





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decades of sprawl development have dramatically altered the landscape of Santa Clara County. The county's once expansive farmlands largely have been paved over to create business parks and residential subdivisions. Poorly planned sprawl has failed to provide the majority of its residents with housing choices that meet their needs and budgets. The lack of transit options has created a car culture where people are required to drive everywhere and anywhere, resulting in the county's now legendary traffic congestion. The flaws of past sprawl development are readily apparent, but future growth can avoid the mistakes of the past and enhance the livability of communities throughout the county.

San José is moving forward with plans to develop Coyote Valley, a 6,800-acre area on the city's southern edge. With beautiful rolling hills and large swaths of productive farmland, Coyote Valley is a visible reminder of San José's history and natural beauty. Unfortunately, the City's General Plan opens the door to paving over this treasure with cookie-cutter sprawl. The General Plan sets aside North Coyote Valley for massive office and industrial "campuses" adrift in a sea of parking, while the Mid-Valley, designated as Urban Reserve, is poised to become a maze of residential subdivisions isolated from job sites, shopping, schools, parks, and basic services.

If Coyote Valley is to be developed, it need not be consumed by sprawl. The Valley's future presents a golden opportunity to create a community based on Smart Growth principles, using land efficiently to make vibrant neighborhoods with a variety of housing choices. Valley residents and workers alike would have easy access to commercial centers, community facilities, and open space through a variety of transportation choices including biking trails, public transit, and pedestrian-friendly streets. This Vision will preserve Coyote Valley's agricultural heritage for future generations while providing ample room for office, research, and industrial facilities. By creating a mixed-

use community that is home to a diverse array of businesses, Smart Growth will help insulate the local economy from boom and bust cycles.

Smart Growth and its urban design corollary, New Urbanism, are not new concepts. Many cities in the Bay Area and across the nation have realized the economic, social, and environmental benefits of sustainable land use planning. San José itself has made important commitments to the principles of Smart Growth and New Urbanism by aggressively pursuing developments in existing urban areas that mix affordable housing, shopping, and jobs. By planning well for the future of Coyote Valley, San José can raise its already strong profile as a national leader in urban planning.

Recognizing the negative impacts that sprawl development in Coyote Valley could have on quality of life throughout the South Bay, Greenbelt Alliance undertook a year-long process to craft a Smart Growth vision for the Valley. Through an open, public process, Greenbelt Alliance sought the opinions and wisdom of local residents, environmentalists, transportation and labor leaders, developers, elected officials, and other stakeholders. *Getting It Right* is the resulting vision, showing how the Valley can look if a Smart Growth approach is employed to achieve San José's development targets of at least 50,000 jobs and 25,000 housing units. If implemented, this Vision will not only create a dynamic new community that is part of San José, but also reduce pressure for more sprawling development in other parts of the region.

Specifically, *Getting It Right* suggests the following steps to build a strong new community that protects the environment and agriculture, promotes social equity, and provides for economic vitality:

Build Community

- Dissolve the artificial division between North and Mid-Coyote Valley to enable the entire area to be coherently planned as a new community.
- Locate the Town Center on Bailey Avenue between Monterey Highway and Santa Teresa Boulevard. Bailey Avenue will serve as the primary retail corridor with each end anchored by a transit station. The Town Center will include buildings with retail uses at street level and office and residential uses on upper floors.
- Create distinct neighborhoods, each with a transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly center that will include small-scale retail, service, office, public uses, and community facilities that will contribute to the identity of each neighborhood.
- Encourage the use of public transportation and discourage automobile dependency through a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program. The TDM program will promote policies and programs like shuttle services, ridesharing, reduced parking, parking pricing, alternative work schedules, and telecommuting.
- Co-locate schools and parks and enable them to serve as civic gathering places in the neighborhoods.

Protect the Environment and Agriculture

- Permanently protect the 3,300-acre South Coyote Valley as a greenbelt buffer between San José and Morgan Hill.
- Establish a network of 860 acres of new regional, community, and neighborhood parkland that complements the existing 1,224 acres of regional parkland and golf course. The park network will be easily accessible to residents and workers on foot, by bike, and by transit, and provide a variety of recreation facilities from playing fields to hiking, cycling, and equestrian trails.
- Restore Fisher Creek to a more natural condition and create the Fisher Creek Greenway to serve both as a flood management facility and as 500 acres of regional parkland.
- Permanently protect approximately 2,380 acres of agricultural lands throughout Coyote Valley. The Valley's agricultural lands will make up the Coyote Valley Food Belt, which will produce a portion of the community's food, provide opportunities for education and tourism, and help preserve the Valley's unique sense of place.



Ensure Social Equity

- Dedicate at least 20 percent of all housing units as affordable housing for low-, very-low-, and extremely-low-income residents. These units will be distributed throughout the Valley to promote social equity and inclusiveness. Inclusionary zoning will be established, and subsidy and incentive programs will be utilized to facilitate the creation of affordable housing.
- Create a robust transit system that will provide mobility for residents and workers who cannot or choose not to drive. The transit system will include a Caltrain commuter rail station at the Town Center near Bailey Avenue, a bus rapid transit line running along Santa Teresa Boulevard, and a convenient local bus loop that connects Coyote Valley's Neighborhood Centers.
- Establish Community Facilities and Services Districts (CFSDs) in addition to the existing district in north Coyote Valley. These Districts will help fund and manage infrastructure projects such as roads and sewers, as well as other community amenities such as day care centers, health clinics, and affordable housing.
- Put in place incentive programs and implement policies that will create opportunities for small business and high quality jobs.

Promote Economic Vitality

- Provide for a more diverse economy that is less susceptible to fluctuations in the economy.
- Reduce the cost of infrastructure to landowners and the City.
- Reduce household costs associated with transportation and energy consumption through the use of compact, mixed-use, and transit-oriented nature of development.
- Increase land values by providing for more rentable and saleable building area and reduced per capita infrastructure costs.
- Enhance developer flexibility to respond to market conditions across a mix of land uses.
- Provide for a sensible approach to development phasing that reduces upfront capital costs, allows for development of relatively small increments of land, and encourages the early establishment of the Town Center and Neighborhood Centers.

If implemented, *Getting It Right* will create a compact, healthy, and vibrant community where housing, jobs, and shopping are well integrated. People of all economic backgrounds will be able to live and work in Coyote Valley and be part of the community's robust economy. Outdoor recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and farms will be on the community's doorstep, not miles away. Making the Vision a reality will not be an easy task. It will require innovation and political will, but the results will be worth the effort. The ultimate future of Coyote Valley is in the hands of the City of San José. Greenbelt Alliance hopes that *Getting It Right*, which has been shaped by the input of a broad array of stakeholders, will serve as a guide and inspiration for San José as it continues to plan for Coyote Valley.

