

# **17 Acres of Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Land**

presented by: Kathryn Mathewson, Linda Perrine,  
and Friends of BAREC

Requesting Support from:

**Santa Clara County Supervisor**

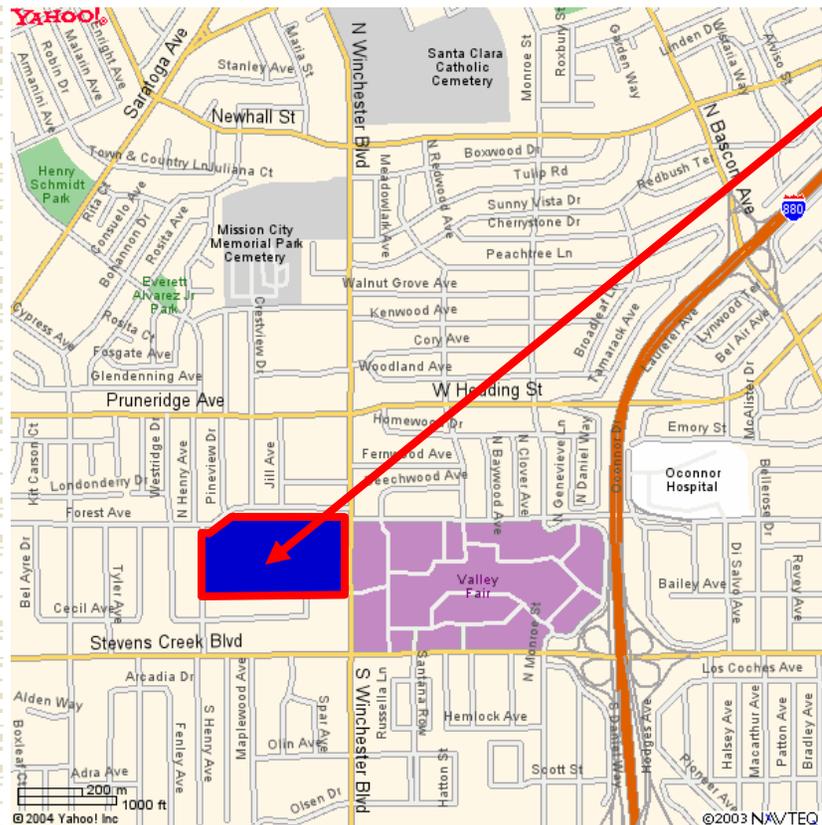
**Jim Beall**

**To Save Prime Valley Farmland for Agricultural  
and Environmental Education Purposes**

*September 16, 2005*

# What is *BAREC*?

## Why should it be preserved?



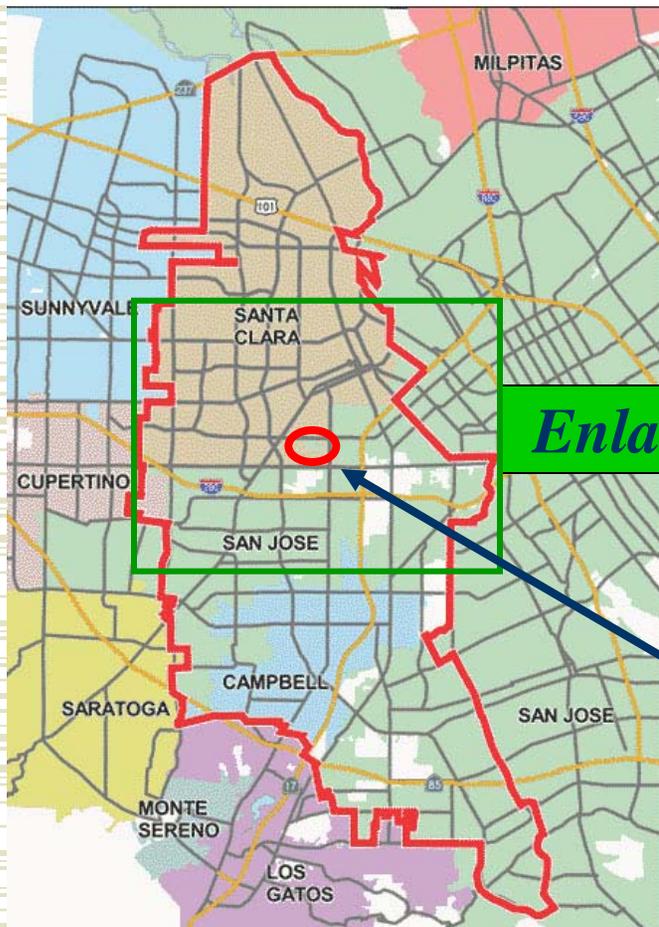
Bay Area Research and Extension Center  
90 N. Winchester Blvd.  
Santa Clara, California

*These 17 acres have been owned by The State of California since the 1920's and were used for both Horticultural and Agricultural research.*

*It is the only remaining such property in a place once known as:*

*“The Valley of Heart’s Delight”*

# *Santa Clara County - District 4*



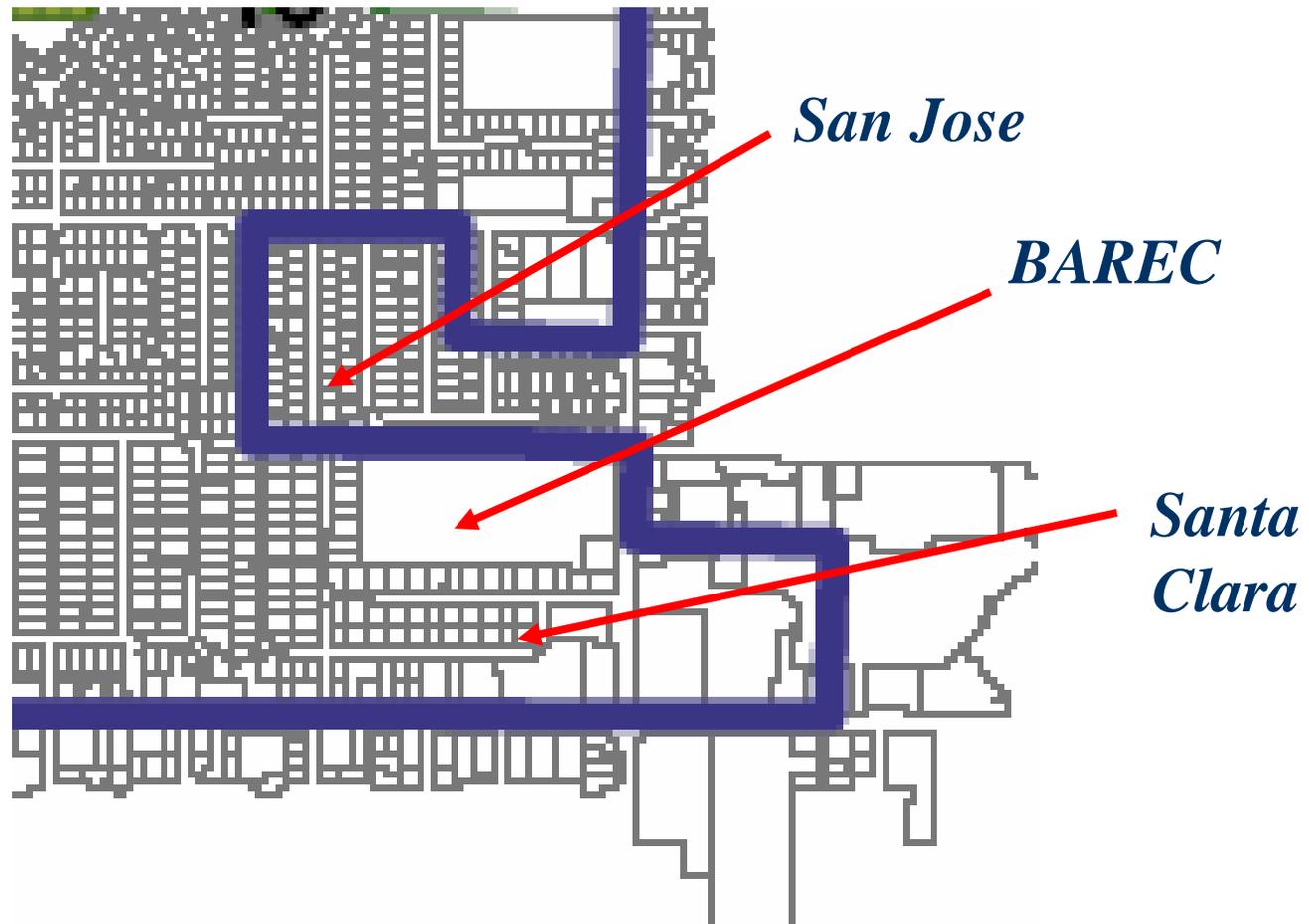
*Enlarged*



*BAREC is perfectly placed in the middle of the district*

Note: Map obtained from Supervisor Beall's web site  
<http://www.scc-assessor.org/scc/assets/docs/157287d4map.pdf>

# *BAREC is Shared Between Two Cities*



# *Open Space in a Concrete Jungle*



## *Brief History*



- ◆ UC-Cooperative Extension owned and used BAREC from 1952 until January 2003, and then it returned to the State
- ◆ Unique historical property serving first the local community and then the agricultural community since 1850's
  - Research done on many crops (strawberries, garlic, fruit), irrigation, drought sod, disease control including native plants, and compost vital to San Jose's present Green Waste Program (which should be introduced to all SCC cities)
- ◆ Existing resources include: agricultural zoning, prime valley soil, 1920's buildings, shops, greenhouses, irrigation, orchard, garden beds, two wells, historical weather station, power and electrical, and a central location with easy access to public transit
- ◆ BAREC supported local school groups and agriculture/horticulture professionals since the 1920s; SCC schools and professionals could lose BAREC as a resource with no replacement

# *Current Status of BAREC*



- ◆ BAREC is not officially sold yet! Status is “Sale Pending.”  
Steps remaining:
  - Completion of Environmental Impact Report and 45 day public comment period
  - Develop and execute an adequate plan to clean up soil contamination
  - Prove that BAREC is not historically significant
  - Santa Clara City Council must vote to change the zoning from “agricultural” to “medium density housing”
- ◆ The non-profit VIVA Foundation has offered to buy BAREC for the appraised value of \$170K (agricultural zoned price)
- ◆ The Guadalupe Coyote Resource Conservation District has written the State stating they need BAREC as agricultural open space to support their mission
- ◆ Community meetings have standing room only community support. The community is prepared to have a Referendum if the Santa Clara City Council changes BAREC's zoning

# *Soil Contamination Issues Surrounding BAREC*



- ◆ BAREC has been an experimental research station for chemicals since the 1920s. Its soil is contaminated from many kinds of chemicals, both known and unknown.
- ◆ The State's solution for cleaning up soil contamination is to remove the top foot of soil. This does not remove the problem.
- ◆ Chemicals are in gas form and throughout the soil strata.
- ◆ Recently DDT was found in the soil on State's land at Agnew State Hospital after housing was built. Watson Park in San Jose (East Jackson and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street) was recently closed for soil contamination (heavy metals were discovered on the site).
- ◆ EPA's research shows chemicals move through building foundations into the air of homes and offices.
- ◆ BAREC, our county, and the State need an inexpensive way to remove soil contamination. BAREC could be used as a Center of Excellence to create new technologies and businesses for our county, state, and nation.

# *Why is the future of BAREC a County Issue?*



- ◆ BAREC and the surrounding community were unincorporated and in the county for most of their history.
- ◆ In 1983 the City of Santa Clara annexed BAREC and two sides of it; San Jose annexed the other two sides.
- ◆ All the homes adjacent to BAREC have San Jose addresses and zip codes and must pay San Jose insurance rates.
- ◆ The State and UC had a San Jose address for its entire history; all research credit was given to San Jose.
- ◆ Citizens of Santa Clara near BAREC feel they are treated as second class citizens and their issues are not addressed by the City.
- ◆ Research and programs on BAREC were for the SCC, the State, and the nation. New jobs and skills result when this happens. The county needs more balance in its job market.

# *Why Should Santa Clara County Be Interested in BAREC?*



- ◆ This County, its residents and its children have an opportunity to create an educational farm/garden project on BAREC, open to the public, which would enhance the quality of life for future generations
- ◆ BAREC cannot be used until soil contamination is removed. Soil contamination is all over SCC creating many health problems.
- ◆ BAREC is set up as a research facility. The site can be used to research and clean up its soil and all the land the State is currently selling. It can also bring new technology ideas and jobs to market.
- ◆ Soil biology can clean up contamination inexpensively. California has no lab which studies soil biology/ecology. Soil Food Web will move from Oregon to BAREC.
- ◆ New technology like hydro-mechanical obliteration (developed in SCC) could revolutionize agriculture/horticulture, increase worker productivity by 300 percent, reduce health care costs, and create new jobs.

# *Why Should Santa Clara County Be Interested in BAREC?* (cont.)



- ◆ Universities would create new classes and degrees and professions on soil health.
- ◆ SCC has imbalanced educational programs with only one week of environmental education in K-12. College environmental studies departments have no land near them for coursework and research.
- ◆ The other Bay Area counties are further ahead of SCC on environmental education programs (Santa Cruz's Life Lab, UC Davis's Children's Garden, Livermore's Camp Arroyo Sustainable Living Center, Berkeley's Edible Schoolyard Program, Marin's Food System Project, and many on the internet: (<http://www.kidsgardening.org/School/registrysearch.taf>)).
- ◆ BAREC can be the center of a new revolution in soil health which translates to healthier food, plants, and people, and a less expensive government with less dependency on natural resources (oil, water, electricity).

# *Why Should Santa Clara County Be Interested in BAREC?* (cont.)



- ◆ UCSC Agroecology and Sustainable Systems Program has offered to help SCC with its ag/garden educational programs if it is on BAREC.
- ◆ BAREC is centrally located in the county/District 4 and has direct access to the public transit hub at Forest and Winchester, across from BAREC and behind Valley Fair
- ◆ SCC District 4 has **NO** county park and County parks should be special ecological or historical places. BAREC is unique. There is nothing comparable to BAREC in District 4, the Central Coast, or the Bay Area
- ◆ SCC has no public botanical garden or arboretum yet it has prime soil and climate along with a rich agricultural history
- ◆ BAREC could help reduce all of the above problems if it is allowed to remain in open space.
- ◆ BAREC could qualify as National Historical Register site; we are pursuing the application process.

# *Santa Clara County Lacks Adequate Open Space in the Valley*



- ◆ Large contiguous open spaces (not linear trails) near public transportation are needed on the Valley floor which are not next to freeways or under flyways
- ◆ Unincorporated neighborhoods near BAREC are missing at least 38 acres of open space per state's requirements
- ◆ West San Jose adjacent to BAREC is missing 20 plus acres of open space and its school open space has been reduced by more than 60 percent.
- ◆ SummerHill Homes recently built housing on our Valley's only large FFA (formerly Future Farmer's of America) one mile from BAREC.
- ◆ Schools near BAREC are losing their open space for development projects; “Sprawl” is even happening to our schools
- ◆ BAREC could offset this if it is allowed to remain as open space and be used as an educational sustainable garden & agriculture project
- ◆ Currently large open spaces are in mountains with no public transportation

# *Need To Localize Food Production*



- ◆ Our food travels on average at least 1,500 miles to our table
- ◆ We need to be concerned about our food security given the political climate
- ◆ We should be localizing some of our food and helping those most concerned to understand how to grow their own food.
- ◆ BAREC could be first step towards educating the public on the need to re-localize our food production back into the Santa Clara valley and train residents for highly efficient, sustainable food production in their yards similar to Victory Gardens of World War II
- ◆ Our country and the world is on the verge of a very challenging energy crisis given the demand and need for oil and natural gas (Peak Oil)

# *BAREC Provides SCC Great Opportunities*



- ◆ Vision for BAREC: Garden/Agriculture Programs to expand Environmental programs in SCC inspiring young people who could reinvent Silicon Valley environmentally (big business), develop a safer and healthier environment, and create a less expensive government and health care system.
- ◆ Independently funded and staffed through a non-profit (501c3)
  - Income generated from: grants, produce sold through Farmer's Markets, CSA and local school cafeterias, children's day care gardening programs, and educational programs
  - Provide hands-on gardening, agriculture, and nutrition education, meeting State science requirements and the federal government's new Wellness Program standards.
  - Learn how to clean up contaminated soils with a diversity of soil micro-organisms. This would remove many common diseases, create better food, and result in a less expensive health care system. BAREC could have the State's first soil testing lab for the soil's life.
  - Provide for sustainable local food systems which use less energy and are grown in healthy soil without chemicals
  - UCSC Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems Program would like to assist getting a program started in Santa Clara Valley on BAREC property

# *Educational Ag/Garden Program Beneficiaries*



- ◆ Curriculum for all grade levels in local schools (K-12)
  - Currently students receive one week of Environmental Ed in K-12
  - We will be making our case for BAREC to SCC Office of Education September 21, 2005
- ◆ All local colleges have expressed a need for BAREC in support of:
  - Environmental Studies, Horticulture, Natural History, Biology
- ◆ Teacher training in organic gardening
- ◆ Adult education (college credit)
- ◆ General Public Programs
- ◆ Gardening is the #1 leisure time activity in the U.S.; gardening is big business
- ◆ Apprenticeship program (~45/season) similar to UCSC CASFS
- ◆ Training for gardeners, landscape professionals, government employees, home owners, and teachers
- ◆ Landscape professional training in organic methods including school grounds maintenance
- ◆ Restore home for Master Gardeners/Master Composters of SCC
- ◆ Long term goal: to create a more balanced community with citizens who are prepared to create new environmental business opportunities

# *What Do We Need from the SCC Board of Supervisors to make this happen?*

- ◆ Your support for continuing to make BAREC unique for SCC and introducing a fourth chapter in BAREC's 150 years of community contribution.
- ◆ We request the SCC Board of Supervisors write the State and City of Santa Clara indicating that SCC needs time to evaluate BAREC's future.
- ◆ Refer to attached GCRCD letter and SCCOE sample letters
- ◆ Consider the ways BAREC could help improve the environmental quality and education in the county with particular emphasis on our farm/garden suggestions.
- ◆ Report the BAREC issues to the County's Housing, Land Use, Environmental, and Transportation Committee (HLUET) for a hearing on the ways BAREC can help SCC and specifically what we are suggesting.
- ◆ Apply to the EPA Grant Programs to get soil tests for BAREC and work with us to get accurate information on the chemicals used on BAREC over the years.

## *Addendum*

# *Political/Legal Issues Around BAREC*



- ◆ Santa Clara 2002 Housing Study showed housing was not needed on BAREC
- ◆ CA Civil Code Section 815: Preservation of Agricultural Land and Open Space...among the most important environmental assets of California.
- ◆ State failed to notify local or regional govt. agencies of BAREC's availability after they took possession of BAREC. Many regional and local agencies never knew of its availability before state offered it to developers.
- ◆ Brown Act violations by City and State discussing BAREC without public involvement or notice
- ◆ UC records from BAREC's library documenting soil contamination and history seem to be “missing”
- ◆ State’s consultants working on sale of BAREC gave campaign contributions to two Santa Clara City Councilmen who pushed for BAREC housing
- ◆ State’s developer is a UC Regent and owner of SummerHill Homes. Conflict of interest?
- ◆ These issues have been given to SCC District Attorney's office.