

# III. PROJECT GOALS

## A. Creating a Sustainable Balance

*Getting It Right* grew out of the desire to create a shared vision for Coyote Valley that is a model of Smart Growth. This model is “smart” in that it provides the blueprint for a sustainable new community that effectively balances environmental quality, economic vitality, social equity, and community character. The following goals express the basic intent of the Vision as it relates to these four broad themes:



### Environment

**Goal:** A mixed-use community sensitively integrated with the natural environment in a manner that preserves ecosystem functions and protects the biological diversity and productivity of Coyote Valley.

Development in Coyote Valley is not viewed as an either/or proposition as it relates to the natural environment. Instead, the natural and built environments are viewed as two parts of an integral unit whose functions are interdependent. Key natural systems and resources to be addressed include the hydrologic system, the sensitive habitat areas, and the prime agricultural soils.

### Hydrology

The key functions of Fisher and Coyote Creeks as drainage courses and habitat areas will be integrated into the urban setting. The Vision’s goal is to establish a comprehensive area-wide flood management system that protects existing and future development from flooding while also preserving natural habitat, creating recreational amenities, and accommodating agricultural needs.

In addition to regulating surface flows, new development also needs to protect the groundwater supply. The design of the new community will preserve the pervious land needed to recharge the groundwater, maintain sustainable levels in the aquifer underlying the valley, and implement Best Management Practices that minimize the pollutants in urban runoff.

### Natural Resources

Key natural resources in Coyote Valley include sensitive habitat areas associated with the two creeks and areas of serpentine soils, as well as visual resources associated with the unique topographic and agricultural setting. Urban development will avoid key habitat areas, prohibiting development in hillside areas with serpentine soils and incorporating sensitive riparian habitat areas into the overall flood management open space system. Utilizing an open space and natural systems approach to flood management will provide the opportunity to enhance natural habitat values along the Fisher Creek corridor. The channel will be realigned to provide a more natural configuration and replanted with native riparian species. Habitat value also will be enhanced by linking the two creek open space corridors with each other and with the surrounding open space to facilitate the movement of wildlife across the Valley.

To preserve the visual quality and character of the existing setting, the new community will incorporate open space corridors that preserve a sense of openness within the urbanized area and permit views out to the surrounding valley floor and foothills. Also, to reinforce the connection between the urban community and its rural context, development along the perimeter of the community will generally face out toward the open space, rather than turning its back. Single-loaded perimeter roadways can provide a gracious transition between urban and rural, and preserve views to the rural open space for all. As in San Francisco and other urban areas with powerful natural settings, the straight grid of streets will provide view corridors that visually connect the urban fabric with its natural setting.



### Agriculture

Agriculture has and will continue to play an active and positive role in Coyote Valley’s future. The new community will maintain a compact form in order to preserve as much agricultural land as possible. It will also establish mechanisms for preventing future erosion of agricultural potential in the Valley. A more diverse range of activities that can protect and enhance the viability of agriculture in Coyote Valley will be accommodated and supported, including large-scale commercial agriculture, family farms, market gardens, produce markets, community gardens, etc.

To integrate agriculture into the physical and social structure, to establish the agricultural image, and to support the local agricultural economy of Coyote Valley, the Vision proposes:



- Agriculture-oriented activities such as regular farmers’ markets, and seasonal activities, such as harvest festivals.
- Agro-tourism and “buy local” programs that will diversify markets and revenue streams for local farmers.
- Community gardens in public parklands and in public lands set aside for flood management and groundwater recharge.
- Provision of the first right of refusal for plots in community gardens to households without yards.
- School programs that teach children about growing their own food.



### Economics

**Goal: A new mixed-use community that is economically stable and profitable over the long term.**

The Vision illustrates a Smart Growth strategy for achieving San José’s objective to develop Coyote Valley into a major employment center that attracts new jobs and revenue to the City. To develop an economically vital and sustainable community, San José needs to consider more than just the near-term development and potential tax gains. It also should address the long-term costs of sprawl such as decreased productivity, environmental degradation, and reduced quality of life. The Vision incorporates the view that there are long-term economic benefits associated with the development of a compact, transit-oriented, mixed-use community.



Creating a high-density, transit-oriented development pattern in Coyote Valley will provide a number of economic benefits for landowners and developers, including more rentable and saleable building area; lower per capita and per acre infrastructure costs; more efficient, incremental phasing of development; flexibility to respond to market conditions; and lower costs related to provision of parking.

Creating a high density, transit-oriented development pattern will also provide a number of economic benefits for future residents, employees, and the City of San José, including lower transportation costs; fewer non-productive hours spent commuting; greater housing affordability; more retail, service sector, and professional jobs; and greater service efficiency.



### Social Equity

**Goal:** A mixed-use and mixed-income community that provides broad access to meaningful work, affordable housing, community services, and an attractive and healthy living environment.

The physical design of the Coyote Valley community can do much to promote social equity for future residents and workers, starting with the creation of a diverse local economy. Rather than creating a land use monoculture that caters to a single industry sector, the community will be designed to accommodate a broad range of businesses and the services needed to support them. This in turn will generate employment for a diverse workforce with the full range of education and skill levels.

By creating a compact, higher-density mixed-use community served by transit, Coyote Valley can help those with fewer resources in several ways. Appropriate densities in the range of 20–30 units per acre will facilitate the provision of affordable workforce housing by lowering per unit construction costs and spreading those costs over more market-rate units. Placing affordable housing near transit eliminates costs associated with owning and operating an automobile since residents and workers can walk to and from transit. Providing affordable housing near employment also creates the potential for workers to live and work in the same community. Compact, mixed-use development that locates parks, schools, child care, health care and other community services near transit also increases fair access to these resources by all in the community.

**Goal:** To establish the regulatory framework and financing mechanisms that will support the development of the Coyote Valley community as one that provides fair and equitable access to meaningful employment and affordable housing.

Obviously, many social equity objectives can only be marginally influenced by the physical composition of the community. Coyote Valley also will require much more in the way of commitment of resources and regulatory support if social equity objectives are to be achieved. For instance, regulatory mechanisms, such as inclusionary zoning, are needed to ensure that affordable housing is provided and is fully integrated into the community. Public subsidies, such as Redevelopment Agency funds, and funding mechanisms, such

as community facility districts, will be needed to support affordable housing and to finance facilities for community services such as child care and health care.



### Place Making and Community Building

**Goal:** A distinct and identifiable community as opposed to a structureless collection of “uses.” Coyote Valley should be a place that nurtures pride of place among those who live and work there.

The place-making strategy is to create a thoughtfully structured town that preserves key characteristics of its natural setting and establishes a human scale for future development. This strategy calls for the preservation of physical features that help define the boundaries and visual character of the community—the riparian corridors, key topographic features, and agricultural lands—and for the creation of an interconnected

grid of pedestrian-scaled blocks and tree-lined streets that establish a safe, walkable community.

Within this circulation framework, the Town Center and Neighborhood Centers have been strategically located to create identifiable mixed-use districts with employment, shopping, and community services located near transit and housing. Parks and public buildings have been located to create focal features that further contribute to the identity of individual neighborhoods. Finally, the Vision encourages the creation of “catalytic” development sites in the Town and Neighborhood centers as a means of encouraging early development in these areas and establishing a core for the new community.

