



April 26, 2010

Envision San Jose Task Force

Re: Last week's decision by the City Council to consider "backloading" greenfield development

Dear Task Force Members;

Committee for Green Foothills would like to thank the San Jose City Council for accepting our suggestion that the General Plan revision process include consideration of "backloading" greenfield development in North Coyote Valley and east Evergreen until jobs capacity has been fully developed in other areas of the City. The vote was to entertain and consider the idea, not necessarily to do it, but we are satisfied with and appreciate the decision. I will also note that the idea has been briefly discussed before – I specifically raised it at the last Task Force meeting – but further consideration is always helpful.

A written version of my suggestion at last week's City Council meeting is attached below (I may have diverged slightly from the text when speaking). As you will see from the text, I disclosed to City Councilmembers who may have been unaware of it that the proposal might mean the greenfield areas will not be developed before 2040, and they still supported consideration of the idea.

Regarding Coyote Valley Research Park, the only entitled project I am aware of in North Coyote or east Evergreen, the permits would allow them to develop if they still wish to, and upon development would no longer be considered greenfields. If, however, the permit holders continue with their decade-long failure to build, then the backloading proposal as expressed to the City Council would mean they could not receive new permits until jobs capacity had been reached elsewhere. Of course, in both this case and the hypothetical example given by Mayor Reed of a proposed development in east Evergreen, any proposal with sufficient advantages for the City could be accommodated with a General Plan amendment.

We are sure that the City Council direction intended this backloading proposal receive sufficient consideration, and we trust City staff to ensure that is the case.

Please contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

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Brian A. Schmidt
Legislative Advocate, Santa Clara County

(Written version of the oral comments given by Brian Schmidt, Committee for Green Foothills, to the City Council meeting on April 20, 2010. Actual oral comments may have diverged slightly from the written version. The comment proposal was suggested for consideration in the General Plan revision process in a friendly amendment by Councilmember Ash Kalra, accepted by Councilmember Sam Liccardo and approved by the City Council.)

We support a minor but important variation on the current land use proposal that jobs development should happen anytime, anywhere in City limits.

We would like to ask the City Council to recommend a proposal to "backload" development of open spaces and greenfield until after other areas are developed.

San Jose greenfields are East Evergreen and parts of North Coyote Valley, and the idea is that these areas would not develop until after jobs capacity has been fully developed elsewhere in the City, where greenfields aren't at risk. This proposal would not affect existing permits like the Coyote Valley Research Park, the already-developed western half of the Evergreen, or the Water Treatment Plant area that is undergoing separate planning.

The advantage of this suggestion is it would encourage development where it is needed – Evergreen Village and East Evergreen, Edenvale, downtown, and North First Street. It is possible that the suggestion means these Greenfield areas are not developed before 2040, but so long as the same development happens elsewhere that needs redevelopment, then that result is a good feature and not a bug in the General Plan. Other areas of the City have the capacity for the same kind of development elsewhere, and if by some strange chance an important proposal could only happen on greenfields, such a proposal could be tied to a General Plan amendment.

Again we request that you ask staff to include this suggestion in some form as the revision process moves forward. I'd be happy to answer any questions.