



# Memorandum

**TO:** RULES AND OPEN  
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Barry Ng

**SUBJECT:** COYOTE VALLEY WATER  
RESOURCE INVESTMENT  
STRATEGY

**DATE:** January 10, 2018

Approved

D. D. S. Y. L.

Date

1/11/18

## RECOMMENDATION

Support the Coyote Valley Water Resource Investment Strategy by working collaboratively with the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority and the Santa Clara Valley Water District in matters involving planning, zoning, trails, right-of-way improvements, water quality, environmental stewardship and green infrastructure.

## BACKGROUND

At the November 15, 2017 Rules and Open Government Committee meeting (item G.2), the City Manager was directed to support the efforts of the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) and the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (OSA) on the Coyote Valley Water Resource Investment Strategy and return to Council with an update regarding the Strategy findings.

The SCVWD and OSA have jointly initiated work to assess the feasibility of large-scale green infrastructure project opportunities, such as how to better leverage open space areas to detain storm water for downstream flood protection, improve water quality in the Coyote Creek and Fisher Creek, provide for aquifer recharge, and restore wetlands and riparian areas to increase ecological resiliency.

## ANALYSIS

Based on direction provided by the respective Boards of Directors of the SCVWD and the OSA at a joint meeting on January 17, 2017, the SCVWD and the OSA have initiated work on the development of a collaborative and scientifically-based assessment of large-scale green infrastructure project opportunities in the Coyote Valley. This project, known as the *Coyote Valley Water Resource Investment Strategy* (Strategy) will analyze and quantify the benefits of natural/green infrastructure investments within the Coyote Valley, specifically looking at how to better leverage open space areas to detain stormwater for downstream flood protection; improve water quality in Coyote Creek and Fisher Creek; provide for aquifer recharge; and restore historic wetlands, riparian areas, and uplands to increase ecological resiliency. Restoration work in these areas would also provide a suite of potential

co-benefits, for ex: habitat connectivity, restoration of wetlands/springs, carbon sequestration, recreation opportunities, and increased agricultural viability. The Strategy will identify green infrastructure projects that can enhance landscape resiliency and benefit surrounding communities, including potential funding sources, partnership opportunities, and other implementation measures. SCVWD plans to include this work in its Coyote Creek Watershed One Water Master Plan as a case study on how watershed conservation in Coyote Valley helps achieve its integrated water resource management objectives.

Goals and policies in the Envision San José 2040 General Plan (General Plan) focused on Coyote Valley are consistent with the proposed Strategy. The Coyote Valley Greenbelt is planned to be retained as undeveloped or for agriculture uses, while the Coyote Valley Urban Reserve is not planned for urban development during the timeframe of the General Plan. The General Plan also establishes goals and policies to minimize effects of stormwater runoff on ground and surface water quality, and protect property and natural resources.

The Strategy also aligns with the Environmental Leadership goals of protection, preservation, and restoration of riparian resources which in effect also offers habitat for several species, and is a key goal of the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan (SCVHP). Identification of potential green infrastructure will enhance the City's commitment to responsible stormwater management through multi-agency partnerships.

Additionally, it's likely this work will directly result in a list of green infrastructure projects that will be considered for inclusion in the 2018 Storm Water Resource Plan for the Santa Clara Basin in Santa Clara County. This work could also inform preparation of other plans and studies including the City's Green Infrastructure Plan, Environmental Sustainability Plan, and help the City meet the Environmental Resource goals outlined in Envision San Jose 2040.

### **Focus Area**

The primary focus area for the Strategy are the lands within the Fisher Creek watershed, including the watershed sub-basins draining the Santa Cruz Mountains extending downstream to the outlet of Fisher Creek. Analyses will also take into consideration groundwater, surface water, flood risk reduction and biological connections between Fisher Creek and Coyote Creek as it flows through the Valley and downstream into San Jose.

### **Project Goals:**

1. Assess suitability and performance of potential green infrastructure projects in enhancing/protecting local water resources under existing and potential future land uses;
2. Characterize and quantify the potential benefits that could be provided by these green infrastructure projects as they relate to stormwater capture, downstream flood control, groundwater recharge, habitat enhancement and restoration; and
3. Relate these benefits to inform/implement federal, State, regional, and local policies and planning efforts.

### **Project Outcomes:**

1. The *Coyote Valley Water Resource Investment Strategy* will inform development of a case study of potential water resource enhancement projects for the Upper Coyote Creek

- Watershed in SCVWD's One Water Master Plan, and will include a list of green infrastructure projects that are suitable to be included in the 2018 Storm Water Resource Plan for the Santa Clara Basin in Santa Clara County priority projects;
2. Land conservation, investment scenarios, and initial cost estimates for the Coyote Valley that demonstrate how green infrastructure can enhance landscape resiliency and benefit surrounding communities; priority areas for proactive resource conservation and large-scale green infrastructure investments; strategies and potential funding sources to implement; and
  3. Phased implementation plan to identify and engage appropriate government agencies and partners; identify relevant funding sources, including from Prop 1, for project design engineering and implementation.

### **Project Workplan:**

The tasks associated with the development of the *Coyote Valley Water Resources Investment Strategy* and Case Study will include:

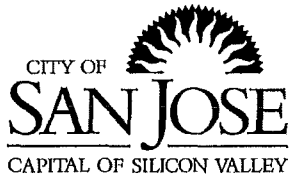
1. Assemble and review relevant spatial data and studies and identify and fill data gaps as necessary/feasible;
2. Conduct mapping to refine site suitability for hydrological/ecological restoration or enhancement;
3. Identify the suite of interventions that could help meet project objectives in suitable areas (e.g. Floodplain expansion, wetland restoration, channel realignment, riparian corridor expansion, small-scale stormwater detention basins, etc.);
4. Model baseline conditions, (e.g. peak flows to Coyote creek, flood inundation areas, and stormwater retention potential, etc.), under future climate scenarios or likely development scenarios;
5. Model future conditions if restoration or enhancements are made under future climate scenarios or likely development scenarios;
6. Iterate and refine restoration/enhancement scenarios; and
7. Finalize preferred green infrastructure scenarios, estimate implementation costs and identify funding sources.

### **Project Update**

SCVWD and OSA staff have largely completed Project workplan tasks 1 and 2 and are making progress on tasks 3 and 4. Immediate next steps are to complete model development, evaluate the baseline hydrological conditions, and develop a suite of potential green infrastructure project opportunities that will be evaluated in tasks 5-7.

/s/ Jon Cicirelli for  
BARRY NG  
Director of Public Works

For questions, please contact Michael O'Connell, Deputy Director, at (408) 535-8300.



## Memorandum

**TO:** RULES AND OPEN  
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Mayor Sam Liccardo  
Councilmember Sergio Jimenez

**SUBJECT:** COYOTE VALLEY WATER  
RESOURCE INVESTMENT  
STRATEGY

**DATE:** November 9, 2017

Approved

Date

11-9-17

### RECOMMENDATION

Direct the City Manager to support efforts of the Santa Clara Valley Water District and the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority on the Coyote Valley Water Resource Investment Strategy, and to return to Council with an update regarding the Strategy findings.

### BACKGROUND

Last week's discussion with the Water District provided sobering information about the extent to which our residents must continue to live in peril due to the risk of flooding along the Coyote Creek corridor. Repairs to the Anderson Dam may take a decade or more, given severe funding shortfalls. Flood-related capital improvements within the more populated part of the Coyote watershed remain similarly unstudied, unfunded, and in the near term, unlikely.

The Water District and Open Space Authority have jointly initiated work to assess the feasibility of large-scale green infrastructure project opportunities, such as how to better leverage open space areas to detain storm water for downstream flood protection, improve water quality in the Coyote Creek and Fisher Creek, provide for aquifer recharge, and restore wetlands and riparian areas to increase ecological resiliency.

The Council and our residents should know more about what options may be available to improve San José's resilience to flood risks, and we should fully support efforts by the Water District and Open Space Authority to do so, in partnership with landowners, local experts and other key stakeholders.