

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



A MESSAGE FROM THE GREENBELT ALLIANCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Amanda Brown-Stevens
Executive Director

Looking back on 2020 will be a fraught experience for years to come. We witnessed struggles and suffering around the region and around the world as we adjusted to the health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We witnessed individual and community resilience as people came together to support each other and adjust to difficult circumstances. We also saw the already significant holes in our community fabric being pulled apart. As climate change brings more uncertainty and an increase in hazards to our region, we are looking hard at the lessons of 2020 to knit together a stronger and more resilient community to face future challenges.

This year reinforced for us that **racial justice and climate justice are one and the same**. We must understand and acknowledge how land-use policy in the past has been used to uphold racial inequality and ensure that our future planning unwinds this disgraceful legacy. This is essential to building a more resilient and equitable region. It means we need to redouble our efforts to focus on the communities most in need. As we educate, advocate, and collaborate to build climate resilience, we're creating deeper and stronger connections and partnerships across sectors around the region. Examples of this work include connecting affordable housing advocates to community members, protecting fire prone land from development, and connecting open space advocates to community members to support new homes near jobs and away from climate hazards.

More than ever, we have been driven and inspired by the **power of nature** in all of our work this year. California's natural lands provide solace in difficult times giving us places to get outside, exercise, and connect. They are also a significant resource in curbing the effects of climate change while protecting our communities from climate-driven events such as wildfires, floods, droughts, and extreme heat.

The power of nature reduces greenhouse gas emissions, thereby slowing climate change via natural and working lands that store carbon and remove it from the atmosphere. Governor Newsom's recently announced 30x30 challenge—to conserve 30% of the state's land and coastal waters by 2030—shows a growing awareness of these benefits across California.

As we look forward to the next year, we know that we as a region must continue to adapt to uncertainty. And while remaining hopeful that the pandemic will be under control, rather than going “back to normal,” we'll continue to build bridges, embrace innovative policy and planning ideas, and center equity and racial justice in all of our work. For example, we are analyzing the Bay Area's lands at greatest risk of multiple climate hazards as well as lands offering greatest resilience benefits to people and ecosystems. In this work, we are examining the role that natural and working lands can play in protecting communities from climate impacts, deliberately focusing on low-income communities and communities of color most affected by events like wildfires, severe flooding, and heat waves.

With this research in hand, Greenbelt Alliance will have a shortlist of Bay Area Resilience Hotspots and policy recommendations on ways to protect and steward these areas to unlock multiple climate resilience benefits—building toward the equitable, resilient future we need.

Amanda Brown-Stevens
Greenbelt Alliance Executive Director

“THE WORK THE ALLIANCE IS GOING TO DO—REALLY HELPING TO IDENTIFY THESE RESILIENCE HOTSPOTS—WILL BE CRITICAL TO OUR AGENCY'S INVESTMENTS IN COMING YEARS.”

WADE CROWFOOT, CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

PROTECTING OPEN SPACE FOR A CLIMATE-RESILIENT FUTURE

2020 was a big year for Greenbelt Alliance. We managed to navigate the barriers presented by COVID-19 to achieve some very significant wins that are critical to a climate-resilient Bay Area. With the support of our dedicated community, in just one year we were able to strengthen growth boundaries and invest in our natural and agricultural lands, protecting the nature-based resources that are so vital to advancing the region's climate goals.

Many of these open space wins followed months or even years of planning, collaboration, organizing, and relentless advocacy leading up to the November 2020 election. As a result, we were able to protect 1,200 acres in Antioch's Sand Creek area from sprawl development by passing Measure T. Known for its majestic rolling hills and open expanses, the area provides a host of natural benefits, including critical wildlife habitat, recharge of groundwater supplies, carbon sequestration, and well-loved walking routes and scenic vistas. We also worked with the community in Sonoma to pass Measure W with an overwhelming 79% majority to renew the city's Urban Growth Boundary for another 20 years. Measure W contains the strongest land-use mandate for affordable housing in Sonoma's history—requiring that 100% of any land added to the UGB must be used for affordable housing, and that 51% of that land must be used to provide housing for low- and very low-income residents.

The growth boundaries used to achieve these wins are an effective way to protect natural and working lands, and they also help to curb sprawl. As we increase our housing opportunities and options, we need to do so in a safe, sustainable way to create resilient communities for generations to come.

“...WE CAN'T TAKE OUR CLIMATE OR WILDLANDS FOR GRANTED AS WE'VE LOST OVER 4 MILLION ACRES OF NATURE FROM THE FIRES THIS YEAR. THE POWER OF NATURE IS UNDENIABLE AND GREENBELT IS DOING THE WORK!”

LIBBY SCHAAF, MAYOR OF OAKLAND



1,200 ACRES

1,200 acres of open space lands protected.



20 YEARS

Urban Growth Boundary renewed for another 20 years. 100% of any land added must be 100% affordable.



82 PERCENT

In November 2020, 82% of voters across the Bay Area passed measures that protect and invest in the region's open space.

DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES THE CLIMATE SMART WAY

Greenbelt Alliance believes that in order to build resilience, the housing and climate crises must be addressed together, using nature-based solutions to steer climate SMART—Sustainable, Mixed, Affordable, Resilient, Transit-Oriented—policy. That’s why we’re proud that in addition to protecting critical open spaces, we were able to endorse 9 climate SMART development projects in 7 cities across the region. These developments could bring nearly 8,500 new homes to the Bay Area, of which 20% will be affordable!

Climate SMART development impacts more than just our housing crisis. When we build homes in walkable neighborhoods, close to public transit, we’re reducing greenhouse gas emissions by taking cars off the road. When we build homes within existing urban areas, we reduce the pressure to build on our open spaces—increasing our resilience to climate-related risks like flooding, wildfire, and drought. And when we build homes in walkable neighborhoods with access to green space, we improve our quality of life—something we’ve found to be invaluable during COVID-19.

Upon reflection on these victories, we’ve realized that we’re on a bit of a roll—a five-year winning streak to be exact! In fact, over the past five years, Greenbelt Alliance, along with our partners and supporters, have protected at least 70,000 acres of natural and working lands while also spurring the approval of over 16,000 new climate SMART homes.

See the full impact of these wins on our timeline:
greenbelt.org/climate-resilience-wins

THE IMPACT 9 SMART DEVELOPMENTS CAN MAKE ON THE BAY AREA



8,465 HOMES

The number of new climate SMART homes Greenbelt Alliance endorsed in 2020, advocating for inclusive development in the right places



122,932 MILES

Decrease in miles driven every day*



48 PERCENT

Decrease in daily greenhouse gas impacts*

*Compared to county average according to GreenTrip Connect



PHOTO BY SHIRA BEZALEL

CREATING A LASTING LEGACY

John Erskine was the son of one of Greenbelt Alliance’s founders, Dorothy Erskine. Dorothy was a progenitor of “smart growth environmentalism” long before that term even existed. She truly understood, well ahead of many others, that saving open space and farmland requires redirecting growth into existing cities. With a mother like Dorothy, it made sense that John took a natural liking to the outdoors. From early childhood with his parents, John explored the Sierras, and in later years enjoyed backpacking—developing an intimate knowledge of the southern Sierra. As a fourth generation San Franciscan he understood the importance of having access to nature while still being able to live within thriving communities and city centers.

Dorothy passed on her knowledge to John who served on the Board of Directors of Greenbelt Alliance from 1985 through 1997. In 1993, John nominated Greenbelt Alliance for the Helen Crocker Russell Award, which was made to nonprofit organizations that improved the quality of life in the Bay Area through programs in the arts, humanities, recreation, or environmental protection. Greenbelt Alliance received the award that year! His leadership helped to shape the amazing places of the Bay Area and protect the region’s open spaces. We are most appreciative of his service and that he not only supported Greenbelt Alliance during his lifetime, but also made a commitment through his bequest to continue to support our vital work.

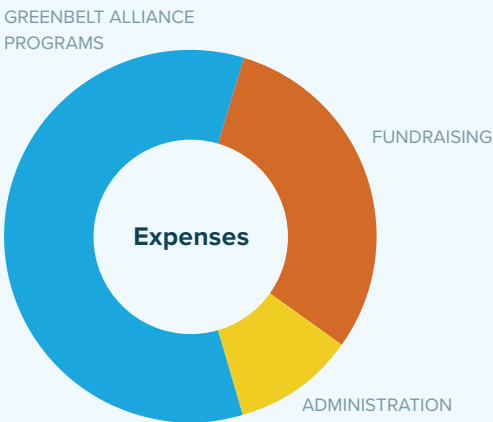
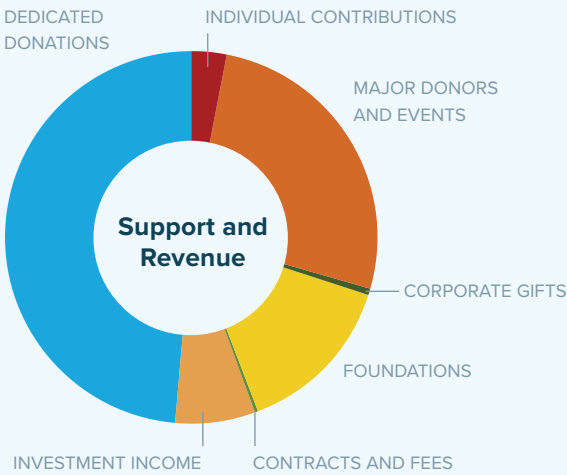


John Erskine (left.)

As we embark on our new vision for the future of the Bay Area, Dorothy’s and John’s legacies live on through our mission. Gifts like these allow Greenbelt Alliance to grow upon over 60-years of success throughout the region, and will be invested in our public policy and conservation efforts both today and for years to come.

Interested in leaving your legacy like John?
Learn more about our Planned Giving program at:
greenbelt.org/planned-giving

FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Statement of Activities

Fiscal Year: October 2019 to September 2020

Support and Revenue	\$3,024,238
Individual Contributions	\$98,928
Major Donors and Events	\$793,805
Corporate Gifts	\$18,907
Foundations	\$425,000
Contracts and Fees	\$13,680
Investment Income	\$206,697
Dedicated Donations	\$1,467,221

Expenses	\$1,802,890
PROGRAM SERVICES	
Greenbelt Alliance Programs	\$1,067,338
SUPPORTING SERVICES	
Administration	\$194,339
Fundraising	\$541,213

Statement of Financial Position

As of September 30, 2020

Assets	\$4,101,959
Current	\$2,156,274
Endowment	\$1,932,344
Other Assets	\$13,341
Liabilities	\$348,503
Net Assets	\$3,753,456

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Savor the Greenbelt is our annual fundraising event to support Greenbelt Alliance's programs.

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Our Sonoma Leadership Council comprises donors who have contributed \$1,000 or more in support of our work in Sonoma County.

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Jack Kent Jr. Legacy Society members are donors who have named Greenbelt Alliance in their will.

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The Greenbelt Alliance Leadership Circle is a society open to those who give \$5,000 or more during a single fiscal year (Oct. 1 to Sept. 30). Their willingness to champion our work of creating a more sustainable and inclusive future has a substantial impact on our mission. Learn more at greenbelt.org/leadershipcircle or contact Nora: ncullinen@greenbelt.org.

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