



SANTA CLARA VALLEY
HABITAT AGENCY

New Habitat Plans Said to Improve Local Land Control

March 10, 2008

By Mark Noack

Morgan Hill Times

Relatively new legal tools for protecting endangered species and habitats are being prepared for approval by the Morgan Hill City Council. According to Ann Draper, assistant operating officer at the Santa Clara Valley Water District, the proposed Habitat and Natural Community conservation plans will give Morgan Hill better control to mitigate and restore natural habitats while also streamlining environmental regulations.

Early in the decade, entering into the habitat plans was a requirement for getting federal and state approval for Highway 101 improvement projects for various local government bodies, including Santa Clara County, San Jose, VTA, the Santa Clara Water District - and later in 2005 - Morgan Hill and Gilroy. "This will be a significant preservation of habitat and open space for our community," Draper said. "It's a habitat legacy for our community."

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