

July 19, 2004

The Honorable Mayor and City Council  
801 N. First Street  
San José, CA 95110

**RE: COYOTE VALLEY SPECIFIC PLAN**

Dear Mayor and City Council:

On July 14, 2004, the Housing Advisory Committee held a Special meeting to discuss the plans being considered for the Coyote Valley. The Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement and the Department of Housing, provided the Commission with an overview of the process and outcomes of various community meetings held to date. This letter serves to inform you of the Commission's recommendations.

Development of the Coyote Valley Specific Plan has generated much enthusiasm and conversation among San José's citizens. The development of a Specific Plan has drawn the interest of communities across the nation and is widely viewed as an opportunity to avoid sprawl and "do it right." The major concept of the Coyote Valley Specific Plan is to be as self-sufficient as possible and to enable its residents to work, shop, utilize services, and play within walking distance of their homes.

It is assumed that the majority of Coyote Valley's 50,000 development-triggering jobs will be in programming, engineering and management fields, however, many janitors, gardeners, administrative assistants, daycare providers and mixed-use retail workers will also be employed in the area. The Commission stresses the importance of providing housing to workers at all income levels, which will, in turn, enhance the community's prospects for sustainability. To help further that end, the Commission recommends the following:


- We urge the City Council to re-affirm its commitment to a 20% inclusionary stipulation, and apportion affordable units according to the following guidelines: 30% extremely low income (ELI); 30% very low income (VLI); 25% low income (LI); and 15% moderate income (MOD). We further advise the City Council to include for-sale dwellings as well as rental units under these provisions and to work with non-profit housing developers to maximize housing opportunities for low-income workers.
- The HAC strongly advises the City Council to require integration of affordable units throughout the mid-Coyote area and to set their exterior and interior finish standards equal to market-rate units.

- In order to ensure balanced design, community acceptance, and maximum affordability, the HAC advises the City Council to avoid low-density land use in favor of a mixture of medium and higher density development.
- Recognizing the importance of transit oriented development principles, the HAC recommends that efficient integration of transportation and land use will be a critical determinant of whether we succeed in “doing it right.” Therefore, the HAC recommends that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) be studied as a more cost-effective alternative to the light rail lines originally envisioned for Coyote Valley.
- The HAC recommends that the Coyote Valley Task Force establish a Housing Subcommittee to examine the many housing issues that will arise in both the near and long terms.

The hallmark of the Coyote Valley vision has been sustainability, environmental sensitivity and design that integrates development with the natural landscape. An equitable social vision will also be critical to the success of the new community.

The Housing Advisory Committee passed the above recommendations with unanimous votes and urges the City Council to take these recommendations into consideration. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



TOM FINK  
Housing Advisory Commission, Chair

cc: Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement