

Honorable Mayor Sam Liccardo, City of San José
Members of the City Council
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San José, CA 95113
via email, sent Feb. 11, 2019

re: Council meeting Feb. 12, Agenda item 3.4: Status Report on Measure T

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

I write as an individual to join the chorus of San José citizens urging you to protect Coyote Valley and to use the full \$50 million allocation from Measure "T" for its preservation.

It is imperative that Coyote Valley remain undeveloped:

- The valley recharges our deep-level aquifer that supplies much of our water. Industrial development in the valley would invite contamination of our drinking water supply.
- The natural landscape retains rainwater. If the valley were to be paved over, water would rush downstream practically instantaneously whenever it rains, increasing the risk of floods in the urban areas. The natural landscape that's there now holds back the water, allowing it to flow over an extended period of time and at a much more manageable rate.
- The valley is also the natural migration corridor connecting the Santa Cruz Mountains to the Diablo Range. Development in the valley could isolate the populations of wildlife, leading to inbreeding and their eventual demise.

The County of Santa Clara is on board with the preservation of the valley, as exemplified by the Board of Supervisors' recent approval of an Agricultural Preservation plan which will fund the acquisition of development easements from local farmers to reduce development pressures and to keep the valley lands in an unpaved state. The Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), the Open Space Authority (OSA), and others are also working to help preserve the valley's rural nature.

You may hear some people advocating for the development of the Coyote Valley, correctly pointing out that San José needs jobs. However,

- The development often contemplated for Coyote Valley is for "distribution warehouses", which cover large swaths of land (with lots of rainwater runoff) but which are highly automated and employ few workers. In contrast, development in the Downtown core, by the Diridon Station, and at transit-oriented Urban Villages can employ many times more people, both by the higher-valued nature of their work and by the multi-story facilities in which they work.
- There is little to no public transit serving Coyote Valley, so nearly everyone working there would have to drive, negatively impacting our greenhouse gas (GHG) and VMT (vehicle miles traveled) levels.

You may hear that San José has a smaller percentage of employment lands than nearby cities, and also that it is important for San José to preserve the employment lands that it has. However,

- The percentage for employment lands in San José is skewed by the fact that, unlike our neighboring cities, we have a large amount of undevelopable land within our city limits. When the number is adjusted for the roughly a third of the city's area that is bay lands and hillsides, San José's percentage of employment lands is more in line with our neighbors.
- And, while I agree that it's a pity that past Councils approved housing on former industrial lands (e.g., near North Oakland Road), Coyote Valley is not existing industrial land that is to be lost to housing, but rather this is just a change in designation so that undeveloped natural lands can remain natural and undeveloped.

Voters in San José last April overwhelming voted against Measure "B" in order to prevent Coyote Valley from falling to urban sprawl, and again in November we overwhelmingly voted in favor of Measure "T" to provide the funding necessary to help permanently protect Coyote Valley from all development, both housing and commercial. We also have repeatedly shown our support for the natural open space with our support for County Parks and the Open Space Authority.

We the people have spoken!
Now it is time for you on the Council to act!
Protect Coyote Valley!

Thank you,

~Larry Ames

Dr. Lawrence Ames, longtime environmentalist, supporter of Open Space, and an advocate for the Coyote Valley.

cc: City Clerk;
Dave Sykes, City Manager;
Megan Fluke and Alice Kaufman, Committee for Green Foothills;
Jean Dresden, San José Parks Advocates;
Shani Kleinhaus, Audubon Society