

Proposed General Plan Update Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions



Natural Communities and Wildlife Habitat

The Natural Communities and Wildlife Habitat goals and policies provide guidance for the City on how to balance resource conservation and urban development, so as to maximize the mutual achievement of environmental, economic and social objectives.

San Jose also recognizes the need for multiple jurisdictions to cooperate in the management of natural communities and wildlife habitat. Recognizing this interdependence, San José will demonstrate environmental leadership through advocacy and cooperative efforts with other jurisdictions.

Item 3.c – October 26, 2009 Task Force Meeting

Balanced Resource Conservation

Goal NR-1: Balance resource conservation and urban development within the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary to maximize achievement of environmental, economic and social objectives. (SJ2020 GP Updated)

NR-1 Policies:

Policy NR-1.1 Continue to maintain the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary and focus development and redevelopment within the existing urban envelope of the City.

Grassland, Oak Woodlands, Chaparral and Coastal Scrub Habitats

Oak woodlands, grasslands, chaparral and coastal scrub are the primary vegetative cover on the hillsides surrounding the Santa Clara Valley floor. In addition to providing grazing land, wildlife habitat, and rainwater capture, these areas also have direct scenic value.

Goal NR-2 Preserve, protect and restore the ecological integrity and scenic characteristics of grasslands, oak woodlands, chaparral and coastal scrub in hillside areas. (SJ2020 GP Updated)

NR-2 Policies:

Policy NR-2.1 The nature and amount of public access to wooded areas and grasslands, when allowed, shall be consistent with the environmental characteristics of these areas. (SJ2020 GP)

Policy NR-2.2 Prohibit the use of motorized off-road vehicles for recreation purposes in oak woodland, grassland, and hillside areas within the City to protect these limited resources. (SJ2020 GP Updated)

Policy NR-2.3 Cooperate with other agencies in the preservation and management of native hillside vegetation. (SJ2020 GP Updated)

- Policy NR-2.4 Minimize the removal of ecologically valuable vegetation during development and grading for projects within the City. (SJ2020 GP Updated)
- Policy NR-2.5 Preserve and protect oak woodlands, and individual oak trees, to the greatest extent feasible. Any loss of oak woodland and/or native oak trees must be fully mitigated. (SJ2020 GP Updated)
- Policy NR-2.6 Discourage agricultural practices, other than managed grazing of grasslands, in hillside areas. (SJ2020 GP Updated)
- Policy NR-2.7 Preserve, protect, and manage serpentine grasslands, particularly those supporting sensitive serpentine bunchgrass communities providing habitat for sensitive plant and animal species. Development will not be permitted on serpentine grasslands supporting state or federal candidate or listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species. Appropriately managed grazing is encouraged on serpentine grasslands. (SJ2020 GP Updated)
- Policy NR-2.8 Avoid planting of invasive non-native plant species in oak woodlands, grasslands, chaparral and coastal scrub habitats, and in hillside areas.

NR-2 Actions:

- Action NR-2.9 Continue to work with Local Partners (the County of Santa Clara, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and the Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill) and three Wildlife Agencies (the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS-NOAA Fisheries)) on completion of the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) project. Once completed and adopted, implement an HCP/NCCP that that both mitigates for land and stream development impacts and provides additional conservation, restoration, and enhancement efforts.

Bay and Baylands

South San Francisco Bay and the baylands are a vital biotic, cultural and recreational open space resource.

- Goal NR-4** **Preserve and restore natural characteristics of the Bay and adjacent lands, and recognize the role of the Bay's vegetation and waters in maintaining a healthy regional ecosystem.** (SJ2020 GP)

NR-4 Policies:

- Policy NR-4.1 The baylands ecosystem shall be protected, preserved and restored in a manner consistent with the fragile environmental characteristics of this area and the interest of the citizens of San José in a healthful environment. (SJ2020 GP Updated)

- Policy NR-4.2 Cooperate with the County, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, EPA, California Department of Fish and Game, Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and other appropriate jurisdictions to prevent the degradation of baylands by discouraging new filling or dredging of Bay waters and baylands. (SJ2020 GP Updated)
- Policy NR-4.3 In cooperation and, where appropriate, in consultation with other interested agencies and with projects such as the South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration Project, encourage the restoration of diked historic wetlands, including salt ponds, to their natural state by opening them to tidal action. (SJ2020 GP Updated)
- Policy NR-4.5 No development which creates adverse impacts on the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge or results in a net loss of baylands habitat value shall be permitted. (SJ2020 GP Updated)
- Policy NR-4.6 Planting of invasive non-native plant species shall be avoided in or near baylands habitats.

Special-Status Plants and Animals

Natural habitats and communities, including streams, oak woodlands, grassland, chaparral, riparian forest, salt marsh, freshwater wetlands, and others, harbor a number of species that are rare, declining, or particularly sensitive to human activities. These "special-status species" include plants and animals that are protected under State and Federal Endangered Species Acts, the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the California Fish and Game Code, and other species listed by the California Department of Fish and Game and the California Native Plant Society. (See Table 1 Special-Status Animal Species)

Goal NR-5 **Preserve, manage, and restore habitat suitable for special-status species, including threatened and endangered species.** (SJ2020 GP Updated)

NR-5 Policies:

- Policy NR-5.1 Preserve and restore, to the greatest extent feasible, habitat areas that support special-status species. Avoid development in such habitats unless no feasible alternatives exist and mitigation is provided of equivalent value.
- Policy NR-5.2 Limit recreational uses in wildlife refuges, nature preserves and wilderness areas in parks to those activities which have minimal impact on sensitive habitats. (SJ2020 GP Updated)
- Policy NR-5.3 Prohibit planting of invasive non-native plant species in natural habitats that support special-status species.

Table 1
Special-status Species in San Jose's Sphere of Influence

Common Name	Scientific Name
Tiburon Indian paintbrush	<i>Castilleja affinis</i> ssp. <i>neglecta</i>
Coyote ceanothus	<i>Ceanothus ferrisiae</i>
Santa Clara Valley dudleya	<i>Dudleya setchellii</i>
Metcalf Canyon jewel-flower	<i>Streptanthus albidus</i> ssp. <i>albidus</i>
Alkali milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus tener</i> var. <i>tener</i>
Big-scale balsamroot	<i>Balsamorhiza macrolepis</i> var. <i>macrolepis</i>
Congdon's tarplant	<i>Centromadia parryi</i> ssp. <i>congdonii</i>
Mt. Hamilton thistle	<i>Cirsium fontinale</i> var. <i>campylon</i>
Hoover's button-celery	<i>Eryngium aristulatum</i> var. <i>hooveri</i>
Fragrant fritillary	<i>Fritillaria liliacea</i>
Loma Prieta hoita	<i>Hoita strobilina</i>
Satan's goldenbush	<i>Isocoma menziesii</i> var. <i>diabolica</i>
Smooth lessingia	<i>Lessingia micradenia</i> var. <i>globrata</i>
Arcuate bush-mallow	<i>Malacothamnus arcuatus</i>
Mt. Diablo cottonweed	<i>Micropus amphibolus</i>
Robust monardella	<i>Monardella villosa</i> ssp. <i>globosa</i>
Most beautiful jewel-flower	<i>Streptanthus albidus</i> ssp. <i>peramoenus</i>
Bay checkerspot butterfly	<i>Euphydryas editha bayensis</i>
Pacific lamprey	<i>Lampetra tridentata</i>
Central Valley fall-run Chinook salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>
Central California coast steelhead	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>
California tiger salamander	<i>Ambystoma californiense</i>
California red-legged frog	<i>Rana draytonii</i>
Foothill yellow-legged frog	<i>Rana boylei</i>
Western pond turtle	<i>Actinemys marmorata</i>
California brown pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>
Golden eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
White-tailed kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Bald eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
American peregrine falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>
California clapper rail	<i>Rallus longirostris obsoletus</i>
Western snowy plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus</i>
California least tern	<i>Sterna antillarum browni</i>
Burrowing owl	<i>Athene cucularia</i>
Vaux's swift	<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
Yellow warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>
San Francisco common yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas sinuosa</i>
Alameda song sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia pusillula</i>
Grasshopper sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>
Bryant's savannah sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus</i>
Tricolored blackbird	<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>
Salt marsh harvest mouse	<i>Reithrodontomys raviventris</i>
Salt marsh wandering shrew	<i>Sorex vagrans halicoetes</i>
Pallid bat	<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>
Western red bat	<i>Lasiurus blossevillii</i>
San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat	<i>Neotoma fuscipes annectens</i>
American badger	<i>Taxidea taxus</i>

Migratory Birds

More than 350 species of birds have been recorded in the City of San José and vicinity. The diverse array of habitats provided by the City supports large numbers of species and individuals of birds.

Goal NR-6 Protect migratory birds from injury or mortality.

NR-6 Policies:

Policy NR-6.1 Avoid implementing activities that result in the loss of active native birds' nests, including both direct loss and indirect loss through abandonment, of native birds. Avoidance of activities that could result in impacts to nests during the breeding season or maintenance of buffers between such activities and active nests would avoid such impacts.

Policy NR-6.2 Require that development projects incorporate measures to avoid impacts to nesting migratory birds.

Urban/Natural Interface

Goal NR-7: Minimize adverse effects of urbanization on natural lands surrounding the City's developed areas.

NR-7 Policies:

Policy NR-7.1 Encourage fencing between residential areas and natural lands to minimize the encroachment of people, pets, and non-native vegetation into natural lands.

Policy NR-7.2 Design Development at the urban/natural community interface of the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to minimize the length of the shared boundary between urban development and natural areas through clustering of development and locating development closest to existing development. Key areas where natural communities are found adjacent to the UGB include the Baylands in Alviso, the Santa Teresa Hills, Alum Rock Park, and Evergreen.

Policy NR-7.3 Lighting in developed areas adjacent to natural areas will consist of low-glare lighting. Any high-intensity lighting used near natural areas will be placed as close to the ground as possible and directed downward or away from natural areas.

Policy NR-7.4 Public facilities such as ballparks and fields that require high-intensity night lighting will be sited at least 0.5 mile from sensitive habitats to minimize light pollution, unless it can be demonstrated that lighting systems will not substantially increase lighting within natural areas (e.g., due to screening topography or vegetation).

Policy NR-7.5 Prohibit use of invasive species, citywide, in required landscaping as part of the discretionary review of proposed development.

Policy NR-7.6 Encourage the use of native plants in the landscaping of developed areas adjacent to natural lands.

Policy NR-7.7 In areas where movement of wildlife through a developed area (i.e., between patches of natural habitat) is not ecologically desirable, barriers to movement of pets out of the developed area and movement of sensitive species into the developed area will be encouraged.

Policy NR-7.8 Design and construct development to avoid changes in drainage patterns across adjacent natural areas and for adjacent native trees, such as oaks.

NR-7 Actions:

Action NR-78 Work with landowners, landscapers, nurseries, and the multi-agency Santa Clara County Weed Management Area to remove and prevent the spread of highly invasive and noxious weeds.

Invasive plants are those plants listed in the State’s Noxious Weed List, the California Invasive Plant Council’s list of “Exotic Pest Plants of Greatest Ecological Concern in California,” and other priority species identified by the agricultural commissioner and California Department of Agriculture.

Wildlife Movement

Wildlife movement within or in the vicinity of the City takes many forms, and is different for the various suites of species associated with these lands. Bird and bat species move readily over the landscape, foraging over and within both natural lands and landscaped areas of the City. Fish species move along the stream corridors, some as residents, some as anadromous species. Mammals of different species move within their home ranges, but also disperse between patches of high-quality habitat.

Movement of animals between the vast expanses of natural lands in the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range is constrained by development that has occurred on the Santa Clara Valley floor. Consequently, it is important that wildlife be able to move between these two mountain ranges in the few areas where such movement still occurs. Within the City’s Sphere of Influence, the Coyote Valley still provides a landscape linkage between these two ranges.

Goal NR-8 Minimize adverse effects of future development on wildlife movement and remove or reduce existing impediments to wildlife movement.

NR-8 Policies:

Policy NR-8.1 In the area north of Highway 237 design and construct buildings to reduce the potential for bird strikes for species associated with the baylands or the riparian habitats of lower Coyote Creek.

Policy NR-8.2 In areas important to terrestrial wildlife movement, design new or improved existing roads so that they allow wildlife to continue to move across the roads (e.g., either over the road surface or through undercrossings or overcrossings designed for the animals moving through the area). Enhance undercrossings used for wildlife movement (e.g., by enlargement) when roads are improved.

Policy NR-8.3 Where new road crossings of streams are constructed, or existing culverts are replaced or improved, design all culverts to allow movement of aquatic species present in any watercourse crossed by the road. Use clear-span bridges in place of culverts where feasible.

NR-8 Actions:

Action NR-8.4 To facilitate the movement of wildlife across Coyote Valley, work with the appropriate transportation agencies to replace at least portions of the median barrier on Monterey Road with a barrier that maintains human safety while being more permeable to wildlife movement.