



May 21, 2009

San Jose City Council
Envision San Jose Task Force

Dear City Council and Task Force Members;

The Committee for Green Foothills urges you seize the opportunity presented to you both to preserve the farmlands adjacent to San Jose and also to plan for a balanced future of jobs and housing, not an imbalanced one forcing thousands of drivers to live elsewhere and commute to San Jose. Specifically, we ask you to do the following:

- Withdraw the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) from South Almaden Valley.
- Plan for no development in Mid-Coyote Valley.
- Withdraw the UGB from North Coyote Valley. This would "grandfather" existing development and existing permits, but the Coyote Valley Research Park permits would not be renewed if they expire without construction, as seems very likely. A less-valuable but still beneficial alternative would be to leave the UGB unchanged but not plan for any development in North Coyote Valley during the General Plan timeframe.
- Require the development of a Farmland Mitigation Program prior to the conversion of prime farmland to other uses anywhere in the City
- Develop a "Green Vision" planning option with reasonable job growth numbers below ABAG projections, and with housing numbers that do not exceed a 1:1 Jobs:Employed Resident ratio. These are feasible numbers that keep development within the City's existing footprint without exporting housing needs to other cities and counties.

We live in a time of crisis and opportunity. We could repeat the many mistakes of previous decades, expanding development outward instead of making it more vibrant, quite possibly at the expense of making existing areas less vibrant by sucking development away from the City and into Coyote Valley. We could condemn thousands of acres of farmland immediately abutting San Jose, spreading the sprawl that currently washes from San Francisco to San Jose and bringing it so close to Morgan Hill that the alleged Coyote Valley "Greenbelt" would convert into a new wave of sprawl that merges San Francisco through San Jose all the way to Gilroy. Or we – starting with your leadership - could choose a different future.

You have the opportunity to transform the growing Silicon Valley into the "Silicon Archipelago" whose shores begin at San Jose. Cities of economically vibrant, high-tech development would be surrounded by productive farmland and environmentally vibrant, natural open space. The San Jose/Alviso/Milpitas area, excepting development merging with Santa Clara, already qualifies with open space and Baylands on three sides. The wonderful news just this week about protection of 966-acre Rancho San Vicente adds to this legacy, a feat that was possible expressly because Coyote Valley development has been stopped so far.

San Jose has Tule elk grazing within City limits. It has one of the best wildflower displays in the state. It has the Everglades of the West being restored to the north, and verdant river and creek courses connecting natural areas. What is missing is a vision that commits to protecting these areas, along with the farmland that physically connects natural areas together and connects the present and future San Jose to its past.

Everyone without their heads in the sand knows that the future of the climate crisis will require different planning from the past, stopping outward-sprawling expansion and preserving nearby farmland that bring us nutritious food from nearby - not from another hemisphere. You have the opportunity to plan for this future that preserves what we have and will make San Jose, and the greater region, a much better place. Please do this, and leave aside the proposals that move in the wrong direction.

Please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Schmidt". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Brian A. Schmidt
Legislative Advocate, Santa Clara County