

September 24, 2014



Santa Clara County Planning and Development
Attn: Bill Shoe, Principal Planner
70 West Hedding Street, East Wing 7th Floor
San Jose, CA 95110

Re: Santa Clara County General Plan Health Element - Public Review Draft

Dear Mr. Shoe,

The Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (Authority) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the public review draft of the Santa Clara County General Plan, Health Element. The Authority is a special district created by the California Legislature in 1993, responsible for protecting greenbelts, natural resources, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat and open space within unincorporated Santa Clara County and the cities of Milpitas, Santa Clara, San Jose, Campbell and Morgan Hill.

Approved by the Authority Board of Directors in March of 2014, the *Santa Clara Valley Greenprint (Valley Greenprint)* outlines conservation goals and strategies to insure that the Authority's work over the coming decades is focused on the values most important for maintaining sustainable natural and human communities. The *Valley Greenprint* includes four priority goals:

1. Protect and manage an interconnected system of wildlands and natural areas to support native habitats and species and to ensure resilience to changing environment.
2. Protect and restore water resources to benefit local communities and environment.
3. Conserve farms, ranches, and other working landscapes to sustain the economic and environmental viability of agriculture in the County.
4. Protect and manage a network of open space lands that provide opportunities for nature-based recreation and education for all residents.

The *Valley Greenprint* identifies many other relevant goals and focused strategies, and can be accessed on-line at <http://www.openspaceauthority.org/about/strategicplan.html>. The Santa Clara County General Plan Health Element draft contains complimentary policies regarding recreation and physical activity, healthy eating, food access, and sustainable food systems that align with the goals and guiding principles of the *Valley Greenprint*. The adoption of the Health Element will serve as validation for work that has already begun and encouragement for what needs to be done in the future, as Santa Clara County continues to grow and change.

6980 Santa Teresa Blvd
Suite 100
San Jose, CA 95119
408.224.7476 T
408.224.7548 F
openspaceauthority.org



The Authority has the following comments:

C. LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN:

HE-C.6 Open space preservation. Comment: The *Valley Greenprint* is designed to complement many existing plans and initiatives that support and influence local open space efforts, including the "Priority Conservation Areas" (PCA's) through Plan Bay Area collaborative. Consider also including in this Section the PCAs as an area of focus for natural land preservation similar to "Priority Development Areas" (PDA's) as presented in HE-C.3 Focused development.

E. RECREATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

HE-E.12 Trails and parks network. Comment: Since 1996, the Authority has allocated more than \$10 million to 15 urban projects in the cities of San Jose, Santa Clara, Morgan Hill, Milpitas, Campbell, and unincorporated Santa Clara County through the Authority's Urban Open Space Funding Program. Consider adding the Authority to this Section to partner with as a potential grant funding source for trails and park network projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Santa Clara County General Plan Health Element - Public Review Draft. If you have any questions regarding these comments please contact me at (408) 224-7476 or by email at rsantos@openspaceauthority.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Santos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Rachel Santos
Associate Planner

Cc: Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager, Santa Clara County Open Space Authority
Matt Freeman, Assistant General Manager, Santa Clara County Open Space Authority