



21250 Stevens Creek Blvd.
Cupertino, CA 95014



August 15, 2011

Mr. John Davidson, Senior Planner
Department of Planning, Building & Code Enforcement
San Jose City Hall
200 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Mr. Davidson,

The De Anza College's Wildlife Corridor Technician (WCT) Program would like to express its appreciation of how its research has been used in the San Jose General Plan 2040, Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). The WCT Program has been studying wildlife movement in Coyote Valley since 2007. Through field observations, camera traps, transects, and other research methods, the WCT Program has identified Mid-Coyote Valley to be the optimal wildlife corridor linking the Diablo Range and Santa Cruz Mountains habitat together. Here, we define Mid-Coyote Valley as the area bounded by US 101 Freeway to the east, Bailey Avenue to the north, Palm Avenue to the south, and Calero County Park and Santa Teresa Hills to the west. Prior to this research, no other in-depth multi-species study of this landscape has been conducted.

Since our 2008 Annual Report, the WCT Program has only gained a deeper understanding of the diversity of birds and mammals living and crossing through Coyote Valley. As a result of our latest findings, the WCT Program requests the following changes to be made to Table 3.5-3, "Special-Status Animal Species Known to Occur within the City Limits," on pages 436-445 of the Draft PEIR underneath "Occurrence":

- California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*): In addition to already noted occurrence, they have been spotted at the west side of US 101 Freeway in Coyote Valley.
- Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*): In addition to already noted occurrence, known active nests are present at Coyote Lake, Anderson Reservoir, and Calaveras Reservoir. They are found throughout the year in Coyote Valley, but are rare and not breeding.
- Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*): In addition to already noted occurrence, they are observed year round in Coyote Valley.



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- Loggerhead shrike (*Lanus ludovicianus*): In addition to already noted occurrence, they are a fairly common breeder in Coyote Valley's agricultural lands.
- Yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*): They are a fairly common breeder along Coyote Creek throughout Coyote Valley.
- San Francisco common yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas sinuos*): In addition to already noted occurrence, they are common year-round in Coyote Valley along Coyote Creek
- Yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*): They are rare along Coyote Creek in Coyote Valley during the spring months, but have not been observed breeding.
- Tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*): In addition to already noted occurrence, a breeding colony has been observed in Coyote Valley, as well as hundreds of individuals foraging throughout Coyote Valley during the fall through early summer.
- San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes annectens*): In addition to already noted occurrence, they are abundant throughout Coyote Valley with numerous nests occurring along Coyote Creek .
- American badger (*Taxidea taxus*): In addition to already noted occurrence, they occur in the agricultural fields of Coyote Valley. Numerous road-killed badgers have been observed on US 101 Freeway through Coyote Valley.
- Ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*): There have been reports of Ringtail in Coyote Valley.

The WCT Program would also like to note that on page 436 for the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), in addition of the already mentioned occurrence, there is a record of the condor from San Martin just south of Coyote Valley and also at Lick Observatory in 2011.

Furthermore, as a result of our latest findings, the WCT Program requests the following change to be made to Table 3.5-2, "Special-Status Plant Species Known to Occur within the City Limits," on page 432 of the Draft PEIR underneath "Occurrence":

- Mt. Hamilton Thistle (*Cirsium fontinale* var. *campylon**): In addition to the already noted occurrence, this species has been observed at the east and west sides of US 101 Freeway in Coyote Valley.



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Lastly, the WCT Program would like to comment that the wildlife in Coyote Valley is not as constrained by developments and US 101 Freeway as the PEIR describes it to be. On page 424 underneath "Wildlife Movement in Coyote Valley," the PEIR states, "Now the area which once certainly served as an easy, short-distance crossing for wildlife to move between the Mt. Hamilton Range and the Santa Cruz Mountains is constrained by these [agriculture, golf course, and US 101 Freeway] developments..." The WCT Program's research since 2007 has shown that mammals frequently use US 101 Freeway crossing structures and can freely move through the valley. As a result, the WCT Program requests the PEIR to not label these developments as constraining Coyote Valley, though enhancements should be made to reduce road kill and increase connectivity.

The De Anza College's WCT Program deeply thanks the City of San Jose for considering and incorporating the Program's research of wildlife movement in Coyote Valley into its environmental impact review process. It is our goal that the City of San Jose will be a leading example of environmental sustainability in the year 2040, protecting critical open spaces such as the Coyote Valley wildlife corridor for current and future generation. We offer our services and we look forward to working with the implementation team in the future. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

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