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October 6, 2015

**New poll: Sonoma County voters want more greenbelts***Seventy-five percent would vote yes to renew and expand community separators in Sonoma County*

Santa Rosa, Calif. — A new survey of Sonoma County voters commissioned by Greenbelt Alliance found that 75 percent would definitely or most likely vote “yes” on a potential county ballot measure to renew *and expand* protections from sprawl for greenbelt lands designated as community separators between Sonoma County’s towns and cities.

“The polling results show that Sonoma County voters overwhelmingly support protecting *and* expanding our greenbelts,” said Teri Shore, Regional Director for Greenbelt Alliance in Santa Rosa. “We need to renew and add to community separators or risk losing more agricultural lands and open space to housing tracts, malls and big box stores.”

The existing protections for community separators that voters approved by 70 percent nearly two decades ago expire at the end of 2016. Greenbelt Alliance and its allies are now calling on the Board of Supervisors to go beyond a renewal to strengthen protections and add priority greenbelts to community separators. The Board of Supervisors is expected to vote on October 13 on whether to just renew or to strengthen and expand community separators with a ballot measure in 2016.

**Key findings of the Sonoma countywide voter survey on community separators:**

- Seventy-five percent initially supported renewing and adding greenbelt lands to community separators, rising to 78 percent by the end of the poll.
- Sixty-seven percent would view their supervisors more favorably if they placed a measure to renew and expand community separators on the ballot.
- Though just 37 percent are aware of community separators, among that group 89 percent say they have had a positive impact on their community.
- A majority of respondents support permanent or long-term (50 years) protection of community separators.

The survey was conducted for Greenbelt Alliance by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates, Inc., based in Oakland, Calif. ([Read the survey summary.](#))

About 17,000 acres of agricultural and natural lands in eight areas are designated as community separators around Sonoma County ([see maps](#)). They serve as green buffers and hold back sprawl, complementing urban growth boundaries around cities. Community separators also protect agricultural lands, waterways, woodlands and wildlife habitat from development. ([Learn more about community separators.](#))

Priority additions should include lands around Penngrove and between Cloverdale and Healdsburg that are identified for designation in the 2020 General Plan. Groundwater recharge areas, prime agricultural lands and wildlife habitat should also be considered for community separator designation for long-term preservation.

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Greenbelt Alliance addresses how the Bay Area handles growth. The organization shapes the rules that govern growth to protect the region's open spaces and to ensure our towns and neighborhoods are amazing places for everyone. [greenbelt.org](http://greenbelt.org)

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