

CHERRY ORCHARD TENANCY

February 24, 2020

Teresa Alvarado
David Pandori
General Plan 4 Year Review Task Force Co-Chairs
General Plan Task Force Members

Re: Paradigm Shift in Coyote Valley

Dear Teresa and David:

A new paradigm has arisen for all of Coyote Valley. With the acquisition of over 900 acres in North Coyote Valley for slightly less than \$100,000,000, the old views and models of what Coyote Valley is and will be have been turned upside down. The old paradigm, simply put, consisted of over 30,000 jobs to be created in North Coyote Valley, thousands of housing units in Mid Coyote Valley and a "Green Belt" in South Coyote Valley. Of course, the South Coyote Valley Green Belt never really existed as a true "green belt" since it is the most densely parcelized and developed portion of all of Coyote Valley. The old paradigm is out the window now. The acquisition of the North Coyote Valley acreage is only the beginning of what will likely be a methodical effort on the part of government and environmental groups to transform North Coyote Valley into a true green belt.

This new paradigm, beginning with the initial acquisition of this substantial amount of acreage in North Coyote Valley, makes a lot of sense for many of reasons. North Coyote Valley is currently the least developed region in all of the Coyote Valley. It has the fewest number of parcels and therefore the fewest number of property owners among the three designated regions of Coyote Valley (North Coyote Valley, Mid Coyote Valley, and South Coyote Valley). Along with the fewest number of parcels among the three regions it also has the fewest

number of structures and residences. North Coyote Valley has a large wetlands area not found in the other regions and it is the region with the greatest potential impact on flood control issues. Because most of North Coyote Valley is made up of a few larger parcels, gaining control of the bulk of North Coyote Valley for environmental preservation is easier than trying to gain control of the southern part of the Mid Coyote Valley or South Coyote Valley, each of which region contains hundreds of parcels and owners. North Coyote Valley provides the greatest opportunity to preserve and enhance the much talked about "bridge" between the two mountain ranges allowing the migration of a wide variety of plants and animal species. North Coyote Valley is the closest portion of Coyote Valley to the major population areas of the City of San Jose which will allow easier access to North Coyote Valley once the area has been made available for public enjoyment. It is worth noting that a larger portion of North Coyote Valley is in the City of San Jose than in the Mid Coyote Valley or South Coyote Valley. (See attached map).

Pursuing North Coyote Valley and even the northern portion of the Mid Coyote Valley makes good sense relative to environmental and conservation goals. More North Coyote Valley land must be acquired to effectuate the long term environmental and conservation goals which have been recently espoused and used as justification for the recent land acquisition. Thankfully, North Coyote Valley is owned predominately by a small number of owners who hold large parcels in the region. While the acquisition cost will be high and probably continue to climb, the ability to focus on a few landowners to accomplish the significant goal of acquisition is probably the single most important factor allowing this paradigm shift to occur. If this acquisition process had to be repeated hundreds of times, the task of obtaining control of this vast area would be undoable.

It will take additional hundreds of millions of dollars to acquire most of North Coyote Valley and the northern portion of the Mid Coyote Valley. But then what? What should be done with all of this land? What will be the grand master scheme? No doubt the scheme will include some re-routing of water flows, building of some additional flood controls, the building of trails and other public access. Information and teaching centers will likely be a part of the plan. Perhaps some of the land will be returned to its native state. Areas for farming and other agricultural uses might be set aside. There will of course be ongoing maintenance and security expenses. New bonds and taxes to effectuate all of

this will be likely. Perhaps a new or greatly expanded government agency to oversee this project will be implemented. Exactly how the land will be used is far from clear. But what is clear, is that after the land is acquired, additional hundreds of millions of dollars will be needed to implement the grand new plan. It will probably take decades to achieve. But in the end, it will no doubt be worth it, and a noteworthy community asset will be created for the benefit of many generations to come.

The old paradigm regarding jobs, housing and a green belt in Coyote Valley is gone. The green belt is now in North Coyote Valley and probably a portion of Mid Coyote Valley. Jobs are essentially gone and so is most of the housing under the new paradigm. So, then what about South Coyote Valley and the southern part of Mid Coyote Valley? South Coyote Valley consists of approximately 393 parcels and the southern portion of Mid Coyote Valley has another 115 parcels, totaling 508 parcels. The total acreage of both of these regions is about 3400 acres. The total number of residential structures in both regions is about 429. Other permanent structures, commercial and otherwise, total about 2117 with an additional 235 structures. Such as mobile houses and cargo containers. South Coyote Valley and the southern portion of Mid Coyote Valley will henceforth be referred to herein as the South Coyote Valley Area.

My interest in all of this stems from the fact that my family has owned land in South Coyote Valley for nearly 50 years which is located in the City of San Jose. Our 221 acres has been operated as an orchard for decades. Our orchard is the largest remaining orchard in the County of Santa Clara. We have seen firsthand the impact of climate change on agriculture in the Coyote Valley. We are the largest remaining orchard because we have worked hard to maintain our orchard and to preserve the agricultural lifestyle of the area. Sadly, agriculture in Coyote Valley does not have a commercial future. More on this issue later.

Under the new paradigm, assuming that local government and interested agencies continue to move forward in their current direction, they will ultimately control about 2,550 acres in the North and Mid Coyote regions, consisting of approximately 122 parcels and only 36 residences and 249 additional structures (not including the structures on the IBM, Metcalf, Coyote Equipment Storage and

Gavilan College sites). To apply the approach of the new paradigm to the remaining acreage of the South Coyote Valley Area would require several times the amount of money needed for the North Coyote Valley and Mid Coyote Valley acquisitions. The time alone required to navigate the hundreds of deals that would be required in the South Coyote Valley Area versus the couple of dozen deals needed to effectuate the new paradigm in the North Coyote Valley region would make such an undertaking rival the building of the Great Wall of China in terms of time to complete. Simply put, a different approach and a different set of goals needs to be applied to the South Coyote Valley Area.

How should the South Coyote Valley Area be approached? Start by assessing which of the North Coyote Valley region environmental goals are attainable in the South Coyote Valley Area. There are minimal wetlands and few opportunities for flood control in the area. There are minimal, if any, unique plants or wildlife in the South Coyote Valley Area that are not already found in the North Coyote Valley region. There is an opportunity to foster and support a "southern bridge" for plant and wildlife migration between the two mountain ranges. There is the opportunity to preserve the agricultural nature of the area (although commercial agriculture is probably not viable). Groundwater recharge can be maintained.

Under the new paradigm, the South Coyote Valley Area now becomes a buffer between the "green belt" of the north and the growth of Morgan Hill to the south. The South Coyote Valley Area must present viable private ownership uses in order to prevent the South Coyote Valley Area from deteriorating into a poorly maintained, ramshackle area ripe for annexation by an ever-growing Morgan Hill or becoming an eyesore serving little if any community good.

The South Coyote Valley Area is in transition to the extent that commercial agriculture is no longer viable in the area. This is due to a number of factors, including climate change, the withdrawal of processing centers from the region (now mostly located in the Central Valley), foreign competition, and the lack of affordable labor. Few, if any, crops can be commercially grown in the region for profit. The largest farming operator in Coyote Valley has recently filed for bankruptcy. Marijuana is a potentially viable commercial crop but there are governmental and social barriers that must be overcome before the region can become the "Valley of Hemp's Delight". Perhaps large solar "farms" could be

built. Again, many governmental barriers need to be overcome in order for such use to be viable. And let's face it, large solar farms, while "green" in the sense of creating renewable energy, are anything but green in the sense of natural habitat, rural ambiance and the preservation of small scale, noncommercial agriculture.

The overall average parcel size in the South Coyote Valley Area is about 6.7 acres. More than 69% of the parcels in the South Coyote Valley Area are smaller than the average size. The new paradigm for the North Coyote Valley region will not be constrained by the real life need of property owners to make a living because that region will be owned by government agencies and non-profits. But that will not be the case regarding land ownership in the South Coyote Valley Area. There will be private individuals and entities which must earn income from the land or use the land for residential use.

The South Coyote Valley Area should become a model area where private ownership and environmental sensitivity are blended in a way that encourages both. Government should work with private ownership to keep the area rural in nature through a series of agreed upon criteria. By allowing limited residential use, primarily on parcels in the 2-4 acre range, the area's environmental objectives can be maintained and enhanced at the same time as allowing private ownership to enjoy the land as well. By allowing large parcels in the 2-4 acre range, with a residence on each parcel, a large part of each parcel can be encouraged to be used as open space or private agricultural use. Planned rural residential use would solve the conundrum of trying to fulfill the environmental goals and allowing property owners to enjoy the fruits of property ownership. Further study can be made to determine the possible viability of a "southern bridge" and how such a bridge can be achieved without adversely impacting current private ownership. This approach would substantially maintain the current rural character of the South Coyote Valley Area, advance a variety of environmental goals and allow private ownerships to thrive.

My family has been deeply involved with the South Coyote Valley Area for a long time. We want to see it maintain its current character and atmosphere. It is clear to us that things are changing. We want to encourage you and other community leaders to recognize the new paradigm and look at the South Coyote Valley Area, taking into account the reality of the future of commercial agriculture,

the status of land ownership and existing development in the area. We believe a collaborative conversation with the hundreds of owners in the South Coyote Valley Area should lead to a fresh vision as to how land ownership and conservation goals can exist for the benefit of all.

Regards,

Helen Marchese Owen

Helen Marchese Owen

Margy Cacitti

Margy Cacitti

Leo J. Cacitti

Leo J. Cacitti

Elizabeth M. Hirata

Elizabeth M. Hirata

Melvin Hirata

Melvin Hirata

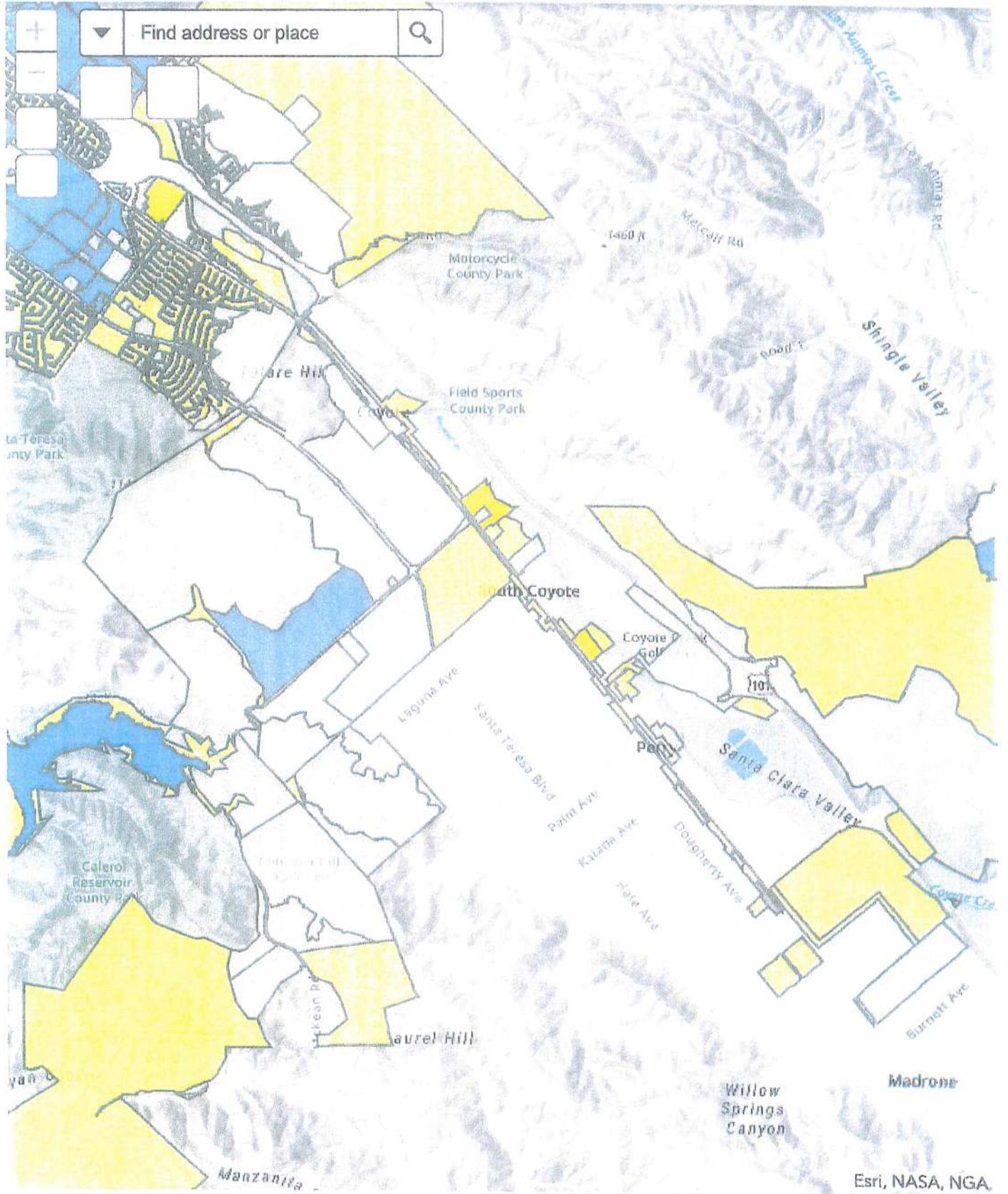
Chris J. Marchese

Chris J. Marchese

Land Use Zoning

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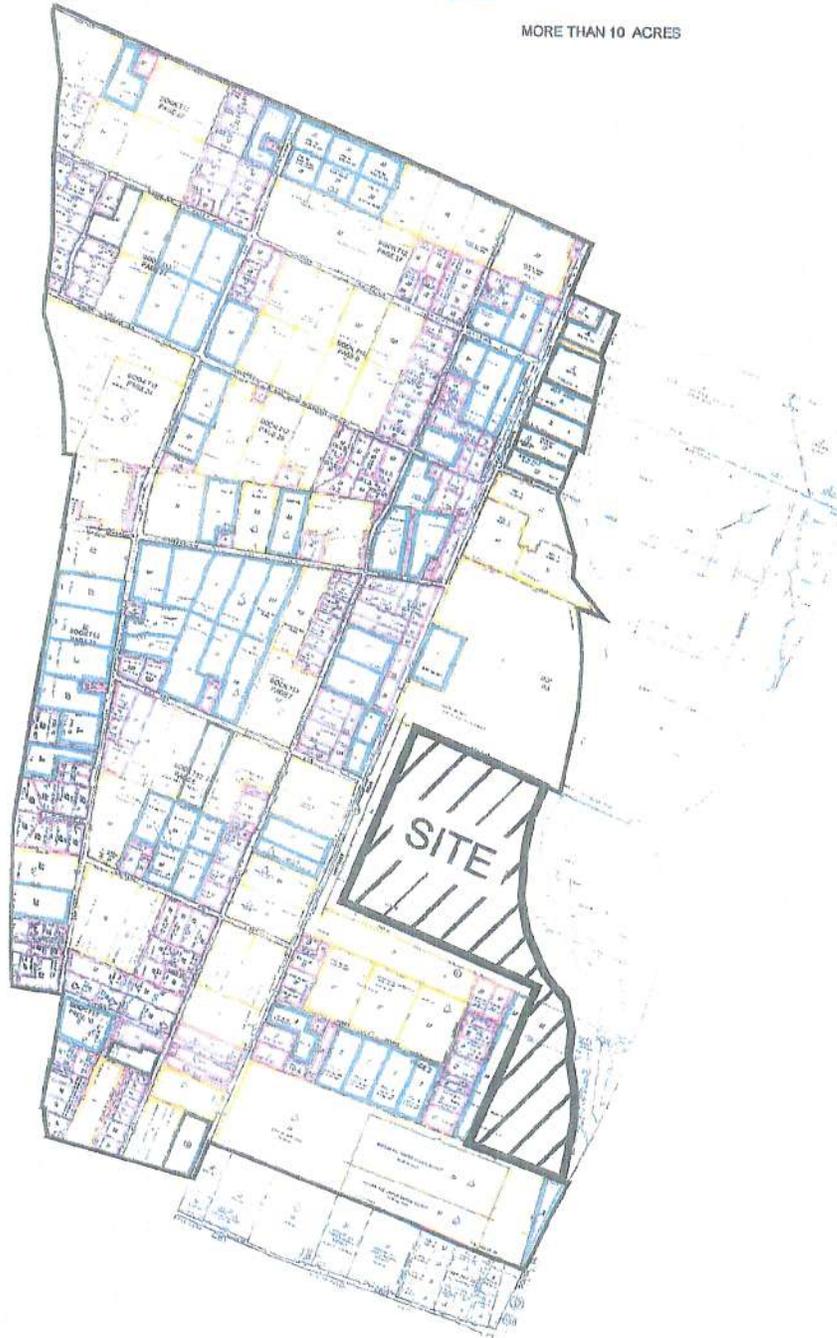
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LEGEND

-  LESS THAN 5 ACRES
-  5 TO 10 ACRES
-  MORE THAN 10 ACRES



PARCEL ANALYSIS
SOUTH COYOTE

DRAWN: RA
CHKD.:
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RUTH AND GOING, INC.

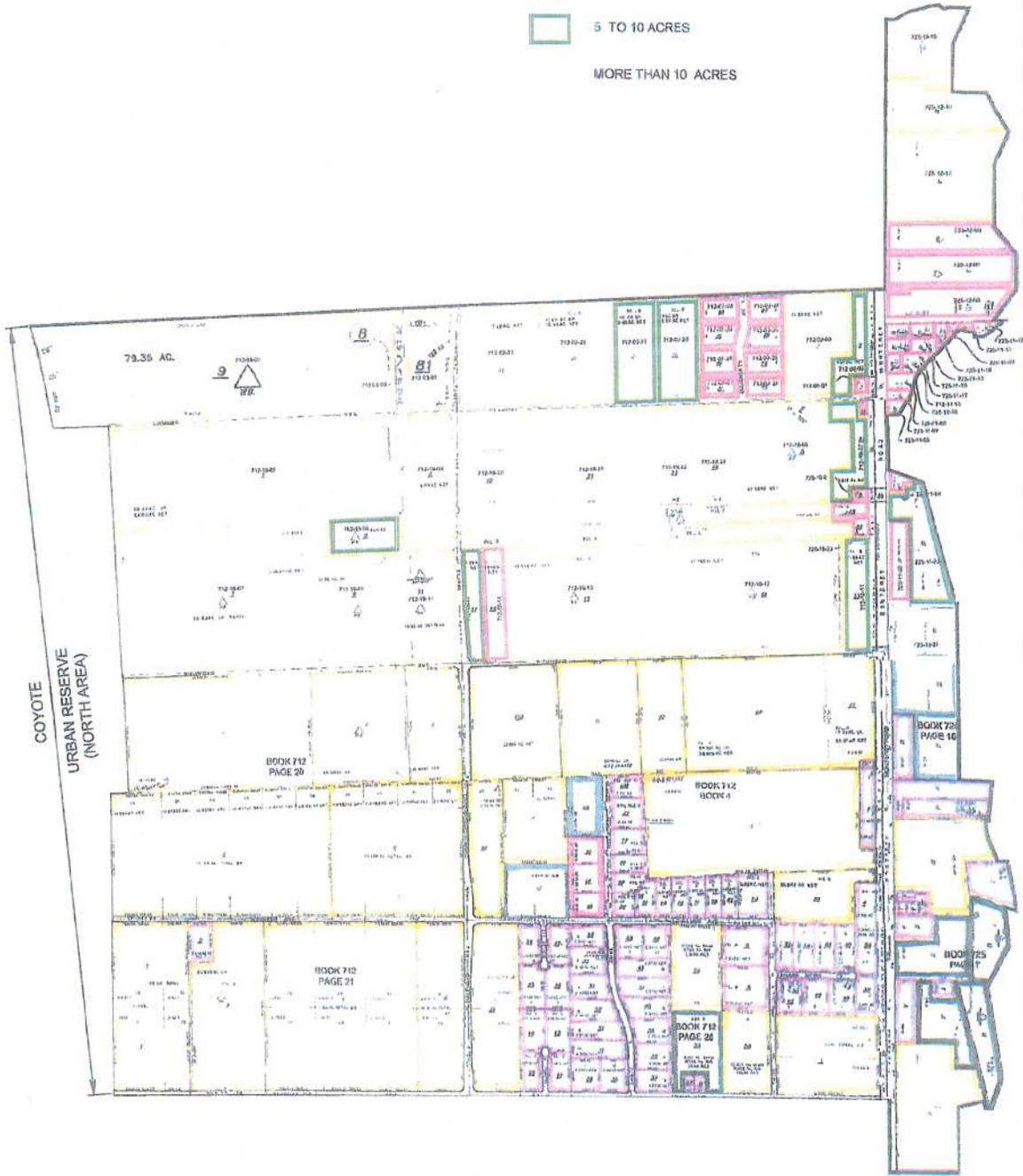
2218 THE ALAMEDA SANTA CLARA, CA 95050 (408) 238-2400

SCALE: NTS
DATE: 2018-01-12
JOB # 17-927-A



LEGEND

- LESS THAN 5 ACRES
- 5 TO 10 ACRES
- MORE THAN 10 ACRES



PARCEL ANALYSIS
 MID-COYOTE

DRAWN: RA
 CHKD.:
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RUTH AND GOING, INC.

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SCALE: NTS

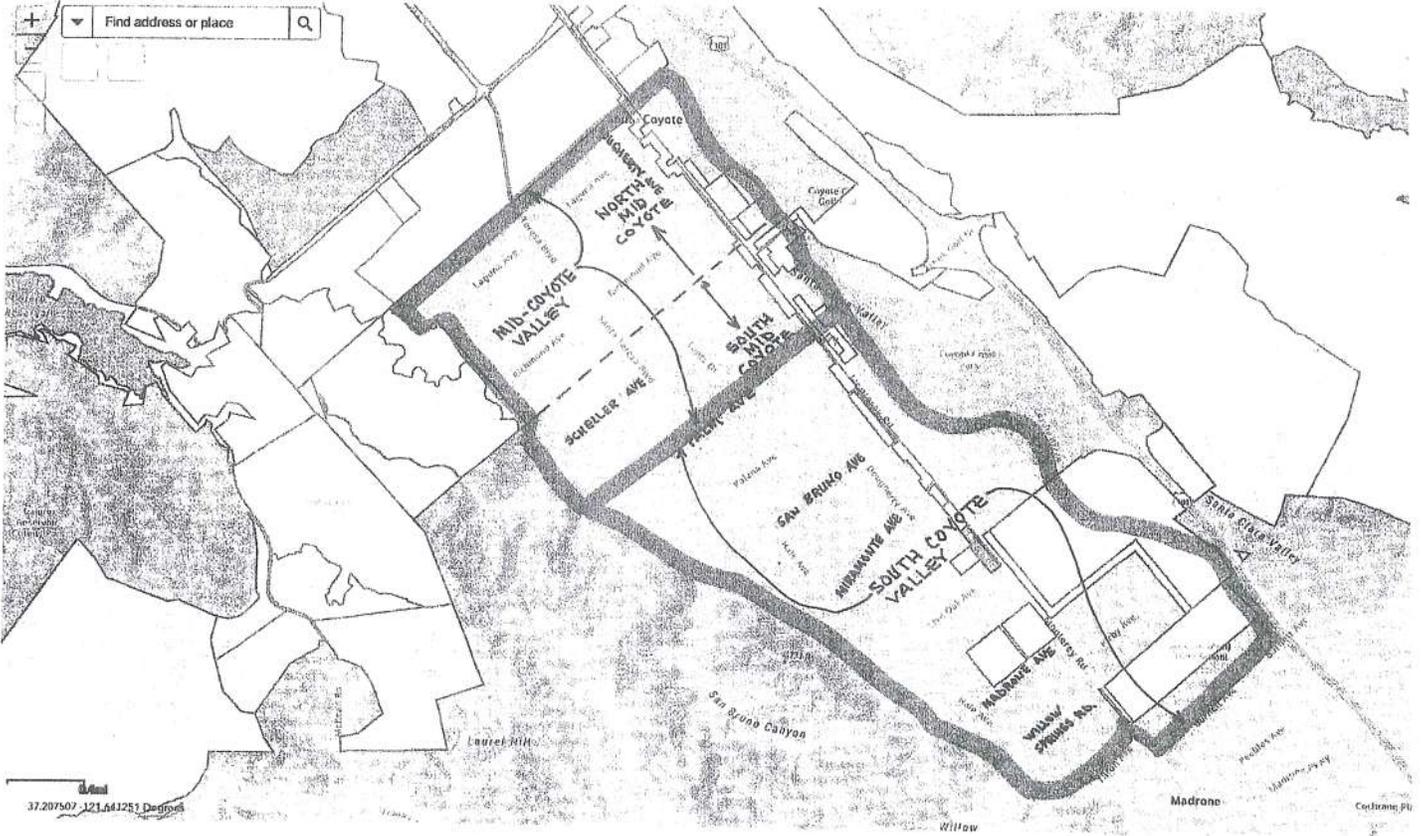
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Land Use Zoning

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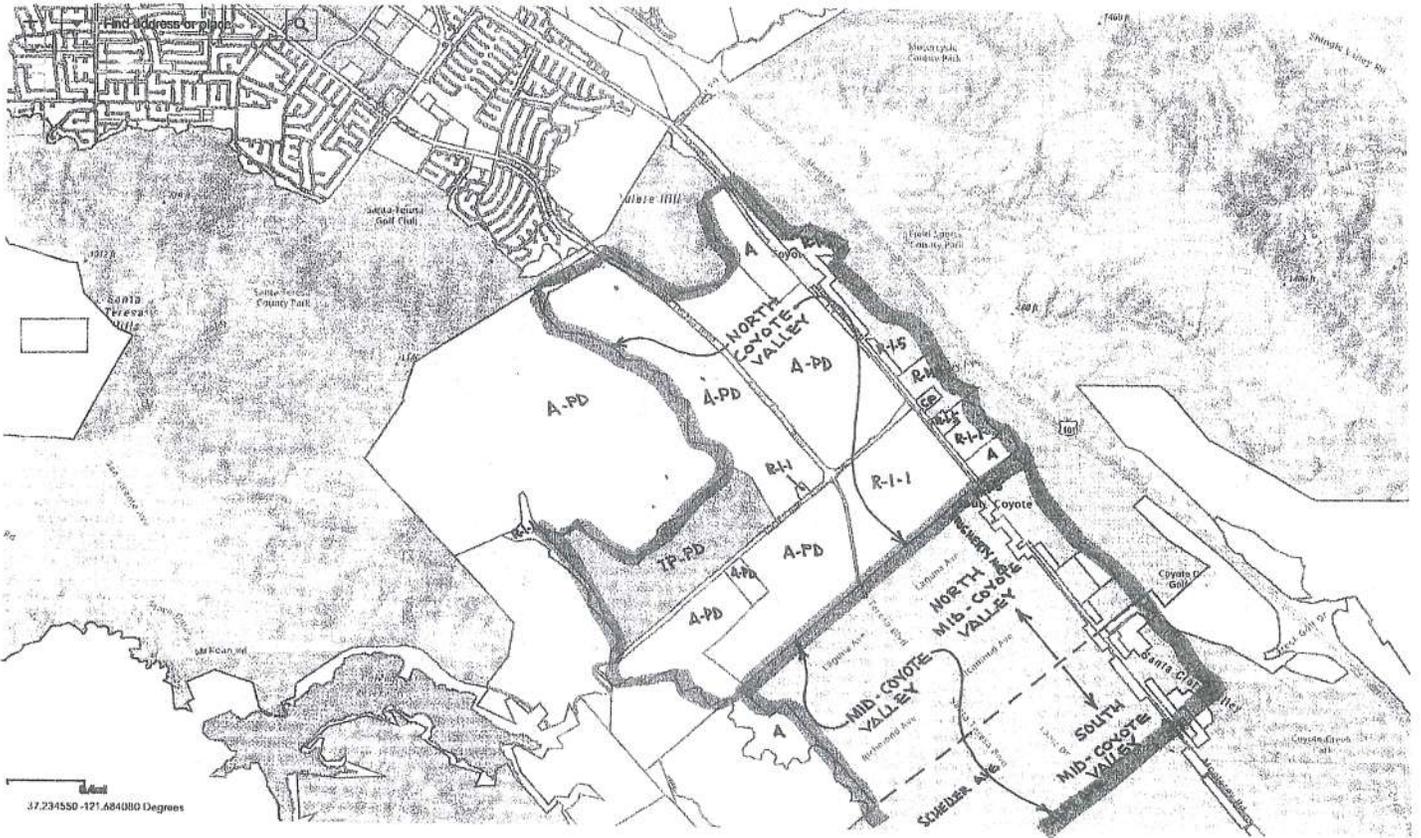
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Land Use Zoning

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