

To: Mayor Ron Gonzales  
San Jose City Council

From: Friends of the Coyote Valley Greenbelt (FROGs)  
Coyote Valley Alliance for Smart Planning

Re: Coyote Valley Greenbelt

Date: January 25, 2005

The Friends of the Coyote Valley Greenbelt (FROGs) and the Coyote Valley Alliance for Smart Planning issue this joint statement. We have found some common ground and share some strong perspectives about the Coyote Valley Greenbelt that we wish to bring to your attention.

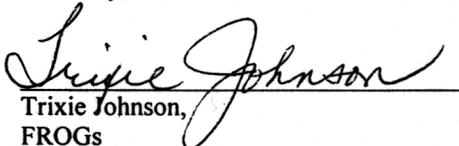
1. We both acknowledge that, for most of the area designated as a greenbelt there is no "there" there, except for the Coyote Creek Park lands. It will take a concerted effort to turn the land south of mid-Coyote into a true greenbelt. The City must do more than allocate some initial "seed" funding, though that is an important first step. A viable greenbelt will require real work and more funding.

2. We strongly urge the establishment of a formal mitigation funding program which links the development of the urban reserve with the creation of the greenbelt. The program would mitigate the loss of agriculture and farmland to development by assuring that sufficient greenbelt land is acquired in fee or through easements and development rights. This allows property owners in the greenbelt area to sell if they wish or supports them if they wish to stay and farm.

3. We urge the City to use all of the leverage potential that a mitigation fund could create. Establishment of an adequate, developer-funded mitigation fund could attract additional supplemental funding from the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority and from private foundations. This would be far more effective than an earlier proposal that developers each negotiate individual purchase of lands for mitigation. That process would rule out any funds leveraging from other sources and thus severely reduce the potential for securing the greenbelt.

A dedicated fund, adequate to the need and administered by a well-designed mitigation program, will benefit all parties - the current greenbelt property owners who wish to farm and those who wish to sell, as well as the future residents and businesses of the new urban area. It can also guarantee a continuing rural agricultural area for residents who have chosen that life style. One concept presented to the Specific Plan Task Force would create some sort of organization to promote the greenbelt. While this concept might help to achieve the greenbelt, it is not likely by itself to be successful in meeting the Council directive to assure a permanent greenbelt. Only an adequately funded acquisition program can do that.

Sincerely,

  
Trixie Johnson,  
FROGs

  
Richard DeSmet,  
Coyote Valley Alliance for Smart Planning