



SPUR

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

San Jose Planning Commission
200 E. Santa Clara Street
3rd Floor Tower
San José, CA 95113

October 26, 2021

Dear Planning Commission Members:

On behalf of SPUR, we are writing in strong support of the Envision San José 2040 General Plan Four Year Review Task Force’s recommendations related to Coyote Valley, which were finalized by the Task Force at their meeting on October 29, 2020.¹

You have an opportunity to help San José move from an outdated vision of sprawl development that would create an uninterrupted expanse of pavement, traffic, and buildings between San Jose and Morgan Hill to a vision that preserves the city’s southern greenbelt and recommits to concentrating growth in the parts of the San José that are already urbanized. We urge you to reorient the City’s vision so that it embraces building up, rather than out.

Many different strands of SPUR’s research support the Task Force’s recommendation the General Plan should lead to a future for Coyote Valley as one of agriculture and open space rather than as a jobs center. In *Rethinking the Corporate Campus* (2017) and *The Urban Future of Work* (2012) we highlight the importance of locating jobs in accessible places that reduce drive-alone commuting, make more efficient use of land and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In our report *Locally Nourished* (2013) we highlighted the value that agriculture brings in diversifying the region’s economic base and its value as a land-use that reinforces growth toward infill, rather than sprawl. For San José, the sum of these recommendations translates into concentrating job growth in already existing urbanized areas, not planning for greenfield development at the southern border of the city.

City planning staff summed up this new vision for Coyote Valley well in their recommendations to the task force:

Coyote Valley is a unique asset to San Jose and should be preserved as a resource for the community that furthers the City’s goals of environmental sustainability, enhancing open

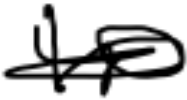
¹ Envision San José 2040 4-Year Review, “Task Force Meeting No. 9 Synopsis,” October 29, 2020. See Motion #1, pages 9-11: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/66911/637408548044970000>

*space, supporting agriculture in the non-urban areas of the City, and protecting critical linkages for wildlife movement.*²

Furthermore, we commend both the staff and the Task Force staff for going beyond just articulating a new vision and providing ten clear, actionable recommendations for the North, Mid, and Southern Coyote Valley areas.³ The coordination with the County's upcoming zoning updates is an especially welcome example of how to take strong action to protect a greenbelt that crosses two jurisdictions.

We urge the Planning Commission to embrace all of the Task Force's recommendations. They will go a long way in changing both the regulatory framework and the assumptions of the real estate market so that San José can truly refocus its plans for growth inward, rather than outward.

Sincerely,



Fred Buzo
San José Director



Eli Zigas
Food and Agriculture
Policy Director

² *Memorandum to Envision San José 2040 Task Force*, October 22, regarding "October 29, 2020 Task Force Meeting," pg. 4: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showdocument?id=65782>

³ *Ibid*, pages 17-18