



Outlook

Fw: Coyote Valley/Monterey Road Corridor Study

From Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>**Date** Fri 2/20/2026 2:36 PM**To** Rules and Open Government Committee Agendas <rulescommitteeagenda@sanjoseca.gov>

1 attachment (393 KB)

Joint_letter_EconomicPolicyAssmt_5.15.24.pdf;

From: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>**Sent:** Friday, February 20, 2026 2:27 PM**To:** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>**Cc:** Roche, Megan <megan.roche@sanjoseca.gov>**Subject:** FW: Coyote Valley/Monterey Road Corridor Study

From: Alice Kaufman [REDACTED]**Sent:** Friday, February 20, 2026 1:31 PM**To:** Wilcox, Leland <Leland.Wilcox@sanjoseca.gov>; Burton, Chris <Christopher.Burton@sanjoseca.gov>; Hughey, Rosalynn <Rosalynn.Hughey@sanjoseca.gov>; Maguire, Jennifer <jennifer.maguire@sanjoseca.gov>; Carvalho, Brent <Brent.Carvalho@sanjoseca.gov>**Cc:** City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>; District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; Lucas Ramirez [REDACTED]**Subject:** Coyote Valley/Monterey Road Corridor Study

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Hello all,

With regard to the Coyote Valley Corridor Study item in front of the Rules Committee, I'm asking that the attached joint environmental letter, dated May 15, 2024, be **appended to the staff report for any future agenda items on this topic.**

This letter highlights the inaccuracies and missing information in the city's draft "Economic and Policy Assessments" document from April 2024. Importantly, that document was a draft and would likely have been revised and corrected before being finalized.

If the city intends to memorialize the draft documents that were produced during the Coyote Valley Corridor Study, it's important that the flaws and errors in those documents be noted in the record so that any future reference to those documents does not assume that they were accurate.

I look forward to reviewing the staff report and workload analysis that will be brought to next week's Rules Committee. Thank you for your consideration.



Alice Kaufman (She/Her)

Policy and Advocacy Director

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May 15, 2024

Brent Carvalho
City of San Jose Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San Jose, CA

Re: Coyote Valley Corridor Study

Dear Brent,

The undersigned organizations respectfully submit the following comments with regard to the Coyote Valley Corridor Study (CVCS) draft Economic and Policy Assessment report (dated April 2024).

I. The Economic and Policy Assessment does not mention the requirement of compatibility with the Coyote Creek Park Chain and broader environmental objectives for Coyote Valley

Envision 2040 General Plan Policy LU-20.11 provides: "Conduct a study of the Monterey Road Corridor through North, Mid-, and South Coyote Valley to consider appropriate non-residential uses for properties on the east side of Monterey Road **that would be compatible with the Coyote Creek Park Chain**, provide more flexibility of use and could also promote agricultural and nature based tourism or commercial activities." (emphasis added)

On November 16, 2021, when the City Council directed staff to initiate this study, the memo from Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers Jimenez, Peralez, Foley and Cohen provided as follows: "Return to the City Council by February 2022 with a budget, potential sources of funding, and an expeditious timeline to conduct a study of expanded recreational and commercial uses for properties east of Monterey Road. **In all cases, we expect that new uses will be compatible with broader environmental objectives to equitably preserve Coyote Valley for San José's diverse community.**"

Given that this document is an assessment of compatibility with city policy, each land use "cut sheet" should include an assessment of whether it is compatible with the Coyote Creek Park Chain and with broader environmental objectives for Coyote Valley.

A. Compatibility with the Coyote Creek Park Chain requires deference to Santa Clara County's vision and goals for the Coyote Creek Parkway

According to Santa Clara County's *Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan and Master Plan for the Coyote Creek Parkway County Park*¹ ("Coyote Creek Park Master Plan"), protection and stewardship of the wildlife habitat and the Coyote Creek riparian corridor is of paramount importance.

The Coyote Creek Park Master Plan's vision states:

The Coyote Creek Parkway is an outstanding example of a regionally significant riparian habitat. It is significant in its physical scope, natural beauty, diversity of species, and extent to which the corridor has been preserved in public ownership. It offers unique recreation and interpretation opportunities for all park visitors. Resource conservation and stewardship values will guide management and development to assure the sustenance of a quality riparian wildlife corridor both now and in the future. (Coyote Creek Park Master Plan, p. 24)

The Coyote Creek Park Master Plan also provides a list of "fundamental guidelines" to direct both the natural resource management (NRM) and public recreation (PR) components of the plan, including the following:

NRM Guideline #1: In cooperation with a variety of partner agencies and interest groups:

The Parkway's creek, groundwater, and biological resources shall be managed and enhanced to encourage native biodiversity, preserve resources, and protect habitats.

Coyote Creek and its natural floodplain should be restored, to the greatest extent practical, to allow for stable hydro-geomorphic processes beneficial to the preservation of a sustainable riparian habitat corridor.

Sufficient buffer areas between adjacent land uses and the riparian habitat corridor shall be provided to protect and preserve the Vision of the Parkway.

Functioning habitat corridors that connect the Parkway with the surrounding hills and open spaces should be identified, established, and maintained.

¹ <https://parks.sccgov.org/sites/g/files/exjcpb961/files/integrated-master-plan-report-final-march-2007.pdf>

Collaboration efforts should occur to obtain adequate protection and funding for the initiation and long-term administration of natural resource management programs in the Parkway.

NRM Guideline #2: A continuous, multi-tiered, riparian wildlife corridor along Coyote Creek shall be established through the Parkway. The corridor would provide nesting, rearing, and foraging areas for wildlife species that depend upon or use the creek, including threatened or endangered species.

NRM Guideline #3: The natural resources of Coyote Creek should be enhanced through active stewardship programs and adaptive management strategies based upon the most current and reliable scientific information.

NRM Guideline #4: Adjacent lands that would benefit a stable stream hydrology, serve as a buffer between differing land uses, offer unique parkland opportunities, or enhance the existing park should be identified for potential future acquisition and inclusion within it.

(Coyote Creek Park Master Plan, p. 24-25 [emphasis added])

As is clear from the vision and guidelines of the Coyote Creek Park Master Plan, any uses or new development within the Coyote Valley Corridor Study area that would impact biodiversity, wildlife habitat, wildlife movement and connectivity, or stream and groundwater hydrology would not be compatible with Coyote Creek Park. Furthermore, any uses that block or impair wildlife movement to and from Coyote Creek across the parcels within the CVCS area would conflict with the goal of establishing functioning habitat corridors to connect the Parkway with the surrounding hills and open spaces.

Finally, encouraging new development on undeveloped CVCS parcels may be in conflict with the goal of identifying lands adjacent to Coyote Creek Park for potential future acquisition, if those lands would benefit stable stream hydrology, serve as a buffer between differing land uses, offer unique parkland opportunities, or enhance the existing park.

We request that the Economic and Policy Assessment be revised to include “Compatibility with the Coyote Creek Park Chain” for each land use evaluated. We recommend that this be included as a new line item on each “cut sheet” in the document.

- B. Compatibility with broader environmental objectives for Coyote Valley must include considerations of wildlife movement and wildlife habitat, flood risk and flood reduction potential, agriculture, and climate resilience

When the City Council gave staff direction to initiate the CVCS process, it was as part of the Council motion to change the General Plan land use designation and zoning for the entirety of Coyote Valley from industrial use to open space and agriculture. The Council made that decision

due to their conviction that it was necessary to protect Coyote Valley for the benefits it provides for wildlife habitat and movement, flood and groundwater protection, farmland, and climate resilience. The Council certainly did not intend the CVCS process to negate their vision by enabling any land use the intensity or characteristics of which would undo any of the protections afforded by the Council's action.

The majority of potential land uses in the CVCS area would be incompatible with the broader environmental objectives mentioned by the Council, unless stringently restricted in terms of size, intensity, hours of operation, traffic generation, and other factors. We know that staff is planning to release draft development/design standards soon that will contain such restrictions, but at this point, we are unable to consider the vast majority of the uses described in the Economic and Policy Assessment as being compatible with broader environmental objectives for Coyote Valley. In our opinion, of the uses in the "cut sheets," only "Agricultural Exhibits and Education Uses" and "Farmers' Market/Food Stands" are compatible.

With regard to wildlife movement and habitat, as mentioned in the Coyote Creek Master Plan, Coyote Creek and its riparian ecosystem provide a critical wildlife movement corridor.² All of the efforts to protect the rest of Coyote Valley from development have been predicated on Coyote Creek remaining a safe and fully functioning movement pathway. Until now, environmental organizations have not focused attention on Coyote Creek – because until now, Coyote Creek has not been threatened. But Coyote Creek is the backbone of the entire Coyote Valley landscape linkage, as well as providing essential habitat for many animals that live, breed, and forage in the creek corridor. Development that encroaches too close to the riparian habitat, especially if it increases existing levels of nighttime lighting, noise and activity, development that fences off corridors that animals need to use, or development that increases traffic or activity inside the creek corridor itself (as through increased vehicle traffic over the Coyote Creek Golf Club bridge), would be contradictory to the goals of encouraging native biodiversity, preserving biological resources, and protecting and connecting habitats.

Wildlife movement across Monterey Road is a major concern. As recognized in the Baseline Assessment, Monterey Road is the foremost barrier to wildlife movement across the valley.³ Development along Monterey Road is likely to make wildlife movement here more challenging, since it will add further barriers to those that already exist. Solutions to this problem are being explored by the City and the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), including new wildlife crossings that could reduce roadkill deaths (if combined with fencing to guide animals to the crossings). But unless and until new wildlife crossings are constructed, any new development on Monterey Road is likely to obstruct and hinder wildlife movement through Coyote Valley.

With regard to flood and groundwater protection, as noted in the Baseline Assessment, Coyote Valley is unique in the county in terms of hydrology. The groundwater table is extremely close to

² See, e.g., Pathways for Wildlife, March 2016, [Coyote Valley Linkage Assessment Study](#).

³ Santa Clara County Wildlife Corridor Technical Working Group, Coyote Valley Subcommittee, April 2019, [Recommendations to Reduce Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions on the Monterey Road Corridor in Coyote Valley, Santa Clara County](#)

the surface, with depths ranging from 0 to 10 feet below ground surface. This means that the area is vulnerable to flooding, since excess stormwater cannot be adequately absorbed into the soil. It also means that Coyote Creek and its riparian ecosystem are hydrologically intertwined with lands nearby both above and below the ground surface. This is because Coyote Valley's hydrology combines a near-surface groundwater table with extremely permeable soils. This geology allows for the free movement of surface water into the deeper groundwater aquifer. We are concerned that any land use that risks contamination on the surface could potentially be communicated to Coyote Creek and its riparian corridor, as well as to the drinking water aquifer. Concerns for flooding and for groundwater quality were indeed a fundamental reason for the decision by Council to retain Coyote Valley as a rural open space landscape, and fundamental considerations of the Coyote Creek Park Master Plan.

According to Figure 6.1 in the Baseline Assessment, several of the CVCS parcels are within the 100-year FEMA floodplain, including the parcel owned by the Coyote Creek Golf Club.

We request that the Economic and Policy Assessment be revised to include “Compatibility with broader environmental objectives for Coyote Valley” for each land use evaluated, with specific evaluations concerning wildlife movement and habitat, and concerns related to hydrology, flooding and groundwater. We recommend that this be included as a new line item on each “cut sheet” in the document.

II. The Economic and Policy Assessment does not mention all of the relevant policies in the Envision 2040 General Plan

San Jose's Envision 2040 General Plan contains multiple policies that are relevant to the CVCS process, including the following:

- ER-7.4 To facilitate the movement of wildlife across Coyote Valley, work with the appropriate transportation agencies to replace portions of the median barrier on Monterey Road with a barrier that maintains human safety while being more permeable to wildlife movement and implement other improvements to benefit wildlife movement.
- ER-7.5 Support the on-going identification and protection of critical linkages for wildlife movement in the Mid-Coyote Valley.
- LU-20.1 Protect and preserve the remaining farmlands within San José's sphere of influence that are not planned for urbanization in the timeframe of the Envision General Plan, such as mid- and south Coyote Valley, through the following means:
 - 1. Strongly discourage conversion of agricultural lands outside the Urban Growth Boundary to non-agricultural uses.
 - 6. Require ancillary non-agricultural land uses on agricultural lands to be ancillary to and compatible with agricultural land uses, agricultural production, and the rural character of the area, and to enhance the economic viability of agricultural operations.

- LU-20.2 Preserve agricultural lands and prime soils in non-urban areas in order to provide local and regional fresh food supplies, reduce dependence on foreign products, conserve energy, and retain the aquifer recharge capacity of these lands.
- LU-20.4 Leverage agricultural lands to create and maintain a unique community character, provide open space, link to the region's history as the Valley of Heart's Delight, support the area's tourism industry, contribute to the local economy, and add to the quality of life of the community
- LU-20.5 Enhance viability and profitability of ongoing use of agricultural lands by supporting ancillary commercial uses such as fruit stands, small-scale environmental and agricultural tourism, and the processing of agricultural products.
- LU-20.6 Encourage agricultural uses which follow ecologically sound agricultural practices and minimize the use of chemicals and pesticides in order to promote healthy soils and ground water, provide healthful local foods, reduce energy use, and reduce the farming industry's demand for resources.
- LU-20.10 Study and make revisions to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to allow compatible commercial agriculture supportive uses in Coyote Valley
- LU-20.14 Shift the Urban Service Area boundary north in Coyote Valley in the future, and prohibit the shifting of the Urban Service Area boundary south in Coyote Valley. Properties designated for urban uses should remain within the Urban Service Area.

Collectively, these policies emphasize the importance of Coyote Valley for both wildlife connectivity and for agriculture. They also include specific guidelines for requiring any commercial uses to be ancillary to agriculture, which is highly relevant to the policy landscape for the CVCS process.

We request that the Economic and Policy Assessment be revised to include the above-cited policies, and to evaluate compatibility with these policies for each land use. We recommend that this be included as a new line item on each "cut sheet" in the document.

III. The "Restaurants, Wineries, Beer Gardens and Culinary Arts" cut sheet should not include a "Consistent" rating for General Plan Land Use

Specifically with regard to the "Restaurants, Wineries, Beer Gardens and Culinary Arts" use, the cut sheet indicates a ranking of "5: Consistent" for General Plan Land Use Consistency. The cut sheet states that "Use is intended for Ag designation and identified in Policy LU-20.5."

Policy LU-20.5, however, provides as follows: "Enhance viability and profitability of ongoing use of agricultural lands by supporting ancillary commercial uses such as fruit stands, small-scale environmental and agricultural tourism, and the processing of agricultural products."

This language is not at all consistent with restaurants and beer gardens. At most, a small-scale restaurant or outdoor eating area **that is ancillary to agriculture** and that exists primarily to

enhance the viability and profitability of ongoing use of agricultural lands would potentially qualify as “agricultural tourism” and thus be consistent with LU-20.5.

LU-20.5 is one of several policies under “Goal LU-20 – Rural Agriculture” in the General Plan. That goal states: “Provide and protect sufficient agricultural land to facilitate local food production, to provide broad community access to healthful foods, to add to a distinct community image, and to promote environmental, fiscal, and economic benefits of rural agricultural lands.” All of the policies under this goal are intended to promote and preserve agricultural land. Policy LU-20.5 is intended to achieve this by allowing ongoing agricultural use to enhance its profitability by operating an ancillary commercial use such as a fruit stand or small-scale agritourism (e.g. pumpkin patch activities for kids during the fall season).

In order for “Restaurants, Wineries, Beer Gardens and Culinary Arts” to achieve a ranking of “5. Consistent” with the General Plan, this category would have to be re-defined to specifically state that any such uses must be both (a) small-scale and (b) ancillary to agriculture and intended to enhance the viability and profitability of ongoing use of agricultural lands.

If the definition of “Restaurants, Wineries, Beer Gardens and Culinary Arts” remains as it currently is, its ranking must be changed to “3. Partially consistent.” We note that this is the ranking given for “Lodging/Small Eco-Hotels” (with the note that “Agriculture uses can occur simultaneously with these uses”) and “Private Recreation Uses” (with the note that “Private recreation uses, which are rural in character may be compatible with the agriculture designation”). We also note that “Small-Scale Retail” is given a ranking of “0: Inconsistent” with the note “Non-agricultural retail uses are not allowed in Ag designation.” The same is true for Light Industrial uses such as “Outdoor Storage” and “Battery Energy Storage Facilities.” Basically, every other non-agricultural use is stated to be either “Partially consistent” or “Inconsistent” with the General Plan. It is baffling that “Restaurants, Wineries, Beer Gardens and Culinary Arts” is considered fully consistent with the General Plan when no other commercial, retail or industrial use is.

We request that the cut sheet for “Restaurants, Wineries, Beer Gardens and Culinary Arts” be revised to indicate a ranking of “3. Partially consistent” and include a statement that such use would have to be ancillary to and intended to enhance the viability of agriculture.

- IV. All uses ranked “Partially Consistent” should include a statement that in order to be consistent, such uses must be small-scale and ancillary to and intended to enhance the viability of agriculture.

The cut sheets for “Lodging/Small Eco-Hotels,” “Private Recreation Uses,” “Spas and Personal Service Uses,” and “Nature-Based Education Centers” are ranked as “Partially Consistent” with the General Plan. Also, the cut sheet for “Recreational Vehicle Resort and Campgrounds” is ranked as “1: Limited Consistency.” These rankings include notes providing explanations that vary in wording but that all seem to vaguely refer to the need for such uses to be ancillary to

agriculture. This wording needs to be made clearer and stronger, since Policy LU-20.5 is unequivocal in stating that any environmental or agricultural tourism uses must be (a) small-scale, (b) intended to enhance the viability and profitability of ongoing use of agricultural lands, and (c) ancillary to ongoing agriculture.

We request that the cut sheets for “Lodging/Small Eco-Hotels,” “Private Recreation Uses,” “Spas and Personal Service Uses,” “Nature-Based Education Centers,” and “Recreational Vehicle Resort and Campgrounds” be revised to include a statement that such use would have to be ancillary to and intended to enhance the viability of agriculture.

- V. The “Demonstration Areas for Sustainable Infrastructure” cut sheet should not include a “Consistent” ranking for General Plan Land Use.

The cut sheet for “Demonstration Areas for Sustainable Infrastructure” includes a “Fully Consistent” ranking for General Plan Land Use consistency, with a note stating “Use is intended for Ag designation and is consistent with ecological practices supported in Policy LU-20.6 and sustainable communities supported in Policy 20.8.” This ranking should be changed to “Partially Consistent” and include a statement that such use would have to be ancillary to and intended to enhance the viability of agriculture.

Policy LU-20.6 states: “Encourage agricultural uses which follow ecologically sound agricultural practices and minimize the use of chemicals and pesticides in order to promote healthy soils and ground water, provide healthful local foods, reduce energy use, and reduce the farming industry’s demand for resources.” Encouraging ecologically sound agricultural practices on land that is actually being farmed is a very different thing from “quick-build infrastructure demonstration projects” that, according to the cut sheet, could include solar, wind, or green construction technologies. While laudable in their goals, these uses have absolutely nothing to do with agriculture or with reducing the use of chemicals and pesticides.

Policy LU-20.8 states: “Work with agricultural entities (i.e., farming industry, non-profits, land owners), the County, other Santa Clara County cities, and the Local Area Formation Commission and other stakeholders to promote public education to improve the community’s understanding of the importance of agriculture in creating sustainable communities within Santa Clara County.” Again, this has absolutely nothing to do with whether a solar, wind, or green construction demonstration area is consistent with the definition of allowed uses on agricultural land in the General Plan.

These uses can only be considered consistent with the General Plan if they fit the requirements of Policy LU 20.5, similar to the other uses discussed above.

We request that the cut sheet for “Demonstration Areas for Sustainable Infrastructure” be revised to indicate a ranking of “Partially Consistent” and include a statement that

such use would have to be ancillary to and intended to enhance the viability of agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Sincerely,

Alice Kaufman, Policy and Advocacy Director
Green Foothills

Judy Fenerty, Conservation Chair
California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Chapter

Deb Kramer, Executive Director
Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful

Shani Kleinhaus, Environmental Advocate
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

Katja Irvin, Guadalupe Group Conservation Chair
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter