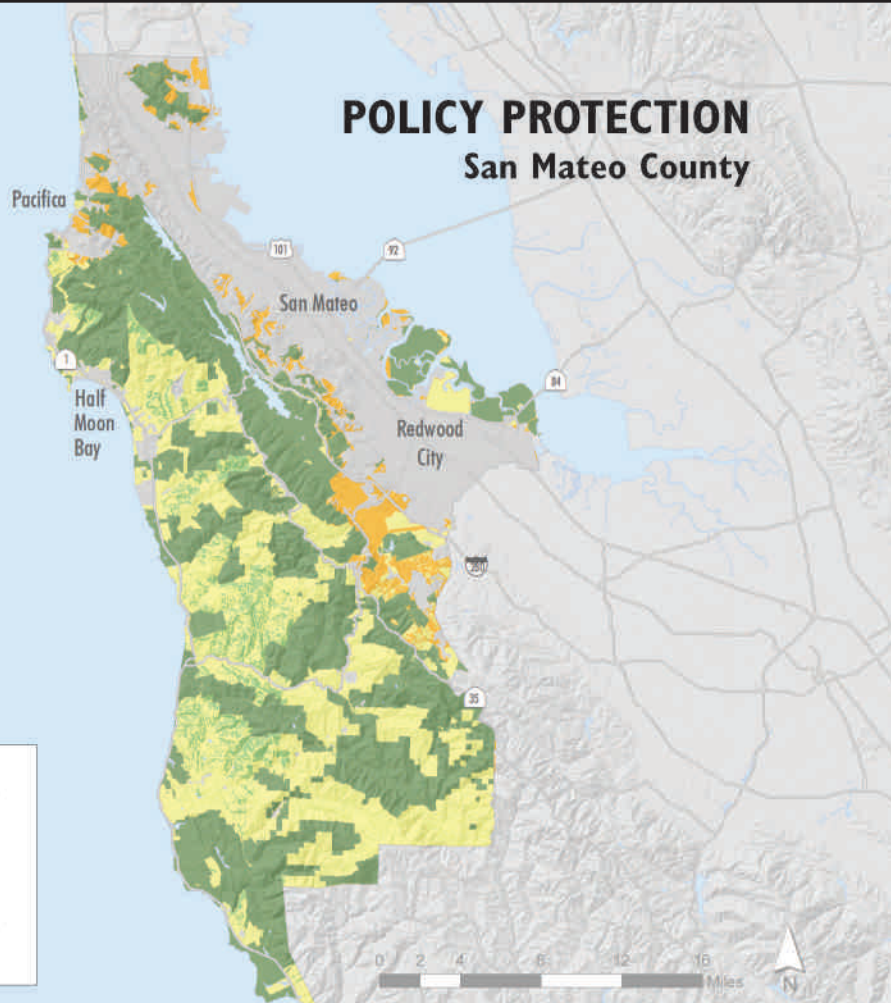
POLICY PROTECTION San Mateo County

Policy Protection



Size of circle represents proportion of total acres protected relative to other counties

Protection	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	111,000	38.6%
High Protection	11,400	4.0%
Medium Protection	79,500	27.6%
Low Protection	13,400	4.7%
Urban	72,400	25.2%
Total	287,700	100.1%



For definitions of risk and protection levels see page 4.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY



Mark Medeiros co-founded San Jose's Veggielution.

Mark Medeiros grew up in a rural community between Morgan Hill and Gilroy. He saw firsthand why Santa Clara County was known as the “Valley of Heart’s Delight” for its abundant fresh food.

When Mark saw company after company springing up in Silicon Valley—paving over acres of agricultural land—he found a passion in advocating for protection of the region’s remaining farmland. As a student at San Jose State, he became active in the fight to protect Coyote Valley from development. Thanks to the hard work of Mark and many other residents, San Jose’s newly adopted General

Plan puts development of much of Coyote Valley off the table through 2040. Other historic threats from the past—such as development proposals in Sargent Ranch south of Gilroy—have also eased in recent years.

Many threats remain in Santa Clara County; over 63,400 acres of land are still at risk. Gilroy is an attractive area for development that too often is sprawl. Gilroy’s intent to move its future high speed rail station out of downtown and onto prime agricultural land poses a significant risk, as does rural parcelization of agricultural land in San Martin south of Morgan Hill.

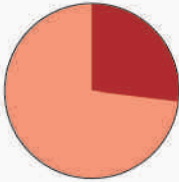
“I love connecting people back to the land—just a few generations ago, almost everyone grew their own food.”

Fortunately, more people are working to sustain and enhance the county’s agricultural heritage in both the greenbelt as well as urban farms in cities. Mark is one of them—he co-founded Veggielution, a 2-acre nonprofit community farm that grew 22,000 pounds of food in 2011 and educates hundreds of people about organic gardening each year. The county has begun a Food Systems Alliance to focus on improving access to healthy food and helping local agriculture become more viable.

These exciting developments, combined with a renewed focus on infill development by San Jose, the region’s largest city, mean Santa Clara County residents may finally be able to enjoy the benefits of both Silicon Valley and the Valley of Heart’s Delight.

LANDS AT RISK Santa Clara County

Lands At Risk



Size of circle represents proportion of total acres at risk relative to other counties

At Risk	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	229,800	27.7%
Low Risk	346,100	41.8%
Medium Risk	46,200	5.6%
High Risk	17,200	2.1%
Urban	189,000	22.8%
Total	828,300	100%

0 2 4 6 12 16 Miles



POLICY PROTECTION Santa Clara County

Policy Protection



Size of circle represents proportion of total acres protected relative to other counties

Protection	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	229,800	27.7%
High Protection	11,600	1.4%
Medium Protection	365,400	44.1%
Low Protection	32,500	3.9%
Urban	189,000	22.8%
Total	828,300	99.9%

0 2 4 6 12 16 Miles



For definitions of risk and protection levels see page 4.

SOLANO COUNTY



Les Barclay farms walnuts in Solano County.

Les Barclay, a Bay Area native, once lived in Hawaii but he missed northern California's weather, trails, open space, and wildlife. "I'm an outdoor enthusiast," he says. "The Bay Area has the most diverse land that is protected of any urban area." A member of the Native Plant Society, he often hikes in Rockville Hills Regional Park.

He bought a 16-acre walnut farm outside Fairfield in 2000. The nuts are harvested in October and taken to a processing facility in the central valley. The shortage of nearby processing plants is a challenge he shares with others. "The price of fuel means the driver has increased what he charges us," Les says.

He's seen a lot of change in Solano County, including some poorly planned growth. He credits Solano's Orderly Growth Initiative, originally approved in 1984 and renewed by voters in 2008, for protecting agricultural land. "It's the primary reason Solano has its beautiful, uncluttered open space between cities," he says.

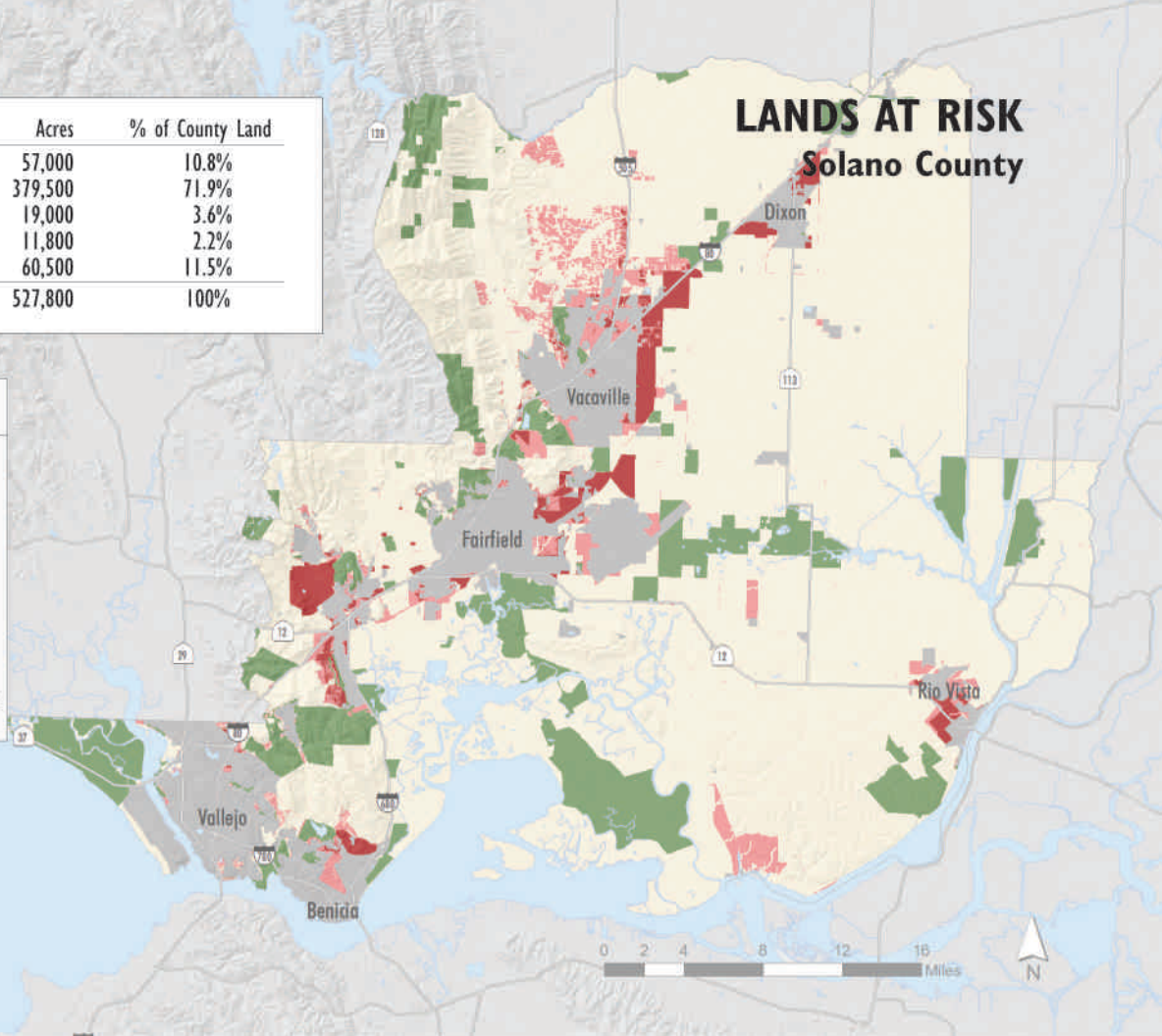
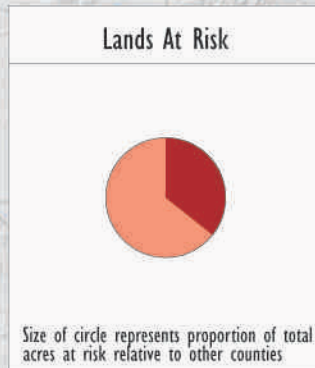
The renewal of the initiative was a fight, and Les helped write letters to the editor and met with growers to explain the benefits of the measure. It passed with nearly 70% of the vote. The Orderly Growth Initiative is the main reason that 73% of Solano's greenbelt lands enjoy a high level of protection.

"Solano has beautiful, uncluttered open space between cities."

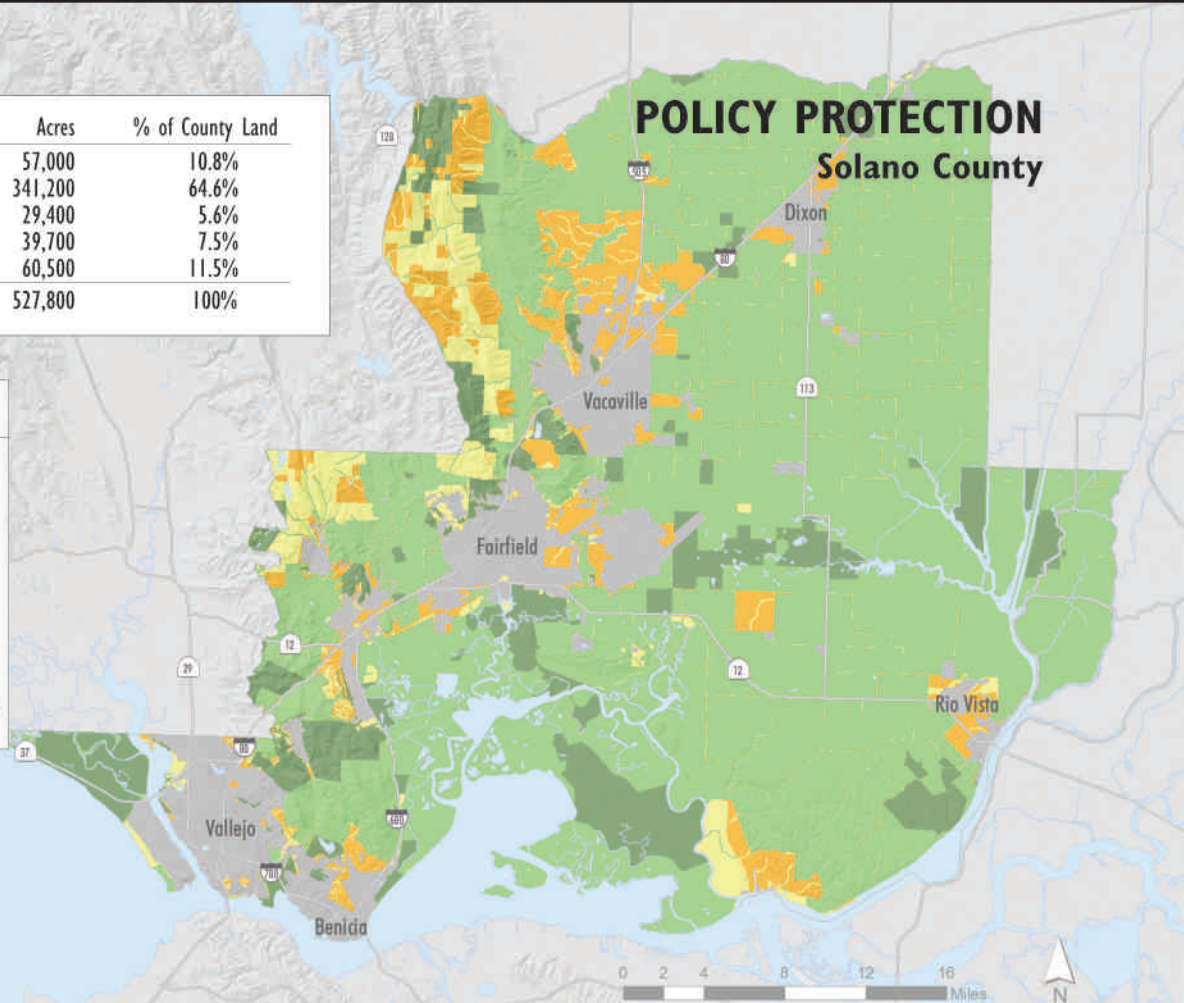
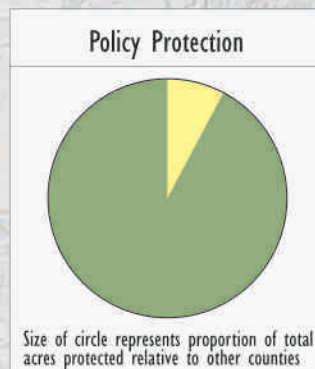
Yet over 30,800 acres remain at high and medium risk of development in the county. The Dixon Ridge area outside the city is some of the Bay Area's best farmland. Dixon—located along the I-80 corridor within easy commuting distance of Sacramento—lacks an urban growth boundary, leaving adjacent agricultural land vulnerable to sprawl.

Solano County is expanding opportunities for agri-tourism as a way to generate revenue. The only county in the Bay Area without an Open Space District, Solano could add one to help protect its natural areas as well as promote its agricultural heritage.

At Risk	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	57,000	10.8%
Low Risk	379,500	71.9%
Medium Risk	19,000	3.6%
High Risk	11,800	2.2%
Urban	60,500	11.5%
Total	527,800	100%



Protection	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	57,000	10.8%
High Protection	341,200	64.6%
Medium Protection	29,400	5.6%
Low Protection	39,700	7.5%
Urban	60,500	11.5%
Total	527,800	100%



SONOMA COUNTY



Lucas Murillo is influencing the next generation to care for the environment.

“People here want to preserve the environment, like it’s part of preserving their backyard.”

Lucas Murillo spends many days introducing kids to the natural world. An AmeriCorps member for Conservation Corps North Bay, Lucas builds trails and manages invasive plants at Pepperwood Preserve near Santa Rosa. He also teaches elementary school students. “It’s funny to hear what the kids say—‘will we see tigers?’” Lucas says. “It’s great to introduce them to the outdoors, and to tell them they can go to their local park and see the same thing.”

A graduate of the University of California at Santa Cruz, Lucas grew up in Concord, hiking Mount Diablo. Sonoma County is a new

home for him. “It is so green compared to where I come from,” he says. “People here want to preserve the environment, like it’s part of preserving their backyard.”

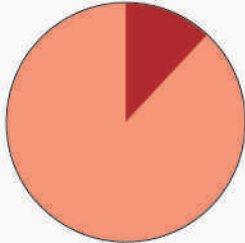
The next decade will be important for Sonoma County. While it can proudly boast urban growth boundaries around each of its nine cities, the county lands remain open. Rural residential development of these properties continues to pose the single largest threat to preserving productive farm and ranch land, and disrupts contiguous wildlife habitat. Over 250,000 acres of Sonoma County’s green-belt remains minimally protected;

another nearly 500,000 acres have only medium protection. Innovative growth management measures may be necessary to protect these vital lands.

Protecting the landscape is important to Sonoma County residents; in 2006, 76% of voters supported reauthorizing the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District for another 20 years with a 25-cent sales tax. Smart land management practices combined with the permanent protection work of the Sonoma Land Trust and others will benefit wildlife and residents.

LANDS AT RISK Sonoma County

Lands At Risk



Size of circle represents proportion of total acres at risk relative to other counties

At Risk	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	171,200	16.9%
Low Risk	649,200	64.2%
Medium Risk	101,700	10.1%
High Risk	13,800	1.4%
Urban	74,800	7.4%
Total	1,010,700	100%



POLICY PROTECTION Sonoma County

Policy Protection



Size of circle represents proportion of total acres protected relative to other counties

Protection	Acres	% of County Land
Permanent Protection	171,200	16.9%
High Protection	7,900	0.8%
Medium Protection	499,600	25.4%
Low Protection	257,200	49.4%
Urban	74,800	7.4%
Total	1,010,700	99.9%



INVESTING IN BAY AREA LANDS

It is not enough to simply protect Bay Area natural and agricultural lands from development. The region needs to nurture and steward those lands to make sure they continue to thrive and provide benefits to residents.

Agricultural lands provide fresh, affordable food from local farms and ranches. These landscapes provide significant economic benefits as well. Bay Area agriculture earned \$1.8 billion in 2010, and the wine industry generates \$9.5 billion annually in Napa County alone. But farmers in the Bay Area face challenges that make it difficult to make a living. Farmers and ranchers need help to stay in business.

The Bay Area's natural lands provide clean drinking water, clean air, and protection from disasters like flooding, landslides, and climate change. For example, using natural lands to filter our water and control flooding saves money compared to expensive filtration plants and levees. Diverse habitats support a broad array of native plants and animals, and our beaches, forests, regional parks and trails help California's families stay healthy. Muir Woods and other famed landscapes help make the Bay Area a top tourist destination.

Natural lands also contribute to the region's economic competitiveness. Open spaces rich with accessible parks and trails to get to them, and a plethora of local food options contribute to a high quality of life. That quality of life attracts a talented workforce, encouraging businesses to locate and stay here.

But without ongoing stewardship, the region could lose those benefits. It's essential to provide resources to restore and maintain natural areas to allow imperiled species to recover and prevent invasive species from displacing native plants and animals. And we need renewed funding for ongoing maintenance and operations to keep parks safe, clean, and open to the public.

Here are just a few examples of the many ways to invest in Bay Area lands.

Helping agriculture

The ingredients exist for Bay Area agriculture to thrive. Consumer demand for local food is high, farmers want to provide more to the market, and there is local farmland available for additional production. "There's land, there's labor, and there's a market," affirms Bob Corshen of the Community Alliance with Family Farmers. But farmers need help to stay in business, to expand their markets, and even to increase their acreage.

One example of a way to help is to solve the problem of food distribution. Farmers find that packaging and delivering food to multiple locations is time-consuming and inefficient. Life is much easier—and profitable—when there is a central location to deliver produce. These hubs make distribution more efficient and make sure extra food isn't wasted.

Over two dozen wholesale food distributors in the Sonoma County area supply restaurants, hospitals, hotels, and schools that are clamoring for locally grown produce. While the distributors can't go to every farm to pick up vegetables and fruits, they are willing to go to a central distribution point. People's





Harvest, a fresh food processing center and distribution hub for local farmers, is set to open in Petaluma in late spring 2012. This will help farmers access new customers and sell more food without having to travel to multiple markets. People's Harvest will also chop and pack a farmer's produce, since many institutional customers want food already prepared.

Facilities like People's Harvest make farming much more financially workable for local farmers, and increase the availability—and reduce the price—of locally grown food for consumers. But these facilities require start-up capital and operations funding for ongoing management. This is an opportunity to make a concrete improvement in the viability of agricultural enterprises.

Sustaining natural habitats and watersheds

The region needs funding to maintain wildlife corridors and lakes and rivers to remain sustainable for biodiversity and Bay Area residents. Jurisdictions could look to the South Bay for a solution.

Habitat Conservation Plans, which a number of counties use, are an example of one way to steward land. Santa Clara County is on the cusp of adopting a Habitat Conservation Plan, which will protect, enhance, and restore natural resources in specific areas of the county. Through acquisition of land as well as long-term management, enhancement, and in some cases restoration of natural communities, the plan will contribute to the recovery of endangered species, safeguard water quality by protecting and improving key watershed areas, and increase recreational areas and public access to parks and trails.

But investment is needed to make Santa Clara County's plan a reality. The cost of implementing the plan is approximately \$15 million annually. Over the 50-year life of the plan, \$80 million is needed for habitat and watershed restoration, and \$16 million for recreation and public access. Over half of the funds will come from mitigation fees paid by private developers, but significant additional funding will be needed as well.



Supporting parks

Bay Area residents are fortunate to have protected open space to enjoy yet it's in danger of neglect. The region needs resources to keep state, regional, and local parks and trails open and well-maintained so that residents can truly reap the benefits.

Funding for California's parks has declined in recent years due to state budget cuts. Throughout the state, parks are at risk of being closed to the public due to lack of funding. When Governor Brown took office in 2011 his budget called for a reduction of \$22 million in spending on state parks. The Department of Parks and Recreation released a list of 70 parks proposed for closure in response. While many of these parks have been able to stay open through innovative public-private partnerships, the 2012-13 state budget contains more proposed cuts to California's state park system, leaving the fate of dozens of parks in question.

Local parks and trails are also at risk. The brand new Cowell-Purisima Coastal trail in San Mateo County thankfully has funding from the California Coastal Conservancy for operation and maintenance of the trail until 2014. But after that, unless another government agency or nonprofit takes over day-to-day management of this long-awaited and beautifully situated trail, it may be forced to close.



CONCLUSION

Every decision for what happens on Bay Area land—whether for homes, planted fields, or nurtured wild-life habitat—should be carefully weighed. The right balance is one that will improve the quality of life for future generations and protect natural and working lands.

Although Bay Area residents and leaders have made good progress in slowing sprawl since the first *At Risk* report was published in 1989, the global threat of climate change demands that we create a sustainable region. The Bay Area needs to safeguard farms so people have healthy, fresh food; to protect watersheds and forests that capture water and carbon; and to construct homes in places where people don't need to drive, improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas pollution.

These times demand that Bay Area residents and leaders take the next step beyond protection and preservation. If we truly value the gorgeous hills, valleys, and farms of the Bay Area, we must invest in making farming and ranching a sustainable livelihood. We also need to recognize the value of our wild spaces and waterways. And the economy thrives when people are drawn to work and live in places where there are opportunities for recreation and a healthy lifestyle.

At Greenbelt Alliance, we know place matters. The Bay Area is beautiful and a world-class metropolis. It will take strong leadership to invest in what makes the region special—its diverse geography and people. To make the Bay Area a great place for future generations, it will take the combined solutions of preservation, policy protection, and stewardship.



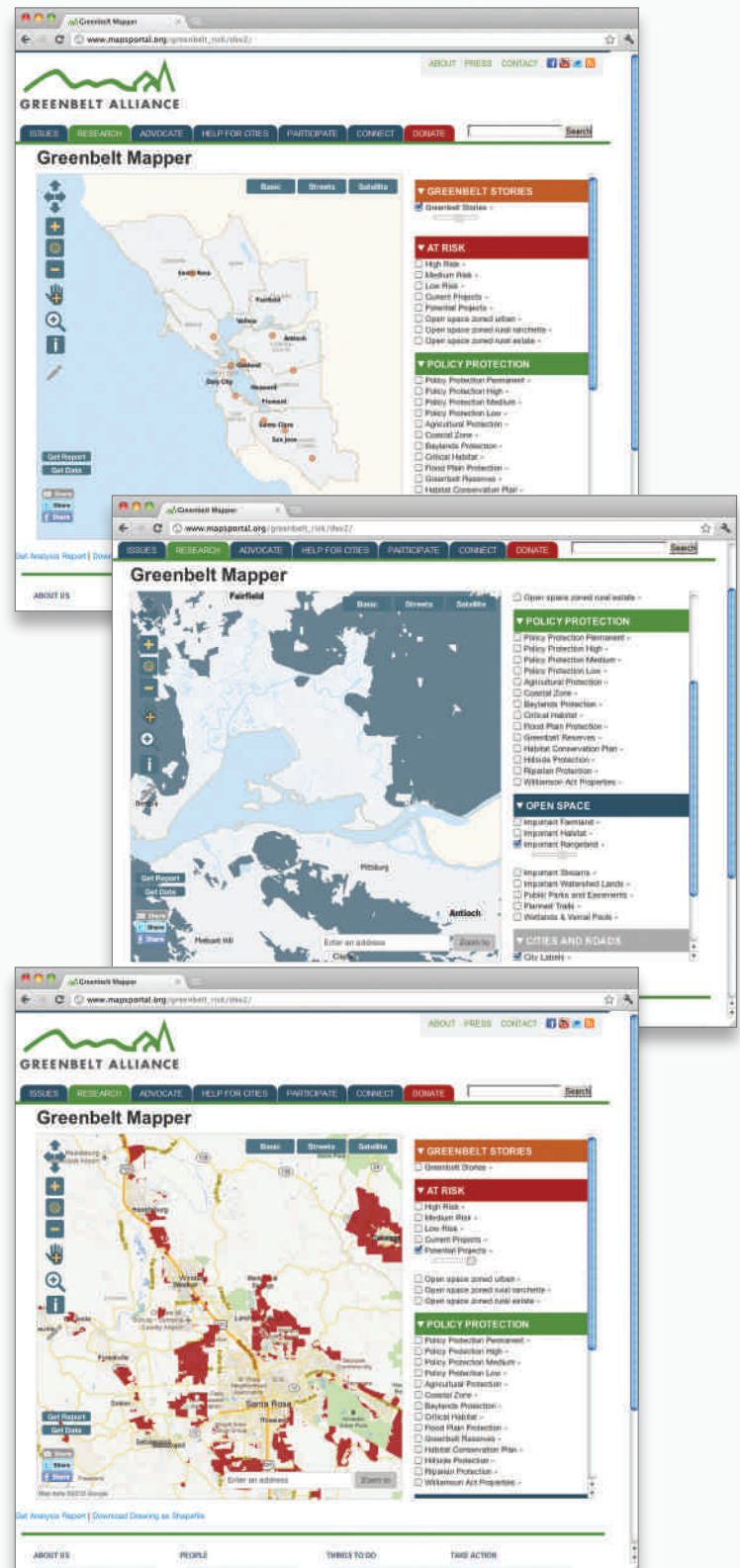
GREENBELT MAPPER

The complexity of the Bay Area's greenbelt is best understood online. The Greenbelt Mapper, an interactive online map, showcases where land is zoned for development, where growth management measures are in place, and the many values open space provides.

The Greenbelt Mapper shows precisely what policies—such as urban growth boundaries, agricultural protection measures, or hillside ordinances—are in place over every square inch of land in the region. This can help determine which measures work and prioritize future policy measures to adopt.

The Greenbelt Mapper also includes detailed information about the intrinsic values of the Bay Area's lands, identifying farms and ranchlands, water resource lands, parks and trails, and critical wildlife habitat. For example, you can use the Greenbelt Mapper to view important water resource lands overlapped with lands at high risk for development. Seeing the value of the land combined with information about which lands are most at risk presents a clear picture of what places should be prioritized for preservation and investment.

To visit the interactive Greenbelt Mapper, go to greenbelt.org/greenbelt-mapper.



METHODOLOGY

At Risk: The Bay Area Greenbelt 2012, through a detailed spatial analysis, tries to answer the question, how much of a threat does sprawl pose to the greenbelt?

The analysis captures land use and planning data in three primary categories: 1) development pressure, 2) policy protection, and 3) open space value. The At Risk map showing likelihood of development within 10 to 30 years is derived by directly comparing the pressure to build on open spaces against the policies enacted to keep them preserved. Visit the Greenbelt Mapper at greenbelt.org/greenbelt-mapper to explore more.

The development pressure category comprises information on market activity, zoning and growth projections, as well as locational

pressures on open space. These values are added on top of each other to give a cumulative score, with those strongest development factors receiving a greater relative score. For example, a proposed project in the approval process is given a greater relative score than undeveloped open space zoned for rural residential dwellings.

The policy protection category is similarly an aggregate of policy measures enacted that protect the land from development, such as urban growth boundaries, agricultural protections, and hillside ordinances. Then the development pressure category and the policy protection category are scored against each other; the resulting combination provides the final numbers.

A third component, the value of the Bay Area landscape, deepens our understanding. The Mapper allows you to see where wildlife habitat, recreational lands, cultivated areas, and water resources cover the region. Taken together with the development and protection categories, the assessment of the region's lands empowers the Bay Area community to make more informed decisions about the future of the landscape for this and the next generations.

For a complete methodology report with resources used, see greenbelt.org/research/at-risk/methodology.

