



Mayor Ron Gonzales &
Members of the Coyote Valley Specific Plan Task Force
San José City Hall
801 North 1st Street
San Jose, CA 95110

November 8, 2004

Dear Mayor Gonzales and Members of the Task Force:

Since before the Coyote Valley specific planning process began, Greenbelt Alliance has believed that a plan should be developed to enhance the South Coyote Valley Greenbelt so that it can be home to viable agriculture, wildlife habitat, passive recreation and can generally continue to serve as a non-urban buffer between San Jose and Morgan Hill. We are pleased to learn that, over the past several weeks, a concept for a plan that meets these goals has started to emerge.

For such a plan to be successful at turning the South Coyote Valley into a landscape that serves as an innovative model of a greenbelt, Greenbelt Alliance strongly believes that the following components should be integrated into the plan for the South Coyote Valley Greenbelt:

- A strategic acquisition plan, using both easements and fee-title purchases, should be developed to secure as much of the Greenbelt as possible as permanently protected agricultural land. To help ensure the viability of agriculture in the Greenbelt, the acquisition of large parcels, as well as smaller parcels that are contiguous to one another, should be prioritized.
- The South Coyote Valley Greenbelt should be viewed as an "agricultural enterprise area" and an institution should be established to help farmers within the Greenbelt succeed. This institution could help match farmers to available land, assist with the promotion of agricultural products, provide technical assistance, and serve other needs as appropriate.
- Revenues generated by development in North and Mid Coyote Valley should be used to help fund the acquisition of agricultural land and sustain the institution charged with promoting the Greenbelt's agriculture.
- Zoning rules and design guidelines that maintain the Greenbelt's rural character should be developed for any residential development that does occur in the Greenbelt.

MAIN OFFICE ♦ 631 Howard Street, Suite 510, San Francisco, CA 94105 ♦ (415) 543-6771 ♦ Fax (415) 543-6781
SOLANO/NAPA OFFICE ♦ 725 Texas Street, Fairfield, CA 94533 ♦ (707) 427-2308 ♦ Fax (707) 427-2315
SOUTH BAY OFFICE ♦ 1922 The Alameda, Suite 213, San Jose, CA 95126 ♦ (408) 983-0856 ♦ Fax (408) 983-1001
EAST BAY OFFICE ♦ 1601 North Main Street, Suite 105, Walnut Creek, CA 94596 ♦ (925) 932-7776 ♦ Fax (925) 932-1970
SONOMA/MARIN OFFICE ♦ 50 Santa Rosa Avenue, Suite 307, Santa Rosa, CA 95404 ♦ (707) 573-3661 ♦ Fax (707) 575-4275
info@greenbelt.org ♦ www.greenbelt.org



- Policies that ensure farmers have the “right to farm” should be applied so that farmers have certainty that they will not be pushed out of the Greenbelt because of conflicts with non-agricultural land owners.
- The Greenbelt should be multi-functional in nature. In addition to agriculture, the South Coyote Valley Greenbelt should be planned to provide significant wildlife habitat and passive recreation facilities.

Greenbelt Alliance understands that the vast majority of the land in the Greenbelt is under the jurisdiction of Santa Clara County. We encourage the City of San Jose and Santa Clara County to work together so that the plan to protect and enhance the Greenbelt that will hopefully emerge from the specific planning process can be fully implemented. We also encourage the City to consider applying the plan for the Greenbelt to lands that are not currently designated as greenbelt – in particular, the land between Monterrey Highway and the Coyote Creek Parkway. In *Getting It Right: Preventing Sprawl in Coyote Valley*, Greenbelt Alliance’s vision for Coyote Valley’s future, we showed that the development goals for Coyote Valley can likely be met without developing this area. Since San Jose has jurisdiction over this area, it can be better guaranteed that protection and enhancement policies can be applied to this land.

Greenbelt Alliance also feels that it is essential that the plan for the Greenbelt be completed at the same time as the plan for the portions of Coyote Valley proposed for development. If the plan for the Greenbelt is allowed to be completed at a later date, we are concerned it will be viewed as an “add on” and that the Greenbelt plan will not receive the financing, or the attention of policy makers, that will be necessary to make the plan successful. Greenbelt Alliance encourages the City staff, the consulting team and the Task Force to take the time necessary to fully develop the specific plan.

On a related note, as Greenbelt Alliance pointed out in our recent “report card” assessment of the specific planning process to date, we believe that several other important issues have not yet gotten adequate attention in the planning process. Included among these issues are: ensuring that the hillsides around Coyote Valley will be provided long-term protection, that the growth inducing impacts of development in Coyote Valley will be controlled, that a detailed plan for affordable housing in the Valley is developed, that community facilities such as child care centers and health clinics are provided for, and that a financing plan that allocates funds to the myriad of projects and programs the development of Coyote Valley will be asked to help fund is created. Again, the specific planning process should not be rushed and time should be taken to properly address all of these issues.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to making Coyote Valley’s future great.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Madsen
Field Director