

# Workbook Narrative Section VI – Conceptual Urban Design

Reference: General Application to the Task Force Workbook

## PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY BUILDING

The planning for Coyote Valley incorporates principles of community building from many sources. These include the following:

- Charter of the New Urbanism
- Ahwahnee Principles
- Principles of Smart Growth
- Coyote Valley Santa Clara Valley Water District Guiding Principles and Goals
- San Jose’s 2020 General plan
- Council’s Vision & Expected Outcomes
- VTA Best Practices

Some of the key planning principles embedded in these sources characterized our approach in developing the CVSP. They include:

### Environmental Footprint

- Preserve and enhance the open space of Coyote Valley.
- Protect the natural environment and culturally significant resources.
- Protect ground water quality, conserve water and provide watershed stewardship.
- Provide flood protection and open space recreation in a multi-functional approach.
- Provide sustainability, conservation and restoration for community, site and building design.
- Integrate history, climate, natural and cultural landscape into the community.

### Connections

- Provide for a variety of transportation choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods & connections to surrounding open spaces.
- Create corridors of transit, roadways and greenways as definers and connectors of neighborhoods.
- Provide a network of inter-connected streets and public spaces that encourage alternative modes of transportation.

### Open Space/ Landscape Recreation

- Establish a network of open space uses & connections.

- Provide for a wide range of recreation opportunities: passive and active.
- Provide conservation areas and open spaces to define and connect neighborhoods.

#### Public & Civic Places

- Create civic spaces and buildings that reinforce community identity.
- Place public buildings such as city halls, libraries and post offices in important places with strong civic architecture.
- Civic buildings and places like town squares and parks make excellent anchors for retail districts and provide a community with landmarks.

#### Neighborhoods and Districts

- Create compact neighborhoods that are mixed-use, pedestrian friendly and transit-oriented, which have centers and edges.
- Provide districts with distinct and diverse neighborhoods with linked civic uses.
- Provide opportunities for social equity: housing for all ages, economic levels and ethnic groups.
- Create an authentic and healthy community.

## COYOTE VALLEY PLANNING STRATEGIES

While the Principles of Community Building describe universal goals, the following strategies describe specific Coyote Valley Urban Design, Land Use, and even Governance strategies that are important in achieving the Council's Vision for this exciting new urban center.

### Connection and Mobility Strategies

#### Reduce Private Automobile Regional Commute Trips

Achieve a higher than normal use of Caltrain, Bus, Light Rail, Carpool and Private Express Busing for both into and out of Valley commutes, through urban design strategies that provide convenient intra-community access to multi modal regional transit hub(s).

#### Internal Trip Capture

Achieve a higher than normal local live/work capture in Coyote Valley through: the inclusion of a maximum variety of both workplaces and residences; matching, as much as possible, affordability of housing with income levels of jobs; timing of both residential development and workplace development that links-in-time new job/job relocation with home rent/purchase market availability.

Provide such obvious intra-community transportation convenience and pleasure, that we achieve an above normal number of workers/residents making their own workplace and home location decisions based on in valley proximity (for instance; making it very obvious that intra-community transit is so comprehensive and convenient that living and working in Coyote Valley eliminates the need for multiple cars).

Through urban design strategies that arrange workplaces within walking and bicycling distance of housing, encourage walk and bicycle commutes.

#### Dispersed Transportation Technologies 21st Century Transportation Options:

Onboard computers, with cellular and GPS technology can assure nearly immediate pick-up and just-in-time drop-off at fixed guide stops and Cal Train station.

Online real-time transit vehicle tracking information, as well as visible Caltrain and light rail immediate arrival and departure information located throughout the town center can eliminate the annoyance of arriving on a platform only to find a train just left and you have a twenty minute wait.

Transit debit cards, or cellular phone account debiting, and GPS/cellular communication with on-demand micro cabs offer great promise in creating reliable and quick service, while increasing productivity and providing a real livable income for cab drivers in towns the size of Coyote.

"Golf Cart" style urban electric cars take up less space, cause less local pollution, and are less dominant over pedestrians and bicycles. They can be encouraged through priority parking. (They can park diagonally or back in, in the same roadside width as standard vehicle parallel parking at a ratio of 4:1).

#### Structured Shared Parking

The PROBLEM: Private Surface Parking And Standard Parking

#### Ratios

Private surface parking may very well be a greater roadblock to the creation of a pedestrian friendly and transit-oriented environment than large roads. Standard levels of adequate surface parking actually force people to drive because parking convenience replaces pedestrian convenience. Private developments approach to surface parking can generally be seen in two ways:

- Individual buildings, or uses, are sited with their own parking adjacent and therefore are separated from other uses by the parking field, or lined up in a single row all facing a parking field. This is the case with: “strip” commercial like the grocery/drug store anchored convenience center; big box retail centers; individual stores or offices.
- Individual uses are grouped around a “pedestrian friendly” court, “campus” or mall, but then collectively removed from the rest of the urban environment by a proportionally larger parking field. Regional mall shopping centers and corporate campuses follow this model.

Large surface parking fields can be made more attractive with landscaping and tree shading, which is a marked improvement over un-landscaped “seas of asphalt” but not really more pedestrian friendly.

#### Private Parking Ratios To Accommodate The Peaks

Single use, on premises, private parking must be sized to accommodate that uses peak demand, no matter how infrequent that may be. The office parking lot is full during working hours five days a week. A church lot is full on Sunday morning. A theatre lot is full on Friday and Saturday night. And the mall lot is full at Christmas.

#### The Parking Traffic Spiral

When surface parking disrupts pedestrian proximities and synergies it forces more people into their cars, which then requires more parking which then becomes an incentive to drive rather than join transit and other modes, and thus reduces the opportunity to meet the Council’s vision regarding transit oriented development.

#### The STRATEGY

##### Shared Structured District Parking

It is our opinion that a commitment to shared structured parking is perhaps more important to establishing Coyote Valley as a pedestrian friendly urban environment than our transit strategies. And it may be more cost effective.

### The Parking Traffic Spiral Works Both Ways

When shared structured parking encourages pedestrian proximities and synergies it encourages more people to walk, which then requires less parking, which then serves as a disincentive to drive.

### Structured Parking

In terms of the ability to achieve greater pedestrian proximities with structured parking, the arithmetic is quite simple. Simply divide the area of a surface lot by the number of stories of a structured lot and that is the coverage of the structured lot. But that is only the beginning.

### Shared Parking

A well-positioned common parking structure can be very efficient when it serves uses with different peak demands. There are a number of studies of this, and we have included our own within the Coyote Valley Numerical Scaling Model.

### Urban Walks and Trails

At the finest grain of urban connection and mobility is a walking and biking network that can parallel streets as well as make connections and access parks and open spaces not available to cars.

### Neighborhood Streets

The neighborhood street is much more than a way of moving automobiles to and from their garages. It is the neighborhood's sociable public realm. Here pedestrian scaled street widths, shade canopy street trees, front porches and windows on the street make this a real place of neighbor interaction.

### Main Streets (just the right amount of traffic)

Completely banning vehicles from areas of retail commerce, as in malls and urban pedestrian only streets has too often hurt retail viability and had the opposite of its intended effect. Vehicles are an important component in energizing a town center. Indeed, the main street model of one travel lane each way + parallel parking continues to prove its simple, balanced mix as small town main streets are revitalized (Mountain View). Conversely, large multi-lane arterials with broad intersections and no on street parking are not viable main streets.

## Workplace Strategies

### Mix of Workplaces

Urban Integration is key to our workplace design strategy, and we are exploring as many potential workplace situations as possible, in terms of

how they might return to an integrated urban model from their current sprawl model.

The Next Generation Technology workplace may include incubator space, prototype manufacturing, open source and muni-source access, and the wireless town.

Freight elevators and second floor small-scale production work is a traditional component of the urban workplace.

Major corporations are not only major employers in their own right, they are brokers for hundreds of small independent subcontractors and suppliers. The Hollywood entertainment industry model has radically shifted from the all-in-one huge studio lots of the old MGM's to the world's most elaborate model of independent creative contributors, all sharing in credits and royalties.

- Global leadership with multilingual software integration and headquartering a 24/7 global work force
- Next generation service work including new Health Care delivery networks and multiple independent outpatient specialized services and medical practitioners

#### Corporate Building and Branding in Urban Center

Large corporate users represent a different challenge in urban integration. Issues such as corporate security and building as branding come into play.

#### The "Not-So-Purpose-Built" Workplace

Non-purpose built buildings, or "not so purpose built" buildings are a part of our overall strategy for integrating the urban workplace. Today, many of our commercial buildings are so focused on branding, particular function, or architectural theme that, if for any reason their purpose ceases, they are simply obsolete. Such buildings are either (hopefully) torn down, or they sometimes stand empty for years. This typical urban building example (pictured) has had continuous and varied occupancy since 1914. It is a simple warehouse structure that lends itself to periodic re-adaptation. It has been a rail siding warehouse, printing plant, monster cable distribution center, apparel sweatshop, chocolate factory, boom-time dot. com. hive and now an architectural digital imaging studio.

#### An Education & Technology Business Partnership

Lifelong learning as a new entrepreneurial enterprise, or a component of an educational institution is becoming a major service provider to employers who must manage the re-education of staff in response to new technologies, software, and systems almost annually.

### Mixed Use

Live/work; office over retail; and small professional office spaces are familiar components in an integrated urban workplace.

Mixed-use commercial condo ownership is a new market that may support urban workplace integration.

## Urban Form Strategies

### Civic Focus Urban Form

Street and walk patterns define an urban form and should be configured to provide focuses on our civic buildings in a proportionate balance with park and open space vistas.

### Enclaves & Labyrinths

Security, comfort, predictability, and familiarity are less necessary (and most difficult to provide) at the scale of the metropolitan region; but become more available and needed as we progress through ever more intimate place scales. From the region, to Coyote Valley, to a neighborhood district or community core, to a neighborhood street, to a home courtyard, to one's private residence, places should become safer, more familiar, and subject to more direct individual control. Small private walks and "secret shortcuts", as well as small pocket parks and small private enclave "commons" become the urban oases that balance the excitement and unpredictable interactions of urban living.

### Community Core

Compared to the common sprawl model of a center-less collection residential, retail, and office campus projects. Coyote Valley will have a clear and obvious community core. Here, culture, commerce and a mix of living, working, shopping, dining and entertainment will be integrated at a fine pedestrian scale and at the valley's highest densities.

### Urban at the Start

Strategies to accelerate an urban start to Coyote Valley include: establishing the lake and a fixed guideway transit service from the beginning; encouraging higher density workplace, residential and mixed use; and encouraging structured parking in the earliest community core private projects.

## Housing Opportunities Strategies

California, and particularly the San Francisco Bay Area, has over the past decade experienced an escalating increase in the cost of housing. Due

to this ever-increasing cost of housing, the availability of housing for those families and individuals needing affordable housing has continued to decline. To address this growing demand for affordable housing opportunities, Council has mandated that the Coyote Valley Specific Plan include a minimum of 20% of the housing as deed restricted, below market rate units. We, as architects and urban planners, see this as both a challenge and an opportunity to develop a variety of housing options for those seeking affordable housing.

The range of housing types and the manner in which they are integrated into the fabric of the Coyote Valley Specific Plan is very important to the success and acceptability of including below market rate housing units in the overall residential housing mix.

It will be important to design and locate the affordable housing components within the plan to blend seamlessly into the overall pattern of the community. In order to create a sense of community and not stigmatize the affordable housing components of the project, the units will be designed to be included as an integral mix throughout the community. This integration into the community is important in allowing everyone, no matter what economic level, to enjoy and experience the opportunities and amenities that will be included in the Coyote Valley Specific Plan.

To successfully integrate approximately 5,000 affordable housing units into the Coyote Valley Specific Plan it will require that a variety of housing solutions be incorporated into the plan. The following is a sampling of the housing options that can help support the needs of this particular portion of the community.

#### Family/Individual Arrangement Affordable Housing

This housing option can provide housing units, which are built in conjunction with market rate housing units. In this instance, secondary unit could be developed as a 'granny unit' attached to a single family home, or as an independent unit built above a garage. In both these examples, the units could be rented to either an individual or a family. This housing option would not be included in the deed restricted, below market rate unit.

#### For Sale Affordable Housing

The plan envisions that a significant amount of the affordable housing units should be targeted for purchase by families. These units must be distributed in a manner that integrates them into the whole community.

#### Rental Affordable Housing

To accommodate the housing needs for extremely low and very low-income persons and families is particularly challenging. This need will generally be satisfied by providing rental housing units, which are designated at various

sites within the community, and may be constructed by institutional, and non-profit groups (County Housing Authority, Bridge Housing, Ecumenical Association for Housing, etc.)

Below market rate rental units within market rate projects can also be used to provide housing opportunities for both moderate and low-income households.

#### Special Needs

As part of the community, affordable housing opportunities will also be required for persons having special needs that cannot be satisfied in the open housing market. These groups include:

- Disabled; Aged; Safety net; Abuse sanctuary; Fresh start; SRO, Single Room Occupancy

## THE PUBLIC REALM

### Parks, Recreation, Open Space

A well-designed, diverse, and accessible network of parks and community facilities is essential to the health and wellbeing of any community. In addition to the extensive existing recreation and open space amenities of the valley, such as Coyote Creek corridor, the hills, golf course, trail systems, etc.; the CVSP Conceptual Urban Design proposes amenities based on recreation standards generated by the City of San Jose. The proposed recreational elements of the plan include a series of parks serving a variety of users and a mix of uses from passive to active, including:

- Community Parklands
- Neighborhood Parks
- School Recreational Lands
- Festival Grounds
- Community Gardens

Additional open space amenities proposed include:

- The new Fisher Creek corridor
- Canal Park

Community Parklands Includes Three Community Parks  
Coyote Lake and Park, the proposed Laguna Seca sports fields, and the proposed sport field complex in the South Coyote Valley Greenbelt. Community parklands serve an area within a one-mile radius. The three community parks range in size from 40 acres to 80 acres. Activities include large group of active & organized sports,

group picnic and aquatic recreation. The parks may include community centers or other civic facilities and the Coyote Lake Park will have an international garden.

#### Neighborhood Parks Are The Focal And A Gathering Point For Each Neighborhood

They range in size from 4 acres to 10 acres and serve an area within a ¼ mile radius. Typically, a neighborhood park includes smaller recreational amenities such as tennis, basketball and turf areas. Some parks may consist of an informal green for more passive enjoyment.

#### School Recreation Lands Are Intended To Serve School Recreational Needs

There will be one playground or playfield per school. It may be possible to locate the schools and public park facilities together in order to create a shared use.

#### Festival Grounds

This is a grouping of civic and public spaces that reinforce community identity. It totals approximately 20 acres and can serve a variety of uses such as farmer's market or music performances. It may have stadium-style seating. This could be a place for the high school to play intra-league games.

#### Community Garden

Community gardens will be located throughout the community associated with other parks. They will typically be one to two acres in size.

#### Pocket Parks

Many pocket parks will be located throughout the community. These are small parks ranging in size from ¼ acre to 1 acre. These provide for a variety of passive or small tot recreation.

Other elements in the open space network that have been described previously include the Fisher Creek Corridor and the Canal Park. Many other important elements will help to define the open space system and provide interest and enjoyment for the community, such as public squares incorporating civic art, fountain and water features.

#### A Focus On, and Celebration Of, Civic Buildings

The public realm of Coyote Valley composes its streets, parks, the lake and public buildings in a civic celebration. The Bailey Avenue overpass at Monterey Road is the community gateway with an axial focus on Coyote Lake and the hillock beyond. Other community core roads radiate on the

same focus and visually connect the Caltrain transit hub, the community event park and stadium (festival grounds), several schools, several sections of the fixed guideway transit system and the Santa Teresa Blvd. district. The broad east/west commons parkland incorporates elementary middle and high schools.

Interconnections of transit, parkway and parks and open space features become the civic locations for large and small public buildings ranging from elementary schools to libraries, fire stations, and churches.

Community gathering places are planned at each transit stop and may be as small and simple as coffee shop, newsstand and community mailboxes.