

I want to thank the media and the public for attending today's demonstration of democracy in action. My name is Teresa O'Neill and I will be reading a prepared statement on behalf of SaveBAREC. I will be followed by Mr. Kirk Vartan, the SaveBAREC Referendum Coordinator, Ms. Sharon McCray, and Former UC Employee at BAREC and SaveBAREC Historian. At the end of the statements, I will welcome questions from the media.

For five years, the SaveBAREC grassroots community has worked tirelessly and with dedication to inform the people of Santa Clara about the proposed development of the last piece of significant open acreage in Santa Clara and of the merits of having BAREC remain in agricultural usage, as a tribute to this valley's glorious past and as a beacon to an even brighter future. For that, I as a citizen of Santa Clara, thank SaveBAREC. Unfortunately, the process our City leadership employed to approve the proposed development did not reflect the true leadership that Santa Clara is capable of and has shown in other instances. The process was not sufficiently open to consider all the options for the future of BAREC. In order to restart that process to engage more of the people of Santa Clara in the decision, the SaveBAREC grassroots community is submitting more than the required 3,949 signatures to place the City Council's zoning and general plan change on the ballot. While this has been a lengthy and costly process, and there is still a long way to go, it is necessary to direct the City Council to gather broader community input regarding preservation of public land and develop a plan that reflects that input.

BAREC is located in a heavily congested area that will worsen when Valley Fair expands 650,000sqft, Santana Row adds additional housing and restaurants, and the Century Theaters property eventually develops. To make matters worse, the City of Santa Clara is relying on the City of San Jose and County of Santa Clara to address road conditions, even though the City of Santa Clara didn't work with those jurisdictions early in the process to decide the best use for the BAREC open space.

Any plan for future use of this property needs to responsibly address the extreme soil contamination by the University of California's 80 years of using various known and experimental pesticides and fertilizers. The State's plan is to remove *some* of the soil to

get rid of *some* of the toxins, while we propose to remove **all** the toxins and keep **all** of the soil, restoring it to its pristine state. Ironically, our recommendation of bioremediation, a State acceptable natural method of cleaning the soil, was rejected by the State for this project.

Bioremediation is cheaper than hauling away dirt to a containment facility which merely relocates the contaminated soil. **Bioremediation** cleans all levels of the soil equally not just bringing the toxins down to “acceptable” averages as with the proposed excavation method. **Bioremediation** also protects the residents by not releasing toxins into the air which occurs during the excavation process. Why is the State not interested in utilizing this organic technique?

There is a growing discussion to change the US Federal Farm Program to support sustainable, community based agriculture which would improve US diets. Due to BAREC’s large size and ideal location near major freeways, public transit, and surrounding neighborhoods, this agricultural gem can serve the State by playing a leading role in urban planning and providing fresh, healthy, and flavorful food for the local community. It can also play a role in incubating new agricultural technologies, green solutions, and the next generation jobs. The Silicon Valley can combine with the Valley of Hearts Delight to lead the State and the country in agriculture and green initiatives. SaveBAREC will continue to unite the community to support the vision of an educational, organic urban farm, but a truly open decision process may ultimately recommend another plan. That is what community engagement is all about.

But Santa Clara has the opportunity to create a legacy for future generations by creating a Center of Excellence on soil cleanup and how urban farming can be accomplished. These two referendums will empower the citizens of Santa Clara to decide for themselves what legacy we want to create.

In making my closing statement, I would like to say, the choice is ours.