



**Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society**  
*Founded 1926*

May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Mayor Chuck Reed and San José City Council Members  
San José City Hall  
200 East Santa Clara St.  
San Jose, CA 95113

**RE: General Plan Update and limits to urban growth**

Dear Mayor Reed and San José City Council members:

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) and our 3,800 members urge you to focus all future growth represented in the General Plan Update to the existing San Jose urban footprint. As a leader in the efforts to protect our local habitats and ecosystems, along with our role in solving climate change and energy conservation issues locally, SCVAS is committed to supporting the City of San Jose in its efforts to be a world leader in growth, development, and planning for our future.

We will be recommending to the general plan task force to concentrate development efforts on the city's existing urban footprint, and to set aside the Coyote and Almaden Valley urban reserves as open space. Setting the urban reserves aside for their eventual development represents a direction for San Jose that is neither good for the City's fiscal health nor for achieving the City's Green Vision.

With the development of the General Plan Update, it only makes sense that homes and jobs will be located near existing and planned transit stations on underutilized sites. We recommend and hope to see a planning and design focus around people and communities as opposed to individual vehicles and traditional motor transit. The open space value represented by the Coyote and Almaden Valley Urban Reserves will be this generation's legacy and we strongly encourage the Council to consider a change in designation of these urban reserves to more clearly reflect their open space value. Neither Coyote Valley nor Almaden Valley qualify as opportunities for infill or transit-oriented development. Adding development in either of the urban reserves would be more than the City can handle for decades. San Jose should build more homes and attract more jobs, but this growth must make better use of existing infrastructure and breathe new life into existing neighborhoods.

Additionally, we urge the Council to remove all zoning and overlays that allow urban development in Coyote Valley. The general plan update alternatives as part of its environmental review process, should include as an alternative, a study of no jobs or housing in Coyote Valley.

As the Bay Area's largest city, San Jose is well-placed to be a leader in planning for an environmentally balanced future and we strongly encourage you to adopt a model climate-friendly general plan. We look forward to your leadership in the coming months as you thoughtfully consider our recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

Bob Power, Executive Director